



The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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ITALY & HER ISLANDS - AN EXPLORATION OF ITALY'S ISLANDS & CORSICA

Here is a wonderful opportunity to discover the Italian islands of Elba, Sardinia and Sicily combined with two days on the beautiful French island of Corsica. All of the islands we will call into are easy enough to visit individually but difficult to combine independently in a 10-night trip. The islands feature an array of ancient ruins, attractive towns and villages and we will have time on each to visit the main sites but to also explore some of the smaller ports and less visited regions. We have ensured that each day has an enjoyable mix of culture with guided excursions as well as ample time at leisure. October is the perfect time of year for our exploration, the crowds of summer will have dispersed with ideal weather for touring and sightseeing. Sailing from the Tuscan port of Livorno, we will cruise to the enchanting island of Elba, best known as Napoleon's island of exile. From there we continue to Corsica which, despite officially being a part of France, has its own identity in everything from customs to language and benefits from magnificent geographical diversity ranging from stunning natural harbours to picture perfect hilltop villages and a majestic countryside. Leaving the charms of Corsica behind we spend two days in Sardinia where we explore the Medieval city of Alghero and discover Nuraghe Palmavera, whilst from Cagliari, we will have the opportunity to visit the wonderful ruins of Nora. Our last days are spent on Sicily which, with a history of 3000 years has a wealth of sites to discover from magnificent Doric temples to great Byzantine cathedrals and bizarrely styled villas. In addition to our fascinating itinerary we have the pleasure of cruising aboard the all-suite MS Hebridean Sky which with just 118 passengers is able to visit atmospheric ports and villages which the big ships cannot

access. This is a voyage that will appeal to those who love Italy, and who enjoy hopping between islands. Local guides and our onboard Guest Speaker will contribute greatly to our enjoyment and understanding of these island gems and you will find yourself wanting to return time and

time again.

ITINERARY

Day 1 London or Manchester to Pisa, Italy.

Fly by scheduled flight. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the MS Hebridean Sky in Livorno for embarkation. Sail this evening.

Day 2 Portoferraio, Elba.

Today we call into the enchanting island of Elba, best known as Napoleon's island of exile from 1814 to 1815. Departing from the island's busy capital Portoferraio, we set out for a delightful drive exploring the southern region of this charming island with superb views over the coastline. The first stop will be Villa San Martino which was the summer residence of Napoleon Bonaparte and has been transformed into a museum. Later enjoy some time at leisure in Porto Azzurro with its picturesque harbour. Our drive continues along the coast to the 17th century country wine farm, La Chiusa, which is beautifully nestled in a vineyard estate surrounded by olive trees and overlooking the ocean. As any self-respecting mansion on Elba, La Chiusa claims to have once housed Napoleon during his exile here. Experience the estate's interesting cellar to learn how the wine is handled and produced and in the estate's garden facing the sea we will enjoy a delicious sampling of the local wine. Return to

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the ship for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at leisure in Portoferraio.

Day 3 Bastia, Corsica.

Situated on the north of the island of Corsica, Bastia was the old Genoese capital and is now a busy port. Its setting is handsome, the classic Mediterranean allure of pale, sunlit streets flanked by tall colourful buildings. Our walking tour of the historic quarter will include the 15th century cathedral, chapels, and Baroque buildings such as the Oratoire St Roch, Oratoire de l'Immaculee Conception and the Roccoco church, St Jean Baptiste, famous for its twin campaniles. Return to the ship for lunch and this afternoon choose to relax on board, enjoy some free time in Bastia or join an excursion to the small fishing port of St Florent. Our drive will take us through the Nebbio which takes its name from the thick mist that sweeps over the region and is now reputed for its fine wines from Patrimonio. On arrival in St Florent we will have time to wander the maze of narrow streets and take a coffee in one of the waterfront cafes whilst watching the yachts in the marina.

Day 4 Bonifacio.

Be on deck this morning as we arrive at Bonifacio's stunning natural harbour. Well known by Odysseus as the home of the savage and giant laestrygonians, today Bonifacio's breathtaking cliff-top setting and relaxed pace make it one of the most welcoming ports in the Mediterranean. On our morning tour we will explore the narrow streets and the historical heart of the town. We will discover the Bosco quarter with the St Francis Convent, the 14th century church of St Marie Majeure and take in the views from the clifftop on which the city is built. Afterwards maybe take a walk in the nearby Marine Park which offers some stunning views back to the town. We will sail late

this evening allowing time for an after dinner stroll.

Day 5 Porto Torres & Alghero, Sardinia.

Arrive in Sardinia and the port of Porto Torres over breakfast. A panoramic drive takes us to Nuraghe Palmavera with its main tower of the Nuraghe, which still has its dome shaped ceiling that dates back to 1100 BC. The complex, which was abandoned in the 5th century BC due to fire, shows the different phases of social life and political organisation of the tribal community. Continue to the Medieval city of Alghero, which was colonised by the Catalans in the 14th century and today there is still a strong Catalan identity throughout the town, and it is often even referred to as "Barceloneta". There will be some free time to walk through the Medieval streets and along the city walls or maybe visit the archaeological museum. Return to the ship for lunch and an afternoon at sea.

Day 6 Cagliari.

Berth this morning in the Sardinian capital of Cagliari from where we drive along the southwestern coast to reach Nora which was founded by the Phoenicians but also has Carthaginian and Roman ruins. After a period of Roman prosperity, there was a decline and in the 3rd century AD the city was engulfed by the sea. Still visible today are the remains of a Carthaginian warehouse and various Roman buildings including the baths with splendid mosaics and the theatre. This afternoon we explore the Sardinian capital of Cagliari, an ancient city which dates back to the Phoenicians and Romans. On a walking tour we will stroll around the old town with its narrow streets running along a steep hillside. See the terraced Piazza del Palazzo and the 14th century Cathedral of St Cecilia.

Day 7 Palermo & Monreale, Sicily.

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After a morning cruising we arrive in the early afternoon in the Sicilian capital of Palermo. You can choose to explore the city, famous for its jumbled and picturesque streets punctuated with ornate Baroque churches, domed Arab mosques and glittering Byzantine mosaics that reveal a unique and diverse heritage. We visit the impressive 12th century cathedral which houses the royal tombs of Henri VI and King Ruggiero. Alternatively, join an excursion to Monreale Cathedral, said to be the most beautiful Norman Church in Italy, designed and completed by William the Good in 1174. With its thick walls and powerful towers, the exterior looks like an austere fortress yet it is the interior of this great cathedral which is its crowning glory. Here the large nave, with its side aisles and grey granite columns set off the exquisite Byzantine mosaics on the walls above the arches.

Day 8 Messina for Taormina or Tindari.

From the nearby port of Messina you can choose to visit Taormina, a walled town lying in the shadow of Mount Etna, Europe's highest volcano. The town has been a popular tourist destination since the 19th century and our guided tour will include walking the characteristic alleys before visiting the 15th century Palazzo Corvaja and the impressive Greek Theatre from where there are marvellous views over the town and coast. Alternatively, join an excursion to Tindari, a town which was founded by Syracusan merchants during the war against Carthage in 396 BC. The ruins of the ancient city are relatively well preserved and the structure that astounds above all others is the 4th century Greek Theatre which is a marvel of acoustic engineering. However, the foremost attraction is the Sanctuary of the Madonna Nera containing the sculpture of the Virgin and Child, in citron wood, and which is said to have reached Tindari in an attempt by the faithful to keep it safe from the 8th century Byzantine Iconoclast movement.

Day 9 Syracuse.

Syracuse was founded by the Greeks in 734 BC and by the 5th century was a political and military power throughout the Mediterranean, rivalling Athens as the largest and most beautiful city in the Greek world. This morning we visit the Neapolis Archaeological Park to discover the wellpreserved Greek theatre with seats carved from limestone. Paradise Quarry, now an attractive garden and orange grove, was the primary source of that limestone and is the site of the curious 'Ear of Dionysius' - a vast grotto with an amplifying resonance. Returning to the ship for lunch we have a free afternoon to explore Ortigia, the historical centre of Syracuse. We meet this evening for a private concert in one of the town's palazzos accompanied by local food and wine. We remain moored in Syracuse overnight.

Day 10 Noto.

Drive this morning to the Baroque village of Noto. Built in 1703, Noto is a picturesque city located on the terraced slopes of Mount Iblei among olive groves and almond trees. A guided walk along the central streets will reveal the 18th century Palazzo Ducezio and some Baroque churches: San Francesco Immacolata, the cathedral, San Carlo, Santa Chiara and the imposing Palazzo Nicolaci di Villadorata, built in 1737. After lunch on board we have a free afternoon in Syracuse before we sail this evening.

Day 11 Valletta, Malta to London or Manchester.

Be on deck this morning as we cruise into the Grand Harbour of Valletta. Disembark and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight.

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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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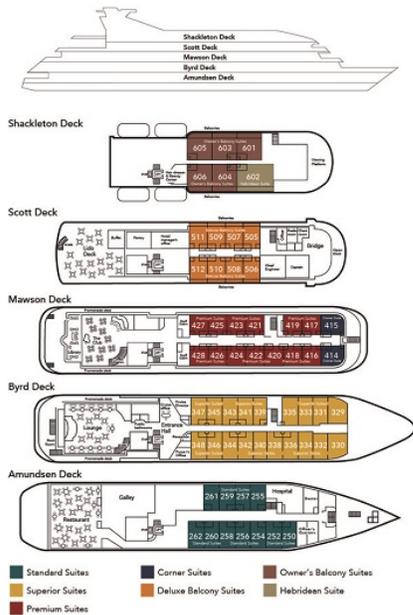
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