

## **ISLE OF SKYE DISCOVERY TOUR ITINERARY**

### **Day 1 Travel from Edinburgh to Skye**

Following introductions and meeting the group we will depart and make our way across country for the trip to Skye. We will have the opportunity to stop of at some of Scotland's famous landmarks along the way, including the Falls of Dochart, the beautiful and haunting scenery of Glencoe and the iconic Glenfinnan Monument and Harry Potter viaduct deep in the heart of the Western Highlands.

Upon reaching Mallaig and small fishing port on the north western coast we make the short hop across the Sound of Sleat to Armadale and after a short 10 minute drive we reach our superb lodgings and warm welcome from the staff at the Hotel Eilean Iarmain (Isle Ornsay Hotel) , reknown for not only it's magnificent views out to sea, but also for it's fresh local produce including seafood, game and Angus beef.

We will arrive in good time to settle into our very comfortable rooms before enjoying our first scrumptious meal on Skye at the hotel.

### **Overnight, Hotel Eilean Iarmain**

### **Day 2 The Cleared Coast, Boreraig and Suisnish 8 miles, ascent 290m 4 to 5 hours easy to moderate**

Following a hearty breakfast we take a short drive to the ruined church of Strath Suardal to begin our hike. Today our circular walk takes us through the cleared villages of both Boreraig and Suisnish, cleared of people in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century by landowners to make way for more profitable sheep farming.

The story of the Clearances, whilst perhaps economically inevitable, there are many who hold scant regard for the manner in which it was done. There are few places on Skye which bear such evident testimony to the ruthlessness that underpinned the Highland Clearances as these two ruined communities. The outstanding coastal scenery, overlooking Loch Eishort and Loch Slapin makes the moving and poignant walk all the more enjoyable and it is hard not be able to envisage these villages as they once were, with thriving communities making a living off the land, growing barley and potatoes and fishing the local waters.

Our walk hugs the coastline and passes some fine waterfalls and emerges near the hamlet of Kilbride where our transport awaits us.

### **Overnight, Hotel Eilean Iarmain**

### **Day 3 Loch Coruisk easy to moderate 8 miles, 5 hours, 390m ascent**

Our third day on Skye takes us to one of the most isolated and breathtaking places on the island. Loch Coruisk has fascinated visitors for centuries and enjoys a magical and mysterious reputation. Here the powers of creation have fashioned a scene of wild and rugged grandeur and its beauty lies in the total absence of restraint.

We will take the Bella Jane charter boat out to the Loch, stopping en route to view the seal colony and other sealife, before reaching Loch Coruisk.

The scene is one of small islands and sandy bays ringed all around by the heather clad mountains of the Cuillin mountains which spill their streams into suspended corries, over crags and down into the Loch.

We will make an unforgettable exploration around Loch Coruisk, truly one of the most outstanding locations on Skye that anyone could wish to visit.

Following a lunch stop in this haven we will walk out over the hills through Glen Sligachan, perhaps the most stunning of all Skye's glens to our new lodgings for the next 2 nights, the Sligachan Hotel.

#### **Overnight, Sligachan Hotel**

### **Day 4 Lorgill, The Hoe and Ramasaig Bay 6 miles, 390m ascent 3.5 hours ( optional extension )**

We head to the Duirinish peninsula today for some breathtaking coastal walking. The circuit of the high cliffs of the Duirinish provide magnificent walking on turf ground in an atmosphere of peace and calm with awe inspiring views across to the Outer Hebrides drifting on the horizon.

We begin at the sheep station at Ramasaig and head across country to the deserted crofting community of Lorgill, cleared in 1830 of the fifteen families who lived here and were forcibly removed to begin new lives in Nova Scotia.

From here we climb up to the cliffs and Macleod's Maidens come into view, Skye's famous sea stacks. The walking along the cliff tops is pure delight and we follow the trail at a relaxed pace with fine views out to sea.

The sea cliffs of The Hoe are home to an amazing variety of seabirds including fulmars who nest on the cliff edge and as we approach Ramasaig Bay we can look across Moonen Bay to the lighthouse at Neist Point, the most westerly point on Skye.

We have an optional extension here of a walk up to Waterstein Head, one of the most spectacular cliffs on the island, a magnificent eyrie from which to gaze out over the Minch to the islands of the Outer Hebrides floating on the horizon.

#### **Overnight, Sligachan Hotel**

### **Day 5 The Quiraing and Meall na Suiramach 4 miles ascent 400m 4 hours**

Formed in post glacial times when underlying sedimentary rocks could no longer hold the weight of the overlying lavas and as a result moved eastward in a series of massive and spectacular landslips, the utterly amazing formations of the Quiraing were born.

On a mixture of heather clad slopes and good trails we will take as long as we need to explore this labyrinth of formations including the Needles, the Prison and the Table.

The route into the heart of the Quiraing is along a gentle incline and then down into a narrow and quite exhilarating, almost alpine crossing below the cliffs of Maoladh Mor, before venturing on to be faced with the massive and imposing cliffs of Meall na Suiramach.

Here we have the chance to drink in these magnificent views before continuing on to Loch Hasco and a leisurely hike down from the Quiraing where our transport awaits and transfers us to Portree and the Cuillin Hills Hotel, where a warm Highland welcome awaits us.

### **Overnight Cuillin Hills Hotel**

### **Day 6 The Old Man of Storr, The Storr Sanctuary 4 miles, 400m ascent 3 to 4 hours**

There can be few red blooded hikers who are not drawn to the bizarre assortment of pinnacles and ridges which make up the Storr Sanctuary. The Old Man itself stands proudly, undercut at its base and seeming to defy gravity and the might of the Skye weather.

Our journey today takes us into the heart of the Sanctuary to explore the highest part of the Trotternish Ridge with its glorious views eastward to the Raasay and beyond to the Torridon mountains.

A truly spectacular days hiking before we head to the very northern end of Skye and an optional walk to Duntulm Castle, headquarters of the Macdonald's of Skye from the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

On our return to Portree and the Cuillin Hills we have time to relax, perhaps pick up some gifts and enjoy the warm open fires and Highland hospitality before settling down for our celebratory farewell dinner.

### **Overnight, Cuillin Hills Hotel**

### **Day 7 Transfer back to Edinburgh**

We take an alternative route back to our starting point following the Road to the Isles, over the Skye Bridge and by Eilean Donan Castle and through the spectacular Glen Shiel with its Five Sisters of Kintail standing proudly high above our route.

We follow the Great Glen south and head across the central highlands and back to Edinburgh by late afternoon. With time to say farewell to new friends found and treasured memories of your week on Skye.