

## The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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## ISLANDS, GARDENS & TEMPLES OF ANCIENT JAPAN

Join us aboard the MS Island Sky and immerse yourself in the mythology and beauty of Japan and the fascinating sites of South Korea on this remarkable voyage. Our comprehensive exploration offers a marvellous balance of ancient castles, beautiful gardens, opulent temples and shrines combined with beautiful natural landscapes and islands. Like all well planned itineraries we have included some of the best known highlights, but equally will also take you to some places where relatively few foreign tourists set foot. With the MS Island Sky we are able to visit out of the way islands and remote stretches of coast which would not be practical on a regular land tour or a larger cruise ship, and it is in such places that we find timeless villages, rural landscapes and a rich cultural heritage. Over the course of eleven nights we will witness a variety of cultures, natural wonders and architectural styles. Amongst the many highlights will be our visit to Kyoto including the breathtaking Golden Pavilion, the iconic gardens of Kenroku-en and the 17th century Matsue Castle. Also, whilst in South Korea we explore the World Heritage Site of Gyeongju with its abundance of archaeological sites and Haeinsa Temple, regarded as one of the three great temples in Korea. The final part of our voyage focuses on some of Japan's smaller islands where a slower pace of life is enjoyed, an altogether different experience from Japan's mainland and we will spend time exploring Yakushima known for its remarkable cedar forests, Amami Oshima, a natural sub-tropical paradise situated in the Amami Islands and Ishigaki in the Yaeyama Islands. All this will be achieved with great ease sailing aboard the MS Island Sky and we will be joined on board by our expert Guest Speaker and excellent local guides who will

provide an insight into the fascinating culture and history



along the way.

### ITINERARY

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**Day 1 London to Tokyo, Japan.**

Fly by scheduled flight to Tokyo.

**Day 2 Tokyo.**

Arrive and transfer to our hotel for an overnight stay. The remainder of the day and evening are at leisure.

**Day 3 Tokyo to Kanazawa.**

After breakfast in the hotel, a guided morning city tour will include the Meiji Shrine and Sensoji Temple. We will continue to the train station to join our bullet train to Kanazawa where, on arrival, we will transfer to the MS Island Sky. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we moor overnight.

**Day 4 Kanazawa.**

Kanazawa is a thriving centre of the arts, long known for its lacquer ware, outstanding collectable pottery of the Kutani style, gold leaf workmanship, delicate hand painting of silk for kimonos and Noh theatre dramas. The narrow and winding cobblestone streets have a quaint photogenic charm with old fashioned streetlamps and wooden lattice windows hiding elegant restaurants and craft galleries. Around each bend is a traditional house, museum, art gallery, craft shop, historic samurai residence and even a geisha house to explore. The fascinating open-air market displays a vast variety of items from flowers to fish and local handicrafts. Next to the Kanazawa Castle ruins, we will visit one of Japan's premier highlights, the famed Kenroku-en Garden, ranked among the country's top three gardens. Alternatively, you can choose to head towards the mountains and explore the town of Inami, built by expert wood carvers, whose magnificent craftsmanship can be seen in Zuisenji Temple. Today the town is home to 120 woodworking studios, with craftsmen keeping the traditional practice alive.

From here we will drive to Gokayama where we will see the traditional gasho-zukuri style houses, which are still used today as homes. Walking through the village here we will experience the history and heritage of Japan.

**Day 5 Kyoto.**

From our berth in Maizuru, we drive inland to Kyoto, Japan's former historic capital and Emperor's home for nearly 1000 years. Our full day tour begins with a visit to the bamboo forest before continuing to the World Heritage Site of Tenryu-ji Temple, ranked first amongst the city's five great Zen Temples. After lunch we continue to the Kinkakuji Temple (Golden Pavilion), which was built as a retirement villa for the Shogun and converted into a Buddhist Temple after his death. Built on the edge of a tranquil pond with the second and third stories covered in gold leaf we can walk through the peaceful gardens and marvel at the reflection in the still waters. Alternatively, spend the morning at the quaint fishing village of Ine, famous for its 'funaya' boat houses which line the bay. Enjoy a walk through the village and a boat tour in the bay for the picturesque views from the sea.

**Day 6 Matsue.**

From the port of Sakaiminato we visit Matsue, the 'town of water,' which nestles between a scenic lake and a large lagoon. We will visit the cultural attractions of the town including the 17th century Matsue Castle before enjoying a boat ride on the local canals. Alternatively visit the Adachi Museum of Art which is set in a beautiful natural environment and well known for both its superb Japanese gardens and its collection of contemporary Japanese paintings, comprising approximately 1500 of the country's most highly regarded paintings produced after the Meiji period. Return to the ship for lunch as we sail for South

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Korea this afternoon.

### Day 7 Ulsan, South Korea.

Crossing over to South Korea we embark on a full day excursion to magnificent Gyeongju, a World Heritage Site which is often described as the world's finest open-air museum embracing ancient Korean history and Buddhist culture. As the ancient capital of the Shilla Dynasty, Gyeongju's cultural heritage dates back to the first millennium. Today, as we stroll through some of the hundreds of excavated monuments, temples, tombs and pagodas, there will be time to explore the National Museum with its exceptional collection of finely worked gold jewellery, metal weapons and distinctive pottery. At lunchtime, we will sample Korean delicacies and enjoy a cultural performance of traditional dance.

### Day 8 Masan for Haeinsa.

From our berth in Masan we head inland to the Haeinsa Temple. Regarded as one of the three great temples in Korea, it was first settled in 802 AD and its name derives from a verse in a Buddhist Sutra as "reflections on a smooth sea". In the 13th century when Korea was at war with the Mongols, the government commissioned the Triptaka Koreana, a complete copy of Buddhist scriptures, in the hope of Buddha's intervention in the war. They were carved onto 81,258 double sided wooden blocks and stored on floor to ceiling shelves in the Janggyeong Panjeon complex. We also visit the Daejeokkwangjeon, the main worship hall of the temple. After lunch in a nearby restaurant we will return to Masan this afternoon where you may want to visit the vibrant fish market selling the daily catch as well as dried and salted fish and seaweed, and try a sample at one of the raw fish restaurants.

### Day 9 Nagasaki, Japan.

Back in Japan, this morning we will explore Nagasaki, the second city destroyed by an A-bomb in World War II. Our tour will include the Peace Memorial Park, Atomic Bomb Museum and Glover Garden. This afternoon we will visit Dejima Island which was built during the Edo Period to house Portuguese Christian missionaries and prevent the propagation of their religion. It was also the residential quarters of the Dutch, the only foreigners allowed to trade in Japan during the Sakoku isolation period for 200 years until Japan reopened to the world. Alternatively, there will be a visit to the abandoned Gunkan-jima, or Hashima Island\* that lies just off the coast of Nagasaki. The island was populated until 1974 and served as a coal mine with more than 5000 residents living on an island only 480 metres long and 150 metres wide. To accommodate so many people in such a small area every piece of land was built on, so the island came to resemble a battleship and given the name Gunkan-jima or 'Battleship Island'. In 1974 the coal mine closed and the residents had to leave the island. Over the years the natural elements have taken hold giving the island an eerie atmosphere. In more recent years the island has become a set for several movies, including the James Bond film, 'Skyfall'. During your visit the guide will walk you through the island to observation areas before taking the local ferry back to the mainland. \*Please note that the visit to the island is weather/tidal dependent. If the ferry is unable to access the pier, there will be a cruise around the island instead.

### Day 10 Yakushima Island.

Sailing down the coast of Kyushu this afternoon we arrive on the island of Yakushima which became Japan's first World Heritage Site in 1993. Yakushima is famous in botanical circles for many great garden plants, including dwarf plants that have evolved to

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grow smaller than their mainland cousins. We will spend time here on nature walks, including Yakusugi Land, a nature park populated by a number of the island's ancient cedar trees such as the Buddhasugi, Futagosugi and Sennensugi.

### Day 11 Amami Oshima.

Today we arrive on Amami Oshima, a natural subtropical paradise situated in the Amami Islands and surrounded by transparent waters, brightly coloured coral reefs and tropical fish. The island is almost entirely covered in forest and mangrove and offers fantastic bird watching and wildlife sightings. We have the day to explore and will visit the Nature Observation Park where we can walk through the forest and hope to see the Amami jay, ruddy kingfisher, Ryukyu akashobin, butterflies and possibly the rare black hare. We will also see local industry and watch the process of making tsumugi and kasuri silk-cotton fabrics, used for making kimonos, at the Oshima Tsumugi Village, a craft complex in a beautiful hillside setting amongst flowers. In the afternoon we will visit the Amami Park which focuses on the artist Tanaka Isson with a museum of his works which depict the natural beauty and life of Amami.

### Day 12 At Sea.

Enjoy a day at sea with time to relax on deck and join the lecture programme in the lounge.

### Day 13 Ishigaki Island.

Our final call in Japan will be at the Yaeyama Islands, a cluster of coral reefs and forested mountains. This morning, from our base in Ishigaki we will explore the island. Our tour will start with a visit to the Yoneko- Yaki Pottery to learn about the craft of making the famous Shisa - half dog, half lion statuettes, typically sold in pairs. From here we will drive along the scenic

roads to Ishigaki Yaima Village. We will explore this open-air museum that has preserved traditional Japanese houses. Located in the forests, keep an eye out for the local wildlife such as squirrel monkeys. There will also be a chance to walk through the mangroves along the boardwalk and see the unique flora and fauna. Later, after lunch on board, we will take in more of the island with a visit to the Tamatozaki Cape, where from the observatory there are wonderful views of the Hirakubo Peninsula and the sea of Ishigaki. We will continue to Kariba Park located on Kariba Bay, taking in the stunning views while exploring the shrines and statues that decorate the park. Our final stop will be the Yaesen Brewery which produces awamori, a sake-like Okinawan spirit.

### Day 14 Keelung, Taiwan to London.

We will disembark this morning and transfer to Taipei airport for our scheduled flight to London.

### Day 15 London.

Arrive today.

### 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.

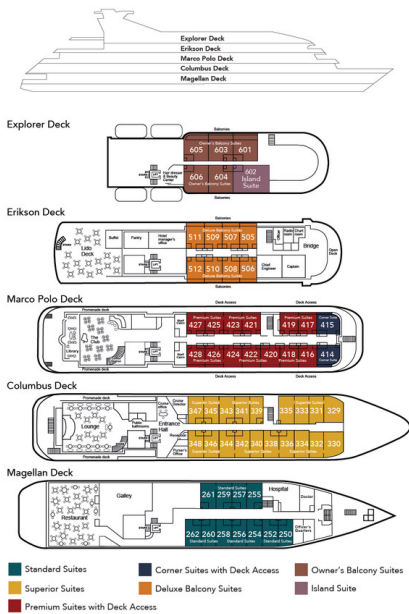
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## INSIDE YOUR SHIP



Columbus Deck Superior Single



Columbus Deck Superior Suite



Erikson Deck Deluxe Balcony Suite



Explorer Deck Island Suite



Explorer Deck Owner's Balcony Suite

Magellan Deck Standard Single



Magellan Deck Standard Suite

Marco Polo Deck Corner Suite

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## PRICING

07-Jun-2026 to 21-Jun-2026

Columbus Deck Superior Single	£11995 GBP pp
Explorer Deck Owner's Balcony Suite	£12795 GBP pp
Erikson Deck Deluxe Balcony Suite	£12295 GBP pp
Columbus Deck Superior Suite	£10495 GBP pp
Magellan Deck Standard Single	£11495 GBP pp
Magellan Deck Standard Suite	£9995 GBP pp
Marco Polo Deck Corner Suite	£11295 GBP pp
Explorer Deck Island Suite	£13995 GBP pp
Marco Polo Deck Premium Suite	£10795 GBP pp