

The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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AROUND THE EMERALD ISLE

"Have you ever been across the sea to Ireland? If you are reading this then chances are that you have, but I am constantly surprised when I meet people in the UK that have not ventured on the short flight or 60 mile ferry crossing to the Emerald Isle. I am a proud Hibernophile, I return many times each year and have done so for 50 years. I don't need to tell you that it's one of the most beautiful countries in the world, being constantly voted so by travel writers. But, it is so much more. Culturally rich with amazingly gifted writers, poets, musicians and actors and historically fascinating with a history stretching back some 10,000 years. During this circumnavigation of Ireland, we will learn much of Ireland's forgotten past from the arrival of Christianity in the 5th century, followed by the Vikings and the Anglo Normans to the more recent and often troubled history. A republic and independent nation for barely 100 years it has witnessed enormous changes particularly in the last couple of decades. With a population of less than Yorkshire, it has achieved so much to be proud of and during our in-depth exploration we will aim not only to show its beauty but delve into its past to gain a better understanding of modern day Ireland. For many the highlight will be our visits to some of Ireland's grandest houses and gardens set amidst stunning and uniquely Irish landscapes. However, perhaps most of all it will be the charm and warmth of the people that make any trip to Ireland most memorable. As we set sail from Liverpool, a city steeped in Irish history, we can offer an enlightening and entertaining journey and given the joi de vivre of the Irish we can promise, it will not be boring." Andrew Cochrane, Noble Caledonia Founder & Director



ITINERARY

Day 1 Liverpool, England.

Embark the MS Island Sky this afternoon. Transfers will be provided from Liverpool Lime Street Station at a fixed time. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we sail this evening.

Day 2 Dun Laoghaire & Dublin, Ireland.

We start our exploration of Ireland in Dublin. From our berth in Dun Laoghaire a city tour will include Merrion and Fitzwilliam

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Squares and the famous 'Doorways of Dublin'. We will also see the National Gallery, Dublin Castle and St Patrick's Cathedral. See the famous Guinness Brewery and Trinity College, Ireland's oldest college, founded in 1592. This afternoon choose to spend longer in the city or travel south to discover the magnificent gardens at Powerscourt. The gardens span 20 hectares and are a blend of formal gardens, sweeping terraces, statuary and ornamental lakes together with secret hollows, rambling walks, walled gardens and over 200 variations of trees and shrubs. The gardens were begun in the 18th century although most of what we see today dates from the 19th century.

Day 3 Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Arrive in the Northern Irish capital of Belfast where a city drive will include the Grand Opera House and the Albert Memorial before passing Queen's University and the Botanic Gardens. Our final stop is the Titanic Experience, located right beside the historic site of this world-famous ship's construction. Housed in an iconic, six-floor building, this state-of-the-art visitor experience tells the story of the Titanic, from her conception in Belfast in the early 1900s, through her construction and launch, to her famous maiden voyage and tragic end. Alternatively choose to visit the famous gardens at Mount Stewart which were planted in the 1920s by Edith, Lady Londonderry and are of international importance. The magnificent series of outdoor 'rooms' and vibrant parterres contain many rare plants that thrive in the mild climate of the Ards Peninsula. There will be time to explore the opulent house which reveals a fascinating heritage and historic world-famous artefacts and artwork. Enjoy an afternoon at leisure.

Day 4 Rathlin Island & Giant's Causeway.

Located just a few miles from the North Antrim coast, Rathlin has been settled for more than 6000 years. Today, there are only 80 or so souls, whereas before the famine there were 1200 inhabitants. History is everywhere with historic buildings and ruins which we will explore on foot with our local guides. Also see the unique "upside down" Rathlin West Light, a great feat of engineering and one of the Great Lighthouses of Ireland. From our anchorage in Portrush we will visit the Giant's Causeway which became widely known from the 1700s as the 'Eighth Wonder of the World' and large numbers of visitors came to view this amazing array of basalt columns of which there are estimated to be around 40,000 in total. After a stop at Dunluce Castle, we return to the ship.

Days 5 & 6 County Donegal, Ireland.

We spend the next day and a half in County Donegal. From our berth in Killybegs we will offer a range of excursions including Glenveagh National Park where we find the wonderful 19th century castle built on the shores of Lough Veagh. Surrounded by magnificent mountains, pristine lakes and native oak woods this is a magical place. After a tour of the castle we will explore the woodland gardens set in the starkly dramatic shadows of the Kinnaveagh, Dooish and Staghall Mountains. The original Victorian garden was first laid out in 1885 and then extensively developed in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. The walled garden is a stunning affair as is the Tuscan garden, Italian terrace and the famous 67 steps. Drive west to the Glencolmcille area, a Gaeltacht (Irish speaking) area steeped in culture and rich in folklore and music. One of the most scenic areas in Ireland, the drive through the countryside is outstanding. The Folk Museum which opened in 1967 is a monument to Father James McDyer who came to the village in 1952 and set about infusing the



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local people with a spirit of self-reliance and pride in their heritage. We also visit the charming Salthill Gardens. Located some 200 yards from the sea, this old walled garden has been gradually transformed by Elizabeth Temple into something very special. Independent of trends, this delightful half hectare enclosure offers a feeling of privacy and mystery that is particular to old walled gardens. Whilst we are moored overnight we will be entertained by Irish dancers and local music on board. We will spend the afternoon of day 6 at sea.

Day 7 Galway.

From our berth in Galway we explore the beautiful region of Connemara. Here the National Park covers nearly 3000 hectares of scenic mountains, heaths and woodland and is home to herds of ponies. By driving along the 'Wild Atlantic Way' we will see beautiful coves, bays and traditional fishing villages where we can experience local culture in this Irish speaking part of the country. Also visit Kylemore Abbey which is set on a lake against a backdrop of the Connemara Mountains and home to Ireland's only Benedictine order of nuns who have restored and cared for the Kylemore estate since 1920. Uniquely, only Victorian varieties of flowers and vegetables are grown in the walled garden which contains two distinct areas: the kitchen garden and the flower garden.

Day 8 Skellig Islands & Bere Island.

Over breakfast we will pass the Skelligs, tiny islands just off the magnificent coast of the Dingle Peninsula. Weather permitting, we will sail around these mystical islands with their early Christian history. Skellig Michael is a World Heritage Site and atop this rugged pyramid, that rises from the sea, are the ruins of a monastery. Spend the afternoon on Bere Island which lies at the entrance to the deep, sheltered waters of Bantry Bay. The

small island, roughly 10 kilometres by 3 kilometres, has a population of about 200 people but its place in history is assured. Martello towers date from the Napoleonic Wars whilst, after the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, the island became one of three Irish ports retained by the British because of its strategic value. Evidence remains of earlier visitors too with megalithic standing stones, wedge tombs and ring forts. We will explore on a choice of island walks, spend time at the Heritage Centre which showcases island life and take the chance to meet the islanders. We will remain at anchor overnight.

Day 9 Garnish Island & Bantry.

Sail the short distance to the sheltered harbour of Bantry as we drive to nearby Glengarrif. Here local boats will take us to Garnish Island where we visit the beautiful Innacullin Gardens where the sheltered position and Gulf Stream is favourable to the growth of ornamental plants, many normally only found in sub-tropical or Mediterranean climates. We return by local boats sailing past 'Seal Island', home to 250 common seals. After lunch on board we will walk to Bantry House, overlooking Bantry Bay. We will explore the house, one of the finest historic houses in Ireland along with the gardens.

Day 10 Kinsale & Cork.

Arrive in County Cork at the picturesque harbour town of Kinsale. As we sail into the town we pass the impressive fortifications of Charles Fort and James Fort which were built in the 17th century to protect against invading Spanish forces. However today Kinsale is renowned for its brightly coloured buildings and glorious harbour setting which you can explore at your own pace. Renowned as the gourmet capital of Ireland you may wish to take a break in one of the cafés, pubs or restaurants. From Kinsale we will also drive the short distance to Ireland's second



city of Cork for a leisurely walk around the compact 800 year old city. Experience the smells and sounds of the English Market which dates back to 1610, stroll the busy lanes of the 18th century Huguenot Quarter and wonder at the magnificent Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral.

Day 11 Waterford & Kilkenny.

From our berth in Waterford we will drive inland to the Medieval city of Kilkenny. The great building prowess of the Normans is very evident in the 11th and 12th century buildings bestowed on the city. Characterised by many beautifully restored buildings, the most splendid is Kilkenny Castle which was until recently a stronghold of the Butler family. The castle began life as a Norman fortress and gradually became more domesticated through the centuries. After exploring the interior we can wander in the surrounding 21 hectares of gardens before spending time in the city and perhaps visiting the Design Centre. Return to the MS Island Sky for lunch and enjoy a leisurely afternoon to explore Waterford, Ireland's oldest city, at your own pace. Maybe visit the Medieval Museum, the Viking-built Reginald's Tower or the House of Waterford Crystal.

Day 12 At Sea.

Spend the day cruising as we cross the Irish Sea and into the English Channel.

Day 13 Portsmouth, England.

Disembark this morning. Transfers will be provided to Portsmouth Harbour Railway Station at a fixed time.

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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YOUR SHIP: ISLAND SKY

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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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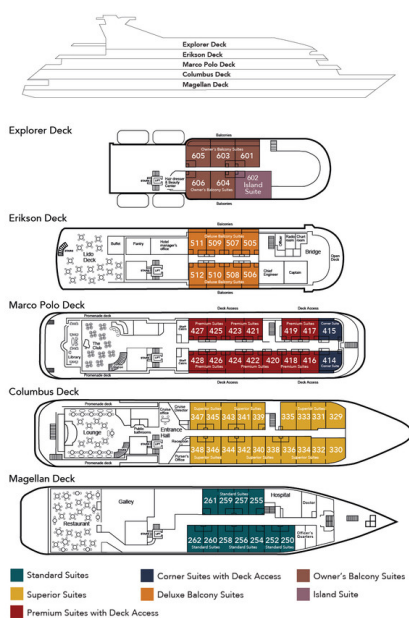
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INSIDE YOUR SHIP



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PRICING



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