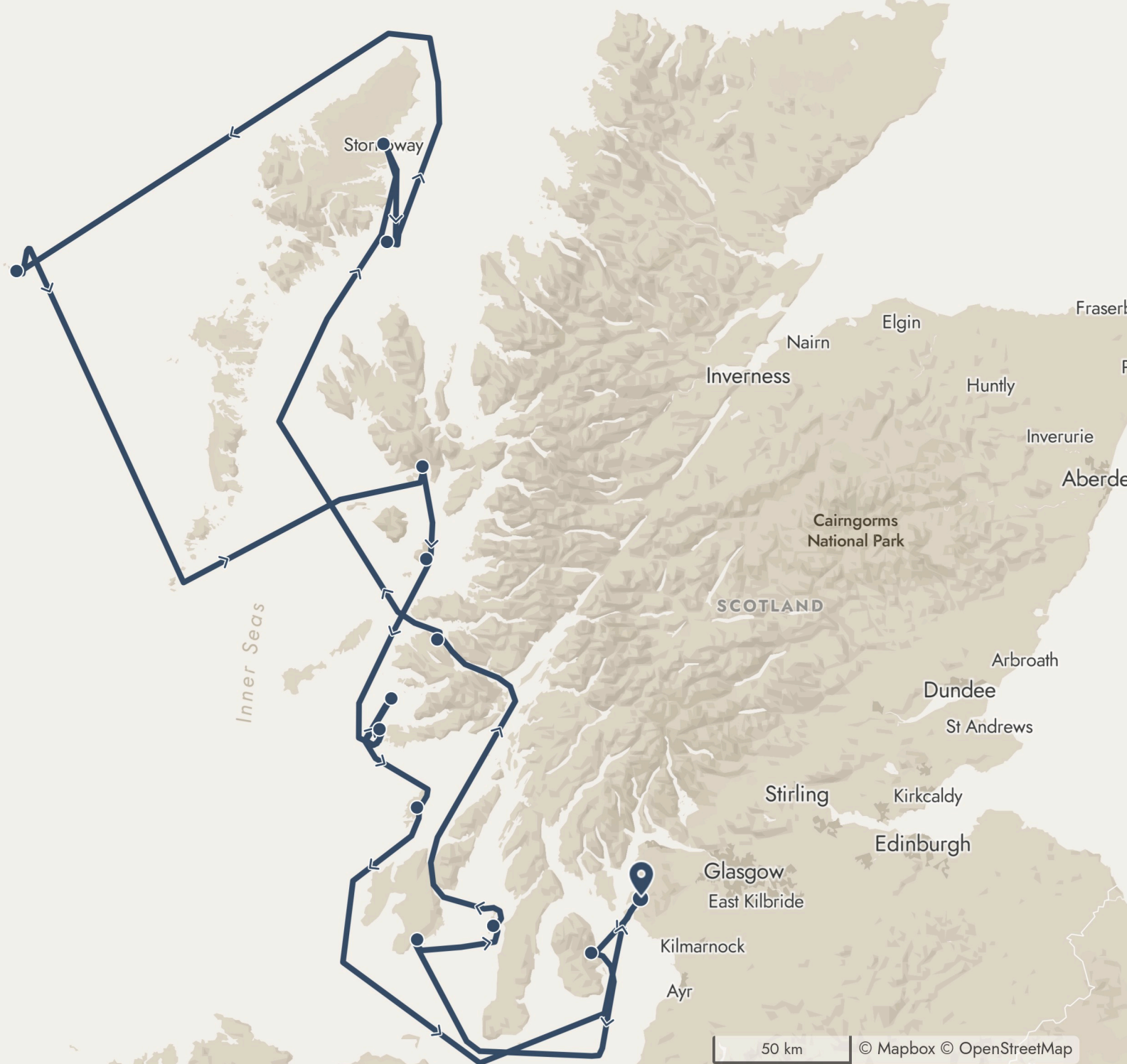




The Scottish Isles – Island Hopping in the Hebrides

MS Spitsbergen, 27.4 – 7.5.2026



Legend ▼

— HX Expedition

Day 1 - Embarkation in Fairlie

Our journey began in Fairlie, where calm seas and clement weather offered a quiet welcome to the expedition ahead.

As guests came on board MS Spitsbergen, the ship quickly began to feel like home — cabins settled into, decks explored, and the Scottish coastline taking shape beyond the portholes. The mandatory safety drill marked the formal beginning of shipboard life, followed by an introduction from the Expedition Leader and Hotel Manager, who

outlined the voyage and the days stretching ahead.

The moment of departure, however, carried something distinctly memorable. From the quay, the sound of bagpipers rose to meet the ship — an unmistakably Scottish send-off, and one that grounded the start of our British Isles voyage in something felt rather than simply witnessed.

With the coastline receding behind us, the expedition was underway.





Largs

Fairlie

Fairlie

Millport

Kilwinning

Irvine

Arran

Isle of Arran

Lamlash

Firth of Clyde

Legend

HX Expedition

5 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Day 2 - Arran

The Isle of Arran revealed itself on a day of rare clarity — light that sharpened every ridge and shoreline, giving the island's landscapes full presence.

Ashore, guests spread across a range of excursions, each uncovering a different character of the island. At Brodick Castle, history settled into the rooms and surrounding gardens with quiet persistence — centuries of Scottish life held in stone and cultivated ground. Along the coast, the Expedition Team led guests through the shoreline's own story, drawing connections between the landscape and the traditions built alongside it.

Those drawn to wilder ground headed into Glen Rosa, where the

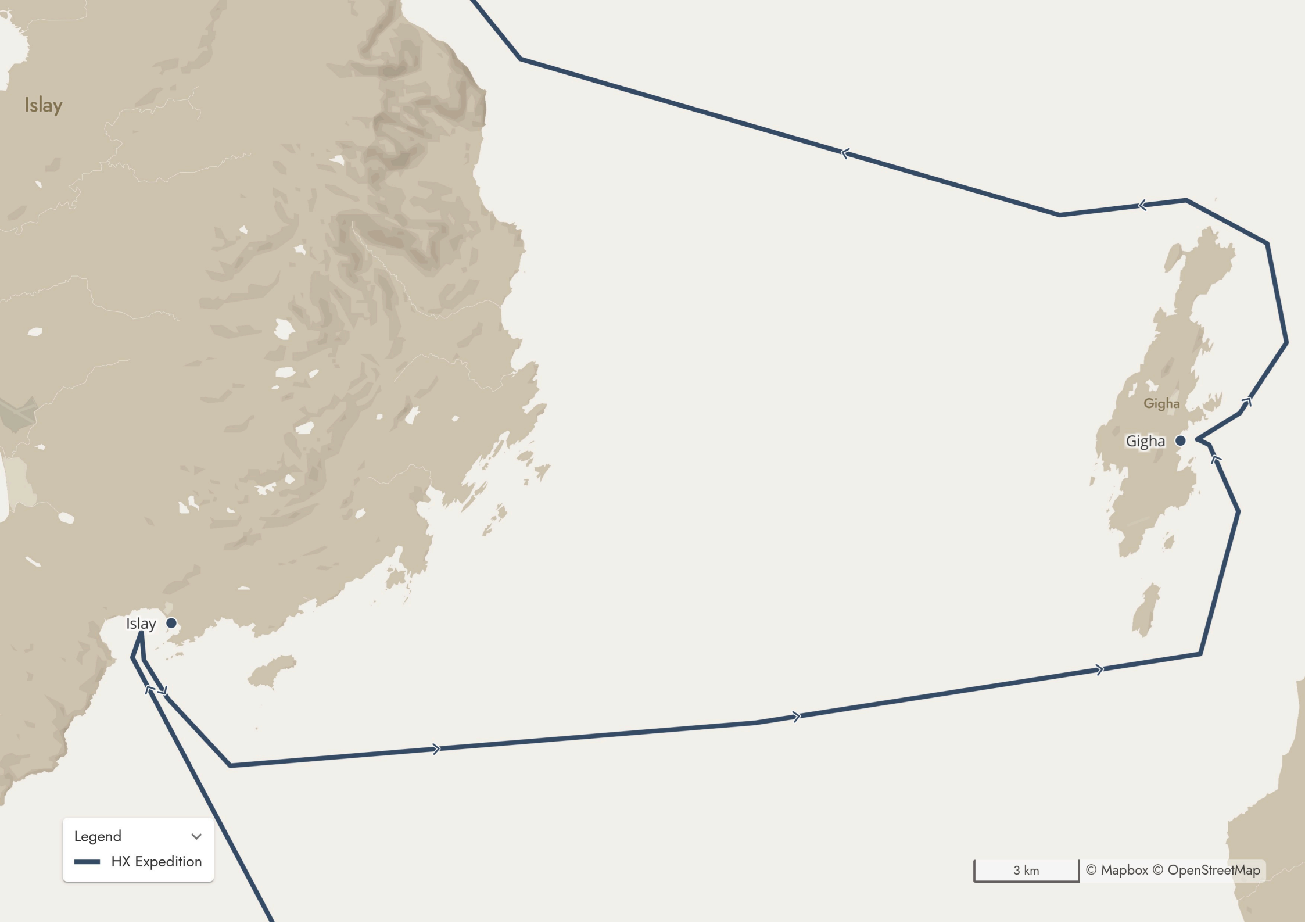
valley opens into a landscape of rock, heather, and long, open views.

The Forest Safari offered something quite different — a quieter immersion into the island's sheltered interior, where the pace slowed and subtler details came into focus.

The conditions held throughout, clear and calm, and gave each activity room to be fully felt.

In the evening, guests gathered on board for the Captain's Welcome — introductions made, officers met, and the voyage marked with a proper beginning. After a full day on Arran, it was a warm and grounding close to the first day of exploration.





Islay

Gigha

Gigha

Islay

Legend

 HX Expedition

3 km | © Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Day 3 - Islay

Our next day brought us to the island of Islay, where we were once again welcomed by excellent weather, allowing us to fully enjoy the landscapes and experiences this unique island has to offer.

Once ashore, we spread out across a range of excursions. Some of us explored the character of the island with a walk through Port Ellen, discovering local life and its strong connection to the sea. Others joined a coastal cruise, experiencing the shoreline from the water and observing the wildlife that inhabits these rich environments.

For those looking for a more active outing, the hike to Carraig Fhada Lighthouse offered a scenic route along the coast, with rewarding

views over the surrounding waters. Some of us also took part in a beach clean-up, contributing to the preservation of this beautiful coastline.

A highlight for many was the whisky tasting experience, which included a visit to the renowned Laphroaig Distillery. Here, we gained insight into the craft behind Islay's famous peated whiskies and experienced first-hand the distinctive flavours that define the island. With calm conditions, varied activities, and a strong sense of place, Islay offered a rich and rewarding day — blending culture, nature, and tradition in one of Scotland's most iconic destinations.

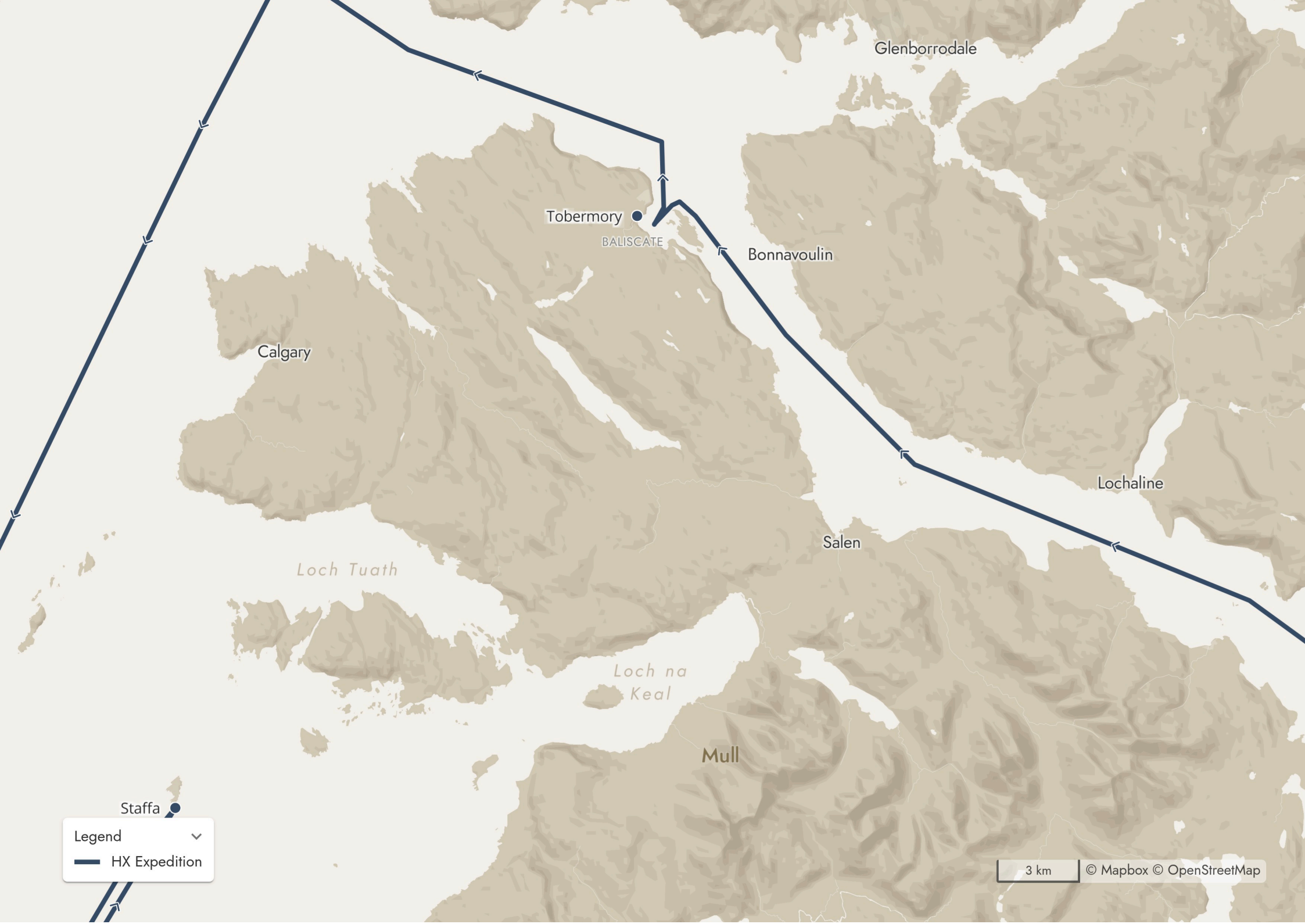


Day 4 - Gigha

The following day brought us to the Isle of Gigha, where fine conditions allowed us to fully enjoy this small and welcoming island. Before going ashore, we were introduced to the island's story and community, setting the tone for a day that combined nature and local life. Once landed, we spread out across a variety of activities. Many of us made our way to the beautiful Achamore Gardens, where winding paths led through a rich collection of plants thriving in this sheltered environment.

Others joined a hike from Ardminish toward the southern part of the island, enjoying open views and the peaceful rhythm of island life. Some of us also took the opportunity to visit Achamore House, adding a historical perspective to the experience. With calm weather, varied activities, and a relaxed pace throughout, Gigha offered a balanced and rewarding experience — capturing the quiet charm of the Inner Hebrides.





Glenborrodale

Tobermory

BALISCATE

Bonnavoulin

Calgary

Lochaline

Salen

Loch Tuath

Loch na Keal

Mull

Staffa

Legend

— HX Expedition

3 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Day 5 - Tobermory

Tobermory, on the Isle of Mull, was our destination for the day — overcast skies casting a soft light over the landscape, while conditions remained very pleasant for a full day of exploration.

Once ashore, we spread out across a variety of excursions. Most of us joined a walking tour through the town, discovering its history and enjoying the character of its colourful waterfront. Others ventured further afield to visit Duart Castle, gaining insight into the island's heritage and its strong connection to the sea.

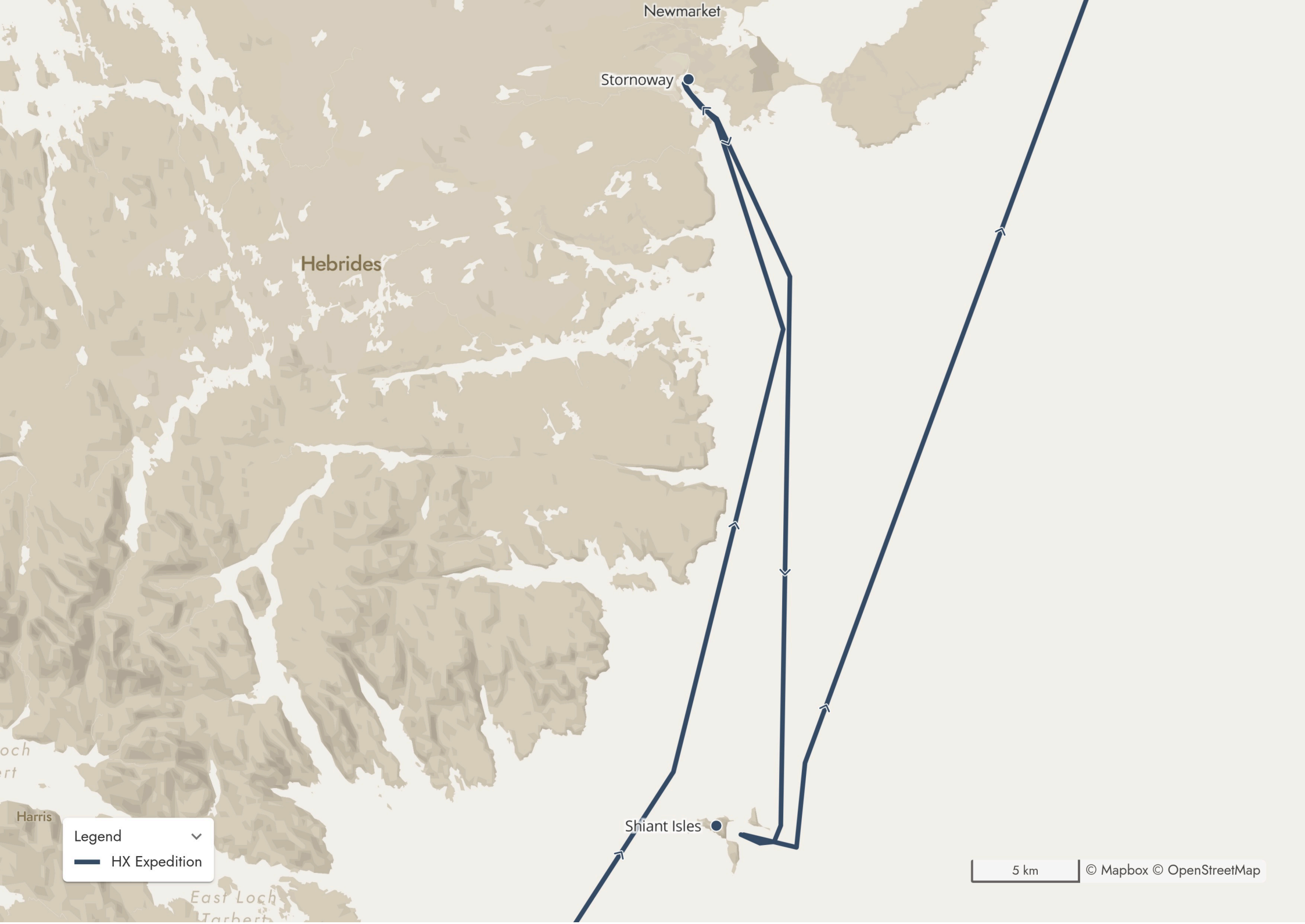
For those looking for a more active experience, a hike toward the Tobermory Lighthouse offered a rewarding route along the coastline, with wide views across the surrounding waters. Many also took the opportunity to explore the town independently, enjoying its relaxed

atmosphere, small shops, and welcoming harbour.

Adding another dimension to the day, we also carried out a Science Boat session, heading out on the water to observe the marine environment around Tobermory. This hands-on activity offered a closer look at the coastal ecosystem and complemented the time spent ashore.

Before departing, we were treated to a special cultural moment on board with a performance by the Isle of Mull Gaelic Choir, whose music filled the ship and offered a powerful connection to the traditions of the region — bringing a memorable close to our time in Tobermory.





Newmarket

Stornoway

Hebrides

loch
ert

Harris

Shiant Isles

East Loch
Tarbert

Legend

— HX Expedition

5 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Day 6 - Stornoway (AM)

Stornoway, on the Isle of Lewis, welcomed us under slightly overcast skies and comfortable temperatures, creating pleasant conditions for a full day ashore.

Once landed, we spread out across a variety of excursions, each offering a different way to experience the island. Many of us visited Lews Castle with a local guide, exploring its interiors and enjoying views over the harbour. Others took to the surrounding grounds on foot, following paths through woodland and along the coastline. Some of us ventured further afield to the Blackhouse Village, gaining

insight into traditional island life and how communities adapted to the environment over generations.

With time also to explore independently, we were able to enjoy the town's harbour, local shops, and relaxed pace. The gentle light of the day added a soft tone to the landscape, making for a calm and enjoyable visit to the Outer Hebrides.

A well-balanced day of culture, history, and exploration, set within one of Scotland's most distinctive island communities.



Day 6 - Shiant Isles (PM)

After departing Stornoway, we continued south toward the remote and rugged Shiant Isles for an afternoon of scenic sailing and wildlife observation.

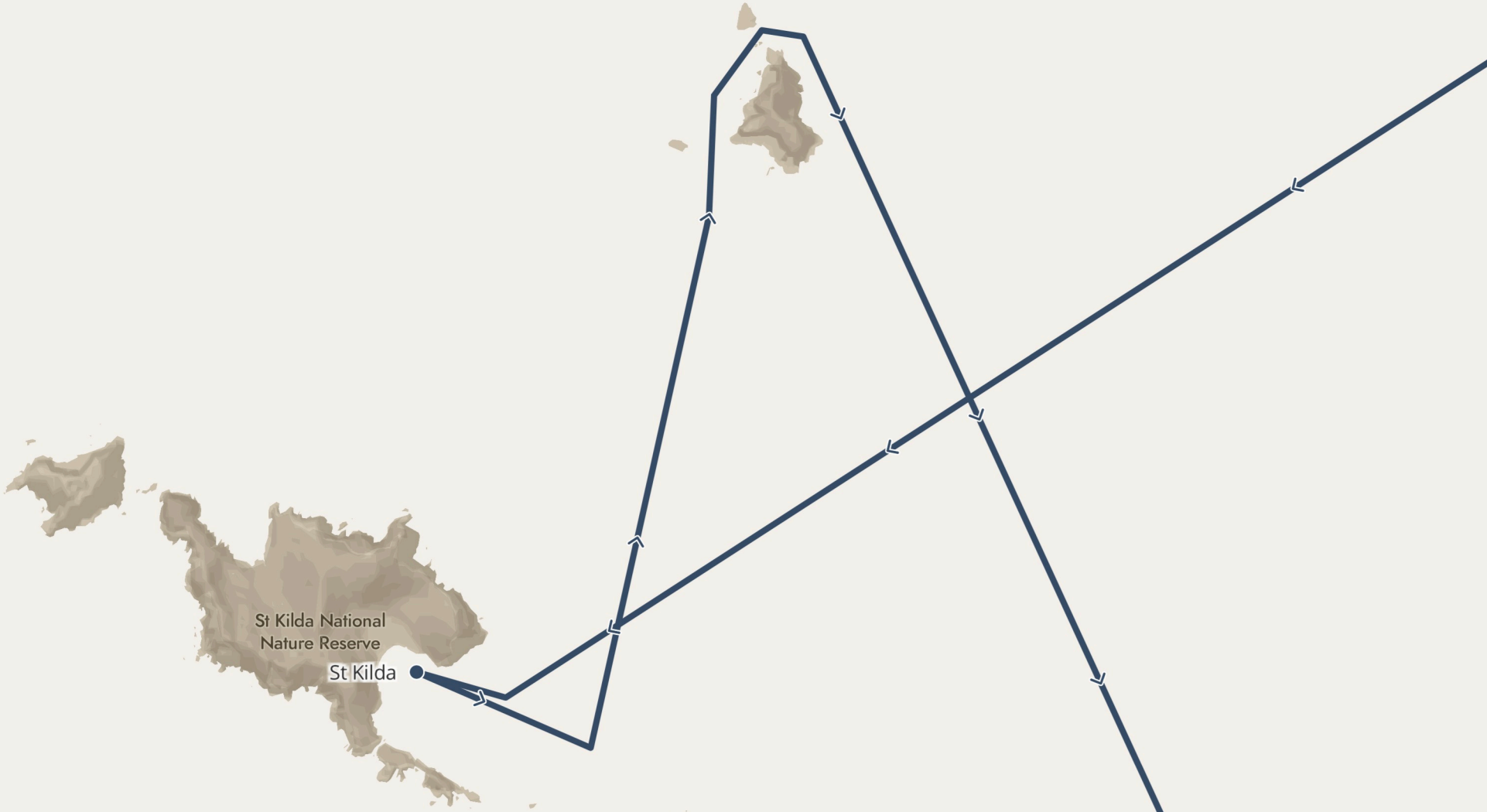
As we approached the islands, the sea state became more lively, with rougher waters adding energy and movement to the experience.

Once in the area, we observed puffins darting low above the water, while gannets circled overhead and plunged dramatically into the sea in search of fish. Along the rocky shoreline, seals rested between the

swells, seemingly undisturbed by the movement around them. Higher up on the slopes, we could spot sheep grazing on the grassy hillsides, adding a peaceful contrast to the dynamic sea below. We also encountered numerous guillemots, gathering along the cliffs and waters surrounding the islands.

The combination of rugged scenery, active wildlife, and the motion of the sea created a true Hebridean atmosphere — wild, remote, and full of life.





St Kilda National
Nature Reserve

St Kilda

Legend

— HX Expedition

Day 7 - St Kilda and the Stacs

St Kilda greeted us under excellent conditions, and as the islands and towering stacs emerged on the horizon, the atmosphere on board quickly filled with anticipation for what would become one of the most memorable days of the voyage.

After anchoring off Hirta, we prepared to go ashore and explore this remote and extraordinary place. Throughout the day, we experienced St Kilda in different ways. Some of us set out on challenging hikes across the rugged landscape, while others joined nature walks to better understand the wildlife and environment of the islands. Many also chose to simply roam freely, taking in the dramatic scenery, the historic village remains, and the overwhelming sense of remoteness that defines St Kilda.

With calm seas and clear visibility throughout the day, the islands

revealed themselves in exceptional detail. The combination of towering cliffs, green slopes, and endless Atlantic horizons created a truly remarkable setting.

In the afternoon, after returning to the ship, we continued our exploration with a scenic sailing past the nearby stacs of St Kilda. Conditions remained excellent, allowing us to fully appreciate these spectacular sea stacks and the abundant birdlife that inhabits them. Seabirds filled the skies and cliffs, bringing constant movement and sound to the landscape.

A day of remarkable scenery, wildlife, and exploration — St Kilda delivered an unforgettable experience at the very edge of the British Isles.





Loch Scavaig

Loch Scavaig

Elgol

Loch Eishort

Sound of Sleat

Mallaig

Morar


Arisaig

Rùm National Nature Reserve

The Small Isles National Scenic Area

Isle of Eigg

Legend

 HX Expedition

5 km © Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Day 8 - Loch Scavaig (AM)

Loch Scavaig welcomed us in the morning, its steep mountains and dramatic coastlines enclosing us as we approached one of the most impressive natural settings of the voyage.

With at times windy conditions but good visibility, we were able to fully enjoy our time exploring the area around Loch Coruisk. Once ashore, we experienced the landscape in different ways. Some of us embarked on a hike along the loch, crossing rugged terrain beneath the towering Cuillin mountains, while others preferred a gentler walk along the shoreline, taking in the reflections, waterfalls, and the stillness of this remote environment.

A small boat cruise offered another perspective of the area, bringing us close to the rocky coastline and allowing us to spot seals resting on nearby islets. We also carried out a Science Boat session, adding a hands-on element to the morning and giving us the opportunity to better understand the marine environment and coastal ecosystem surrounding the loch.

The combination of towering mountains, calm waters, and varied exploration options made Loch Scavaig another memorable highlight of our journey through the Scottish Isles.



Day 8 - Isle of Eigg (PM)

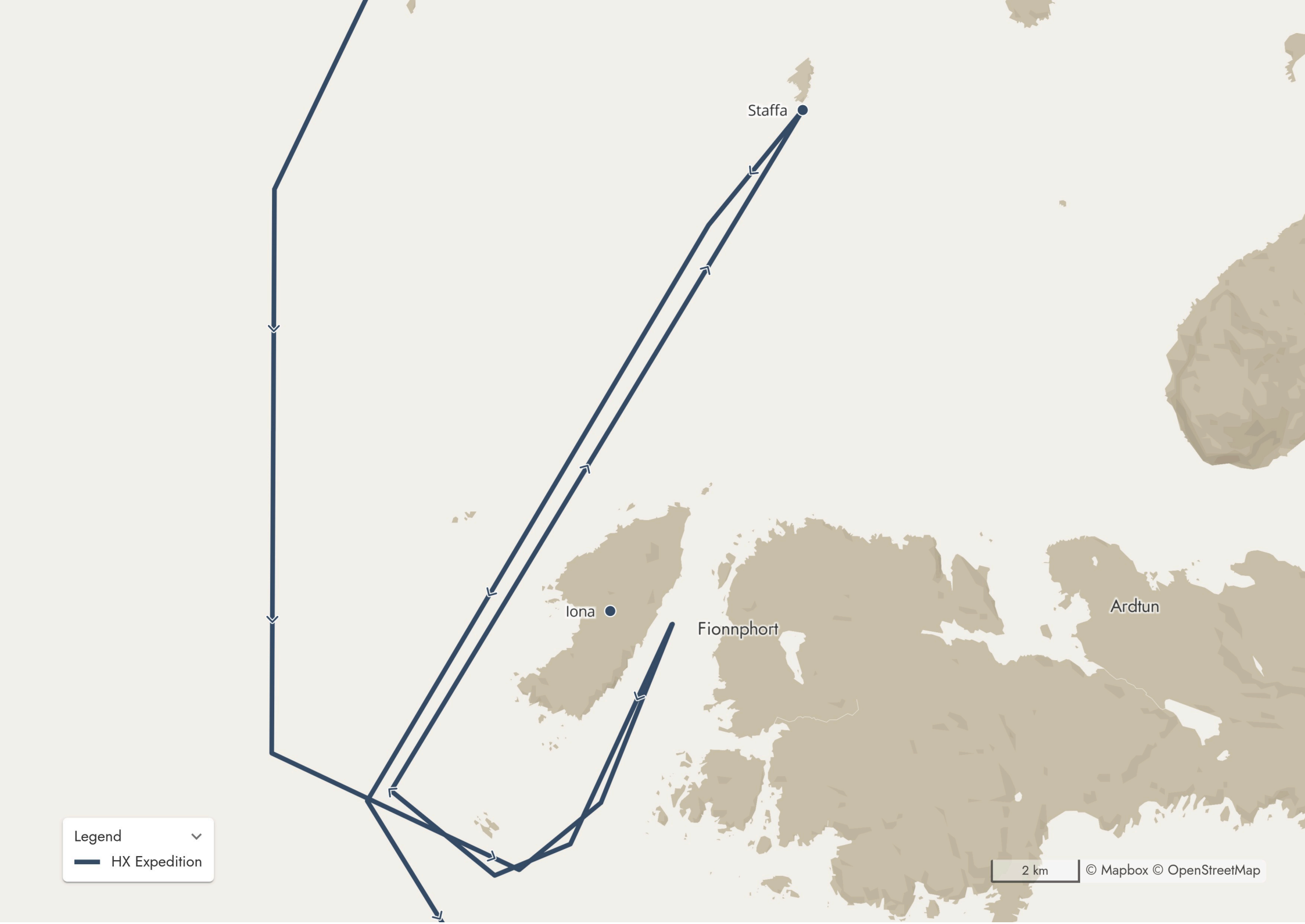
In the afternoon, we continued to the Isle of Eigg, where good weather conditions once again allowed us to enjoy a relaxed and rewarding time ashore.

After landing, we spread out across the island in different ways. Some of us joined a Nature Walk with the Expedition Team, exploring the landscapes and learning more about the island's environment and community life. Others gathered near the jetty for an underwater drone session, offering a fascinating glimpse beneath the surface and revealing the marine life hidden below the calm coastal waters.

Many also chose to simply roam freely around the island, taking in the peaceful atmosphere, the colourful houses, and the open views surrounding this small Hebridean community. The relaxed pace of Eigg, combined with the scenic surroundings, created a particularly enjoyable contrast to the dramatic mountain landscapes of the morning.

With pleasant weather, welcoming scenery, and time to explore at our own rhythm, the Isle of Eigg provided a calm and memorable continuation to another rewarding day in the Scottish Isles.





Staffa

Iona

Fionnphort

Ardtun

Legend

— HX Expedition

2 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Day 9 - Iona (AM)

Iona greeted us on a clear morning, a fresh breeze adding energy to the landscape and the crossing ashore.

Once landed, we spread out to explore this historic island in different ways. Many of us visited the renowned Iona Abbey, wandering through its surroundings and taking in the atmosphere of one of Scotland's most important spiritual and historical sites.

Others spent time exploring the village, enjoying its quiet charm, colourful gardens, and relaxed rhythm of life. A group of us also

joined a hike near the village, discovering more of the island's open landscapes and coastal scenery while enjoying the broad views under the bright morning light.

The combination of sunshine, moving clouds, and wind gave Iona a particularly vibrant atmosphere, making for a memorable and refreshing morning ashore before continuing our journey later in the day.



Day 9 - Staffa

In the afternoon, we continued to Staffa for a small boat cruising excursion around this remarkable volcanic island. Although the conditions remained windy, the direction of the swell worked in our favour and allowed us to safely approach one of the highlights of the area.

As we navigated along the basalt cliffs, the island revealed its striking geological formations, with towering columns rising directly from the sea. The true highlight came as we were able to enter Fingal's Cave, an unforgettable experience made even more dramatic by the sound

of the waves echoing within the cave and the scale of the natural formations surrounding us.

Throughout the outing, we also observed some seabird life around the cliffs, with puffins and other birds in the vicinity.

The combination of adventurous conditions, dramatic scenery, and the rare opportunity to cruise inside Fingal's Cave made Staffa another memorable highlight of our journey through the Scottish Isles.



Day 10 - Colonsay

Colonsay welcomed us under good weather conditions for another rewarding day ashore.

Once landed, we spread out across the island to explore in different ways. Some of us walked together with the Expedition Team toward the beautiful Colonsay House Gardens, enjoying the quiet roads and open scenery along the way before taking time to wander through the gardens themselves. Others preferred to take the shuttle transfer and explore the area at their own pace.

A smaller group embarked on an extended hike around the island, reaching higher viewpoints and enjoying broad views over the surrounding Hebridean landscapes. The relaxed atmosphere of

Colonsay encouraged everyone to experience the island in their own rhythm, whether through walking, photography, or simply enjoying the peaceful surroundings.

Later in the day, some of us joined a Science Boat session, heading out onto the water to better understand the marine environment surrounding the island. This hands-on activity offered a closer connection to the coastal ecosystem and complemented the exploration ashore.

With calm conditions, open landscapes, and a gentle pace throughout the day, Colonsay provided a fitting conclusion to our exploration of the Scottish Isles.





Day 11 - Disembarkation in Fairlie

Early in the morning, we arrived back in Fairlie, where our journey through the Scottish Isles came to an end.

After breakfast, it was time to say goodbye to MS Spitsbergen, to the crew and Expedition Team, and to the fellow guests with whom we had shared these unforgettable days. Throughout the voyage, we explored remote islands, historic communities, dramatic coastlines, and some of the most remarkable natural settings in the British Isles. From the colourful harbour of Tobermory and the peaceful atmosphere of Iona to the towering cliffs of St Kilda and the volcanic

formations of Staffa, each destination brought its own character and experiences. Along the way, wildlife encounters, scenic sailings, hikes, small boat cruises, and cultural visits combined to create a journey rich in discovery and shared moments.

As we stepped ashore in Fairlie, we carried with us memories of rugged landscapes, welcoming island communities, and the unique spirit of the Hebrides — memories that will remain long after the voyage itself has ended.



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