

ISLANDS & ATOLLS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN - CRUISE MADAGASCAR, ALDABRA & TANZANIA

Here is an extraordinary cruise for those who enjoy the natural world and all its wonders and are looking for the opportunity to escape the British winter. Join us aboard the all-suite MS Island Sky and enjoy the warmth and beauty of the Indian Ocean as she undertakes exactly the type of itinerary that suits her many talents best. With the vessel's purpose built Zodiacs we will land on otherwise inaccessible beaches, explore vast lagoons and coral reefs and encounter some of the most extraordinarily beautiful tropical scenery to be found anywhere in the world. Sailing from Mauritius we will land on its nearest neighbour, Reunion, a little bit of France in the Indian Ocean and a stunning place to spend a day. We will discover the island's truly awesome and dramatic scenery before we continue to Madagascar for five days of exploration of this incredibly verdant and beautiful island with its unique flora and fauna. During our time here there will be ample opportunity to discover the forests which are full of wildlife including the iconic lemur, chameleons and indigenous birdlife as well as to see the underwater world and village life. Continuing to the Seychelles we have a day and a half scheduled in the Aldabra islands. Aldabra is the last breeding ground of the giant tortoise and in addition to seeing some of these endearing creatures you should also encounter dolphins, turtles and whales as well as countless birds including the flightless rail, the last flightless bird in the Indian Ocean. Our expedition concludes in Tanzania where we visit Kilwa Kisiwani, a site of exceptional historical interest and discover atmospheric Zanzibar. This expedition really is a veritable feast of beauty, the natural world and island culture. You will witness the bounty of the islands, the wildlife from the lemurs of Madagascar to the

giant tortoises of Aldabra and an amazingly



prolific birdlife.

ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Mauritius.

Fly by scheduled indirect flight.

Day 2 Mauritius.

Arrive this morning and transfer directly to the MS Island Sky. Settle into your suite and spend a leisurely day on board. This evening enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we set sail this



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evening.

Day 3 Reunion Island.

We arrive at breakfast in Reunion where we have a choice of excursions. On a full day tour we will visit the central highlands where spectacularly rugged peaks of volcanoes cradle huge amphitheatres known as cirques, where mountains tower to over 10,000 feet and beautiful waterfalls plummet hundreds of feet. The rich soil and mellow climate produce a lush and verdant landscape which is dotted with villages and towns with a uniquely French atmosphere. Fields of sugar cane and plantations of tropical fruits, vanilla and all manner of spices perfume the air. We will enjoy views from the Nez des Boeuf and see the Piton de la Fournaise crater. After enjoying a creole lunch in a local restaurant we will visit 'La Cite du Volcan' museum. Alternatively, enjoy a morning tour to a vanilla plantation in Saint Andre where we learn about the history and culture of this integral part of Reunion's heritage. Continue to Salazie, a verdant landscape and home to many waterfalls including the 'Voile de la Mariee' before spending some free time in Saint Denis on the way back to the ship. This afternoon is at leisure before we set sail this evening.

Day 4 At Sea.

Spend the day at sea as we sail towards Madagascar. Maybe join a lecture or find a spot on deck to relax.

Days 5 & 6 Masoala National Park & Nosy Mangabe, Madagascar.

We will spend two days exploring from our anchorage in Antongil Bay. We discover Nosy Mangabe, a 520-hectare island reserve and one of the most diverse areas of virgin rainforest in Madagascar which has also been an important research centre since the mid-1960s when several aye-ayes and other lemurs

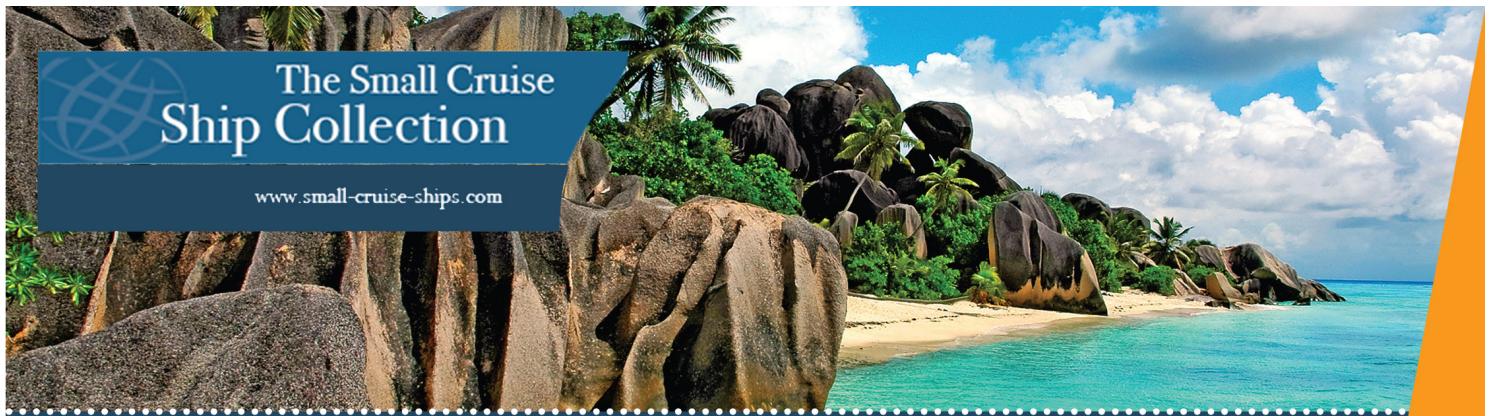
were released into the forest. We will use our Zodiacs to land on the other beach next to the forest and organise a series of nature walks looking at the varied trees, plants and ferns and we hope to spot chameleon, lizards and black and white ruffed lemur. For the birders, we will keep an eye out for Madagascar buzzard, kingfisher and paradise flycatchers. We will also explore Madagascar's largest protected National Park, the Masoala Peninsula, which comprises of coastal rainforest, flooded forests, marsh and mangroves. We may be lucky enough to encounter a group of locally endemic red-ruffed lemur. The park is also home to various species of brightly coloured Mantella frogs, all manner of extraordinary chameleons and is a refuge for the endangered Madagascar red owl, Madagascar serpent eagle and many endemic bird species. A range of walks for all levels will be on offer, as well as a visit to the local village.

Day 7 Domaine de Bobangira.

After a morning at sea we arrive over lunch at the port of Vohemar, our base for an afternoon at the Domaine de Bobangira. This reserve on the Indian Ocean has wild, unspoiled beaches and forests rich in biodiversity having about 40% of endemic flora to the region. Declared as a protected private nature reserve in 2017 by the national forestry department, it is home to fat-tailed dwarf lemurs, the diurnal white-headed lemur, Brookesia and various species of chameleons. There are also large centenarian canarium bujiga trees in the park, locally known as mandrirofo, a type of tree used in Madagascar to build fishing pirogues.

Day 8 Diego Suarez.

This morning we will enter the dramatic harbour of Diego Suarez. Also known as Antsiranana, the town has a cosmopolitan mix of



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inhabitants including Creoles, Indians, Chinese, Comorans and Arabs. This morning, choose from a city tour taking in the Commonwealth Cemetery, the faded colonial grandeur of Place Joffre, and a baobab viewpoint at French Mountain; or alternatively, drive up to Amber Mountain National Park at an elevation of 3,200ft, where we will divide into short and long walking parties to explore the pristine rainforest. In the towering vegetation, we may spot Sanford's brown and crowned lemurs, as well as chameleons, stunningly well camouflaged leaf-tailed geckos, and an array of endemic birds.

Day 9 Nosy Hara.

Having sailed around the northern tip of Madagascar we will find a number of strangely shaped limestone islets that dot the aquamarine sea. Depending on tides and sea conditions, the expedition team will pick the most suitable island for landing in this marine reserve archipelago. We hope to offer swimming and snorkelling over the diverse coral reefs, as well as woodland walks to find extraordinary flora and fauna including one of the world's smallest reptiles. Zodiac cruises around the picturesque islands offer a good chance of sighting not just elegant tropicbirds but also the magnificent Madagascar fish eagle, one of Africa's rarest birds.

Days 10 & 11 Aldabra Islands, Seychelles.

Arriving in the Outer Seychelles we have a day and a half to enjoy the Aldabra group of islands and our itinerary will be in the hands of our Expedition Leader and Captain who will monitor the local conditions to ensure we maximise our time here. Whilst our itinerary is flexible, we hope to call at the island of Assumption which was ruthlessly plundered for its vast deposits of guano in the early 20th century. Happily, peace has returned and the wildlife of rare birds and green turtles are once again in

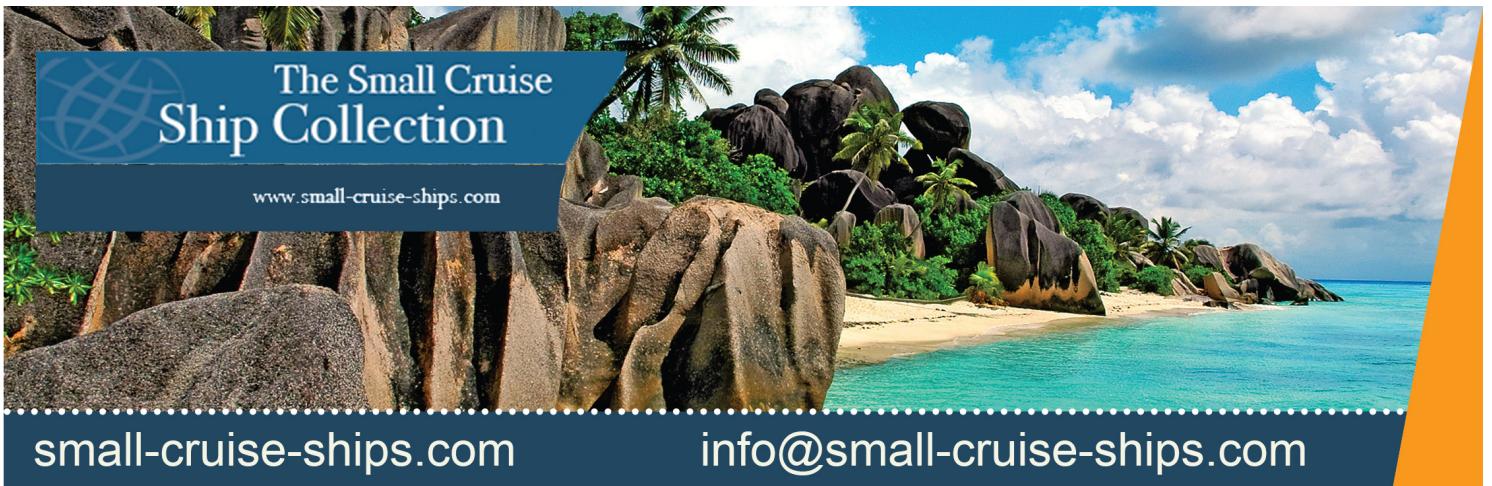
abundance. Our time here will be spent beachcombing, on nature walks or snorkelling. We will also plan time on Aldabra, the island referred to by Sir Julian Huxley as "One of nature's treasures and should belong to the whole world". Aldabra is unique and every time we call we find something new of interest. Our exploration will be guided by the tides and sightings have been made of the extremely rare white throated rail and the atoll is also home to the world's second largest colony of frigate birds and the largest crab, the coconut crab. Whilst exploring by Zodiac it is difficult to know in which direction to look. The clear blue seas abound with life, the skies are alive with varied birdlife and ashore giant land tortoises forage as they have done for millions of years. We hope to explore Picard Island with a short walk to see some of the numerous tortoises and robber crabs or swim in the lagoon, a vast 17 mile stretch of shallow clear water. From our Zodiacs we can watch the everchanging undersea world and snorkel in colourful coral waters.

Day 12 At Sea.

Spend a leisurely day on board as we continue our journey through the Indian Ocean en-route to Tanzania.

Day 13 Kilwa Kisiwani, Tanzania.

This morning we anchor off Kilwa Kisiwani, a site of exceptional historical interest, where the atmospheric ruins represent a wide sweep of East African coastal history, from the heights of the Swahili and Shirazi trading civilisation to the darker days of slavery and the uprisings against German rule. Once one of Africa's wealthiest towns, Kilwa Kisiwani is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and contains the world's most extensive and best-preserved Swahili ruins. We will spend the morning on a walking tour and see the prominent fort and the Great Mosque



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which stood at the heart of this ancient city which was once the largest in East Africa. This afternoon we hope to find a local beach to offer the chance to swim, snorkel or take a stroll.

Day 14 Latham Island.

Also known as Fungu Kizimkazi, this uninhabited coral island measures just 7.5 acres but is an important breeding ground for many bird species and one of the most important areas in the Indian Ocean for masked booby, brown noddy, sooty tern and greater crested tern. Weather permitting, we will use our Zodiacs to cruise the island to view these colonies and also offer the chance to snorkel on the fringing reef surrounding the island.

Day 15 Zanzibar.

Zanzibar's harbour, crowded with dhows, very much sets the scene for our visit to this Arab-style city with its long narrow streets, bazaars, houses with overhanging balconies and intricately carved doorways. On a morning walking tour, soak up the timeless atmosphere of Stone Town including Livingstone House, Sultan's Palace, the slave market and the Old Fort. The afternoon is free to relax and explore independently or join a tour of a spice farm to experience the various fruits and spices cultivated on the island. Alternatively, travel to Jozani Forest which sustains a variety of wildlife and birds, including the rare red colobus monkey, indigenous to the island.

Day 16 Dar es Salaam to London.

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

Day 17 London.

Arrive this morning.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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YOUR SHIP: ISLAND SKY

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VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

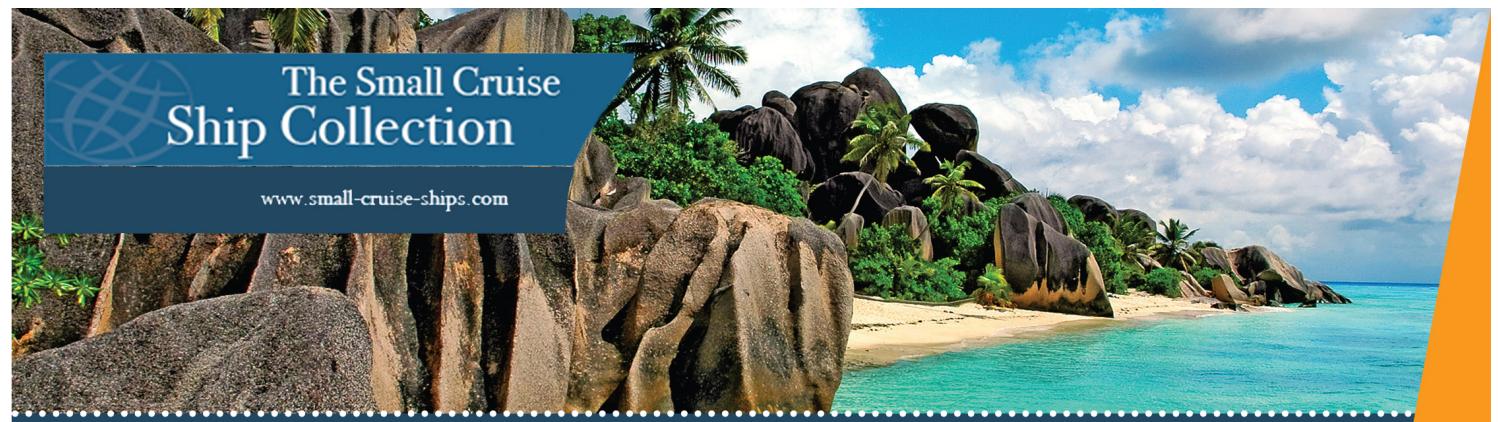
With a maximum passenger capacity of only 116, a vessel of her size is capable of carrying many more but instead the MS Island Sky has the benefit of unusually large suites, luxuriously appointed public areas and spacious outside decks. There is a high ratio of crew to passengers- the friendly crew of 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



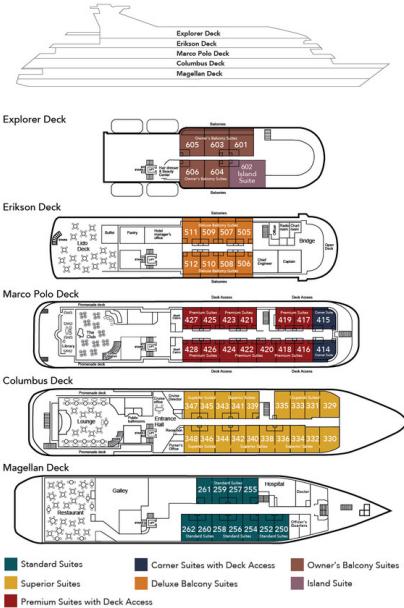
varied menus.

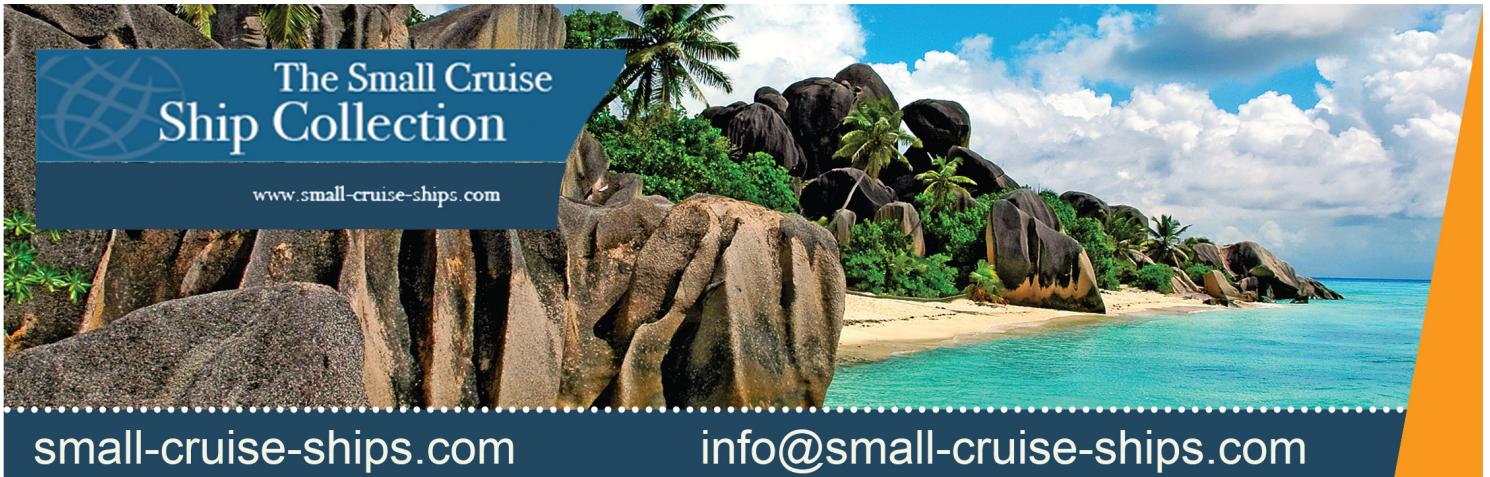


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