

**Small Ship Adventure Co.**

Specialising in Small Ship Cruising Worldwide



# NORWEGIAN FJORDS & SCOTTISH ISLES

**Aboard the Clipper Odyssey**

**June 23 – July 6, 2012**

## **ITINERARY**

**Saturday, June 23, 2012**

**Depart**

Depart today on your independent overnight flight to Norway.

**Sunday, June 24**

**Oslo, Norway**

Arrive in Oslo and check in at our airport hotel for an afternoon at leisure. Gather this evening for a welcome reception and dinner at our hotel.

**Monday, June 25**

**Oslo / Tromsø / Embark *Clipper Odyssey***

This morning board your flight to Tromsø, known as the “Gateway to the Arctic.” After lunch we depart on a tour of this charming university city that has also been the launching point for many polar expeditions. A cable-car ride up the 1,800-foot Mount Storsteinen affords fabulous views. We visit the unique Arctic Cathedral, built in 1965 and famous for its dazzling wall of blue and gold stained glass—one of the largest stained glass windows in Europe. We also visit the Tromsø Museum where exhibits offer a look at the fascinating Sami culture, a northern people whose livelihood depends on reindeer herding. Embark the *Clipper Odyssey* this evening and set sail.

**Tuesday, June 26****Trollfjord, Lofoten Islands / Stamsund / Reine**

This morning, as we cruise the shores of Nordland and Trollfjord, watch for the orca, minke, pilot, and sperm whales often seen in this area. We go ashore in the small village of Stamsund where we visit the Lofotr Viking Museum, built at the site of an ancient Viking farm. On our way back to the ship we make a photo stop to capture superb panoramic vistas. After lunch on board we go ashore in Reine on Moskenesøy Island, one of the four main Lofoten Islands. Often hailed as the most scenic spot in Norway, the town sits on the shores of a blue-green lagoon surrounded by pinnacled mountain peaks.

**Wednesday, June 27****Kjerringøy / Røst**

Today we visit the 19th-century trading station of Kjerringøy, which lies on a sleepy peninsula bathed by turquoise seas and back-dropped by soaring granite peaks. Most of the historic district has been preserved as an open-air museum. This afternoon we visit Røst, one of the 356 islands and rocky outcrops that make up the southern edge of Lofoten. By Zodiac we explore the shores of this northern oasis that basks in the heart of the Gulf Stream, its mild climate attracts millions of nesting seabirds.

**Thursday, June 28****Vega Island**

Vega is a designated World Heritage Site which reflects the preservation of traditional subsistence living. In the settlement of Nes we meet with the hearty locals and learn about their unique practice of eider down harvesting.

**Friday, June 29****Runde**

This morning attend informative lectures as we cruise along the western coast of Norway. We arrive at the island of Runde which has a mere 160 human inhabitants, but is home to more than half a million seabirds representing more than 230 different species including puffins, kittiwakes, gannets, fulmars, storm-petrels, razorbills, shags, and guillemots. Here we explore by Zodiac and keep watch for seals lolling on some of the smaller offshore islands.

**Saturday, June 30****Geiranger / Geiranger Fjord**

Today we disembark at the tiny village of Geiranger. Here we board coaches and ascend to Flydalsjuvet Gorge overlooking the hamlet. Higher still, near the summit of Mount Dalsnibba, we take in the astonishing panorama of the entire Geiranger Fjord. After returning to Geiranger, a drive along the coast reveals views of generations-old farms stubbornly clinging to the cliff-sides. Be on deck this afternoon as we cruise down this 12-mile-long, serpentine fjord, one of Norway's premier scenic wonders and a World Heritage Site since 2005. Mountains tower above us on both sides and we pass numerous breathtaking waterfalls—a photographer's paradise.

## **Sunday, July 1**

### **Bergen**

After breakfast we set out to explore Norway's second largest city (after Oslo), founded nearly one thousand years ago. We pass by venerable King Haakon's Hall, the Rosenkranz Tower, and the old wharf of Bryggen—a World Heritage Site whose picturesque medieval gable houses date back to the time of the Hanseatic League. Beyond lies the bustling fish market and a park that is home to the concert venue, Grieghall, named for the composer, Edvard Grieg. After a drive past gracious suburban homes and gardens we visit the Troldsal concert hall where we are treated to the music of Grieg by a Norwegian pianist. Return to the *Clipper Odyssey* for lunch as we set sail for Scotland.

## **Monday, July 2**

### **Lerwick, Shetland Islands, Scotland / Mousa**

The Shetland Islands, a group of remote islands with a distinctly Norse feel to them, are replete with ancient archaeological sites. We arrive this morning in Lerwick, capital of the Shetlands where we board coaches for a scenic drive to Jarlshof. This archaeological site contains remains dating from 2,500 B.C. up to the 17th century. Our guides help us interpret the multiple stone structures—late Neolithic houses, Bronze-Age village, Iron-Age wheelhouses, Norse longhouse, medieval farmstead, and 16th-century laird's house.

After lunch aboard the *Clipper Odyssey* we visit Mousa, which boasts one of Britain's finest Iron Age ruins, an unusually well-preserved 40-foot *broch*, a dry stone structure, dating from about 200 A.D. We then walk to a nearby beach where gray and common seals often haul out to relax. Join an optional hike to search for breeding seabirds including guillemots, Arctic terns, and European storm-petrels.

## **Tuesday, July 3**

### **Fair Isle / Kirkwall, Orkney Islands**

One of the most isolated settlements in the British Isles, Fair Isle is renowned for the quality and intricacy of its hand-made sweaters using the wool of local sheep. It is also famous as a haven for seabirds including gannets, murre, black-legged kittiwakes, numerous gull species, and puffins. After a short walk, we join some of the 70 islanders at their community center for tea and cakes, and a visit to the local museum. This evening we arrive at Kirkwall where we overnight pier side.

## **Wednesday, July 4**

### **Kirkwall**

Today we disembark in Kirkwall for a tour that explores the Orkneys' major archaeological sites. Maes Howe, a chambered tomb dating from 3500 B.C., is also noted for its runic hieroglyphs left by visiting 12th-century Vikings. We also explore the enigmatic Standing Stones of Stenness, the Ring of Brodgar, and Skara Brae, a remarkably well-preserved Stone Age village buried in sand some 4,500 years ago. We return to Kirkwall and make a stop at the magnificent St. Magnus Cathedral.

**Thursday, July 5****Isle of May / Bass Rock / Leith**

The Isle of May is one of Scotland's great seabird islands. Conditions permitting, board Zodiacs to visit the small bird observatory on the island. The number of birds is staggering, and they are astonishingly fearless. Here we find puffins by the thousands, kittiwakes blanketing the cliffsides, shags on every available rock, and eider ducks at our feet.

On our way to Leith we circumnavigate Bass Rock, renowned for its 100,000 resident gannets—the largest gannet colony in the world. In the late evening we arrive in Leith, the port for Edinburgh; overnight is pier side on board the *Clipper Odyssey*.

**Friday, July 6****Leith / Disembark / Edinburgh**

After breakfast on board, transfer to Edinburgh airport for your independent flights homeward.