

SECRETS OF SUMATRA CRUISE

Join us aboard the MS Island Sky and discover the many wonders of Sumatra, the world's sixth-largest island. Separated from mainland Asia by the Strait of Malacca and from Java by the Strait of Sunda, Sumatra lies at the heart of geological and cultural crossroads. Spectacular volcanoes and mysterious calderas are many along the Barisan Mountains, the long spinal range of the island following Sumatra's west coast. Perpetual warmth and the presence of high peaks have made the natural environment of this large landmass one of the most diverse in the world: the many national parks of the island are an attempt to protect this increasingly endangered treasure. With the Indian Ocean to the west and the southeast Asian archipelagos to the east, Sumatra's cultural history is rich and the island is home to many fascinating peoples. Our voyage will explore their cities, towns and villages, from the Aceh at the northwestern tip of the island, to the Bataks and Minangkabau of the central highlands, and the Nias community on Nias Island, off the west coast of northern Sumatra. Sumatra was revealed to the Western world by Marco Polo and is often referred to as the Isle of Gold: sailing around its diverse shores, exploring its coastal communities and occasionally venturing inland, we will be able to understand why. The privilege of exploring this remarkable land from a small ship and in the company of knowledgeable expedition team members and local guides is an opportunity not to be missed.



ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Penang, Malaysia.

Fly by scheduled indirect flight.

Day 2 Penang.

Arrive and transfer to the MS Island Sky. The remainder of the day is at leisure to acclimatise and relax after your flight. You



may wish to enjoy a stroll ashore as we will be moored overnight.

Day 3 Penang.

Today there will be a choice of excursions. You may choose to join a walking tour of historical Georgetown, a UNESCO World Heritage Site where we can see the well-preserved cultural and historical heritage of Penang's capital city. Founded in 1786 by the British East India Company, Penang grew as an important trading port and became a melting pot of Malaysian, Chinese, Indian and European influences which we can see as we pass by the town hall, St George's Church, Sri Mahamariamman Temple and the Kapitan Keling Mosque. Alternatively, discover the island's natural beauty as we join the Penang Hill Railway which was constructed in 1923 and takes us to the top of Flagstaff Hill, 830 metres above sea level. Here we will take a one-mile nature trail through 'The Habitat', walking across a dipterocarp forest amidst oak laurels and tree ferns. The area's rich biodiversity encompasses more than 100 species of birds, endangered endemic plants including the Penang slipper orchid, and a multitude of fauna such as flying lemurs, dusky leaf monkeys and the giant black squirrel. As we make our way along the Treetop Walk, we can take in panoramic views of the city and the Andaman Sea below. After lunch on board the remainder of the day is free to explore further at your own pace before we sail this evening.

Day 4 Lake Toba, Indonesia.

We arrive on Sumatra at Kuala Tanjung, our base to visit the iconic Lake Toba. At over 1145 square kilometres it is the largest lake in southeast Asia found in the volcanic peaks of the island. After an early breakfast we will start our journey inland passing through the palm oil, rubber and cocoa plantations enroute to Parapat, the gateway town located in the beautiful and fertile volcanic basin at the northern end of the Bukit Barisan mountain range. The scenery is stunning and after lunch in a local restaurant we will board our boat to cruise across the lake to the central island of Samosir, passing lovely coves with white sandy beaches to where colourful Toba Batak villages cling to the shore. We will visit the beautiful traditional houses and ancient tombs of Laga Siallagan, the first king of Ambarita. In front of the traditional houses we find the Banyan tree with the stone chair of King Siallagan, the location where all important judicial and village matters were traditionally administered.

Day 5 Belawan.

There will be a choice of excursions today, choose a long but rewarding day as we leave the vessel at sunrise and drive inland to the eastern side of the Gunung Leuser National Park and visit the Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre at Bukit Lawang. This is now one of the world's most important conservation projects as orphaned orangutans are brought here to learn how to live in the wild again. We can watch them at play and feeding and learn how the six month rehabilitation programme works. We will enjoy lunch in a local restaurant before returning to the ship in the late afternoon. Alternatively explore the highlights of Medan, the nearby capital of North Sumatra. Here we visit the 19th century Maimoon Palace, a 30 room palace featuring Malay, Mogul and Italian influences before continuing to the Mesjid Raya (Grand Mosque). We will explore the collections at the Museum of Northern Sumatra including stone carvings from Nias Island and items from the Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic periods as well as colonial and military history. Our guided tour will end at the Chinese pagoda before returning to the MS Island Sky.



Day 6 At Sea.

We have a day to relax as we cruise the coast to the northern tip of Sumatra. Maybe take in a lecture by the onboard experts or find a spot on deck.

Day 7 Pulau Weh & Banda Aceh.

This morning we anchor off Pulau Weh where our Zodiacs will take us to Gapang Beach. Here we have a chance to swim in the clear waters considered some of the best in Indonesia. Alternatively relax on the beach or take a walk through the small town. We will sail over lunch to Banda Aceh. Many will recall the destruction caused to this port on the northern tip of Sumatra by the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami. Enormous effort has been made to rebuild since the fateful day and we will visit the Tsunami Museum, memorial and educational centre that document the impact. We will also visit the Aceh Cultural Museum and the Baiturrahman Mosque, one of the dominant landmarks in downtown Banda Aceh with seven domes and four towers with one main tower. It has a 4760 square metre Italian marble floor and can accommodate up to 9000 people.

Day 8 Simeulue Islands.

After a morning at sea we arrive in the archipelago of the Simeulue Islands at lunchtime. Located 100 miles from the Sumatran coast and with white sand beaches, vast coral reefs and a pristine blue sea dotted with a multitude of seamounts, atolls and small islets, Simeulue Island is well off the traditional tourist route. We will use our Zodiacs to land on one of the local beaches for swimming, snorkelling and nature walks.

Day 9 Pulau Nias.

We continue south and land on the island of Nias some 70 miles from the west coast of Sumatra. Its isolation has protected its cultural heritage and we will see some wonderful examples of tribal art and unique architecture. After an island drive we will witness a stone jumping demonstration in a traditional village. Here, talented local villagers leap over six foot tall stone megaliths in a rite of passage; the higher they jump, the better chance they have of acquiring a wife. However, the tradition originated to train them for warfare and defence. This colourful culture developed separately from Sumatra and the island has a history of headhunting, warfare, slaves and gold. After lunch on board there will be the opportunity for a quick swim or snorkel before continuing our journey south in the late afternoon, crossing the equator this evening.

Day 10 Siberut & Pulau Karangmajat.

This morning we will anchor off the Mentawai archipelago. Like Nias, these islands have a unique culture, flora and fauna due to their isolation from the rest of the country. On arrival we will travel through the tropical forest to a small village where we will be invited to the meeting house to enjoy a cultural performance. The island is rich in wildlife and we will keep an eye out for some of the 140 bird species and monkeys which frequent the forest. Over lunch we sail to the islands off the coast and will find a suitable landing site to enjoy a beach walk or snorkel over the island's fringing coral reefs.

Day 11 Padang for Bukittinggi.

We return to the Sumatran mainland today at the port of Padang, our base for a choice of excursions. This part of Western Sumatra is home to the Minangkabau people who despite their Islamic faith have the largest matrilineal society where the woman is the head of the house and controls family affairs. We will head inland passing the magnificent Anai valley and visit the breathtaking Ngari Sianok Canyon where we will



see the tunnels built by the Japanese during the second world war before ending in Bukittinggi. Here we will witness the cultural performances by the Minangkabau people and try some local delicacies. The region is also home to the world's largest flower, the Rafflesia Arnoldii which can grow to nearly one metre across and weigh up to 11 kilogrammes. These typically bloom between August and November and, if we are lucky and the season starts early, we will arrange an alternative full day excursion visiting the Batang Paluph Nature Reserve where we will enjoy a series of walks in search of the flower.

Day 12 Bengkulu.

After a morning at sea we reach the southern half of the island and the city of Bengkulu. The British East India Company established a garrison here in 1685 but with little success until Sir Stamford Raffles arrived in 1818 and established a market in pepper, coffee and nutmeg. The British remained until 1824 when the city was traded with the Dutch for Melacca. On a city drive we will view Fort Marlborough, the British cemetery and explore the bustling local market.

Day 13 Pulau Krakatoa.

This afternoon we sail into the Suna Strait and towards the island of Krakatoa. The volcano here famously exploded in 1883, killing 36,417 people. The explosion is considered to be the loudest sound ever heard in modern history, with reports of it being heard nearly 3,000 miles from its point of origin. If conditions permit, we will use our Zodiacs to land on the island where you can choose to join a nature walk at the base, climb up the lower slopes of the volcano or swim in the surrounding waters.

Day 14 Belitung Islands.

Arrive at lunchtime in the idyllic Belitung Islands, a group of islands off the coast of Sumatra famed for their long clean beaches and crystal clear seawater. We have the afternoon to enjoy the fine white sandy beaches and the wonderful coral reefs. Snorkelling platforms will allow us to swim with a multitude of colourful fish, molluscs, jellyfish and sea urchins. Meanwhile on nature walks we will explore the forest for birdlife, or you may prefer to simply relax on the beach.

Day 15 At Sea.

Enjoy a relaxing final day on board as we cruise towards Singapore. Maybe join a lecture, relax with a book or find a spot on deck.

Day 16 Singapore to London.

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

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



YOUR SHIP: ISLAND SKY

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VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

With a maximum passenger capacity of only 116, a vessel of her size is capable of carrying many more but instead the MS Island Sky has the benefit of unusually large suites, luxuriously appointed public areas and spacious outside decks. There is a high ratio of crew to passengers- the friendly crew of 75 crew and Scandinavian captains are experienced mariners, having been in service aboard large 2000 plus passenger vessels and who now prefer a less frantic life aboard a small ship. If, like them and us, you prefer a more peaceful life at sea, you will find the MS Island Sky the perfect ship. When choosing the vessel for your next voyage of discovery, you can select a ship with endless entertainment and impersonal service or come with us where peace, high quality service and attention to detail are the order of the day. We promise there will be no organised entertainment, fancy dress, deck games or any of the usual big ship experiences. The atmosphere on board is more akin to a private yacht or country hotel. A little music in the lounge or bar after dinner, guest speakers, informative port briefings from our cruise director and of course good food which may be enjoyed leisurely in the attractive dining room. After a day ashore you will return to the comfort and peace of a well run and exceedingly comfortable ship. Your Suite Onboard there are 57 exceptionally spacious and well designed suites. All feature a sitting room area and some have private balconies. The feeling of luxury is enhanced by the wood panelling and brass, which predominates throughout the vessel conveying the atmosphere of a private yacht. The passenger accommodation is arranged over five decks and all suites have outside views. Each affords considerable comfort with en-suite bathroom featuring marble-topped vanity unit with sink and walk-in shower, large wardrobes, dressing table with large mirror and stool and excellent storage. There is a mini-fridge, flat screen television with inbuilt DVD player which can also play CDs and a telephone in each suite. Bottled water, towelling dressing gowns and slippers are also provided for your comfort. Other facilities include a programmable electronic safe, hairdryer, assorted toiletries and individually controlled air-conditioning and heating. The suites on each deck have their own colour theme. Soft hues and blended tones enhance the traditional maritime style making the passenger accommodation an inviting and relaxing place to be. Your Space The spacious and finely decorated public rooms include a large lounge where daily briefings and talks will be provided throughout the voyage and an elegant bar where a pianist plays periodically throughout the day. The bar also features a 24-hour tea and coffee station. The onboard library is the perfect place to relax with a book and is stocked with reference books pertaining to the places the vessel is visiting along with a selection of games and two computers with internet access. Daily newspapers and magazines are also placed in the library depending on local availability. There is

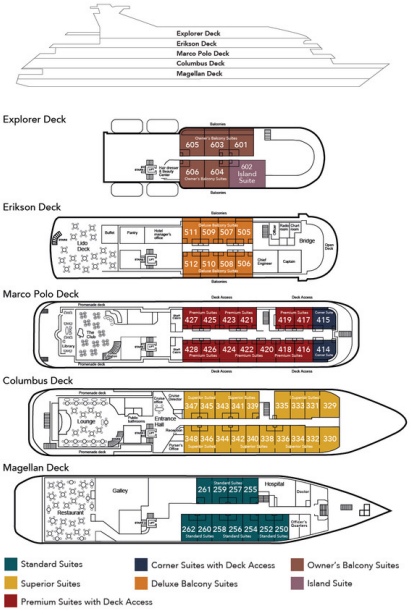
also WI-FI access throughout the vessel. Outside there is a rear sun deck where meals are served in warm weather under shade, a bar and comfortable deck furniture for sun bathing or relaxing with a book. On the top deck there is a Jacuzzi and further observation and sun deck. There is also a small hairdressers on board with appointments made on request. Your Dining Another benefit of a small ship is the quality of the cuisine. With only one sitting and a maximum of just over 100 passengers, the galley is able to provide delicious meals. Where possible and when it meets his high standards, the chef will obtain local produce in markets or buy the catch of the day from a passing fishing boat. Such purchases enhance the well stocked larders and bring a local touch to the



varied menus.



INSIDE YOUR SHIP



Columbus Deck Superior Single



Columbus Deck Superior Suite



Erikson Deck Deluxe Balcony Suite



Explorer Deck Island Suite



Explorer Deck Owner's Balcony Suite



Magellan Deck Standard Single



Magellan Deck Standard Suite



Marco Polo Deck Corner Suite





Marco Polo Deck Premium Suite





PRICING

16-Jul-2027 to 31-Jul-2027

Magellan Deck Standard Single	£13795 GBP pp
Magellan Deck Standard Suite	£11495 GBP pp
Marco Polo Deck Premium Suite	£12495 GBP pp
Explorer Deck Island Suite	£15995 GBP pp
Marco Polo Deck Corner Suite	£12995 GBP pp
Columbus Deck Superior Suite	£11995 GBP pp
Erikson Deck Deluxe Balcony Suite	£14395 GBP pp
Explorer Deck Owner's Balcony Suite	£14995 GBP pp
Columbus Deck Superior Single	£14395 GBP pp