



Supporting Scotland's Otters

Experience Tiree & Otter Watching Workshops

May 2027

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Welcome to our new Tiree workshop brochure! Here you'll find all the key information you need to know if you're considering booking an island otter watching experience with us.



About Us

Lutra Grampia is the culmination of over 15 years spent working with a group of animals unparalleled in their ability to enchant, inspire and connect people with nature and conservation.

From the otter who started it all completely rerouting my life, to years spent watching, studying, surveying and introducing others to the Eurasian Otter, and to the conservation education I've been able to provide through them, it was perhaps inevitable that I'd one day form my own organisation with otters at its heart.

At Lutra Grampia, the aim is simple: to connect people, otters and conservation through practical action, education, and delivering memorable experiences.

We offer a range of guided otter walks and workshops, otter advocacy and learning opportunities through education packages and presentations, we're involved in practical otter conservation, research and specialist ecological consultancy and we aim to give back to local projects, organisations and groups supporting otters and their habitats through all of our activities.

An old mentor once told me "one day you'll be guiding on otters on an island." And that island was always going to be Tiree...

Alana Dewar, Otter Projects Officer



Meet Your Guide

Growing up on the Fife coast, animal daft, at my happiest outside and precociously aware of conservation issues, my future professional and personal interests shouldn't have come as a surprise! I both work and volunteer across multiple conservation projects alongside managing Lutra Grampia, and though I'm based primarily on the mainland, I try to spend as much time on Tiree as possible in between. On the far fewer occasions I happen to be indoors, you'll typically find me with a ferret, book, cup of tea and / or slice of cake in my hand, soundtracked by folk music!

We are proud to be members of the following organisations



Workshop Overview

Set on the beautiful Isle of Tiree, our two-day otter watching workshops are our pride and joy! You'll get to experience Tiree and have plenty opportunities to watch otters along the island's quiet south-west coastline, while learning how to survey coastal otters and taking part in conservation and citizen science activities.

We'll be dining at the local cafes and restaurants, with Tiree-made refreshments in between, and we'll finish day two with an exclusive otter-themed creative activity at Tiree Makery! And alongside the memories you'll come away with, we'll have a special goody bag for you as well!

It's otter watching with a difference, giving you an opportunity to experience Tiree and support its community businesses, while also giving back to the areas we've spent time in.

Key Details

Dates

Tue 4 - Wed 5 May 2027

Price

Early Bird Rate - £375 per person
(until 1 February 2027)

Normal Rate - £450 per person
(inclusive of £20 donation to Tiree Ranger Service)

Booking Open From

Sat 12 September 2026 (Waiting List)

Sat 31 October 2026 (General Sale)

Group Size & Composition

4 guests per group

Open to ages 16 and above

What's Included

- Daily guiding
- Travel between island sites
- Refreshments
- Lunch and dinner (both days)
- Creative activity at Tiree Makery
- Conservation activity with Tiree Ranger Service
- Exclusive goody bag
- Discounts from selected Tiree businesses.

What's Not Included

- Travel to & from Tiree (Ferry / Plane)
- Accommodation
- Alcoholic Drinks

Why Tiree?

Surely it would be easier basing an otter watching workshop on Mull, Skye or Shetland - where the otter populations are much higher - or even, if not on mainland, perhaps even far more accessible islands like Arran and Bute? Why go all the way to Tiree?

The first answer is - simply - Tiree. These workshops are not just about otters. They're about introducing small groups to a special little island with a huge character. An island which has to walk the delicate line of being increasingly reliant on seasonal tourism without becoming overwhelmed by it. The season runs typically from April to early October, peaking during the school holiday periods and around key annual events such as Tiree Music Festival, the Wave Classic and 10K, Half Marathon and Tiree Ultra. To avoid placing additional pressure on the island's communities and resources, we've been careful to schedule our activities away from these times. That way, we also get to benefit the island when it needs it. It's not an unknown island by any means, but it's also a hidden gem in many ways. Sharing some of those lesser known parts with our participants - responsibly - is one of our key aims.

Secondly, it is absolutely about the otters. Otter welfare comes first. We know Tiree and the behaviour and habits of its otters intimately. We know the areas we can base ourselves to maximise guest experiences while minimising potential for disturbance to the otters, sensitive landscape and islanders. Groups are capped at 4 for the same reasons. It also avoids placing any extra pressure on the areas well popularised for otter tourism, where other, excellent local guides are far better placed to deliver experiences.

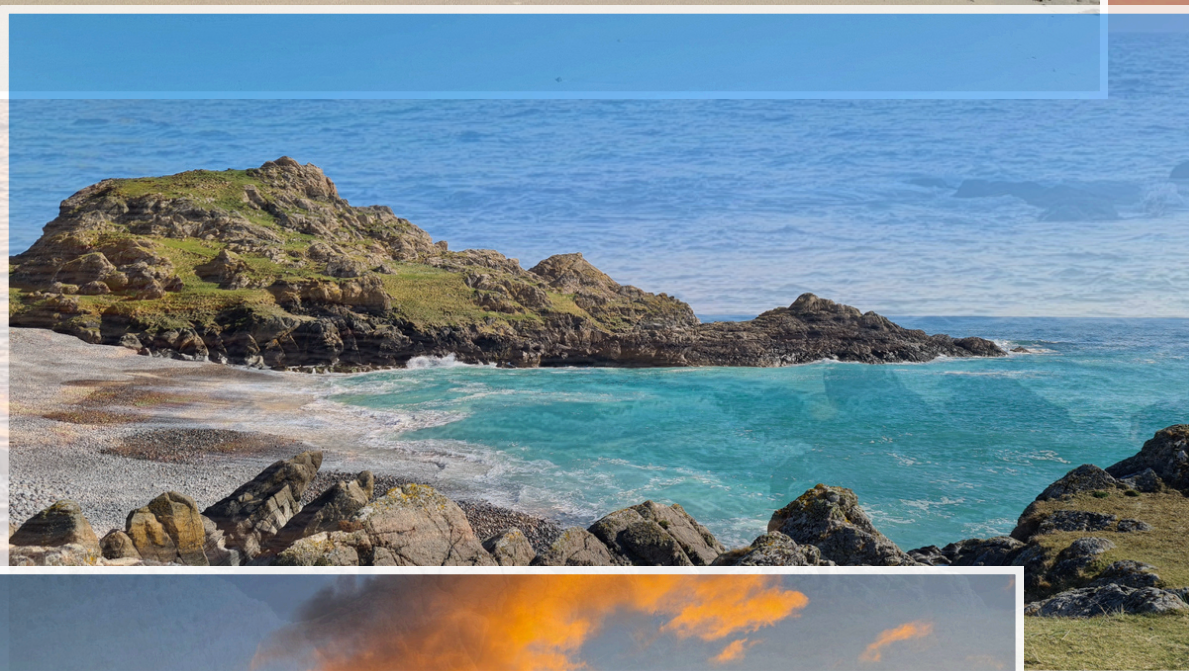
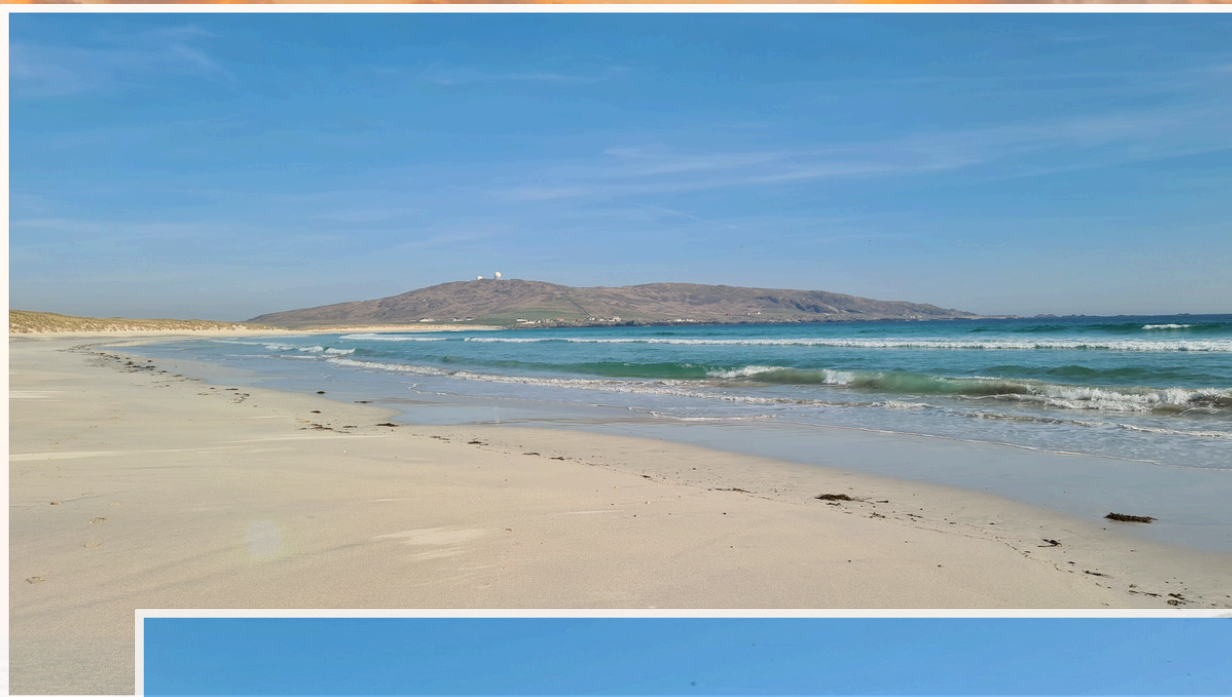
Where We're Heading....

Tiree lies 22 miles west of the Scottish mainland, set out in the Atlantic Ocean, and is the most westerly of the Inner Hebrides.

At just 12 miles long, and averaging just 3 miles wide (barely half a mile wide in the centre!) it's a small, very flat island with only three small hills punctuating the horizon. Tiree is a working island with less than 700 permanent residents spread across its many crofts and townships, but welcomes responsible tourism - now a key part of the island's economy. Transport from Oban and Glasgow provides a vital link to the mainland for islanders and visitors alike.



A Flavour of Tiree...



Otter Ecology on Tiree

Though a small island, Tiree still supports a very healthy, stable otter population, which is resident across its full coastline and diverse range of habitats. Active otter territories across the island range from 25 - 40, always changing in response to naturally fluctuating population dynamics and survival rates.

The unique geography of Tiree, with its mild seas and climate, very shallow shelving coastlines, an ideal blend of coastal and inland spaces for resting, foraging and travelling and well distributed freshwater access points for drinking and bathing make it highly attractive to otters, and unlike many other tidal areas, activity can be seen at all times rather than peaking closer to low tide. Otter activity is particularly high from autumn to spring, and our workshops have been timed to coincide with the time of year sightings will naturally become much more regular. We'll also be basing ourselves in the south-west of Tiree, where there is a strong population cluster we've been studying for the past 10 years.

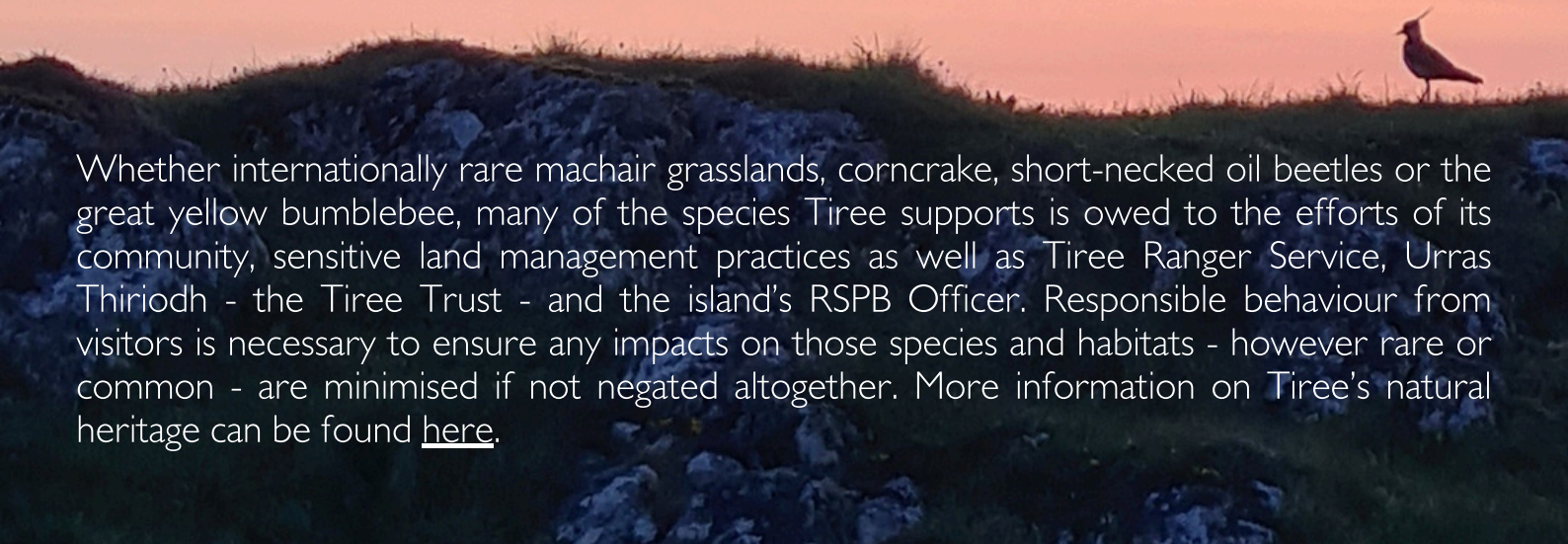
Field signs including prints, runs, spraint sites, scrapes and castlings can be found across the island and give us all the clues we need on what they've been up to in between sightings. We'll be delving deep into their ecology and survey techniques during the workshop, so no prior knowledge is required.



Island Biodiversity

Biodiversity is not in short supply on Tiree, whether on land or at sea! During your visit, you'll see a huge range of terrestrial, shoreline and marine flora and fauna, including resident and migratory bird species, Tiree's trademark hares, grey and common seals, invertebrates and keep your eyes peeled for dolphins, porpoise, whales and perhaps even a basking shark!

Tiree's landscapes are highly designated, featuring Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar wetlands, all owing to significant, rare or otherwise important species and habitats found across the island.



Whether internationally rare machair grasslands, corncrake, short-necked oil beetles or the great yellow bumblebee, many of the species Tiree supports is owed to the efforts of its community, sensitive land management practices as well as Tiree Ranger Service, Urras Thiriodh - the Tiree Trust - and the island's RSPB Officer. Responsible behaviour from visitors is necessary to ensure any impacts on those species and habitats - however rare or common - are minimised if not negated altogether. More information on Tiree's natural heritage can be found [here](#).

Weather & Climate

For good reason, Tiree is known as the 'Land Below the Waves'. Its flat landscape, vast expanses of open land, few hills, trees or other forms of shelter, and its positioning in the Atlantic, means there's no escaping the fact that it is a naturally windy place! Although - on the upside - the wind keeps it midge free in the most part, which is a big win!

Nevertheless, the climate is mild year round, warmer than average in winter and mostly very comfortable all through summer days and evenings. Sunshine levels are above average, and prolonged wet and stormy spells are more concentrated in late autumn and winter, after the main season has ended - conveniently.

As with anywhere - particularly in Scotland - weather can be unpredictable at any time of the year, so being prepared for any eventuality is still necessary.

Tiree's climate and weather systems are heavily influenced by the warming effect of the Gulf Stream, which gives rise to conditions suitable for the species and habitats it is hence able to support.

Limited air and light pollution make for clear skies and vast, rolling vistas as far as the eye can see, so wherever you are on Tiree, looking up or around you will almost always reward you!

Itinerary

We have a rough itinerary we aim to follow throughout our workshops, however due to the nature of wildlife watching, we are also keen to ensure there is space for flexibility, so that we can easily adjust timings to give you the best experience possible. We might also have groups who'd prefer either to head out early, or stay out later, and we are open to both options.

Day One

8.30am - Introductions

8.45am - Otter Ecology Walk

10am - Refreshments Break

10.15am - Otter Watching

12.30pm - Lunch at Farmhouse
Cafe, Balemartine

1.30pm - Otter Watching

3pm - Conservation Activity with
Tiree Ranger Service

5pm - End of Day 1 Main Activities

6.30pm - Dinner at Alan Stevenson
House, Hynish

8pm - Optional Evening Excursion
(1 hour)

Day Two

8am - Otter Watching

10.15am - Refreshments Break

10.30am - Otter Watching

11:30am - Citizen Science Activities

12.30pm - Lunch at Farmhouse
Cafe, Balemartine

1.30pm - Otter Watching

3pm - Tiree Makery Creative
Workshop

5pm - End of Day 2 Main Activities

6.30pm - Dinner at Tides at the
Reef, Crossapol or Ceabhar, Sandaig

8pm - Optional Evening Excursion
(1 hour)



Otter Watching

The centrepiece of our workshops is of course the banks of time we'll be spending looking for and observing otters and hopefully being rewarded with a lovely mix of behaviour.

Daytime otter activity is most concentrated in the morning and early afternoon in the areas we'll be based in, and so we've planned out the itinerary with this in mind. An optional evening otter watch can also be arranged, if you wish.

We'll be positioning ourselves in good otter spots, where we can settle ourselves down among the rocks, dunes or from vantage points which limit detectability. Watching otters discreetly often means sitting or lying in positions which might not be the most comfortable, so do bear this in mind. We will do our best to minimise this wherever possible and move ourselves at regular intervals. Some areas will require longer spells of walking, over uneven coastlines, and a bit of scrambling here and there, so a good level of general fitness is required.

Sturdy footwear with good soles and a set of binoculars are essential, alongside clothing in dark or natural tones which doesn't rustle too much. We will have a telescope with us on a short tripod, for those interested in using it.

Otter welfare is our priority, and we'll provide further guidance on responsible behaviour around otters both in the lead up to and during the workshops.

Conservation & Citizen Science

Giving back to Tìree in any way we can is at the heart of our workshops.

We've designed them to minimise our impact on the land and sea while also making sure we include activities that'll allow us to have a net positive impact. We'll be joining forces with Tìree Ranger, Hayley, on day one for an afternoon conservation session, whether that be a beach clean, a biodiversity survey, or something else that directly benefits the land or coastline. On top of that, £20 from every ticket fee will also be going back to the Ranger Service to support their ongoing work.

And then on day two, we'll be including a bit of citizen science of our own, carrying out a shoreline survey to assess its health and value to biodiversity. Our methodology will align with the Marine Conservation Society for this one, and any interesting findings will be recorded, and also passed onto Hayley.

You'll learn how to use recording tools such as iRecord, and leave with the skills to carry out your own local monitoring elsewhere.



Creative Activities

We do like to mix up our activities, whatever we're doing, to include something just a wee bit different, and we love using creativity as a means of engagement. Plus it's just good fun!

Tìree Makery is an artist-led social enterprise, run by islanders with community, sustainability, culture, access to art and inclusivity at its heart. Alongside their brilliant workshops, the shop space and its thoughtfully curated stock is absolutely beautiful, and supports 16 local Tìree creatives as well as others from across Scotland. We're huge fans of everything they're doing, and working with them as part of our workshops was always going to be a no-brainer!

And so, on day two, we'll be across at the Makery under their expert tuition screen printing our very own otter themed tote bags, incorporating natural features we've spotted across the island!

Your design will be entirely up to you, and all materials will be provided. Again, no prior knowledge or experience is required. It'll be the perfect, light-hearted, immersive activity to round out the main part of our time together.

Tìree
Makery

Meals & Refreshments

Otter watching, conservation and creativity all work up a fair appetite, so we've made sure you'll have plenty of opportunities to fuel up throughout our workshops.

We'll be gathering refreshments for you from Tiree Tea, Hebridean Roast, village shop Buth a Bhaile and extra goodies from The Bake Shed and Chocolates and Charms to keep you going, for starters...

And we'll be dining out for lunch and dinner on both days. Here's where we'll be heading...



Farmhouse Cafe, Balemartine, will be our base for **lunches** on both days.

Soups, toasties, wraps and more are available alongside sweet treats, home baking and a range of hot and cold drinks. If the weather's on our side, we can sit outside and enjoy the views, or head inside for a bit of extra comfort. The cafe also has a small gift selection for you to browse through and maybe treat yourself! Find them on Facebook, [here](#).

On day one, **dinner** will be at **Alan Stevenson House**, Hynish.

With seasonal menus alongside some year-round staples, you're in for a treat here! Most menu items are sourced from within the Hebrides, inspired by Tiree, and cooked to perfection. We'll enjoy a two-course meal, and relax after a packed first day. You can find out more about the restaurant [here](#).



Dinner on day two will either be at **Tides at the Reef**, Crossapol or **Ceabhar**, Sandaig. Both restaurants also have excellent seasonal menus, with a range of options to suit all tastes. Ceabhar also hosts its very own brewery! Meanwhile, Tides is based within Reef Inn, and on the Reef - the largest expanse of machair on Tiree! Check out what they have to offer [here](#), meanwhile you can see more from Ceabhar on [Facebook](#).

Goody Bags

We won't be letting you leave empty handed! As well as your memories from your time on Tìree, you'll take away a range of goodies from us, and from island businesses, in your unique tote bags from our session at the Makery! Intrigued? Here are just a few of the businesses who'll be contributing to your goody bags!

Love a cuppa? Tìree has its own teas! Breakfast teas, herbal teas (Tilley mint and nettle, named after the local wind turbine, is our favourite!), decaf teas, spicy teas... you're spoiled for choice! We'll be including a pack of tea of your choosing as part of your goody bags, and a couple of wee surprise gifts that have nothing to do with tea but everything to do with a certain sheep... Check out **Tìree Tea** on [social media](#), where all will become clear!



But then, perhaps you're a coffee drinker, in which case tea might not be your bag! Not to worry... for the coffee fans, we'll swap out the tea (but not the other TT goodies!) for a pouch of Tìree's own speciality coffee - the aptly named Crossapol Colombian! We'd also recommend popping into the **Hebridean Roast** shop in Scarinish, where hot chocolate, brownies and a range of other gifts are also available. More information [here](#).

Talking of shops, this is one you will be in (and probably not just once if you're anything like us!) while you're on the island! Becky makes the most spectacular cakes and traybakes every single day! And chocolates, and truffles. We'll be including a full size chocolate bar in your goody bag, and there will most likely be a cake run at some point as well. Follow **Becky Bakes** on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to whet your appetite!



Tìree was crying out for a bookshop, and Jo answered! **Big Sky Books**, based at Hynish, sells a range of new and second hand books, stationery and hosts a range of lovely events throughout the year. Jo will be sourcing some otter themed books for us, and maybe something extra. If we have time around Hynish during the workshops, we may well fit in a wee visit to the shop as well. Find them on Facebook, [here](#).

While You're Here...

There are so many other activities we would really have loved to include in our workshops, but to maximise otter watching time, there was a limit on what we could fit in. We are discussing a few other extras, which we'll let you know about once they're confirmed, but if you are intending to come over for a few more days, either before or after your workshop, here are some suggestions of other things to see and do...



In May, boat trip season will be in full swing, with a good chance of spotting cetaceans, seals and basking sharks around Tiree's coast and, usually, better sea conditions! **Tiree Sea Tours** will have a number of different trips running, so keep an eye on their schedule around the time you're in Tiree. We have a discount code available exclusively for our workshop participants if a trip comes up that you'd like to attend. All sailings are advertised on [social media](#), so give them a follow.

Active events are a big part of the year on Tiree, and the annual 10K and Half Marathon will be taking place just before our workshop - on Saturday 1st May. It's a brilliant route, following the same coastline we'll be based on for our workshop, and superbly organised by Will Wright at Tiree Fitness. If you're so inclined, you can sign up for the event [here](#).



If you're into watersports, **Wild Diamond** offer tuition and equipment hire for windsurfing, surfing, body boarding, stand up paddleboarding and kitesurfing - primarily based at Loch Bhasapol, Corraig - and also hire out kayaks which can be delivered anywhere on Tiree and used off the coastline of your choosing. They also manage the campsite at Balinoe. Find out more at www.wilddiamond.co.uk.

As well as offering our participants 10% off bike hire, Will has also generously extended the same discount to massage therapy sessions from **Tiree Fitness**. So if you're a wee bit stiff after all of our otter watching antics, there's a remedy waiting for you! Private yoga sessions are also available alongside other fitness related activities. Check out their website, [here](#).



Travel

Travel to and from Tiree is not included in our workshop rates, however we are here to help you through the process from start to finish and can advise you on the most suitable options for you.

There are two main options for travelling to Tiree: ferry, and by air.

Ferry

Caledonian MacBrayne (Calmac) operate a daily ferry service to Coll and Tiree from Oban throughout the summer months. The journey time is approximately four hours. Advance booking is strongly advised, particularly if you intend on bringing a vehicle to Tiree.

The current timetable, including rates, will be available in late 2026 so keep an eye out for more details on the Calmac website - [Calmac Timetables \(Oban / Coll / Tiree\)](#). As we are able to provide transport during your workshop, you may find travelling as a foot passenger the most cost effective option.

For more information and booking, see calmac.co.uk.

Air

Flights to Tiree are available from Glasgow Airport (daily), operated by Loganair, and Oban Airport (select dates), operated by Hebridean Air Services. Journey times of around an hour are to be expected.

More information, availability and booking details are available from:

- Loganair - [Glasgow to Tiree Service](#)
- Hebridean Air Services - [All Flights](#)

Travel Within Tiree

During your workshop, we will provide transport between different sites and can arrange pick up and drop off from the ferry terminal and airport on your arrival / departure dates.

If you intend to stay on Tiree for a little bit longer, there are a few other options available to help you explore more of the island.

- Car Hire - available from [Toraz Car Hire](#), based at Tiree Airport
- Bike Hire - available from [Tiree Fitness](#) (10% discount available)
- John Kennedy Transport - private hire / minibus, contact info@johnkennedytransport.co.uk for more information

Accommodation

Tiree has a range of accommodation available, and we'll be on hand to advise you on the best options to suit your needs.

Hotels / Bed and Breakfast

Both [Alan Stevenson House Hotel](#) and [The Reef Inn](#) are well placed in the areas we'll be basing ourselves in for the workshops, at good rates. Both hotels offer private rooms, of a range of sizes, while Alan Stevenson House also offer shared rooms. Bookings can be made using the links above and include bed and breakfast as standard.

[Mannal House](#) (pictured) is even closer, and with its beautifully presented rooms, excellent breakfasts and gorgeous hospitality, is high on our list of recommendations.

In the north of the island at Balephetrish, [Rockvale](#) have a range of en-suite bedrooms available, with a continental breakfast buffet and shared access to the conservatory, dining room and kitchen facilities all included.

Self Catering Properties

Self-catering accommodation is available across the island, with options including full houses, pods and cabins. We would recommend checking out the listings at [IsleHoliday](#), paying particular attention to those marked as 'Resident Owned', meaning members of the Tiree community will be benefiting from your stay.

Camping

Camping with and without caravans or campervans is available at [Balinoe Campsite](#), which has a good number of pitches and all the facilities you need and is another site close to where we'll be based for most of the workshop.

Meanwhile, the Croft Camping Scheme, managed by Tiree Ranger Service on behalf of the crofting communities and residents on Tiree, offers up to three pitches per croft site, in areas carefully selected to ensure the impact on the island's fragile landscape is minimised. To request a pitch, please read through the details given [here](#), complete the request form and return it to camping@tireetrust.org.uk.

Responsible wild camping is possible around Tiree while adhering to the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. Further details specific to Tiree can be found [here](#), and we, and the Ranger Service, can advise you on suitable locations.

Booking Details & Pricing

If you'd like to book your place on one of our workshops, please email us at otters@lutragrampia.org. We'll send you a booking form to complete, and we will require a deposit of £100 to confirm your place.

Once we have your form and deposit, you don't need to do anything else until one week before the workshop, when the remaining balance is due. That is of course unless you wish to pay in instalments, which we would be more than happy to arrange with you if this suits you better.

Our regular workshop rate is £450 per person, however if you book before 1 February 2027, you will qualify for the discounted early bird rate of £375 per person.

For full disclosure, we have kept our guiding fees as low as possible across the two days, with the Tiree businesses involved in receipt of £215 from every ticket sold. Our main aims from these workshops are to ensure Tiree benefits in every way possible, whilst giving you all a memorable experience that will hopefully connect you to this wonderful island, otters and conservation long into the future.

Kit List

What We'll Provide

- Tea / coffee, water & snacks
- Telescope
- Maps
- First aid resources
- Emergency shelter
- ID guides / worksheets for citizen science activities and all equipment for conservation activity
- Transport to / from accommodation & sites around Tiree

What To Bring

- Waterproof clothing and warm layers
- Sunglasses
- Hat and gloves
- Sturdy / walking boots
- Binoculars
- Water bottle / travel mug
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Any daily medication you require
- Small rucksack

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to have any existing knowledge of otters?

No, none at all! You'll learn plenty as we go through the workshop.

How fit do I need to be to take part?

A good standard of general fitness is required for walking several miles in a day, and across uneven coastal terrain.

Am I guaranteed to see an otter?

Watching wildlife never comes with any guarantees, and at times circumstances may occur which change otter behaviour and reduce the likelihood of sightings. However, we will be based on a coastline where we have had an over >95% success rate of daily otter sightings daily over the past 10 years. We will do our very best to get you into all the best positions to observe otters during your workshop.

Can I take photos?

Of course! However, please be aware that this is not a photography workshop, and therefore this will not be our focus. A photographers workshop is in the pipeline...

Can I bring my dog?

Due to the nature of the workshop, we can't allow dogs to come along with us. However, if you would like to bring your dog to Tiree with you, we can help you find a dog walker and / or make provisions for you to attend to your dog during the workshop.

What happens if the weather is poor?

Our workshops will go ahead in all but severe weather. Please come prepared with warm and waterproof clothing for all eventualities.

My ferry / flight has been cancelled! What do I do?

We will be in touch in the days leading up to your workshop, and if your ferry or flight is cancelled we will support you to find an alternative method of travel, if possible, or discuss refunds with you if you cannot make it to Tiree.

Are refunds given if my circumstances change before the workshop?

Your deposit is refundable up to 6 weeks before the workshop. If you have to drop out at short notice, after paying the remaining balance, this will be returned to you in full.

Will there be toilets nearby?

We will have access to toilets in between activities and at lunch / dinner.

What if I get ill or injured during the workshop?

Your guide is a qualified outdoor first aider and will have a fully stocked first aid kit available at all times, as well as a fully charged mobile phone in the event of any emergencies, where the relevant agencies will be contacted as a matter of priority.

Useful Resources

To find out more about **Tiree**, you may find the following resources useful:

Discover Tiree - www.isleoftiree.com/

[Tiree Visitors Map](#)

[Tiree Visitors Guide 2026](#)

Visit Tiree - www.visittiree.com/

Wild About Argyll - [Isle of Tiree](#)

Calmac - [Things to Do on the Isle of Tiree](#)

[Tiree Distillery](#). (somewhere else you may like to visit...)

An Iodhlann: [Tiree's Historical Centre](#)

Urras Thiriodh: [The Tiree Trust](#)

[The Hynish Trust](#) (watch this space for an extra guided tour...)

[Tiree Archaeology Walks](#)

To find out more about **Lutra Grampia**, you can find our website at lutragrampia.org, follow us on Facebook or Instagram (both @lutragrampia) or sign up to our newsletter at lutragrampia.substack.com. We are also members of, and bound by the codes of conduct of:

[The WiSe Scheme](#)

[Wild Scotland](#)

[IUCN Species Survival Commission Otter Specialist Group](#)

For **weather** updates, **tide and swell charts** and more see:

[Met Office](#) (use Balemartine for location data)

[WillyWeather](#) tides data (Balemartine / Crossapol)

