

FROM THE NORWEGIAN FJORDS TO THE BAY OF BISCAY LUXURY CRUISE

Fall under the spell of an enchanted journey linking the spectacular fjords of Norway to the elegant shorelines of Southwestern France. Between vertiginous reliefs and majestic waterfalls, the Nordic landscapes will unveil raw and soothing nature, before making way, travelling down the North Sea, for softer horizons, where Belgium reveals its discreet coastlines, with their maritime heritage and authentic charm. Gradually, Normandy then Brittany will come into view, with characterful ports, historic villages and the light of the Atlantic, down to the Gironde estuary, home to a warmer atmosphere shaped by way of life and wide open spaces.



ITINERARY

Day 1 - Bergen

Located at the end of **Byfjord** , **Bergen** was the capital of Norway in the 12th and 13th Centuries and has preserved some very beautiful monuments from the time when it was home to royalty. Wandering through Bergen's streets means going back in time, in search of the hidden treasures that have been listed as **World Heritage Sites by UNESCO**. A veritable openair museum, Bergen is home to a thriving artistic community of painters, potters, jewellers. The Bergen cable car offers you a splendid panorama over the port and the surrounding fjords. Do not miss the visit to the old quarter with its narrow streets, a testimony of the power of the hanseatic League that controlled trade in Northern Europe at the end of



the Middle Ages.

Day 2 - Eidfjord

Eidfjord is nestled in one of the last branches of the beautiful **Hardanger** **Fjord** , 'the Norwegian orchard', which has been famous for its fruit production since medieval times. All the forces of nature seem to come together in this ancient glacial valley. Imposing and majestic mountains border the **Hardangervidda** **National** **Park** , the largest high-altitude plateau in Europe. The serene waters of the fjord and **Lake Eidfjord** are matched by the roar of the **Voring** **Falls** , one of Europe's highest waterfalls and Norway's main source of hydroelectric power.

Day 2 - Sailing in the Hardangerfjord

In the heart of Norway's natural scenery, to the southeast of Bergen, you will sail the peaceful waters of the **Hardangerfjord** , the second longest fjord in Norway. At the wide mouth of this majestic fjord, gently sloping valleys offer the sight of lush meadows and fruit trees galore. Moreover, it is rightly nicknamed the "fruit orchard of Norway". As you continue sailing and move further inland, the fjord narrows and the rolling surroundings make way for vertiginous walls and high mountainous areas. Enhanced by the reflections of the light on the soft waters, at times clear, at times deep, the landscapes become wilder and reveal an uncut diamond of singular beauty.

Day 3 - Egersund

Like a painter's palette, the former industrial town of **Egersund** unveils its colours as if to better charm its passing visitors. Its small wooden houses, among the best conserved in Norway, certainly display **colourful fa çades** that distinguish them from the other municipalities of the southern Norwegian coast, which opted for white at a time when this was a sign of wealth. Admire the façades of Strandgaten, the **former main street** of the town, and wander the old district of Hauen, which is now full of cafes, galleries and boutiques. Also make a detour to the Heidningeholmen Church, whose foundations date back to the 17th century, and dive into Egersund's past.

Day 4 - At sea

During your journey at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This journey without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, depending on the activities offered, or to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

Day 5 - Antwerp

Located in the Flemish region of **Belgium** , **Antwerp** is worth a visit for its remarkable architectural heritage. In this moderately-sized, cosmopolitan city, you will be able to stroll around the ancient city centre, dominated by the most important monument in Antwerp, the **Notre-Dame Cathedral** , a UNESCO World Heritage site. The museums of the city retrace the history of Antwerp, including the**home of Rubens** , containing the works of the painter, and the **Plantin-Moretus museum** , a print works and publishing



house that are UNESCO listed. From **Grote Markt** , the central square in the city, you will be captivated by the attractive sight formed by the unusual medieval architecture of the guild houses.

Day 6 - Ostend

Located on the Flemish coastline, half way between France and the Netherlands, the elegant city of **Ostend** is a favourite summer destination for Belgians. You can enjoy the "queen of beaches", a stretch of fine white sand punctuated by breakwaters, covered by the North Sea at high tide. The seafront boasts sumptuous facades from the Belle Epoque, such as **Villa Maritza,** which stands witness to this seaside town's rich past. Art amateurs will enjoy the excellent **Kunstmuseumaan Zee,** where a retrospective of Belgian art dating from 1830 is on display.

Day 7 - Honfleur

A treasure of the **C ote Fleurie,** Honfleur is located on the edge of la Crique de Rouen in Normandy. You will no doubt admire the historical ships moored in its **old port.** With its tall, slate-covered houses, the quays provide a great setting for a very nice walk. In the streets behind the harbour, you will see many timber houses. These picturesque places were the cradle of several pre-impressionist painters. You can see their works in the **Eug ene Boudin museum.** Exhibited works represent scenes of medieval streets and the coastline as it used to be, as illustrated by the Butin beach and its lush green hillsides.

Day 8 - Saint-Malo

The mere mention of **Saint-Malo** 's name is enough to plunge us back into the richness of its past. The fortifications stand as testimony to the Malouins' determination to defend their citadel, fought over by France and Britain in turn. When we drop anchor here, immerse yourself in the diversity of its heritage: the time when privateers sailed the oceans in search of trade and victories; the legendary yacht races the port city is still famous for, such as the Route du Rhum; and the final resting place of the French writer François-Rene de Chateaubriand, who was born here and chose to be buried here anonymously.

Day 9 - Roscoff

Once a city of corsairs, the port of **Roscoff** is now a popular seaside resort proud to have been labelled a "**Small Town with Character** ". From its tumultuous and fascinating past, Roscoff has preserved an exceptional architectural heritage from the 16th and 17th centuries. Its historic centre is brimming with relics from the past: the magnificent granite mansions of shipowners, the **Notre-Dame-de-Croaz-Batz gothic church** , and the **Old Port** , once the stronghold of smugglers and merchants. The town is also known for its foreshore, which boasts a rich algal biodiversity. Its study, beginning in 1872, led to the creation of the first European research and teaching centre in marine biology and oceanography, the **Station Biologique de Roscoff**.

Day 10 - Quiberon

Welcome to the **Quiberon** peninsula in the **Morbihan,** Brittany's wild and contrasting landscape. On the Atlantic Ocean side, you will see stretches of wild coastline with rugged, windswept cliffs, and on the Quiberon Bay side, long sandy beaches overlooking emerald waters. **Port Haliguen** , a ten-minute walk from Quiberon, is a marina that has retained all its charms of yesteryear.

Day 11 - Sailing in the Gironde Estuary



Located on France's Atlantic coast, **the Gironde Estuary** stretches between Bordeaux and the Atlantic Ocean. Sail through peaceful landscapes lined with **traditional fishing huts, charming villages, and renowned vineyards** bordering the estuary's shores. Between shifting light and preserved nature, let yourself be carried away by the unique atmosphere of this majestic waterway, shaped by the tides and the region's maritime history.

Day 12 - Bordeaux

Bordeaux stretches along the banks of the Garonne river, in South-West France. Its rich wine tradition makes it the **world capital of wine. **Let yourself be carried away by the history of the Port de la Lune, made a UNESCO World Heritage site for its prestigious classical architecture. On the famous Place de la Bourse, the past and the present unite: here you can observe the majestic old buildings reflected in the contemporary **Miroir d 'eau** creation.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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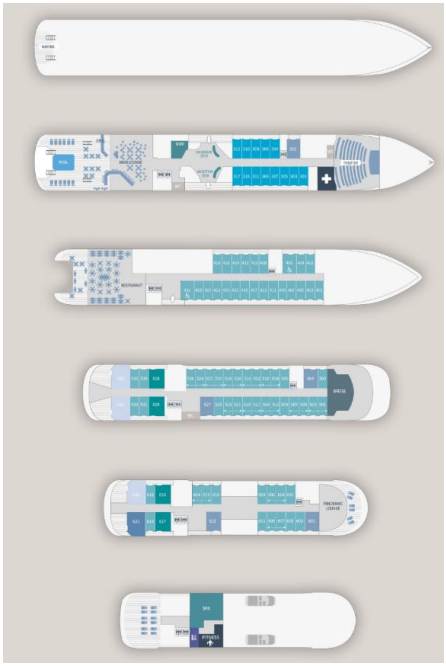
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