

## The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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### PASSAGE THROUGH ANTIQUITY

Here is a passage through antiquity, an incomparable journey featuring a wealth of sites including the magnificent 'Rose Red City' of Petra and the fascinating ancient city of Hegra in Saudi Arabia which has only recently opened to tourists. These sites are irresistible attractions for the genuine traveller and as you explore these vast and complex Nabataean cities, whose wealth came from their proximity to the ancient Middle East trade routes, you cannot help but be impressed by the industry and sophistication of this ancient civilisation. We begin our journey with five days of exploration in Jordan, which from the grandeur of Petra to the desert sands of Wadi Rum and the mystical Dead Sea is a country steeped in history and awe inspiring beauty. Petra, a city set deep in the Edom mountains and lost to Western 'civilisation' for hundreds of years, was hewn directly from the rock by the Nabataeans and is an amazing feat of engineering and construction. Following our time in Jordan, we will embark the MS Hebridean Sky and sail to Saudi Arabia to discover Hegra, the country's first UNESCO World Heritage Site and Petra's sister city. Untouched and inaccessible to visitors until recently, Hegra is a truly captivating site which offers clues about the mysterious Nabataean Kingdom. Continuing on to Egypt, our focus moves to the great achievements of the Ancient Egyptians as we spend time exploring some of the country's many wonders including the Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx. A highlight for many will be our transit of the iconic Suez Canal enabling access to the Mediterranean city of Alexandria, the cultural and economic centre of the ancient Mediterranean and from where, after a day of exploration we will sail to the Cretan capital of Heraklion before ending our voyage in Athens. This

unusual itinerary offers a fascinating mix of some of the world's most impressive and historic sites combined with time to relax on board the all-suite MS Hebridean Sky. We have planned the journey for spring when temperatures will be pleasant for exploring and with the aid of our knowledgeable local guides and excellent Guest Speaker, we will learn of some fascinating ancient civilisations



and empires.

#### ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Amman, Jordan.

Fly by scheduled flight. Arrive in Amman this evening and transfer to our hotel in the Dead Sea area for a two night stay.

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### Day 2 Dead Sea & Bethany.

Enjoy breakfast in the hotel and a leisurely morning. You may wish to swim or float in the Dead Sea which, at 423 metres below sea level is the lowest spot on earth. The high salt content prevents the existence of any life forms but is also believed to provide healing properties with the mud on the seabed being rich in minerals. After lunch in the hotel restaurant we will drive to Bethany, the site where John the Baptist met and baptised Jesus Christ. The excavations conducted at Bethany in Jordan have uncovered a 1st century AD settlement with plastered pools and water systems, which were almost certainly used for mass baptisms, a 6th century Byzantine settlement with churches, a monastery and other structures most probably catering to religious pilgrims. This evening we will meet for dinner at the hotel.

### Day 3 Kerak & Little Petra.

This morning we drive southward along the Dead Sea shore before heading to the imposing Crusader stronghold of Kerak where we visit the fortified castle which was built in AD 1142 and witnessed many battles between the Crusaders and Saladin's Muslim armies. See the network of dimly lit vaulted rooms and long winding corridors, which lead into each other through heavy arches and doorways. After our visit we continue our journey south to the rose-red city of Petra. We will stop enroute at the spectacular site of Little Petra, where a modest gorge (Siq el-Barid) leads into the area of carved tombs and monuments. See the Painted Cave which is believed to have been a shelter for a sect focused on Dionysus, the ancient Greek god of wine, as it contains remains of Greek-style plaster artwork, quite unique for Petra, displaying tangled vines and flowers with brightly coloured birds and cupid-like figures. After our visit we continue to our hotel and will meet for dinner this

evening.

### Day 4 Petra.

After breakfast in the hotel we will explore the breathtaking Nabatean city of Petra which was carved out of the rose-red sandstone about 2000 years ago and has been voted as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. Walk past the Obelisk Tomb and then through the Siq, the narrow 1.2 kilometre gorge that leads to Petra's most impressive monument, the Treasury, which was carved out of the pale reddish sandstone in the 1st century BC. Pass by the dozens of classical Nabatean ruins and tombs known as the Street of Facades, the remarkable 3000 seat Theatre, the Royal Tombs, the Colonnaded Street, the Byzantine Church, the Temple, the Monumental Arch and the mighty Qasr el-Bint Faroun. After lunch amidst the ruins of Petra you will have the option to return to the hotel for an afternoon at leisure or stay and explore the site further independently. Those feeling active may choose to climb about 900 steps up to the large, 1st century AD monument known as the Monastery with its remarkable views over Wadi Araba. Meet this evening for dinner.

### Day 5 Wadi Rum & Aqaba.

This morning we will drive to Wadi Rum, also known as the Valley of the Moon where the desert landscape is mixed with awe-inspiring shapes to create an almost supernatural atmosphere. We will embark on an adventurous excursion by a Bedouin open top four-wheel drive vehicle. We begin at the visitor centre from where there is a view in the distance of the Seven Pillars of Wisdom, the famous landmark named after the book by T.E. Lawrence 'Lawrence of Arabia'. During our excursion we will also see the Alameleh inscriptions which are a good example of ancient rock drawings, Siq Um Al Tawaqi, a





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short canyon containing a carving of the head of T.E. Lawrence and ruins of Allat (Goddess) Temple of the AAD tribe. After lunch in the desert we will drive to Aqaba to embark the MS Hebridean Sky and will set sail this evening.

### Day 6 At Sea.

After a busy few days of exploration, spend a relaxing day at sea. Maybe join a lecture in the lounge or find a spot on deck.

### Day 7 Al Wajh & Hegra, Saudi Arabia.

From our berth in Al Wajh there will be a choice of activities today. A full day tour will drive inland to the Alulah region and ancient Hegra, the largest conserved site of Nabataean civilisation south of Petra. Hegra was both a trading centre and military stronghold enabling the Nabataeans to control the Arabian caravan trade and the site has been left practically undisturbed for 2000 years. Here, surrounded by desert, we can find over 100 well-preserved tombs hewn from the rocks of the Hijaz mountains, featuring beautifully carved facades dating back to the first century BC. The largest of the tombs is that of Lihyan, son of Kuza at 72 feet tall. Alternatively explore the city of Al Wajh, once a key port for silk road merchant ships. Visit the atmospheric old town and market, the 200-year-old Al-Ashraf Mosque, which overlooks the bay and Al Wajh Castle which was built in 1875 toward the end of the Ottoman period.

### Day 8 Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt.

Arrive in Egypt today at the resort town of Sharm el Sheikh. It is, however, offshore that our interest lies with the clear waters of the Red Sea. Maybe join a snorkelling tour to the Ras Mohamed National Park. Designated a National Park in 1983 the reef ecosystems here protect a diversity of fish species and coral. Alternatively take a glass bottomed boat tour as we view some

of the many species of colourful fish, coral and sponges that live in these waters. Returning to the ship for lunch we will spend the afternoon cruising through the Gulf of Suez.

### Day 9 Cairo & Giza.

A full day tour is dedicated to the capital city of Cairo. From our berth in Sokhna we drive to the impressive Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx, the only survivor of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World and the tombs of the great Pharaohs and their queens. After lunch we visit the Egyptian Museum with 107 halls that are separated into seven sections. The museum houses statues, jewels and treasures of Tutankhamun. We will visit the Amarna Room and see the Fayoum portraits, and monuments from the later periods from the Greeks and the Romans.

### Day 10 Suez Canal Transit.

Spend the day in transit of the Suez Canal and the Great Bitter Lake.

### Day 11 Alexandria.

Our final day in Egypt finds us in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria. Here we have a choice of excursions and you may want to explore Alexandria with a visit to the Bibliotheca Alexandrina and the Archaeological Museum which contains recent finds of Cleopatra's palace. Also see Pompey's Pillar, the Coptic Cathedral of St Mark, the Catacombs and the Roman Theatre. Finally take in the views from the Citadel of Qaitbay, which stands where the famous Pharos Lighthouse of Alexandria stood in antiquity. Alternatively take a full day tour into the Western Desert to visit the Museum and graveyards of El Alamein. It was here in October 1942 that thousands of British and Commonwealth soldiers lost their lives in battle. We will visit the Commonwealth War Cemetery as well as the local museum



with its collection of memorabilia including tanks, artillery and uniforms from the nations that fought in the North Africa campaigns.

**Day 12 At Sea.**

Enjoy a final relaxing day on board as we leave North Africa and sail to Crete.

**Day 13 Heraklion, Crete.**

From our berth in Heraklion it is a short distance to the Palace of Knossos, legendary home of the Minotaur. Wander around the site impressively excavated by Sir Arthur Evans, seeing some of the 1300 rooms adorned with lively frescoes where King Minos held court. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at leisure in the town, maybe visit the archaeological museum which holds the world's largest collection of Minoan artefacts.

**Day 14 Athens, Greece to London.**

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

**Please Note:**

Itineraries are subject to change.



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### YOUR SHIP: HEBRIDEAN SKY

**YOUR SHIP:**

**Hebridean Sky**

**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.

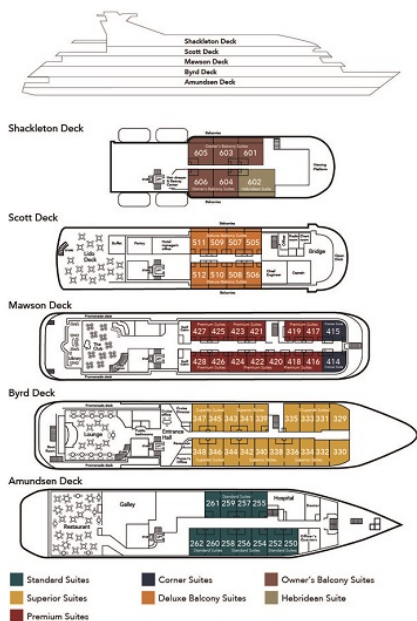
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## INSIDE YOUR SHIP



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## PRICING

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