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## PACIFIC COASTAL ODYSSEY - ALONG THE COASTS OF CHILE, PERU, ECUADOR & COLOMBIA TO PANAMA

Our coastal cruise along the Pacific shores of South America will be dominated by the ever present Andes as we make our way from central Chile to Panama City. This is one of the world's great expedition cruises and few regions in the world offer the diversity and ecosystems of those found in this intriguing part of South America. From the towering snow-capped Andes to the barren coastal desert and tropical forests with an amazingly rich biodiversity of flora and fauna, the landscapes are unparalleled. Our voyage takes us along the nutrient-rich Humboldt Current which is a haven for an amazing concentration of seabirds, marine mammals and wildlife. We will visit the Islas Ballestas National Reserve, the Humboldt Penguin Nature Reserve, Ecuador's Machalilla National Park, a protected coastal haven for over 200 species of birds and wildlife, and Colombia's Utria National Park with its dense rainforest and mangroves, home to many bird species, reptiles and monkeys. This expedition is as equally rich in geological, archaeological and cultural interest with visits included to the Pintados Geoglyphs, the Peruvian capital of Lima, the Inca archaeological site at Tambo Colorado and the Huaca del Sol pyramids from the Moche culture. A highlight for many will be the transit of the Panama Canal crossing from the Pacific Ocean to the Caribbean Sea, and as we do so we will toast the engineering marvel during our transit. Much of the itinerary is far from the 'big ship' routes and includes little known but fascinating destinations with magnificently diverse wildlife, beautiful beaches and fascinating indigenous cultures. A voyage such as this would be difficult to undertake by any other means than a cruise and the 118-passenger MS Island Sky is the perfect vessel for such a



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journey. Our Zodiacs will be put to good use in the more remote places allowing us to land and explore otherwise unreachable places and our knowledgeable onboard team will enable us to make the most

Day 1 London to Santiago, Chile.

Fly by scheduled indirect flight.

Day 2 Santiago.

Arrive today and transfer to our hotel. The remainder of the day and evening is free to relax in the hotel or explore independently.

Day 3 Santiago to Valparaiso.

A morning city tour will include the Presidential Palace, Plaza de Armas and the cathedral. Later we drive out to the Casablanca Valley which is now one of the country's premier wine areas. We will learn about the cultivation of grapes and visit one of the vineyards for a tasting and lunch. Continue to Chile's main port of Valparaiso this afternoon to embark the MS Island Sky. Moor overnight.

Day 4 Valparaiso.

Spend the morning in this historic and marvellously sited city which is built on 42 hills. Take a scenic drive to the Alegre Hill to see the colourful houses before enjoying the views from the Yugoslavian Terrace over the bay. Also see the Fisherman's Wharf, the Plaza Soto Mayor and the Naval Academy. Return to the ship via the seaside resort of Vina del Mar where we see the famous "floral clock" and the Fonck Museum with a collection of



of each day.

### ITINERARY



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artefacts from Easter Island. Enjoy lunch on board and a leisurely afternoon at sea as we start our journey north.

### Day 5 Coquimbo.

This morning we arrive in the important port city of Coquimbo, with its strong British influence, and the regional capital of La Serena. One of Coquimbo's highlights is the picturesque Barrio Ingles. This historical quarter opposite the port stands as a testament to the strong British influence in this port city. British settlers arrived in the area in the mid-1800s and the legacy remains in the architecture of this barrio. Rising impressively above the city is the 91 metre Cross of the Third Millennium. Alternatively, on a full day tour, we head inland where the landscape transforms itself into a lush array of plantations and vineyards set amongst rolling hills. We will stop at the Gabriela Mistral Museum in the village of Montegrande to enjoy a pisco tasting in the Elqui Valley and take a stroll through the Main Square.

### Day 6 Expedition Cruising.

Today we enjoy the benefits of small ship cruising as we plan to use our Zodiacs and local boats to view some of the islands off the Chilean coast. We may visit Isla Pajaros to view the colonies of cormorants, boobies and Humboldt penguins that reside here. Also, Isla Chanaral, the largest in a series of islands once known as an important site for guano, a valuable agricultural fertilizer. The islands are protected today as a nature reserve that is home to sea lion colonies, nesting boobies, pelicans, cormorants as well as marine otters.

### Days 7 & 8 At Sea.

We spend the next two days at sea as we continue our journey up the Chilean coast. Our expedition team will continue their lecture programme on board and if conditions permit we may use our Zodiacs to explore some of the islands we pass on the way.

### Day 9 Iquique.

Arrive this morning in Iquique which grew in the 19th century due to the large deposits of sodium nitrate found in the area. On a full day excursion we will discover the desert and pampa region inland from Iquique and see the remains of a once flourishing nitrate town in Humberstone. Founded in 1872 at the junction of the Pan-American Highway and the road to Iquique, it is today a ghost town after it stopped operations in 1960. After lunch we continue to the Pintados Geoglyphs where over 60,000 square yards of hill slopes are decorated by more than 400 figures depicting humans, animals, birds or abstract shapes, isolated or arranged into thematic groups. The geoglyphs are estimated to date from 1,000 to 1,400 AD and are thought to be part of a votive centre.

### Day 10 Arica.

Enjoy a choice of excursions today from the port of Arica. A morning tour will provide an introduction to Arica's monuments and historic buildings including the Customs House and Church of San Marcos, constructed by Gustave Eiffel in 1876.



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Afterwards continue outside of the city to see the geoglyph art on the nearby hillsides. A visit to the San Miguel Archaeological Museum reveals its fascinating display of Chinchorro Mummies, the oldest known mummies in the world dating back 7,000 years. We return to Arica via the Morro where the history and arms museum offers an insight into the battles of the War of the Pacific and also wonderful views over the city. Return to the ship for lunch and a free afternoon. Alternatively a full day tour will travel south to the oasis village of Codpa which, during the pre-Hispanic period, was the residence of the chief of Altos de Arica who governed the tribes of Socoroma, Putre, Livilcar and Tignamar, among other communities. We will travel through the Atacama Desert, the driest desert in the world, and see the Presencias Tutelares Sculptures. On arrival in Codpa we will taste the traditional Pintatani wine, discover the local architecture, visit the church and enjoy a traditional lunch before returning to the ship this afternoon.

### Day 11 Matarani, Peru.

Here in the far south of Peru we call into the port of Matarani. Drive to the 'White City', as Arequipa is known. Our tour includes the bustling Plaza de Armas dominated by the stunning neo-Renaissance Cathedral, set amidst colonial buildings. Later, visit Santa Catalina Convent, a beautiful walled citadel, which for four centuries housed a closed order of nuns. We will also take in the colonial district of Yanahuara, a short distance from the heart of the city. It is a charming area of narrow cobblestone streets and old, white, volcanic stone houses. From here, there are magnificent views of the three volcanoes which overlook the city: Misti, Chachani and Pichu Pichu.

### Day 12 At Sea.

Our lecture programme continues as we journey north.

### Day 13 Pisco for Isla Ballestas, Tambo Colorado & Nazca Lines.

Influenced by the cold Humboldt Current, the Isla Ballestas marine preserve area serves as a breeding refuge for birds, resting areas for mammals and spawning grounds for many marine organisms. We take local boats from the port of Pisco to explore these unparalleled, fascinating islands where we should see a variety of seabirds, such as the very localised Peruvian booby, and mammals such as the southern sea lion. On our way back to the mainland we will pass the "candelabro", a giant figure etched into the coastal cliffs. Return to the ship for lunch and this afternoon we travel to the Tambo Colorado, one of the best preserved Inca archaeological sites in Peru. Named after the abundant use of colour on the walls it was one of the administrative and military centres controlling the Pisco valley from its base on the main road between the coast and mountains. We will explore the site and see the structures built around the central plaza. Alternatively, there will be an opportunity to join an optional tour aboard a small aircraft for a bird's eye view of the famed Nazca Lines. These enormous geoglyphs etched in the desert floor date back to 2000 BC and can only be truly appreciated from the air.

### Days 14 & 15 Lima.

From our berth in Callao we spend a day and a half in Lima



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which was founded by the conquistador Francisco Pizarro in 1535, and then named the 'City of Kings' by the Spaniards who took the city in name of the Spanish Crown. During the vice royalty the city became the most important capital in the region, and as testament to this, today you can still see the imposing buildings that were constructed principally in the city centre. During our time in the city we will see the most important buildings in the Plaza Mayor, such as the Government Palace, the beautiful cathedral, Santo Domingo Monastery and the various small palaces and colonial balconies that adorn the capital of the Peruvian Republic, all of which was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO thanks to its well preserved architecture. We will spend time at the excellent Larco Herrera Museum which contains the world's largest collection of pre-Colombian art and culture and showcases artefacts from 5,000 years of Peruvian history. Also discover the city's more modern districts of San Isidro, Miraflores as well as Barranco, known as the Bohemian district due to its bright buildings, street art and charming streets. Sail in the early afternoon on our second day and spend time at sea.

#### Day 16 Salaverry.

After a morning cruising we arrive in Salaverry. From the port we will drive to Huaca de la Luna to see the Huaca del Sol pyramids from the Moche culture, a remarkable pre-Inca civilisation. We also visit the intriguing desert city of Trujillo. This oasis city was founded by Pizarro in 1536 and still exudes much Spanish colonial charm. Visit the Casa Urquiaga, a mansion containing pre-Columbian ceramics and the Plaza de Armas with its imposing 17th century cathedral.

#### Day 17 Isla Lobos de Tierra.

Weather permitting we will use our Zodiacs as we visit the offshore island of Lobos de Tierra. In the 19th century this was the site of a large guano mining centre however today it is an important seabird sanctuary and home to Peruvian pelicans, blue footed boobies and cormorants. We will explore the coastline in the Zodiacs and take walks ashore watching for the birdlife and South American sea lions in the waters. Spend the afternoon at sea as we cross into Ecuador.

#### Day 18 Puerto Bolivar, Ecuador.

On our first call in Ecuador there will be a choice of experiences offered. A full day tour will take us to the Buenaventura Cloud Forest Reserve which is home to a remarkable array of flora and fauna. Divided into highlands and lowlands it combines elements of the deciduous Tumbesian Forest of Southern Ecuador with the wet Choco forests of Northwestern Ecuador. We will take a series of trails in the forest and with up to 300 bird species we hope to see hummingbirds, El Oro parakeet, Royal pacific flycatcher and Ecuadorian tapaculo. After lunch at a local organic farm we return to the ship. Alternatively head to a plantation to learn about one of Ecuador's biggest industries, banana production. Learn about the growing practices as well as developments in cultivation which have helped the industry thrive and Ecuador become the world's largest exporter.

#### Day 19 Isla de la Plata.



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Day 22 Utria National Park, Colombia.

Around forty kilometres off the Ecuadorian coast is the small island of Isla de la Plata (Silver Island) where it is claimed Sir Francis Drake buried some of his treasure. The island is part of the Machalilla National Park and a sanctuary for seabirds such as the red footed, blue footed and Nazca boobies who share the steep cliffs with frigate birds, albatrosses and the red-billed tropicbirds. Spend the day with our naturalists and local guides who will lead nature walks searching for wildlife. Sail in the late afternoon to the port of Manta where we moor overnight.

Day 20 Manta.

Our final call in Ecuador will be at the port of Manta which is the largest tuna fishing harbour on the continent. Leaving the city we drive along the scenic seaside promenade and through the suburbs to charming Montecristi which still retains the atmosphere and faded elegance of its Spanish heritage. We will stop by Montecristi's central square which holds a cornucopia of artisan stalls selling straw baskets, jewellery and colourful handicrafts before we learn about the town's biggest export, the iconic Panama hat. Later we will visit the Pacoche Reserve, located on the Manabi coast and habitat for multiple species. Our expedition team will lead walks through the park's trails to see the resident howler monkeys, over 50 species of endemic birds and rich flora.

Day 21 At Sea.

Relax on deck or maybe join a lecture as we spend a day at sea sailing to Colombia.

This morning we land on the Pacific coast of Colombia and have a day to explore this beautiful area which is well off the traditional cruise routes. Here we find the Utria National Park, a tropical forest which reaches down to the sandy beaches. Using our Zodiacs to get ashore we will enjoy hikes and nature trails as our local guides point out the indigenous plants and birdlife and highlight the ongoing reforestation programmes. Alternatively enjoy the chance to swim from one of the beaches.

Day 23 Panama City, Panama.

Panama City is a combination of the historic old town, declared a UNESCO Historical Site, and the ultra-modern new town. Arriving at lunchtime we head out to stroll along the cobblestone streets of the Casco Antiguo visiting the colonial mansions and 17th century churches and convents before continuing to Panama Viejo and the original ruins of the city founded in 1517 which was burnt to the ground by British pirate Henry Morgan. The many changes in the city can be identified by its unique architecture, influenced by a wonderful blend of French, Spanish and Italian styles.

Day 24 Panama Canal Transit.

An undisputed destination on the travel bucket list must be the Panama Canal. The first attempt to build the canal was made by a French company but ended in failure in 1889. The American government eventually bought out the French for 40 million





dollars, and their attempt to build the Canal started in 1904. Through the efforts of over 80,000 workers and the loss of more than 30,000 lives, the greatest single construction project ever undertaken was completed. The project ended in triumph, with the Canal opening in 1914, and it is now a vital artery of international trade, with nearly 14,000 ships travelling through it every year. The canal is around 50 miles long and takes between eight to ten hours to cross.

Day 25 Colon to London.

Disembark in Colon and transfer to Panama City airport for our scheduled indirect flight to London

Day 26 London.

Arrive this morning.

Please note

Itineraries are subject to change.



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## 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

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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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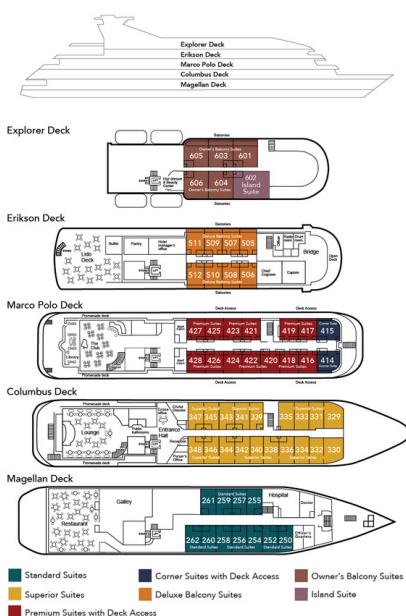
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## INSIDE YOUR SHIP



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