Hebrides Cruises

An exhilarating combination of luxury and adventure at sea





Exceptional luxury wildlife cruising

Hebrides Cruises is a family-run business and the leading luxury wildlife cruise company on the west coast of Scotland, owning and operating three ocean-going vessels. Owner Rob Barlow has been introducing people to the idyllic islands of the West Coast of Scotland for more than a quarter of a century.



Hebrides Cruises

Rob and his son-in-law James Fairbairns are qualified Skippers and Rob's daughter Emma Fairbairns is Shore Manager, the helpful contact for guests from their first communication to post-cruise feedback. Other crew members are long-standing friends and colleagues who return every season, providing a continuity of knowledge and expertise. The atmosphere of friendship onboard very quickly extends to guests, and every season over 50% of guests have cruised with us before. We are very proud that the hundreds of reviews on our website, posted by our guests in their own words, are 100% positive.

On every cruise, the close-knit team of Skipper, Chef, Steward and Wildlife Expert ensure the best possible holiday for no more than 12 guests on board. With the highest crew-to-guest ratio in small ship cruising in Scotland, our highly qualified crews — with an intimate knowledge of the Hebrides and the west coast — love to provide the best Scottish hospitality, always with a dash of fellowship and fun.



A passion for the natural environment

Sustainability and a love of nature are at the heart of our company, and we are proud to hold the Green Tourism Gold Award standard. As an accredited WiSe (Wildlife Safe) operator, our approach to responsible wildlife watching runs through every cruise.

Our commitment has been recognised well beyond the environmental field. In recent years Hebrides Cruises has won national awards as a family business and for food and innovation, alongside recognition at the Highlands & Islands Tourism Awards and the Nature of Scotland Awards. But the recognition we value most highly is the wildlife itself: every cetacean sighting on our cruises is recorded on the Whale Track app, which Hebrides Cruises helped develop with the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust.

The Green Tourism assessors said it best:

" the team continue to incorporate sustainability into every aspect of their cruises, whilst maintaining extraordinary levels of customer service and biodiversity knowledge on each trip."







The perfect vessels for cruising the Hebrides

Our three ships are luxury ocean-going vessels with great pedigrees. They each have two engines, stabilisers and carry tenders on board, ensuring a fast, comfortable and safe sea adventure.

Each has her own character. Elizabeth G, full of traditional marine charm, is the first choice for our expedition cruises. Emma Jane, newly refitted, is elegant, stable and incredibly spacious — and carries our only on-deck hot tub. Lucy Mary is a classic luxury motor yacht with a deluxe master cabin suite, especially popular for private charter.

Beautifully fitted out for cruising in style, our vessels have classic maritime finishes on both outdoor and indoor deck areas. Interiors are comfortable and spacious and all cabins are ensuite. It is no exaggeration to say our guests fall in love with their vessel, which is their charming home for the duration of their cruise.







A wildlife expert on every cruise

Because we are passionate about the natural environment and wildlife, there is a specialist wildlife guide as part of the crew on every cruise. All our guides have an in-depth knowledge of our cruising areas and engage with our guests to help spot wildlife and pass on their knowledge.

All shore excursions are accompanied, with the opportunity to explore independently if preferred and if safety allows. Over 60 species of birds can be seen on any trip, including white-tailed and golden eagles and the popular puffins during nesting season. Otters, several species of dolphins, porpoises, seals, basking sharks and minke whales are regularly encountered at close quarters, with more occasionally orca, sunfish, humpback and other types of whale. All cetacean sightings are recorded on the Whale Track app, which Hebrides Cruises helped develop with the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust.







Delicious Menus

The west coast of Scotland provides an amazing larder of fresh produce from land and sea, from which our Chefs create gourmet standard menus — cooking that has earned Hebrides Cruises national recognition for food and innovation.

Seafood is a speciality, including hand-dived scallops, which may even be caught by Skipper Rob Barlow while on board. Guests returning from a shore trip are always delighted with the irresistible freshly baked treats on offer. The individual tastes and any dietary requirements of our guests are provided for, while drinks from the bar and coffee, tea and snacks are available all day. Towards evening, the Skipper will choose a sheltered anchorage with a stunning setting as a backdrop for dinner. This is always a high point of the day, with the Skipper and Wildlife Guide joining guests for the meal, to exchange stories and discuss the itinerary for the following day.

Everything is included

Your cruise price includes full onboard hospitality, so you can simply switch off and enjoy the experience:

- Comfortable ensuite cabin accommodation
- Freshly prepared breakfast, lunch and traditional afternoon tea each day
- A delicious three-course evening meal, with complimentary wine at dinner
- Tea, coffee and refreshments throughout the day
- Daily shore landings and island visits, guided by your crew
- A dedicated wildlife guide on every cruise
- Toiletries and hairdryer in every cabin







Inspirational voyages

The islands and coastlines of the west coast of Scotland are amongst some of the most remote and beautiful in the world. Within the thousands of miles of sea and shores, our crews know the best routes, the most perfect sheltered anchorages, the most evocative history, the most fascinating geology and the best habitats for wildlife.

From this vast area, we offer 17 hand-picked wildlife cruise itineraries across four cruising grounds: the Inner Hebrides; the Outer Hebrides, St Kilda and the Northwest Coast; the Caledonian Canal and Loch Ness; and the Southern Hebrides and Northwest Ireland. Choose from 3-night, 4-night, 6-night, 8-night or 10-night cruises, or book a private cruise charter. Dates and availability for every itinerary are on our cruise calendar at hebridescruises.co.uk.







The Inner Hebrides





Hebrides Magical Mini Cruise

3-nights

Our luxury motor yacht, Lucy Mary, offers a specially designed 3-night cruise for those looking for a short break, or wishing to try small-ship cruising for the first time. The luxurious interiors and outdoor decks of Lucy Mary are perfect for soaking up the relaxed atmosphere and excellent hospitality on board, while watching the beautiful scenery glide past. Our 3-night mini-cruise will transport you to captivating coastlines along serene sea lochs offering idyllic anchorages and sheltered stopovers, dotted with castles and lighthouses, waking up to a new island coastline every day. Dolphins, porpoises, minke whales, eagles, otter and deer are regularly spotted. Each day there are options for shore visits which could feature an accompanied walk with your wildlife guide, a beach barbecue or a swim in the sheltered lochs.

"When it comes to discovering the perfect blend of thrilling adventures and peaceful getaways, nothing compares to sailing through the Hebrides on the Lucy Mary."





'The food was exceptional'

In Search of Seafood: A Hebridean Gourmet Cruise

4-nights

The clear waters of the Inner Hebrides produce some of the finest seafood in the world, and this cruise is a celebration of it — the award-winning itinerary behind our national recognition for food and innovation.

Guests are taken to the source: oysters and mussels grown sustainably on the Isle of Mull and gathered from honesty boxes on the shore; crab, langoustine and lobster landed by local fishing boats; and scallops hand-dived by Skipper Rob Barlow himself. Spring is also prime season for brown and sea trout from local fishermen. Our chefs, with their deep knowledge of Hebridean produce and a real passion for seafood, serve it within hours of landing — at anchor in a serene sea loch, with a new vista every evening. The menu isn't all seafood, and individual tastes, allergies and less fish-keen partners are all happily catered for.

The cruising is as rewarding as the cooking: the dramatic coastlines of Mull, Loch Sunart and Ardnamurchan and, weather permitting, the idyllic Isle of Iona, with dolphins, minke whales, porpoises, otters and red deer regularly spotted from the decks.







Inner Hebrides autumn "Big 5" wildlife cruise

4-nights

The main focus of this sheltered-water cruise is to spot the "Big Five" wildlife species of the Inner Hebrides which are around in the autumn. The itinerary takes in beautiful and remote Loch Etive, the Isle of Mull, Ardnamurchan and the Isle of Lismore, all providing stunning scenery and exceptional onshore walking. "Bagging" the list of "Big 5" species is fun which prompts a lot of camaraderie amongst guests and crew. The Big 5 are red deer stag; common seal (misnamed as they are quite rare); otter; eagle (both golden and white-tailed) and harbour porpoise. But this is just the beginning - many other rare wildlife species will definitely be seen.

"A lovely autumnal cruise in comfort. We saw all the 'Big 5' as promised."



The Inner Hebrides





Idyllic islands: Mull, Iona, Staffa & the Treshnish Isles

6-nights

The Isle of Mull has a captivating coastline of deeply indented sea lochs, dramatic cliffs and shell-sand beaches, with fascinating islands offshore. A shore trip on the uninhabited Isle of Lunga, one of the Treshnish Isles, allows close encounters with nesting puffins, guillemots, razorbills and many other seabirds, while the Isle of Staffa is famed for Fingal's Cave and its outstanding geology. The Isle of Iona is strikingly beautiful with its turquoise seas and white sand beaches, but also a good place to see the elusive corncrake. Other potential stopovers include the Isle of Ulva, its neighbouring island, Gometra, and the Isle of Inch Kenneth, all offering excellent walking and fascinating history. Minke whales, dolphins, porpoises, basking sharks, otters and white-tailed eagles are commonly seen in these waters.

"Absolutely outstanding, in particular to see inside the cave at Staffa and seals and dolphins from the rib."



The Inner Hebrides





The Small Isles and sea lochs: wildlife havens

6-nights

There is a special time of year, and a particular area of the west coast of Scotland, that provides an amazing opportunity for encounters with marine and other wildlife. Autumn is a wonderful time to be at sea in the Hebrides for spotting dolphins, porpoises and minke whales. Basking sharks are still around and seals and otters are easilyspotted. Eagles and seabirds are at their highest number as the young depart the nest to claim their own territories. The cruise area is very scenic, visiting the "Small Isles" of Muck, Canna, Rum and Eigg and some of the magnificent sea lochs of Mull and Ardnamurchan, with excellent walking opportunities on shore.

"The cruise was brilliant in every way! Fabulous wildlife, amazing meals, and great fun."







Skye and the Small Isles: Hebridean horizons

6-nights

The “Small Isles” of Muck, Eigg, Rum and Canna each have their own distinct beauty, character, wildlife and sense of community. Cruise times between the islands are short; the new horizons constantly appearing create an irresistible invitation for onshore exploration. All four islands offer excellent walking with a striking backdrop of the other isles constantly in view. Red deer on Rum and puffins on Canna are very easy to spot, while eagles can be seen on any one of the islands. Leaving the Small Isles behind to head for the Isle of Skye, a favourite sheltered anchorage is Loch Scavaig, nestling below the towering Cuillin mountain range. From here, a walk inland to Loch Coruisk reveals some of the most dramatic mountain scenery found anywhere in the world. The cruise area is a hotspot for cetaceans such as minke whales, dolphins, porpoises and seals.

“An amazing cruise with each island so different. We saw all the wildlife we hoped to.”









Cruise around Skye: Secret Coastlines

8-nights

There is no better way to experience the Isle of Skye than arriving from the sea. On this exclusive voyage we circumnavigate the whole island — a rare opportunity to see every coast of one of Scotland's most spectacular places, far from the crowds.

Our vessels and guests are often the only visitors on remote, undisturbed shores that no road reaches. The scenery is breathtaking throughout: great mountain panoramas, secret coves, shell-sand beaches and idyllic small offshore islands. Shore trips offer remarkable contrasts, from cathedral-like sea caves and abandoned townships to ancient castles and a whisky distillery.

These waters are rich in wildlife too, with eagles, otters, dolphins and whales frequently spotted as the island slowly reveals itself, coast by coast.

"The entire experience was delightful. The onboard crew were fabulous--friendly, helpful, and proud of their islands."







The Isle of Skye, the Small Isles and the Shiants

8-nights

The Isle of Skye, the Small Isles of Muck, Eigg, Rum and Canna, and the Shiants provide an enthralling and contrasting island experience. The exploration of so many islands at one time is only possible from the sea. Island-hop around the Small Isles before heading for Loch Scavaig on Skye and the islands of the Inner Sound. Here, the deep waters are bordered on the east by the great mainland mountains of Torridon and Applecross, on the west by the island of Raasay and the Trotternish ridges, and in the south by the mighty Cuillins, providing a spectacular cruising experience. The dramatic sheltered mainland sea lochs offer idyllic stopovers before heading out into the Sea of the Hebrides to reach the mystical Shiant Isles. Often described as a mini St Kilda, the Shiants have a remarkable landscape, a fascinating history and are a nesting site for thousands of seabirds — a visit never to be forgotten.

"The scenery and anchorages were wonderful with numerous sightings of cetaceans and superb meals. We'll be back!"





Loch Linnhe, the Caledonian Canal & Loch Ness

6-nights

This epic journey through the very heart of Highland Scotland is full of breath-taking contrasts in scenery, heritage and wildlife. Magnificent sea lochs, quintessential castles, stunning inland lochs and the engineering marvel of the Caledonian Canal all combine to make a fascinating cruise itinerary. The towering mass of Ben Nevis is a stunning backdrop to Loch Linnhe at the entrance to the 60 miles of the Caledonian Canal, which includes the navigation of Neptune's Staircase and mysterious Loch Ness. Walking and cycling opportunities are excellent; guests' own bicycles can be stored on board while the Wildlife Guide ensures guests get the most out of the natural environment while exploring on shore.

"You just can't beat the scenery in the Highlands with excellent views of deer, golden eagles and a perfectly placed otter!"







Sea Kingdom of the Southern Hebrides

8-nights

This fascinating cruise travels south from Oban to explore the historic islands of the Southern Hebrides, where the Lords of the Isles ruled in the 10th century. Today the pristine waters are another kind of sea kingdom as a haven for rare marine wildlife including whales, dolphins, basking sharks, porpoises and seals. Stopovers include the Garvellachs, with a fascinating heritage, and the lush, fertile isles of Colonsay and Gigha with their fabulous beaches. Jura is stark and austere, with plentiful wildlife, and a visit to Islay must include a whisky distillery.
A favourite stopover on the Isle of Seil is one of the most lovely, remote anchorages in the Southern Hebrides. It overlooks the tide race of Corryvreckan, the most dramatic on the west coast of Scotland.

"It never ceases to amaze me how the team at Hebrides Cruises deliver such fabulously enjoyable cruises. Everything is done to the highest standard."





Southern Hebrides to Northwest Ireland

10-nights / *Our newset voyage*

The Southern Hebrides and the northwest of Ireland share deep Celtic roots — in music, tradition and the Gaelic language — and dramatic volcanic coastlines fringed with rare machair grasslands. This special voyage links the two, in a journey no other operator offers.

Heading swiftly south from Oban with a stopover at picturesque Crinan, the cruise crosses the North Channel to the north coast of Ireland. Highlights along this legendary coastline are likely to include Rathlin Island, the Giant's Causeway, Malin Head and Glenoory Point, with sheltered anchorages such as Pollcormick Bay, famed for its white sands, and Gola Island with its towering cliffs and teeming seabird colonies. Sea conditions and time permitting, the voyage may continue round to the fishing town of Killybegs beneath Slieve League, home to some of the highest sea cliffs in Ireland.

These waters are seeing ever more sightings of dolphins and porpoises, along with minke, humpback and even fin whales — so the wildlife guide will be glued to the binoculars. The return passage takes in the wild west coast of Islay, Portnahaven and Nave Island, with a final night at anchor in Loch Spelve on Mull or Ardencaple Bay on Seil.







Far-flung Islands: Harris, Taransay and the Flannan Isles

10-nights

Setting out through the islands of the Inner Hebrides, this extensive voyage then follows a route along the west coast of Skye to reach the Outer Hebrides. In the Sound of Harris, a spectacular panorama of small islands and sea lochs, fringed with shell-sand beaches and turquoise waters, are home to red deer, golden and sea eagles, seal colonies and a host of seabirds. After a shore visit to Taransay, the cruise heads out into the Atlantic to reach the Flannan Isles, with its mysterious history, now home only to nesting puffins, storm petrels, Leach's petrels, kittiwakes and gannets. Heading back out to sea, the area is a hotspot for minke and pilot whales and other species of dolphin, including Risso's dolphin. On reaching the Isle of Lewis, anchor offshore near the famous Callanish Stones and, like many seafarers in the past, visit them from the sea in wonder.

"A fabulous trip, we visited remote islands, saw lots of wildlife, ate wonderful food and had a lot of fun. The crew did everything possible to make our trip memorable."





Far-flung Islands: the Shiants and the Summer Isles

10-nights

The cruise route initially passes through the islands of the Inner Hebrides, before heading out into the Minch sea channel. Dropping anchor at the wild and enchanting Shiant Isles, a day and night are spent exploring the islands and observing the thousands of various species of nesting seabirds. Putting to sea again in an easterly direction, the Summer Isles archipelago, a group of 20 islands set in a landscape of outstanding beauty, comes into view. Shore trips include the main island of Tanera Mor and exploring the dramatic caves and beaches of the outlying islands, all havens for wildlife. The homeward voyage, heading south, provides opportunities to visit some of the very remote coasts of the North West Highlands and the dramatic sea lochs of Loch Torridon, Loch Alsh, Loch Carron and Loch Hourn.

"Many thanks to the Crew for a wonderful trip on Elizabeth G. Super company, stunning scenery and great food."





Far-Flung Islands: Mingulay to the Shiants

10-nights

Take a magical voyage to the most remote, unpopulated islands of the Outer Hebrides with evocative destinations including Mingulay, the Monach Isles, Taransay, and the Shiants. Call in at some of the populated isles with their Gaelic-speaking communities, such as Berneray, Barra, the Uists and Harris. While en route, stopover options include the Isle of Skye and the remote North West coast of mainland Scotland, dropping anchor in the magnificent sea lochs of Knoydart, Ardnamurchan and Morvern. There is a good chance of seeing most of the wildlife the Western Isles has to offer and the scenery is some of the most spectacular in the world — a photographer's dream.

"Amazing guiding, wildlife, coastlines and tranquil bays for a calm night's sleep after wonderful food and excellent wine."





St Kilda and Isles of the Outer Hebrides

10-nights

This breath-taking cruise takes in many of the iconic destinations of the Western Isles. The astonishing St Kilda Archipelago and the far-flung islands visited en route, including Barra, Mingulay and the Monachs, are outstanding stopovers. Reaching St Kilda is weather dependent, but our record is excellent with our ocean-going vessels and experienced Crews — Skipper and owner Rob Barlow alone has made more than 250 trips to St Kilda. Dropping anchor in Village Bay is awe-inspiring, often with minke whales and basking sharks for company. Guests soak in the unique, haunting atmosphere while exploring onshore and cruising the dramatic sea stacks clamouring with the cries of hundreds of thousands of birds. Heading onwards, the voyage takes in the Isle of Harris, the amazing Shiant Isles, the Isle of Skye and the beautiful fjord-like sea lochs on the North West coast of the Scottish mainland.

"The scenery, the crew, the food and the wildlife were amazing. How else would you see a Minke whale breaching several times within 100metres of the ship?"





Whale watching in the Northern Minch

10-nights

The main focus of this fabulous expedition wildlife cruise is to find as many cetacean species as possible. From Oban, the vessel passes through the Inner Hebrides to reach the waters of the Northern Minch, off the Outer Hebrides. There the crew are on the lookout for humpback whales, fin whales and sei whales as well as orca and pilot whales, with Risso's and white-beaked dolphins in the deeper waters. Minke whales, common and bottlenose dolphins and porpoises can be spotted throughout the cruise as well as many seabirds. Manx, sooty and great shearwaters; storm and Leach's petrel; and great, arctic, pomarine and long-tailed skuas all inhabit the Minch. Amazing remote stopovers include the Summer Isles, Handa Island & Sea Stack, Loch Laxford, Loch Nedd, Kylesku, the Badcall Islands and Stornoway.

"What a trip! Whales, dolphins, porpoise, basking sharks, seals and many birds including some rare ones."







In Search of Giants: Expedition Cruise

10-nights

Our unique cetacean research expedition cruise ventures to the former whaling grounds west and north of Scotland, to help answer the question — do giants still roam in these seas? This annual cruise searches for large baleen and sperm whales in seas thought to be an important migratory corridor. Our specialist on-board guide is a whale expert, a fount of information for guests, while documenting all sightings to contribute to the knowledge of whales in the decades since Hebrides whaling ceased. Because of the research nature of this cruise, more time will be spent at sea, but guests will enjoy the usual exceptional hospitality and gourmet meals from our crews, as well as shore visits to other remote destinations such as the Flannan Isles, St Kilda and Lewis, with sightings of other cetaceans and wildlife as well as whales.

"The highlight of the trip was seeing at least six humpback whales three fin whales also: the second heaviest animal in the history of life on earth!."



Private Cruise Charter

3, 4, 6, 8 and 10-nights

A private cruise charter is the ultimate way to enjoy everything that the west coast of Scotland and small ship cruising can bring, including our famed onboard hospitality. Gather your favourite people together to share a relaxing, once-in-a-lifetime holiday, a celebration, or an exhilarating activity adventure — the ideal size for a group of friends and family. Choose your own itinerary and activities: go diving, kayaking, canoeing, walking and wild swimming, or simply sit back and soak up the starry nights, the sunsets, and the silence, apart from the sound of the sea.



We arrange charters of every kind, each with bespoke planning and logistics handled by our shore team:

- Family & celebration charters — milestone birthdays, anniversaries and reunions, with the whole ship to yourselves
- Corporate & leadership retreats — an inspiring, distraction-free setting for teams to think, plan and reconnect
- Specialty & interest charters — photography, whisky, walking, wildlife and more, with itineraries tailored to your passion

Private charter is available for any or all of our three vessels on dates with no reservations, and must therefore be booked well in advance.

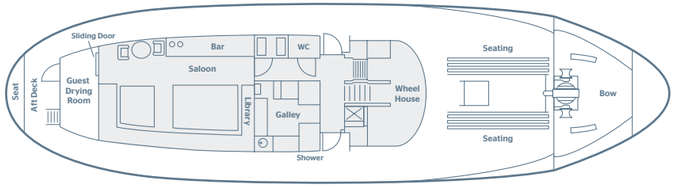
"We landed on ten different islands and saw golden and white-tailed eagles, dolphins, minke whales and a basking shark; what more can one ask for!"

Elizabeth G

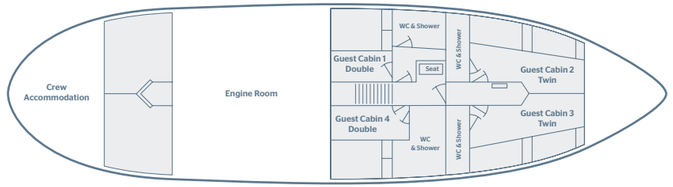
Elizabeth G has a lot of marine character and is the first choice for our expedition cruises, providing comfortable accommodation for 8 guests in 4 double or twin ensuite cabins (or 10 guests for private cruise charter). The indoor dining saloon and outside observation decks on 2 levels are perfect for relaxing and wildlife watching.



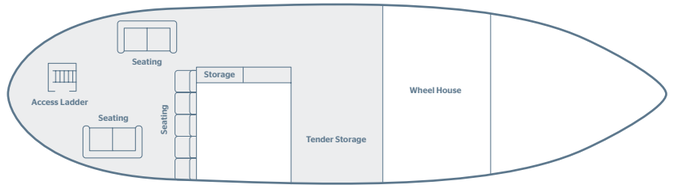
Elizabeth G / Deck Saloon Plan



Elizabeth G / Guest Cabin Plan



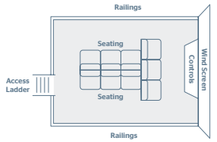
Elizabeth G / Top Rear Observation Deck



Emma Jane

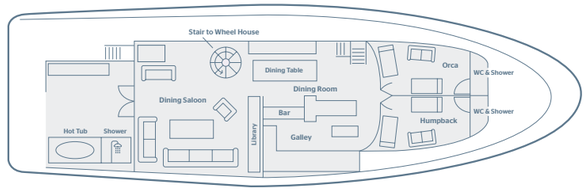
Emma Jane is elegant, stable and incredibly spacious, carrying 12 guests in 6 ensuite double or twin cabins. Newly refitted, her expanded dining saloon and lounge bring everyone together in comfort, with indoor and outdoor deck areas over 3 levels. Her fittings and finishes are of the highest quality — including our only on-deck hot tub.

Wildlife Observation Deck

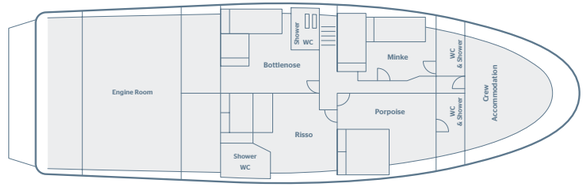




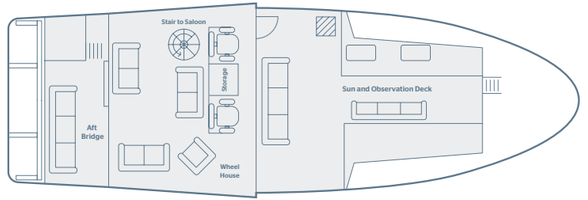
Emma Jane / Deck Saloon Plan



Emma Jane / Guest Cabin Plan



Emma Jane / Wheelhouse Deck Plan

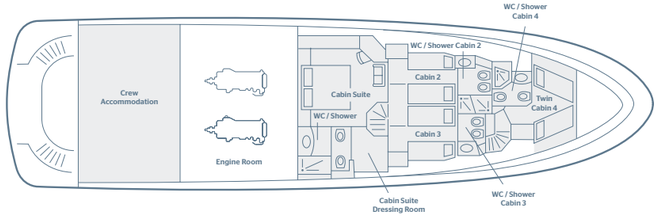


Lucy Mary

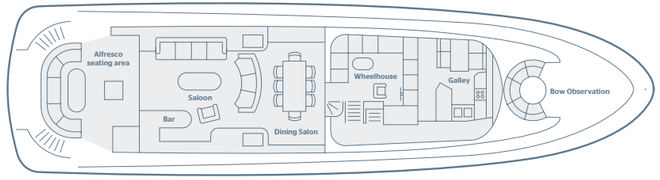
Lucy Mary is a classic luxury motor yacht of contemporary design, built in Holland by renowned Lowland Yachts, easily surpassing other vessels in her class for comfort and cruising range. Especially popular for private charter, she carries 8 guests on board (10 for charter) in 4 ensuite cabins, including a deluxe master cabin suite.



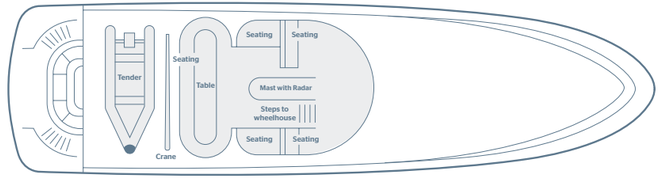
Lucy Mary / Deck Saloon Plan



Lucy Mary / Guest Cabin Plan



Lucy Mary / Top Rear Observation Deck



Travel, reviews and contact page

Your vessel sails from Oban at 4pm on the day of departure and you will be provided with detailed joining instructions in advance. You have a choice of travel options to reach your cruise.

By car: If travelling from the south, Oban is a 2.5 hour drive from Glasgow. There is secure paid parking in Oban and some free on-street parking.

By private transfer: Available with our partner Airport Transfer Scotland.

By air: From Glasgow airport, take the airport bus into Glasgow City Centre to catch the train or bus to Oban.

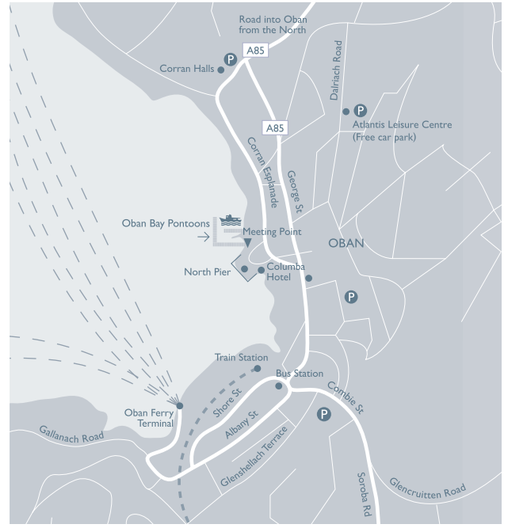
By train or bus: There is a very scenic 3-hour train or bus journey between Glasgow and Oban, departing in the morning and at midday.

Please get in touch for departures from Inverness, or if you need more detailed advice and information on the travel arrangements to meet your cruise.

Guest Reviews

All the testimonials in the brochure were taken from our guest reviews which can be read on our website.

Photography by our crews and guests



Contact Us

For further information or to book, call Emma on Tel **+44 (0)1631 711 986,** Mobile/WhatsApp **+44 (0)7585 151611** or email info@hebridescruises.co.uk. Dates, prices and live availability for every cruise are on our cruise **calendar at hebridescruises.co.uk**



Hebrides Cruises

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Join the Watch — sign up on our website for wildlife sighting reports, stories from the sea and first access to seasonal offers.















