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SHETLAND, FAROE, ICELAND: WILD ISLANDS & LANDS OF LEGENDS

From Bergen to Reykjavik, PONANT proposes an 11-day expedition cruise aboard Le Champlain exploring the most beautiful landscapes of the Celtic and Viking lands of Norway, Scotland, the Faroe Islands and Iceland. From Bergen, the city founded by the Vikings and famous for its Hanseatic wharf, you will sail in the calm waters of Hardangerfjord, the second longest fjord in Norway. In the heart of this natural preserved jewel, you will discover stunning scenery while lavish fruit orchards sprawl across its lush shores. Le Champlain will then set sail west towards the Shetland Islands. The exploration of this British archipelago located in the North Atlantic Drift promises breath-taking scenery on land and at sea: a jagged coastline of immaculate sandy beaches, windswept verdant moors, thousand-year-olds cliffs sculpted by marine erosion. To the great pleasure of ornithologists, many bird colonies have found refuge in the crevices of these landscapes! The Shetland Islands and the Orkney Islands are deeply steeped in Viking and Scottish heritage and can also be discovered via their remarkably well-preserved archaeological vestiges. Your ship will then sail north towards the the Faroe Islands, Denmark's northernmost autonomous territory. In this isolated archipelago, you will immerse yourself in a wild and spectacular natural environment. In Suduroy, the rolling plains populated by sheep shape the scenery punctuated by sheer summits, mountain lakes and jagged cliffs looking out to the islands, offering outstanding terrestrial and maritime panoramas. Eysturoy reveals itself through the life of the archipelago's inhabitants, between remote villages, green roofs, a traditional black wooden church, and local customs. You will also enjoy sailing around

cliffs that are home to bird colonies. Here, Viking legends and Nordic cosmogony are never far away. On the edge of the Arctic, with its vertiginous fjords, volcanoes and waterfalls, Iceland offers up a simultaneously romantic and wild face. In the East Fjords region, where life is organised around fishing, you will discover a jagged coastline and alpine landscapes before reaching Heimaey. This is the only inhabited island in the Westman archipelago. An exceptional place composed of volcanoes and almost-desert landscapes, it is also a refuge for many colonies of birds,

including gannets.

ITINERARY

Day 1 BERGEN

Located at the end of Byfjord, Bergen was the capital of Norway in the 12th and 13th Centuries and has preserved some very beautiful monuments from the time when it was home to royalty. Wandering through Bergen's streets means going back in time, in search of the hidden treasures that have been listed as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO. A veritable openair museum, Bergen is home to a thriving artistic community of painters, potters, jewellers. The Bergen cable car offers you a splendid panorama over the port and the surrounding fjords. Do not miss the visit to the old quarter with its narrow streets, a testimony of the power of the hanseatic League that controlled trade in Northern Europe at the end of the Middle Ages.

Day 2 SAILING IN THE HARDANGERFJORD

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In the heart of Norway's natural scenery, to the southeast of Bergen, you will sail the peaceful waters of the Hardangerfjord, the second longest fjord in Norway. At the wide mouth of this majestic fjord, gently sloping valleys offer the sight of lush meadows and fruit trees galore. Moreover, it is rightly nicknamed the "fruit orchard of Norway". As you continue sailing and move further inland, the fjord narrows and the rolling surroundings make way for vertiginous walls and high mountainous areas. Enhanced by the reflections of the light on the soft waters, at times clear, at times deep, the landscapes become wilder and reveal an uncut diamond of singular beauty.

Day 3 LERWICK, SHETLAND ISLANDS & ISLE OF NOSS, SHETLAND ISLANDS

The small and charming capital of the Shetland Islands, with its sea front of old houses and narrow streets, offering travellers its old districts and a warm port atmosphere. Geopark Shetland, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is located to the north. Incredibly well-preserved archaeological sites and ruins prove that the islands' occupation dates back to the first Neolithic colonies. The Shetland Museum and Archives recounts the Shetlands' history of heritage and culture: Lerwick's abundant waters were even fished by the Dutch in the past. Many colonies of birds have chosen to nest on the towering sandstone cliffs on the eastern coast of the Isle of Noss. The many ledges sculpted into the rock effectively make for ideal breeding sites for the gannets, puffins, guillemots, black-legged kittiwakes, razorbills, arctic fulmars and great skuas that populate this territory. Separated from the island of Bressay by a sound of only 100 metres (328 feet), this wild island in the Shetland archipelago has been a national nature reserve of Scotland since 1955. Make the most of this unique opportunity you have to discover this isolated Eden, bathed by the North Sea.

Day 4 KIRKWALL, ORKNEY

Capital of the Orkney archipelago, Kirkwall, which means "church bay", is an ideal stopover before continuing on to the Northern Isles. Sheltered in a wide bay, the lively town welcomes the visitor with its charming paved alleyways edged by old houses and craft shops. Tankerness House, the oldest homestead in the town, is a must-see landmark. But the true architectural treasure of the aptly named Kirkwall is none other than its remarkable red and gold stone cathedral. And because whisky is inseparable from Scotland's identity, stop at the Highland Park Distillery for a highly instructive visit.

Day 5 SUDUROY ISLAND, FAROE ISLANDS

Suduroy Island, literally "South Island", has one of the smallest populations in the Faroe Islands. It has sheer cliffs along its western face. The island is an important breeding ground for seabirds, including northern fulmars, black-legged kittiwakes, Atlantic puffins, and guillemots. Your expedition team will guide you as you discover the island, its authentic villages with black, tarred-wood churches typical of the Faroe Islands, and its hiking trails lined with peat fields and stone sheepfolds. Sheep are indeed omnipresent throughout the Faroe Islands -- in fact, there are more sheep than humans --, and they add to the charm of these wild landscapes.

Days 6 - 7 EYSTUROY ISLAND, FAROE ISLANDS

Your stop on Eysturoy Island ("East Island" in Danish) will be an opportunity to immerse yourself in a traditional village of the Faroe Islands. The locals only welcome a few dozen visitors each year, so this is a rare privilege. In the company of your naturalist guides and local guides, you will discover the village, where certain houses have a typical Scandinavian roof, made from birch bark covered with sod. Here, you will enjoy a traditional

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coffee. Our more athletic guests will be able to hike along the trails that connected the island's villages when people got around on foot. These trails are marked with cairns due to the frequent presence of fog.

Day 9 SAILING ALONG FAROE ISLANDS COASTS

The Faroe Islands, an archipelago formed by volcanic rock, reveal an incredible diversity of reliefs where the sea is ubiquitous: you'll sail past stone pinnacles and unique coastlines. To the west of the island of Vagar stand Thindolmur and Drangarnir, rocky outcrops that marine erosion have detached from the coast, thus forming independent islets known as stacks. The impressive Traelanipa cliff, also known as Slave Cliff, stands 142 metres (466 feet) high. It overlooks the superb Lake Sorvagsvatn. Located 30 metres (98 feet) above sea level, this is the archipelago's largest lake. On the island of Streymoy, you'll be able to spot guillemots, screeching fulmars or penguins, nesting in the welcoming crevices of the Vestmanna cliffs.

Day 10 EASTFJORDS

EastFjords are part of the wildest and most unspoiled areas of Iceland. Here, various glaciations have carved out the volcanic plateaus that have eroded over the millennia, carving valleys and creating long, majestic fjords into which the sea intrudes. This slow metamorphosis has created sublime landscapes that you will be able to observe in all their diversity: basalt cliffs plunging into the sea, waterfalls with crystal clear waters, black sand volcanic beaches, alpine reliefs, hot springs. In this remote area, birds have found refuge in a rich ecosystem, such as puffins mainly in May and June. Here, nature is written in capital letters.

Day 11 HEIMAÆY, VESTMANNÆYJAR

This land seated off the southern coast of Iceland is the largest of the Vestmann islands, and is the only inhabited island in the archipelago. The steep Edfell volcanoes and the green prairies of Herjolfsdalur offer rich contrast of nature. On the Storhofði road, look out over grey sand beaches and cliffs carved out by the Arctic ocean. From here, you can also see the bronze landscapes of the mountaintops. You could visit Eldheimar, an ultra-modern and interactive museum which traces the volcanic eruption has experienced Heimaey in 1973.

Day 12 REYKJAVÍK

Iceland's capital stretches along the edge of a vast bay in the west of the country. Perlan, the "Pearl of Reykjavik", a museum located on 'Oskjuhlíð hill, offers a panoramic view of the lush, green landscapes. A little further, one can easily spot the signpost showing the way to the evangelical Hallgrímskirkja church, and to the historical centre where one can stroll along the Skólavordustigur and the Laugavegur, two lively streets with charming small shops. For some relaxation just outside of the city, visitors have the opportunity to visit the Reykjanes peninsula and its famous thermal lagoons of the Blue Lagoon.

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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YOUR SHIP: LE CHAMPLAIN

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VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Featuring innovative and environmentally-friendly equipment, elegantly designed cabins, spacious suites with large windows, and lounge areas that open onto the outside, this new limited-capacity yacht boasting just 92 cabins and suites will offer you a truly unique cruising experience. As the first ship in a new series, Le Champlain will embody the unique atmosphere that is the cruise line's hallmark: a subtle blend of refinement, intimacy and comfort. Aboard this ship that flies the French flag, you will experience the incomparable pleasure of an intimate cruise, with the possibility of exploring an ever-increasing range of destinations in an ethnic-chic ambiance with luxury service. Experience a luxurious setting where the accent is on authenticity and passion for travel. RESTAURANTS As it is an essential part of French culture, gastronomy will naturally have pride of place aboard this new ship. Through its two restaurants, Le Champlain will invite you on a journey to elegance and epicureanism. In a relaxed atmosphere, a first dining area located on Deck 3 and able to seat 70 will serve grilled meats daily, along with a variety of salads and desserts. To the back of Deck 4, you will find a 260 m² panoramic restaurant which can accommodate all of our passengers in a single sitting. Designed

differently to that on our other ships, this dining area, which opens onto the outside, will have a buffet of salads, desserts and cheeses at your disposal. Our discreet and attentive crew will provide table service for hot meals. PUBLIC AREAS Like Le Boreal and its sisterships, Le Champlain has many common areas that are designed and equipped to meet all of your needs while preserving the intimacy of each passenger. A 140 m² reception area includes: A reception/concierge desk, An excursions desk, The ship's administrative services, The sales office, manned by our Guest Relations Officer, Our 50 m² boutique which sells clothing, jewellery, beauty products, postcards and various accessories, Toilets accessible to passengers with reduced mobility. A new hydraulic platform with adjustable height provides: Easier boarding than on any other cruise ship, Easier Zodiac embarkation and disembarkation for expeditions, Easier access to the sea for swimming and practising various water sports such as kayaking or paddle-boarding. A pool deck offering: A pool with a panoramic view, equipped with a counter-current swimming system, A pleasant solarium, An outdoor bar and lounge with armchairs and sofas. A 200 m² main lounge which can accommodate all of our passengers to share convivial moments and to host activities organised during the day or evening. Lastly, a theatre that seats 188, equipped with: The latest sound and lighting technology, A LED wall as the stage backdrop, for the projection of high-resolution images and videos. Please click the following links to read more about Ponant and the other Ponant



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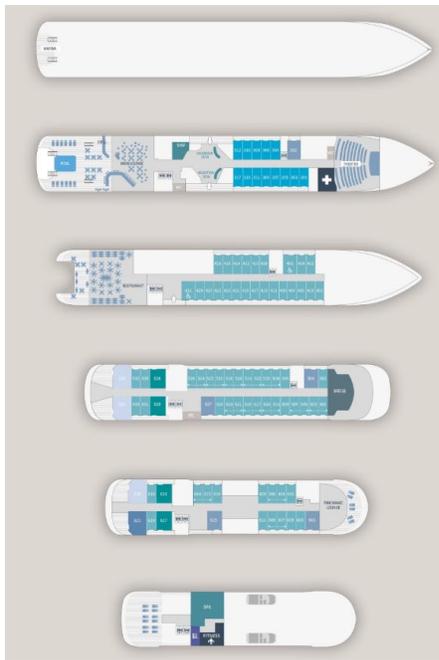
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