

Further Details:

Arriving in Scotland:

Your transportation to Scotland is not included in this pilgrimage. We highly recommend you arrive (at least) a day prior to May 3rd just in case you encounter travel delays along the way. It also helps shake the jet-lag and may even provide you time to explore a little of Glasgow prior to us meeting as a group to begin our pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage Details:

*Important information about our Guided Walks:

You will note that we have provided a brief description of each walk which includes how we would rate the physical activity level (gentle, mild to moderate, and challenging) and also including when hills, stiles and scrambles may be encountered. This, of course, is based only on our opinion. Participation in the guided walks offered are optional and up to the individual to discern their own ability (which we can discuss more when we are on Iona). If, while on Iona, you choose not to join us on one or more of our guided walking tours, there are still wonderful adventures available for you to enjoy! You may wish to go for a gentle stroll around the village, shop, stop in for a cream tea at one of the island's two hotels, revisit the Abbey, Nunnery, Oran Chapel, take a meditative walk on one of the many beautiful beaches or simply get cozy with a book, journal or rest. We will also offer shorter and more gentle guided walks for those who would prefer this option.

**Ceremony, Song, Poetry, and Ritual may be offered at various times and locations and in group session throughout our week.*

Our first day together:



Our journey together will commence on the morning of Fri, May 3rd, 2024: Beginning at 8:00am we will meet each other at the Holiday Inn EXPRESS, Glasgow Airport and together we will board our private hire bus for a day filled with adventure. Wending our way through the Highlands and Islands we will pause once or twice for comfort breaks and to take photos of the stunning views, as well as to (individually) pick-up a few items to bring along for a packed lunch. Our destination for this day-trip will be the Kilmartin Glen where we will spend our time amongst its many rock carvings, standing stones, and Neolithic and Bronze Age burial cairns. Once the Kingdom of the Dal Riata (kin of Columba), we will first stop at Dunadd, a 2000 year old hill fort where Kings were anointed long ago and where you will have the opportunity to take in the stunning views and literally stand in the footsteps of Kings and Saints!



While in Kilmartin you will also have the opportunity to walk amongst its impressive 5000 year old standing stones including the stone circles of Temple Wood, and enter ancient burial chambers (some older than the great pyramids!). There will also be time to visit the Kilmartin Parish Church; a gothic style church dated back to 1835 (in its Kirk yard lies incredibly preserved medieval tomb slabs featuring carvings of knights and Celtic symbols) and Kilmartin's newly refurbished museum and cafe. After our day in Kilmartin is complete we will once again board our private bus and make our way to Oban (known as the 'gateway to the isles'). Here we will settle into our accommodation on the esplanade at the Muthu Alexander Hotel where you can choose to enjoy the pool and sauna, rest, or head out for individual sightseeing or shopping. Around 7:30 this evening we will gather for a group-booked meal (not included) at an atmospheric and delicious restaurant by the water side.



**The trek up Dunnad includes a bit of clambering up a few stony areas. Though we have led people of various ages/physical fitness up Dunnad, the choice to make the trek may not feel right for all and will be up to the individual to discern upon arrival. For those staying behind, there will be an opportunity to enjoy your lunch in this peaceful and ancient place with time for reflection by a nearby stream.*

**The ground amongst the Standing Stones, burial chambers and Temple Wood is flat and easily walkable by all.*

The next morning, Saturday, May 4th:



After breakfast (included) there will be time for individuals to further explore Oban before our group re-gathers to board the ferry to Craignure on the Island of Mull. This beautiful 45 minute sail with stunning views of some of Scotland's majestic Highlands and Islands provides a great opportunity to capture amazing photos. Upon arriving in Craignure, we will all board a public bus together and make our way across the majestic Isle of Mull to Fionnphort where upon arrival, we will catch our final 15 minute ferry over the turquoise blue Sound of Iona to the Isle of Iona.

After setting foot on Iona, our luggage will be picked up and we will all walk to our home-away-from-home for the week, the Bishop's House. After settling in, and after a brief walk/introduction to the island, we will gather for our first evening meal on Iona followed by an evening group session.

More about the Bishop's House:

Location and Accommodation:

Bishop's House is in an ideal location being a short walk from the ferry, Iona Abbey, the Nunnery and the Village. As a retreat house Bishop's House provides simple, comfortable accommodation with shared bathrooms (not ensuite) each with a tub or shower, much like at Kirkridge. All bedrooms are up one flight of stairs (a chair lift is available for those in need). Bedroom assignments will be two people to a room in twin beds. There will be a limited number of single rooms available at an extra cost on a first reserve-basis.



Meals at the Bishop's House:

All meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner) for our week on Iona (starting with dinner on May 4th, ending with breakfast on May 11th) are included during our stay at Bishop's House and are prepared by the lovely staff. Meals are home-cooked, simple yet wholesome and hearty traditional Scottish-fare served family style (fish, meat, poultry, vegetables, potatoes, soups, salads, homemade bread). Vegetarian, gluten-free, and other dietary specific meals are available (pre-ordered) upon request. Tea and coffee are always within reach. And, as is often requested by retreat houses: guests are kindly asked to help set up and clear away dishes from the table, as well as help with a few very simple housekeeping tasks before we depart.

Inside Bishop's House:

The open communal space of Bishop's House is warm and cozy with a spacious lounging area providing a gorgeous view of the Sound of Iona, a library with an open fire, and located in the center of building is the beautiful St. Columba Chapel, open to all and a special space for quiet reflection.

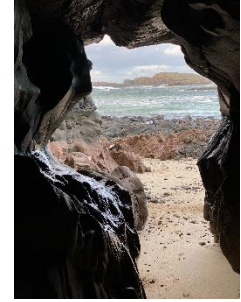
To read more about the Bishop's House on Iona: <https://island-retreats.org/iona/bishops-house>



Itinerary for our Week on Iona (each day will be announced the night before):

**Note: Denise and Nick will weave in the many stories and links between Columcille, Kirkridge and Iona as we wend our way amongst the sites, as well as during our group sessions throughout the week. A more detailed itinerary of subjects covered*

during our group sessions will be offered closer to our time together and may be subject to shift and change according to weather, tide, and energy of the group.



Day of History and Reflection: Abbey Tour and Hermit Cell



Denise and Nick will guide the group through the ancient history of Iona to modern-day island life as we (literally!) walk together in the footsteps of Vikings, Saints, Kings, as well as Iona's contemporary community.

This day will include stories of Druids and Viking Raids, Columba and his monks, St. Oran, Augustinian Nuns, and Celtic Crosses – all shared during an informative tour of Iona Abbey, the nunnery ruins, and the Relig Oran. This guided tour will also include a brief introduction to George Macleod

and the Iona Community, along with what modern-day island life is actually like for those who live here year round.

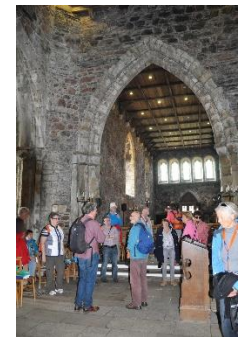


Afterwards, depending on the flow of the day, the group may be given the option of returning to the Bishop's House, wandering on their own, or continuing on a guided hike across the middle of the island to the Hermit's cell (where Columba is said to have gone to be in solitude) where we will stop for a while, share stories and break for a packed lunch.

**The walk through the Village, Nunnery, Relig Oran and Iona Abbey is an easy and gentle walk.*

**The walk to the Hermits Cell is a mild to moderate walk which can be boggy in spots. There are a couple of stiles to be crossed (A stile is a construction with steps that enables walkers to get over fences). People of all ages and various capabilities have traversed this route.*

**Note: There is a possibility that the guided walk to the Hermit's Cell may be offered as an option for another day. That will unfold when we are there.*



Day of Adventure: Journey to Columba's Bay and Labyrinth:

This day will begin according to the tide time table so that we can experience both Columba's Bay and visit the Wee Cave (also known as the Cave of the Little Cross) both of which are best at low tide.



On our way to Columba's Bay we will stop for story and reflection at Martyr's Bay, the Crossroads, and The Hill of the Angels (a.k.a. The Big Fairy Mound). Columba's Bay is where it is said that St. Columba landed in a small coracle with 12 of his fellow monks in 563 A.D. At Labyrinth, we will discuss its history, as well as the history of the Labyrinth co-created in PA by Columcille and Kirkridge. All are welcome to individually walk the labyrinth.



**Moderate full walking day with a short scramble.*



Optional Boat Trip to Staffa and Fingal's Cave:

Sometime around 1pm on this day, those who wish to make this amazing journey will meet at the jetty and take a boat ride to the small volcanic island of Staffa. Most known for its impressive Fingal's Cave: the inspiration for the Hebrides Overture by Mendelssohn. Oftentimes seals,



cormorants, puffins, and sometimes even dolphins, basking sharks and even small whales have been spotted along the way. It is never guaranteed whether landing on Staffa will be a success as it all depends on the sea swells upon arrival. If landing is successful, there is a moderate walk along the rocks surrounding the base of the island that actually goes into Fingal's Cave, as well as a walk up steps (semi-steep but definitely do-able!) that leads to a beautiful pathway on the grassy top of the island where the puffins nest from the end of April to late July.

**If we are not able to land you will still experience (close-up) the amazing beauty of Staffa, Fingal's Cave and several other of Staffa's caves. Additionally, if walking on Staffa doesn't feel right for you, you may choose to stay on the boat while it is docked at the island. Occasionally, the crew will take those on the boat for short sail to see more of the island from the sea (and to spot the puffins on the water).*

**Mild to Moderate walking day. Sea travel.*



Additional Possibilities for the week, yet to unfold:

On some of the days listed above, there may be time to integrate in a few of the following options. Please let Walking Awake know if you have an interest in any of the below listed and we will do our very best to plan on adding them in as we go along. Again, please hold open that this pilgrimage will be very fluid in nature depending on group energy, weather, tides, etc.

St. Martin's Cave Walk: This is a beautiful hike along the coastline which includes moderate hill climbing and some scrambling. Must be coordinated with low tide.

**The walk to St. Martin's Cave can be challenging for some. We would rate it as a moderate to challenging walk/scramble.*

Early Morning Sunrise Ceremony on Dun I: This includes an early morning walk (in the dark, just before dawn) up to Iona's highest point, Dun I from which you will experience the Isle's magnificent 360 degree vista as the sun rises. We will also visit the Well of Eternal Youth, sometimes called "Brigid's Well". There, members of the group will have the option of participating (or holding space) in a ceremony at the well.

*The walk up Dun I is moderate climb to a height of 333ft with some scrambling. We will go slow and support each other as we make the journey. This event/trek can be emotionally, spiritually and somewhat physically challenging, yet very rewarding on many levels.

*Note: This guided walk may also be offered for the group at another time of day (not prior to sunrise) if desired. This will unfold when we are together on Iona.



Walk up the Glen of the Temple to the Hill of the Signal:

Lending their names to sites at Columcille Megalith Park, this seldom visited somewhat secluded site invokes an otherworldly feel and deep connection to the energies of Iona and for some, to the mountain upon which both Columcille and Kirkridge rest.

**A mild - moderate walk. One stile to be crossed. Gentle somewhat steep walk up Hill of Signal.*

Early Morning Meditations: As facilitators, we are happy to offer optional morning meditations which may feature some of the following: Silent sitting meditation, guided meditation, and mindful movement meditation. Time (TBA) will be about a 1/2 hour before breakfast. Weather permitting, we may also offer a morning meditation on the beach. Please let Walking Awake know if you have an interest in attending morning meditations.

Saturday, May 11th: Day of Iona Departure: Our group will depart after breakfast (time TBA).

Your return to Glasgow is included in the cost of your journey and will be via public transportation (ferry from Iona to Fionnphort, bus from Fionnphort to Craignure, ferry from Craignure to Oban, train from Oban to Glasgow Queen Street Station). From Glasgow Queen Street station: it's all up to you! Feel free to ask us for additional travel advice, if needed, we would be happy to share a few suggestions. If you wish to travel home at another time or in a different direction, please let us know so we do not book and reserve your return transportation to Glasgow.

Cost:

\$2700.00 per person if registered by September 15th, 2023.

After September 15th, 2023 the price increases to \$3000.00 per person.

A non-refundable deposit of \$700.00 per person will reserve your place.

A small number of single rooms are available at additional cost (see below)

There are 17 spaces available for this journey.

Prior to registration:

- Please contact Denise Crown at denise@walkingawake.com to confirm availability.
- All reservations at above costs are shared accommodation (two to a room) Note: While rooms are ensuite in Oban, the rooms at Bishop's House are not ensuite: there are 5 bathrooms (each with a tub or shower) to be shared amongst up to 20 guest (much like at Kirkridge).

- Limited single room accommodations (in both Oban and on Iona) are available on a first-reserve basis for an additional \$500.00 per person. If you'd like to secure a single room, we highly recommend early registration.
- All individuals must agree to Walking Awake's terms and agreements which are listed on the Walking Awake website www.walkingawake.com

Payment schedule is as follows:

October 15th, 2023:\$750.00 (per reservation) due

December 15th, 2023: \$750.00 (per reservation) due

February 2nd, 2024: Balance-in-full due.

*Depending on availability, if registering after February 2nd, 2024: the amount is due in full.

Walking Awake's cancellation and refund policies are non negotiable and can be found under the Terms and Agreement section of our website.

All payments are to be made to Walking Awake via PayPal (link on homepage of Walking Awake website)

Cost Includes:

• **Transportation:**

- Private bus pick-up from the Holiday Inn EXPRESS at Glasgow at 8:00 AM on May 3rd. . Private bus journey includes a day-trip to Kilmartin with an early evening drop-off at Muthu Alexandra Hotel in Oban.
- Return ferry transport: Oban/Craignure, Fionnphort/Iona (May 4th/May 11th, 2024)
- Return public bus: Craignure/Fionnphort (May 4th/May 11th, 2024)
- Train from Oban to Glasgow Queen Street Station on Saturday, May 11th, 2024 (time TBA)

• **Accommodation:**

- 1 night shared accommodation at Muthu Alexander Hotel in Oban
- 7 nights shared accommodation on Iona at the Bishop's House

• **Meals:**

- Breakfast on Saturday, May 4th, 2024 at Muthu Alexandra Hotel
- All Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinners during stay at Bishop's House on Iona

• **Other:**

- Week-long admission to Iona Abbey and Museum
- Guide(s) and bus driver fees.
- All reservations include a \$150.00 per reservation donation to be shared equally between Columcille Megalith Park and Kirkridge Retreat Center

Not included:

- Airfare (we suggest you arrive at least a day prior to our meeting in case of delays)
- Any travel or accommodation prior to or following the dates of our trip
- Evening group-booked meal in Oban and all other meals not listed as included
- (Optional) Group-booked boat trip to Staffa £30pp
- Individual travel insurance for all eventualities (REQUIRED)
- Options not listed above
- Optional tips for bus driver, guides, or other services.
- Any unforeseen costs incurred due to travel delays within our pilgrimage (see below)

Travel Delays:

Arrival In Scotland: We suggest you consider planning to arrive in Scotland at least 24 hours prior to our scheduled pick-up time on May 3rd - just in case you encounter flight delays, etc.

In the rare event that we could possibly encounter travel delays within our journey (such as weather, ferries not running, train or bus delays/issues, etc.) each individual is responsible for any and all additional costs incurred including but not limited to accommodation and meals. Fortunately, this has not occurred yet in our years of running trips to Iona. (See Walking Awake's Terms and Agreements for further details)

Flying Home: Because of the possibility of unforeseen travel delays within our journey, we highly suggest that you do not book your return flight reservations until (at least) later in the evening on Sunday, May 12th, or even a day or two later.

Wish to spend more time in Scotland?:

If you have interest in further exploring Scotland while you are here, you may also wish to consider joining us (prior to our pilgrimage to Iona) on our Orkney Odyssey, April 25th - 30th, 2024. If you do choose to join us for both, this would allow you a few free days in between to embark on self-guided time at other sites in the Edinburgh and Glasgow area. For more information about our Orkney Odyssey, visit www.walkingawake.com (we currently have 4 spaces available on our Orkney Odyssey Pilgrimage)