

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 Barcelona. 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.



ITINERARY

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. Today offers time to relax in preparation for our journey.

Accommodation: Valletta Hotel

Day 2 Valletta

Sitting in the centre of the Mediterranean, Malta boasts unbeatable location, location, location. Its 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 enjoy the facilities at our hotel or stroll the streets of Valletta at your own pace. Join us for a Welcome Reception this evening, where we honour the bravery of the Maltese people and hear wartime tales of courage against seemingly insurmountable odds, from a local expert.

Accommodation: Valletta Hotel

Meals: Breakfast, Welcome Reception (drinks and canapes)

Day 3 Embark Valletta (Port: Valletta)

A second day in Valletta gives us the chance to experience more of Malta, when we venture into the island's rural heartland, where we experience the resilient and welcoming spirit for which the regional Maltese are known.

Upon check-out we visit Mdina, Malta's former capital and one of the island's most atmospheric historic sites. Known as the 'Silent City,' Mdina is a hilltop settlement with roots dating back over 3,000 years. The city's mix of medieval and baroque architecture, quiet streets, and commanding views make it a 'must see'. A short introduction from our local guide will outline the city's history, from its time as a Roman municipium to its later role as a stronghold for Malta's nobility. After an introduction from our local guide, you'll have free time to explore at your own pace, perhaps visit St. Paul's Cathedral, walk the bastions, wander the shops or enjoy lunch (own expense) in an authentic Maltese restaurant.

We'll then continue to a nearby boutique winery, located in the countryside just outside Mdina. With most Maltese wineries being small, family-owned estates, our visit offers an insight into country's rural lifestyle. We'll tour the vineyard and cellar, learn about their production methods, and enjoy a guided tasting of several wines, accompanied. It's a relaxed and informal setting, offering a chance to experience another side of Maltese life, before we return to Valletta to board the Douglas Mawson and begin our voyage.

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

Day 4 Syracuse, Italy (Port: Syracuse)



Syracuse's delightful jumble of Greek, Roman, medieval and baroque layers make every street corner and every ancient site a story unto itself. Greek ruins rise from citrus orchards; baroque churches stand stoic and medieval streets lead down to the sea. They meet, a plethora of stories waiting to be heard.

Our 'Your Choice' experiences offer a variety of sights, sounds and smells! For those visiting the sights of Syracuse or Noto this morning, we suggest a stroll to the island of Ortigia this afternoon. The small Baroque Island of Ortigia, the historic heart of Syracuse, has been inhabited for over 3,000 years and is celebrated for its Greek heritage. As a UNESCO landmark, Ortigia features stunning church facades, vibrant outdoor restaurants, and elegant piazzas. Surrounded by sea, it offers a pleasant afternoon visit, blending historical charm with a coastal vibe.

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

Option 1 Morning experience: Syracuse and the Parco Archeologico della Neapolis

Once a rival to Athens, Syracuse is home to one of Sicily's greatest archaeological sites - the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Parco Archeologico della Neapolis. Our local guides tell tales of past realms as we view the 16,000 capacity Greek Theatre, and the 2nd-century Anfiteatro Romano, originally used for gladiatorial combats and horse races, before standing at the foot of the monolithic Altar to Hieron II where up to 400 oxen would be sacrificed in one ritual. Beside the theatre, and just as fascinating, we find the limestone quarries that supplied stone for the ancient city. Honeycombed with catacombs below, and citrus trees above, it is also where the 7,000 survivors of the 5th-century war between Syracuse and Athens were imprisoned.

Option 2 Morning experience: A Sicilian stroll through Ortigia's colourful market

There are fewer experiences more Sicilian than strolling through the Ortigia Market with a local, and it's just steps from where your ship will be berthed in Syracuse. Ortigia, the ancient heart of the city, is a small island connected to the mainland by short bridges and known for its stunning baroque architecture, Greek ruins, and lively seaside charm.

Held daily from early morning to mid-afternoon (except Sundays) along Via De Benedictis, the Ortigia Market is a vibrant showcase of local life and flavour. With your guide, explore stalls bursting with fresh produce, herbs, spices, and traditional Sicilian products. You'll be introduced to beloved local staples like arancine, caponata, cacio siracusano, and prosciutto dei Nebrodi, learning about their roots in Sicily's rich culinary heritage. Influenced by Mediterranean, Islamic, and Byzantine cultures, the market is both a feast for the senses and a window into Sicily's layered past.

Option 3 Morning experience: The Baroque Town of Noto

An example of architectural elegance, Noto is one of Sicily's most picturesque towns. Completely destroyed by the 1693 earthquake, it was rebuilt on a new site under the scrutiny of Guiseppe Lanza, the Duke of Camastra, whose passion for all things baroque is evident at every turn. Framed by baroque

palazzi and grand churches, Noto's main square became a symbol of the Risorgimento, the 19th-century movement for Italian unification. Eighty-five years later, during World War II, British forces arrived in Sicily as part of Operation Husky and liberated Noto. The town was among the first in Italy to be freed, with locals welcoming the Allies with what was described as 'unbridled enthusiasm.'

Day 5 Messina (Port: Messina)

We follow the coastline of Sicily overnight with an early morning arrival at the gateway to the island of Sicily: Messina. The city of Messina guards the mouth of the straits of the same name - a mere 15-minute ferry crossing from the Italian mainland. The recipient of more than its fair share of disasters, Messina has faced many invasions. However, it is the city's notorious bad luck - two major earthquakes and a tsunami, that destroyed the entire town. Famous as the finish line for Monty and Eisenhower on their wager as to who would reach Messina first, this stoic city acts today as our gateway to Europe's highest active volcano and its surrounding coastal gems.

Our experiences today offer a variety of activities. Visit a winery on the slopes of Mt. Etna, take a seat at an ancient Roman Ampitheatre for one of the best views in Sicily, or follow Francis Ford Coppola's iconic trilogy on a 'Godfather' tour. As always it is Your Choice.

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

Option 1 Half-day experience: Taormina

Topped by an ancient Greco-Roman theatre, with spectacular views of Mount Etna, the hilltop enclave of Taormina is at the top of the list when it comes to visiting Sicily. Once a holiday resort for Greeks and Romans, it attracted numerous foes, however today it fights a different form of invasion with the town performing solidly on the Hollywood A-lister bucket list. Its luxurious hotels, restaurants and tile-terraced piazzas appear on the front page of Vogue, and with views across the Mediterranean, no wonder it is a 'must see' for all travellers to Italy.

Option 2 Morning experience: A winery with a volcanic twist

Today, we explore the volcanic soils of Mount Etna, with a twist. Wine production has been central to Sicilian culture since the time of the Romans, and this tradition lives here with a blend of heritage and innovation. Vines flourish on Etna's mineral-rich lava soils, ideal for native grapes like nerello mascalese and carricante. Enjoy a guided tasting with panoramic views and discover how Sicily's ancient wine legacy continues to evolve, rooted in the land, yet forward-looking in spirit.

Option 3 Morning experience: The Godfather

Follow the footsteps of Marlin Brando and Al Pacino on this panoramic drive through lands of 'Godfather' proportions. Our first stop is the charming village of Savoca, one of the picturesque seafront towns immortalised in Francis Ford Coppola's iconic trilogy. In Savoca, we visit the renowned Bar Vitelli, which houses a rich collection of film memorabilia, before some time to stroll the streets.



Our panoramic tour continues to the hilltop village of Forza D'Agro, perched at an impressive 365 metres (1,200 feet). This picturesque setting served as the backdrop for numerous scenes in the trilogy. As you wander the narrow lanes and historic churches, you'll be transported to a world where the real and cinematic past intertwine, creating a truly immersive experience. The region was chosen for film shoots due to its timeless Sicilian atmosphere. The rustic charm and historic architecture provided an ideal backdrop for the dramatic narrative of The Godfather. While Sicily, including Savoca and Forza D'Agro, has a complex history with the Mafia, today it is celebrated more for its cultural heritage and cinematic connections.

Day 6 Palermo (Port: Palermo)

Once infamous as the centre of the Sicilian Mafia, Sicily's capital, Palermo, now proudly claims to be 'a clean city,' offering travellers the chance to enjoy its ancient sites, colourful markets, and vibrant Sicilian lifestyle once more. Steeped in history, culture and Mediterranean charm, Palermo was founded by the Phoenicians as early as the 8th century BCE. Its strategic location at the crossroads of civilisations has seen it influenced by Greek, Roman, Arab, Norman and Spanish cultures, making it a fascinating city to explore. Beyond its historical and architectural treasures, Palermo is known for its lively atmosphere, with bustling piazzas, a vibrant street food scene, and sun-drenched beaches. The city's resilience, rich history, and diverse cultural mix, make Palermo a captivating destination for travellers seeking to explore Sicilian heritage.

This morning's 'Your Choice' activities offer a variety of ways to discover the city's story, leaving your afternoon free to explore at your own pace. To make things easy, our complimentary shuttle will run throughout the afternoon, ensuring a smooth and comfortable ride into town and back.

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

Option 1 Morning experience: The 'Real' Godfathers of Palermo

Exploring the Mafia in Palermo involves delving into a topic far more nuanced than the stereotypes presented in mainstream cinema and TV. Known locally as Cosa Nostra, the Mafia is a profound social and economic phenomenon that has significantly shaped Sicily's history over the past two centuries. From its roots in the aristocracy to its transformation into a political and entrepreneurial powerhouse in the 20th century, Cosa Nostra's impact is immense. Key events include the sack of Palermo, the violent confrontations of the 1970s and 80s, and the subsequent state crackdown, marked by the assassinations of many institutional figures. The 'pizzo' phenomenon, where businesses are extorted for protection money, underscores the Mafia's all-pervasive reach. Yet, Palermo's collective response has led to a remarkable resurgence in the city's confidence.

This guided tour offers a unique perspective on Palermo, revealing sites and events tied to Cosa Nostra's history. Each stop provides insight into the city's fight against organised crime, while your local guide shares personal stories, offering a genuine understanding of Palermo's true essence.



Option 2 Morning experience: Palermo's Private Palaces

On this locally guided walking tour, you'll discover how Palermo's oratories and their stunning stucco art reveal the city's intricate social and political fabric. In the 17th and 18th centuries, powerful families vied to showcase their influence by building magnificent oratories. These religious spaces were not just places of worship but also symbols of their congregation's (known as a confraternity) wealth and status. Each confraternity sought to surpass the others by creating more elaborate architecture and lavish decor. Giacomo Serpotta, a master of late baroque stucco art, was commissioned to craft intricate decorations that underscored their prestige. His masterpieces adorn key sites across the city, including oratories in the Loggia neighbourhood. These opulent buildings became focal points for both religious and civic life, reinforcing the authority of their patrons and solidifying their control over Palermo's social and political landscape. This tour will guide you through these monumental sites, revealing the profound impact of Palermo's ruling elite and its cultural legacy.

Option 3 Morning experience: Palermo's beating heart - Vucciria market

This morning, we join a local foodie fan to explore Palermo's Vucciria market - the city's beating heart. This is where locals come to shop, eat, and gather, just as they have been for generations. You'll hear vendors calling out their wares, see stalls overflowing with fresh produce and seafood, and smell sizzling street food in the air. We'll take time to explore, perhaps sampling a crisp panelle or warm arancina for an authentic taste of Palermo.

Day 7 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 8 Cagliari (Port: Cagliari)

The Mediterranean's second largest island, Sardinia, is unique and enigmatic. Its coastline, beaches, granite cliffs and mountainous inland showcase sprawling resorts and medieval villages - all a testimony to the island's eventful history as the centre of the Mediterranean's east to west trading route. A succession of conquerors gifted to the islanders' animals, seeds and plants to be raised and populated. Understandably the most popular plants were vines, which now support a burgeoning wine business with Sardinian wines popular in Europe.

Cagliari, Sardinia's vibrant capital, is a city where history and modern life blend seamlessly. Living here means enjoying a Mediterranean lifestyle framed by stunning beaches, ancient ruins, and bustling markets, shaped by an impressive list of conquerors like the Phoenicians, Romans, Byzantines, and Spaniards. Its maze-like streets open onto energetic piazzas where neighbours debate politics, share laughter, and savour bold local flavours. The sea isn't just a backdrop, it's part of



daily rhythm, with fishermen's boats arriving early and markets pulsing with fresh catch.

Our 'Your Choice' experiences showcase Cagliari and its surrounds with a sample of the best the region has to offer.

A complimentary afternoon ship-to-shore shuttle is offered so you may explore Cagliari independently should you wish.

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

Option 1 Morning experience: Sampling Sardinia

Explore Sardinia's rich history and landscapes, shaped for millennia by tradition, faith, and wine. Begin with a scenic drive through Cagliari to Monte Urpino, where we pause for panoramic views of the Gulf of Angels, salt ponds, and the Molentargius Lagoon, famed as the home to flamingos once called sa genti arrubia ("the red people") by locals. Then we are in for a real treat when we visit a local winery to experience Sardinia's ancient winemaking heritage. Wine production here dates back over 3,000 years and wine are a centrepiece of all Sardinian evenings. Enjoy a tasting of locally produced wines, thoughtfully paired with traditional Sardinian snacks, as you learn how these time-honoured winemaking practices are still preserved and passed down today.

Option 2 Morning experience: A snack with St Joseph

We begin our journey along Cagliari's coastline, where we stop at the Devil's Saddle; a dramatic rocky formation wrapped in local legend. From here, we take in views of a peaceful harbour and Poetto Beach, a long stretch of soft, pale sand bordered by the sea and the salt marshes. We discover how, in summer, the marshes turn a striking scarlet as the water evaporates, and in winter, they attract large flocks of migratory birds, especially the iconic pink flamingos.

We then head to the 14th-century Saint Joseph Convent. Named after the patron saint of workers and families, the convent reflects Sardinia's deep-rooted religious traditions. Once home to religious orders central to community life, it has been carefully restored, showcasing traditional ladiri; sun-dried mud bricks unique to Sardinian architecture. Here, we relax with a tasting of local snacks and wines in this peaceful, historic setting. Our morning concludes with a short drive through Cagliari's city centre, ending at a scenic viewpoint just outside the Old Town.

Option 3 Morning experience: Sardinia's white gold

We step into the world of Sardinia's "white gold" at the Saline Conti Vecchi, where salt once powered the region's economy. Our visit begins at a working salt plant and museum, where we'll learn how engineer Luigi Conti Vecchi transformed the Santa Gilla Basin in the 1930s. Before his reforms, salt workers endured long hours in harsh conditions with little pay or support. Conti Vecchi modernized the process and built housing, schools, and healthcare for the workers, reshaping both industry and community life. We'll explore historical records, a vintage workshop, and a restored chemical lab that reveal this remarkable story. Then, we'll board a motorised train through the salt flats, passing towering white mounds and spotting



flamingos in the Santa Gilla wetlands. Finally, we'll visit the historic village of Macchiareddu, where the salt workers voices still echo in the sunlit streets, and the story of Sardinia take on an interesting twist.

Day 9 Olbia (Port: Olbia)

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

Olbia, perched on Sardinia's northeastern coast, 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 - Afternoon experience: The Aga Khan's Folly; Porto Cervo

The undisputed capital of what is referred to as the Costa Smeralda is Porto Cervo. This town of barely a few hundred inhabitants, today trades with a different type of clientele - the rich and famous. 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 afternoon 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 - Afternoon 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 10 Bonifacio (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 11 At Sea

We connect Sardinia and Menorca with a leisurely day at sea, sailing from Italy'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 12 Mahón (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 islands 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 13 Palma 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 14 Disembark Barcelona

Socially, culturally and industrially, Barcelona shines as a beacon of difference in Spain. Proudly Catalonian first and Spanish second, its people are free-spirited, liberal thinkers with a passion for their freedom. In the last 30 years, Barcelonans have sculpted their city into one of Europe's most venerated travel destinations. Its boulevard-style main street, Las Ramblas, is the name on every traveller's lips, and Barcelona's vibrant is as sought after as it was during the Spanish Empire's monarchal peak. A palatial stronghold of the 15th century power couple, Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, Barcelona greeted a jubilant Christopher Columbus upon his return to Spain and the rest as they say, is history. The city has never looked back.

Our tour today celebrates the capital of Catalunya. Famed for its vibrant arts scene, Barcelona shows off its style with works scattered along its plazas and throughout its parks. Miro, Picasso, Vidal, and Montaner all called Barcelona home. But it is the name Antoni Gaudi, which attracts 21st century art aficionados worldwide. We spend time at his masterpiece of modernist architecture - La Sagrada Familia, to be inspired by the symbolism of this ongoing construction project, before coach cruising the Plaza de España, Gran Via and the elegant avenue of Paseo de Gracia, home to Barcelona's most inspired modernist architecture.

Having familiarised yourself with the city, your afternoon is free to explore Barcelona's many attractions, before we transfer to our group hotel in the late afternoon.

Accommodation: Barcelona Hotel

Meals: Breakfast onboard

Day 15 Depart Barcelona

This morning, check out of your hotel and farewell your fellow travellers as you transfer to Barcelona 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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