



# Lords of the Sea Kingdom

## An Adventure Through the Western Isles

August 16 - 26, 2012

Well over a thousand years ago the Vikings sailed across the North Sea, first to raid and then to settle in the Hebrides and Western Scotland. They mingled with the native Gaelic people and brought a special gift – their mastery of the sea and their fast, flexible ships. Before long, a race of strong and independent leaders was born. The highest title, the Overlord, was claimed by the Norse King. Somerled, the earliest ancestor of Clan Donald, rebelled to lead a great revival of Gaeldom. The Norse were driven out of Western Scotland and the Isles, and Somerled crowned himself “King of the Isles.”

Join Discover Europe on this magical and historical journey through the Western Isles of Scotland as we explore both the landscape and culture of this powerful clan. We’ll arrive in Glasgow, pausing just long enough to shake the jet lag and enjoy an introduction to this vibrant modern city. The real adventure begins as we turn northwest to one of the earliest headquarters of the Sea Kingdom, the Isle of Ilay. Today the island is perhaps best known for its malt whisky distilleries, but long ago the leaders of the Clan Donald gathered here to decide matters of law, land, religion, and marriage. We’ll spend two days exploring the island and its special place in the clan history.



Iona Abbey

Returning to the mainland, we’ll travel north to Oban for the easy ferry crossing to Mull. From there, we’ll begin our island adventures with visits to Duart Castle and Torosay Castle. An excursion to the windswept Holy Isle of Iona lets us examine the beginnings of Christianity in Scotland, for it was here that St. Columba brought his faith in 563.

We’ll return to the mainland across the Sound of Mull to Lochaline, then north through the forgotten corner of Sunart and Moidart, still Macdonald territory. Our final leg of the journey is on the spectacular “Road to the Isles,” which passes Loch Morar, the deepest body of water in Britain, and its silver sands. We’ll also visit the Isle of Rhum.

Discover Europe has crafted an itinerary rich in beauty and full of history. Along the way there will be unexpected stops, time for a wee dram in the local pub, and the best of Scotland’s backroads. Join us for an unforgettable journey through Western Scotland.

The cost of this itinerary, per person, double occupancy is:

Land Only (no airfare included): **\$4360**  
Single supplement: **\$680**

Airfares are available from many U.S. departure cities. Please call for details.

The following services are included:

- Hotels:** 9 nights accommodation in first-class hotels. All hotel taxes and service charges included.
- Coaching:** All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary.
- Meals:** 9 full Scottish breakfasts, 8 dinners.
- Guides:** Discover Europe tour director throughout.
- Expenses:** Portage of one large suitcase per person.
- Entrances:** Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary.
- Insurance:** Complete travel insurance including cancellation coverage.
- Additional:** All ferry crossings as detailed in the itinerary.



Kinloch Castle





**Thursday, August 16.** Depart the U.S. this evening aboard your transatlantic flight.

**Friday, August 17.** Upon arrival in Glasgow, you'll be met for transfer to your city center hotel. After time to rest from the flight, the city of Glasgow will be introduced in a panoramic sightseeing tour, ending with a visit to the internationally acclaimed Burrell Collection for those interested. This evening we'll gather for an opening dinner party. Welcome to Bonnie Scotland! **(D)** **Overnight: Glasgow**

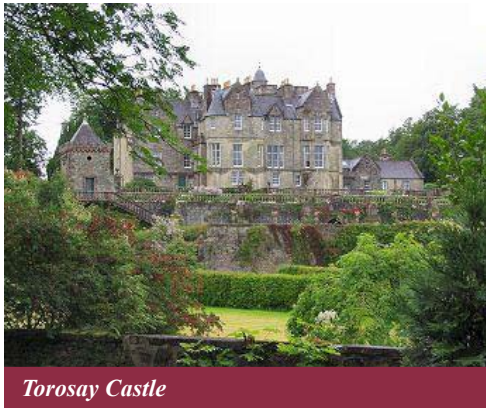
**Saturday, August 18.** We make a prompt start this morning for the west coast via the "Rest and Be Thankful" pass. We'll stop briefly in Inverary before journeying down the long peninsula of Kintyre. We can lunch aboard the ferry, which docks at Port Askaig on the Isle of Islay. We'll visit Finlaggan, headquarters of the Lords of the Isles for 400 years. Dinner at the hotel this evening. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Isle of Islay**

**Sunday, August 19.** A panorama of Islay today. You'll discover the proud history of the island as we travel to various points of interest including the round church at Bowmore and Kildalton Chapel with its fine 8<sup>th</sup>-century Celtic cross. We'll visit the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Centre, the Port Charlotte Museum, and, if open, the Ardbeg Distillery. Dinner together this evening in a local pub. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Isle of Islay**



*Finlaggan & the Paps of Jura*

**Monday, August 20.** Our morning ferry back to the mainland departs from Port Ellen, taking a slightly different return route. We drive north, stopping in the Kilmartin valley to see its remarkable collection of stone circles and cairns, relics from an ancient past. We'll visit Arduaine, enjoying remarkable views across Loch Melfort to the tiny islands of Shuna, Luing, and Scarba, and explore the glorious Arduaine Gardens. Upon arrival in the bustling port of Oban we'll take the ferry to Craignure on the Isle of Mull. Dinner at the hotel. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Mull**



*Torosay Castle*

**Tuesday, August 21.** We'll begin our exploration of Mull with a visit to the fantastical creation of Torosay Castle and its outstanding gardens. We'll continue to Duart Castle, ancient seat of the Clan Maclean. Turning north along the Sound of Mull, we'll follow the coastal road to the charming village of Tobermory and our hotel. You'll have time to browse in the village before dinner at the hotel this evening. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Mull**

**Wednesday, August 22.** A full day's excursion to the holy island of Iona. Before we board the ferry we'll visit the Colomba Centre, which retells the story of St. Columba's life. Once on Iona we'll have a leisurely exploration of the abbey complex, and then return to Mull for a free evening. **(B)** **Overnight: Mull**

**Thursday, August 23.** It's just a short ferry hop across the Sound of Mull to Lochaline where we'll travel north through the vast emptiness of Sunart and Moidart, pausing to look at Castle Tioran and the Monument to the 7 Men of Moidart. Our route brings us to the lovely "Road to the Isles," which passes the still, deep waters of Loch Morar and the famous silver sands, before terminating at the busy port of Mallaig. There will be time to relax before we gather for dinner at the hotel. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Mallaig**

**Friday, August 24.** Today we'll cross from Mallaig to the tiny island of Rhum in the Inner Hebrides, for a panorama of the island includes a visit to the extraordinary Kinloch Castle. We'll take the ferry back across to the mainland for dinner this evening in our hotel. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Mallaig**

**Saturday, August 25.** A return today to the bright lights of Glasgow. We'll skirt Fort William and stop in the breathtakingly beautiful and haunting valley of Glen Coe, literally the "Valley of Weeping." It was here that the MacDonalads were betrayed by Campbell of Glenlyon in 1692. The short film at the Visitor Centre recounts the events leading up to that fateful day. We'll then cross Rannoch Moor and travel along the banks of Loch Lomond to our hotel. Our closing dinner party this evening brings us together for a final opportunity to share stories and laughter. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Glasgow**



*Glen Coe, the Valley of Weeping*

**Sunday, August 26.** Transfers to Glasgow airport this morning for returning flights home. **(B)**

Key to included meals: **B** - breakfast, **D** - dinner