

MELANESIAN ODYSSEY 2027 - FROM PAPUA NEW GUINEA TO FIJI

Here is a fascinating island hopping expedition through Melanesia from Papua New Guinea to the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and finally to Fiji. Travelling independently in Melanesia can be difficult, with little infrastructure in place to accommodate for tourists and information about getting around often scarce. This of course makes the region alluring to the genuine traveller who will encounter beautiful islands with unique features and customs that remain relatively unscathed by the modern world. The region is ideal for exploring by small ship and particularly one as suitable as the MS Island Sky. Her fleet of Zodiac landing craft provides us with the freedom of spontaneity to explore and land in places where relatively few travellers have been before us. After an overnight stay in Singapore, our expedition will begin in Papua New Guinea where we will moor in the dramatic Simpson Harbour which is part of a huge, flooded caldera and ringed by a number of volcanoes. From here we set sail for the Solomon Islands which were thrust on to the centre stage of world history when the Allied forces took the offensive in the South Pacific and air, land and sea battles ensued for their control. We will visit the majestic Morovo Lagoon, the world's largest double barrier lagoon and a truly awe-inspiring place, and Tetepare Island which is the largest uninhabited tropical island in the Southern Hemisphere. We continue to Honiara where we explore the war sites and then on to the enchanting small islands of Santa Ana and Utupua. With our time on these remote island paradises we will have the opportunity to visit tribal villages little changed for centuries, see astonishing ceremonial dances, enjoy nature walks inland or swim in the warm waters from isolated palm-fringed beaches.

Leaving the Solomon Islands, we have three days in Vanuatu archipelago home to volcanos, rainforests bursting with a magnificent array of flora and fauna, beautiful beaches and a mesmerising underwater world of tropical fish and coral. Afloat and ashore, our expedition will be filled with unforgettable images, remote idyllic islets, tribal villages unchanged for centuries, astonishing ceremonial dances, kaleidoscopic reefs and soaring white-tailed tropic birds. This voyage has something for everyone, whether your interest lies in natural history, military history, bird watching, photography, the undersea world or simply just being one of the privileged few who are able to set foot on islands of astonishing richness and beauty. We hope you can join us in this faraway haven, for an unparalleled opportunity to explore one of the most intriguing places



on the map.

ITINERARY



Days 1 & 2 London to Fiji.

Fly by scheduled indirect flight.

Day 3 Lautoka, Fiji.

Arrive today and transfer directly to the MS Island Sky for embarkation. The remainder of the day is at leisure to acclimatise after our long flight before we sail in the late afternoon.

Day 4 At Sea.

Spend a relaxing day at sea as we cross to Vanuatu. Our lecture programme will commence in the lounge or else find a spot on deck.

Day 5 Tanna Island, Vanuatu.

Our first call in Vanuatu is the island of Tanna, meaning earth in the local Kwamera language. Captain Cook was the first European to visit the island in 1774, landing at Port Resolution, having been attracted by the glowing light of Mount Yasur. This 361 metre active volcano is situated in the southeast of the island and dominates the landscape. The more adventurous amongst us may wish to join a journey to the crater taking local trucks through the rainforest that covers the mountain before walking to the rim. Alternatively, we hope to have the chance to visit local villages where traditional lifestyles are maintained and the local culture has been largely unaffected by western influences

Day 6 Efate Island.

Awake this morning off Port Havannah, situated on the north coast of Efate Island and our base for today's activities. There are a number of outer islands that we may be able to explore depending on weather and sea conditions. Lelepa Island is 160 acres of unspoilt tropical rainforest and palm fringed beaches. On a nature walk we will see the herbs used in local medicines before exploring Feles cave thought to be the resting place of the legendary Polynesian Chief, Roi Mata. We also hope to land on Moso Island where the local Tasiriki community has been active in the conservation of the local turtle population and where we hope to set up a snorkelling platform or offer a chance to swim from the beach.

Day 7 Malekula & Wala Island.

The second largest of the island group, Malekula is also the most culturally diverse with a small population that speaks over 30 distinct languages. Here we will learn about the ancient tribes the Big Nambas who lived in the north and Small Nambas from the central and southern provinces. Tribal warfare was once very common but today the island is peaceful. We plan to visit one of the tribal groups, learn about their culture, with many ancient sites hidden in the forests, and see some of their important traditions of dance and song. In the afternoon we will relocate and find a suitable spot to swim, snorkel or enjoy a nature walk.

Day 8 Espiritu Santo Island.

Espiritu Santo is the largest of Vanuatu's islands with some of the most beautiful white sand beaches, amazing blue holes, caves and renowned snorkelling. It was also a huge military base during World War II. Today there will be the opportunity to join an island tour including the Nekar Custom Village where we will learn about local traditions and customs, including their unique water music and kava making, before enjoying time to swim in one of the nearby "blue holes". Alternatively, we will plan to swim or snorkel amongst the corals and fish of the region at Million Dollar Point, named after the value of the



military equipment dumped into the sea. Sail over lunch and enjoy an afternoon at sea.

Day 9 Nembao Village, Utupua Island, Solomon Islands.

After a morning at sea we arrive this afternoon in the Solomon Islands at the remote Utupua Island. After being welcomed ashore we will have the option to meet the island's school children, take a Zodiac cruise to the mangroves or join our naturalists for some beachcombing and nature walks in the nearby forests.

Day 10 Santa Ana.

Spend the morning cruising towards Port Mary on Santa Ana Island where we will be welcomed with a stunning dance by the villagers with spears and mud face masks. After the performance we have the opportunity to explore the village further with its plethora of local handicrafts, join a nature walk through the forests or swim from the local beach.

Day 11 Honiara.

Prior to World War II Honiara did not exist; it developed around the site of the US military headquarters. The town and Mataniko River, which runs through it, were the front for many months during the battle of Guadalcanal. Today, this is a bustling town with lovely hibiscus and palm tree lined avenues. After breakfast we will join a city tour of Honiara including the central market, parliament building and National Museum where we get an insight into the history of the Solomon Islands. Enjoy lunch before continuing to the World War II sites including Henderson Field, the Japanese Peace Park and the US Memorial at Skyline Ridge. Alternatively, visit a local organic cocoa farm where we can learn about the farming techniques and growing practices before enjoying a tasting of the final chocolate products. This evening we will cruise through Iron Bottom Sound, the site of intense naval battles during World War II and so named for the large numbers of Japanese and American ships and aircraft that sank beneath the sea.

Day 12 Tetepare Island.

Tetepare, cloaked in rainforests and fringed with coral reefs, is the largest uninhabited tropical island in the Southern Hemisphere and home to one of the Solomon Islands leading conservation projects. Managed by the Tetepare Descendants Association, they have ensured the island was saved from the threat of loggers and many areas remain untouched. A wide variety of plants and animals live in the 120 square kilometres of lowland rainforest that blankets the island. A total of 76 bird species, 25 reptile and 13 mammal species have been recorded here including skinks, dugongs and the endemic Tetepare white eye whilst the beaches support three species of turtle including the endangered leatherback. Today we will enjoy a range of guided walks in the rainforest with the local conservationists who will educate us on the work they are doing on the island.

Day 13 Marovo Lagoon.

Marovo Lagoon is the largest double barrier lagoon in the world. Thousands of islands scatter the lagoon, from tiny coral islets on the fringing reef to massive 1600 metre volcanic islands. Inside the lagoon, the islands are surrounded by spectacular coral formations and white sand beaches, the lagoon waters shimmering in every shade of blue, turquoise and jade green. We have a full day here to explore the villages which produce some of the finest wood carvings in the region. We will also find a suitable spot to snorkel and swim from the beaches as well as enjoying nature walks in the local forests.



Day 14 At Sea.

Spend the day at sea as we make our way towards Papua New Guinea.

Day 15 Rabaul, Papua New Guinea.

Arrive today in Rabaul's dramatic Simpson harbour which is ringed by six cone-shaped volcanoes. Our morning tour will include a visit to the Volcanic Observatory, which monitors 14 active and 23 dormant volcanoes in Papua New Guinea, and from where we will enjoy magnificent views over the bay and the volcanoes. Our next stop will be Mount Tavurvur, which violently erupted in 1937 and 1994, and where we will witness the Hot Springs. Before returning to MS Island Sky we will pass old Rabaul Airport, destroyed by the 1994 volcanic eruption, the museum and the vibrant market. This afternoon will be at leisure to explore independently or relax on deck as we moor overnight.

Day 16 Rabaul to Singapore.

Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for our scheduled indirect flight to Singapore. Arrive this evening and transfer to our hotel for an overnight stay.

Day 17 Singapore to London.

Return to the airport this morning for our scheduled flight to London. Arrive this afternoon.

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

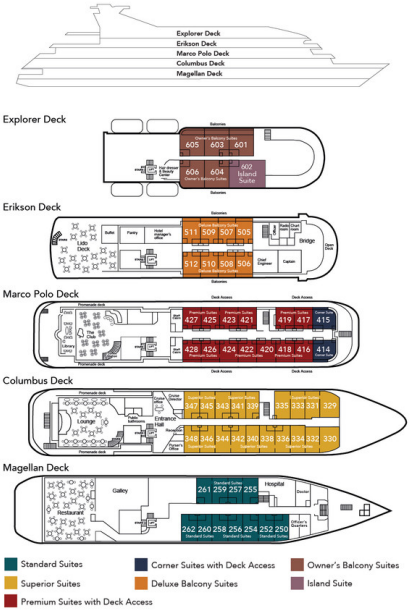
also WI-FI access throughout the vessel. Outside there is a rear sun deck where meals are served in warm weather under shade, a bar and comfortable deck furniture for sun bathing or relaxing with a book. On the top deck there is a Jacuzzi and further observation and sun deck. There is also a small hairdressers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

08-Mar-2027 to 24-Mar-2027

Magellan Deck Standard Single	£12495 GBP pp
Magellan Deck Standard Suite	£11995 GBP pp
Erikson Deck Deluxe Balcony Suite	£13995 GBP pp
Columbus Deck Superior Suite	£12295 GBP pp
Marco Polo Deck Premium Suite	£12495 GBP pp
Marco Polo Deck Corner Suite	£13295 GBP pp
Explorer Deck Island Suite	£14995 GBP pp
Explorer Deck Owner's Balcony Suite	£14495 GBP pp
Columbus Deck Superior Single	£12995 GBP pp