

WHALES, DOLPHINS & SEABIRDS OF THE ATLANTIC EDGE CRUISE

We are delighted to have joined forces once again with ORCA, a UK based whale and dolphin conservation charity dedicated to the long-term protection of whales, dolphins and porpoises and their habitats worldwide. ORCA's vision is to have oceans alive with whales and dolphins, and their mission is to give everyone who cares about whales and dolphins an active role in safeguarding their future. This new, six night voyage has been designed to appeal to those who enjoy being at sea and have a passion for the natural world. As part of ORCA's ongoing education work, Ocean Conservationists will be joining us on board, delivering exciting wildlife experiences and innovative education programmes, teaching guests about the marine environment whilst at the same time collecting critical scientific data about some of the richest habitats in the ocean. Monitoring in the Bay of Biscay is particularly important due to the risk of ship strike for large whales - so while on deck you will find Ocean Conservationists collecting data with the 'OceanWatchers' app which passengers can also assist with by downloading the app too. We will be sailing through one of the world's top five best whale and dolphin locations as we pass through the English Channel and down into the Bay of Biscay, a rich feeding ground and an important migration route for many species, such as fin whales - the second largest animal on the planet. Following the continental shelf edge (a dramatic change in water depth from 150 to 4000 metres) means that we will be in the perfect mixing bowl of nutrients that promote large algal blooms that act as the basis of all life in the Bay of Biscay. Large schools of fish are found here feeding on these microscopic plants, which not only provides the perfect pit-stop for migrating fin whales, but also the perfect habitat for a variety of other whale and dolphin species, such as the common dolphin, striped dolphin, Risso's dolphin, sei whales and many more. Journeying towards Spain, we will be met by two deep-sea canyons in which you can find the wonderful world of beaked whales. These elusive mammals are deep diving specialists and we will keep our eyes peeled for the deepest diving mammal on the planet - the Cuvier's beaked whale. We have timed the voyage for early September when whale migrations from north to south are taking place increasing further the possibility to spot whales whilst a diverse range of bird species should also be seen during our journey. We hope you can join us and the ORCA Ocean Conservationists on what promises to be an unforgettable trip in some of the most beautiful and productive waters and discover the wonderful world of whales and dolphins





for yourself.

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Day 1 Portsmouth, England.

Embark the MS Hebridean Sky this afternoon. Transfers will be provided from Portsmouth Harbour Railway Station at a fixed time.

Day 2 Lyme Bay & Dartmouth.

At dawn we will be sailing through Lyme Bay and staff will be on deck as we look for common dolphins that can be found in these waters. Later this morning we will sail along the River Dart to our anchorage off the town of Dartmouth. Here you can choose to spend a couple of hours exploring the town or maybe join a Zodiac ride along the river and see the castles and river fortifications whilst keeping an eye out for wildlife. Over lunch we sail out to the English Channel where the shallow waters are home to several species of whale, dolphin and porpoise. Regular sightings in these waters include minke whales, common dolphins, bottlenose dolphins and harbour porpoises. A few lucky spotters could even see some rarer visitors, including the second largest animal on the planet - the fin whale, long-finned pilot whales, Risso's dolphin and even the iconic humpback whale. Keep an eye out for playful bow-riding dolphins who leap in the waves made by the ship as we sail through these waters.

Day 3 Shelf Edge, Bay of Biscay.

Overnight we have sailed into the Bay of Biscay which is one of the most exciting areas in the world for whale and dolphin watching. A dramatic change in water depth from 150 to 4000 metres creates the perfect mixing bowl of nutrients that promote large algal blooms. These microscopic plants are the catalyst for drawing in ocean giants, who feed on the large schools of fish sustained by this explosion of life. We spend the day cruising in these rich feeding grounds, keeping a lookout for fin whales, sei whales, minke whales, long-finned pilot whales, Risso's dolphins, bottlenose dolphins, striped dolphins and common dolphins. Around one-third of the world's whale and dolphin species can be sighted in Biscay - with orca and blue whales being among the occasional visitors, meaning it is always an exciting area to watch for wildlife.

Day 4 Canyons & Santander, Spain.

Arrive this morning in the southern Bay of Biscay. Around 2-30 kilometres off the coast of Spain, lies the Santander and Torrelavega Canyons which are both more than twice the depth of the Grand canyon. These colossal trenches are the perfect habitat for some of the most elusive and interesting whale and dolphin species, such as the Cuvier's beaked whale. This mind-boggling species is the deepest diving mammal on the planet, they can hold their breath for an astonishing 3 hours and 42 minutes, and dive to an incredible 2,992 metres. Other beaked whales sighted here include the Sowerby's beaked whale, northern bottlenose whale and True's beaked whale, as well as other marine mammal species like the pilot whale and sperm whale. So keep your eyes peeled for some of the most exciting and unusual species you might spot. In the early evening we will berth in Santander where we have a few hours to stretch our legs before we sail tonight.

Day 5 Whale Watching.

Spend the day cruising along and around the northern Iberian Coast which is home to around 22 whale and dolphin species including the harbour porpoise, common dolphin, bottlenose dolphin, and Risso's dolphin. Several members of the iconic



"blackfish" have also been sighted in these waters, including regular sightings of the longfinned pilot whale and occasional sightings of orca and false killer whale. Further offshore species such as the striped dolphin, Cuvier's beaked whale, Sowerby's beaked whale, sperm whale, minke and fin whale can be spotted.

Day 6 Vigo & Iles des Cies.

Sail this morning into the Galician port of Vigo from where local boats will take us offshore to the beautiful Iles des Cies. Part of the Atlantic Islands National Park, the Romans named them the 'islands of the gods' and we will spend time enjoying the natural beauty of the landscapes; see the stunning beaches, walk the paths to search for animal and plant life or maybe swim in the clear waters. Alternatively spend some time in Vigo itself and explore the narrow streets of the old town or visit the Castro Fotress which was built in 1665 to defend the city from the English Navy and offers views over the city. Later, we sail the waters off the coast of Portugal which are home to playful dolphin species, such as the bottlenose dolphin and common dolphin, as well as the shy harbour porpoise.

Day 7 Oporto, Portugal to London or Manchester.

Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to the UK.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



YOUR SHIP: HEBRIDEAN SKY

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VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

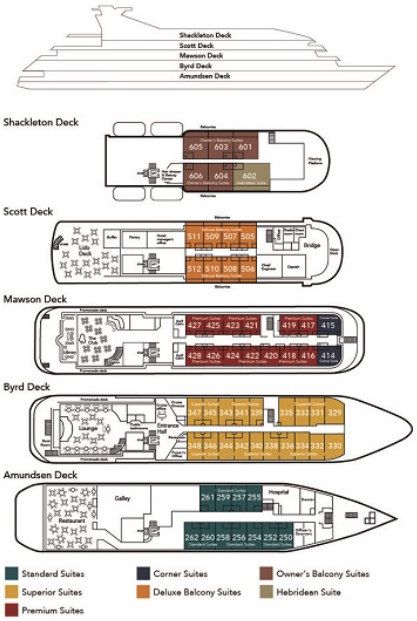
Hebridean Sky has always been known for its effortless elegance, impeccable service and atmosphere of charm and camaraderie. Now we add increased adventure options and an on-site Passenger Service Representative. Hebridean Sky is the perfect blend of luxury and adventurous exploration. Is it a luxury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