

NORTH AFRICAN ODYSSEY - A FASCINATING VOYAGE FROM MALTA TO MOROCCO IN 2028

Africa's Mediterranean coast has always been a magnet for travellers with its array of wonderful ancient sites which in the main are little visited and yet offer the visitor some of the most splendid and varied remains of the Roman world. First colonised by Phoenicians and Greeks around the 7th century BC, the region eventually fell to Rome and with agricultural development came many impressive cities said to rival Rome in their magnificence. The favourable desert influenced climate has been remarkably kind to the sites and they provide an unparalleled insight into life in classical times. This is a region that is best discovered by sea and from Casablanca we will call in Tangier, a city that reflects the country's rich history and vibrant culture before visiting the little known Spanish enclave of Melilla on the Moroccan coast, a fascinating place to spend a few hours. Continuing east we spend five days in Algeria with its striking Mediterranean coastline and rich cultural heritage. Here our touring options will include the city of Tlemcen in the north of the country, known for its Moorish buildings, and one of the oldest cities in all of Africa, Oran with its notable Arab, Spanish, Ottoman and French influences, the ancient city of Tipaza and the Mausoleum of Mauretania, the Roman ruins at Djemila which were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1981 due to their unique adaptation of Roman architecture to a mountain environment, and finally Constantine. Our exploration of North Africa then continues in Tunisia which has a wealth of sites and we will visit the great Roman amphitheatre of El Djem, the ancient city of Kairouan, the Hadrian-era amphitheatre of ancient Uthina 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. Our journey concludes in Malta where after sailing into Valletta's magnificent harbour there will be the opportunity to visit the charming island of Gozo. All this will be achieved with great ease aboard the MS Hebridean Sky and with just over 100 like-minded travellers, we are able to explore in a way that is impossible from aboard a large cruise vessel and being timed for March, we can expect pleasant temperatures, agreeable for exploration. Whether your interest lies in exploring the ancient world, modern politics or simply the joy of experiencing new places from modern cities to Berber villages, this itinerary



has it all.

ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Casablanca, Morocco.

Fly by scheduled indirect flight. On arrival transfer to the MS Hebridean Sky and enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we moor overnight.

Day 2 Casablanca.



This morning we visit the city's most important sights including the Notre Dame Cathedral. The highlight of our tour will be our visit to the Hassan II Mosque, one of the largest religious monuments in the world after Mecca. It took 3,300 traditional Moroccan artisans to create the beautiful mosaics, marble floors and splendid wood ceiling. Return to the ship for lunch and a leisurely afternoon at sea.

Day 3 Tangier.

From our berth in the port of Tangier, a short drive will bring us to the Donabo Gardens located on the coast with wonderful sea views. Divided into ten sections we can explore the Moroccan garden that celebrates the tradition of tea, the mint maze where multiple varieties blend their fragrances along the alleys, a rose garden thriving in the cool shade and a pollinators' garden purposely designed to attract bees. Later we can explore the city where on a walking tour we will visit the Medina, enjoy the views from the kasbah situated at the highest point of Tangier, and wander through the Grand Souk. Alternatively drive across the beautiful Rif Mountains to Tetouan. Visit the unique School of Art Dar Sanaa which is located in a former palace and teaches the most traditional of Moroccan crafts to its students before we continue to the Medina, a UNESCO World Heritage Site which is full of narrow alleys and streets with vendors selling local handicrafts, foods and spices. Our tour will end at the old Royal Palace, a 17th century building which is itself a reflection of the Hispano-Moresque architecture, and the nearby Hassan II Square.

Day 4 Melilla, Spain.

After a morning at sea we arrive in Melilla, a little bit of Spain in North Africa. Situated on the northern coast of Morocco the Spanish city occupies a rocky peninsula which juts out into the Mediterranean. It has been in Spanish hands since 1497 and previous colonisers included the Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans. It is a fascinating place to spend an afternoon observing the co-existence of Catholic and Muslim faiths, the influences of Spanish and Moorish architecture and the old walled city, fortress and busy marketplace.

Day 5 Ghazaouet, Algeria.

Our first call in Algeria is the port of Ghazaouet located close to the border with Morocco. From here we drive approximately 50 miles inland to Tlemcen, an interesting and cultured city. Our visit will include the 11th century Great Mosque and the deconsecrated Sidi Bel Hassan Mosque which was transformed into a museum in 1901 and houses a selection of mosaics, carvings and pottery. After a local lunch we will continue to El Mansourah to see the remains of an old minaret and El Mechouar, which was built as a citadel in 1145 before it became the royal residence of the Zianide dynasty in the 13th century.

Day 6 Oran.

Oran is a city of architectural riches, and the Arab, Spanish, Ottoman and French influences are very noticeable. Its originality is owed much to its turbulent history during the Medieval period which profoundly changed the evolution of its landscape to such an extent that, unlike other Algerian cities, it is indelibly marked by its Hispanic past. Today, Oran can be described as an open-air museum of Western military architecture, alongside buildings with Arab and Ottoman influences as well as modern buildings dating from the French colonial period. Our guided walking tour will view some of the most striking buildings including the Cathedral, Place d'Armes, Pasha Mosque, Sidi El Houari and the old Arab quarters



followed by a drive to Mount Aidour and the Fort of Santa Cruz to take in the sweeping aerial views of Oran. Return to the MS Hebridean Sky for lunch and spend a relaxing afternoon at sea.

Day 7 Algiers.

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 and 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. Alternatively, a half day city tour will include the Martyrs' Monument, a dominant landmark which offers spectacular views over the city and Bay of Algiers. Continue to La Grande Poste, an impressive piece of Hispano-Moorish architecture completed in 1908, and the Basilica of Notre Dame D'Afrique.

Day 8 Bejaia.

Bejaia is built on a beautiful bay protected by mountains which give the city a splendid backdrop. A minor port in Roman times, it was named Saldae having been settled by the Roman Emperor Vespasian and is our base for a choice of excursions today. Perhaps take a full day tour to Djemila which was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1981 due to its unique adaptation of Roman architecture to a mountain environment. In a remarkable setting, the ruins are some of the finest preserved in North Africa. We will drive along a very scenic route and traverse spectacular scenery as we climb from Little Kabylia towards the high plateau of Setif where the Roman ruins are located. See the Arch of Caracalla, the forum, the basilica and the temples before viewing the mosaics displayed in the museum that represent the best collection in Algeria. This is a long but rewarding excursion. Alternatively, drive through the valley of the Soumman, the legendary meeting place of the leaders of the Freedom Fighters. It was here that they launched the revolution of 1 November 1954 which lasted for seven years until they gained independence for Algeria on the 5th July 1962. Afterwards we travel to a Berber village in Kabylia where we visit a typical house and various workshops where items are still made in the old-fashioned, unhurried way. Enjoy a 'degustation' of Berber olive oil whilst tasting the different types of bread and other local produce and gain an insight into Berber culture and history.

Day 9 Skikda for Constantine.

Our final day in Algeria takes us inland to historic Constantine, one of the oldest cities in Africa. Over 2,000 years ago it was part of the kingdom of Numidia and went by the name of Cirta. The Phoenicians were the first to build the city and called it Sewa - the Royal City and it was invaded and ruled by the Romans, Ottomans, and French. Today it sits on two sides of a 200 metre gorge which was carved out by the Rhumel River to create a natural fortress. The picturesque city is known as the 'City of Bridges' as it has a number of engineering marvels including the Sidi M'Cid bridge which was the highest bridge in the world when constructed in 1912 and offers stunning views towards the town and the gorge below. After taking in the views, we will explore the city centre including the Palace of Ahmed



Bey, Islamic University and the imposing Mosque Emir Abdelkader.

Days 10 & 11 Tunis, Tunisia.

Arrive in Tunisia at the port of La Goulette, our base for the next day and a half. There will be a number of guided tours to choose from including the site of Carthage which was founded by the Phoenicians in the 8th century BC and became one of the most influential cities in the Mediterranean. This prosperity led to rivalry with Rome and it was during the Third Punic War, in 146 BC, that the Roman forces destroyed the city. Due to its strategic location, the Romans rebuilt Carthage in the 1st century AD to become one of the most important cities in their Empire. We also hope to 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. Meanwhile, a full day tour will travel inland to the ruins of ancient Uthina, one of the Roman Empire's oldest cities in Africa. A guided walk includes the nearly fully restored Hadrian era amphitheatre which was dug into the hillside and could hold about 16,000 spectators, the grand Capitole, pinned down on one side by five partially reconstructed columns, and the baths of the Laberii, which take their name from an inscription found on a mosaic of Orpheus charming the animals, now in the Bardo Museum. Later we will drive to Zriba Olia, an abandoned Berber village that was built in the seventeenth century but deserted in the 1960s.

Days 12 & 13 Sousse, El Djem & Kairouan.

We continue our exploration of Tunisia with a day and a half in the port of Sousse. During our time here we drive out of the city to the small village of El Djem to see the great Roman amphitheatre, built to accommodate 35,000 spectators, and visit the excellent museum with its collection of mosaics. Our tour of Sousse will include the museum which is located in the ramparts of the kasbah and houses 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 will see the Great Mosque which is a universal architectural masterpiece and one of the most impressive and largest Islamic monuments in North Africa. In addition we 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 14 Valletta & Gozo Island, Malta.

Sail this morning into the Grand Harbour of Valletta where we have a choice of excursion options. You may wish to take the ferry to the Maltese island of Gozo, thought to be the Calypso Isles of Homer's Odyssey. After arriving in Mgaar harbour we will visit the Ggantija Temples in Xaghra. Dating back to 3600 BC the temples, which are now recognised as a World Heritage Site, are one of the most significant archaeological finds in Malta. We continue to the capital of Gozo, Victoria, which is spread beneath the Citadel, the walled castle dominating the island. Walk within the city walls and view the imposing cathedral before continuing to Our Lady of Victories Church, one of the most richly embellished places of worship on the island which was elevated to the rank of a minor Basilica in 1967. We will enjoy a local lunch before returning to Valletta by ferry. Alternatively, join a morning walking tour of Valletta, the 16th century 'Fortress City' built by the Knights of St John. Take in the 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 before we return to the vessel for lunch and an afternoon at leisure.

Day 15 Malta to London.

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

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



YOUR SHIP: HEBRIDEAN SKY

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VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

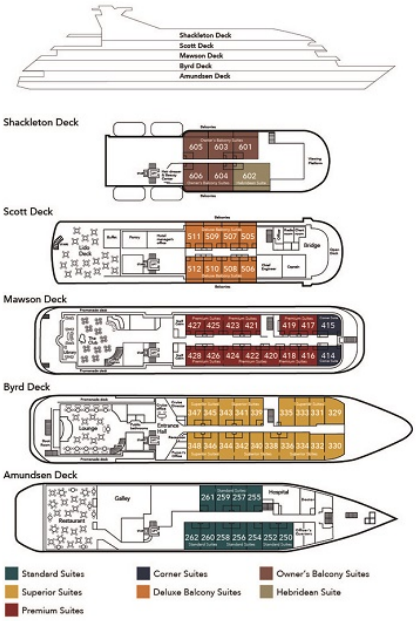
Hebridean Sky has always been known for its effortless elegance, impeccable service and atmosphere of charm and camaraderie. Now we add increased adventure options and an on-site Passenger Service Representative. Hebridean Sky is the perfect blend of luxury and adventurous exploration. Is it a luxury 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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PRICING

06-Mar-2028 to 20-Mar-2028

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