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13 DAYS LUXURY BRITISH ISLES CRUISE - LISBON TO LONDON

Brilliant birdlife, quirky islands, and fortified history await on this Atlantic voyage from Lisbon to the iconic Tower Bridge. Spot colourful puffins and graceful Manx shearwaters among the many seabirds, as we explore the remarkable islands of England, Wales, and the English Channel. Delve into WWII history, admire medieval castles and explore islands of car-free tranquillity. Discover stunning beaches, breathtaking coastal scenery, and fascinating wildlife.



ITINERARY

Day 1 - Lisbon

A glorious mosaic of beauty, freedom and authenticity, Portugal's capital is a stirring artwork of a city. Known for the seven hills it spreads across, and its stirring fado music, Lisbon is a pastel-coloured blend of houses and beautiful tile artworks - and this creative city strikes a perfect harmony between natural and manmade beauty. Stroll along Alfama's steep, cobbled

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streets as you explore one of the city's oldest neighbourhoods - where each house and door could be its own photograph. Look for the decorative tiles, with the distinctive blues and whites of Azulejo ceramics, and visit the dedicated museum to learn more. Afterwards, wind up to Sao Jorge Castle, where views out across Lisbon's red rooftops unravel. Just one of many majestic viewpoints, you can also seek out Miradouro da Graça for perhaps Lisbon's finest panorama, with the copper-coloured suspension bridge stretching over sparkling water beyond the sea of buildings. The elegant Tower of Belem rises in the Tagus estuary and is a historic defender of these shores. The grand, carved cloisters of Jeronimos Monastery spread out close by, and there's another UNESCO recognised location close by at Sintra, where a colourful town is set amid thick gardens and towering mountains - capped by the royal Pena Palace. Later, relax and take a quick break to drink Ginjinha, a cherry liqueur made from chocolate cups instead of coffee. Lisboetas have a sweet tooth, and the famous Pastel de Nata's crumbling pastry and caramelised-custard topping is the essential accompaniment to any coffee stop.

Day 2 - Vigo (Galicia)

Located in in Galicia, in the northwest of Spain on the Portuguese border, Vigo is perhaps the country's most underrated destination. Considered by many as "just" an industrial fishing port (meaning the seafood rarely travels further than a mile to your plate), Vigo seduces everyone with its cuisine, landscape and warm Spanish welcomes. Like many of Galicia's coastal towns, life in Vigo has been dictated by the ocean. The city dates back to Roman times and Romanesque architecture such as the churches of Santa Maria de Castrelos, Santiago de Bembrive, San Salvador de Coruxo can be found all

over the city. From the 16th-18th centuries it became alive with commercial trade and buccaneers looking for sunken treasure. The town still enjoys its status as having sunken treasure in its waters, and debates about who would own this if ever discovered periodically colour local conversations. The old town and fishermen's quarter are worth exploring, although unfortunately with the port's rapid expansion in the 20th century, many of the original fishermen's houses were demolished. However, remnants of the city's Medieval past are still visible and a trip along the Spanish-Portuguese border will reward you with the beautiful walled Medieval city of Tui and the Velansa Fortress. The 13th century fortress offers a splendid view of the fortified Cathedral of Tui on the opposite side of the River Miño. Mount Castro, a castle fortress actually in the city, commands a magnificent view of Vigo and the bay.

Day 3 - Day at sea

Days at sea are the perfect opportunity to relax, unwind and catch up with what you've been meaning to do. So whether that is going to the gym, visiting the spa, whale watching, catching up on your reading or simply topping up your tan, these blue sea days are the perfect balance to busy days spent exploring shore side.

Day 4 - Treско, Isles of Scilly

For many visitors Treско is the most attractive of the Isles of Scilly. This is especially due to its Abbey Garden, which is home to thousands of exotic plant species from around 80 different countries. Plant collector Augustus Smith began the gardens in the 1830s on the site of an old Benedictine Abbey by channelling the weather up and over a network of walled enclosures built around the Priory ruins. He had three terraces carved from the rocky south slope and maximised Treско's mild

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Gulf Stream climate. Even in mid-winter there still are hundreds of plants flowering here. Another surprising attraction at the Abbey Garden is the collection of figureheads from ships that wrecked among the Isles of Scilly.

Day 4 - St Mary's (Isles of Scilly)

Scattered 30 miles offshore from England's most south-westerly point - Land's End - the Isles of Scilly are home to rich wildlife, and green land sloping to powdery white beaches. The Isles of Scilly's biggest island harbours around 1,600 people - roughly three-quarters of the total population - and is one of five occupied islands. Isolated and serene, life here hums along at its own pace in this archipelago's bubble, which enjoys the UK's mildest climate, and some of its most spectacular beaches. Hugh Town is the centre of St Mary's, and you'll be warmly welcomed by the incredibly tight-knit local community. A peaceful place, watch out when the waters are suddenly parted by the competition of gig racing - the island's sporting pride and joy - which sees teams competing in colourful rowboats. Elsewhere, catch sight of Atlantic seals and seabirds like puffins and fulmars, along nine miles of coastline. You can also spot the ghostly shipwrecks strewn around the island's waters, and the 140 islands and skerries that have made treacherous sailing historically. There's a dense collection of historical sites that belies the islands' small size - from a former prime minster's grave to star-shaped fortresses. Tresco Abbey Garden is one of the UK's most vibrant gardens, with diverse plants bathing in the warmer climate and over 300 species on display. Taste the rewards of the mild weather with a glass of wine from England's most south-westerly vineyard.

Day 5 - Holyhead

Scenic lighthouses soar from craggy outcrops over crashing waves around Holyhead - a Welsh coastal gem known as a busy ferry port connecting Wales with Dublin. The iconic South Stack Lighthouse - built in 1809 and rumoured to be haunted - shines brightly on top of a photogenic rocky outcrop, reachable only by a nerve-testing bridge suspended over the wild waters below, and a series of almost 400 steps. Ellin's Tower is perfect for seabird encounters - spot puffins, razorbills, and guillemots nesting among the jagged cliffs, while red-billed choughs circle overhead. Fresh sea breezes brush against you on walks out above the waters to the lighthouse at the terminus of Holyhead Breakwater, which is the longest in the UK at 1.7 miles. The long wall protects the harbour from the whims of the Irish Sea. Located in the oldest lifeboat station in Wales, Holyhead Maritime Museum is a fascinating voyage through the area's deeply-entrenched maritime heritage. Uncover tales of eerie shipwrecks, rescue missions, and Holyhead's Roman origins. Breathe in briny air on coastal walks in Breakwater Country Park, or ascend Holyhead Mountain's 220 metres. The relatively gentle climb dutifully rewards with views of the Skerries Islands, and perhaps even Ireland's emerald shores. Holyhead is also a great jumping off point for the Anglesey Coastal Path, a 130-mile trail snaking along some of Wales' trademark wild and rugged coastal scenery.

Day 6 - Skomer Island

Skomer Island is Wales's remote and wonderful wildlife paradise, a perfect place to encounter Atlantic puffins burrowing into wildflower-speckled cliffs. Just off the Pembrokeshire coast, this wildlife sanctuary shelters a rich array of birds and wildlife and offers a unique natural experience. Between April and July, thousands of colourful and characterful puffins flock to the

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island to breed along its rugged cliffs, wildflower meadows, and sheltered bays. Walking slowly around Skomer's coastal path is an extraordinary wildlife immersion. Witness more than 40,000 preening, photogenic puffins at The Wick, and watch on as they return to feed their chicks with freshly caught fish. The small island is also home to the world's largest colony of Manx shearwaters, with over 300,000 pairs nesting in the many burrows that pock the island's terrain. As afternoon turns to evening, the birds gather on the surrounding seas, creating a noisy cacophony as they return home. The island's natural shelter is also sought by red-billed choughs, and grey seals lounge lazily on the shores. Dolphins sometimes visit the nutrient-rich waters, and a stunning array of wildflowers bloom throughout the summer, adding splashes of colour to the landscape. With such natural riches, Skomer has for decades served as a valuable research hub, especially for scientists from Oxford University. They visit to study the incredible bird populations and their behaviour.

Day 6 - Milford Haven, Wales

Welcoming you to the wild beauty of the Pembrokeshire coast, Milford Haven is a gateway to some of Wales's best sea views, historical ruins, and diverse birdlife. Sail into the largest river estuary in Wales to reach the deep harbour of this former whaling town and current energy hub. The warehouses of the revitalised waterfront have been repurposed into craft shops, bright cafes and intriguing restaurants. From Milford Haven, it's not far to the natural drama of the Pembrokeshire Coast Path. Sandy beaches, rock archways and fantastic views of Atlantic seas are laid out along a protected 186-mile walking trail. Visit legendary Pembroke Castle, one of the region's most impressive fortresses. Perched on a rocky promontory overlooking the

flowing River Cleddau, this stout stronghold is where Henry VII was born. It boasts towering walls, grand towers, and plenty of medieval mystique. To the south, you can find the limestone cliffs of St Govan's Head, sheltering colonies of red-billed choughs and peregrine falcons, and learn tales of the 6th Century St Govan's Chapel that clings to the cliffs. Local legend says the stone sanctuary was built where St Govan, a hermit, sought refuge from pirates. There is a thrilling descent down the steps to the chapel, with Atlantic waves smashing the cliffs below. At the southern tip of Pembrokeshire, the copper-red cliffs of St Ann's Head - Wales's sunniest spot - reveal sweeping views from the lighthouse that crowns the remote headland.

Day 7 - Isle of Lundy

Taking its name from the Norse word for puffin, Lundy is a secluded sanctuary for seabirds and the UK's marine wildlife. Just 12 miles off the coast of Devon, yet seemingly a world away, tiny Lundy Island rises where the River Severn meets the Bristol Channel and merges into the vast Atlantic's waters. Its stark, soaring cliffs face out towards the next landmass - the distant Americas - while the eastern grasslands offer room to roam for goats, deer and ponies. Designated as the UK's first Marine Nature Reserve, Lundy is a true haven for wildlife enthusiasts and bird watchers. Puffins, Manx shearwaters, and peregrine falcons nest on Lundy during the spring and summer months, while the surrounding waters teem with grey seals, basking sharks, dolphins, and porpoises. Beneath the waves, divers relish an underwater world rich with soft corals, anemones, and a wide variety of fish species, as well as the intrigue of historic shipwrecks. You can explore the island on foot, following trails that offer sweeping coastal views. The towering cliffs offer breathtaking panoramas of the surrounding

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sea and dramatic landscapes. Humans have been intrigued by Lundy for over 4,000 years, but development remains minimal, restricted mostly to a small village and a scattering of scenic lighthouses, stout churches, castles and monuments and, of course, a cosy pub - the Marisco Tavern.

Day 8 - Dartmouth

Situated on the south-west coast of England, it seems that Dartmouth is a town that time forgot. Pretty pastel painted houses dating from the medieval times flank the idyllic port, while the enchanting jumble of streets only add to the quiet authenticity of this, very English, seaside town. The surrounding 120 miles of stunning coastline and acres of rural countryside are any adventurer's dream, so if you enjoy beach combing, hiking or simply just admiring the view, this sleepy little Devonshire village will not disappoint. Known for its cream teams (an absolute must), ice cream, as well as the obligatory fish'n'chips, Dartmouth's local speciality is fresh Devon crab. Best served with a pint of local beer and a bowl of home-made mayonnaise, this local speciality is simply delicious.

Day 9 - St Helier

Although it's just nine miles long and five miles wide, the largest of the Channel Islands packs an outsized punch, boasting scenic beaches, clear waters and a wealth of historical intrigue. St. Helier, Jersey's energetic capital, revolves around a lively central market, King Street's shops, cafes, and restaurants, and the picturesque harbour. During World War II, Jersey was occupied by the Nazis for five years, and the occupiers used forced labour to construct an elaborate network of war tunnels that still survive, and can be explored, today. The towering walls of Elizabeth Castle, fortified throughout its history, stand as a reminder of the island's strategic importance. This impressive

castle, perched just offshore, has watched over Jersey for centuries, even providing refuge for King Charles II during the English Civil War. At low tide, you can walk the causeway revealed by the retreating waters to reach the 16th-century fortress, where sweeping views of St. Aubin's Bay await from the battlements. The island's unique history of occupation and maritime traditions are exhibited at Jersey's museum, which invites you right back to prehistoric times. The Maritime Museum - situated in a former ship building warehouse - tells tales of the seas that shaped these islands. Liberation Square, near the harbour, features a poignant monument celebrating the joy of the residents as they waved flags of freedom after the end of the occupation.

Day 10 - Sark Island, Channel Island

The crowning glory of the Channel Islands, Sark Island is an unbeatable place to escape modern life's busyness and slip into serenity. Nestled between Guernsey and Jersey, the island is just 24 miles from France's Normandy coast. The rhythm of life is dictated by foot, bicycle, or the gentle rumble of a traditional horse-drawn carriage. The crisp, beautiful sea is visible practically everywhere on the island. Explore sweeping trails across the emerald cliffs, finding hidden beaches, coves, and sea caves. Cars are forbidden on the island, which plunges into deep, undisturbed darkness at night, allowing the glorious strands of the Milky Way to shine brightly overhead. Sark Island has been designated as Europe's first International Dark Sky Community. Soak up the silence and stillness of this serene land in a blissful time warp of tranquillity. It hasn't always been smooth sailing; and Sark's history reads like a fascinating tome. Regarded as one of the smallest semi-autonomous territories in the world, until recently, it was described as Europe's last feudal

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stronghold. Settled and occupied by many over the years, this two-square-mile island has seen it all. Nowadays, it is a semi-autonomous dependency of Guernsey. This colourful history has endowed Sark with a glorious independence and an idiosyncratic, quaint charm. With just 600 residents and a few content cows for company - Sark Island is a truly unique and rejuvenating place.

Day 10 - St Peter Port

The picturesque capital of Guernsey proves that you don't have to go to the Caribbean for white sand and crystal clear water. St Peter Port is both wonderfully pretty and atmospheric, full of blooming floral displays, tiny stone churches and brightly painted boats. What's more, summers are mostly sunny and comfortable, making the weather something you don't have to worry about. As the capital of Guernsey, St. Peter Port is where the "action" is found. This mainly takes the form of strolling the cobbled streets, stopping every now and then to admire, and perhaps photograph, the stunning views. Once French (original name: St. Pierre Port), the town is at least 800 years old, with the stone castle and maze like streets to prove it. Once you have made your way up to the ancient castle, make like a local and find refreshment with a cream tea, washed down perhaps with a glass of cider! If the weather is on your side, then surely there is no more invigorating pastime than hiking up to the spectacular Guernsey cliffs, taking in stunning views of wildflowers, sandy beaches and English Channel views. For those who want to spread their wings a little further, the tiny island of Herm is just a 20-minute boat ride away, and homes no cars, one pub, a few cows, some puffins and about 50 people. Don't be fooled by St Peter Port's nostalgic exterior. The seaside town has made a name for itself as a foodie heaven, with everything from beach

huts to Michelin starred restaurants offering sumptuous, locally sourced fare.

Day 11 - Portland, England

The tied island of Portland sprawls out attractively into the English Channel, linked to the mainland by just the Chesil barrier beach's thin sliver of sand. Portland forms part of England's dramatic Jurassic Coast, a UNESCO World Heritage Site of limestone cliffs, coastal rock formations and beautiful bays. It may be a tiny teardrop of an island, but with pirate heritage, historic castles and soaring lighthouses, there's a lot to keep you busy, as you soak in Dorset's relentlessly wonderful coastal appeals. Photograph the handsome white and red-banded lighthouse, which watches out over the rock-interrupted waves, on a breathtakingly photogenic outcrop. Flashing out warnings of a hull-shredding offshore bank, the lighthouse marks the southern tip of this island, and lurches out five miles towards the Channel Islands. Rock mined from Portland has been used to create some of the most famous buildings in the world, including St Paul's Cathedral and the United Nations' Building of New York. The stunning natural arch of Durdle Door is close by - looming over a scenic cove, it is undoubtedly one of England's prettiest beaches and most beautiful natural landmarks. A 16th-century Tudor castle stands guard over Portland's harbour, and was one of London 2012's more unusual Olympic venues, hosting sailing events. The waters here remain filled with sailboats harnessing the power of the salty sea breeze. You can also learn of D-Day history, and the role this area played in one of the most important land invasions ever seen, at Castletown D-Day Centre.

Days 12 - 13 - London (Tower Bridge)

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Centuries-old architecture shares an instantly recognisable skyline with the modern metallic and glass shards of skyscrapers in London, a city of endless history and tradition. Arrive at the centre of it all, below the watch of one of the most famous bridges in the world, Tower Bridge. From here, you can begin a tour of iconic landmarks, and discover why England's capital is one of the most visited, adored and adulated cities. So much to see, so little time. The traditional and contemporary go hand in hand in London like nowhere else. Ascend the London Eye, for a birds-eye view of the city, before wandering across the Thames's wide flow to the Gothic architecture of the Houses of Parliament, and the rise of Big Ben's unmistakable clocktower. A hefty sprinkle of royal pageantry awaits at Buckingham Palace, where red-jacketed soldiers stomp sternly and solemnly in their duty, during ceremonies to mark the changing of the guards. Close to Tower Bridge, you'll find the Tower of London's historic fortress, palace and prison, while bustling central markets like Borough Market offer a taste of flavours from around the world. Sweeping green spaces like Hyde Park provide spacious relief from the skyscrapers, while world-class museums exhibit finely curated exhibitions from across the world, covering the entire scope of human history and invention, as well as the natural world. Greenwich's leafy parks and centres of refined study are close by, or a boat ride along the Thames will introduce you to this megacity from the perspective of the water.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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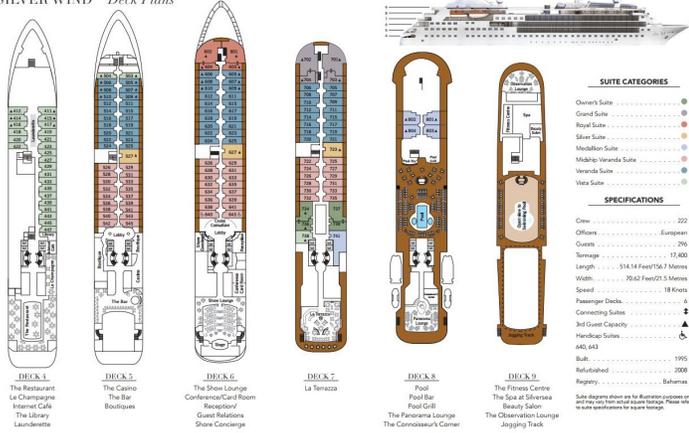
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