

The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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IBERIAN COASTAL ODYSSEY - A VOYAGE FROM BILBAO TO VALENCIA

Our late summer voyage from Bilbao around the Iberian Peninsula to Valencia offers the opportunity to visit some marvellously historic and special places and 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. Sailing aboard the all-suite MS Hebridean Sky from the charming city of Bilbao we continue to Spain's Asturias region to explore Oviedo with its Medieval old town. Galicia is next, a unique region with its own distinctive culture where there will be the opportunity to discover Santiago de Compostela, one of Spain's most beautiful cities. Whilst in the region there will also be a choice of visiting the scenic Iles des Cies, part of the Atlantic Islands National Park, by local boat or alternatively to take a trip into the estuary from the pretty coastal village of Combarro to learn about mussel farming and of course sample some of the produce. Continuing to Portugal for two days of exploration, there will again be a choice of tours on offer including to Oporto with its vibrant Ribeira district, the beautifully preserved Medieval city of Guimaraes, a full day to the Alentejo region including the enchanting city of Evora or you can explore the captivating capital of Lisbon. After a busy few days, a leisurely day at sea will be a welcome interlude before we arrive in Andalucia and the vibrant city of Seville for a full day to discover the city's Moorish treasures including the magnificent Alcazar Palace. We continue to Gibraltar and then to the naval port of Cartagena with its fine Roman remains before reaching Valencia. Our fascinating itinerary incorporates visits to Medieval

towns and charming and vibrant coastal cities combined with time for individual exploration. Sailing in the company of just over 100 fellow travellers, we have the added benefit of excellent local guides and our knowledgeable Guest Speaker who will add much to your experience and knowledge of this fascinating region. Few itineraries in Europe can offer such a wide ranging and endlessly fascinating cultural experience and when combined with the rich maritime history of the region and the sheer beauty of the coastal landscapes, we can promise you a most enjoyable



experience.

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ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Bilbao, Spain.

Fly by scheduled flight. On arrival transfer to the MS Hebridean Sky and enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we sail this evening.

Day 2 Gijon for Oviedo.

After a morning at sea we arrive in Gijon, the largest city in Asturias and our base for exploring nearby 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 will begin our walking tour during which we will see the Gothic San Salvador Cathedral before exploring the restored Old Town decorated with beautiful sculptures.

Day 3 La Coruna & Santiago de Compostela.

From our berth in La Coruna our full day tour will 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 chance 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 worldfamous 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 before returning to the ship.

Alternatively you may like to spend the morning in La Coruna. During our guided tour we will pass by the Tower of Hercules before continuing to the convent of Santo Domingo which contains a chapel dedicated to La Coruna's patron 'La Virgen del Rosario'. Continue to the church of Santa Maria del Campo, built between the 12th and 15th centuries before ending at Maria Pita Square. Maria Pita is one of the most important names in the city as after days of fierce fighting against the British navy, she encouraged the inhabitants to fight once again and defeat the invaders. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at leisure.

Day 4 Vigo for Iles des Cies or Combarro.

Sail this morning into the Galician port of Vigo from where you can choose to join a local boat which will take us offshore to the beautiful Iles des Cies. Part of the Atlantic Islands National Park, the Romans named them the 'islands of the gods' and we will spend time enjoying the natural beauty of the landscapes; see the stunning beaches, walk the paths to search for animal and plant life or maybe swim in the clear waters. Alternatively, drive to the pretty coastal village of Combarro where on a guided walking tour we will explore the narrow streets and pass the many simple fishermen's cottages. Arriving on the seafront we find a number of 'horreos', grain stores raised on stone pillars which were built in the 18th and 19th centuries. Meanwhile in the middle of the estuary we see the 'bateas', floating docks used for mussel farming. We will take a private boat trip along the estuary to learn about mussel farming, and sample some of the local mussels, oysters and white wine.

Day 5 Oporto or Guimaraes, Portugal.

Arriving in Portugal, we have a choice of tours today. Maybe visit Oporto, Portugal's second largest city and a World Heritage Site.

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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. See the city's cathedral, located on the top of Penaventosa Hill with an amazing view over the river before some free time to stroll and explore the riverfront promenade of Cais da Ribeira with its pastel buildings, restaurants and buzzing atmosphere. Alternatively, drive to Guimaraes, often referred to as the birthplace of Portugal, it is one of the country's most historic cities being where the first king of Portugal was born and where the reconquest of the country from the Moors began. During our guided tour we will view the 10th century castle and visit the Palace of the Dukes. After a walking tour along the charming cobblestone streets and past the wonderful Medieval buildings we will return to the ship for lunch and enjoy a relaxing afternoon at sea.

[Day 6 Setubal for Evora or Lisbon.](#)

Moor today in the picturesque port of Setubal where we have a choice of excursions including a full day tour to visit the Alentejo region. We will drive to Evora, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where a walking tour will explore the sights and Medieval history of this enchanting city. Evora is one of the oldest towns in the Alentejo region and we will see the well preserved Roman Temple, St Francisco Church and the Chapel of Bones before exploring the charming squares. Alentejo is a highly respected wine region traditionally producing red wines from the Tempranillo and Trincadeira grapes. We will enjoy lunch in a vineyard including a tasting before we return to the MS Hebridean Sky. Alternatively, join a half day tour to Lisbon. Set on seven hills on the banks of the River Tagus, Lisbon has been the capital of Portugal since the 13th century and is a city

famous for its majestic architecture, 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, Praca do Comercio. During our panoramic morning tour we will see the Monument to the Discoveries and Belem Tower and visit the famous Jeronimos Monastery. Return to the ship for lunch and an afternoon at leisure in Setubal.

[Day 7 At Sea.](#)

Spend a relaxing day at sea as we continue our journey around the Iberian Peninsula. Maybe join a lecture in the lounge or find a spot on deck to relax.

[Day 8 Seville, Spain.](#)

Having sailed up the lower reaches of the Guadalquivir River, we arrive this morning in vibrant Seville and enjoy a morning walking tour to explore the city's greatest monuments. Enter the Alcazar Palace with its ornate Moorish interiors and exotic terraced garden. Built by Pedro the Cruel in the 14th century with the help of Moorish craftsmen, it is still used as a residence by the King of Spain. We also visit the imposing La Giralda, Seville's cathedral, reputed to be the largest Gothic style church in the world with its distinctive Moorish tower. We return to the MS Hebridean Sky for lunch and a leisurely afternoon to explore further at your own pace.

[Day 9 Gibraltar.](#)

Mid-morning we arrive at this strategic British outpost in the Mediterranean. After an early lunch on board there will be an afternoon tour and after taking in the views from Europa Point, we will continue to the Great Siege Tunnels, a labyrinth of

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tunnels built to defend Gibraltar from Spanish and French attacks between 1779 and 1783. Also see the Gibraltar Museum before we return to the ship and sail this evening.

Day 10 Cartagena, Spain.

Spend the morning cruising to Spain's main naval port of Cartagena. We will enter the deep natural harbour through two fortified rocky headlands for an afternoon of exploration in this historic city that dates back to the Phoenicians. Hannibal used it as his capital city on the Iberian Peninsula and named it after Carthage in North Africa whilst the Romans used it as a strategic port and administrative centre. The city walls remained intact until the 20th century creating a dense historic centre. Take the lift or walk up to Concepcio Castle for amazing views of the city and harbour, view the Roman theatre and the archaeological site of Molinete where work continues to uncover the Roman city. Later enjoy a stroll along the tree-lined harbour promenade as we return to the MS Hebridean Sky and sail tonight.

Day 11 Valencia to London.

Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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YOUR SHIP: HEBRIDEAN SKY

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Hebridean Sky

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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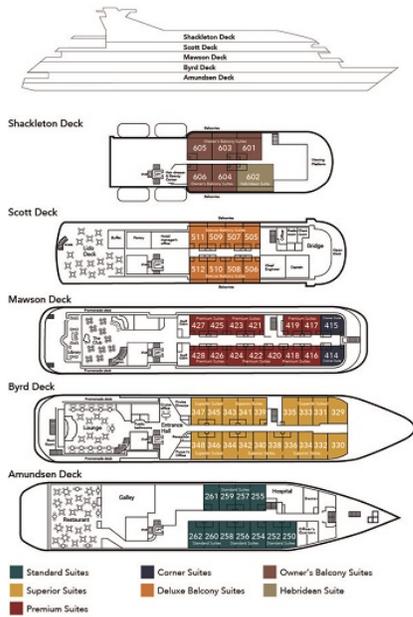
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Byrd Deck Superior Suite



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Shackleton Deck Hebridean Suite

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07-Sep-2027 to 17-Sep-2027

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