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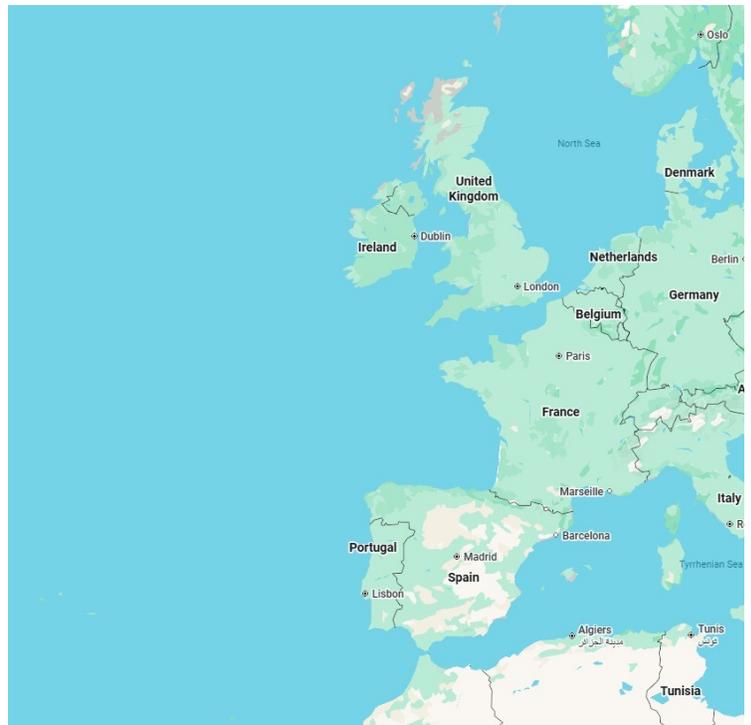
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17 DAYS LUXURY MEDITERRANEAN CRUISE - MALAGA TO DUBLIN

Journey from the Spanish south out west to Madeira's volcanic cliffs and the far-flung Azores, where geothermal springs bubble and crater lakes glimmer on Sao Miguel. Stroll UNESCO-listed Angra do Heroismo and visit remote Flores before heading for Ireland's emerald shores. Admire the soaring Cliffs of Moher, explore Iron Age forts on the Aran Islands, and spot puffins on the Skelligs. Visit the historic Old Midleton Distillery in Cobh before arriving in Dublin.



ITINERARY

Day 1 - Malaga (Costa del Sol)

Bathing in the Sunshine Coast's stunning subtropical climate, and laying out endless spectacular beaches, it's no surprise that Malaga is one of Spain's most popular cities. The already impressive cultural appeal of this holiday city has skyrocketed over recent years, and with a storied old town and Moorish fortifications, Malaga has a lot to offer. Nearby, you can recline on the renowned beaches of the Costa del Sol, or venture inland to discover the Moorish treasures of Granada and Cordoba. La

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Malagueta beach is Malaga's spacious urban beach, perfect for a sunbathe and a dip in the warm water, before enjoying seaside cocktails or seafood tapas in the restaurants nearby. Malaga and the Costa del Sol may be best known for glorious weather and beaches, but Malaga can now stake a genuine claim as an artistic powerhouse too. Visit the renowned Picasso museum - housed in the artist's birthplace - before exploring the freshly opened outpost of the Pompidou Centre. The art also spills out onto the streets in the colorful Soho district - splashed with vibrant street paintings. Known as La Manquita - or the one-armed woman - the city's cathedral rises over the historic old town. Its huge bell tower stands tall, but an accompanying second tower was never completed - hence the nickname. The Alcazaba fortress palace looms over the waterfront and forms a spectacularly preserved remnant from the era when the Moors controlled the Andalusia region. Discover more of the Arabic influence by visiting Granada's Alhambra palace, or Cordoba's La Mezquita mosque. Together with Seville's converted cathedral, the cities form Andalusia's Golden Triangle of Moorish wonders.

Days 2 - 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 shoreside.

Day 4 - Funchal, Madeira

Bedecked with dramatic cliffs, fertile mountains, and sun-gorged beaches, Madeira is a lush, colorful island of plants, paradise, and Portuguese-flavored pleasures. Bathing in year-round

sunshine, Funchal - the lowkey capital of Madeira - is perfect for slowing the pace, and toasting the thrilling scenery with a bottle of the island's famous wine. Narrow, cobblestone streets line the old town, where whitewashed buildings, iron-wrought balconies, and tiled patterns carry echoes of Lisbon. Rua de Santa Maria is the city's oldest street, and the doors have been vividly painted by local artists. Sit for a drink, to sample your choice of Madeira's renowned wines - Boal is the ideal option for those with a sweeter tooth. You'll also find Corpo Santo Chapel here, one of the few remaining buildings to have survived from the 15th century. Blossoming parks and gardens splash color around, and the sweet smell of pollen lingers in Parque de Santa Catarina. Look out over Funchal Harbor between the fountains and blooming flower beds, as ducks and swans enjoy leisurely days on the lake. Madeira Botanical Garden waits in the hills over the city, along with Palheiro Garden - a sophisticated and elegantly landscaped English garden, 500 meters above sea level. For an even more dramatic view of this gorgeous setting, head up to Cap Girao - a rusty-red cliff with a cable car strung up to its sheer drop. The cliff falls away vertically to the vivid blue waters below. Or head down to the sea, to enjoy Funchal's gorgeous pebble beaches rustling, framed by colossal, craggy cliffs.

Day 5 - Day at sea

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Day 6 - Ponta Delgada (Sao Miguel Island)

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Providing a gorgeous green welcome to sailors venturing on the long journey across the Atlantic, Ponta Delgada's shoreline is a reassuring sight, as it emerges into view. Sat on Sao Miguel Island, the largest of Portugal's Azores islands - which wait on an outpost of western Europe, some 1,100 miles from the mainland. Ponta Delgada is the island's largest city, and a place of spectacular volcanic vistas, steaming hot springs, and impressive landscaped gardens. The city's signature trio of arches welcomes you to Ponta Delgada, and its island of verdant volcanic contrasts. Wander between monochrome churches like the Gothic Church of St. Sebastian, and up to the Convent and Chapel of Our Lady of Hope - which houses the revered icon of Christ that is paraded through the streets annually, and believed to have miraculous powers by locals. Or, head for beaches offering sanctuary on charcoal-colored sands, or the Antonio Borges Botanical Gardens, where tropical plants add extra shades to the Green Island's scenery. Now extinct, the mighty Caldeira das Sete Cidades is a truly awe-inspiring sight - and the colossal collapsed volcanic caldera blooms with lush greenery and scattered wildflowers. The vast crater has been taken over by a glowing, picturesque lake, which reflects the blue sky above. A full three miles wide - and with a circumference of eight miles - it's a vast panorama to take in. The Lagoa de Fogo - or Lake of Fire - is another of the island's calderas - rise up to see the crumpled scenery encasing a beautiful lake. Sao Miguel Island's geothermal activity has practical uses too, and you can harness the powers to unwind any tired muscles after a long day, by sinking into the hot springs of Poca Da Dona.

Day 7 - Horta, Azores

Far adrift, in the Atlantic's vast sweep, Horta serves as a welcoming island respite for some truly epic ocean voyages. One of the most westerly parts of Europe, these Portuguese islands lie a full 1,100 miles from the coast of the mainland. The bustling marina here serves as the perfect stopover and a welcome respite for tired sailors and yachts embarking on transatlantic crossings. The colourful harbour is decorated with a multicoloured patchwork of their stories and flags, and adding to this massive, ever-growing mural is said to offer sailors protection while out on the seas. While Horta's clientele may come and go with the waves, there's nothing transient about the stunning volcanic cones and soaring wildflower-splashed hills that make up this beautiful Atlantic island pit-stop. Horta is the main city, and a charming welcome to dry land, as you step onto the pentagon-shaped island of Faial. On the frontier of continents, the violent meeting of the European and North American tectonic plates forged this beautiful archipelago - and the rich volcanic scenery here is ripe for exploration and adventure. The busy harbour lies before the dramatic backdrop of the neighbouring Pico Island's cloud-wisped peak - head up to Espalamaca Lookout for the best view of Horta's busy harbour and islands emerging nearby. Horta has a grand volcanic caldera of its own, and you can journey up through threads of cloud, to look down into the island's immense, bowl-shaped crater. The Lighthouse of Ponta dos Capelinhos is an island icon, having survived 1957's dramatic eruption. It now occupies a scenic location on a headland, surrounded by vast swathes of charred new land, which were churned out from the depths.

Day 8 - Santa Cruz das Flores, Azores

Flores means flowers and the island has been described as a floating green garden. This is due to the rich volcanic soils and

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the humid subtropical climate with frequent rainfall. Although not the original flowers, hydrangeas were introduced to the Azores from Asia by the Portuguese. They have thrived--used as fences and even becoming the official flower of the Azores. The colour of the flowers depends on the acidity and mineral content of the soil, with the blue colour typically growing in the acidic volcanic soils found on Flores. Flores, and Corvo Island, form the western group of the Azores archipelago. The two islands are located on the North American tectonic plate. To their east is the Mid Atlantic Ridge where plates meet. The whole Azores region is geologically active. Flores is a volcano whose last eruption was about 3000 years ago--recent for geologists. The central massif with deep valleys and high peaks dominates the view of the island, with or without clouds. Flores is one of UNESCO's Biosphere Reserves, recognising the partnership between ecology and the social use of the landscape by people for farms and vineyards. Whaling was an industry in the Azores until the 1980s, with shore-based crews and local processing works. Sperm Whales were targeted and the deep waters around the Azores still support them and rare beaked whales. Shallower water attracts Common, Bottlenose and Atlantic Spotted dolphins. Look out for them from the ship when approaching and leaving the islands.

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Day 9 - Angra Do Heroismo, Azores

Sailing vessels needed a place to re-supply and repair on voyages between Europe and ports in Africa, the West Indies and the East Indies. Angra do Heroismo (Angra) on Terceira Island in the Azores was the ideal port of call. But only if you were the correct nationality at the time. Angra has had shaky times both politically and literally. The Azores sit on the Azores Triple Junction, the spot where the North American, Eurasian and African tectonic plates are slowly pulling apart. This makes

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them vulnerable to tremors and volcanic eruptions. A severe earthquake hit the islands of Terceira and Sao Jorge in 1980 leaving scores dead and thousands homeless. In Angra, many historic buildings were damaged. The town was so faithfully restored that the town centre became a World Heritage Site in 1983. The town square and 400-year-old military fortifications are key historic features. Battles have been fought on Terceira twice. In the 1580s, the islanders fought against the Spanish occupation of the Azores, before eventually losing control to Spain. The Sao Joao Baptista do Monte Brasil Fortress was built by the Spanish, who defended it until the Portugal restoration in 1642. The fortifications are now protected in Monte Brasil Natural Park. During the Liberal Wars (civil war) of the 1820s, Angra served as the capital of Portugal for a government in exile. Angra's citizens won a battle in 1829 which led to Angra earning the honorary title of do Heroismo "the Heroic". Not a bad title to brag about.

Days 10 - 12 - Day at sea

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Day 13 - Bantry

Located on the Wild Atlantic Way, one of the longest-defined coastal routes in the world, Bantry is a beautiful, busy market town and fishing port. Nestling amongst the drumlins at the head of Bantry Bay, it's a splendor of mountain scenery, hilly pastures, streams, lakes, and woods. The landscape changes with the moods of the sky.

The town has a long history, numerous megalithic monuments bear witness to the fact that Bantry has been inhabited since the early centuries. Explore more of Bantry's past with a visit to Carriganass Castle and the ancient stone circle at Kealkill.

Bantry House commands the finest views of Bantry Bay and is one of Ireland's most attractive, great houses, continually lived in and managed by the White family since 1739. Full of treasures collected on the travels of generations of Earls of Bantry, gorgeous restored formal gardens, and excellent tearooms, it's an unmissable treat. A climb of "one hundred steps" at the back of Bantry House gives an awesome view right across the bay.

Day 14 - Cliffs of Moher

"The cliffs of Moher rising out of the mist"... These words by the great American poet Wallace Stevens perfectly immortalize the Cliffs of Moher. Romantic, wild, mysterious, and breathtakingly beautiful, this landscape is to Ireland what poetry is to prose. There's no better way to soak in the views of Ireland's premier natural wonder than from the surface of the waves far down below their lofty heights. The immense scale and beauty of this 15 km stretch of 300-million-year-old cliffs gradually unveils itself from the privileged vantage point on deck. A mesmerizing highlight of the Wild Atlantic Way, the cliffs at the southwestern edge of County Clare are Ireland's most visited natural landmark, welcoming 1.5 million visitors annually. Spectacular and stark, they loom over 200 meters at their tallest point, where the iconic O'Brien's Tower salutes passing ships. From the perspective at sea level, the staggering scale of the layered,

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precipitous cliffs is starkly revealed, along with the relentless power and churn of nature, as Atlantic waves smash and break against the sheer rock wall. Designated as a UNESCO Global Geopark and enjoying Special Protection status, the cliffs offer rich spoils for birdwatchers. Thousands of guillemots, razorbills, fulmars, and kittiwakes thrive on the cliffs alongside the largest mainland colony of puffins. At certain times of the year, it's also possible to spot basking sharks gliding through the waters around you.

Day 14 - Kilronan, Aaran Islands

If you have ever wanted to imbibe in the Celtic legends of your past, then Kilronan is the answer to your prayers. Situated on the isle of Inishmore in the Aran Islands in County Galway, Cill Ronain - the official Gaelic spelling - is all about history, spirituality, and the kind of rejuvenation that can only be found on Irish soil. The first thing you should know about the Aran Isles is that they are exceptionally beautiful. National Geographic called them "one of the world's top island destinations" and they are universally recognized as being the "islands of saints and scholars". Windswept moors and craggy cliffs akin to a Victorian novel flank rolling seas that are Dantesque in their raw power. This is where nature comes home to roost (not to mention the 60,000 seabirds that call the islands their home). Inishmore (Inis Mor) is the biggest island of the archipelago, and as such has the most interesting Celtic history. Over 50 Celtic, Christian and pre-Christian sites are on Inishmore alone (with others on the other two islands that make up the rest of the archipelago). The most important of these sites is perhaps the prehistoric fort of Dun Aonghasa, "the most magnificent barbaric monument extant in Europe". Perched precariously on a 100-metre-high cliff, the fort dates back 3,000 years and is

one of Ireland's most ancient and sacred sites. Little is known of the history of Dun Aonghasa, not who Dun Aonghasa may have been, but a placing so close to the sea edge suggests ritualistic significance.

Day 15 - Skellig Islands & Ballinskelligs

If you think that the Skellig Islands look familiar, that's because they are. The Skelling Michal towers set the scene in episodes seven and eight of the Star Wars franchise, and local tourism has been feeling the force ever since. Aside from being in a galaxy far, far, away, the magnificent Skellig Michael Towers has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1996. The two Islands (Great Skellig and Little Skellig) were part of a Gaelic Christian Monastic settlement from the 6th to the 12th century and the towers on Skellig Michael (Great Skellig) are a "unique example of an early religious settlement" (as well as being a final resting place for Jedis). The towers are surely the main attraction of the area and are simply fascinating. Built in a beehive shape to protect against the harsh elements, they use local stone and no mortar. Today, some 1,400 years later, they are still practically intact. Little Skellig is equally as important for birders too; the island is home to almost 30,000 pairs of gannets, the second largest colony of seabirds in the world. Guillemots, Puffins, Manx Shearwaters, and Storm Petrels also nest on the island, making up the "Skellig Big Five".

Day 16 - Cobh

The picturesque little seaside town of Cobh, pronounced Cove, has a magnificent natural harbor, the second largest in the world. This contributed to Cobh's connection with some of the world's most famous ships. Of all the passenger ships that sailed from here though, the most notorious must be the Titanic, Cobh being her final port of call. Not surprisingly there are plenty

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of memorials to the ship in town including the not to be missed Titanic Experience. Through interactive experiences, visitors get the chance to experience life on board the ship and to discover more about the passengers who made that ill-fated voyage.

Back when the town was called Queenstown from 1849 - 1920, over 2.5 million people emigrated from Ireland through Cobh port. Some were heading to start new lives in North America, some involuntarily as convicts and others escaping famine. The Cobh Heritage Centre tells the moving stories of how these Irish people became scattered around the globe. Spike Island, just a short ferry ride away is Ireland's version of Alcatraz. Over 1,300 years old, the star-shaped fortress later had the dubious honor of being the world's largest prison. Daytime and spooky nighttime tours are possible for those who dare. Cobh is an extremely walkable town, down on the waterfront are some of the best views of the town. Brightly colored houses and friendly pubs, meander up the hilly street, drawing the eye to the town's focal point, the impressive St Colman's Cathedral towering above.

Day 17 - Dublin

Atmospheric cobbled streets, with buskers scraping fiddles and characterful pubs inviting passersby inside, is Dublin in a snapshot. A city of irrepressible energy and lust for life, Ireland's capital is as welcoming a place as you'll find. Horse-drawn carriages plod along cobbled centuries-old streets, blending with an easy-going, cosmopolitan outlook. Known for its fun-filled gathering of pubs, any excuse works to enjoy a celebratory toast and chat among good company. Home to perhaps the world's most famous beer - slurp perfect pourings of thick, dark Guinness - cranked out for the city's thirsty

patrons. Learn more about the humble pint's journey at the Guinness Storehouse. Dublin has come a long way since the Vikings established a trading port here, back in the 9th Century. In the time since, the city became the British Empire's de facto second city, and the Georgian imprint still adds oodles of historic character. Learn of 1916's Easter Uprising, when the Irish rebelled and established their independence here, as you visit the infamous, haunting Kilmainham Gaol. The uprising's leaders were tried and executed in these dark confines. Dublin's St. Patrick's Cathedral has immense history below its steep spire, which dates back to 1191. There's rich literary heritage to leaf through too, and the city's streets were rendered vividly in James Joyce's classic Ulysses. The Museum of Literature celebrates the full scope of Dublin's lyrical talents. Trinity College also has a prestigious roll-call of alumni - visit to see the Book of Kells, a beautifully illustrated bible of the medieval era.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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YOUR SHIP:

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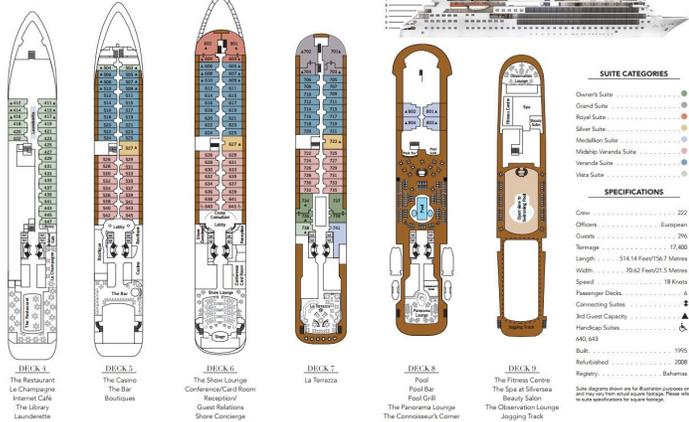
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