

# The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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## MALTA TO MALAGA

Join us aboard the all-suite MS Hebridean Sky for this voyage from Malta to Malaga which incorporates a circumnavigation of Sicily and all its wonders followed by a journey across the Mediterranean exploring some of the most splendid and varied remains of the Roman World. Sicily has an incredible wealth of treasures and a geography which lends itself beautifully to exploration by sea with most points of interest located close to the coast. Owing to its benevolent climate and superb strategic position, the island has been coveted, fought over and colonised numerous times with the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Normans, Byzantines and Bourbons having all made their mark. From magnificent Doric temples to great Byzantine cathedrals and bizarrely styled villas, there is so much to explore during our circumnavigation of the island. We will visit the Roman mosaics of Villa Romana di Casale, the Valle dei Templi, the superbly well-preserved Greek temples of Segesta and the Norman Royal Palace and Palatine Chapel in Palermo, Byzantine Monreale Cathedral and the stunning Greek theatre at Taormina. We have planned some late departures from port which afford the opportunity to enjoy dining ashore or an after dinner stroll in some towns which are particularly atmospheric in the evening. From Sicily we sail south to Malta and on to Tunisia, Algeria and Spain visiting some further magnificent sites which provide an unparalleled experience of life in classical times which, with the help of our knowledgeable Guest Speaker and local guides, will be brought vividly back to life. Whilst in Tunisia we will visit the Roman amphitheatre of El Djem, the ancient city of Kairouan and Carthage with its Phoenician ruins. It is easy to imagine how daily life played out in Roman times in

this great city which will transport you to another world and time. Following a day in the Sardinian capital of Cagliari we sail to Algeria for a full day exploration of the ancient city of Tipaza before heading to mainland Spain. Our penultimate call will be to Cartagena, which was used by Hannibal as a strategic base and later became a Roman administrative centre, before our voyage concludes in the delightful city of Malaga. All this will be achieved with great ease aboard the MS Hebridean Sky and with just over 100 like-minded souls, we are able to explore in a way that is impossible from aboard a large cruise vessel. For those who enjoy exploring the ancient world, this itinerary has it all and the bonus of having a ship for our base, rather than a sequence of hotels, leaves us free to relax and enjoy all the marvellous sights that surround us. Please note that this itinerary is a combination of two cruises which can be booked individually, 'Circumnavigation of Sicily' &



'Reach of Rome'.

### ITINERARY

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### Day 1 London to Valletta, Malta.

Fly by scheduled flight to Malta. On arrival transfer to the MS Hebridean Sky and enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we sail this evening

### Day 2 Licata for Piazza Armerina, Sicily.

From the port of Licata we travel inland to what is regarded as the finest Roman site in Sicily, the Imperial Roman Villa of Casale, which is located close to Piazza Armerina amidst wooded rolling countryside. This huge villa was built in the 3rd century and has some stunning floor mosaics. Our return drive takes us through the province of Caltanissetta, recognised today as one of the best winemaking regions in Italy thanks above all to its production of high quality, prestigious red wines including Nero D'Avola. We will break our journey at one of these vineyards and enjoy a chance to sample some wine over a Sicilian lunch before returning to the ship.

### Day 3 Agrigento for Valley of the Temples.

Although handsome in its own right and awash with Medieval atmosphere, Agrigento is not our main reason for calling at this southern coast port. Close by is the Valle dei Templi, a series of Doric temples and the most captivating of Sicilian Greek remains, a grouping unique outside Greece. Surrounded in greenery of olive and almond trees, admire the Temple of Hera, the Temple of Concordia, the Dioscuri Temple, the Temple of Olympic Jove and the Temple of Hercules. After lunch on board the afternoon is free to explore Agrigento and shuttles will run from the port to the town and the excellent archaeological museum which you can explore at leisure.

### Day 4 Trapani.

Trapani was the landing point for Peter of Aragon in 1282 to start the Spanish occupation of Sicily. This morning there is the option to travel inland to explore Segesta, one of the grandest Doric monuments to survive. See the unfinished temple dating from 424 BC as well as the theatre from where you can enjoy excellent views of the countryside and distant coastline. Alternatively visit Erice, famed in antiquity for its temple dedicated to the goddess of love, the Phoenician Astarte, Greek Aphrodite or Roman Venus. A tour will take us to this stunning site high above the sea and to the beautifully preserved Medieval town characterised by its winding cobblestone streets and beautiful courtyards. Both tours will then enjoy a Sicilian lunch at a nearby olive oil farm. We return to the ship later in the afternoon and there will be the opportunity to wander around Trapani at leisure as we plan to sail later in the evening.

### Day 5 Palermo.

Arrive this morning in the Sicilian capital of Palermo. After breakfast we will explore the city, famous for its jumbled and picturesque streets punctuated with ornate Baroque churches, domed Arab mosques and the 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. Return to the ship for lunch and this afternoon either enjoy some time to explore independently or 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.

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### Day 6 Messina for Taormina.

From the nearby port of Messina we will 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. Those who wish to spend longer here will be able to take lunch independently in one of the local restaurants and enjoy an afternoon exploring at leisure before our coach returns to Messina. Alternatively, return to the ship for lunch and enjoy free time in Messina before we sail this evening.

### Day 7 Syracuse.

Syracuse was founded by the Greeks in 734 BC and by the 5th century was a political and military power throughout the Mediterranean which rivalled Athens as the largest and most beautiful city in the Greek world. On leaving the vessel we visit the Neapolis Archaeological Park where we will find a well preserved 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. We will continue to explore the island of Ortigia where we will find the Temple of Apollo, considered to be Sicily's most ancient Doric temple and the Baroque Cathedral, erected over the remains of the Temple of Minerva. The afternoon is free to explore independently before we meet this evening for a private concert in one of the town's palazzos accompanied by local food and wine.

### Day 8 Noto & Ragusa.

From our berth in Pozzallo we will explore the Baroque villages of Noto and Ragusa. 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. We return to the ship for lunch and this afternoon continue to charming Ragusa which has been included in the UNESCO World Heritage List for its artistic architectural heritage with its Baroque palaces, churches, squares and winding narrow streets, all of which create an evocative and ancient atmosphere. We will discover the wonderful Ragusa Ibla: the "Pearl of the Baroque", the gardens, the magnificent palaces, the splendid church of San Giuseppe and the Dome of San Giorgio, built in the 18th century on the site where an older church stood before the earthquake of 1693.

### Day 9 Valletta, Malta.

After breakfast enjoy a city walking tour of Valletta, the 16th century "Fortress City" built by the Knights of St John. Our morning tour will include the highlights of Valletta with its stunning views across the harbour from the Barakka Gardens. We will explore Merchants Street, containing the surviving auberges built by the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, together with the palace where Napoleon Bonaparte is believed to have stayed in 1798. Our final stop will be at St John's Cathedral. After lunch ashore, the remainder of the afternoon is at leisure.

### Days 10 & 11 Sousse, El Djem & Kairouan, Tunisia.

After a morning at sea we arrive into Tunisia at the port of Sousse which will be our base for the next day and a half of

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discovery. During our time here we will drive out of the city to the small village of El Djem, see the great Roman amphitheatre, built to accommodate 35,000 spectators, and visit the excellent museum with its collection of mosaics. A tour of Sousse will include the museum, located in the ramparts of the Kasbah and housing a fine collection of mosaics and the imposing Ribat, one of the finest and best conserved buildings of the series of “fortress-monasteries” that dotted the North African coastline. We will also drive to the ancient city of Kairouan where we see the Great Mosque which is a universal architectural masterpiece and one of the most impressive and largest Islamic monuments in North Africa. Also see the Aghlabid Basins, the majestic cisterns built by the Aghlabids in the 9th century which represent a highly sophisticated work of engineering from the Middle Ages.

### Day 12 Tunis & Carthage.

From the nearby port of Tunis we drive to the site of Carthage, founded by the Phoenicians in the 8th century BC it became one of the most influential cities in the Mediterranean. This prosperity led to a rivalry with Rome and it was during the third Punic War, in 146 BC, that the Roman forces destroyed the city. Due to the strategic location, the Romans rebuilt Carthage in the 1st century AD to become one of the most important cities in their Empire. See the Phoenician remains of Tophet, the sanctuary of the gods Tanit and Baal as well as some interesting monuments from the Roman era including the baths and the amphitheatre. Later, explore the Bardo Museum which houses some renowned Roman mosaics from the archaeological sites of El Djem, Sousse and Dougga as well as artefacts and sculptures from Carthage.

### Day 13 Cagliari, Italy.

Arrive over breakfast in the Sardinian capital of Cagliari, an ancient city which dates back to the Phoenicians and Romans. From the port we drive along the south-western 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 Carthaginian warehouses and various Roman buildings including the baths with splendid mosaics and the theatre. After lunch on board, during an afternoon 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 Mary.

### Day 14 At Sea.

Spend a relaxing day at sea as we cross the Mediterranean Sea. Maybe join a lecture or find a spot on deck.

### Day 15 Algiers, Algeria.

Depart this morning for the ancient city of Tipaza which was probably founded by the Phoenicians but really came into being under the Romans. The city was extended by Emperor Claudius and grew wealthy on Mediterranean trade. It was built on three small hills which overlooked the sea. There are ruins of three Basilicas, two cemeteries, the baths, the theatre, the nymphaeum and the unusual oval shaped amphitheatre. After visiting the city, we will enjoy a typical Algerian lunch before continuing to the mysterious Mausoleum of Mauretania which lies in the hills above the sea about 18 kilometres away from Tipaza. It is one of the most breathtaking sights in Algeria. The vast pyramid-like structure is named the Tomb of the Christian on account of the large crosses that decorate the tomb which predates Jesus Christ. We return to the ship via the Martyrs’

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Monument which offers spectacular views over the city.

### Day 16 Cartagena, Spain.

In the early afternoon we arrive in Spain's main naval port of Cartagena. Enter the deep natural harbour through two fortified rocky headlands for an afternoon of exploration in this historic city that dates back to the Phoenicians. Hannibal used it as his capital city on the Iberian peninsula and named it after Carthage in North Africa whilst the Romans used it as a strategic port and administrative centre. The city walls remained intact until the 20th century creating a dense historic centre. Take the lift or walk up to Concepcio Castle for amazing views of the city and harbour, view the Roman amphitheatre and the archaeological site of Molinete where work continues to uncover the Roman city. Later enjoy a stroll along the tree-lined harbour promenade as we return to the MS Hebridean Sky.

### Day 17 Malaga.

Having spent the morning cruising we will have the afternoon to explore the historic city of Malaga. See the Roman theatre, built in the 1st century BC under Emperor Augustus and used until the 3rd century BC. After being left to ruin for centuries the Moors used the amphitheatre as a quarry as they built the nearby Alcazaba Fortress between 1057 and 1063. The site was rediscovered in 1951 and has three parts, the stands, orchestra pit and stage. Alternatively head to La Merced Square where we see the birthplace of Pablo Picasso before we visit the impressive 16th century cathedral which was built on the remains of a mosque. With its mix of Renaissance and Gothic styles it has been declared a national landmark. We remain moored overnight in Malaga for anyone wishing to take an after dinner stroll.

### Day 18 Malaga to London.

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

#### Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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## YOUR SHIP: HEBRIDEAN SKY

**YOUR SHIP:** 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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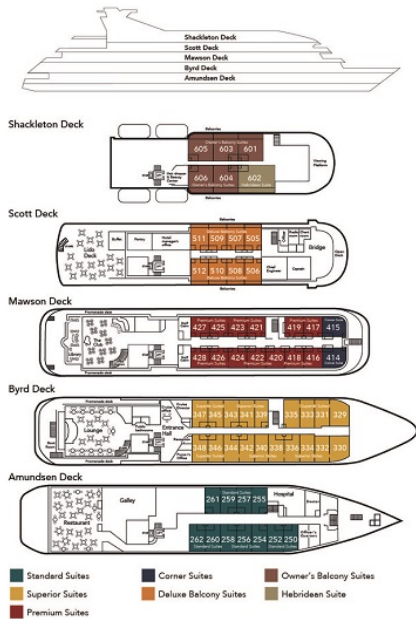
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## INSIDE YOUR SHIP



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## PRICING

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