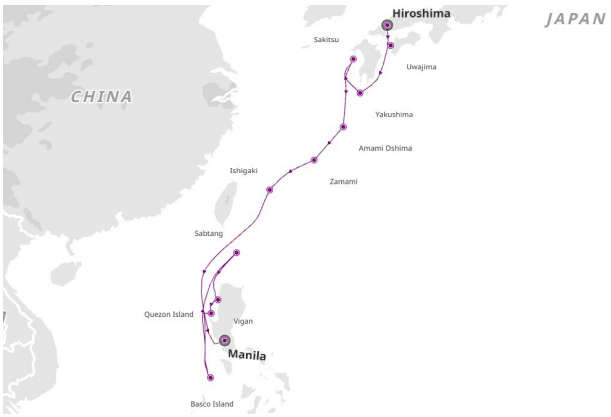


THE EASTERN ARCHIPELAGO: EXPLORING JAPAN AND THE PHILIPPINES

Two island nations, one extraordinary voyage. Sail through the wild, sun-drenched southwestern reaches of Japan -- where the Ryukyu archipelago dissolves into turquoise waters and each island reveals something entirely unexpected -- then cross open ocean into the Philippines and explore an ancient, untouched coastline that few expedition ships ever reach. From Hiroshima to Manila, this is Japan and the Philippines at their most remote and most beautiful.



ITINERARY

Day 1 Hiroshima

Hiroshima is a city of peace and resilience. The Hiroshima Peace Park and Museum, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, vividly portrays the aftermath of the atomic bombing. Designed by Kenz Tange and inaugurated in 1955, the museum serves as a global symbol of peace, featuring a solemn cenotaph bearing the victims' names and the Flame of Peace, lit in 1964. The Genbaku Dome stands as the sole original structure left at the blast site

Day 2 Uwajima

Uwajima, a bustling coastal city, is anchored by the elegant Uwajima Castle, one of twelve Edo-period survivors, with spectacular cityscapes for hikers ascending to its keep. The Tensha-en Garden is a tranquil space with bamboo groves, towering culms and seasonal blooms. In the nearby village of Uchiko, the Old Quarter's streets are lined with well-preserved



wooden houses and merchant buildings, frozen in time from the 18th and 19th centuries
Show less

Day 3 Yakushima Island

Yakushima Island rises from the sea in deep greens and mist. Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site, the island is home to some of Japan's oldest trees, their gnarled forms wrapped in moss and memory. Along its trails, waterfalls emerge from dense foliage, and the air carries a sense of stillness that invites unhurried exploration. Yakushima offers a rare encounter with nature at its most enduring and contemplative

Day 4 Sakitsu

Sakitsu Village, on the Amakusa Islands in western Kumamoto, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site tied to Japan's Hidden Christian history. Once a secret hub of worship during prohibition, it's home to Sakitsu Church, known as the "Church of the Sea," with a European Gothic exterior and rare tatami-mat interior. The village's story is further told at the Minato-ya Museum, which displays artefacts used to practice the faith in secret

Day 5 Amami Oshima Island, Naze

Dreamy beaches, mangroves and cerulean seas make up the Amami Islands. The largest, Amami Oshima, was part of the Ryukyu Kingdom before brief US control after WWII. The Tanaka Isson Memorial Museum in Amami Park displays works by the late painter who lived here. Pristine beaches like Tomori have colourful marine life, while in the south, rivers weave round the Mangrove Primeval Forest, and rugged cliffs and giant pebbles hug the Honohoshi Coast

Day 6 Zamami Island

One of the Kerama Islands, a small group lying 40 kilometres west of Okinawa. The Keramas were designated a national park in 2014 in recognition of water clarity that ranks among the highest measured anywhere in the world -- a consequence of weak currents and minimal agricultural runoff. Humpback whales move through the surrounding waters between January and March. The village of Zamami, on the island's north coast, is small enough to walk in an hour, with a local history museum and a ridge trail that opens onto views of the surrounding island chain

Day 7 Ishigaki, Ishigaki Island

The main island of the Yaeyama group, at the southwestern edge of the Ryukyu archipelago. Ishigaki town serves as the administrative hub for a scattering of islands that extends almost to Taiwan, but the island itself rewards time on foot: the Banna Park ridge gives views across the East China Sea, and the waters around the island contain some of the most intact coral reef systems in Japan, including regular sightings of manta rays in the channel off Kabira Bay

Day 8 Day at sea

Sea days are rarely dull. Take the time to sit back and let the world go by. The ship's observation decks provide stunning views of the passing ocean. A day at sea gives you the opportunity to mingle with other passengers and share your experiences of this incredible trip or head to our library which is stocked full of reference books. Get an expert's view in one of our on-board lectures or perhaps perfect your photography skills with invaluable advice from our onboard professional photographers



Day 9 Batanes Islands, Sabtang Island

A small island with a rustic vibe, Sabtang is one of four main inhabited islands of Batanes and features peaceful sandy beaches backed by verdant cliffs. Browse traditional products like woven baskets and the local berry wine. For a moderate hike, wind your way up occasionally steep, grassy ridges to breathtaking seascapes at the Chamantad-Tinyan Viewpoint. On Morong Beach, photogenic Mahayao Arch is a massive natural rock formation

Day 9 Batanes Islands, Basco Island

Batanes, the Philippines' northernmost province with capital Basco, was first occupied by Japan in WWII, leaving behind the hand-carved Dipnaysuhuan Tunnel, cut from volcanic rock. Today, Batanes is celebrated for its Ivatan heritage, with a resilient culture shaped by isolation and storms, reflected in its century-old stone houses. Diura Fishing Village showcases this enduring spirit, where traditional Ivatan fishing rituals continue today

Day 10 Salomague Harbour (Vigan)

The Philippines' best preserved colonial town, the UNESCO-listed 16th century Vigan City lies an hour south of Salomague port. Vigan's unique fusion architecture blending Philippine, Chinese and European elements has "no parallel in East and Southeast Asia" per UNESCO. Cobblestoned Calle Crisologo is the lively main street of the Mestizo district, with its broad promenade (malecon), horse-drawn carriages and rustic mansions

Day 11 Quezon Island, Hundred Islands

Hundred Islands National Park in the Lingayen Gulf of the Philippines has 124 islands known for their unique mushroom shapes, formed from ancient seabeds influenced by shifting sea levels. Conservation efforts like giant clam replanting aim to protect the marine environment, once traversed by Spanish galleons. Governor's Island has a deck with a statue of St. Joseph and is the jump point for the 546m island-to-island zipline

Day 12 Manila

Arrive in Manila today. The capital of the Philippines is a teeming, sprawling metropolis. Its flaws are no match for its creative, exciting energy, which infused everything from its art to food. There's so much to see and do here: the city's museums, Fort Santiago, San Agustin Church and the Chinese Cemetery are some of the highlights. Intramuros - the old Spanish walled town at the heart of the city - is unmissable. Explore if timings allow and be sure to sample some Filipino cuisine in all its bold sour, sweet and tangy glory. Alternatively, head straight to your home for the next several days. After a seamless check-in, settle into your cabin or stateroom and take time to explore your ship's luxurious facilities

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



YOUR SHIP: MINERVA

YOUR SHIP: **Minerva**

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

The 5 star elegant Scandi-design boutique ship offers you an intimate setting from which you will be fully immersed in all the sights and scenery of your voyage. Introducing SH Minerva Minerva has been designed to journey to off the beaten path destinations and remote polar regions in style and comfort. The ship incorporates a PC5 ice-strengthened hull combined with extra-large stabilisers to make your journey as smooth as possible. Sophisticated Elegance We know how important outdoor space is, so our spacious, relaxing public spaces provide wide open, unobstructed views throughout the ship. The destination will always be in view. Your Wellbeing The safety & happiness of the guests is paramount to the 120-strong crew on board as well as the passionate expedition team who'll be serving up thrilling shore excursions and lasting memories. Cabin Types The 76 cabins including 6 suites have all the amenities you will need to feel comfortable including dressing gowns, hairdryers, personal safes and minibars. The stylish cabins all have desks, a dressing area and comfy seating. En suite bathrooms all feature glass-enclosed rain showers. Wheelchair access Guests who use wheelchairs must bring their own, as we have only a small number of wheelchairs stored onboard for emergencies. To ensure ease of movement on the ship, wheelchairs and mobility aids must be no wider than 65cm. All mobility or medical equipment brought on board must be capable of being carried safely and must be declared before sailing. To ensure that all guests can safely evacuate during an emergency, guests requiring a wheelchair can only be accommodated in our ADA-accessible cabins. There is an Oceanview stateroom on Vega which is specifically designed to be completely ADA compliant and have a fully operable wheelchair-access wet unit. Vega has two lifts, serving every passenger deck apart from the Stargazing top deck, which is, therefore, more difficult to access, as are the Aft Marina and Swan's Nest forward observation platform. Also, we don't have special equipment to access the swimming pool, jacuzzi, or sauna. Otherwise, the ship is entirely at your disposal. Many of the expeditions ashore in remote places are by Zodiac. Boarding these boats and returning aboard can present challenges for wheelchair users, as can navigating uneven terrain. These challenges are by no means always insurmountable, though, and our highly experienced crew is trained to provide reliable advice and assistance. They will make every effort to ensure wheelchair-using guests enjoy a memorable experience at each destination. Our general guidance, however, is to recommend wheelchair users travel with a companion for their ease and enjoyment. If you prefer to remain aboard, our panoramic interiors and ample open decks ensure an immersive, intimate experience of your inspiring





surroundings.

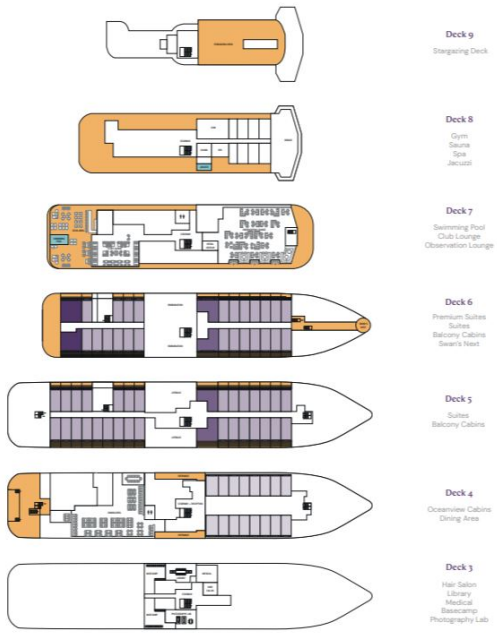
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