MIDSUMMER IN ICELAND ABOARD SERENISSIMA

Iceland is without doubt one of the most extraordinary and dramatic lands on the planet and we are offering the opportunity to join a unique expedition combining this wonderous country with time in the Shetland Islands and an in-depth exploration of the remote Faroe Islands. We will set sail from Aberdeen before sailing north to the Shetland Islands and the little-visited Faroe Islands where a highlight will be seeing the many puffins and other sea birds nesting. We will spend four days exploring the villages and rolling hills of these distant isles before venturing further north to Iceland. We have timed our voyage for June when the long summer days are ideal for exploring and to experience the spectacular midnight sun in Iceland.

Europe’s least populated country offers the visitor a truly unparalleled experience of elemental forces at work and during our exploration of Iceland we will witness the immense scale of the landscape dominated by towering snow-capped mountains, thundering waterfalls and spontaneous erupting geysers as we learn of the centuries old legacies of a Viking and Norse heritage. We will visit some of its most dramatic areas and, whilst we sail its waters, will look out for humpback whales, orcas, white-beaked dolphins and observe the colonies of seabirds.

A journey by small ship is the ideal way to get up close to nature and explore areas inaccessible to larger vessels and a voyage such as this can only be undertaken by a special vessel with the self-sufficient qualities of the 95-passenger MS Serenissima. With her expert team and fleet of Zodiacs we will be able to land on remote beaches and cruise close to shorelines and cliffs crowded with birdlife.

ITINERARY

Day 1 Aberdeen, Scotland.
Embark the MS Serenissima this afternoon. Transfers will be provided from Aberdeen Airport and Railway Station at a fixed time. Sail this evening.

Day 2 Foula & Papa Stour, Shetland Islands.
This morning we visit Foula, one of Britain’s most remote inhabited islands. Apart from a narrow coastal strip of more fertile croftland, Foula is an expanse of peat and moorland rising steeply to five dramatic peaks. In the early summer Foula’s wildflowers provide a glorious burst of colour. Translated as “Bird Island” from Old Norse, the island is designated as a Special Protection Area for birds and is home to the world’s largest colony of Great skuas, known locally as bonxies, which compete fiercely with Arctic skuas for breeding territories. Kittiwakes and Arctic terns return annually to nest whilst the cliffs team with puffins, shags and fulmars. Over lunch we will sail the short distance to Papa Stour where we will use our Zodiaks to explore the stunning cliff scenery, sea stacks, arches, blowholes and coastal caves which are home to Arctic skua and large numbers of Arctic terns.

Day 3 Klaksvik, Faroe Islands.

After a morning at sea we arrive in the Faroe Islands and the island of Borooy in the north of the group. On our afternoon excursion we will learn more about the Faroese and Viking traditions as we make our way via a three mile long tunnel, 500 feet under the sea to Leirvik on the island of Eysturoy. Here we will see the archaeological excavations of a thousand year old Viking farm before continuing to Gota, located at the head of the broad Gotuvik fjord. This historic area was the home of the famous Viking chieftain, Trondur i Gotu, who defended the old Viking ways against the desire of the Norwegian king and the Faroese chieftain, Sigmundu Brestisson, to convert the Faroese to Christianity. Ruins of his farm are found in Gota, whilst the Blasastova Museum provides an insight into the culture and way of life in the Faroe Islands in past centuries.

Day 4 Torshavn.

From our berth this morning we will join a guided tour through Torshavn over the hills to Kirkjubour, the island’s oldest cultural centre, where we see the ruins of the 13th century St Magnus Cathedral and the 11th century church, still in use. We also visit the 900 year old ‘Roykstovan’, the old bishopric, considered to be the oldest wooden house in Europe. For those feeling active we will arrange a hike in the hills surrounding the town to discover the local flora and fauna. After lunch on board, we will drive to the beautiful village of Saksun, an isolated settlement situated beneath steep majestic mountains. We will visit Duvugaroar, an old farmhouse that is now a museum, and a traditional Faeroese wooden church in Kollafjord.

Day 5 Vestmanna.

Vestmanna is our base this morning as we explore the northwest corner of Streymoy and the nearby cliffs. We will board local boats to explore the vertical cliffs that climb almost 1500 feet, sailing into grottos carved by the surf over the years and watching the thousands of seabirds including puffins, guillemots, fulmars and kittiwakes that nest here each summer. Return to the ship for lunch and spend a relaxing afternoon on board sailing towards Iceland.

Day 6 Hofn, Iceland.

As we approach Iceland we will see the shimmering white Vatnajokull Glacier, Europe’s largest glacier, sometimes called an icecap. The 600 metre thick ice surmounts active volcanoes, one of which erupted in 1996 creating a crater on the surface of the glacier, a most unusual phenomenon. From our berth in Hofn we will drive to the otherworldly glacial lagoon of Jokulsarlon, a dramatic drive through some of the finest scenery that Iceland offers. Once we reach Jokulsarlon, the 100 metre deep glacial river lagoon which is full of large icebergs, carved
from the glacier Breioamerkurjokull, we will embark on a cruise on the pristine water, sailing in between the blue, white and black ice.

Day 7 Neskaupstadur & Mjoifjordur.
Enjoy the benefits of our small ship as we spend the day exploring the lesser-known fjords in the east of Iceland. We hope to land at the small town at Neskaupstadur for a chance to visit the excellent museum which features the local art gallery, Museum of Natural History and Maritime Museum. Those feeling active can hike to the avalanche barriers behind the town, offering great views of the surrounding areas. Cruise through Mjoifjordur where we can enjoy the wilderness of this remote area.

Day 8 Husavik.
Be on deck this morning as we sail into Husavik, known as the whale capital of Iceland. From our berth we will head inland to visit the Lake Myvatn-Krafla area, a fine example of the volcanic world with lava fields, boiling and steaming mud pools, steam vents of sulphur and craters. The area illustrates the sheer magnitude of Iceland’s forces at work. The lake itself, with beautiful natural rock formations and hot springs, is also a unique ecosystem and the largest migratory bird sanctuary in Europe. We will offer time in the natural baths before returning to the ship via the spectacular Godafoss Waterfall where water from the Skjalfandafljot River falls from a height of 12 metres over a width of 30 metres. Enjoy some free time in Husavik this afternoon to explore the town and maybe visit the excellent whale museum.

Day 9 Grimsey Island & Siglufjordur.
Spend the morning on Grimsey Island. The Arctic Circle bisects this island which is known for its tiny community, basalt cliffs and the large variety of birdlife. On arrival join our expedition team members for a nature walk on the island. Over lunch we sail to Siglufjordur, a picturesque town that enjoys an idyllic setting in a small fjord backed by mountains. Here in the early 1900s, a booming economy due to the herring industry resulted in a prosperous town with some marvellous Icelandic architecture. Stroll through the town and visit the Hening Era Museum.

Day 10 Saudarkrokur & Drangey Island.
Cruise overnight into Skagafjordur where we berth in the small town of Saudarkrokur. Established as a market town in 1868 for the local farmers, the town grew in the early 20th century as an important fishing port and trading centre for the region. We will drive inland to Glaumbaer and visit the museum, built within turf-roofed farmhouses, which showcases the region’s heritage and we will also see the tannery, the only one in Europe that makes fish leather. Over lunch we sail to Drangey Island, situated in the fjord it is a colony for thousands of seabirds including puffins, guillemots, gannets and fulmars who nest on the steep cliffs that rise 180 metres. Our guide will tell us the ancient stories of Grettir the Strong who lived on the island in exile over 1000 years ago.

Day 11 West Fjords.
Awake this morning in the West Fjords, an isolated but spectacular area of Iceland. We will cruise into Isafjordur and, depending on local weather conditions, we hope to use our fleet of Zodiacs to explore further. We also plan to visit the village of Thingeyri, one of the oldest settlements in the West Fjords and the location of the area’s first trading post. Return to the ship.
via the thunderous Dynjandi, the highest waterfall in the West Fjords falling 100 metres and 30 metres wide.

**Day 12 Snaefellsnes Peninsula.**
Sail this morning into Stykkisholmur, located in Breidafjordur Bay and surrounded by an archipelago of islands. The town is famed for its beautiful and well-preserved old houses and is also the gateway to the Snaefellsnes Peninsula which is dominated by the Snaefellsjokull volcano, regarded as one of the symbols of Iceland and known as the setting for Jules Verne's “Journey to the Centre of the Earth”. Our tour will include a drive through the lava landscape to the glacier visiting pretty fishing ports and beaches along the way. Afterwards, there will be the opportunity to spend some time at leisure in the town.

**Day 13 Reykjavik to London.**
Disembark after breakfast and transfer to the airport for your scheduled flight to London.

**Please Note:**
This voyage is a combination of both expedition style cruising and small ship destination cruising. Whilst we will be alongside in most of the ports, on some days we will be at anchor and the vessel’s Zodiacs will be utilised to transport passengers ashore and for Zodiac cruising to explore the more remote regions we will be visiting. The use of the Zodiacs will be key to the operation of the itinerary as shown. If you have any queries pertaining to the use of Zodiacs or the level of fitness required for this voyage please do not hesitate to ask one of our experienced travel consultants.
YOUR SHIP: SERENISSIMA

YOUR SHIP: Serenissima

VESSEL TYPE: 

LENGTH: 

PASSENGER CAPACITY: 

BUILT/REFURBISHED: 

Prior to her life as the MS Andrea she spent many years cruising the Norwegian coast as the Harald Jarl. The decision by the Norwegian owners, Hurtigruten to invest in much larger new vessels, presented an opportunity to the American company, Elegant Cruises to purchase the vessel in 2002. After a substantial refit of over $20 million in Sweden she began her new life of worldwide cruising. She underwent another significant refurbishment in December 2018 and her capacity was reduced to 95.

Perhaps, one of the best known and loved features of this vessel is its unique style. During the major refit in Sweden the then owners commissioned Swedish interior designers to create a Gustavian style interior. This bright Swedish 18th century influenced, country house style works particularly well on a vessel of this vintage, providing intimacy and classic nautical sensibility often lacking in larger vessels.

Accommodating just 95 passengers, the 53 cabins are attractively designed for comfort and convenience and are fully air conditioned with a modern shower and toilet, telephone, flat screen televisions and other thoughtful appointments. There are eight different grades of cabin arranged over five decks and with the exception of the five inside cabins, all staterooms feature either windows or portholes.

The free seating Venice Restaurant accommodates all guests in one sitting. In addition there is an outside dining area for when the weather and itinerary permit. A new addition to the vessel is a Lido area on Deck 5 with a bar and Jacuzzi.

Other facilities on board include two lounges, a small library with two computers for internet access, a spacious observation deck, fitness area, massage and an elevator. In areas such the United Kingdom and Norway the vessel is equipped with Zodiac craft allowing us to visit remote places where normal tender arrangements are not possible.

The European captain, officers, expedition staff, and crew offer a first class service and have been selected for their professionalism and caring attitudes. The atmosphere on board is warm and welcoming and dedicated to discovery and relaxation.
INSIDE YOUR SHIP

Classic Stateroom  Deluxe Stateroom
Junior Suite  Owner’s Suite
Serenissima Suite  Standard Single
Standard Stateroom  Superior Stateroom
### PRICING

**12-Jun-2023 to 24-Jun-2023**

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