

MADAGASCAR & BEYOND - DISCOVER THE WONDERS OF THE SEYCHELLES & MADAGASCAR

Join us aboard the all-suite MS Island Sky for a wonderful expedition that combines idyllic islands, some of which are a mere dot in the Indian Ocean, with the natural wonders of Madagascar. Our voyage begins with a week in the Seychelles including the magnificent Aldabra islands before we sail to the world's 'eighth continent' for nine days of discovery of Madagascar's astonishing flora and fauna. We then continue to the island of Reunion where we have the benefit of a full day to discover its beautiful scenery before our expedition concludes in Mauritius. The Seychelles offer a tropical beauty that is difficult, if not impossible to match anywhere else in the world and whilst exploring the islands, one of the highlights will be our time in the Aldabra Islands, the last breeding ground of the giant tortoise and 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. To explore the abundant crystal clear waters of the vast lagoon and to set foot on atolls that have never been exploited by the hand of man is a rare experience. We continue to Madagascar where the animals, plants, landscapes and people that make up this thousand mile long island are unlike anywhere else in the world. This extraordinary country long remained obscure as a destination and is still relatively unknown amongst even the most serious of travellers. There is minimal infrastructure in many parts of the island and for those wishing to explore the siland in some depth, doing so by small ship is far more preferable than by any other means. During our time exploring Madagascar we will discover the rainforests which are full of wildlife including the iconic lemur, chameleons and indigenous birdlife as well as seeing the underwater world and village life. Our expedition is a veritable feast of beauty and the natural world. You will witness the bounty of the Seychelles, the wildlife from the lemurs of Madagascar to the giant tortoises of Aldabra, an amazingly prolific birdlife and a mesmerising underwater life. With the vessel's fleet of Zodiacs for forays ashore, allowing access to the wonderful places denied to larger ships and accompanied by just 100 fellow travellers and our onboard experts, you can learn about and enjoy encounters with fabulous endemic wildlife in this immensely rich and timeless corner of the





Indian Ocean.

ITINERARY

Day 1 London or Manchester to Mahe, Seychelles.

Fly by scheduled indirect flight.

Day 2 Mahe.

Arrive and transfer to the MS Island Sky moored in Port Victoria. Later we sail the short distance to our overnight anchorage.

Day 3 Curieuse & Aride.

Spend the morning on Curieuse, a rugged island that was once home to a leper colony and now houses an eco-museum and visitor centre. The island is an important nesting site for hawksbill turtles and boasts endemic vines and mangroves which we will explore during our island walk. Over lunch we sail the short distance to Aride, one of the finest and most important seabird islands in the Indian Ocean. Over one million seabirds breed on the island including tropical shearwater, lesser noddy, frigate birds and roseate tern and also five species unique to the Seychelles such as the Seychelles warbler and Seychelles magpie robin. The island is largely covered in native woodland including the endemic Wright's gardenia, a shrub with beautifully scented flowers found nowhere else in the world.

Day 4 Amirante Islands.

Over lunch we arrive at the 28 islands in the Amirante Group which were discovered by Vasco da Gama in 1501 and are considered to be some of the most pristine and untouched islands in the world. If conditions permit we will visit Poivre Atoll which is made up of three islands. In the past the islands were used for vanilla, nuts, maize, cattle and pig farming but in recent years, the atolls' landscapes have become a popular nesting ground for bird species like Chinese and blue heron, whimbrels, fodies, noddies and greater frigate birds. The sandy shores are also important nesting grounds for hawksbill and green turtles.

Day 5 Alphonse Islands.

There are three islands in the Alphonse group, and as we approach them you will understand why they are regarded by many to be the most beautiful of the 115 islands in the Seychelles archipelago. Our day will be directed by sea and weather conditions but we hope to call at the tiny and idyllic



island of Bijoutier which, rarely visited, is a haven for a variety of seabirds. There will be the opportunity to swim and maybe snorkel in the crystal clear waters. Bijoutier sits between two larger atolls so the ocean current flows passing Bijoutier replenish the coral reefs and make them especially rich in biodiversity.

Day 6 At Sea.

Spend the day at sea as we continue our journey through the Seychelles. Maybe watch for wildlife on deck or join a lecture.

Days 7 & 8 Aldabra Islands.

Arriving in the Outer Seychelles we have one 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 is 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 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 ever-changing undersea world and snorkel in colourful coral waters.

Day 9 Nosy Hara, Madagascar.

Our first call in Madagascar will be off the northwest coast where we will find a number of strangely shaped limestone islets that dot the aquamarine-coloured sea. The expedition team will decide on the most suitable island for landing, such as Nosy Hara with its abundant birdlife and great places to swim off the beach. We will spend the day exploring the islands on foot or alternatively join a Zodiac cruise around the islands and have a chance to snorkel over the coral.

Day 10 Nosy Tanikely.

Spend the morning at the Nosy Tanikely Island Marine Reserve, an uninhabited island which offers snorkelling opportunities and wonderful beaches. We will take the chance to either swim in the clear waters or snorkel over the corals keeping an eye out for reef fish, turtles and morays. Alternatively, explore the island where we may see the resident lemurs, skinks, fruit bats and hermit crabs and enjoy fantastic views from the 1908 lighthouse on the island's highest point. Sail this afternoon.

Day 11 Mahajanga.

Mahajanga is a major port in northwest Madagascar. This cosmopolitan city, situated on the Betsiboka River, mixes Sakalava, Tsimihety, Arab, Chinese, Indian and European influences and is our base for a full day tour of the surrounding area. After landing by Zodiac we will commence with a drive to Lake Mangatsa, a sacred site of many legends where we will



learn about local traditions as we search for lemurs, chameleons and birds in the trees. Lunch will be served at a hotel, which offers lovely sea views, before we return to the MS Island Sky via the local market.

Day 12 At Sea.

Spend a leisurely day on board as we continue our journey around the Madagascan coast.

Day 13 Morondava.

From our anchorage off the town of Morondava, the capital of the Menabe region, we will use the Zodiacs to make a beach landing. From here there will be a choice of excursions to explore the local region. We will explore Marofandilia Forest, a protected area that is home to a number of species of lemurs, birds, reptiles and plants, and is managed by the proactive NGO Fanamby (the Malagasy 'arm' of Conservation International). During our visit we will take part in walks through the forest before a picnic lunch. We will then head to the Avenue des Baobabs. Of the eight baobab species in the world, six are endemic to Madagascar and here we will marvel at the majestic Grandidier's baobabs, a couple of dozen of which form a natural avenue. We will learn about the trees and their spiritual significance and have the opportunity to contribute to local reforestation efforts by planting a young baobab ourselves. Alternatively, if you would prefer a more leisurely day, there will be a morning tour to the Avenue des Baobabs which will return to the ship for lunch and a relaxing afternoon on board.

Days 14 & 15 Tulear.

After a morning at sea we arrive in Tulear and this afternoon will visit the Antsokay Arboretum which is entirely devoted to the conservation of the plants from the southwest of Madagascar and, after more than 30 years of hard work, offers a densely kept selection of flora presenting a typical sub-arid thicket with baobab trees towering over the smaller plants. We will see the four hectare botanical garden which comprises over 900 species of plants of which 90% are endemic to the region. After mooring overnight we spend our second morning at the Reniala Private Reserve, a small area of just 60 hectares but containing a spiny forest which is unique to southeastern Madagascar. The park is home to 200 plant species including baobabs as well as being a haven for birders with sightings of paradise flycatchers, Madagascar hoopoe and Madagascar crested drongo. Return to the ship for lunch and spend a relaxing afternoon at sea.

Days 16 & 17 Taolagnaro.

Our final call in Madagascar is the southeastern port of Taolagnaro, also known as Fort Dauphin. This was the first French settlement in Madagascar, situated on a peninsula overlooked by the Anosy mountains. We will moor overnight and our afternoon and morning excursions will include the Nahampoana Private Park. The reserve is only 67 hectares but home to four species of lemur including ring-tailed and sifakas whilst the gardens showcase Madagascan plants with three-cornered palms and spiny Desiderata trees. A tour of Taolagnaro will include the historical buildings where we will learn about the arrival of the Malagasy people to Madagascar and the links with Reunion. Also enjoy walks at Manantantely, a 136 hectare park consisting of a nursery set in a paradisiacal valley with several walking trails where we may see chameleons and lizards. Day 18 At Sea. Spend the day at sea as we leave Madagascar and sail towards Reunion Island.

Day 19 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. Return to the MS Island Sky for lunch and enjoy a relaxing afternoon on board before we sail to Mauritius this evening.

Day 20 Mauritius to London or Manchester.

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

Day 21 London or Manchester.

Arrive this morning.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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

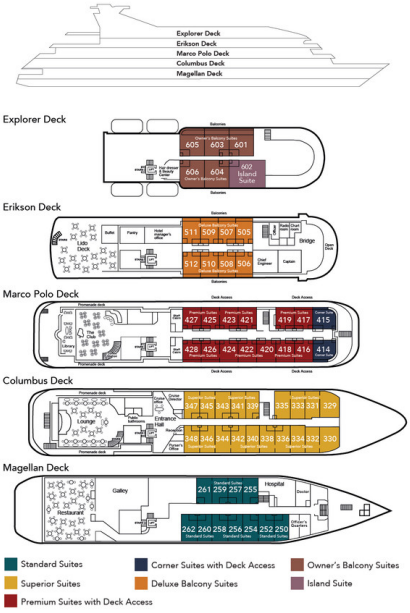
also WI-FI access throughout the vessel. Outside there is a rear sun deck where meals are served in warm weather under shade, a bar and comfortable deck furniture for sun bathing or relaxing with a book. On the top deck there is a Jacuzzi and further observation and sun deck. There is also a small hairdressers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

29-Nov-2027 to 19-Dec-2027

Explorer Deck Island Suite	£17995 GBP pp
Marco Polo Deck Corner Suite	£15495 GBP pp
Magellan Deck Standard Suite	£13995 GBP pp
Columbus Deck Superior Suite	£14495 GBP pp
Erikson Deck Deluxe Balcony Suite	£16995 GBP pp
Marco Polo Deck Premium Suite	£14995 GBP pp
Explorer Deck Owner's Balcony Suite	£17495 GBP pp
Magellan Deck Standard Single	£16495 GBP pp
Columbus Deck Superior Single	£16995 GBP pp