

## The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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## SPRING IN THE MIDDLE SEA - ITALY & GREECE CRUISE

This relaxing and informative voyage offers the opportunity to explore the Mediterranean and all its wonders as we cruise to some of the most fascinating sites of the ancient world and spend time in some scenic towns and coastal ports. Sailing from Athens, our itinerary has been devised to include a rich collection of archaeological, historical and beautiful sites in Greece and Italy before arriving at the Grand Harbour of Valletta. We will transit the Corinth Canal and explore a magnificent array of ancient sites including Delphi, one of Greece's most important sites of antiquity and Olympia. We will also visit the marvellous site of Butrint in Albania where settlement can be traced back to the 8th century BC. Leaving Albania, we spend two days in the delightful Italian region of Puglia followed by a further two days of discovery of some of Sicily's many wonders. This heady mix of ports represents a fascinating itinerary combining as it does some 'must see' sites together with some smaller ports that are perfectly suited for the 118-passenger MS Hebridean Sky. We have also included ample time at leisure for independent exploration in some charming ports of call such as Itea, Preveza and Syracuse, places where owing to our ability to moor centrally, you can easily access the delightful towns from our moorings. By the end of the voyage you will have seen and learnt so much and exploring in small groups with excellent guides, our trips ashore will be a pleasure. We have the added advantage of travelling in April when the summer crowds have yet to arrive but the weather is ideal for touring and sightseeing.



### ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Athens, Greece.

Fly by scheduled flight. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the MS Hebridean Sky in Piraeus. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we moor overnight.

Day 2 Corinth Canal, Corinth & Epidaurus.

Sail early and be on deck later this morning as we navigate the narrow Corinth Canal. Completed in 1893 and only 6.4 kilometres long and 21.5 metres wide, it is only small ships like the MS Hebridean Sky which can now make this journey. Over lunch we dock in the port of Corinth which flourished under both Greek and Roman rule due to its significant location on the Isthmus of Corinth which controlled trade routes as well as being

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home to the naval power which took colonies in Syracuse and Corfu. It has also been closely linked to St Paul who lived here for a number of years and is known through his letters to the Christian community. This afternoon you may choose to explore the site of Ancient Corinth seeing the Temple of Aphrodite, the 6th century BC Temple of Apollo, built on a hill overlooking the marketplace, and the Roman Forum. Alternatively, drive to one of the most renowned of Greece's ancient sites. Situated on the slopes of a beautiful wooded valley, Epidaurus was known throughout the Hellenic world for its unique medical facilities and healing treatments. Dedicated to Aesclepius, the god of healing, the city was filled with curative spas and baths and only priests had access to certain secret rites. Most of the ruins of Epidaurus have been reduced to their foundations, with the exception of the astonishing theatre. Still used for special performances, the theatre is in an admirable state of preservation. Built into the ground, rather than above it, it is known for its fantastic acoustics, which we will observe during our visit.

### [Day 3 Itea & Delphi.](#)

Spend the morning at the sacred site of Delphi, one of Greece's most important sites of antiquity. The hillside ruins here are exceptional and we will explore the Sanctuary of Apollo, the site of the sacred Delphic Oracle and walk along Delphi's Sacred Way, visiting the Treasury of the Athenians and the 5000 seat theatre dating from the 4th century BC. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy a free afternoon along the charming waterfront in Itea before we sail in the early evening.

### [Day 4 Katakolon for Olympia.](#)

Pastoral and lush, Olympia's plentiful ruins are shaded by Aleppo pines and olive trees. The fame of Olympia rests upon

the Olympic Games. During the celebrations that accompanied the Games, competitors, while not forgetting that they were Athenians, Spartans or from other city states, remembered that they were Greeks and regarded an Olympic victory as the highest honour. We will see the gymnasium, the stadium and the palestra or wrestling school. We will also explore the Altis, or sacred precinct of Zeus, which houses structures including the Temple of Zeus, one of the largest temples on the Greek mainland and the Archaeological Museum with some fine sculptures and artefacts from the site. After our visit we drive to a nearby agriturismo where we will partake in a tasting of their olive oils and wines accompanied with local delicacies. After a chance to stroll amongst the olive trees and vineyards we return to the ship.

### [Day 5 Preveza for Nikopolis.](#)

Our last call in Greece will be at Preveza from where we head for the little known ancient city of Nikopolis, one of the largest and most important sites in the whole of Greece. Built by the Roman Emperor Octavianus Augustus following his victory at Aktium in 31 BC over Antony and Cleopatra, inside its extensive walls are the Odeum, the Theatre, the Nymphaeum and the monument to Augustus. Later, the city flourished in the early Christian period as the seat of the archbishop of old Epiros, but earthquakes and invading Goths and Vandals led to its demise. After lunch on board there will be time to explore the pretty yacht-lined harbour town of Preveza and we sail late for anyone wishing to take an after dinner stroll.

### [Day 6 Sarande for Butrint, Albania.](#)

The port of Sarande is our base to discover the ancient city of Butrint, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A morning guided tour will explore the ruins that feature the remains of many eras and

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cultures. From the Hellenistic period there are temples, the promenade and the 4th century BC theatre. From the Roman era are the public baths, gymnasium and fountains. From the Byzantine era we see chapels and the large Basilica of St Peter and St Paul, whilst the Venetians are represented by a watchtower and a small castle with commanding views over the Straits of Corfu. This afternoon there will be some free time to explore Sarande at your own pace before we sail in the early evening.

### Day 7 Brindisi & Ostuni, Italy.

From our berth in Brindisi we head to the “White City” of Ostuni, so called due to the almost blinding sunlight reflecting on the walls of its whitewashed dwellings. Ostuni has a privileged position as it was built on three hills and from the top of the town you can enjoy a stunning view of the Adriatic coast from which Ostuni is separated by an ocean of centuries-old olive trees. The town has maintained its Medieval atmosphere which we will see as we walk through the meandering, narrow and picturesque streets of the old town which lead to the impressive 15th century cathedral, a beautiful example of Apulian Romanesque style. Spend the afternoon at leisure in Brindisi, maybe take a stroll along the waterfront promenade and see the Roman Arch which marks the end of the Roman Road “Via Appia” used by pilgrims, soldiers and traders as they travelled to Greece and the Holy Land. Alternatively visit the 12th century Tempio di San Giovanni al Sepolcro or wander the palm-tree lined Corso Garibaldi.

### Day 8 Gallipoli & Lecce.

Continuing our exploration of Puglia we will drive to Lecce, often referred to as ‘The Florence of the South’ with its amazing collection of Baroque architecture. A guided walk will include a

visit to the beautifully decorated Santa Croce Basilica and Piazza Duomo, considered one of the finest and most impressive squares in southern Italy. After lunch on board the afternoon is free to explore historic Gallipoli, with its whitewashed houses and attractive old quarter that still has a Greek air about it. There is much of interest here with a history influenced by the Byzantines, Normans, Crusaders and Turkish. Maybe visit the Aragonese Castle or walk the city walls.

### Day 9 Catania & Taormina, Sicily.

After a relaxing morning at sea we arrive in Sicily over lunch. From our berth in Catania we will have a choice of excursions this afternoon. Maybe visit Taormina, a walled town lying in the shadow of Mount Etna, Europe’s highest volcano. The town has been a popular tourist destination since the 19th century and our guided tour will include walking the characteristic alleys before visiting the 15th century Palazzo Corvaja and the impressive Greek Theatre from where there are marvellous views over the town and coast. Alternatively explore Catania. The architecture here is particularly impressive but a little forbidding being mainly constructed from black lava stone from Mount Etna. On an afternoon walking tour we will see the magnificent Piazza del Duomo, a World Heritage Site, St Agatha’s Cathedral and the imposing 13th century Castello Ursino.

### Day 10 Syracuse.

Syracuse was founded by the Greeks in 734 BC and by the 5th century was a political and military power throughout the Mediterranean which rivalled Athens as the largest and most beautiful city in the Greek world. On leaving the vessel we visit the Neapolis Archaeological Park where we will find a well preserved Greek theatre with seats carved from limestone. Paradise Quarry, now an attractive garden and orange grove,

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was the primary source of that limestone and is the site of the curious 'Ear of Dionysius', a vast grotto with an amplifying resonance. We will continue to explore the island of Ortigia where we will find the Temple of Apollo, considered to be Sicily's most ancient Doric temple and the Baroque Cathedral, erected over the remains of the Temple of Minerva. The afternoon is free to explore further at your own pace.

Day 11 Valletta, Malta to London.

Disembark after breakfast 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

**YOUR SHIP:** Hebridean Sky

**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.

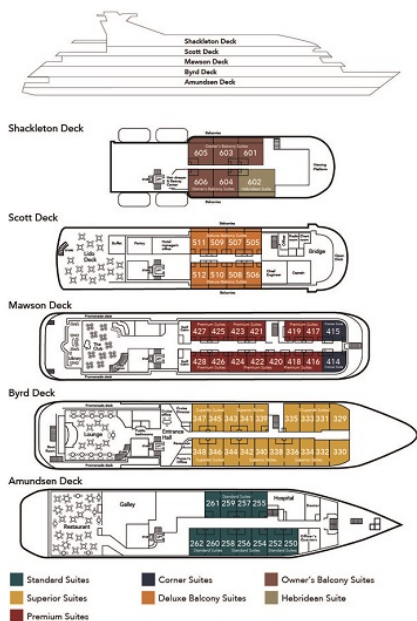
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## PRICING

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