

The Small Cruise Ship Collection

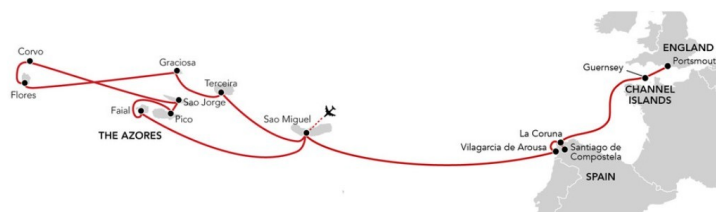
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AZORES TO BRITAIN

This wonderful island hopping itinerary aboard the MS Island Sky explores the islands of the Azores, the Iberian Peninsula and the Channel Islands visiting some marvellously scenic and historic places along the way. We have chosen the perfect time of year for our voyage and can expect verdant gardens and landscapes awash with blossoms and moderate temperatures with the absence of high season crowds. Our journey begins far out in the Atlantic in the islands of the Azores, some 800 miles from the Portuguese coast, which are known for their spectacular volcanic scenery, abundant flora and peaceful lifestyle. Every new day brings a different vista and we will spend eight days exploring the raw beauty and cultural vibrancy of this remote and unsophisticated archipelago. Their appeal is difficult to define in words, but if you appreciate dramatic scenery, exploring islands where time appears to be standing still, watching for passing whales and learning about the local people and their customs, this could be the voyage for you. Following our in-depth exploration of the Azores, we spend a relaxing two days at sea before we arrive in the Iberian Peninsula where we will witness some splendid Spanish 'pazos' in their springtime glory and step into the pilgrimage cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. Our penultimate call will be to the 'island of flowers', Guernsey, where we have a full day to explore before sailing to our destination, Portsmouth. Our two-week voyage will be full of natural world and cultural highlights as we discover timeless islands, fabulous coastal scenery and the rich maritime history of the region in the company of just 100 or so like-minded travel companions.



ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Sao Miguel, Azores.

Fly by scheduled indirect flight. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the MS Island Sky for embarkation. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we sail this evening.

Day 2 Terceira.

This morning explore Angra do Heroismo, a charming UNESCO heritage town with a distinct Mediterranean flavour of cobblestone streets and a certain quiet charm. Enjoy a walking tour that takes in the Misericordia Church, Convent do Sao Francisco, the public gardens and museum. In the afternoon there will be free time to hike to Monte Brasil, offering wonderful views over the island, or alternatively relax and wander the historic town at your own pace.

Day 3 Graciosa.

Known as the 'White Island', Graciosa has a gentle rolling landscape, dotted with windmills and traditional whitewashed houses. Visit Fuma do Enxofre ('Cave of Sulphur'), a geologically unique phenomenon and one of the original examples of the volcanic Azores, and take the winding stairway down to the

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magnificent volcanic cavern and lake. Also see the village of Santa Cruz and the charming Matrix Church. Return to the ship for lunch and spend the afternoon at leisure to explore the small town of Vila da Praia.

Day 4 Flores & Corvo.

Named after its abundant flora, Flores is often regarded as the prettiest of the Azores. A rugged terrain island with flowers growing in the deep canyons and waterfalls casting hues of blues and green as they splash down to the sea. Visit the vertical basalt cliffs of Rocha do Bordoies, formed by the cooling of lava. See a stunning array of natural features including calderas, fajas, rivers, waterfalls and valleys. This afternoon we will use our small ship to circumnavigate the tiny island of Corvo, the smallest island in the archipelago.

Day 5 Sao Jorge.

This largely rural island is of geographical interest with its cliff shoreline marked with flat fajas sweeping to the sea. We start our full day tour on the western part of the island, Ponta dos Rosais, visiting a Forest Park and cheese factory. As we move to the north we enjoy the view over the Fajas, an area of flat land at sea level resulting from the erosion of cliffs. As we make our way to the south side towards Calheta we will stop for lunch at a local restaurant before continuing on to Urzelina to visit the remaining tower of a church buried under lava from the eruption of 1808. Now it is surrounded by fruit trees and vegetation. Upon our return to Velas we will take a walking tour of this charming old-world harbour town. We remain moored overnight for anyone wishing to take an after dinner stroll.

Day 6 Pico.

Explore distinctive Pico, home to Portugal's highest peak and numerous black lava flows. The UNESCO-designated Lajido Acros tells the story of early winemakers who used the volcanic soil for the grapes and, on a visit to a vineyard, we will enjoy a tasting of the local product. After a typical Azorean lunch we will learn about whaling life in the Azores at the Museum of Lajes returning to the ship via the Lagoa do Capitaio offering views over the north of the island.

Day 7 Faial.

Our day begins with an island drive where we explore the fairly recent volcanic activity at Ponta dos Capelinhos. See how a 1957-1958 volcanic eruption transformed the area and created a new land mass. Visit the Volcano Interpretation Centre before continuing to the impressive Caldera, now a nature reserve, which is 400 metres deep and nearly 1500 metres in diameter. This afternoon a walking tour of Horta will include the Scrimshaw Museum and Cafe Peter, a famous stopping point for sailors crossing the Atlantic.

Day 8 Sao Miguel.

Enjoy a full day exploring the island of Sao Miguel, known as Ilha Verde, the green island and home to some of the most stunning viewpoints in the Azores. This morning we head west towards the Sete Cidades volcano from where we can enjoy excellent views over the Lagos de Canarios. We will continue our drive along the attractive northern coast before arriving in the Furnas Valley, an enormous valley and luxuriant garden in the east of the island where we enjoy lunch. We will also visit the village of Furnas and the botanical gardens before returning to the ship and sailing this evening. For the keen hikers, if weather permits, we will arrange to walk the trail in Sete Cidades.



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Days 9 & 10 At Sea.

Relax on board as we sail to the Iberian Peninsula. Take in a lecture in the lounge or maybe find a spot on deck to watch for wildlife.

Day 11 Vilagarcia de Arousa, Spain.

Arriving in Galicia over lunch we will discover the 'Rias Baixas' which translates as low estuaries. This afternoon we drive the short distance to the Pazo de Rubianes which was originally founded in 1411 and was one of the three official lordships in Spain. Enjoy a guided walk through the stunning gardens, famous for their thousands of camellias but also home to eucalyptus trees, sequoias and camphors. Also visit the Pazo's extensive vineyards to learn about the local Albarino wine production and enjoy a tasting before exploring the historical palace itself.

Day 12 La Coruna for Santiago de Compostela.

Today we visit Santiago de Compostela, the capital of the autonomous community of Galicia. The city's cathedral is the destination of the important Medieval pilgrimage route, the Way of St James (in Spanish the 'Camino de Santiago'), which is still walked today. For those keen to walk some of the route there will be the opportunity to hike a short section towards Santiago. Otherwise transfer directly to the site where we will visit the Conventual de San Francisco, the Faculty of Medicine and the world-famous Plaza del Obradoiro. Inside the cathedral, we will visit the Romanic crypt and see the facade of Platerias; the Quintana Plaza; House of Parra; facade of Azabachería; and the facade of San Martin Pinario. Enjoy lunch at a Parador and some free time before returning to the ship and sailing this evening.

Day 13 At Sea.

Spend the day at sea as we continue our journey north.

Day 14 Guernsey, Channel Islands.

Arrive this morning on Guernsey, the 'Island of Flowers', and take a panoramic drive during which we will see the beautiful coastline and beaches and visit the Little Chapel, built in 1914 as a miniature version of the famous basilica at Lourdes and covered in fragments of shattered china. Return to the ship for lunch and the afternoon is free to explore the pretty town of St Peter Port or maybe join a walk along one of the cliff paths where, if the weather is fine, we should be able to see the nearby Channel Islands and possibly the French coast. Please note that we will be at anchor today and will use the vessel's Zodiacs to transfer ashore.

Day 15 Portsmouth, England.

Disembark this morning. Transfers will be provided to Portsmouth Harbour Railway Station and our departure London airport at a fixed time.

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.

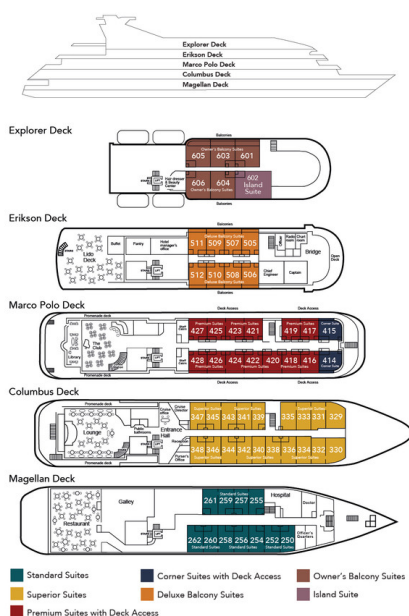
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INSIDE YOUR SHIP



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