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BEST OF BRITISH

Drawing on our considerable experience of operating cruises around the British Isles, we have devised this circumnavigation of the UK which offers a wonderful portrait of life in our islands. The voyage is a celebration of the very best of what we offer and it is a wonderful opportunity to return to some of our favourite places to see some of the most beautiful scenery, meet some interesting inhabitants and learn more about both the past and present of the United Kingdom. We will sail from Portsmouth and during our cruise visit remarkable places of great natural beauty, rich in wildlife and history. From the idyllic islands of Herm and St Agnes in the southwest with their crystal-clear waters and fine white sandy beaches to Unst, the northernmost inhabited island and St Kilda, we will enjoy the peace and tranquillity which these charming islands exude. During our circumnavigation we will visit many special places including Tresco's famous subtropical Abbey Gardens, St Davids, Britain's smallest city, Rathlin Island and the Giants Causeway in Northern Ireland and Berwick-upon-Tweed, England's most northerly town from which we explore Northumberland including Lindisfarne Castle. Over the course of 15 days we will visit all of the UK's four countries, as well as the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, and with the all-suite MS Hebridean Sky as our base, in the company of just over 100 fellow guests, we will be able to visit many fascinating yet little-visited destinations that are otherwise inaccessible to the larger ships. All of this makes for a most appealing sea journey whether you be an avid gardener, nature-lover or simply enjoy sailing past and visiting some of the most enchanting places in the world. NB. Due to the many small ports that we will be visiting during this voyage,

whilst we will be alongside in some, on a number of days we will be at anchor and the vessel's Zodiacs will be utilised for



transportation ashore.



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ITINERARY

Day 1 Portsmouth

Embark the MS Island Sky this afternoon. Transfers will be provided from Portsmouth Harbour Railway Station at a fixed time.

Day 2 Guernsey & Herm, Channel Islands.

This morning we arrive on Guernsey, the 'Island of Flowers' where there will be the option of a walking tour of St Peter Port including a visit to Castle Cornet, a 12th century battlement which guards the entrance to St Peter Port harbour. Alternatively, enjoy 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. Over lunch we sail the short distance to Herm, the smallest inhabited Channel Island and, at just one and a half miles long and half a mile wide, perfect for exploring on foot. Here, you will have free time to explore, perhaps take a stroll over to Shell or Belvoir beach or join our naturalists for a walk.

Day 3 Isles of Scilly

Spend the morning on traffic-free Tresco, walking its idyllic lanes from the beach to the famous subtropical Abbey Gardens. Defying the Atlantic weather, this miracle of a garden is home to more than 20,000 species of plants from over 80 countries. Enjoy time to wander at your own pace along the paths, maybe visit the Valhalla collection of ship figureheads from ships wrecked on the islands or relax in the cafe. We spend the afternoon on St Agnes, the most southwesterly community in the UK. Surrounded by rocks and reefs this delightful tiny island offers marvellous coastal walks. The small island of Gugh lies

across a narrow sandbar and here we find a single stone monolith called the 'Old Man of Gugh' which dates back to the Bronze Age.

Day 4 Fishguard and St Davids

From our berth in Fishguard we will take a scenic drive to St Davids, Britain's smallest city. Explore the magnificent 12th century cathedral and see the Bishop's Palace before enjoying some free time in the city. Return to the ship for lunch and either choose an afternoon at leisure or join our naturalists for a walk along the Pembrokeshire coastal path. The path covers 186 miles around the Welsh coast and we will join a section to enjoy the wonderful scenery.

Day 5 Peel, Isle of Man

Arrive this morning on the Isle of Man at the main fishing port of Peel. Settlements have been here since the Mesolithic Age and the island also claims to have the longest continuous parliament which was founded in 979 AD. Leaving Peel we will visit Tynwald Hill, located in the little village of St John's. This grass-topped, tiered hill is made from the soil and stones from each of the island's 17 parishes and is the point from which, each 5th of July, all the laws enacted in the year preceding are promulgated to the gathered government officials and the public at large, both in Manx and English languages. Continue to Castletown where we board the vintage steam train for a delightful and traditional journey to Douglas. Dating from 1874, the Isle of Man Steam Railway is the island's oldest Victorian rail system and this narrow gauge railway still runs with its original locomotives and carriages. Return to the ship for lunch and a free afternoon to explore Peel at your own pace.

Day 6 Rathlin Island & Portrush, Northern Ireland.



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Arrive this morning at Rathlin Island. Located just a few miles from the North Antrim coast, Rathlin has been settled for more than 6000 years. Today, there are only 140 or so souls, whereas before the Great Famine there were 1200 inhabitants. History can be seen everywhere here amongst the historic buildings and ruins. Also see the unique "upside down" Rathlin West Light, a great feat of engineering and one of the Great Lighthouses of Ireland. Over lunch we sail to Portrush, our base for a visit to 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 - it is estimated that there are around 40,000 in total.

Day 7 St Kilda.

This morning we arrive at St Kilda, a remarkable uninhabited archipelago some fifty miles beyond the Outer Hebrides. Dominated by the highest cliffs and sea stacks in Britain, Hirta, St Kilda's main island was occupied on and off for at least two thousand years, with the last 36 Gaelic speaking inhabitants evacuated at their own request in 1930. Immediately after the evacuation, the island was bought by the Marquess of Bute to protect the island's thousands of seabirds, including puffin and fulmars that nest here in the spring, and in 1957 it was bequeathed to The National Trust for Scotland. St Kilda is one of only a few UNESCO World Heritage Sites with dual status reflecting its natural and cultural significance. The local ranger will join us on board before our expedition staff lead guided walks on the island. Later, cruise past Stac Lee and Berneray which rise 170 metres from the sea and during the summer are home to up to 60,000 breeding pairs of northern gannet.

Day 8 Scrabster.

Spend the day in Scrabster, the most northerly port on the Scottish mainland. This morning we will visit the Castle and Gardens of Mey, built between 1566 and 1572 by George Sinclair, 4th Earl of Caithness. The castle was purchased by Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, in 1952, who renovated and restored it and created the beautiful gardens which we will see today. After lunch on board, enjoy a leisurely afternoon or choose to take a drive along the coast to John O'Groats, the most northerly town on mainland Britain. After some free time here we will return to the ship via Dunnet Bay, a glorious crescent of sand and dunes, and Dunnet Head to see the lighthouse, built in 1831 by Robert Stevenson, taking in the views over the Pentland Firth to the Orkney Islands.

Day 9 Unst, Shetland Islands.

After a morning at sea we arrive over lunch in Unst, Britain's most northerly inhabited island and at the Heritage Centre we learn about how the islanders have lived over the centuries and the industries that have prospered. We will visit the Unst Boat Haven, dedicated to the history of the island's distinctive wooden boats which descend from Viking craft and Saxa Vord. Admire the views over Hermaness National Nature Reserve and Muckle Flugga stacks.

Day 10 Lerwick.

From the Shetland capital, we will visit the remarkable archaeological site of Jarlshof. The site was uncovered by a violent storm in the winter of 1896/7, revealing an extraordinary settlement site embracing at least 5000 years of human history. The site contains a remarkable sequence of stone structures - late Neolithic houses, a Bronze- Age village, an Iron-Age broch and wheelhouses, several Norse longhouses, a Medieval farmstead and the 16th century laird's house. Return to the ship



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for lunch and enjoy a free afternoon to explore this historic port. Perhaps wander through its narrow stone lanes or maybe visit the excellent Shetland Museum, containing artefacts from shipwrecks and the whaling era.

Day 11 Montrose.

Spend the morning at sea before we arrive in Montrose, the gateway to Angus and known as the birthplace of Scotland. It was the Battle of Dunnichen, between the Picts and Northumbrians in 645 AD which led to the creation of the Kingdom of Alba and in 1320 the signing of the Declaration of Arbroath marked Scotland's creation as an independent country. This afternoon we visit nearby Glamis Castle, the childhood home of the Queen Mother. One of the most famous rooms in the castle is Duncan's Hall, the legendary setting for Shakespeare's Macbeth. There will be some time to explore Montrose independently before we sail this evening.

Day 12 Berwick-upon-Tweed, England.

England's northernmost town is our base for today's exploration of Northumberland. To the south lies Holy Island, also known as Lindisfarne, home to a monastic community which was established in 635 AD by Irish evangelist St Aidan. Viking raids forced the monks to leave in 875 AD, but in 1082 St Cuthbert rebuilt the Priory, the remains of which we can visit today. Also walk up to Lindisfarne Castle perched atop a rocky crag on the island. After our visit choose to either return to the ship for lunch and an afternoon at leisure in Berwick or to continue to Alnwick Castle. The second largest inhabited castle in England, it has been home to the Percys, Earls and Dukes of Northumberland since 1309. After lunch there will be the opportunity to visit the castle, see the fine collection of artwork and explore the wonderful gardens.

Day 13 Whitby.

This morning we will call into Whitby, where on the east cliff the ruins of St Hilda's Abbey dominate the skyline. This charming fishing port, which was once an important whaling station, is also the town where 18th century explorer Captain James Cook lived as an apprentice seaman and where Lewis Carroll wrote some of his work. We will visit the ruins of Whitby Abbey and its museum as well as the unique parish church of St Mary's. Take some time to enjoy the wonderful panoramic views from above the old town with its delightful collection of red roofed pantile cottages and narrow cobbled streets before descending to the old town. There will also be a chance to ride a section of the North Yorkshire Moors Heritage Railway which travels through the beautiful countryside of the North York Moors National Park using historic carriages and steam locomotives.

Day 14 Lowestoft

The Suffolk town of Lowestoft is the easternmost town in Britain and our base for the day. There will be the opportunity to visit Helmingham Hall, the home of the Tollemache family since 1510. The Hall appears to float on the surface of its broad surrounding moat and we have time to wander around the extensive and beautiful gardens. Alternatively, visit the Anglo Saxon royal burial site at Sutton Hoo where, in 1938 the archaeologist Basil Brown discovered the remains of a 90 foot burial-ship of an Anglo- Saxon warrior king. The exhibition tells the compelling story of Anglo- Saxon warriors, treasure and kings, with a full-size reconstruction of the burial chamber. After the excursion, choose to either return directly to the ship or spend some time in the seaside town of Southwold before we sail this afternoon.

Day 15 Portsmouth.





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



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YOUR SHIP: HEBRIDEAN SKY

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VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Medical facilities with available doctor Elevator serving all passenger decks Swimming/zodiac platform All Voyages Include: Up to Two Pre-Voyage Hotel Nights Complimentary Wine or Beer with Dinner Certified Emergency MD and Clinic World Class Cuisine Live Entertainment Complimentary Coffee/Tea station Voyage Photographer Dedicated Passenger Service Manager Complimentary Expedition Jacket Please note deck

Hebridean Sky has always been known for its effortless elegance, impeccable service and atmosphere of charm and camaraderie. Now we add increased adventure options and an on-site Passenger Service Representative. Hebridean Sky is the perfect blend of luxury and adventurous exploration. Is it a luxury ship? An adventure ship? It's both! The vessel underwent a multi-million pound refurbishment in Sweden in Spring 2016. **ONBOARD DINING** Great expeditions require great food! We are pleased to offer daily changing breakfast, lunch and dinner menus with an emphasis on providing well balanced and nutritional cuisine. Our team of international chefs has boat loads of creativity and you are sure to experience a variety of interesting dishes throughout your voyage. The restaurant is located on Deck 2 and our service team looks forward to providing a memorable dining experience. **IMPECCABLE SMALL-SHIP AMENITIES** Returning from excursions, passengers enjoy complimentary refreshments, afternoon tea and all-day coffee in The Club, a gracious space for relaxation, surrounded by panoramic windows. Other Sea Explorer features include: Library with Internet access Lounge with audiovisual facilities Dining room Wraparound sun deck with Jacuzzi Exercise room



plan may vary.



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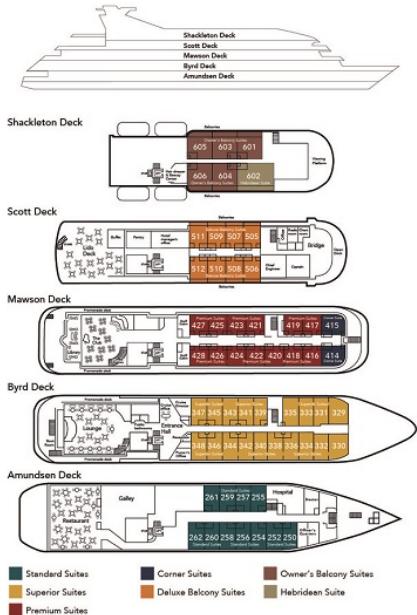
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