

From top to bottom, right: St Kilda houses a quarter of the world's gannet population; The harbour town of Tobermory is the largest settlement on the Isle of Mull; A stormy sky over the iconic Eilean Donan Castle on the road to the Isle of Skye.

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One day we bashed ashore on to a rough pebbly beach in the ultra remote Shiant Isles. We returned from a ramble around the rocky coastline to find a drinks tent had been set up in the wilds complete with warming drinks. In the Outer Hebrides they surprised us again on a sweeping Atlantic beach at the end of a walk with a champagne picnic with Scottish stew, followed by strawberries and cream.

Cruising the Scottish isles does not end there. Next year I'm embarking on the National Trust for Scotland's 'Isles of my Heart' cruise, with Captain Alistair McLundie sailing guests around his Hebridean 'backyard' on this cultural cruise aboard the *Pearl II*. Also in the diary is a cruise on the *Lord of the Glens*. This unique vessel is able to tackle Scotland's historic canal network, but can also head out into the Hebrides, the mystical isles that are so beloved of the British Royal Family, that so inspired Mendelssohn and that you can enjoy on your very own Hebridean odyssey whichever ship you choose. 📍

