



The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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GREAT BRITISH MILITARY HEROES - A JOURNEY FROM OPORTO TO GIBRALTAR

This journey along the Iberian Coast will appeal to those who have a genuine lust for travel and who will enjoy connecting with the history of this fascinating region that has played such a major part in the destiny of Britain. Our ideally sized vessel, the MS Island Sky will enable us to enter past worlds of great naval and land battles and at the same time we will be able to appreciate the contrasting cultures, timeless beauty and fabulous coastal scenery of the Iberian Peninsula. As we sail down the Atlantic coast to Gibraltar, we will delve into the rich history of the region focusing on its captivating military and maritime past, whilst enjoying the company of just over 100, fellow like-minded travellers. Along this stretch of coast there have been many battles on land and sea, and military sites and references will come thick and fast. Our journey begins with a two night stay in Oporto where we will have time to explore this enchanting city and learn of the highlights of the Second Invasion of Portugal by the French in May 1809 during the Peninsular War when the British and Portuguese troops risked crossing the Douro River and succeed in expelling 25,500 French troops. The British have had a major military presence in Iberia since the 1140s when they played a key role in driving the Moors from Lisbon, the most important episode in the Portuguese section of the Reconquista. Since the 14th century, British troops and/or warships were deployed to help protect Portugal from Spanish pressure. Then in 1808-13, the threat was French and we will explore the British commitment in the Peninsular War. From our base of Figueira Da Foz we will head to Bussaco, the only major battle of Marshal Massena's third invasion of Portugal in September 1810. The virtual stalemate

pitted 65,000 French against the Anglo-Portuguese Army of 51,000, many of whom had no battle experience. By the end of November that same year the French retreated after having been stopped by the impressive Lines of Torres Vedras and we will visit these defensive lines created by Wellington in 1809 from Lisbon. Our voyage ends in Gibraltar which the British sieged in 1704 after the Spanish allied with France and then held it against a series of sieges. Then there is of course that infamous Battle of Trafalgar where the British defeated Napoleon's combined Spanish and French fleets. In addition to learning of the fascinating military and maritime history of the Iberian Peninsula, there will be opportunities to sample some splendid ports, visit the historic city of Coimbra and spend time in Lisbon where we will have a wonderful drinks reception within the Maritime Museums' Galeotas Pavilion which houses historic sea faring vessels. Helping us understand more of all we will see, and experience will be our expert guide and speaker and we have ensured that the itinerary has an enjoyable mix of culture and history as well as time at leisure to relax on board or explore under your

own steam.

ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Oporto, Portugal.

Fly by scheduled flight to Oporto. On arrival transfer to our hotel and check in for our two night stay. Meet for dinner this evening at a local restaurant. (D)

Day 2 Oporto.



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Today there will be a choice of excursions. You may wish to travel back to 1809 when the French mounted a second invasion of Portugal during the Peninsular War and retrace the steps of the crossing of the river Douro, on the 12th May 1809 by Wellesley, and the Battle of Oporto. We will start on the south bank of the river Douro and the Serra do Pillar convent where Wellesley commended the battle and from here visit the Bishop's Seminary, the scene of fierce fighting after 600 men crossed the river in port wine barges. Also visit the nearby Military Museum and board a boat to sail along the river taking in views of the city. The tour concludes with a visit to the Peninsular War monument on the way back to the hotel followed by an afternoon at leisure. Alternatively, spend time in the attractive city of Oporto which was originally a Celtic-Iberian settlement and became a prosperous Roman village thanks to its natural harbour. During our tour we will drive through its narrow streets to find 16th century arcaded buildings, Baroque churches and chapels, as well as the city's iconic 19th century iron bridge, built by the school of Gustav Eiffel. Our final visit will be to the city's cathedral, located on the top of the Penaventosa Hill. Inside are beautiful examples of golden carved altarpieces and paintings from the Nasoni period, whilst outside we will enjoy the amazing view over the river. The tour will conclude with a visit to a port wine lodge where we will see the old casks full of port and enjoy a sample of this delicious world-famous wine. The remainder of the day is at leisure to explore at your own pace. (B)

Day 3 Oporto to Vigo, Spain.

This morning we depart Oporto and head north along the coast to the town of Viana do Castelo where we will visit the Gil Eannes, a century old vessel that has served as a supply ship,

floating hospital and icebreaker and is now a museum. Learn about this fascinating ship's history and the part it has played in Portugal's maritime history. After lunch there will be some free time to explore this charming town before transferring to Vigo to embark the MS Island Sky. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we sail this evening. (B, L)

Day 4 Figueira da Foz, Portugal.

Located at the mouth of the Mondego River, Figueira da Foz is one of central Portugal's prime beach resorts. However, our reasons for visiting are actually inland and we have a choice of excursions today. We will drive to the site of the Battle of Bussaco which occurred in September 1810 in the heart of a national park and explore the battle from both the French and Allied perspectives. Our tour begins with a visit to Massena's headquarters at Moura from where we head to Santo Antonio do Cantero past a 10 mile long ditch where over 2,500 French soldiers were killed or wounded. After lunch we will visit the Military Museum and the chapel used as a 'Blood Hospital' and our final stop before returning to the ship will be in Carmelite and the monastery that Wellington spent the night at before and after the battle. Alternatively, visit the nearby city of Coimbra, the Medieval capital of Portugal for over 100 years, and the site of the country's greatest university for the past five centuries. On a walking tour we will view the stunning buildings from the 16th to 18th centuries, including the Paco das Escolas (Royal Palace) and the Monastery of Santa Cruz before we head to the university which was recently appointed UNESCO status.

Day 5 Lisbon.

Set on seven hills on the banks of the River Tagus, Lisbon has been the capital of Portugal since the 13th century. It was in nearby Sintra that the controversial "Convention of Sintra" was

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signed in 1808 and the city became the site of further conflict during the Peninsular War. Today there will be a choice to join a tour to the Line of Torres Vedras, a defensive system constructed by Wellington between 1809 and 1812 in the hills that surround the city including the Fort of San Vincente. Also see Wellington's headquarters at Pero Negro and Beresford's headquarters at Casal Cochim. Alternatively, a morning tour of Lisbon includes the famous landmarks and places of interest such as the Monument to the Discoveries, Belem Tower and Ajuda National Palace. This evening we have arranged for a private drinks reception to be held in the Galeotas Pavilion at the Maritime Museum of Lisbon. Enjoy a drink while exploring the vast collection of sea going vessels from throughout the centuries. Return to the ship for dinner and sail.

Day 6 At Sea.

Join our lecturer in the lounge or find a spot on deck as we spend a relaxing day at sea.

Day 7 Gibraltar.

Disembark this morning and discover this strategic British outpost in the Mediterranean. After taking in the views from Europa Point, we continue to the Great Siege Tunnels, a labyrinth of tunnels built to defend Gibraltar from Spanish and French attacks between 1779 and 1783. Also see the Gibraltar Museum. After lunch we transfer to our hotel for our two night stay. (B, L)

Day 8 Gibraltar.

Enjoy a day at leisure for independent exploration. Maybe take the cable car up the famous rock, see the Botanical Gardens or visit the Garrison Library. This evening we will meet for dinner at the hotel. (B, D)

Day 9 Gibraltar to London.

After breakfast in the hotel we transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London. (B)

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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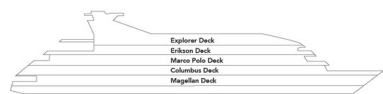
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INSIDE YOUR SHIP



Explorer Deck



Erikson Deck



Marco Polo Deck



Columbus Deck



Magellan Deck



- Standard Suites
- Corner Suites with Deck Access
- Owner's Balcony Suites
- Superior Suites
- Deluxe Balcony Suites
- Island Suite
- Premium Suites with Deck Access



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PRICING



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