

WEST AFRICAN ODYSSEY - AN VOYAGE ALONG AFRICA'S ATLANTIC COAST

In spite of all its regional difficulties, Africa still captures the imagination like no other continent. Its varied cultures and peoples, its extraordinary wildlife and the majesty of its landscapes cast a lifelong spell on all who visit and exploring the region from the comfort of a small ship is by far the best way to experience its many wonders. Join us for this remarkable voyage as we sail along the coast of West Africa from Morocco to Ghana visiting countries that may well sound like an itinerary from the pages of an intrepid 18th century explorer's diary but are some of the most fascinating and captivating places on earth. Much has changed since the Portuguese sailed along the West African coast in the 15th century. These regions of Africa, rarely visited for more than a half-century, have opened up in recent years and offer the intrepid traveller a range of cultural and natural world experiences. During this unique voyage spanning over 3,000 nautical miles, we will visit nine countries and enjoy an intimate exploration of the extraordinary diversity of animals, plant life, and human cultures spanning the coast of Western Africa as we travel between Casablanca and Accra. Sailing south from Morocco, the contrast of scenery and landscapes will be mesmerising from bustling cities including Casablanca, Dakar and Freetown to the volcanic landscape of Lanzarote, the sand dunes of the Western Sahara and the extensive waterways of The Gambia. We will visit the remarkable Bandia Reserve in Senegal which is home to a diverse range of African mammals and, a highlight for many will be our two days in the Bijagos Archipelago, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve off the coast of Guinea-Bissau with a unique and rich cultural life. Whilst in Sierra Leone there will also be the opportunity to visit the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary, a conservation programme established to protect wild chimpanzees and their habitat. Aside from the marvellous natural world wonders we will encounter, there is of course a fascinating cultural heritage and human history to be discovered as we delve into the history and legacy of West Africa's transatlantic slave trade with visits to forts, castles, monuments and museums commemorating that period in history which we will learn about from local guides. The roads may be poor and the tourist infrastructure very much in its infancy in some of the countries we will be visiting, but that is precisely why we believe West Africa presents such an array of exciting experiences for the adventurous traveller who wishes to witness this extraordinary area, its diverse cultures and marvellous wildlife but who are weary of the more well-trodden paths around the world. After a day's exploration, we will be returning each evening to the comfort of the all-suite MS Hebridean Sky with the added benefit of some days at sea interspersed throughout the itinerary when you can relax on board and attend the informative lectures by our Guest Speaker and members of our





onboard team.

ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Casablanca, Morocco.

Fly by scheduled indirect flight to Casablanca. On arrival transfer to the MS Hebridean Sky and enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we moor overnight.

Day 2 Casablanca.

During our guided morning tour we will visit the city's most important sights including the Notre Dame Cathedral and the market. The highlight of our tour is a visit to the Hassan II Mosque, the largest religious monument in the world after Mecca. It took 3,300 traditional Moroccan artisans to create the beautiful mosaics, marble floors and splendid wood ceilings. The mosque also features the world's tallest minaret, soaring 200 metres above the city. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy a leisurely afternoon on board as we sail to Agadir.

Day 3 Agadir.

Spend the morning at sea before arriving this afternoon in the vast Bay of Agadir for our exploration of the city. Almost completely destroyed in the 1960 earthquake, some of the city's heritage did survive including the hilltop Kasbah. We will take a scenic cable car ride to the Kasbah Oufella, offering panoramic views of the bay. After viewing this historic fortress continue to Souk El Had, the city's vibrant central market and the Talborjt Mosque, before we end at the charming artisan village of the Coco Polizzi Medina with its unique architecture and local art.

Day 4 Arrecife, Lanzarote, Canary Islands.

The easternmost corner of the Canary Islands, the island of Lanzarote features a bizarre landscape, born of volcanic activity over many millennia, having a rare beauty that is not unlike the surface of the moon. Few places on earth can offer such diverse natural phenomena in such a small area, from eerie formations of petrified lava to beaches of black volcanic sand and fertile fields to vineyards growing in the depths of volcanic craters. It was this landscape that inspired artist Cesar Manrique, a multifaceted artist who knew how to combine art and nature like nobody else. He left part of his artistic legacy in Lanzarote and



perhaps the greatest exponent is Los Jameos del Agua. This volcanic tunnel, with its famous, spectacular natural auditorium, is home to a highly singular geological formation. The Mirador del Rio is another creation of his, a natural vantage point offering spectacular views of the Chinijo Archipelago.

Day 5 El Marsa for Laayoune, Western Sahara.

From the port of El Marsa drive across the sand dunes to the city of Laayoune. There are not many travellers who can boast of a visit to the territory of Western Sahara. Mostly consisting of flat desert, it is one of the least populated regions in the world. Surprisingly, it makes for a really interesting visit as we take in the unique Spanish-Saharan architecture in the old town including the Catholic cathedral, the camel market and the craft workshops. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy a leisurely afternoon at sea.

Day 6 Dakhla.

After a relaxing morning at sea, we will arrive into Dakhla. The town occupies a long peninsula which juts out into the Atlantic. During our afternoon ashore we drive past stunning sand dunes before arriving at this friendly town with its white-washed houses and learn about some of the traditions of this remote region.

Days 7 & 8 At Sea.

We will spend the next two days at sea as we sail along the coast of Africa. Enjoy lectures in the lounge and find a spot on deck to relax.

Days 9 & 10 Dakar & Ile de Goree, Senegal.

This morning, we arrive into the capital of Senegal, Dakar. Our city tour includes Independence Square, the Presidential Palace and a local market before we take a ferry across to the Ile de Goree. With its colonial style houses and wonderfully tranquil atmosphere, it is difficult to believe that this island was one of the busiest slave centres in West Africa during the 18th and 19th centuries. We will see the Slave House, now a museum and the Historical Museum in the Fort d'Estrees. From the fort there are marvellous views of the island and over Dakar. We will also visit Bandia Reserve, a 3,500-hectare nature reserve which is home to a wide range of African mammals including white rhino, zebra, giraffes, green vervet monkeys, and jackals, along with over 120 bird species. Boarding safari jeeps, we will spend time in the nature reserve before driving to Lake Retba, or 'Pink Lake' as it is known for its vivid pink colour. The lake is separated from the Atlantic Ocean by a narrow strip of sand dunes. Being this close to the ocean, the lake has a high salt content which the locals collect for preserving fish.

Day 11 Banjul, The Gambia.

Spend the day in The Gambia, the 31 mile wide country that is surrounded on three sides by Senegal. It makes up for its size with its personality, being known as the Smiling Coast of Africa. The country has a long history, with stone circles having been excavated and dating back over 1,200 years, to Arab traders setting up trade routes in the region for slaves, gold and ivory. The Portuguese took over the routes in the 15th century, and the area now known as The Gambia was colonised and recolonised by the British from the 16th century onwards, in various forms, until its independence in 1965. A half day city tour will include the city mosque, market and museum with exhibits showcasing the culture and history. Alternatively, visit the south of The Gambia which is rich in natural beauty with extensive waterways and tributaries home to a range of bird and wildlife living in the lush green wilderness. Here villages and life continue to



embrace traditions and offer insights into the culture of different tribes, through their art and food. Maybe join a small boat for a leisurely cruise amongst the mangroves or alternatively board 4x4 vehicles to visit some of the villages, the local school and markets before enjoying lunch at a beach restaurant.

Days 12 & 13 Bijagos Archipelago, Guinea Bissau.

We have two days in the Bijagos Archipelago which comprises a group of 88 small islands, spread over 5,000 square miles, many of which are uninhabited and rarely visited by foreigners. These islands offer a unique blend of culture, history, wildlife and natural beauty and were declared a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1996. Our programme will be determined by tidal and weather conditions but we hope to use our Zodiacs to land on Carache Island, which boasts tropical rainforests and a stunning coastline. Visiting the local village we will learn about their rituals and subsistence farming projects and will have the opportunity to buy some handicrafts or relax on the golden beaches. Meanwhile on Caravela Island we will join the local women as they harvest oysters and shellfish before a performance of traditional Bijagos dancing. We may also visit Bolama Island which was the capital during Portuguese rule and retains colonial era architecture.

Day 14 At Sea.

Spend a day at sea as we continue our journey around the West African coast.

Days 15 & 16 Freetown, Sierra Leone.

We will arrive in Freetown this morning and will spend a day and a half exploring the city, the history of Sierra Leone and the natural beauty of the area. The colourful city was founded in 1792 by British abolitionists as a settlement for freed slaves. Its history before that was as a slaving port, as seen by the remains on Bunce Island, the largest British slave fort on the West African coast, where tens of thousands of slaves were shipped to the Americas until its closure in 1808. In more recent years, Freetown has grown into a lively and diverse city with a vibrant food scene, bustling markets and soft sand beaches. The city's historic centre is a mix of colonial and more modern architecture, lush green trees, as well as its historical landmarks including the National Museum of Sierra Leone and the National Railway Museum which charts the history of Sierra Leone's railway from 1898 to 1975. Not far outside the city, we hope to visit the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary which was established in 1995 when a husband and wife team set up the conservation programme to protect wild chimpanzees and their habitat. The project aims to build a relationship between apes and humans by collaborating with the local communities to protect the forests.

Days 17 & 18 At Sea.

Relax on board as we sail towards the Ivory Coast.

Day 19 Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

Arriving in Abidjan today, we will travel along the coast to the old colonial capital Grand Bassam, which was the capital of the Ivory Coast from 1893 to 1896. The town became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2012 thanks to the splendid colonial style residences that overlook the Gulf of Guinea and shape the urban fabric of the city. The town today is a vibrant and popular destination on the Ivory Coast and has experienced a period of great splendour and was in fact the first French settlement in West Africa and the capital of its colony. Some of the colonial buildings have been restored while others were abandoned offering a unique charm to the city.



Day 20 Takoradi & Elmina Castle, Ghana.

The coastal city of Takoradi is known for its bustling fishing harbour, pristine white sand beaches and lively atmosphere. The area is also rich in history and the arrival of the Portuguese in the 15th century led to the introduction of the slave trade. After clearing immigration formalities we will drive to one of the biggest and earliest slaving forts, Elmina Castle, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Built by the Portuguese in 1482 and captured by the Dutch in 1637, it was expanded when slaves replaced gold as the major export, with storerooms converted into cells. A tour of the castle will take you through its history, from a Portuguese fort and slave trading post to, in more recent years, a Police Training Centre, secondary school, and now a historical museum. After our tour we return by Zodiac to the MS Hebridean Sky which will have sailed and anchored near the castle.

Day 21 Tema for Accra to London.

This morning, we will arrive into Tema and disembark the MS Hebridean Sky. We will spend the day exploring the sights of Accra including lunch before transferring to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.

Day 22 London.

Arrive this morning.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



YOUR SHIP: HEBRIDEAN SKY

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VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

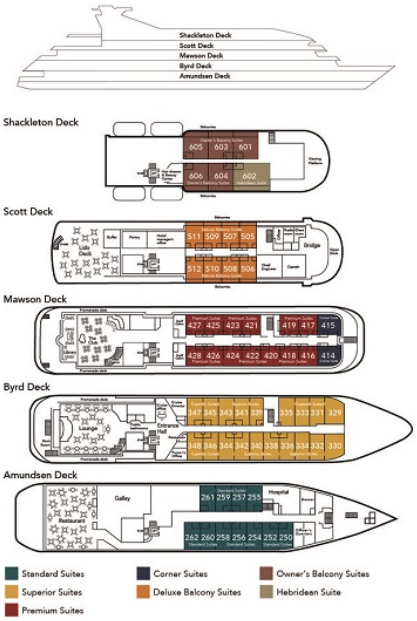
Hebridean Sky has always been known for its effortless elegance, impeccable service and atmosphere of charm and camaraderie. Now we add increased adventure options and an on-site Passenger Service Representative. Hebridean Sky is the perfect blend of luxury and adventurous exploration. Is it a luxury 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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Byrd Deck Superior Sole



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PRICING

01-Dec-2027 to 22-Dec-2027

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