



PASSAGE THROUGH THE SEYCHELLES

The Seychelles offers the visitor a tropical beauty that is difficult, if not impossible to match anywhere else in the world. Spread out over a vast area of the Indian Ocean, they offer everything from quiet sophistication and enchanting scenery to wild and uninhabited nature reserves, where the very remoteness of the islands has protected them from the worst excesses of mankind. We know the region well having operated vessels there for almost thirty years and if ever there was a region perfect for expedition cruising it is here, a timeless world of wonders both below and above the water. With our fleet of Zodiacs we can reach the unreachable, landing on remote beaches, walking through verdant rainforest and national parks and getting close to some unique flora and fauna. Obviously, such beauty and serenity is best enjoyed with a small number of travelling companions and the MS Hebridean Sky is an ideal vessel, with a maximum of just over 100 passengers she offers all the comforts of a larger vessel, but with the added luxury of a small number of passengers and an expert expedition team who will add much to your enjoyment. Setting sail from Tanzania, we have a full day to explore atmospheric Zanzibar before we spend time discovering Kilwa Kisiwani, a site of exceptional historical interest. Continuing to the Seychelles, our journey will include all aspects of this extraordinary island nation from the lesser known and rarely visited Outer Seychelles where we visit the Aldabra Islands, the world's largest coral atoll and a World Heritage Site to the developed Inner Seychelles with staggeringly beautiful islands such as Aride and Praslin. For many the highlight of the voyage will be our time spent exploring the Aldabra Island Group, the breeding ground of the giant tortoise and in addition

to seeing some of these endearing creatures we should also encounter dolphins and turtles as well as countless birds including the flightless rail, the last flightless bird in the Indian Ocean. To explore the abundant crystal clear waters of the vast lagoon and to set foot on atolls which have never been exploited by the hand of man is a rare



experience.

ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
Fly by scheduled indirect flight.

Day 2 Dar es Salaam.

Arrive today and transfer to the MS Hebridean Sky. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we sail this evening.

Day 3 Zanzibar.

Our arrival into Zanzibar's colourful harbour which will be crowded with dhows, very much sets the scene for our visit to



this Arab-style city with its long narrow streets, bazaars, houses with overhanging balconies and intricately carved doorways. On a morning walking tour, soak up the timeless atmosphere of Stone Town including Livingstone House, Sultan's Palace, the slave market and the Old Fort. The afternoon is free to relax and explore independently or join a tour to a spice farm to experience the various fruits and spices cultivated on the island. Alternatively, travel to Jozani Forest which sustains a variety of wildlife and birds, including the rare red colobus monkey, indigenous to the island.

Day 4 Kilwa Kisiwani.

Over lunch we anchor off Kilwa Kisiwani, a site of exceptional historical interest where the atmospheric ruins represent a wide sweep of East African coastal history, from the heights of the Swahili and Shirazi trading civilisation to the darker days of slavery and the uprisings against German rule. Once one of Africa's wealthiest towns, Kilwa Kisiwani is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and contains the world's most extensive and bestpreserved Swahili ruins. We will spend the afternoon on a walking tour and see the prominent fort and the Great Mosque which stood at the heart of this ancient city which was once the largest in East Africa.

Day 5 At Sea.

Our lecture programme continues as we spend a relaxing day at sea sailing to the Seychelles.

Days 6 to 8 Aldabra Islands, Seychelles.

We have three days to enjoy the Aldabra group of islands and our itinerary will be in the hands of our Expedition Leader and Captain who will monitor the local conditions to ensure we maximise our time here. Whilst our itinerary is flexible, we hope

to call at the island of Assumption which was ruthlessly plundered for its vast deposits of guano in the early 20th century. Happily, peace has returned, and the wildlife of rare birds and green turtles are once again in abundance. Our time here will be spent beachcombing, on nature walks or snorkelling. We also hope to reach Cosmoledo where a huge ring of twelve islands circles a lagoon. Many of the atolls are still to be surveyed and we will explore some of them by Zodiac. This is an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area with all three species of booby found in the Seychelles including the last breeding site for the brown booby. Also spot sooty terns and great frigate birds. We will also spend time on Aldabra, the island referred to by Sir Julian Huxley as "One of nature's treasures and should belong to the whole world". Aldabra is unique and every time we call at what is believed to be the world's largest atoll we find something new of interest. Sightings have been made of the extremely rare white throated rail and the atoll is also home to the world's second largest colony of frigate birds and the largest crab, the coconut crab. Whilst exploring by Zodiac it is difficult to know in which direction to look. The clear blue seas abound with life, the skies are alive with varied birdlife and ashore giant land tortoises forage as they have done for millions of years. We hope to explore Picard Island with a short walk to see some of the numerous tortoises and robber crabs or swim in the lagoon, a vast 17 mile stretch of shallow clear water. From our Zodiacs we can watch the ever-changing undersea world and snorkel in colourful coral waters.

Day 9 Farquhar Group.

Spend the morning at sea before we anchor off Farquhar where we will use our Zodiacs to explore the sparkling lagoon of this remote, atoll ringed island of coconut and casuarina trees.



Hawksbill and green sea turtles come to the atoll to nest and several of the Farquhar Group's islands are Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas. The island is a haven providing us with a delightful afternoon of bird watching or snorkelling.

Day 10 Alphonse Islands.

There are three islands in the Alphonse group and as we approach the islands over lunch you will understand why they are regarded by many to be the most beautiful of the 115 islands in the Seychelles archipelago. On the main island the circular lagoon offers good snorkelling and there are a number of tracks across the island to enjoy island walks.

Day 11 Amirante Islands.

This morning we arrive at the 28 islands in the Amirante Group of islands which were discovered by Vasco de Gama in 1501 and are considered to be some of the most pristine and untouched islands in the world. If conditions permit we will spend the day on Desroches, the largest of the islands, although still only measuring six kilometres by 1.5 kilometres. Enjoy nature walks with our naturalists and members of the island's conservation team observing the flora and fauna and in particular the giant tortoises and nesting turtles. Meanwhile keen snorkellers will have the opportunity to swim over the outlying coral.

Day 12 Aride & Curieuse.

Early this morning we will anchor off Aride, one of the finest and most important seabird islands in the Indian Ocean. Over one million seabirds breed on the island including tropical shearwater, lesser noddy, frigatebirds and roseate tern and also five species unique to the Seychelles such as the Seychelles warbler and Seychelles magpie robin. The island is largely

covered in native woodland including the endemic wright's gardenia, a shrub with beautifully scented flowers found nowhere else in the world. Sail over lunch to Curieuse, a rugged island which was once home to a leper colony and now houses an eco-museum and visitor centre. The island is an important nesting site for hawksbill turtles and boasts endemic vine and mangroves which we explore on an island walk.

Day 13 Praslin & Grande Soeur.

From our overnight anchorage we will land on Praslin to explore the 'Vallee de Mai', the last remnant of the original high canopied Seychelles palm forest and home to the coco de mer. We will walk its paths looking out for the rare black parrot and enjoying its natural beauty. Return to the ship for lunch as we sail the short distance to Grande Soeur, an idyllic uninhabited island. Spend the afternoon walking the island trails which link the island's white sand beaches and maybe catch sight of some of the giant Aldabra tortoises or enjoy a final snorkelling opportunity in the turquoise waters.

Day 14 Mahe to London.

Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for our scheduled indirect flight to London.

Day 15 London.

Arrive this morning.

Please Note:

Flexibility is the key to an expedition cruise; sometimes the whole day's schedule will be changed to maximise your experience, something that would not be possible on a large cruise ship. Each day holds something new and below are some extracts from the ship's log from last season which will provide



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you with an idea of what to expect.



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YOUR SHIP: HEBRIDEAN SKY

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VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Hebridean Sky has always been known for its effortless elegance, impeccable service and atmosphere of charm and camaraderie. Now we add increased adventure options and an on-site Passenger Service Representative. Hebridean Sky is the perfect blend of luxury and adventurous exploration. Is it a luxury ship? An adventure ship? It's both! The vessel underwent a multi-million pound refurbishment in Sweden in Spring 2016. **ONBOARD DINING** Great expeditions require great food! We are pleased to offer daily changing breakfast, lunch and dinner menus with an emphasis on providing well balanced and nutritional cuisine. Our team of international chefs has boat loads of creativity and you are sure to experience a variety of interesting dishes throughout your voyage. The restaurant is located on Deck 2 and our service team looks forward to providing a memorable dining experience. **IMPECCABLE SMALL-SHIP AMENITIES** Returning from excursions, passengers enjoy complimentary refreshments, afternoon tea and all-day coffee in The Club, a gracious space for relaxation, surrounded by panoramic windows. Other Sea Explorer features include: Library with Internet access Lounge with audiovisual facilities Dining room Wraparound sun deck with Jacuzzi Exercise room

Medical facilities with available doctor Elevator serving all passenger decks Swimming/zodiac platform All Voyages Include: Up to Two Pre-Voyage Hotel Nights Complimentary Wine or Beer with Dinner Certified Emergency MD and Clinic World Class Cuisine Live Entertainment Complimentary Coffee/Tea station Voyage Photographer Dedicated Passenger Service Manager Complimentary Expedition Jacket Please note deck



plan may vary.

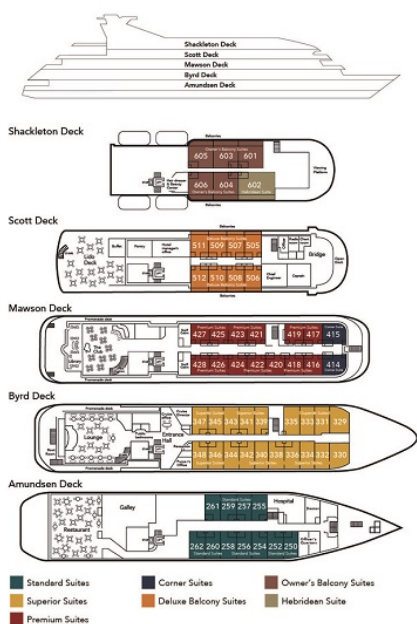
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PRICING

19-Jan-2025 to 02-Feb-2025

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