

SAILING 'THE MED': A MEDITERRANEAN FEAST CRUISE

Welcome to Aurora Expeditions' Sailing the 'Med': A Mediterranean Feast Sailing in the wake of historical trade routes, we cross a sea brimming with traditional fare. In eras where olive oil was liquid gold and wine favoured over water; the goods traded on these shores established rituals and lifestyles. From the coastal kitchens of Malta and Sicily we sail the seas to the island treasure troves of Sardinia, Corsica, Menorca and Mallorca, before finding the Spanish coast at Valencia and following the Iberian Peninsula to Morocco and onto Portugal. Along the way, we journey to century-old farmhouses, traditional fishing villages, world-class wineries and woodfired kitchens as we immerse ourselves in the culture, traditions and cuisines of the communities who ensure their homeland remains a treasure waiting to be tasted.



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Day 1 Arrive Valletta, Malta

Welcome to Malta. On arrival at Valletta Airport make your way to the Arrivals Hall to meet our representative, followed by a transfer to our group hotel. At the hotel, visit our hospitality desk in the lobby to meet our team who will provide you with useful information regarding pre-embarkation procedures and about your time in Valletta. You will also receive cabin tags for your luggage. Please clearly label the tags with your name and your cabin number on the ship. Join us tonight for a Welcome Reception to begin our journey.

Accommodation: Valletta Hotel

Meals: Breakfast, Welcome Reception (drinks and canapes)

Note: if you would like to attend our Welcome Reception, please ensure your flight lands in Malta prior to 2:00pm.



Day 2 Valletta - embark (Port: Valletta)

Sitting in the centre of the Mediterranean, Malta boasts unbeatable location, location, location. It's sunny charm and island lifestyle have made it a modern-day summer holiday destination, but historically, its strategic position has made it a target for invaders. The Maltese people, known for their convivial and family-oriented nature, have a long history of defending their homeland, from ancient Greek sieges to Napoleon's forces. Their remarkable bravery during World War II, particularly during the Second Siege of Malta, earned the nation the George Cross from King George VI. This honour is proudly displayed on the Maltese flag and coat of arms, symbolising their enduring spirit and resilience.

Our morning is spent in Maltas' celebrated capital, Valletta, which remains a historical city with streets of fascinating sites telling more than their fair share of stories. Our local guide tells tales of the past and present at the Barrakka Gardens where we gain a perspective of the city's harbour from a naval point of view before exploring the Grand Masters Palace and Armoury, where we uncover an impressive collection gathered by The Knights of St John, while the multimedia show, Malta Experience, places thousands of years of Malta into perspective.

Your afternoon is free to stroll the streets of Valletta at your own pace, before boarding the Douglas Mawson.

This evening, we gather for a 'Welcome Dinner' where we meet our Aurora Expeditions team and crew.

Day 3 Agrigento, Sicily (Port: Porto Empedocles)

Sailing towards the southern shoreline of Sicily, we arrive at Porto Empedocles. Our 'Your Choice' experiences offer a choice of two engaging options this morning. Choose to join a guided tour of the Valley of the Temples, where you will explore the rich history and fascinating lifestyles of Sicily's ancient residents. Alternatively, head inland to a family-owned winery to discover the centuries-old significance of wine production on the island and enjoy a tasting of local wines.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Agrigento - The Valley of the Temples

A highlight of any visit to Sicily, Agrigento, or the Valley of the Temples as it is known, is an archaeological gem. The site brings to life the stories of the people who lived, loved and died here, dating as far back as the 6th century BCE. "One of the wealthiest colonies in Greece", the city thrived around 2,500 years ago, with an economy based on produce from the rich surrounding land and the trade routes from Greece. Its impressive ruins attract travellers from around the world.

Option 2 - Morning experience: Sicilian Wine Tasting

For those who would prefer a relaxing afternoon, this winery visit is ideal. The southern Sicilian countryside is scattered with wineries owned and operated by families. Inland from Port Empedocles, surrounded by lush olive and almond groves with wheat fields stretching around them, each winery benefits from Sicily's unique soil, which is enriched by volcanic ash and Mediterranean minerals. Wine has long been a cornerstone of Sicily's economy, dating back to ancient times when the island



was a major wine producer for the Roman Empire. During your visit, you will tour the winery and learn about traditional winemaking methods that have evolved over centuries. Following the tour, enjoy a tasting session featuring wines paired with local snacks that highlight regional flavours. This experience offers a genuine taste of Sicily's vinous heritage and provides insight into the island's deep-rooted winemaking culture, all while soaking in the natural beauty of the region.

Day 4 Trapani (Port: Trapani)

We sail south to Sicily to discover the land that gave the world The Godfather, Italian cinema and true Italian food. Considered by many mainland Italians to be 'the poorer cousin', Sicilian life encompasses a wealth worth more than any bank account - one of dedication to family, faith and food. Governed over centuries by an enviable list of European powerhouses, Sicily established a stoic personality early. Its determined, steadfast people are Sicilian first, and Italian second. Proud and passionate, they speak of their island's history as if it happened only yesterday.

The ancient port town of Trapani acts as a gateway to two exceptional experiences. The choice, as always, is yours.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences

Option 1 - Morning experience: The Medieval gem of Erice.

The fortified settlement of Erice is one of Sicily's gems. Despite dating back to the time of the Phoenicians, it was the Romans who made Erice a place of pilgrimage, as they believed the hilltop to be the home of the Goddess Venus. Enclosed by city walls, Erice has the appeal of a medieval town. With our guide we step into the past as we stroll the narrow alleyways of its town centre, browse its traditional shop fronts and explore its streets. Our afternoon is free to explore the old town of Trapani, which is surrounded by its 16th century walls, or enjoy some relaxation shipside.

Option 2: Morning experience: I'll have salt on that please!

We may consider salt a simple seasoning sprinkled on chips, but in ancient times it was known as 'liquid gold'. Salt made exploration possible, with cured foods essential for long sea voyages. In Trapani, Western Sicily, the Culcasi family has been producing artisanal sea salt for over 100 years. Their story began in the 1960s, when they restored a flood-damaged salt pan, saving it from ruining and reviving a centuries-old tradition. Today, their salt flats lie within a WWF reserve, offering a unique two-part tour. First, visit the Salt Museum and 15th-century mill to explore the history of salt and the family's legacy. Then, take a scenic walk along the salt pans, where white crystals shimmer beside pink basins and mirrored water. Surrounded by protected wildlife, you'll witness the transformation of seawater into salt--an immersive experience that connects nature, heritage, and the enduring value of this ancient treasure.

Option 3 - Morning experience: A taste of Marsala

Discover the rich history of Marsala, Sicily's iconic fortified wine, on a visit to Cantine Florio. Marsala gained international fame in the 18th century when English merchants began importing the wine to Britain, sparking its global reputation. Founded in 1833 by Vincenzo Florio, a visionary Sicilian entrepreneur, Cantine



Florio set a new standard for quality, quickly becoming a leader in Marsala production. During our guided tour, explore the historic cellars where centuries of craftsmanship are preserved in vast oak barrels and atmospheric stone halls. Learn about the Florio family's legacy and their role in shaping Italian industry and culture. After the tour, enjoy a guided tasting of Cantine Florio's finest Marsala wines, each reflecting the depth and elegance of this unique tradition. This experience offers a perfect blend of history, heritage, and flavour in one of Sicily's most storied wine estates.

Day 5 At Sea

Enjoy a leisurely day at sea as we sail from Italy's largest island to its second largest. This is a day made for relaxation to do as much or as little as you please. Perhaps unwind in the sauna, lounge on the Sun Deck, or find a quiet corner in one of the ship's observation lounges. You might also discover a new favourite read in our well-stocked library, while this afternoon you're invited to join your master storyteller for a fascinating presentation on the culinary traditions of the region -- a true feast for the mind and senses.

Day 6 Olbia, Sardinia (Port: Olbia)

Following Sardinia's eastern seaboard, we reach the coastal city of Olbia in time to enjoy your favourite 'Your Choice' experience, before an afternoon free in Olbia.

Perched on Sardinia's northeastern coast, Olbia has been a crucial Mediterranean trading port linking the island to mainland Italy for centuries. Today, it serves as the vibrant gateway to the world-famous Costa Smeralda, a stretch of dazzling beaches, luxury resorts, and exclusive marinas, including the iconic Porto Cervo. From bustling harbour to stylish seaside playground, Olbia bridges Sardinia's rich trading past with its glamorous present, welcoming visitors to explore one of the Mediterranean's most coveted coastlines.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: The Aga Khan's Folly; Porto Cervo

The undisputed capital of what is referred to as the Costa Smeralda is Porto Cervo caters for a discerning clientele, with celebrities, the rich and famous and super yachts all common place. We mingle with the owners of million-euro yachts and the international jet set who were encouraged to visit Porto Cervo by none other than Prince Karim Aga Khan IV. The Im m of the Nizari Ism li Shias purchased the land here in the 1960s and invited French architect Couelle to add a little 'joie de vivre' to the place, a spark that remains to this day. Today, Porto Cervo remains a playground for the rich and famous. Spend your morning strolling along the marina, where you can admire luxurious superyachts, or simply bask in the sun at a seafront bar while soaking up the exclusive atmosphere. Whether you're exploring the waterfront or savouring the town's upscale charm, Porto Cervo offers a taste of refined luxury and exclusivity found in few other Mediterranean ports.

Option 2 - Morning experience: A Taste for Sardinia's Wines

Enjoy a hosted vineyard tour that blends tradition with sustainability. Explore an Olbian vineyard under the Sardinian sun and learn about their integrated farming methods that



eschew herbicides in favor of low-impact treatments. During your visit, you will enjoy a guided tour of the winery and an introduction to the Vermentino grape, a cornerstone of Sardinian winemaking famed for its crisp, aromatic wines.

Enjoy a tasting of these renowned wines alongside a variety of Sardinian snacks. Savour the Vermentino's bright acidity, citrus notes, and subtle minerality, which are perfectly complemented by the traditional Sardinian bread. This tour offers an immersive dive into Sardinian wine culture, enriched by the island's distinctive climate and soil.

Day 7 Bonafacio, Corsica (Port: Bonifacio)

Although his parents sent him to military college on the mainland before he turned ten, Napoleon Bonaparte famously declared that to know Corsica 'is to be born there.' A land of vertical granite cliffs and craggy bays, Corsica is a slice of France with a twist. Passed between the powers of Pisa, Genoa and France, even its language is a combination of Italian, spoken in a Tuscan dialect, and Latin. Corsica's strategic location has it firmly within the realms of trade, and few of its towns were as commercially important as Bonifacio, located at its southern tip. Our 'Your Choice' experiences offer a morning in town with your afternoon free to explore solo, or a trip inland with the opportunity to learn about the islands thriving wine culture.

This afternoon, a complimentary shuttle will be available for those who wish to return to Bonifacio's hilltop old town and soak up a little more of its unmistakable Corsican charm.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences

Option 1 - Morning experience: Bonifacio

Thanks to its stunning natural setting, the ancient fortress town of Bonifacio has attracted travellers for centuries. Protected by vast chalk walls, the town stretches along a narrow promontory, supported by orange-hued limestone cliffs that have been hollowed out by centuries of pounding waves. We join our guide for a tour of the tangled medieval alleyways of the Bosco quarter in search of traditional wares. We spend time at the 14th century St. Francis convent, where we find an ancient cemetery dedicated to mariners, and St. Dominique, a church built in 1270 by the Kings Templar. Our tour takes us through tiny, narrow streets flanked by traditional houses.

This ancient trading port's facades and streets tell fascinating tales of pirates and sieges, among them the 12th century St. Marie Majeure Church, which sits above an underground cistern that was a source of water during times of siege. We visit a house that hosted Emperors Napoleon Bonaparte and Charles V on the aptly named Two Emperors Road, and we visit the Chapel of St. Roch, built on the spot where the last victim of the plague, died in 1528, a plague that decimated the island. This experience returns to the ship around midday. Should you wish to linger longer in this hilltop wonder, or enjoy lunch onboard before returning to explore further, a town to ship shuttle will operate this afternoon.

Option 2 - Full day experience: Sartene and Corsican wines

We combine the definitive Corsican village of Sartene with a visit

to a traditional Corsican vineyard today. As the only island vineyards in France and with over 2,000 years of heritage, Corsica's wines are distinctive. The diversity of soils, sun-drenched hillsides and the unique microclimates offer robust red and white wines. Traditional Corsican red wine comes from Niellucciu and Sciacarellu grapes, and from Vermentinu and Biancu Gentile for white wine. We learn about these ancient grape varieties when we visit a winery in the Ortolu Valley.

Our journey continues through the rugged Corsican interior to the village of Sartene. It clings to a hillside, offering striking architecture and wonderful views, which hide a conflicted past. Two hundred years ago, the village's plaza had a guillotine that was used during times of political and social upheaval. Throughout its past, Sartene endured numerous invasions by pirates and by the Genoese, before conceding to the French in 1768. Today, life here is a little gentler. Our local guide walks us through Sartene's charming, cobbled streets, where we visit the Church of St. Maria, which holds the sacred hood, chain and cross that were carried through town during the Good Friday Procession, and we have time to explore the village's shops and side streets, before returning to Bonifacio.

This experience returns to Bonifacio mid-afternoon. Should you wish to explore this hilltop wonder independently, a town to ship shuttle will operate this afternoon.

Day 8 At Sea

We connect Corsica and Menorca with a leisurely day at sea, sailing from France's largest island to the Balearic archipelago. This is a time to relax and enjoy the rhythm of the open water. Throughout the day, our hosts and onboard team will share engaging presentations on the historic trade routes and the role of food and drink in shaping the cultures of these island nations. As night falls, we'll be surrounded by a night sky full of stars, just as it was for ancient mariners who once navigated these same waters by starlight.

Day 9 Mahón, Menorca (Port: Mahón)

The heart of this easternmost Balearic Island beats to its own drum - albeit a mellow one. Over 210 kilometres

(130 miles) of sandy beaches, fjord-style calas and crescent shaped coves, protect a rural inland crisscrossed by some 64,373 kilometres (40,000 miles) of stone walls and farms. Unlike the neighbouring island of Mallorca, nightlife is non-existent in Menorca. Instead, you will find handicraft industries such as costume jewellery, leatherwork, dairy farming and Menorcan horse centres popular among locals and tourists. After a century of British rule, Menorca was handed to Spain in 1802, yet the British influence remains. Not only is this evident in some of Menorca's architecture but in its drinking culture too, as the island is believed to be the first place to produce gin in the Mediterranean. Aurora's 'Your Choice' experiences showcase the island's capital and head inland seeking traditional insights.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Mahon and its traditional Gin

Begin with a brief introductory tour of Mahon with a local guide before heading to one of Menorca's renowned Gin Distilleries. On Menorca, gin isn't just a drink -- it's part of the island's

cultural identity. Introduced during the 18th-century British occupation, gin-making has remained a proud tradition for over 300 years, supported by the island's abundant wild juniper. At the distillery, we'll see how this iconic spirit is still crafted using age-old methods. known as Gin Xoriguer, the Mahon brewed, version of the "conventional" Gin. Typically, tasted with lemonade in a cocktail known as "pomade" it is a staple for any local celebration. We'll learn about the island's gin production before tasting a sample or two.

Option 2 - Morning experience: The city of Ciutadella

This excursion offers an authentic glimpse into the rural lifestyle of Menorca, with a visit to the historic market town of Ciutadella. Once the island's capital, Ciutadella is known for its elegant architecture, narrow stone streets, and deep-rooted traditions. We'll take a brief guided walk through the old town, where Gothic churches, baroque palaces, and centuries-old plazas speak to its rich past. You'll learn about the city's connection to the lively festivities of Sant Joan, a beloved local celebration filled with music, horses, and centuries of ritual. After our walk, enjoy free time to explore at your own pace, perhaps browse local shops, sample Menorcan pastries at a cafe, or simply soak in the atmosphere of this proud and picturesque town before continuing your journey into Menorca's quieter countryside.

Option 3 - Morning experience: Farming Finca style

We head inland to visit a traditional finca--a Menorcan farm--offering a closer look at the rural heartbeat of the island. Farming has long been central to life in Menorca, with generations working on the land to preserve local traditions and sustain small-scale agriculture. At the heart of this visit is a family-run dairy farm, where we'll meet the farmer and hear firsthand what life is like on a working Finca.

Here, milk is used to craft Mahon-Menorca cheese, a product deeply tied to the island's identity. Made and matured entirely by hand, this cheese reflects the slow, careful process that defines Menorcan farming. As we explore the farm, we gain insight into a way of life that values heritage, self-sufficiency, and the close relationship between people and land, a tradition that continues to shape the island's culture today.

Day 10 Palma Mallorca, Mallorca (Port: Palma Mallorca)

An autonomous region of Spain, the economy of the Balearic Islands has ebbed and flowed in line with the waters to which they owe their fame. Recent years have brought an influx of tourists on flight inclusive packages and Europeans seeking an 'expat' lifestyle on a budget. But there is more to these islands than a suntan and a smile. Their history paints a portrait of brave islanders defending their lands from far more sizeable empires. The Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, British and Spanish have all left their mark, gifting this eclectic archipelago a story waiting to be told.

We spend the morning on a 'Your Choice' experience, with a complimentary town to ship-shuttle for those wishing to linger in Palma longer, before sailing west to the Spanish coast mid-afternoon.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences



Option 1 - Morning experience: Panoramic Palma

Discover the highlights of Palma de Mallorca on this locally guided tour. Begin your journey by ascending to Castell de Bellver, a unique 14th-century circular fortress perched high on a hilltop, offering breathtaking panoramic views of the city and bay. From there, continue along the scenic coastal road to Cala Major, where you'll pause for a photo stop near Marivent Palace, the summer residence of the Spanish royal family. Next, head into the heart of Palma for a short, guided stroll through the city's charming historic centre. Afterward, enjoy some free time to explore at your own pace before returning to the ship for lunch, or choose to linger longer and soak in the vibrant atmosphere of the capital.

Option 2 - Morning experience: The Moors of Mallorca

Explore Palma's majestic Moorish royal precinct on foot with a locally guided tour. Begin at the Palacio Real de la Almudaina, a stunning blend of Moorish, Gothic, and Renaissance architecture. Originally a Moorish fortress, it became the residence of Catholic Monarchs like Ferdinand and Isabella. Today, it serves as a royal residence when the Spanish royal family visits. Next, head next door to the magnificent Cathedral of La Seu, an iconic Gothic masterpiece overlooking the sea. Enhanced by Antoni Gaudi, it stands as a symbol of Mallorcan pride. Return to the ship for lunch or linger longer in Palma's vibrant capital.

Option 3 - Morning experience: The Best of Oils

Olive oil, a cornerstone of Spanish cuisine, is produced with exceptional quality on the island of Mallorca. Revered as "liquid gold" by early traders, Mallorca's organic olive oil has recently become a hallmark of the island. This morning, we delve into the rich history and modern importance of this essential ingredient, exploring its impact on Mallorcan traditions, lifestyle, and economy. At a local olive oil farm, our host will guide us through the production process, sharing the fascinating story of this prized fruit. We'll gain insights into every aspect of olive oil before savouring its exquisite flavours firsthand.

Day 11 Valencia, Spain (Port: Valencia)

Valencia's Islamic legacy extends beyond its architectural wonders. It remains entrenched in the soul of the city and its inhabitants. It is reflected in how Valencians live; in the jargon they use and in place names scattered throughout the region. The city's story is one of conquest upon conquest. The home of the mythical El Cid Valencia was a Moorish town, having capitulated without bloodshed, but with the arrival of the Christian armies its story changed and it was heavily involved in La Reconquista. Our three distinctive styles of Your Choice experiences each immerse us in the culture and flavours of this historic region.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Panoramic Valencia and Spain's favourite collectables

Experience the heart of Spanish artistry and heritage on this fascinating journey through Valencia and the nearby town of Tavernes Blanques, birthplace of the world-renowned Lladro porcelain. A short, scenic drive takes you to the Lladro



workshop, where the legacy of three visionary brothers lives on. In Spain, Lladro isn't just a brand--it's a cultural treasure, adored for its elegance, craftsmanship, and emotional depth. Discover how each delicate piece is brought to life, from concept to kiln, and enjoy time to admire or shop their intricate creations.

Returning to Valencia we enjoy a panoramic drive through Valencia's historic centre, passing landmarks such as the grand Plaza del Ayuntamiento, Mercado Central, and the impressive Torres de Serranos, once part of the city's ancient walls. The tour ends with a photo stop at the spectacular City of Arts and Sciences, Santiago Calatrava's futuristic architectural complex that showcases Valencia's bold modern side.

Option 2 - Morning experience: The Story of Valencia

Join our walking tour of central Valencia to explore the city's heart. This tour highlights the city's eclectic history, with an emphasis on the 500 years of Islamic rule, and La Reconquista - which ended it all. We visit the one of the city's central piazza's where we gain an insight into the political and social life of Valencia, before passing through Portal de Valldigna, an entrance to the former Moorish quarter, where we step back in time. It was here that Islamic textiles forged the foundation of a prosperous trade, which became the cornerstone of the Christian city in the 15th century. We visit La Lonja de la Seda de Valencia (The Silk Exchange), which boasts UNESCO World Heritage status. Built between 1482 and 1533, this group of buildings was originally used for trading in silk. They are a masterpiece of late-Gothic architecture, illustrating the power and wealth of Valencia's Christian merchants whose wealth funded the city's most famous landmark - the Valencia Cathedral. Filled with treasures, the cathedral houses a chalice believed to be the Holy Grail.

Option 3 - Morning experience: A morning at the Mercado Central

Join your local guide on a visit to the vibrant heart of Valencia at the Mercado Central, one of Europe's largest and most beautiful fresh food markets. Celebrating its 100th anniversary, this Modernist masterpiece opened in 1928 and still serves its original purpose--offering top-quality meat, fish, fruit, and vegetables to locals and visitors alike. Beneath its stunning wrought-iron and stained-glass roof, over 950 stalls bustle with life and flavour. Expect classic Spanish fare like jamon iberico, Manchego cheese, olives, chorizo, and fresh seafood. The market stands on a site where traders have gathered for over 1,000 years, dating back to Muslim rule. Its architecture rivals Valencia's finest, including La Lonja, and its cultural significance is immense. A recent push to pedestrianise the surrounding area is making it even more accessible. Whether you're shopping, tasting, or simply admiring, Mercado Central offers a feast for the senses and a deep connection to Valencia's rich culinary heritage.

Day 12 At Sea

Spend a day at sea, relaxing and soaking up the Spanish sun as we sail its coast to the city of Malaga. Along the way, your host will entertain you with spicy tales of Spanish fare, while you relax over a sangria, perhaps!

Day 13 Málaga (Port: Málaga)



Although very much a modern-day city, the apartment blocks and 'expat' clubs of Malaga and the Costa del Sol hide an undercurrent of ancient traditions. Long before beach bars and resorts, this coastline was part of Al-Andalus, ruled by the Moors for nearly eight centuries. Their legacy runs deep, visible in the arches of the Alcazaba, the layout of the old town, and the way the city seemingly harbours something older beneath its surface, steady and enduring.

Our 'Your Choice' experiences today range from an introduction to Malaga's magical sites, to a visit to the Moorish enclave of Ronda. A complimentary shuttle service* will operate between the ship and the city centre throughout the day allowing you to explore Malaga at leisure or return to the town after lunch on board. (*dependent on pier allocation.)

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences

Option 1 - Morning experience: Magical Malaga

Discover the layered history and charm of Malaga on this scenic driving tour, complete with photo stops and minimal walking. Founded nearly 3,000 years ago by the Phoenicians, the city reflects a rich tapestry of Roman roads, Moorish fortresses and Christian cathedrals. Drive along elegant, tree-lined boulevards and admire the grand neo-Baroque Town Hall, one of many architectural highlights. Pause to take in views of the Castillo de Gibralfaro, a 10th-century Moorish fortress that played a pivotal role in the 1487 Reconquista and remains a powerful symbol of the city. Continue past the majestic Catedral de Malaga, affectionately nicknamed La Manquita, "the one-armed lady"--for its famously unfinished second bell tower. Choose to hop off the coach in town and explore independently or return to the ship for lunch with a free afternoon to enjoy Malaga.

Option 2 - Half Day experience: The Moorish Enclave of Ronda

Venture an hour inland to Andalusia's favourite 'whitewashed town' - Ronda. This famed city excites visitors with a fascinating story of early guerilla warfare and its part in the eventual demise of the Moorish Empire. Straddling the El Tajo gorge, Ronda was once an Islamic stronghold. Here, we visit La Mina de Agua, the former gateway to the city and located at the bottom of the gorge. As Ronda was an Islamic city, all those who entered were obliged to wash and pray beforehand. In 1485, Ronda was besieged by Christian armies, which cut off the city's water supply, and within 10 days, Ronda fell. In less than a decade, the Spanish decreed that all Muslims must leave the peninsula or convert to Christianity.

Day 14 Tangier, Morocco (Port: Tangier)

After a night sailing the Spanish coast, we cross the straits of Gibraltar and cruise into Moroccan waters at a city located at the crossroads of Africa and Europe -- Tangier. Unique among Moroccan cities, Tangier has a chequered past, offering one of Europe's most tantalising stories. Designated an 'International Zone' in the early 20th century, Tangier harboured no taxes, no banking restrictions, no drug, censorship or morality laws. Attracting a mix of expat residents, it played house to everyone from eccentric British nobility to American authors, Franco's civil army to Nazi spies, while it awaited its inclusion in the post-war nation of Morocco. Stories of illicit affairs, underworld deals, and espionage abound in this city, which remains as colourful

as its history suggests.

Our 'Your Choice' experiences highlight Morocco's vibrant artisan revival, with guided visits to the medina in Tangier, or a chance to enjoy the culinary heritage of Tangier.

For a more relaxed alternative, or for those wishing to 'return to town' a complimentary shuttle will take you from the ship to the centre of Tangier, where you can discover a gentler side of the city. Enjoy time at your leisure to sip mint tea in a local cafe, browse traditional craft shops, or take in the atmosphere at your own pace, before we sail north to Spain, in the early evening.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences

Option 1 - Morning experience: Tangier Kasbah District and American Legation Museum

We begin our journey at Tangier's fabled Kasbah. Largely unchanged since Roman times, the Kasbah was the traditional residence of the Sultan and his harem and is now one of the most fashionable residential areas of Tangier. During a guided stroll, we discover the Grand Socco. This cafe-filled plaza serves as the gateway to Tangier´s medina and was once the haunt of Paul Bowles, William Burroughs and their Beatnik friends who gathered here to discuss life and literature while mingling among alleged spies and expats during the notorious time of international rule. Our next stop is at the American Legation. The first American public property outside the United States, the American Legation is now a museum that traces the history of the relationship between the US and Morocco. As one of the first countries to recognise America's independence, Morocco permitted the new United States government to establish a legation in Tangier in 1821. It is the only historical monument to have remained in American possession since the birth of the American nation. Among several displays here is a letter from George Washington to the Sultan Moulay Abdellah.

Option 2 - Morning experience: A Taste of Tangier

This 'foodie' tour of Tangier allows you to dive into the city's culinary heritage. Tangier's cuisine reflects a fascinating blend of Moorish and Spanish influences, with each bite telling a story of its past. From the Moorish tradition of intricate spice blends to Spanish elements like rich, savoury stews, and delicious colonial French deserts, the food here is a testament to the city's eclectic past. Stroll through the historic M'sallah and the old town district, where narrow alleyways and traditional architecture set the stage. Taste local delights like caliente, stuffed dates, and bissara, each crafted with time-honoured techniques. As you visit bustling markets and interact with market sellers, your guide will reveal how these diverse cultural influences have shaped Tangier's unique identity, while we snack like a true local.

Day 15 Cádiz, Spain (Port: Cádiz)

Returning to Spain we reach the proud city of Cadiz, which sits at the mouth of the Guadalquivir River. As the gateway to the Mediterranean, it is touted as the oldest continuously inhabited settlement in Europe, with its dominant families claiming ancestry dating back to Roman times, when the city was called Ceret, and the wine produced was Vinum Ceretensis. From Phoenicians to Iberians, Romans to Moors, Cadiz had its fair



share of invaders. It is no wonder its skyline is dotted with 120 watchtowers, including the 150-foot-tall Torre Tavira, used for spotting sails as they appeared on the horizon - often the first sign of the return of long-lost explorers.

A Spanish naval base even today, it was off the coast of Cadiz at Cape Trafalgar where the British won the battle of the same name over Napoleon's fleet, with the loss of Horatio Nelson. It was from Cadiz where Christopher Columbus set sail to discover the 'new world'. And it was in Cadiz harbour where Sir Francis Drake sacked and burned so many ships that he delayed Spain's attempt at invading England's by at least a year and changed the course of world history.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences

Option 1 - Morning experience: The Story of Sherry

It is the fortified wine, known worldwide as sherry, which has dictated the fate of Jerez. Introduced by the Phoenicians in 1100 BCE, this popular wine has brought both wealth and strife, with the greatest haul of sherry wine made in 1587 when Sir Francis Drake attacked the nearby port of Cadiz and carried off 3,000 kegs. The city's bodegas and local wineries remain the world's largest producers of sherry which although considered by some as a wine which has seen better days, is as popular in Spain today as it was in centuries past. In fact, in Europe, 'sherry' has protected designation of origin status, and under Spanish law, all wine labelled as 'sherry' must legally come from the Sherry Triangle, an area in the province of Cadiz. A short walk of the historic centre introduces us to Jerez, where we spend time with a wine expert, who introduces us to the region's unique wines during a wine tasting.

Option 2 - Midday experience: Historic Cadiz on the Tapas trail

Join us on a tapas tour through the historic heart of Cadiz, where every bite tells a story shaped by sea, trade, and tradition. We weave through the whitewashed lanes of the Casco Antiguo, past sun-dappled plazas, baroque churches, and grand 18th-century merchant houses--reminders of Cadiz's Golden Age, when riches from the Americas poured into its bustling port. Today, the city trades in flavours rather than silver, especially those of the sea. As we hop from tavern to tavern with our local guide, we enjoy delicacies that have fed Cadiz for millennia.

Option 3 - Full-day experience: Andalusia's Heart; Seville

One and a half hours north of Cadiz lies Andalusia's famed city of Seville. Our local guide tells a tale of Seville supported by a host of history's famed conquerors, while Moorish influences join forces with tokens of Gothic, Renaissance, and baroque style added by later Christian kings, all with harmonious charm.

Take in the sights that shape Seville's unique character on an introductory driving tour, before exploring the city further on foot. Drive through the lively neighborhood of Triana, famous for flamenco, colorful houses, historic churches, and traditional pottery workshops, and see parts of the city built for the Universal Expositions of 1929 and 1992, including the striking Alamillo Bridge by Santiago Calatrava and the beautiful Plaza de España, where a short stroll lets you admire its grand pavilions

and lush surroundings, before time at your leisure in Seville's historic heart, where you can view its 'walkable' sites at your own pace.

Day 16 Portimão, Portugal (Port: Portimão)

Set on the estuary of the Rio Arade, Portimao was a flourishing fishing village until only 30 years ago. Greeks, Phoenicians and Carthaginians all plied their trade but in the 11th century the Moors arrived, and Burj Munt as it became known, never looked back. A gateway to the fortified town of Silves and neighbour to a coast of classic, caved beaches, Portimao fishes for a different catch these days, with its marina home to a flotilla of gently bobbing yachts, and riverfront promenade host to casual cafes and bars.

Our 'Your Choice' experiences today offer three distinct ways to explore the region. Choose a visit to the nearby hilltop town of Silves, accompanied by a Portuguese pottery demonstration or winery visit and tasting. Alternatively, take in sweeping coastal views on a panoramic drive, accompanied by a stroll along a section of the Caminho dos Promontorios, for a magical morning on the Algarve, before sailing for Lisbon mid-afternoon.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Silves and Portuguese wine tasting

Once the capital of the Algarve's Moorish kingdom, Silves hosts us this morning with an introductory locally guided tour, and time to explore at our own pace. Silves is famous for its 11th century red sandstone Castelo de Silves, whose square turrets and impenetrable ramparts loom over the town from an immense orange grove. This impressive castle once formed part of the wall that encircled the city and was an important defence as the residence of the Moorish kings of the Al-Garb.

From Silves, we take a short drive to the Quinta dos Vales estate for a Portuguese wine tasting experience. Surrounded by peaceful countryside, we'll sample a variety of regional wines, which may include a crisp rose, a viognier with light tropical notes, or a smooth red blend of cabernet sauvignon and trincadeira -- all accompanied by local delicacies, offering a delicious glimpse into the flavours of the Algarve.

Option 2 - Morning experience: Silves Castle and Portuguese Pottery

This morning, we're welcomed by the historic town of Silves, once the capital of the Algarve. Our visit includes a locally guided tour of its castle ramparts and a pottery demonstration that connects us to the region's artisanal traditions. Showcasing a unique blend of heritage, culture and imagination, emphasised by determination and passion, Portuguese ceramics are famous worldwide. We enjoy time with a local ceramicist, who welcomes us to their studio. They share the art of modelling clay pieces into works of art and demonstrate how to make various pieces by using the potter's wheel and hand-working clay. In Silves we tour the 11th-century red sandstone Castelo de Silves, whose square turrets and impenetrable ramparts loom over the town from an immense orange grove. This impressive castle once formed part of the wall that encircled the city and was an important defence as the



residence of the Moorish kings of the Al-Garb. Steeped in history, the castle has a 60-metre-deep well and a set of vaulted cisterns that still supplies the town with water. We return to the ship for lunch, with time this afternoon to explore Portimao independently.

Option 3 - Morning experience: Ferragudo and the Path of the Headlands

A short drive takes us to Ferragudo, a traditional fishing village that captures the essence of southern Portugal. Here, we'll wander along the waterfront, where colourful boats bob in the harbour and fishermen mend their nets in the sun. As we explore the cobbled streets, we'll pass bougainvillea-covered houses and get a feel for the village's easy-going rhythm. The coastline of this region is a characterised by jagged cliffs and hidden coves, shaped over millennia by wind, water, and shifting earth. Along this rugged edge lies the Caminho dos Promontorios, or Path of the Headlands -- a scenic clifftop trail that traces a series of promontories alternating with recessed beaches and secluded inlets. On this guided walk, we explore around 1.5 kilometres (one mile) of the trail, delving into the region's geology, gaining an insight into what makes this stretch of shoreline so uniquely captivating.

Day 17 Disembark Lisbon (Port: Lisbon)

Lisbon, set along the broad waters of the River Tagus, became the launch point for Portugal's Golden Age of Exploration. From this historic harbour, famed navigators like Vasco da Gama and Magellan sailed to chart new worlds, opening vital trade routes and bringing immense wealth to their homeland. That prosperity left its mark on the city through grand baroque buildings, ornate churches, and tiled pavements. But Lisbon's story is also one of resilience. In 1755 a powerful earthquake, followed by tsunamis and fire, destroyed most of the city. What rose from the ruins is the Lisbon we see today, with graceful boulevards, elegant facades, and a vibrant waterfront that still echoes its maritime past.

We bid the Douglas Mawson farewell. Our locally guided tour visits Belem, where the city's seafaring legacy is on full display. We'll view the Monastery of Jeronimos, the striking Monument to the Discoveries, which honours Prince Henry the Navigator and his explorers, and the iconic Torre de Belem, a fortress that once guarded the entrance to the city for returning ships. Enjoy some free time in Lisbon's charming city centre, perfect for wandering cobbled streets, travelling on one of its quirky trams, sampling local flavours, or simply soaking in the riverside views, before we transfer to our hotel for a final night in Portugal.

Accommodation: Lisbon Hotel (or similar)

Meals: Breakfast onboard

Day 18 Depart Lisbon

After breakfast, check-out of your hotel and transfer to the airport for your onward flight.

Meals: Breakfast

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



YOUR SHIP: DOUGLAS MAWSON

YOUR SHIP: **Douglas Mawson**

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Douglas Mawson was launched in 2025. Named after the legendary Australian geologist and explorer, this new small ship embodies Mawson's pioneering spirit and is designed for global discovery. Featuring the revolutionary Ulstein X-BOW® and purpose-built with enhanced sustainability features, it takes a maximum 154 adventurers to the world's wildest places in smooth, quiet comfort. It boasts our most extensive range of cabins yet, including a range of single cabins. The Douglas Mawson features a host of amenities to help you connect with like-minded travellers and elevate your time onboard this floating base camp for adventure. After a long day of exploring, head to the back deck to swim in the heated outdoor swimming pool, find a sun bed to read on, or soak in one of two Jacuzzis. Work up a sweat in the gym before unwinding in the sauna, resolve to learn something new in the Citizen Science Centre, then enjoy a delicious meal with new and old friends in one of two restaurants. Or, with multiple observation areas throughout the ship, simply relax in comfort while you keep watch for wildlife or incredible landscapes unfold before you. While enjoying the luxurious amenities onboard, you can rest assured that the aim is to get you off the ship to explore the natural environment as much as possible to enjoy some unique activities remains unchanged. Newest Ulstein X-BOW ® The Douglas Mawson features the newest streamlined Ulstein X-BOW®, designed for global discovery. The revolutionary design cuts through the swell, offering unrivalled stability on ocean crossings and helping to reduce fuel consumption. It's just one of the many sustainability features that helps make travel more responsible. Heated Pool, Jacuzzis & Sauna In between landings, enjoy access to the onboard gym or unwind in the sauna. Or head to the back deck to swim in the heated outdoor pool, enjoy a drink at the pool bar, or soak in one of two Jacuzzis, watching the world go by. Leading Technology The Douglas Mawson is at the cutting edge of nautical technology, fitted with industry-leading technology including world-class return-to-port equipment. The ship also features a medical clinic designed for use in remote areas. Built for Adventure The Douglas Mawson features Zodiac access points and an activities platform, making boarding the Zodiacs as quick, efficient and safe as possible, minimising wait times and getting you closer to the action for longer. In our mudroom you will have access to lockers to store gear & boots and rapid drying areas for clothing. More Cabin Choices The Douglas Mawson features 11 different types of cabins, including a range of spacious single berth cabins - all adorned with elegant Nordic interior design features. Multiple Observation Areas As you explore the ship you will find indoor lounge areas with floor-to ceiling windows, and multiple open decks with expansive 270-360 degree views. The Glass Atrium Lounge inside the bow is a fantastic place to sit and watch for wildlife - with a drink in hand. There is no shortage of



spaces to take in the majesty of the incredible world outside! Lecture Theatre On all expeditions you will meet naturalists and local specialists, who offer presentations on their area of expertise to enhance your appreciation of the destination you are exploring. Join the team in the lecture theatre for presentations covering a broad range of topics to suit every interest, from history and culture to biology and climate change. Regardless of the topic, they all have one thing in common: they all aim to engage, educate, entertain and turn you into an ambassador for the planet. Citizen Science Center & Lounge Learn more about the world and the unique destinations Aurora visits by visiting the onboard naturalist and Expedition Team in the world-class Citizen Science Center. You will be rewarded for your thirst for knowledge with one of the best views on the ship. Library With floor-to-ceiling windows, the library is a peaceful sanctuary where you can find non-fiction books to read up on the day's destinations, use a public laptop to organise your photos or play board games with newfound friends. Choose from our range of informative non-fiction titles, wildlife guidebooks, travel journals, novels and a selection of children's books and board games. Wildlife guides, books and binoculars can also be found on the observation lounge on Deck 7. Mudroom No need to take your wet expedition gear back to your cabin to dry. Keep your cabin warm and cosy by leaving your outer jackets and pants in the mudroom. The mudroom is your launchpad for all shore excursions and activities. Here, you will have access to a locker when you can hang your gear up to dry, and store your boots between excursions. Swimming Pool & Jacuzzis There are two Jacuzzis on the top outside deck which offer amazing views of the world outside, a heated outdoor pool surrounded by sun beds you can relax on after a long day of exploring, and a pool bar. Gym & Sauna During your voyage, enjoy complimentary access to the gym or visit our sauna, which we highly recommend after the Polar Plunge! Restaurants One of the most important parts of any expedition is the food! Whatever adventures the day holds, you will be fuelled-up with hearty meals and delicious morning/afternoon teas cooked by our onboard chefs. Meals are a great time to soak up the expedition camaraderie in our open seating dining area. Share stories with your fellow travellers and ask our expedition team questions that may have come up during the day. Tea, coffee and snacks are available 24 hours a day, and our chefs offer different menu options and courses for each meal. Enjoy the range of house wine, beers and soft drinks included with dinner after a long day in the wild. We also invite you to join your captain and expedition team for informal Captain's Farewell drinks, with complimentary beverages and cocktail appetisers, followed by a 3 course meal. Bars & Lounges Communal meeting areas have always played a major role in fostering the warm camaraderie on board our ships. They are the heart of the expedition, where people meet to share tales from the day, swap photos, keep an eye out for wildlife and watch the sun go down. The bars and lounges on board are refined yet inviting places to gather, with floor-to-ceiling windows offering stunning views, and of course friendly bartenders to shoot the





breeze with.

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