



## The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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## TREASURES OF SICILY & PUGLIA - 10 DAY CRUISE

Here is the perfect voyage for those who love Italy, travelling in the company of just 100 or so like-minded travellers and sailing aboard a delightful small ship with a varied programme of interesting visits ashore. Setting sail from Valletta's Grand Harbour, we will spend time in Sicily to appreciate the island's rich legacy of so many invading civilisations followed by time in Puglia, our itinerary taking us off the beaten track to many places that are beyond the reach of the mega-cruise ships. Sicily is an endlessly fascinating island that lends itself beautifully to discovery by small ship and our visits ashore here will include the Roman mosaics of the Imperial Roman Villa of Casale, the magnificently sited Doric temples of Agrigento, timelessly beautiful Syracuse, and the stunning Greek theatre at Taormina. Crossing to the heel of Italy, our final days will be spent discovering Puglia's many gems including visits with local guides to prehistoric dwellings and traditional trulli abodes as well as splendid Baroque architecture and 15th century palazzos. Our days will be varied as we explore UNESCO World Heritage Sites, walk through historic villages and towns and discover the uniqueness of each region as well as enjoying opportunities to sample the local food and wine. Owing to the fact that our small ship can moor centrally, we have the added advantage of being able to access the towns by foot in many ports of call and we have also included time at leisure for individual exploration enabling you to soak up the atmosphere at your own pace.

### ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Valletta, Malta.

Fly by scheduled flight. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the MS Island Sky moored in the Grand Harbour of Valletta. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we sail this evening.

Day 2 Licata for Piazza Armerina, Sicily.

From the port of Licata we travel inland to what is regarded as the finest Roman site in Sicily, the Imperial Roman Villa of Casale, which is located close to Piazza Armerina amidst wooded rolling countryside. This huge villa was built in the 3rd century and has some stunning floor mosaics. Our return drive takes us through the province of Caltanissetta, recognised today as one of the best winemaking regions in Italy thanks above all to its production of high quality, prestigious red wines including Nero D'Avola. We will break our journey at one of these vineyards and enjoy a chance to sample some wine over a Sicilian lunch before returning to the ship.

Day 3 Agrigento for Valle dei Templi.

Although handsome in its own right and awash with Medieval atmosphere, Agrigento is not our main reason for calling at this southern coast port. Close by is the Valle dei Templi, a series of Doric temples and the most captivating of Sicilian Greek remains, a grouping unique outside Greece. Surrounded in the

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greenery of olive and almond trees, admire the Temple of Hera, the Temple of Concordia, the Dioscuri Temple, the Temple of Olympic Jove and the Temple of Hercules. Return to the ship for lunch and maybe join a lecture this afternoon as we sail.

#### Day 4 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, 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 independently before we meet this evening for a private concert in one of the town's palazzos accompanied by local food and wine.

#### Day 5 Catania & Taormina.

From the port of Catania we have a choice of tours this morning. Maybe drive up the coast to 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 join a walking tour of Catania. The architecture here is particularly impressive but a

little forbidding being mainly constructed from black lava stone from Mount Etna. We will see the magnificent Piazza del Duomo, a World Heritage Site, St Agatha's Cathedral and the imposing 13th century Castello Ursino. Return to the ship for lunch and a relaxing afternoon at sea.

#### Day 6 Taranto & Matera, Italy.

Our first call in Puglia will be Taranto from where we cross into neighbouring Basilicata as we visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Sassi di Matera (stones of Matera). Situated in the old town of Matera, the Sassi are prehistoric dwellings dug into the rock itself and are suspected to be some of the first human settlements in Italy. The site covers over 1000 hectares and comprises over 1000 buildings including houses, churches, shops, workshops and monasteries and we will learn more about the history of the town on a walking tour of the labyrinthine streets. The afternoon is free to explore Taranto at your own pace and you may want to see the 15th century Aragonese Castle or the 11th century cathedral.

#### Day 7 Otranto & Lecce.

After breakfast 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. We return to the ship for lunch and the afternoon is free to explore Otranto independently, maybe walk the winding streets or along the seaside promenade. The highlight is the wonderful cathedral with its Medieval mosaic floor created by the monk, Pantaleone, between 1163 and 1165. You can also see the Chapel of the Dead which shows the bones and skulls of 813 martyrs killed by the invading Turks in 1480.

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### Day 8 Brindisi & Ostuni.

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 experience 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 9 Monopoli & Alberobello.

Today we drive into the Puglian countryside which is scattered with 'trulli', limestone dwellings built with dome or conical roofs. We will enjoy a pleasant walk in Alberobello, a fairy-tale trulli village and a UNESCO World Heritage Site and see St Anthony Church also built in trullo style. Afterwards we visit 'Cantina Albea' and its wine museum, home to pictures and old instruments used in the past for the production of wine and where we will enjoy a tasting along with a talk on the wine production. Return to the ship for lunch and a free afternoon in Monopoli where you can wander through the historic centre, visit the cathedral or see the Castello di Carlo V.

### Day 10 Bari 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: ISLAND SKY

**YOUR SHIP:** Island Sky

**VESSEL TYPE:**

**LENGTH:**

**PASSENGER CAPACITY:**

**BUILT/REFURBISHED:**

With a maximum passenger capacity of only 116, a vessel of her size is capable of carrying many more but instead the MS Island Sky has the benefit of unusually large suites, luxuriously appointed public areas and spacious outside decks. There is a high ratio of crew to passengers- the friendly crew of 75 crew and Scandinavian captains are experienced mariners, having been in service aboard large 2000 plus passenger vessels and who now prefer a less frantic life aboard a small ship. If, like them and us, you prefer a more peaceful life at sea, you will find the MS Island Sky the perfect ship. When choosing the vessel for your next voyage of discovery, you can select a ship with endless entertainment and impersonal service or come with us where peace, high quality service and attention to detail are the order of the day. We promise there will be no organised entertainment, fancy dress, deck games or any of the usual big ship experiences. The atmosphere on board is more akin to a private yacht or country hotel. A little music in the lounge or bar after dinner, guest speakers, informative port briefings from our cruise director and of course good food which may be enjoyed leisurely in the attractive dining room. After a day ashore you will return to the comfort and peace of a well run and exceedingly

comfortable ship. Your Suite Onboard there are 57 exceptionally spacious and well designed suites. All feature a sitting room area and some have private balconies. The feeling of luxury is enhanced by the wood panelling and brass, which predominates throughout the vessel conveying the atmosphere of a private yacht. The passenger accommodation is arranged over five decks and all suites have outside views. Each affords considerable comfort with en-suite bathroom featuring marble-topped vanity unit with sink and walk-in shower, large wardrobes, dressing table with large mirror and stool and excellent storage. There is a mini-fridge, flat screen television with inbuilt DVD player which can also play CDs and a telephone in each suite. Bottled water, towelling dressing gowns and slippers are also provided for your comfort. Other facilities include a programmable electronic safe, hairdryer, assorted toiletries and individually controlled air-conditioning and heating. The suites on each deck have their own colour theme. Soft hues and blended tones enhance the traditional maritime style making the passenger accommodation an inviting and relaxing place to be. Your Space The spacious and finely decorated public rooms include a large lounge where daily briefings and talks will be provided throughout the voyage and an elegant bar where a pianist plays periodically throughout the day. The bar also features a 24-hour tea and coffee station. The onboard library is the perfect place to relax with a book and is stocked with reference books pertaining to the places the vessel is visiting along with a selection of games and two computers with internet access. Daily newspapers and magazines are also placed in the library depending on local availability. There is

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also WI-FI access throughout the vessel. Outside there is a rear sun deck where meals are served in warm weather under shade, a bar and comfortable deck furniture for sun bathing or relaxing with a book. On the top deck there is a Jacuzzi and further observation and sun deck. There is also a small hairdressers on board with appointments made on request. Your Dining Another benefit of a small ship is the quality of the cuisine. With only one sitting and a maximum of just over 100 passengers, the galley is able to provide delicious meals. Where possible and when it meets his high standards, the chef will obtain local produce in markets or buy the catch of the day from a passing fishing boat. Such purchases enhance the well stocked larders and bring a local touch to the



varied menus.

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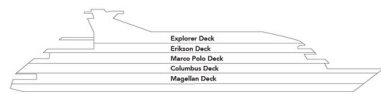
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## INSIDE YOUR SHIP



Explorer Deck



Erikson Deck



Marco Polo Deck



Columbus Deck



Magellan Deck



- Standard Suites
- Corner Suites with Deck Access
- Owner's Balcony Suites
- Superior Suites
- Deluxe Balcony Suites
- Island Suite
- Premium Suites with Deck Access



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## PRICING

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