

FORT LEWIS COLLEGE ADVENTURE CLUB

From the Highlands to the Islands: (A Scotch Whisky Tasting Tour)

September 18 – 27, 2019

Misty mountains overlooking moody lochs where mythical monsters swim. Weathered stone cottages and medieval castles propped on emerald acres. Bearded redheads playing bagpipes in driving rain. It's time to pack your kilts and join the Fort Lewis College Adventure Club to explore Scotland's rousing distilleries and the storybook landscape that gives Scotch Whisky its distinctive flavour.

Just a hop, skip, and jump across the Pond, this exclusive, 10-day, off-the-beaten-path expedition takes adventurers through one of the world's wildest, hardest terrains. Join fellow Fort Lewis College Alumni, Friends, and Donors as you create your own rugged Scottish Highlands story. Follow Professor Emeritus Jim Cross and alumnus Dave Kerns (Sociology, '03) on a journey of the senses, piecing together a greater understanding of and appreciation for the complexities of Single Malt Scotch.

Besides tasting whisky and making your mind up about haggis, you'll also experience the fascinating culture of the U.K.'s northernmost country. Rub elbows with proud Scots. Read Robert Burns beside a roaring fireplace. Walk where legendary warriors fell in battle. Savour tea and shortbread with old friends, while you make new ones over the clinking sound of Scotch-filled glasses. Sip a wee dram – or a couple dozen – as you discover the power of place behind Scotland's longstanding national beverage.

When you've drained that last tumbler, toasting to a rowdy history and promising future, you'll leave wiser, tougher, and full of romantic, gritty tales about that time you grated your soul against the raw elements of windswept moors, soggy pastures, and honest-to-goodness locals who share the truth behind these hallowed grounds. What are you waiting for?

What's included: Nine nights lodging in contemporary and historic hotels, immersive tours, services of a Tour Director, portage at most hotels, ground transportation (motor coaches, train, ferries), distillery entry fees, breakfast and dinner each day, one afternoon tea, welcome drink on arrival night

Lodging: From a 4-star townhouse-style hotel in Edinburgh to 3-star Victorian inns scattered across the Scottish Highlands, you'll find rest each evening in the comfort of cozy rooms, replete with amenities ranging from libraries and lounges to log fires and windows filled with views of lochs, mountains, wildlife, and sea.

From the Highlands to the Islands Itinerary

ITINERARY UPDATED September 2018

(Subject to change, including final confirmation of some distillery visits)

OVERVIEW: This counter-clockwise loop tour of Scotland starts and ends in Edinburgh. Your knowledgeable Tour Director and trusty driver will handle the details of getting the Fort Lewis College Adventure Club from the Lowlands to the Highlands, into Speyside, out west to the Hebrides, down to the Isle of Skye and the Isle of Islay, and, finally, back to Edinburgh.

Throughout this 10-day expedition, you'll explore cities, hike the countryside, unwind in contemporary hotels, dine like kings, learn about the culture, politics, and history of Scotland, and unwrap the complexities of Single Malt Scotch at a hand-selected batch of distilleries chosen by Jim Cross.

DAY 1: Wednesday, September 18

"*Fàilte!*" as the ole Gaelic phrase goes. Welcome to Scotland! On arrival at Edinburgh Airport, take advantage of a group transfer to the **Best Western Plus Bruntsfield** hotel, where you'll meet your Tour Director. Settle in during an afternoon orientation before savouring an early dinner at the hotel and a spirited whisky toast to mark the beginning of this once-in-a-lifetime adventure.

Overnight: Best Western Plus Bruntsfield, Edinburgh

Meals: Dinner, Whisky Toast

Day 2: Thursday, September 19

Rise and shine to coffee and a fine breakfast before heading out on a morning guided **walking tour of Edinburgh**. Most of the city's sights can be found within the medieval Old Town and the elegant Georgian buildings of the New Town, all overlooked by the iconic castle perched high above the city. Visit the **Palace of Holyroodhouse**, the Queen's official residence in Scotland, featuring the State Apartments and Queen's Gallery, which hosts a program of changing exhibitions from the Royal Collection.

Later, enjoy some free time exploring the city's sights, sounds, and many flavours. Walk up **Arthur's Seat**, the main peak in the hills forming Holyrood Park, described by Robert Louis Stevenson as "*a hill for magnitude, a mountain in virtue of its bold design.*" Wrap up your Edinburgh discovery with an **Edinburgh Castle tour**. One of the most important strongholds in the kingdom of Scotland, this remarkable castle has witnessed many of Scotland's defining moments in history.

Wrap up the evening over dinner together at one of Edinburgh's tasty eateries, naturally followed by a nightcap at a **whisky bar**.

Overnight: Best Western Plus Bruntsfield, Edinburgh

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 3: Friday, September 20

After a relaxing breakfast, pack up for a scenic drive to the seaside town of **St. Andrews** northeast of Edinburgh. Beyond its esteemed higher learning institute and historic golf links, St. Andrews is best enjoyed with a visit to the **St. Andrews Museum**, situated in a beautiful Victorian mansion within the grounds of Kinburn Park.

We'll continue our journey to Dundee, a coastal city on the Firth of Tay estuary in eastern Scotland. Home to fascinating museums and galleries, you'll also learn about its regenerated waterfront and Scotland's nautical connections. Take a spot of tea before moving along to **Pitlochry**, nestled along the banks of the River Tummel. Spend the rest of the afternoon ambling around this charming town before indulging dinner together at our hotel.

Overnight: Fishers Hotel, Pitlochry

Meals: Breakfast, Tea, Dinner

Day 4: Saturday, September 21

A new day kicks off with iconic panoramas over Loch Tummel at **Queen's View in Pitlochry**, before we travel on to **Dalwhinnie Distillery**. Unravel the mysteries of single malt whisky on a guided tour of the distillery and warehouse, where you'll hear an explanation of the distillation process and the "why" behind Dalwhinnie's distinctive flavours. The tour includes a tasting of two **Dalwhinnie whiskies**, a sample of the matching **artisanal chocolate**, and a souvenir **Dalwhinnie "dramming" glass**.

In the afternoon, sweeping vistas fill the windows on a drive through the Cairngorms. We'll stop for lunch before visiting the historic **Dallas Dhu Distillery** to discover their traditional distilling styles. Translated to "Black Water Valley" in Gaelic, Dallas Dhu whisky also appeared as a "Dallas Mhor" single malt. This picturesque distillery operated between 1899 and 1983, exclusively producing single malt Scotch whisky. Follow along on an audio-guided tour as we visit the malt barn, kiln and mash tun vat. A wee dram caps off the tour before we make moves to our hotel and dinner in Grantown.

Overnight: Craiglynne Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 5: Sunday, September Sept. 22

All aboard! Today, we'll travel across the Highlands to the coast on the famous **Inverness to Kyle of Lochalsh** train. Mountains and forests cast shadows, while bright lochs and wide-open moors animate this idyllic landscape. The ride crescendos with magnificent views of the Isle of Skye, where our hotel awaits via a short shuttle.

Spend the afternoon exploring the **Portree Harbour** area and walking to the Lump, a hilltop area along the water featuring trails, harbour views, and a 19th-century watchtower. Back at the hotel, relish local delicacies, such as Hand Dived Scallops or Rump of Perthshire Lamb, before drifting off to dreams about another day discovering this mystical island.

Overnight: Cullins Hotel, Isle of Skye

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 6: Monday, September Sept. 23

Breakfast with a view gets the day started on the right foot before we cross the island the **Talisker Distillery** for our debut Island single malt Scotch whisky distillery experience. Learn what it takes to craft this premium whisky before heading north to visit **Dunvegan Castle**. Let your imagination run wild as you wander around this true Scottish fairytale castle and seat of the clan MacLoed. First built in the 13th century, Dunvegan was remodelled in a mock-medieval style in the 19th century.

This afternoon, we'll walk to the brilliant blue and green waterfalls found at the aptly-named **Fairy Pools**, a refreshing reward after hiking across the Skye countryside. Tonight, another fabulous meal satiates with classic traditional fare and perhaps a Skye Blaven Sticky Pudding to serve as the cherry on top of another excellent day.

Overnight: Cullins Hotel, Isle of Skye

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 7: Tuesday, September 24

Say farewell to Skye this morning as we travel down through **Fort William** to historic **Oban**, world-renowned for its perfect horseshoe bay and stellar vistas of the Isle of Mull. After a bit of free time here, continue on to Kennacraig to catch our early evening ferry to the **Isle of Islay**. Also known as the 'The Queen of the Hebrides' in honour of its position as the largest and southernmost Inner Hebrides island, the Isle of Islay is a sight for sore eyes. A late supper greets us at our hotel before resting up for another grand day.

Overnight: Harbour Inn, Isle of Islay

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 8: Wednesday, September 25

A refreshing breakfast sets the tone for a big day exploring Islay's landmark highlights, including the **American Monument and Kildalton Cross**. A tour of the island's distilleries takes us to the **Ardbeg Distillery**, which has been called 'as close to perfection as makes no difference.' The experience sings with a classic tasting of a selection of drams in the Chairman's Study.

A late-afternoon ferry returns us to the mainland, where we venture on to our hotel near **Loch Lomond** for a divine dinner spent recapping island memories and debating Nellie's existence.

Overnight: Winnock Hotel, Drymen

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 9: Thursday, September 26

Morning sun (or mystical Scottish weather) sets the mood for a walking tour at **Loch Lomond**, one of the great natural wonders of Britain often considered the boundary between the Lowlands and the Highlands. The largest inland stretch of water in Great Britain, the Loch is surrounded by hills, including Ben Lomond on the eastern shore, and contains many islands and the legend of one of the world's most famous monsters, Nellie.

The time to return to **Edinburgh** has come, but our adventure isn't over yet. Along the way, we'll visit the **Royal Yacht Britannia**, the former royal yacht of Queen Elizabeth II. Spend the afternoon exploring Edinburgh on your own, soaking in the final moments of our whirlwind adventure. Tonight, we dine like kings at a local's favourite restaurant and go out with a bang on a **magical mystery tour to be unveiled in due time!**

Overnight: Best Western Bruntsfield Hotel, Edinburgh

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 10: Friday, September 27

All good things must come to end. Say your farewells over breakfast before a group transfer to Edinburgh Airport. We recommend booking afternoon flights out of Scotland, but we're also happy to provide options for extending your tour to include time in Glasgow or travel down to the borders. Either way, we wish you safe travels and hope to welcome you back to this marvellous country someday very soon!

Tour Cost: \$4,695 per person, double occupancy

Single supplement: \$550

Deposit: \$1,000 per person due upon booking (final payment due 90 days prior to tour departure date)

What's Included

Airport transfers from/to Edinburgh Airport*

3 nights at the Best Western Plus Bruntsfield, Edinburgh

1 night at Fishers Hotel, Pitlochry

1 night at Craiglynne Hotel, Grantown-on-Spey

2 nights at Cullins Hotel, Isle of Skye

1 night at Harbour Inn, Isle of Islay

1 night at Winnock Hotel, Drymen

Welcome drink on arrival night

Full breakfast each day

9 dinners, 1 afternoon tea

Services of a tour director throughout your stay

Travel to and from all excursions

All entrance costs

Porterage at all hotels except in Edinburgh

**We will provide airport transports from/to Edinburgh Airport or local train station pickups and drop-offs for group participants. A supplement may apply for private transfers, or transfers from all other airports or arrival points. Upon request, accommodation for travellers choosing to arrive a few days early or stay a few days after the tour can easily be made.*

Air Travel

Participants are responsible for their own arrangements to/from Edinburgh.

Questions about distillery tours or if kilts are appropriate to wear the entire time? Contact Dave Kerns at 970.759.9632 or kerns_d@fortlewis.edu.

Albion Journeys:

Our in-country tour operator is **Albion Journeys**, and they are handling enquiries and reservations. If you are interested in traveling on this trip, please contact Albion Journeys and talk with Melodie (Mel) Robson or Maddy Stuart toll-free at 1.866.834.8358 or email info@albionjourneys.com. Mention the Fort Lewis College Scotch Tasting Tour. Albion Journeys HQ is in Cheltenham, UK, so try to call early in the morning (the UK is seven hours ahead of Durango).

Ready to sign-up? Complete the Booking Form and submit it to Dave Kerns or directly to Albion Journeys via email. If you wish, the Fort Lewis College office will forward the completed form to Albion Journeys via email on your behalf. You will need to contact Albion Journeys by phone within 5 business days to provide your credit card information for the deposit.

NOTE: Travel Insurance is required, and Albion recommends that travelers purchase this at the time of deposit payment. Albion does not book travel insurance but will be glad to recommend insurance carriers. Refer to your Insurers Disclosure Statement to ensure the travel insurance policy meets your needs.

Cancellation Charges apply as follows (Albion's Terms & Conditions are fully outlined on their website: albionjourneys.com):

\$500 per person up to 182 days prior to departure

\$750 per person – 181-91 days prior to departure

90 days or less before departure, 100% of the program cost is non-refundable