



The Small Cruise
Ship Collection

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MUMBAI, THE MALABAR COAST & SRI LANKA - A VOYAGE FROM MUMBAI TO COLOMBO

For those seeking an informative and relaxing experience whilst discovering India and Sri Lanka, what better way than a journey aboard the all-suite MS Island Sky in the company of just over 100 fellow travellers. Exploring by small ship, we are able to visit some of the most interesting regions allowing time for some leisurely interludes. The intricate nature of India and Sri Lanka's religions and cultures, together with the rich and absorbing history, will be brought to life by our Guest Speaker and the knowledgeable local guides who will accompany us ashore. Setting sail from the vibrant and bustling city of Mumbai, amongst the many highlights of our time in India will be the Old Town of Goa with its interesting blend of Indian and Portuguese cultures and our time spent in the Malabar port of Cochin from where we will explore the serene 'backwaters', a network of lagoons, lakes, rivers and canals. Boats carrying the local produce of copra, coir and cashews travel slowly through peaceful, palm-shaded waterways and keen birdwatchers can have a field day looking out for fish eagles, kingfishers, egrets, herons and more. During our time in Sri Lanka we will explore its wealth of both ancient and natural sites including the fortified, UNESCO World Heritage Site of Galle and the fascinating capital, Colombo. Sri Lanka is also a paradise for wildlife lovers and we have included game viewing in Yala National Park, which offers a great diversity of animal and birdlife and, further south, the lesser-visited coastal wetland area of Bundala National Park with its flocks of flamingos and rich birdlife. Our journey will take us along some beautiful coastlines and we will visit bustling bazaars, witness daily life, learn something of the colourful cultures, ancient faiths, customs and traditions and witness

some of the remarkable wildlife. All this and more will be achieved with ease with the benefit of returning to the comfort of the MS Island Sky each evening to recharge the batteries with good food, caring service and a restful night's sleep ready to witness another day in these

fascinating lands.

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Day 1 London to Mumbai, India.
Fly by scheduled flight.

Day 2 Mumbai.
Arrive and transfer to the MS Island Sky. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we moor overnight.

Day 3 Mumbai.
Mumbai is a cluster of seven islands which were first home to the 'Koli' fisherman, who still occupy parts of the city shoreline today. First ceded to the Portuguese, the British Government took possession of the islands in 1665 before leasing them to the East India Company who founded the port and saw the city grow in size and importance. This morning we explore the city and see the prominent landmarks visiting the Gateway of India, Mani Bhavan, the former residence of Mahatma Gandhi when he stayed in Mumbai from 1917 to 1934 and Dhobi Ghat where we can observe the vast open air Indian laundry. Alternatively, travel to Gharapuri Island, better known as Elephanta Island, and view the remarkable caves designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This labyrinth of cave temples features courtyards,

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shrines, remarkable statues and vibrant sculptures that date from the 5th to 7th century AD. Return to the ship for lunch and a relaxing afternoon at sea.

Day 4 Goa.

In the 15th century Goa was the largest trading centre on India's west coast and when the Portuguese arrived in the early 16th century they planned to set up a colony to seize control of the spice trade. Goa remained a Portuguese colony until 1961 when it became the 25th state of the Indian Republic. Whilst famous for her beautiful beaches, Goa offers wonderful architecture with a mixture of Hindu and Catholic styles, unique history, rich culture and pretty natural scenery. This afternoon we will explore Old Goa with its fine Basilica of Bom Jesus and the Neo-Classical Church of St Cajetan. Alternatively, visit a spice plantation where the cultivation of cardamom, chilli, cloves and coriander can be seen. We will enjoy the smells and tastes whilst we learn about their uses in Indian life.

Day 5 Mangalore.

In the 14th and 15th centuries Mangalore traded with Persian and Arab merchants and was fought over by the Nayaka princes and the Portuguese. In the 18th century its control was contested by Hyder Ali and his son Tipu Sultan on the one hand, and the British on the other. The influences of its turbulent history are still apparent in the cosmopolitan attitude and diverse religions that exist here. Today it is a business and commercial centre and is India's ninth largest cargo handling port exporting 75% of the country's coffee and the bulk of its cashew nuts and spices. Spend the morning learning about the cashew processing industry before we visit Gokarnatha Temple and the remarkable St Aloysius Chapel, with a fascinating series of intricate paintings that cover virtually every square inch of the

interior ceiling and walls. Created over a period of two years by Brother Antonio Moscheni, an Italian artist, the chapel with its magnificent artwork is one of the city's hidden gems. After our exploration we will return to the vessel for a leisurely afternoon at sea.

Days 6 & 7 Cochin.

Cochin is an extraordinary city with strong influences of Portuguese, Chinese, Arab, Dutch and British cultures still much in evidence today and we have two days to enjoy this intriguing Malabar port. Visits will include the serene Kerala backwaters at Alleppey where we will board a local boat for a cruise past colonial warehouses and coconut thatched houses. For centuries, these canals provided a safe and efficient means of transportation for goods and people moving between the heartland of Kerala and the port towns along the coast. Even today, traditional barges, or kettuvallams, haul coconut, pepper, rice and other goods along the waterways. We will also spend time in Cochin to explore the diverse mix of cultures and religions that together, with its strong trading past in spices and silks, make for a fascinating city. Discover Mattancherry Palace with its ornately decorated rooms including some marvellous ancient murals and see the oldest European church in India, St Francis, and the ruins of the fort. On our first evening as we moor overnight, we will enjoy a Kathakali performance on board after dinner. Based on the subject from the Ramayana, Mahabharata and stories from Saiva literature, Kathakali is one of the main forms of classical dance drama of India and indigenous to Kerala.

Day 8 At Sea.

Relax on board as we spend the day sailing to Sri Lanka.

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Day 9 Galle, Sri Lanka.

Arrive this morning in Sri Lanka and the port of Galle from where we take a walking tour of the impressive Galle Fortress. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is the port where the Portuguese first landed in Sri Lanka in the 16th century and was then extensively fortified by the Dutch during the 17th century. Also see the maritime museum, which is housed in an old Dutch house, the lighthouse, mosque and church before taking a stroll through the narrow streets with its shuttered mansions and cloistered courtyards. Return to the ship for lunch and an afternoon at leisure to explore Galle further at your own pace or join the guided tour to a nearby tea plantation where we will learn about the growing processes and enjoy a tasting.

Days 10 & 11 Hambantota for Bundala National Park, Yala National Park & Kataragama.

We have one and a half days in Hambantota from where we will visit some of the region's highlights. We will explore Bundala National Park, a haven for birdwatchers and Sri Lanka's first declared Ramsar wetland. Located in the deep south of the island, the diversity of the park lies in its landscape, from dry thorny scrubland to sand dunes and salt marshes, to mangroves and lagoons. Take a jeep through the park and discover close to 200 species of bird as well as many species of butterflies, crocodiles, elephants, and deer. Also known as Ruhunu, Yala National Park was designated as a wildlife sanctuary in 1900 and is now home to 44 varieties of mammals and 215 bird species. This vast region of arid scrub interspersed with pockets of dense forest and open patches of grassland hosts one of the highest densities of leopards in the world. On a Jeep safari we also hope to see sloth bears, jackals, wild boar and elephants. In addition there will be a chance to visit Kataragama, one of the three most important religious sites in Sri Lanka and a

popular place of pilgrimage for the Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and the indigenous Vedda communities of Sri Lanka and South India. According to Buddhists this was one of the 16 places visited by Buddha during his visits to Sri Lanka. We will explore the religious complex built across the Menik Ganga which contains buildings from all three religions including the mosque, temple, the small archaeological museum and the principal shrine of the god Kataragama.

Day 12 Colombo.

Sri Lanka's commercial capital and largest city dates back over 600 years having been a trading hub for sea merchants and colonial rulers. Buddhist temples, Hindu temples, mosques and churches reflect the various beliefs practised all over the island and the beautiful facades of the old, colonial buildings contrast with the modern but elegant shopping arcades that have been developed inside. There will be a choice of activities today, join a cultural tour including the Gangaramaya Buddhist Temple, the National Museum and Independence Square. Alternatively visit the Kelaniya Buddhist Temple, located on the outskirts of the city. It is said that Buddha visited and preached his doctrine to a gathering of serpent-kings. Today worshippers come to lay sprigs of lotus flowers around the great white dagoba, light oil lamps, and sprinkle the base of the Tree of Enlightenment with purifying water. We can see the fine carvings and lovely frescoes, fascinating geometrically patterned ceiling paintings, and three important images of Buddha.

Day 13 Colombo to London.

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

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Itineraries are subject to change.



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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

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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.

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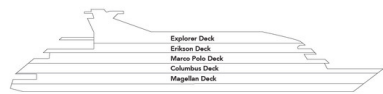
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INSIDE YOUR SHIP



Explorer Deck



Erikson Deck



Marco Polo Deck



Columbus Deck



Magellan Deck



- Standard Suites
- Corner Suites with Deck Access
- Owner's Balcony Suites
- Superior Suites
- Deluxe Balcony Suites
- Island Suite
- Premium Suites with Deck Access



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PRICING



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