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SPRING IN THE ANCIENT WORLD - EGYPT, JORDAN, ISRAEL & CYPRUS CRUISE

Here is a passage through antiquity, an incomparable journey with a wealth of sites on offer including biblical landmarks, Crusader castles, Egyptian temples and tombs, the superb Nabatean city of Petra as well as the magnificent St Catherine's Monastery. We have planned the voyage for spring when temperatures will be pleasant for exploring and with the aid of our knowledgeable local guides and excellent Guest Speaker, we will learn and reflect on the successive civilisations and a period of history spanning well over 2000 years. Our journey begins with a two night hotel stay in Luxor enabling us to maximise our time here visiting the fascinating sites such as the great temples of Karnak and the Valley of the Kings. Continuing to the port of Safaga we embark the MS Hebridean Sky and sail to Jordan for our visit to the desert sands of Wadi Rum and the fascinating city of Petra which was hewn directly from the rock by the Nabateans. Returning to Egypt and the port of Sharm el Sheikh we journey to the interior of the Sinai Peninsula and the lonely desert monastery of St Catherine's, the world's oldest continuously inhabited Christian monastery. Before leaving Egypt we also explore some of the great monuments of the pharaohs, the divine kings of thirty dynasties who ruled Egypt for some thirty-five centuries. See the Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx and spend some time in Cairo's magnificent Egyptian Museum. Following a transit of the Suez Canal, our final two days are spent exploring Israel and Cyprus. This unusual itinerary offers a fascinating mix of some of the world's most impressive and historic sites combined with time to relax on board the MS Hebridean Sky, enjoying good food and informative lectures in the company of just 100 or so fellow

travellers.

ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Luxor, Egypt.

Fly by scheduled flight via Cairo. Arrive late this evening and transfer to our hotel for our two night stay.

Day 2 Luxor.

Enjoy a leisurely morning to relax in the hotel or explore independently before we meet for lunch. This afternoon we will visit the temples of Karnak, one of the most memorable and popular historical areas to visit in the world. Here you will witness the unbelievably vast array of monuments dedicated to Amun-Ra, king of the gods, his wife Mut and their son Khonsu. Just two of the highlights you will see are the great hypostyle hall with over 130 columns, some 22 metres high and the obelisk of the powerful queen pharaoh Hatshepsut. Continue to the Temple of Luxor before we walk back to the hotel via the souk. After some free time we meet for dinner in the hotel.

Day 3 Luxor & Safaga.

After breakfast we head to the West Bank, one of the most famous and important archaeological sites in the world. See the Valley of the Kings, burial ground of the pharaohs for a period of 500 years. The tombs vividly depict the journey of the sun god and pharaoh through the dangers of the underworld. In the temple of Queen Hatshepsut you will discover scenes

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commemorating the reign of this exceptional monarch such as the ambitious voyage where she sent her ships on the Red Sea to the mysterious land of Punt. Also see the Colossi of Memnon and witness the two imposing 18 metre high quartzite seated statues which marked the entrance to the now vanished memorial temple of the Pharaoh Amenhotep III whose reign in the 14th century BC was one of the most opulent in Egyptian history. Later we will board a sailing boat on the Nile for a short cruise including lunch. This afternoon we will drive through the desert to the port of Safaga where we will embark the MS Hebridean Sky and sail this evening.

Day 4 Aqaba & Wadi Rum, Jordan.

Spend a relaxing morning at sea as we cruise towards Aqaba. This afternoon, from our berth in the city we will drive to Wadi Rum, also known as the Valley of the Moon where the desert landscape is mixed with awe-inspiring shapes to create an almost supernatural atmosphere. We will embark on an adventurous excursion by an open top four-wheel drive vehicle. We begin at the visitor centre from where there is a view in the distance of the Seven Pillars of Wisdom, the famous landmark named after the book by T.E. Lawrence 'Lawrence of Arabia'. During our excursion we will also see the Alameleh inscriptions which are a good example of ancient rock drawings, Siq Um Al Tawaqi, a short canyon containing a carving of the head of T.E. Lawrence and ruins of Allat (Goddess) Temple of the AAD tribe. Alternatively, spend the afternoon at one of the nearby beach clubs enjoying time to relax and swim in the Red Sea.

Day 5 Aqaba for Petra.

A full day tour takes us to the breathtaking Nabatean city of Petra which was carved out of the rose-red sandstone about 2000 years ago and has been voted as one of the New Seven

Wonders of the World. Walk past the Obelisk Tomb and then through the Siq, the narrow 1.2 kilometre gorge that leads to Petra's most impressive monument, the Treasury, which was carved out of the pale reddish sandstone in the 1st century BC. Pass by the dozens of classical Nabatean ruins and tombs known as the Street of Facades, the remarkable 3000 seat Theatre, the Royal Tombs, the Colonnaded Street, the Byzantine Church, the Temple, the Monumental Arch and the mighty Qasr el-Bint Faroun. After lunch amidst the ruins of Petra there will be some free time to explore further at your own pace. Those feeling active may choose to climb about 900 steps up to the large, 1st century AD monument known as the Monastery with its remarkable views over Wadi Araba.

Day 6 Sharm el Sheikh & St Catherine's Monastery, Egypt.

This morning we arrive at the resort town of Sharm el Sheikh where we have a choice of excursions. A full day excursion will bring us into the interior of the Sinai Peninsula and the lonely desert monastery of St Catherine's. This ancient monastery which is the world's oldest continuously inhabited Christian monastery, traces its founding to about 330 AD, when Byzantine empress Helena had a small chapel built beside what was believed to be the burning bush from which God spoke to Moses. In the 6th century, Emperor Justinian ordered a fortress to be constructed around the original chapel and the complex includes nine chapels, a bell tower, gardens and wells to create a spiritual oasis. Alternatively, take a glass bottomed boat tour as we view some of the many species of colourful fish, coral and sponges that live in the waters of the Ras Mohamed National Park. Designated a National Park in 1983 the reef ecosystems here protect a diversity of fish species and coral.

Day 7 At Sea.

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Spend the day cruising through the Gulf of Suez.

Day 8 Cairo & Giza.

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

Day 9 Suez Canal Transit.

Spend the day in transit of the Suez Canal and the Great Bitter Lake as we sail from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean.

Day 10 Ashdod, Israel.

Arriving in Israel we have a choice of excursions. Maybe take a full day tour to Jerusalem including a visit to the Mount of Olives from where we can enjoy spectacular views over the 'Golden City' of Jerusalem. Follow in the footsteps of Jesus as you walk through the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus spent the last moments before his arrest. Wander the streets of the Old City from Jaffa Gate to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and continue through the Christian Quarter to the bazaar, passing the Roman Cardo in the Jewish Quarter and the Western (or Wailing) Wall. Alternatively take a half day tour to Jaffa, the ancient port city from which Tel Aviv developed. Famous for its association with the biblical stories of Jonah, Solomon and St Peter, it has a fascinating history stretching back over four thousand years. We will explore the highlights including the Clock Tower, Flea Market and the renovated alleys of the city.

Day 11 Limassol, Cyprus.

After a morning at sea we arrive into Cyprus over lunch. This afternoon we drive to the Temple of Apollo, one of the main religious centres of ancient Cyprus and the ruins of Kourion, a city built in 1200 BC. The most spectacular site at Kourion is the Greco-Roman Theatre that has been completely restored. We will also visit Kolossi Castle, which was built in the 15th century on the ruins of a former fortress dated to the beginning of the 13th century. Return to the ship as we moor overnight.

Day 12 Limassol to London.

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

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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YOUR SHIP: HEBRIDEAN SKY

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VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Hebridean Sky has always been known for its effortless elegance, impeccable service and atmosphere of charm and camaraderie. Now we add increased adventure options and an on-site Passenger Service Representative. Hebridean Sky is the perfect blend of luxury and adventurous exploration. Is it a luxury ship? An adventure ship? It's both! The vessel underwent a multi-million pound refurbishment in Sweden in Spring 2016. **ONBOARD DINING** Great expeditions require great food! We are pleased to offer daily changing breakfast, lunch and dinner menus with an emphasis on providing well balanced and nutritional cuisine. Our team of international chefs has boat loads of creativity and you are sure to experience a variety of interesting dishes throughout your voyage. The restaurant is located on Deck 2 and our service team looks forward to providing a memorable dining experience. **IMPECCABLE SMALL-SHIP AMENITIES** Returning from excursions, passengers enjoy complimentary refreshments, afternoon tea and all-day coffee in The Club, a gracious space for relaxation, surrounded by panoramic windows. Other Sea Explorer features include: Library with Internet access Lounge with audiovisual facilities Dining room Wraparound sun deck with Jacuzzi Exercise room

Medical facilities with available doctor Elevator serving all passenger decks Swimming/zodiac platform All Voyages Include: Up to Two Pre-Voyage Hotel Nights Complimentary Wine or Beer with Dinner Certified Emergency MD and Clinic World Class Cuisine Live Entertainment Complimentary Coffee/Tea station Voyage Photographer Dedicated Passenger Service Manager Complimentary Expedition Jacket Please note deck



plan may vary.

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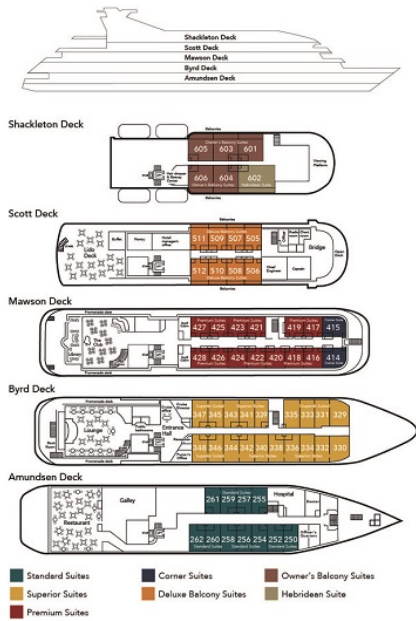
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PRICING



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