

THE AMALFI, SICILY AND MALTA: THE GODFATHER 13 DAY CRUISE

Welcome to Aurora Expeditions' The Godfather For Italy aficionados, no trip to their favourite country is complete without visiting its southern shores, spending time on the cherished island of Sicily and dropping into the Mediterranean gem of Malta. Contested for centuries by Europe's legendary empires, the Amalfi Coast, Sicily and Malta are a modern-day traveller's dream. The coastline is dotted with a colourful array of sun-drenched resorts, picturesque clifftop villages, and impressive ancient cities. Combined with the quintessential Mediterranean lifestyle, delicious food and wine, and the region's intriguing political history, this segment of Europe overflows with tales of family feuds, hidden secrets and dangerous liaisons, making its shores a fascinating find. This journey inspires stories spanning from indulgent emperors to slave uprisings and from buried cities to resort towns brimming with wanton excess. Their stories tell epic tales on this voyage of 'Godfather proportions'.



ITINERARY

Day 1 Arrive Rome, Italy

Welcome to Rome. On arrival at Rome 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 Rome. You will also receive cabin tags for your luggage. Please clearly label the tags with your name and your cabin number on the ship.

This evening enjoy dinner at one of the local trattorias (own expense), with time to relax in preparation for our day tomorrow.

Accommodation: Rome Hotel

Day 2 Rome



An intriguing tale of historical drama and legendary myths make Rome every trivia buff's dream. Scandalous and sanguine, Roman lifestyle swung from democratic to autocratic, slavery to liberation, paganism to Christianity. The Roman empire's public relations machine flaunted its sovereignty with triumphant arches and fluted columns, monolithic mausoleums, statue-ridden stairways and masterfully engineered temples. Enhanced by the wealth of the Catholic Church, the city added to its opulence and grandeur with baroque fountains, obelisk-centred piazzas and Christendom's domed cathedrals. The story of ancient Rome's insurmountable empire, its dramatic demise and the rise of the powerful Catholic Church is one of Europe's most compelling stories.

A tour of Rome is a highlight of any visit to Italy, especially for those of us whose homeland is anything other than ancient. Imperial relics rekindle the era when Rome's population of one million surpassed any other city worldwide. Our local guides merge the city's past and present through their stories on every street corner, along every alley and in every piazza.

Choose a shorter, comprehensive tour to see a slice of Roman life, or lace up your walking shoes and experience Rome from street level on a locally guided walking tour. In the afternoon, enjoy some time for independent exploration before we gather this evening for a Welcome Reception.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences

Option 1 - Morning experience: Highlights of Rome

Rome reveals its tale as we tour its major sights on this morning experience. We encounter the Colosseum and Roman Forum, viewing them from a nearby terrace at the Capitoline Museum, while our guide inspires us with stories of Rome's past. Gifted to the people of Rome as a museum to house the generous number of sculptures and statues left scattered throughout the city, the Capitoline Museum was the brainchild of Pope Sixtus IV. We have free time in the museum to browse its collection at our own pace while we piece together the city's past through its numerous artworks, before our journey continues with a drive towards the Trevi Fountain. Surrounded by a pedestrian zone, a visit to the world's most famous fountain offers not only a timeless photo opportunity but also the chance to ensure your return to Rome, just don't forget to toss in a coin! Afterwards, we return to our vehicle and head back to the hotel for a leisurely afternoon or continue exploring the wonders of the Eternal City at your own pace. (Note: some sights on this tour may be viewed only from the vehicle, depending on the local conditions on the day.)

Option 2 - Half day experience: Roaming Rome

Lace up your walking shoes, slip on a hat and splash on sunscreen to join this comprehensive locally guided tour. Established in an era when few Romans owned transportation, the centre of historical Rome is ideal for walking. With every square foot offering a fascinating fact, we are spoiled for choice by the wealth of sites we experience. Architectural highlights include ancient landmarks such as the Colosseum, the Roman Forum, and Trajan's Column, all viewed from the expansive terrace of the Capitoline Museums, before we pause at Piazza



Venezia to admire the grand Vittorio Emanuele II Monument, then continue to the artistic masterpiece of the Trevi Fountain. Our journey concludes at one of Rome's most enchanting gathering places: Piazza Navona. Each site tells its own story, as our expert guides bring the past to life with tales of emperors, gladiators, plebeians, Renaissance artists, popes, and legionaries who once called Rome home. (Note: some sights on this tour may be viewed only from the vehicle, depending on local conditions on the day.)

Accommodation: Rome Hotel

Meals: Breakfast, Welcome Reception (drinks and canapes)

Day 3 Vatican City (Port: Civitavecchia)

This morning, we drive to the Vatican City for a guided visit to one of Christianity's most iconic landmarks: St. Peter's Basilica. Once the site of Emperor Nero's brutal spectacles, the Vatican Hill was transformed into sacred ground by Constantine, Rome's first Christian emperor, who declared it 'the hill of the martyrs.' Today, this sovereign city-state -- granted independence from Italy in 1929 -- houses the heart of the Catholic Church.

Towering above it all is St. Peter's Basilica, the largest church in Christendom and a breathtaking example of Renaissance architecture. Designed in part by Michelangelo, who at age 72 created the majestic dome, the basilica rises above what is believed to be the tomb of St. Peter, the first apostle and first Pope. Admire Michelangelo's moving Pieta, Bernini's grand baldachin, and the sheer scale and spiritual gravitas of this revered site. (Note: visitation times for St. Peters can be amended at short notice by Vatican authorities. In such cases, the order of activities in Rome may be revised accordingly.)

After our Vatican City visit, we drive to the charming Roman suburb of Trastevere. Known for its narrow-cobbled streets, vibrant piazzas, and authentic Roman character, Trastevere offers a glimpse into local life, with medieval churches, artisan shops, and lively cafes tucked around every corner. Enjoy free time to try a treat, discover a hidden treasure or simply soak up the atmosphere, before we transfer to the port of Civitavecchia to board Douglas Mawson.

This evening, following an important safety briefing, we gather for a 'Welcome Aboard Dinner', an opportunity to meet our Aurora Expeditions team and crew, and to toast the adventures ahead.

Day 4 Gaeta, Monte Cassino (Port: Gaeta)

Jutting into the Gulf of Gaeta, the town of the same name has a rich history featuring everyone from the Romans to Saracens, emperors to pirates and popes to kings. This authentic medieval town, dominated by its fortress castle and framed by a protected marina, can be explored independently.

Our included experience provides a morning to reflect on the bravery of those who fought at Monte Cassino, while we return to the ship for lunch, with time this afternoon to enjoy Gaeta at our own pace, before we set sail south to the Bay of Naples. For those seeking a more leisurely day, the ship docks right in the heart of Gaeta, offering effortless access to this vibrant coastal town. With its charming waterfront, historic streets, and laid-back atmosphere, Gaeta invites you to explore at your own pace, whether that means enjoying a seaside stroll, sampling



local cuisine, or simply soaking up the Mediterranean sun.

This morning, we pause to honour the soldiers and innocent residents who were deeply affected by the tragedy at Monte Cassino. Amidst fields of white crosses, each one a poignant reminder of a life lost, the Monte Cassino region and its historic Benedictine monastery now attract visitors seeking to pay their respects. Each year, thousands come to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice while pushing north towards Rome in June 1944. Perched high on its rugged hilltop, the monastery--filled with priceless artworks--was tragically misidentified as an ammunition depot by the Allied forces. The area, fortified with cannons, minefields, and machine gun nests, saw fierce combat, resulting in the loss of entire divisions as they bravely attempted to scale its slopes. Reduced to ruins in one of the most controversial actions of World War II, the rebuilt monastery now stands as a moving tribute to the 70,000 troops who gave their lives at Monte Cassino, striving to break through the Gustav Line and open the road to Rome.

Day 5 Naples (Port: Naples)

Shrouded by the shadow of a brooding Mount Vesuvius, Naple's 'underworld' reputation has mellowed in recent years providing the perfect culmination of our explorations. Survivors of successive imperial invasions, outbreaks of plagues and infamous natural disasters Neapolitans are well-known for their dramatic personalities. A dedication to family and their ancestral roots makes them natural storytellers, with a passion to share their stoic city and its intrinsic tales with all they encounter.

Our 'Your Choice' experiences today offer a deeper, more interactive connection with Naples. Whether you choose to uncover the city's rich history, explore a stunning royal palace, or take in its stunning panoramas, each option reveals a unique side of this captivating city. This afternoon, enjoy free time to continue exploring at your own pace, or simply relax and soak up the atmosphere over a treat at one of Naples' numerous street food stalls or bars.

Our complimentary shuttle service will operate this afternoon to a convenient location near Via Toledo; a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly boulevard that stretches for over a kilometre between two of Naples' most iconic squares: Piazza Dante and Piazza Trieste e Trento, adjacent to the Royal Palace.

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

Option 1 - Morning experience: Panoramic Naples

If it's views and an informative introduction to Naples you're after, then our panoramic tour fits the bill. Departing the port your first glimpse of the city is the imposing Castel Nuovo, a 13th-century fortress that once housed kings and viceroys and played a key role in Naples' turbulent history, before passing the Piazza della Borsa and the elegant Galleria Umberto I, a 19th-century arcade crowned with a soaring glass dome and lined with chic cafes and boutiques.

At Piazza Plebiscito, Naples' most iconic square, you'll take a gentle stroll while your guide introduces you to key landmarks such as the Royal Palace and the San Carlo Opera House, Europe's oldest active opera venue. While there isn't time to go



inside, you'll have time to explore the square at your own pace. The tour concludes with a scenic drive along the Villa Comunale and a climb up Posillipo Hill, where you'll enjoy refreshments at a local chalet while taking in breathtaking panoramic views over the city and the Bay of Naples.

Option 2 - Morning experience: Naples; Yesterday - Today

Your locally guided walking tour begins in the heart of the historical centre of Naples; a UNESCO World Heritage site where the lively thoroughfare known as Spaccanapoli traces the path of ancient Roman roads laid out over 2,000 years ago. This narrow street aptly nicknamed the "Naple's splitter," appears to divide the city in two and is lined with antique stalls, bookshops, and local grocers, offering a glimpse into everyday Neapolitan life. Underneath the Church of San Lorenzo, we see traces of the former city, as we descend underground and explore this archaeological complex, which has both Greek and Roman roots. We learn the role of the Greek Agora and the subsequent Roman Forum, in civic and commercial life during antiquity, before skipping to the 20th century as we return to street level.

Option 3 - Morning experience: The Palace of Caserta

You are forgiven if you have never heard of the Palace of Caserta, but once you have visited it you may never stop talking about it. A masterpiece of Baroque architecture, Caserta sprawls over five floors, 1,200 rooms, 11 acres of gardens, pools, fountains and cascades, and almost 300 acres of parklands. Designed according to the wishes of Charles of Bourbon III, by Luigi Vanvitelli, one of the greatest Italian architects of the 18th century, Caserta was a palace ahead of its time. Respect for nature became the palace's calling card, drawing from trends spreading across Europe at the time. Hundreds of rare and precious plants from around the world were brought to Caserta and still grown there today. Grand, excessive and opulent, a visit to Caserta will fill your diary with superlatives. Choose to join your local guide for an informative tour of the royal apartments, stroll them at your own pace or explore the manicured grounds and its famous fountains.

Day 6 Salerno (Port: Salerno)

The seaside resort of Salerno acts as a gateway to one of Europe's most famous coastlines: the Amalfi Coast. A magnet to both ancient and modern visitors its interspersed villages appear to almost grow from the rockface on which they are built. The dramatic cliffs and natural harbours of the Amalfi Coast have hosted holiday homes of the rich and revered throughout time. Our excursions offer a hint of the coast's abundant past and present as we view the excavations of luxurious villas, theatres and bathhouses at Pompeii, or search the beachfront villages of the Amalfi for tantalising tales at the heart of Amalfi life.

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

Option 1 - Morning experience: Pompeii

Known to the Neapolitans simply as 'him', Mount Vesuvius towers over the surrounding fertile plains at 4,200 metres (13,779 feet). He has been quiet of late, but it was a different story in 79 BCE, when lava and ash vomited forth engulfing the city of Pompeii. Albeit a tragedy, the excavation of these



extensive sites reveals treasure for travellers. Physical evidence of the city's final dramatic moments, preserved forever amongst the volcanic ash, speak louder than words. Each tells a tale of intrigue, returned to life by the ruins and remains, of these Roman cities. Our guided tour of Pompeii's buried city is amongst one of the most intriguing in world history. Choose to join a locally guided tour of the ruins, explore independently at your own pace or browse the basics. Returning to the ship for lunch, there is time to explore Salerno, before we sail south to Sicily.

Option 2 - Morning experience: Sail the Amalfi Coast

Sail from Salerno and discover the Amalfi Coast in true local style, aboard a local ferry that sails past dramatic cliffs, sparkling turquoise waters, and hillside villages that tumble toward the Tyrrhenian Sea. It's like cruising through a living postcard, with a splash of glamour and a twist of lemon! As we cruise along this iconic coastline, keep an eye out for sleek super-yachts and the endless terraces of lemon groves clinging to the cliffs. These golden fruits are more than just scenic, they're the soul of the region, flavouring everything from desserts to the famous Limoncello, Italy's beloved citrus liqueur. Stop at Amalfi, the waterfront town that lends its name to the coast. Here, you'll have time to wander through winding alleys and soak up the lively atmosphere of its piazzas. It's the perfect spot for a refreshing lemon sorbet or a bit of boutique browsing. Whether you're snapping photos, sipping something citrusy, or simply soaking in the sun, this coastal adventure is a feast for the senses and a highlight of any visit to southern Italy.

Day 7 Messina (Port: Messina)

We follow the coastline to the 'boot' of Italy, arriving around midday 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 20-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 two unique encounters. Visit the slopes and Silvestri Carters of Mt. Etna or take a seat at an ancient Roman Ampitheatre and stroll the opulent streets of Sicily's Hollywood hangout; Taormina. 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 Mt 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 - Half-day experience: Mount Etna

At 3,322 metres (10,900 feet), Mount Etna is the highest active volcano in Europe. Her constant state of irritation is monitored by vulcanologists worldwide, yet it is the people who live in her shadow who know her best. We will drive through villages imbued with history and tradition before arriving at the entrance to the Silvestri Craters. You'll have free time to explore this unique area at your own pace. Walk along the crater's edges and immerse yourself in the stark, rocky surroundings, which reveal ancient lava flows and rich volcanic soils, creating a surreal, almost lunar landscape.

Day 8 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. Its diverse cultural heritage is reflected in its architecture, from ancient ruins and Norman palaces to baroque churches and Arab-Norman art, while the city's famous street markets, such as the bustling Ballaro Market offer a glimpse into Sicily's famous culinary traditions.

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: Panoramic Palermo

Our morning begins in Palermo, where centuries of history tell a unique tale of Sicily's capital city. Touring the city by coach, you'll get a taste of its rich character. Ornate facades, grand piazzas, and the energy of everyday life passing by. From here, we leave the city behind and begin a scenic ascent of Mount Pellegrino, comfortably by coach, making it accessible for all. At the summit, we visit the Santuario di Santa Rosalia, a remarkable 17th-century sanctuary built directly into a cave. Inside, discover its atmospheric chapel and an 18th-century statue of the Virgin Mary. Outside, take in sweeping views over Palermo and the glittering Mediterranean. The journey continues along the northern coast to Mondello, once a humble fishing village, now a favourite seaside escape for locals, known for its pastel beach cabins and art nouveau villas. During our day, we'll enjoy a refreshing granita, a traditional Sicilian treat of shaved ice and fruit, offering a sweet, cooling break to our tour.

Option 2 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 3 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 wealth and status (known as a confraternity). 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 the Oratory of San Lorenzo and 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.

Day 9 Agrigento (Port: Porto Empedocles)

Sailing around the western tip of Sicily, we arrive at Porto Empedocles around midday and enjoy lunch onboard.

Our 'Your Choice' experiences offer a choice of two engaging options this afternoon. Choose to join a guided tour of the Valley of the Temples, where you will explore the rich history and fascinating lifestyles of Sicily's ancient residents. Alternatively, head inland to a family-owned winery to discover the centuries-old significance of wine production on the island and enjoy a tasting of local wines.

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

Option 1: Afternoon experience: Agrigento - The Valley of the Temples

A highlight of any visit to Sicily, Agrigento, or the Valley of the Temples as it is known, is an archaeological gem. The site brings to life the stories of the people who lived, loved and died here, dating as far back as the 6th century BCE. "One of the wealthiest colonies in Greece", the city thrived around 2,500 years ago, with an economy based on produce from the rich



surrounding land and the trade routes from Greece. Its impressive ruins attract travellers from around the world.

Option 2: Afternoon experience: Sicilian Wine Tasting

For those who would prefer a relaxing afternoon, this winery visit is ideal. The southern Sicilian countryside is scattered with wineries owned and operated by families. Inland from Port Empedocles, surrounded by lush olive and almond groves with wheat fields stretching around them, each winery benefits from Sicily's unique soil, which is enriched by volcanic ash and Mediterranean minerals. Wine has long been a cornerstone of Sicily's economy, dating back to ancient times when the island was a major wine producer for the Roman Empire. During your visit, you will tour the winery and learn about traditional winemaking methods that have evolved over centuries. Following the tour, enjoy a tasting session featuring wines paired with local snacks that highlight regional flavours. This experience offers a genuine taste of Sicily's vinous heritage and provides insight into the island's deep-rooted winemaking culture, all while soaking in the natural beauty of the region.

Day 10 Syracuse (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 fascinating morning, leaving your afternoon free to stroll the short distance from the port to the island of Ortigia. 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. Its popular shops are the perfect place to browse for souvenirs, local delicacies and fresh seafood treats. 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. Join your local guide for an in-depth tour or stroll the site at your own pace.

Option 2 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. Today, Noto's charming main street is lined with artisan ceramic studios, gelato shops, and open-air cafes. Join your local guide or wander at your own pace for a morning filled with colour, flavour, and delightful discoveries.

Day 11 Disembark Valletta, Malta (Port: Valletta)

As a matter of Mediterranean real estate, Malta has location, location, location. For fun in the sun and an island lifestyle that may be ideal, but when it comes to defence from invasion it is not. A convivial, family orientated people, the Maltese have fought hard to defend their country against everyone from the Greeks to Napoleon. Their bravery in World War II during the second siege of Malta moved King George VI to award the nation the George Cross which appears on the Maltese flag and coat of arms.

Our day 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. We join a local guide this morning for a browse through Valletta's essential sights. We spend time at the Barrakka Gardens to 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 Hospitaller of St John, while the multimedia show, Malta Experience, places thousands of years of Malta into perspective.

Your afternoon is free to explore further, relax over a coffee and pastry, or try some retail therapy, before we transfer to the hotel for an evening at leisure.

Accommodation: Valletta Hotel

Meals: Breakfast onboard

Day 12 Valletta

A second day in Valletta gives us the chance to experience more of Malta, with options to either delve deeper into its long history of invasion and resistance, or venture into the island's rural heartland. Both experiences reveal the resilient and welcoming spirit for which the Maltese are known. This afternoon is free to return to a favourite site, visit a museum, or relax poolside at our hotel.

This evening, we come together for a special Farewell reception. Here, we honour the courage of the Maltese people with a moving account from a local expert, sharing wartime stories of endurance and resistance against overwhelming odds.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Malta at war

Malta's bravery during World War II is our focus this morning as



we visit the National War Museum at Fort St. Elmo. We'll explore the island's critical role during World War II, from enduring relentless bombings to supporting the Allied invasion of Sicily. Key highlights include the George Cross, awarded by King Geroge VI to the entire population of Malta in 1942 for their extraordinary courage, and President Roosevelt's Jeep, used during Operation Husky. You can choose to join our local guide for a deeper delve into this chapter of history, or explore the museum's other fascinating sections, covering everything from the Knights of St. John to the Cold War, at your own pace.

Option 2 - Morning experience: Malta's rural interior

This morning, 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 leisure, perhaps visit St. Paul's Cathedral, walk the bastions, or enjoy a coffee in one of the small piazzas.

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.

Accommodation: Valletta Hotel

Meals: Breakfast, Farewell Reception (drinks and canapes)

Day 13 Depart Valletta

After breakfast, check-out of your hotel and farewell your fellow travellers as you transfer to the 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





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