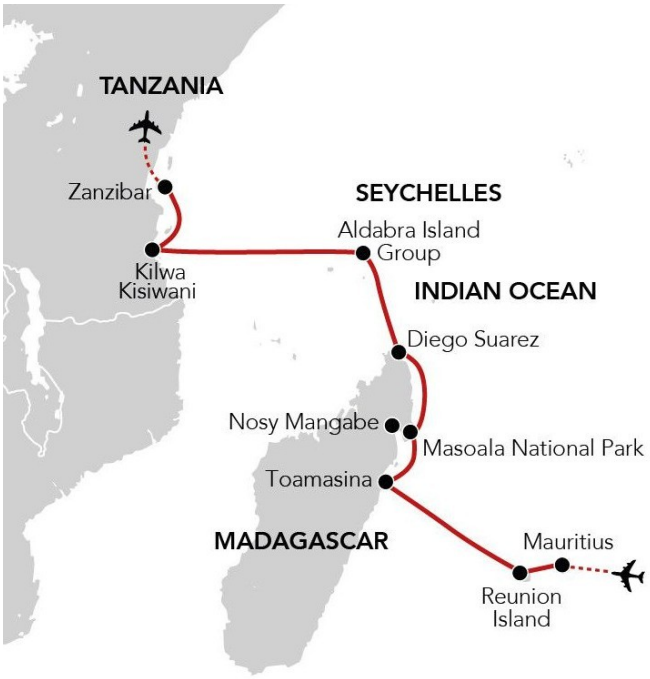



# ISLANDS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN - AN EXPEDITION FROM MAURITIUS TO ZANZIBAR

Here is an extraordinary cruise for those who enjoy the natural world and all its wonders and are looking for the opportunity to experience an unforgettable Christmas and New Year in the Indian Ocean. Our journey aboard the all-suite MS Island Sky incorporates some fascinating and exotic calls combining the magnificent Aldabra group of islands with the natural wonders of Madagascar. 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 four days of exploration of this incredibly verdant and beautiful island. Madagascar is unique; the animals, plants, landscapes and people that make up this thousand mile long island are unlike anywhere else. It is a country that has long remained obscure as a destination and is relatively little known even amongst the most serious of travellers. The long separation from the African mainland has given rise to its amazing number of unique species of flora and fauna. Continuing to the Seychelles we spend time in the Aldabra group of islands. Being one of the most difficult places in the world to access and having a lack of freshwater has saved Aldabra from any tourism development and it is the last breeding ground of the giant tortoises. In addition to seeing some of these endearing creatures we 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, followed by an expedition day to explore the treasure trove of islands off the coast which are rich in biodiversity. Our final full day will be spent in atmospheric Zanzibar. The MS Island Sky is the perfect vessel for our expedition. Carrying just over 100 guests, she is a far cry from the latest breed of cruise ships and can visit small islands and backwaters that are denied to larger vessels. Your experience will be made all the more memorable by our expert crew and officers, who along with our expedition team of marine biologists, ornithologists and botanists have many years of experience in the Indian Ocean and will provide commentary on all we see. With the vessel's purpose built Zodiacs and accompanied by our expert team, we will land on otherwise inaccessible beaches, explore vast lagoons and coral reefs and encounter some of the most beautiful tropical scenery and extraordinary wildlife to be found anywhere in




the world.

## ITINERARY

Day 1 London or Manchester to Mauritius.

Fly by scheduled indirect flight.

Day 2 Mauritius.

Arrive and transfer to the MS Island Sky moored in Port Louis. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we sail this evening.

Day 3 Port Est, Reunion Island.

Over breakfast we arrive 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 dormant or extinct 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 the 'Cite du Volcan' museum. Alternatively, enjoy a morning tour to a vanilla plantation in St 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 St 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 to Madagascar. Maybe watch for wildlife on deck or join a lecture.

Day 5 Toamasina, Madagascar.

Our first call in Madagascar is Toamasina, the country's main port and second largest city as well as the gateway to the Ivoloina Zoological Parc, a 282 hectare property combining a small zoo where we will see up to a dozen species of lemur as well as indigenous tortoises and chameleons. In the surrounding forest we can see free roaming wild lemurs and other wildlife along the various lakeside walking trails. Return to the ship for lunch and an afternoon cruising.

Days 6 & 7 Nosy Mangabe & Masoala National Park.




Spend two days exploring from our anchorage in Antongil Bay. Discover Nosy Mangabe, a 520-hectare island reserve and one of Madagascar's most diverse areas of virgin rainforest. The island has served as an important research centre since the mid-1960s when several aye-ayes and other lemurs were released into the forest. Using our Zodiacs we will land on a beach next to the forest and enjoy guided 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. With luck, we may encounter the 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 8 At Sea.

Celebrate Christmas Day on board as we continue our journey sailing around the coast of Madagascar.

### Day 9 Diego Suarez.

This morning we will enter the dramatic harbour of Diego Suarez, also known as Antsiranana. The town has a cosmopolitan mix of inhabitants, including Creoles, Indians, Chinese, Comorans and Arabs. The city tour will include the Commonwealth Cemetery, the faded colonial grandeur of Place Joffre, and a baobab viewpoint at French Mountain. Alternatively, drive up to the Amber Mountain National Park at an elevation of 3,200 feet, where we will divide into short and long walking parties to explore the pristine rainforest. Amid the towering vegetation, we may encounter Sanford's brown and crowned lemurs, as well as chameleons, stunningly well camouflaged leaf-tailed geckos, and an array of endemic birds. We will depart late this afternoon, continuing our voyage towards the Seychelles.

### Days 10 to 12 Aldabra Islands.

Arriving in the Outer Seychelles we have two and a half days to enjoy the remarkable Aldabra group of islands. 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 truly unique, and every time we call at what is believed to be the world's largest atoll we find something new of interest. Sightings have included the extremely rare white-throated rail, while 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 first. The clear blue seas abound with life, the skies are alive with varied birdlife and ashore giant 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 ever-changing undersea world and snorkel in colourful coral waters. Meanwhile at Cosmoledo a huge ring of twelve islands circles a lagoon. Many of the atolls are still to be surveyed and we will explore some of them by Zodiac. This is an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area with all three species of booby found in the Seychelles including the last breeding site for the brown booby. We also hope to spot sooty terns and great frigate birds on land and have the opportunity to see turtles as we swim and snorkel in the lagoon.

Day 13 At Sea.

Spend a leisurely day on board as we continue our journey towards the African mainland.

Day 14 Kilwa Kisiwani, Tanzania.

Arriving in Tanzania 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 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. Tonight we will welcome in the New Year on board.

Day 15 Expedition Day, Tanzanian Islands.

Today we start the new year in the hands of our Captain and Expedition Leader as we explore the islands off the coast of Tanzania. We hope to use the Zodiacs to land on one of the beaches and offer nature walks or swimming opportunities in the clear waters.

Day 16 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. This afternoon there will be a tour to Jozani Forest which sustains a variety of wildlife and birds, including the rare red colobus monkey, indigenous to the island.

Day 17 Zanzibar to London or Manchester.

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

Day 18 London or Manchester.

Arrive this morning.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.




# 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

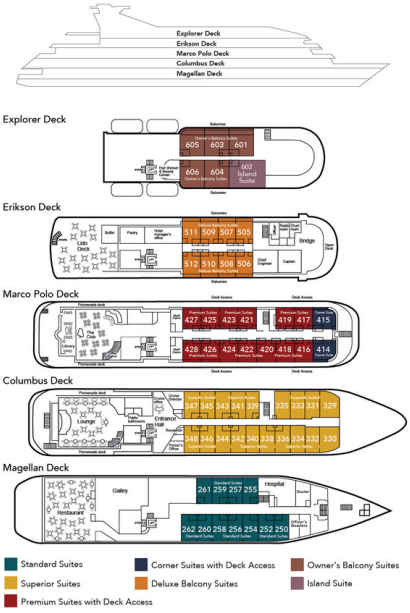
also WI-FI access throughout the vessel. Outside there is a rear sun deck where meals are served in warm weather under shade, a bar and comfortable deck furniture for sun bathing or relaxing with a book. On the top deck there is a Jacuzzi and further observation and sun deck. There is also a small hairdressers 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.




# 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






Marco Polo Deck Premium Suite






# PRICING

**18-Dec-2027 to 04-Jan-2028**

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| Marco Polo Deck Corner Suite | £14395 GBP pp |
| Columbus Deck Superior Single | £14495 GBP pp |
| Explorer Deck Owner's Balcony Suite | £15495 GBP pp |
| Magellan Deck Standard Suite | £12995 GBP pp |
| Columbus Deck Superior Suite | £13495 GBP pp |
| Marco Polo Deck Premium Suite | £13995 GBP pp |
| Explorer Deck Island Suite | £15995 GBP pp |
| Erikson Deck Deluxe Balcony Suite | £14995 GBP pp |
| Magellan Deck Standard Single | £13995 GBP pp |