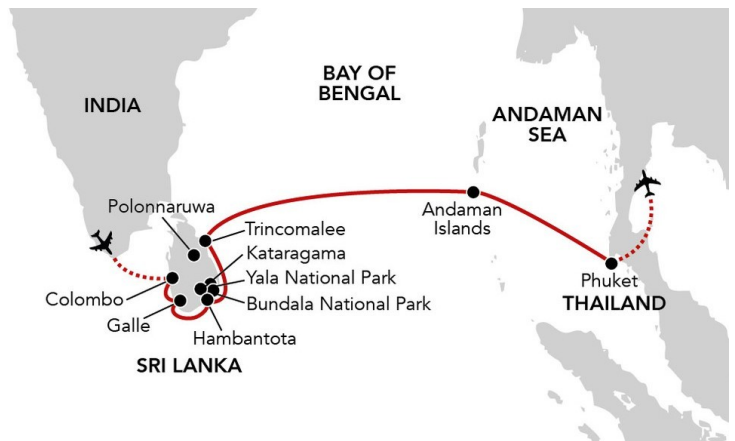




ACROSS THE BAY OF BENGAL - A VOYAGE FROM SRI LANKA TO THAILAND

Join the MS Island Sky and escape to warmer climes for this unique journey from Sri Lanka and across the Bay of Bengal, to Thailand. We will discover Sri Lanka in some depth before sailing to the tropical Andaman Islands and on to Phuket, returning each evening to all the comforts of the MS Island Sky. Such a trip by land would be a continuous connection of hotels, long road journeys and domestic flights whereas with our small ship we can journey along the coast through beautiful scenery enjoying a wonderful mix of cultural and natural wonders along the way. During our time in Sri Lanka we will explore Colombo with its Buddhist and Hindu temples and old colonial buildings and Galle Fort, the fortified old city founded by the Portuguese colonists in the 16th century and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In addition we visit Polonnaruwa, the 5th century ancient city considered to be one of the best planned archaeological sites in the country. There will also be opportunities to discover some natural world wonders with visits to Yala National Park, renowned for its rich wildlife, most notably its many elephants, and Bundala National Park, a haven for birdwatchers and Sri Lanka's first designated wetland site of international importance. After a week of exploration in Sri Lanka, we will spend a leisurely two days at sea as we head east across the Bay of Bengal allowing for time to catch up with fellow travellers and the onboard team regarding all you have seen and experienced. Arriving in the enchanting yet little known Andaman Islands, some 852 miles from mainland India, we have three days to explore these tropical islands with their pristine beaches and untouched primeval jungle. During our time here we will visit Port Blair, the capital which has a number

of museums showcasing the lives of the indigenous population, Ross Island where we will discover the island's rich history with remnants of the colonial era and also spend time on Havelock Island where there will be the opportunity to relax on the beach and swim in the inviting turquoise waters. Continuing on to Thailand and the island of Phuket, our final day will be spent exploring this 'pearl of the Andaman Sea' with its Buddhist temples, beautiful coastal scenery and



characterful capital.

ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Fly by scheduled flight.

Day 2 Colombo.



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Arrive and transfer to the MS Island Sky. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we moor overnight.

Day 3 Colombo.

Sri Lanka's commercial capital and largest city dates back over 600 years having been a trading hub for sea merchants and colonial rulers. Buddhist temples, Hindu temples, mosques and churches reflect the various beliefs practised all over the island and the beautiful facades of the old, colonial buildings contrast with the modern but elegant shopping arcades that have been developed inside. There will be a choice of activities today including a cultural tour visiting the Gangaramaya Buddhist Temple, the National Museum and Independence Square. Alternatively, visit the Kelaniya Buddhist Temple, located on the outskirts of the city. It is said that Buddha visited and preached his doctrine to a gathering of serpent-kings. Today worshippers come to lay sprigs of lotus flowers around the great white dagoba, light oil lamps, and sprinkle the base of the Tree of Enlightenment with purifying water. We can see the fine carvings and lovely frescoes, fascinating geometrically patterned ceiling paintings, and three important images of Buddha.

Day 4 Galle.

Awake this morning in Galle where we take a walking tour of the impressive Galle Fortress. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is the port where the Portuguese first landed in Sri Lanka in the 16th century and was then extensively fortified by the Dutch

during the 17th century. Also see the maritime museum, which is housed in an old Dutch house, the lighthouse, mosque, and church before taking a stroll through the narrow streets with its shuttered mansions and cloistered courtyards. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at leisure to explore Galle further at your own pace or alternatively join a tour to a nearby tea plantation where we will learn about the growing processes and enjoy a tasting.

[Days 5 & 6 Hambantota for Bundala National Park, Yala National Park & Kataragama.](#)

We have one and a half days in Hambantota from where we will visit some of the region's highlights. We explore Bundala National Park, a haven for birdwatchers and Sri Lanka's first declared Ramsar wetland. Located in the deep south of the island, the diversity of the park lies in its landscape, from dry thorny scrubland to sand dunes and salt marshes, to mangroves and lagoons. Take a jeep through the park and discover close to 200 species of bird as well as many species of butterflies, crocodiles, elephants and deer. Also known as Ruhunu, Yala National Park was designated as a wildlife sanctuary in 1900 and is now home to 44 varieties of mammals and 215 bird species. This vast region of arid scrub interspersed with pockets of dense forest and open patches of grassland hosts one of the highest densities of leopards in the world. On a Jeep safari we also hope to see sloth bears, jackals, wild boar, and elephants. In addition, there will be a chance to visit Kataragama, one of the three most important religious sites in Sri Lanka and a popular place of pilgrimage for Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and the indigenous Vedda communities of Sri Lanka and South India. According to Buddhists, this was one of the 16 places visited by



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Buddha during his visits to Sri Lanka. We will explore the religious complex built across the Menik Ganga which contains buildings from all three religions including the mosque, temple, the small archaeological museum, and the principal shrine of the god Kataragama.

[Day 7 Trincomalee & Polonnaruwa.](#)

Sailing to the northeast coast of Sri Lanka we arrive in Trincomalee, one of the finest deep water harbours of the world. Choose to join a morning excursion of Trincomalee which includes Fort Frederick built by the Portuguese in 1623, a walk to Swami Rock and a visit to Koneswarum Kovil, one of the five most holy Shaivate temples in the country. The afternoon will be free to relax on board or maybe visit one of the nearby beaches. Alternatively join a full day tour to Polonnaruwa. This 5th century ancient city was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982 and is considered to be one of the best planned archaeological sites in the country. The entire landscape of the region is punctuated by high man-made reservoirs, the most famous of which is Parakrama Samudra or the Sea of Parakrama, built during King Parakramabahu's reign in 1164-1196 AD. The monuments in the ancient city are relatively well preserved and highlights are the Royal Palace complex, including the King's Palace and Audience Hall and the spectacular Gal Vihare complex of four massive images of the Buddha cut from a single slab of granite.

[Days 8 & 9 At Sea.](#)

Spend a relaxing two days at sea as we cross the Bay of Bengal.

Maybe join our lecture programme in the lounge or find a spot on deck.

[Days 10 to 12 Andaman Islands, India.](#)

Located 1,000 kilometres off the East Coast of India in the Bay of Bengal, the Andaman Islands are an archipelago of approximately 300 islands renowned for their palm lined beaches, mangroves, tropical rainforests and coral reefs that support multiple species of marine life. Our two days of exploration will include Port Blair, the largest town, capital and main entry point of the islands where we will visit the 19th century Cellular Jail, the Naval Marine Museum and the Anthropological Museum which showcases the lives of the aboriginal tribes that populate some of the outer islands. On Ross Island we discover the former capital and administrative centre which was used by the British from 1857 until being abandoned after an earthquake in 1941. Exploring the island by foot we will see the ruins of the Chief Commissioner's House, church, hospital and former troops barracks surrounded by a protected forest which is a sanctuary to a variety of birds. Also visit the small museum where we can see photographs of the island from its heyday. Meanwhile on Havelock Island we can spend some time relaxing on one of the sandy beaches or swimming in the clear waters.

[Day 13 At Sea.](#)

Enjoy a leisurely day on board cruising across the Andaman Sea towards Thailand.



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Day 14 Phuket, Thailand.

Arriving in Thailand over breakfast we will have a choice of excursions this morning. An island drive will include Wat Chalong, the largest and most strikingly ornamented of Phuket's 29 Buddhist temples. Its intriguing history features a monk believed to have formidable healing powers. To this day, Thais from all over the country flock to Wat Chalong to pay homage to the monks and regain their physical and spiritual powers. Later see the Big Buddha Temple located at the top of Nark Kerd mountain. Alternatively, join a local speedboat to visit Phang Nga Bay, renowned for the limestone islands rising dramatically from the sea including the famous backdrop to the James Bond film "The Man with the Golden Gun". Spend the morning enjoying the scenery in the bay before we visit Koh Panyi, a settlement built over 200 years ago with houses built on stilts above the water.

Day 15 Phuket to London.

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

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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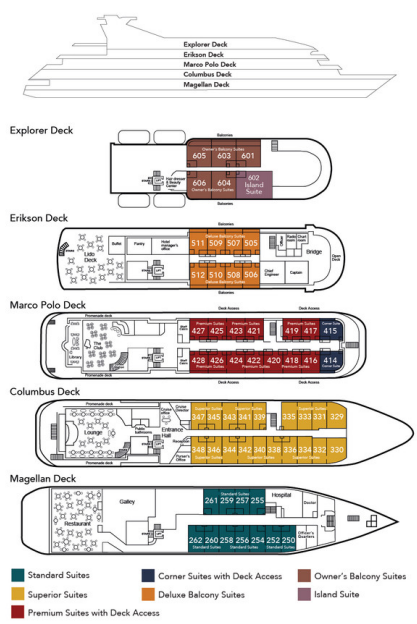


also WI-FI access throughout the vessel. Outside there is a rear sun deck where meals are served in warm weather under shade, a bar and comfortable deck furniture for sun bathing or relaxing with a book. On the top deck there is a Jacuzzi and further observation and sun deck. There is also a small hairdressers 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.

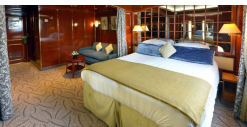
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Columbus Deck Superior Suite



Erikson Deck Deluxe Balcony Suite



Explorer Deck Island Suite



Explorer Deck Owner's Balcony Suite



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