

The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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IBERIAN COASTAL ODYSSEY - 10 DAY SPAIN & PORTUGAL CRUISE

Our late summer voyage from Bilbao around the Iberian Peninsula to Gibraltar offers the opportunity to experience the wonderful wine and food of the area as well as to gain an insight into the region's splendid architecture, natural wonders and fascinating history. It is difficult to imagine a better time than the month of September for our journey, just about everything is as perfect as it can be, from the comfortable temperatures to the relatively crowd free sites. Beginning in the Basque Country, we enjoy an overnight stay in the charming city of Bilbao with its impressive Guggenheim Museum and wonderful old town. Setting sail aboard the MS Hebridean Sky, we continue to Spain's Asturias region where on a full day tour we can discover the stunning Lakes of Covadonga or opt to explore Oviedo with its Medieval old town. Galicia is next, a unique region with its own distinctive culture where we will explore Santiago de Compostela, one of Spain's most beautiful cities and some of the region's beautiful pazos and gardens. Continuing to Portugal we have three days to discover Oporto's vibrant Ribeira district, the beautifully preserved Medieval city of Guimaraes, the wonderfully atmospheric university city of Coimbra and finally the captivating capital of Lisbon. Our fascinating itinerary incorporates visits to vineyards, Medieval towns and natural wonders as well as allowing time for individual exploration. In addition we have the pleasure of cruising aboard the MS Hebridean Sky. From time to time we may pass a huge cruise liner and at moments like this we can be thankful that with just over 100 passengers, we are able to visit atmospheric ports and villages which the big ships cannot access.



ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Bilbao, Spain.

Fly by scheduled flight. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to our central hotel for an overnight stay. After some time at leisure we meet for dinner this evening.

Day 2 Bilbao.

Our morning tour will explore Bilbao, the centre of the Basque Country, lying along the banks of the Nervion River. The Romans discovered iron ore here which paved the way for the region's

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industrial heritage. We will drive to the Artxanda viewpoint looking down across the river to Bilbao followed by a visit to the impressive Guggenheim Museum which includes an unparalleled collection of twentieth century art including Picasso, Cezanne, Kandinsky and Warhol. We will also enjoy a walk in the old quarter, a labyrinth of stone lanes filled with bars and restaurants. After lunch we transfer to the MS Hebridean Sky moored in the city and sail this evening.

Day 3 Gijon.

Gijon is the largest city in Asturias and our base for a day of discovery in the region. Choose from a full day at the lakes of Covadonga nestled in the Picos de Europa Mountains. Drive into the mountains where we will see the two glacial lakes of Covadonga: Lagos Enol and Lagos Ercina - the original centre of the Picos de Europa National Park. Marvel at the serene, mirrorlike waters before we continue to the beautiful pinkhued, twin-spired Basilica of Santa Maria la Real. Lunch will be served at the Parador of Cangas, before we return to Gijon. Alternatively, enjoy a morning in Oviedo, the modern capital of the Asturias region. Oviedo is recognised as the most culturally significant and historically interesting city of the province with many buildings dating back to the 8th and 9th century when Asturias first developed as a kingdom. After a panoramic drive inland, we begin a walking tour where we will see the Gothic San Salvador Cathedral before exploring the restored old town decorated with beautiful sculptures. Return to Gijon for lunch and an afternoon at leisure.

Day 4 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, the facade of Azabacheria 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 5 Vilagarcia de Arousa.

From our berth in Vilagarcia de Arousa we spend the morning at some of the wonderful houses and gardens of the Galicia region. Visit the Pazo de Oca, a Baroque stately home known as the 'Galician Versailles' and 'El Generalife of the north' due to the beauty of its gardens. See Pazo de Ribadulla which dates from the 16th century and is set in a beautiful location on the shores of the Ulla Valley. The garden was developed by the Armada family in the 1870s and is today renowned for its outstanding collection of camellia trees, giant magnolias, olive trees and lirioidendrons. Also see the 15th century Pazo de Rubianes where we find one of the three official lordships in Spain. Visit the 11 hectare garden before we visit the Pazo's vineyards to learn about the local Albarino wine production and enjoy a tasting.

Day 6 Oporto & Guimaraes, Portugal.

Arriving in Portugal we dock at Leixoes, the base for our day of activities around Oporto. You can choose to join the guided tour to Oporto including the impressive St Francis Church and the Ribeira before continuing to a local port wine cellar. Here we will

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be able to learn all about these wines and how they are produced before enjoying a tasting. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy a free afternoon to explore independently. Alternatively, drive to Guimaraes, the birthplace of Afonso Henriques, the first independent King of Portugal. Guimaraes has beautifully preserved its illustrious past; its Medieval centre is a warren of lanes and picturesque plazas framed by 14th century edifices and on an adjacent hill stands the 1,000 year old castle and the palace built by the first duke of Braganca in the 15th century.

[Day 7 Figueira da Foz for Coimbra.](#)

Located at the mouth of the Mondego River, Figueira da Foz is one of central Portugal's prime beach resorts. However, the reason for our call is to visit the nearby city of Coimbra, the Medieval capital of Portugal for over 100 years. On a walking tour we will view the stunning buildings from the 16th to 18th centuries before we head to the university which was recently appointed UNESCO status. Founded in the 13th century we will see the Chapel of Sao Miguel and the Joane Library which houses over 300,000 works dating back to the 16th century. After a local lunch, choose to return to Figueira da Foz or stay in Coimbra for some free time.

[Day 8 Lisbon or Obidos, Nazare & Alcobaca.](#)

Set on seven hills on the banks of the River Tagus, Lisbon has been the capital of Portugal since the 13th century. It is a city famous for its majestic architecture, old wooden trams, Moorish features and more than twenty centuries of history. Following disastrous earthquakes in the 18th century, Lisbon was rebuilt by the Marquis de Pombal who created an elegant city with wide boulevards and a great riverfront and square. During our morning panoramic tour we will see the Monument to the

Discoveries and Belem Tower, and visit the famous Jeronimos Monastery. Alternatively, leave Lisbon for a full day tour visiting a trio of traditional Portuguese towns including the walled town of Obidos where the cobbled streets and whitewashed houses are adorned with colourful blooms. The old fortress has been converted into a pousada, which affords wonderful views of the town and its surroundings. Continue to Nazare, the most colourful of Portuguese fishing villages. According to legend, the fishermen here are descendants of the Phoenicians, and old prints show that they once had to pull boats onto the beach with oxen. After lunch travel to Alcobaca, which was Portugal's spiritual centre until the 18th century, and visit the 12th century monastery where the Baroque façade conceals an early Gothic interior.

[Day 9 At Sea.](#)

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

[Day 10 Gibraltar to London.](#)

Disembark after breakfast and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.

[Please Note:](#)

Itineraries are subject to change.

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VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

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

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



plan may vary.

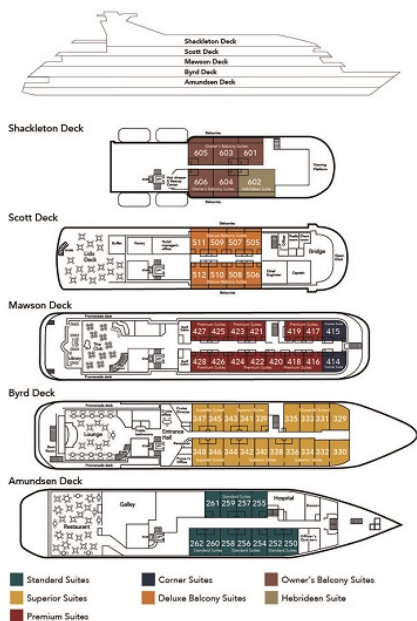
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