

The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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ISLANDS OF ITALY - CORSICA, SARDINIA & SICILY CRUISE

Here is a wonderful opportunity to discover the Italian islands of Elba, Sardinia and Sicily combined with a day on the beautiful French island of Corsica. All of the islands we will call into are easy enough to visit individually but difficult to combine independently in a nine night trip. The islands feature an array of ancient ruins, attractive towns and villages and we will have time on each to visit the main sites but to also explore some of the smaller ports and less visited regions. We have ensured that each day has an enjoyable mix of culture with guided excursions as well as ample time at leisure. Our voyage is planned for late summer, the perfect time of year for exploration, when the crowds of August have dispersed but the weather is ideal for touring and sightseeing. In addition we have the pleasure of cruising aboard the all-suite MS Island Sky which with just over 100 passengers is able to visit atmospheric ports and villages which the big ships cannot access. Sailing from the French Riviera, we will cruise to the enchanting island of Elba, best known as Napoleon's island of exile. From there we continue to Corsica which, despite officially being a part of France, has its own identity in everything from customs to language and benefits from magnificent geographical diversity ranging from stunning natural harbours to picture perfect hilltop villages and a majestic countryside. Leaving the charms of Corsica behind we spend two days in Sardinia where we discover the Medieval city of Alghero and Nuraghe Palmavera and from Cagliari, will have the opportunity to visit the wonderful ruins of Nora. Our last days are spent on Sicily which, with a history of 3000 years has a wealth of sites to discover from magnificent Doric temples to great Byzantine cathedrals and bizarrely styled villas. This is a

voyage that will appeal to those who love Italy, and who enjoy hopping between islands. Local guides and our onboard Guest Speaker will contribute greatly to our enjoyment and understanding of these Italian gems and you will find yourself wanting to return time and



time again.

ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Nice, France.

Fly by scheduled flight. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the MS Island Sky. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we sail this

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evening.

Day 2 Portoferraio, Elba.

Today we call into the enchanting island of Elba, best known as Napoleon's island of exile from 1814 to 1815. Departing from the island's busy capital Portoferraio, we set out for a delightful drive exploring the southern region of this charming island with superb views over the coastline. The first stop will be Villa San Martino which was the summer residence of Napoleon Bonaparte and has been transformed into a museum. Later enjoy some time at leisure in Porto Azzurro with its picturesque harbour. Our drive continues along the coast to the 17th century country wine farm, La Chiusa which is beautifully nestled in a vineyard estate surrounded by olive trees and overlooking the ocean. As any self-respecting mansion on Elba, La Chiusa claims to have once housed Napoleon during his exile here. Experience the estate's interesting cellar to learn how the wine is handled and produced and in the estate's garden facing the sea we will enjoy a delicious sampling of the local wine. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at leisure in Portoferraio.

Day 3 Bonifacio, Corsica.

Be on deck this morning as we arrive in Corsica at Bonifacio's stunning natural harbour. Well known by Odysseus as the home of the savage and giant laestrygonians, today Bonifacio's breathtaking cliff-top setting and relaxed pace make it one of the most welcoming ports in the Mediterranean. On our morning tour we will explore the narrow streets and the historical heart of the town. We will discover the Bosco quarter with the St Francis Convent, the 14th century church of St Marie Majeure and take in the views from the clifftop on which the city is built. Afterwards maybe take a walk in the nearby Marine Park which

offers some stunning views back to the town. We will sail late this evening allowing time for an after-dinner stroll.

Day 4 Porto Torres & Alghero, Sardinia.

Arrive in Sardinia and the port of Porto Torres over breakfast. A panoramic drive takes us to Nuraghe Palmavera with its main tower of the Nuraghe, which still has its dome shaped ceiling that dates back to 1100 BC. The complex, which was abandoned in the 5th century BC due to fire, shows the different phases of social life and political organisation of the tribal community. Continue to the Medieval city of Alghero, which was colonised by the Catalans in the 14th century and today there is still a strong Catalan identity throughout the town, and it is often even referred to as "Barceloneta". There will be some free time to walk through the Medieval streets and along the city walls or maybe visit the archaeological museum. Return to the ship for lunch and an afternoon at sea.

Day 5 Cagliari.

This morning we berth in the Sardinian capital of Cagliari from where we drive along the southwestern coast to reach Nora which was founded by the Phoenicians but also has Carthaginian and Roman ruins. After a period of Roman prosperity, there was a decline and in the 3rd century AD the city was engulfed by the sea. Still visible today are the remains of a Carthaginian warehouse and various Roman buildings including the baths with splendid mosaics and the theatre. After lunch on board we explore the ancient city of Cagliari. On a guided walking tour we will stroll around the old town with its narrow streets running along a steep hillside. See the terraced Piazza del Palazzo and the 14th century Cathedral of St Cecilia.

Day 6 Palermo, Sicily.



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Spend a leisurely morning at sea before we arrive in the Sicilian capital of Palermo at lunchtime. This afternoon you can choose to explore the city, famous for its jumbled and picturesque streets punctuated with ornate Baroque churches, domed Arab mosques and the glittering Byzantine mosaics that reveal a unique and diverse heritage. We visit the impressive 12th century cathedral which houses the royal tombs of Henri VI and King Ruggiero. Alternatively, join an excursion to Monreale Cathedral, said to be the most beautiful Norman Church in Italy, designed and completed by William the Good in 1174. With its thick walls and powerful towers, the exterior looks like an austere fortress yet it is the interior of this great cathedral which is its crowning glory. Here the large nave, with its side aisles and grey granite columns set off the exquisite Byzantine mosaics on the walls above the arches.

Day 7 Messina for Taormina.

From the nearby port of Messina we will visit Taormina, a walled town lying in the shadow of Mount Etna, Europe's highest volcano. The town has been a popular tourist destination since the 19th century and our guided tour will include walking the characteristic alleys before visiting the 15th century Palazzo Corvaja and the impressive Greek Theatre from where there are marvellous views over the town and coast. Those who wish to spend longer here will be able to take lunch independently in one of the local restaurants and enjoy an afternoon exploring at leisure before our coach returns to Messina. Alternatively, return to the ship for lunch and an afternoon at leisure in Messina before we sail this evening.

Day 8 Syracuse & Noto.

Syracuse was founded by the Greeks in 734 BC and by the 5th century was a political and military power throughout the

Mediterranean which rivalled Athens as the largest and most beautiful city in the Greek world. There will be a choice of excursions this morning. Maybe choose to visit the Neapolis Archaeological Park where we will find a well preserved Greek theatre with seats carved from limestone. Paradise Quarry, now an attractive garden and orange grove, was the primary source of that limestone and is the site of the curious 'Ear of Dionysius', a vast grotto with an amplifying resonance. Alternatively explore the Baroque village of Noto. Built in 1703 Noto is a picturesque city located on the terraced slopes of Mount Iblei among olive groves and almond trees. A guided walk along the central streets will reveal the 18th century Palazzo Ducezio and some Baroque churches: San Francesco Immacolata, the cathedral, San Carlo, Santa Chiara and the imposing Palazzo Nicolaci di Villadorata, built in 1737. The afternoon is free to explore independently before we meet this evening for a private concert in one of the town's palazzos accompanied by local food and wine.

Day 9 Agrigento for Valle dei Templi.

Spend a morning at sea as we cruise along the south coast of Sicily docking at lunchtime. Although handsome in its own right and awash with Medieval atmosphere, Agrigento is not our main reason for calling at this southern coast port. Close by is the Valle dei Templi, a series of Doric temples and the most captivating of Sicilian Greek remains, a grouping unique outside Greece. Surrounded in greenery of olive and almond trees, admire the Temple of Hera, the Temple of Concordia, the Dioscuri Temple, the Temple of Olympic Jove and the Temple of Hercules.

Day 10 Valletta, Malta to London.

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Disembark after breakfast and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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YOUR SHIP: ISLAND SKY

YOUR SHIP: Island Sky

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

With a maximum passenger capacity of only 116, a vessel of her size is capable of carrying many more but instead the MS Island Sky has the benefit of unusually large suites, luxuriously appointed public areas and spacious outside decks. There is a high ratio of crew to passengers- the friendly crew of 75 crew and Scandinavian captains are experienced mariners, having been in service aboard large 2000 plus passenger vessels and who now prefer a less frantic life aboard a small ship. If, like them and us, you prefer a more peaceful life at sea, you will find the MS Island Sky the perfect ship. When choosing the vessel for your next voyage of discovery, you can select a ship with endless entertainment and impersonal service or come with us where peace, high quality service and attention to detail are the order of the day. We promise there will be no organised entertainment, fancy dress, deck games or any of the usual big ship experiences. The atmosphere on board is more akin to a private yacht or country hotel. A little music in the lounge or bar after dinner, guest speakers, informative port briefings from our cruise director and of course good food which may be enjoyed leisurely in the attractive dining room. After a day ashore you will return to the comfort and peace of a well run and exceedingly

comfortable ship. Your Suite Onboard there are 57 exceptionally spacious and well designed suites. All feature a sitting room area and some have private balconies. The feeling of luxury is enhanced by the wood panelling and brass, which predominates throughout the vessel conveying the atmosphere of a private yacht. The passenger accommodation is arranged over five decks and all suites have outside views. Each affords considerable comfort with en-suite bathroom featuring marble-topped vanity unit with sink and walk-in shower, large wardrobes, dressing table with large mirror and stool and excellent storage. There is a mini-fridge, flat screen television with inbuilt DVD player which can also play CDs and a telephone in each suite. Bottled water, towelling dressing gowns and slippers are also provided for your comfort. Other facilities include a programmable electronic safe, hairdryer, assorted toiletries and individually controlled air-conditioning and heating. The suites on each deck have their own colour theme. Soft hues and blended tones enhance the traditional maritime style making the passenger accommodation an inviting and relaxing place to be. Your Space The spacious and finely decorated public rooms include a large lounge where daily briefings and talks will be provided throughout the voyage and an elegant bar where a pianist plays periodically throughout the day. The bar also features a 24-hour tea and coffee station. The onboard library is the perfect place to relax with a book and is stocked with reference books pertaining to the places the vessel is visiting along with a selection of games and two computers with internet access. Daily newspapers and magazines are also placed in the library depending on local availability. There is

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also WI-FI access throughout the vessel. Outside there is a rear sun deck where meals are served in warm weather under shade, a bar and comfortable deck furniture for sun bathing or relaxing with a book. On the top deck there is a Jacuzzi and further observation and sun deck. There is also a small hairdressers on board with appointments made on request. Your Dining Another benefit of a small ship is the quality of the cuisine. With only one sitting and a maximum of just over 100 passengers, the galley is able to provide delicious meals. Where possible and when it meets his high standards, the chef will obtain local produce in markets or buy the catch of the day from a passing fishing boat. Such purchases enhance the well stocked larders and bring a local touch to the



varied menus.

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PRICING



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