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LISBON TO LONDON (TOWER BRIDGE)

From Lisbon to London with love! This fantastic cruise takes you from sunny shores and Pastel de Nata's to Gothic splendour and fish and chips! Sail your way north across the top of Spain and the west of France, stopping to drink in the culture and history along the way. Think classic Porto, Mont St. Michel, and Breton villages that will delight. Your arrival in London will literally stop traffic as Tower Bridge opens her gates for you. Some departures may have a slightly modified itinerary. Please get in touch for more information.

Day 1 Pre Cruise

Day 2 Lisbon PORTUGAL

A glorious mosaic of beauty, freedom and authenticity, Portugal's capital is a stirring artwork of a city. Known for the seven hills it spreads across, and its stirring fado music, Lisbon is a pastel-coloured blend of houses and beautiful tile artworks - and this creative city strikes a perfect harmony between natural and manmade beauty. Stroll along Alfama's steep, cobbled streets as you explore one of the city's oldest neighbourhoods - where each house and door could be its own photograph. Look for the decorative tiles, with the distinctive blues and whites of Azulejo ceramics, and visit the dedicated museum to learn more. Afterwards, wind up to Sao Jorge Castle, where views out across Lisbon's red rooftops unravel. Just one of many majestic viewpoints, you can also seek out Miradouro da Graça for perhaps Lisbon's finest panorama, with the copper-coloured suspension bridge stretching over sparkling water beyond the sea of buildings. The elegant Tower of Belem rises in the Tagus estuary and is a historic defender of these shores. The grand, carved cloisters of Jeronimos Monastery spread out close by, and there's another UNESCO recognised location close by at Sintra, where a colourful town is set amid thick gardens and towering mountains - capped by the royal Pena Palace. Later, relax and take a quick break to drink Ginjinha, a cherry liqueur made from chocolate cups instead of coffee. Lisboetas have a sweet tooth, and the famous Pastel de Nata's crumbling pastry and caramelised-custard topping is the essential accompaniment to any coffee stop.

ITINERARY



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Day 3 Oporto (Leixões) PORTUGAL

Steep, stacked banks of evocative buildings and cobbled streets perch scenically over the River Duoro, in this authentic, atmospheric Portuguese city. Famed for its wine and bright azulejo tiles - which turn streets into art galleries - Oporto is a charming taste of the real Portugal. Wander the uneven paths of the country's second-largest city, which are soaked with history, tradition and eye-catching details. Start in the gorgeous, historic Ribeira neighbourhood at the River Douro, and walk up through tiny alleys and narrow streets lined with restaurants and cafes. Catch your breath with a coffee, and be sure to try the famous pastel de nata pastry as a sweet accompaniment. Enjoy views of the colourful city from the skeletal Ponte de Dom Luis I bridge. Its design might ring a bell - the structure was created by a student of Gustav Eiffel, and has a similar aesthetic to his famous tower creation. Porto Cathedral sits on a rise of steps, towering above the city and offering spectacular views down. The cloisters are a highlight - with beautiful mosaics of the renowned blue and white tiles gleaming. If you're hungry, the indulgent Francesinha sandwich will fill you up for days. A Portuguese take on French toast - it's packed full of ham and slathered in cheese, egg and sauce. Or settle in for a feast on some of Portugal's ubiquitous salted cod, Bacalhau. The climate nurtures the revered vineyards, which surround the city, helping to produce harvests of perfect grapes. Head out to landscapes coated in vineyards from the Douro Valley to try some of the finest local wines.

Day 4 La Coruna SPAIN

Revolving around its golden urban beaches, La Coruna is a bustling, historic city, which luxuriates along the twisted Galician coastline. One of Spain's most undiscovered, under-the-radar destinations, La Coruna boasts juicy seafood and unbridled

relaxation beside the Mediterranean's rustling waves, and is set amid a surprisingly lush and vibrant green landscape. A pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella's cultural wonders is also easily within your reach from these shores. The narrow streets of the historic centre open out to the vast Plaza de Maria Pita, which is crowned by the triple domes of the City Hall. Cafes and restaurants spill out around the square, perfect for hunkering down for coffee or a glass of refreshing white Albariño wine. Head to Calle Estrella, to taste the fruits of the Atlantic and La Coruna's seafood - grilled octopus is a particular speciality. If you're in a hurry, grab some empanada pastries, filled with minced beef, or head to the City Market, which is packed with Galician flavours and intrigues. Back at the seafront, the peninsula tempts with strolls out to one of the most storied lighthouses in Spain. Still watching the waves after almost 2,000 years, the Tower of Hercules was built by the Romans in the 2nd century, and this UNESCO World Heritage Site rises 55 metres above the Atlantic - making it Spain's second tallest. The winding Paseo Maritimo coastal path skirts beaches and the city's endless waterfront, and is dotted with colourful artworks.

Day 5 Gijon SPAIN

Think of the north coast of Spain and one does not immediately think surfing and cider. But, as you approach this pretty Asturian city that what you'll be greeted with. Gijon might not offer the sophistication of Barcelona or Bilbao, but it what it lacks in world-famous museums is more than made up for by its unique cultural identity, warm, welcoming charm and miles and miles of nature. Part of "Green Spain", weather in Gijon is a bit more of an issue here than in other parts of the country. As with most places that benefit from lush, verdant nature, it can (and does)

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rain here, so be prepared and don't let that tamper the joy of the exquisite, untouched coastline that stretches from Portugal to France. Gijon dates from Roman times, and the city hosts some superb Roman baths ruins. Some parts of the old city were destroyed in the Spanish Civil War, but from there grew a more streamline city, which seems to have remained lost in the time when it was built. You don't come to Gijon expecting bright lights and big cities, you come because that is what you are trying to get away from. The city is the self-proclaimed capital of Cider, tradition being to pour the (still, not sparkling) drink from a great height. Gijon's ciderhouses, called sidrerias, are found all over the city but the best ones (or the ones with the best view) are on the edge of the Cimavilla (old town), where you can enjoy the show of the waiter pouring your drink, while listening to the rumbling of the Atlantic Ocean crashing below.

Day 6 Quiberon FRANCE

Quiberon is a peninsula of contrasting natural beauty, from its wild, unspoilt western coastline to the sheltered, sandy beaches of the eponymous bay to the east. Visitors flock to the charming fishing villages that serve as popular summertime resorts, coloured with art galleries and alive with the hum of restaurants that serve freshly caught fish. Connected to the mainland by a narrow tombolo, which is guarded by the formidable Penthièvre Fort, the Quiberon Peninsula stretches south for approximately 9 kilometres (6 miles) forming the western border of Quiberon Bay. In 1759 this bay was the site of a decisive battle in the 7 Years' War, when the British Royal Navy gained supremacy over its French counterpart. In the following century Port Maria at the very southern tip, rose to prominence as France's leading sardine harbour, thanks to the development of preserving food in sealed and cooked bottles, later tin cans. The peninsula's

earlier history is still very much evident, with numerous menhirs and stone alignments present along its length, hinting at the significance of the area in megalithic times. Perhaps this was partly a reflection on the peninsula's natural beauty, but also on the dominant force of the Atlantic Ocean that sculpted it. The result is known locally as the "Wild Coast", with caves, arches and rocky coves making for a sublime and breathtakingly beautiful spectacle. Overflowing with history, culture and natural beauty, no wonder Quiberon is known as the "Peninsula of Dreams".

Day 7 Concarneau FRANCE

Fishing has dominated the Brittany town of Concarneau from its beginning. Starting as a safe harbour for local fishing boats it expanded to become an important port and fish processing base for a deepwater tuna fishing fleet. A museum highlights the rich fishing history, and other reminders of fishing both past and present are all around. The harbour shores have walking tracks, beaches and smaller villages to explore. Listen out for the Breton language of Brittany being spoken. The main town today is large and bustling and occupies the mainland of the harbour. The original old part of town, known as the Ville Close, is a different story. It was built on an island in the harbour for safety. A defensive wall around the town was constructed in the 14th century and upgraded in the 17th century. You can still patrol the ramparts of the wall today. The strategic safe harbour and town was fought over several times. One famous battle was in 1373 during the 100-year War when the Breton knight Bertrand du Guesclin, "The Eagle of Brittany", drove the English from the town. The inside of Ville Close is a jumble of timbered and gabled houses, often decorated with flowers, crowding cobbled streets. It is a tight fit, as the town is only 350 metres (1150

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feet) by 100 metres (330 feet) in size. We can understand why the town overflowed to nearby shores. As you cross the bridge to Ville Close you leave much of the modern world and pass an old clock tower that perhaps symbolises a step back to a medieval time.

Day 8 Douarnenez FRANCE

The idyllic town of Douarnenez has been a favourite of artists for 200 years, and continues to colour people's memory. It's impossible not to fall in love with the narrow streets, quaint harbours and the legend of the lost city of Ys, said to lie beneath the waters of the bay. Douarnenez developed as a prosperous port in the 16th century, through the export of fine cloth and sails, that were made in the nearby village of Locronan (voted one of the most beautiful villages in France), a trade that was only surpassed in the 19th century by the sardine fishery. Taking the "Sardine Trail" is one of the best ways to explore the town - it consists of 17 information panels that explain the key points of interest: start (or finish) at the maritime museum at Port-Rhu, where you can play skipper on 5 different boats in the harbour. Narrow cobbled streets with traditional fishermen's houses and their workshops add immeasurable charm to the town. Many of these have been given a new lease of life as craft shops, galleries, cafes and restaurants - why not linger over a glass of cider or give in to temptation and try the local cake, Kouign-amann (described in the New York Times as "the fattiest pastry in all of Europe"). To walk off those calories, head up to the cliffs and to the village of Les Plomarch, a favourite spot of artists and also where you can see the remains of Roman era garum vats - tanks to make a fermented fish sauce - before letting the last of your cares dissolve away at the beach of Le Ris.

Day 9 Saint Malo (Brittany) FRANCE

Ship sails flutter in the breeze, at the natural port of Saint-Malo - a historic and resilient walled city, which watches out over golden sands and island fortresses. Strung tenuously to the mainland, Saint Malo was the historic home of a rowdy mix of skilled sailors and new world explorers - as well as the plunderers who earned the place its 'Pirate City' title. Some of history's great voyages have launched from here - including Jacques Cartier's, which led to the settlement of New France and modern-day Quebec. Founded by a Welsh monk, who made his way here in the 6th century, Saint Malo's castle is forged from sheer granite, and its steep defensive ramparts arise defiantly. The atmospheric walled town turns its back to the mainland and gazes out longingly into the sea. Explore streets that breathe with maritime tales and medieval charm - restored from the intense damage sustained during the Second World War. Cathedrale de St Malo rises above the tight paths, offering views of the peppered islands and fortifications. Boatloads of fresh oysters and scallops are heaved ashore - savour them or grab savoury crepes galettes, stuffed with cheese and ham. Wash Saint Malo's foods down with a Brittany cider, which challenges wine as the indulgence of choice in these parts. A highly tidal region, the pocket-sized islands of Petit Be and Grand Be join the mainland, and you can explore at leisure as the tide recedes. The incredible island of Mont Saint Michel also looms in the estuary of the Couesnon River nearby, hovering like a cinematic mirage above high tide's waters. Elsewhere, Cap Frehel's lush green peninsula juts out from the emerald coast towards Jersey, tempting with rich coastal hiking trails.

Day 10 Le Havre FRANCE

Le Havre is a captivating mix of industrial and natural grandeur with an amazing feeling of space and light. Having been virtually

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destroyed in World War II, only a handful of historic buildings in the city centre survived. It was rebuilt and reborn by a very forward thinking architect, Auguste Perret. With little resources available Perret's solution was to use concrete in a new way, playing with the colours, textures and shapes. His modernist vision earned him the nickname, The Poet of Concrete and later his buildings UNESCO World Heritage status. Landmark building St Joseph's church, with its soaring spire of over 100 metres tall, acts as a lighthouse, visible from out to sea, guiding ships back to port. The imposing concrete church is unadorned but lit by over 6000 pieces of stained glass, an austere masterpiece. There are other architectural wonders in this fascinating city. The Museum of Modern Art, (MUMA), Le Volcan arts centre, shaped like two volcanos and the more recent Bain des Docks, a state-of-the-art aquatic centre inspired by Roman baths. Le Havre has long been associated with innovation, in 1872 Claude Monet, painted the sunrising through industrial chimneys of Le Havre, "Impression, Sunrise". It was panned by critics, one of whom scornfully coined the term "Impressionism". Later it became the world's most famous art movement. The MUMA Museum has a wonderful collection of Impressionist paintings. Le Havre is a city with bold and grand plans, looking firmly forward.

Day 11 Day at sea INTERNATIONAL WATERS

Days at sea are the perfect opportunity to relax, unwind and catch up with what you've been meaning to do. So whether that is going to the gym, visiting the spa, whale watching, catching up on your reading or simply topping up your tan, these blue sea days are the perfect balance to busy days spent exploring shore side.

Days 12 - 13 London (Tower Bridge) UNITED KINGDOM

Centuries-old architecture shares an instantly recognisable skyline with the modern metallic and glass shards of skyscrapers in London, a city of endless history and tradition. Arrive at the centre of it all, below the watch of one of the most famous bridges in the world, Tower Bridge. From here, you can begin a tour of iconic landmarks, and discover why England's capital is one of the most visited, adored and adulated cities. So much to see, so little time. The traditional and contemporary go hand in hand in London like nowhere else. Ascend the London Eye, for a birds-eye view of the city, before wandering across the Thames's wide flow to the Gothic architecture of the Houses of Parliament, and the rise of Big Ben's unmistakable clocktower. A hefty sprinkle of royal pageantry awaits at Buckingham Palace, where red-jacketed soldiers stomp sternly and solemnly in their duty, during ceremonies to mark the changing of the guards. Close to Tower Bridge, you'll find the Tower of London's historic fortress, palace and prison, while bustling central markets like Borough Market offer a taste of flavours from around the world. Sweeping green spaces like Hyde Park provide spacious relief from the skyscrapers, while world-class museums exhibit finely curated exhibitions from across the world, covering the entire scope of human history and invention, as well as the natural world. Greenwich's leafy parks and centres of refined study are close by, or a boat ride along the Thames will introduce you to this megacity from the perspective of the water.

Day 14 Post Cruise

Please Note:

The excursions are provided as a sample of what may be offered on this voyage and are subject to change.

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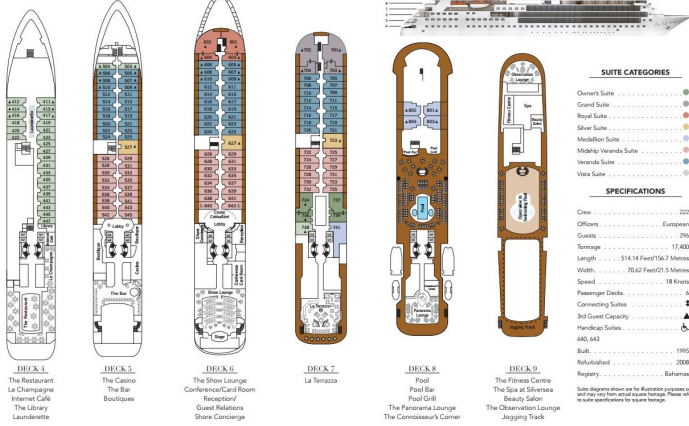


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