

## ISLAY AND THE WHISKY COAST

Tour Code: 10EE/4R



**Depart: Edinburgh**

**Finish: Edinburgh**

### Full Details & Itinerary

**Day 1** Leaving Edinburgh you will head west through Scotland's largest city, Glasgow along Loch Lomond then west through the mountains to the beautiful little village of Inveraray on the banks of Loch Fyne. Here you can visit the local micro brewery and then sample some of the local seafood. Or perhaps just explore the historic town itself. After lunch you will travel down the Kintyre peninsula to Campbeltown for a visit to Springbank Distillery, one of the last distilleries producing everything by hand. Nearby are the impressive seacliffs of the Mull of Kintyre and the superb beach at Machrihanish. From here it is a short drive to catch the early evening ferry to Islay, before travelling to Bowmore for your 3 night stay

**Day 2** A full day exploring Islay. The itinerary today is quite flexible with a mixture of beautiful scenery, white sand beaches, short walks and of course the famous Islay whiskies - renowned for their strong peaty flavours and nurtured by the salty sea air. In the morning you will take the short drive to the west of the island via Saligo Bay for a visit to Kilchoman Distillery (the newest and smallest on the island) with the option of a coastal walk to Machair Bay for any non-whisky lovers. After lunch here you will travel to the tiny harbour village of Portnahaven (look out for seals) then take the back roads along the west coast with its lovely sandy bays. In the afternoon you will stop at the privately owned Bruichladdich Distillery for a tour and tasting followed by a short visit to the Islay Museum or a drink in a local pub before returning to Bowmore.

**Day 3** Another day in paradise! Today you will explore the southern side of the island, home to the smokiest and peatiest of all whiskies – Laphroaig, Lagavulin and Ardbeg. You will make photo stops at the first two then visit Ardbeg for a tour, tasting and lunch. The restaurant here is a beautiful place to relax and enjoy local produce as well as some unique whisky. While in the area you will visit the ruins of Kildalton church with its famous 8th Century Celtic cross. In the afternoon there will be the option to spend some free time in Bowmore village. Here you can visit the famous Round Church, Bowmore Distillery itself (July – Aug) or just relax with a quiet drink looking out over the water. Alternatively you could continue with the tour to Bridgend where you will visit the community craft producers (and brewery!) at Islay House Square or take a walk through the woods along the nearby River Sorn.

**Day 4** This morning you take the ferry back to the mainland then travel through Argyll and the ancient Kingdom of Dalriada. There are more than 350 prehistoric monuments within a six-mile radius of the village of Kilmartin. You will stop here for lunch and a chance to visit the mysterious stone circles and the local community museum. From Kilmartin it is a short drive to Oban – the main ferry port for the islands. Here you will drop off anyone who is continuing on the Mull, Iona and Isle of Skye extension. The others will have some free time to explore the town, before departing for the return journey to Glasgow and Edinburgh