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MANAUS TO LISBON - 38 DAY WESTERN AFRICA & AMAZONIAN LUXURY EXPEDITION

Spanning continents and delving deep into seldom visited territories, this is a voyage for the truly adventurous. Immerse yourself in the wonders of an Amazonian expedition - among scarlet macaws, dancing pink river dolphins and psychedelic flora - before emerging to sunny shores and sailing for the hidden human heritage of Western Africa and picturesque beaches Cape Verde. Sun-drenched volcanic islands, Moroccan medinas, and lovely Lisbon cap it all.



ITINERARY

Day 1 Pre Cruise

Day 2 Manaus

Lying in the heart of the Amazon, hundreds of miles upriver from the Atlantic, Manaus is a busy port city surrounded by the richest rainforest habitat on Earth. Placed strategically at the confluence of two rivers, the town was founded as a fortress by

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the Portuguese Navy, but quickly became a trade hub for the surrounding area. By the late 19th Century, Manaus was the centre of Brazil's booming rubber industry, and grew rapidly into one of the largest cities in Brazil. During this period, many of Manaus' grandest buildings were constructed by the city's 'Rubber Barons', including the Public Market, and the Amazon Theatre, a vast decadent opera house. Today, Manaus is a cultural melting pot, with a diverse population. A complex system of free trade rules has turned Manaus into one of the wealthiest cities in the Brazil, with heavy industry developing alongside traditional livelihoods such as river fishing, and gathering the bounty of fruit, nuts and medicinal plants which the rainforest bestows. However, it is the surroundings which give Manaus its unique character. The famous Meeting of Waters, where tannin-rich water from the Rio Negro combines with milky water from the Rio Solimões to form the Amazon, can be seen just outside town, and the jungle beckons visitors to explore and discover. Excluding Manaus, the state of Amazonas is extremely sparsely populated, and in the largest rainforest on Earth, it is easy to forget the hustle and bustle of the city and simply enjoy the wonders of nature.

Day 3 Lago Canaraci & Furo Comprido

Giant Water Lilies (*Victoria amazonica*) are legendary, as they can support the weight of a child. We may see them at Lago Canaçari. A channel dug from the river allows boat access to the lake. Seasonal inundation from the river system replenishes the lakes. The lake waters have few currents and the shallow quiet waters allow water plants to flourish. The famous Giant Water Lilies have enormous round leaves (lily pads) with upturned rims making them look like huge pastry tarts. The plant's roots are anchored to the lakebed and leaf stalks rise to the lily pads

floating on the water surface. The leaves are solar panels using the sun's energy to fuel further leaf production. The underside of each leaf is artistically patterned with large ribs to give it strength. Birds use the floating platforms. Look for sedate herons standing on lily pads watching for fish and pretty Wattled Jacanas with elongated toes walking casually on the floating leaves. Even if lilies are scarce this year, there is much other flora to explore. Along the shore of the channel look for Ceropia trees with large lobed leaves and visible branches. Sloths like to eat Ceropia leaves so keep a look out for hairy lumps on the branches. Fruit-eating birds feed on the fruit and spread the tree's seeds in their droppings. Ceropia fruit are called snake fingers. Wait, snakes don't have fingers! The fruit is so named because it is long and thin. Toucans, aracari and larger parrots are among the birds that seek the fruit. Meaning Long Hole, Furo Comprido is an old cut-off arm of the river. It lets us explore the forest and the local people. The Amazon changes course as it meanders across the flat lowlands. Loops are sometimes cut off leaving side channels like this. Gallery vegetation at the entrance to the side arm is a good example of plants 'fighting' for the best place in the sun. Water does not limit rainforest growth here (perhaps you have noticed it rains frequently) but light does. Getting enough solar energy to photosynthesize is what makes or breaks the growing potential of each plant. Look for wildlife here. If it is sunny, spot butterflies and other flying insects. Search amongst the thousands of different green shades of the forest for monkeys and birds. Many are hard to find as they hide from predators, but bright coloured birds like tanagers and manakins show up as they flit amongst the foliage. Flocks of parrots, parrotlets, and parakeets are more obvious. The Blue and Yellow Macaws and the Scarlet Macaw are particularly spectacular—with or without a pirate. Many people

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living around the rivers call themselves Cabocles. Ethnically they combine European, Indian and Black African ancestry. When the Portuguese settled Brazil, the Indian population declined from introduced diseases for hundreds of years. Many survivors 'mingled' with the newer arrivals to produce today's Cabocles. Elements of the culture of all the groups persist, such as the Indian use of traditional rainforest foods and medicines.

Day 4 Curua Una

A large open flood plain extends from Río Curuá-Una behind riverside trees. Nearby are hills which are an unusual feature this close to the Amazon. Exploring in Zodiacs allows us to approach floating vegetation to see how these remarkable plants survive without attaching to the riverbed. We can get close to birds from the convenience of the boats. Watch as the birds seek insects amongst the plants or aquatic life below the water surface. Water buffalo have been added to cattle as sources of red meat for local consumption. Originating in Asia the water buffalos are well-adapted to wet conditions and are faster at putting on weight than cattle. They can damage the wetlands so they still must be moved to higher ground during the wettest times of the year. If favorable conditions allow, we will offer an outing after sunset. The 'orchestra of the night' created by insects, frogs and other wildlife is an experience on its own. Perhaps an owl or a potoo will appear, as they hunt for large insects, frogs, and small birds and mammals. We will look for caimans as they search for prey near banks or floating vegetation. We spot the eye shine— the red reflection from their eyes in the beams of light. From the eyes we can then focus in on the floating caimans themselves. Two types of these relatives of the crocodile and alligator are found in the Amazon. The Black Caiman is smaller than the Spectacled Caiman which is

named after a white ring around each eye and has nothing to do with the reflective eye shine.

Day 5 Aquiqui & Guajara

For the adventurous at heart, Aquiqui calls you on a voyage to the extraordinary depths of one of the world's most evocative and impenetrable biological hotspots. Of all the mighty rivers in the world, precious few conjure the adrenaline kick of the Amazon River. Huge, diverse and utterly exotic, to explore this iconic river is to entangle yourself in some of the most enduring and exquisite natural riches the planet has to offer. Remote Aquiqui waits on the banks of the Amazon, cloaked in the dense, thriving embrace of the world's most famous and fascinating tropical rainforest. Study the Aquiqui tributary, which unloads into the Amazon and hordes a remarkable bounty of precious animal life and verdant natural riches. The Verde para Sempre Extractive Reserve opens up before you from here. Visit a protected area of the Amazon Rainforest, which is a haven for rare and vulnerable flora and fauna. Look out for the bright plumage of flamboyant parrots and wading birds, as well as the flicking tongues of the Amazon's most exquisite and intimidating reptiles. You might also see the river's curious pink dolphins, and rare Amazonian Manatees among the wildlife. Breathe in deep, relishing the pure air, and experience the living majesty of this rainforest - which is a truly precious wonder of the natural world. A small black water sidearm of the main river will entice us on our first outing to the Amazon and its people. We visit a small community in part of the Verde para Sempre Extractive Reserve, established to protect the lifestyle of the local people. Their activities include small-scale extraction of products from the forest, tending family vegetable farms, fishing and caring for domestic animals including water buffalo. Three important

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native palm trees are tended and harvested. The Açai Palm produces hanging bunches of Açai berries which have become popular as a nutritious food around the world. Perhaps you have tried it? This Brazilian berry was traditionally a staple for the people living in the Amazon delta. Babassu Palms form long hanging lines of hard fruits. Their seed is crushed for an edible oil and starch is extracted from the fruit. Buriti Palms have fringed round leaves and a scaly fruit. The fruit's flesh is eaten raw or dried and ground into flour and its seed produces an oil. All these palms produce edible palm hearts, leaves for thatching, trunks for timber and sap for fermenting into the local home brew. Palms attract wildlife as do the flooded fields and the gallery forest on the higher banks between the main river and this side arm. Look out for large green iguanas sunning or resting on tree branches. Particularly hard to spot but worth looking for are sleepy sloths. These are specialists of a casual lifestyle of extended sessions of eating and just hanging about.

Day 6 Cruising Breves Narrows

Sailing the Breves Narrows is a chance to explore where few people visit, to immerse yourself completely in Amazonian culture. Let the adventure begin! Possibly one of the most engaging stretches of the Amazon River, Breves Narrows, as its name suggests, consists of a narrow channel of water which meanders among countless islets. Both riverbanks which always remain always in sight, are lined with rich, lush equatorial forest. Hugging the riverbank provides a wonderful opportunity for a close-up view of the exotic flora and fauna as well as the Caboclos people who inhabit the area. Calm and peaceful, these people are guardians of this watery world with their remarkable local knowledge, passed down through the generations. Their riverside homes on stilts have pontoons

stretching to the water from which curious children launch their dugouts to greet passing ships and demonstrate their considerable skills with pirogues. Pink river dolphins in varying shades, from soft pink to a strong flamingo hue, roaring monkeys and exotic birds of all colours, all make for a fantastic photo safari as you glide through the water. The skyscapes are just as exotic with clouds chasing across the sky bringing rapid changes of weather. There are unforgettable, magical sunsets, painting the sky in colours as exotic as the animals you will see. Later under a night sky crowded with stars, sit back with a glass of caipirinha, the traditional cocktail of fresh limes and fiery cane spirit and marvel at the mighty Amazon.

Day 7 Day at sea

Days at sea are the perfect opportunity to relax, unwind and catch up with what you've been meaning to do. So whether that is going to the gym, visiting the spa, whale watching, catching up on your reading or simply topping up your tan, these blue sea days are the perfect balance to busy days spent exploring shore side.

Day 8 Sao Luis

Fall for the off-track and off-beat charms of Brazil's capital of Reggae. Enclosed by gaping river bays, which unload gallons of water into the Atlantic from the dense surrounding rainforests, Sao Luis occupies an island cut just adrift from northeast Brazil's mainland. Known as the 'Island of Love', there's a lot to warm your heart here. Like the artsy, creative atmosphere of the city - Sao Luis is renowned for its poets, authors and musicians. Discover your muse, sipping iced fruity Caipirinhas, and watching as the sun sets over panoramic views of the ocean or vast sandscapes, which shape-shift at the whim of tidal forces. The long promenade offers buzzing beach life, backed by tall

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palm trees, and serves as a gathering point for skilled Capoeira practitioners to flow through slick routines. Ready your camera's trigger finger for the show-stopping old town, to capture the visual feast of candy-coloured shutters and steep cobbled steps. The UNESCO World Heritage Site Listed city centre has a distinctive Portuguese air to it and is adorned with a huddle of faded colonial facades and historic buildings decorated with traditional glazed tiles. Away from the city, the unique desert lakes of Lençois Maranhenses are easily within reach. A bizarre and beautiful landscape - find yourself surrounded by turquoise water craters, nestled in cascading waves of golden sand. It instantly transports you to the surface of a strange and distant planet.

Day 9 Barra Grande

With brilliant beach life, thrilling watersports and balmy waters, Barra Grande is a hidden helping of Brazilian beachside bliss. Not to be confused with Barra Grande in the State of Bahia - this thick sandbar waits to be discovered, hidden away in Piauí to the country's north. The open Atlantic Ocean unrolls before you (sail northwards from here and the next land you'd encounter would be Greenland) on this extended, luxuriant beach, which summons dedicated pilgrims of wind and kite surfers to its revered seas. Spacious sands, warm waters and steady gentle breezes make for an intoxicating outdoor cocktail for watersports enthusiasts. This unique blend of conditions is perfect if you fancy giving it a go yourself - or you can, of course, leave it to the professionals and take it easy while admiring the acrobatic displays. Barra Grande's long, sandy spit unfurls out into a mangrove-backed lagoon to the west. In the opposite direction, the beach rolls on towards Cajueiro da Praia - which has the curious claim to fame of being home to the world's

largest cashew tree. Busy beach bars and restaurants shake up well-earned, zesty caipirinhas and fresh fish dishes in the village, while also offering vantage points of kite surfers pumping, jumping and showing off their best tricks. Enjoy the natural gifts of this beautiful region and drink in all the sun, sea and salt-licked breezes of secluded northern Brazil.

Day 10 Fortaleza

Lie back and let it all go in Fortaleza - a bright and breezy Brazilian beachside city of relaxation and rejuvenation. The 'City of Light' basks in the reliable glow of the bountiful Brazilian sun for 2,800 hours each year, and the locals make the most of it, spreading out across sweeping stretches of pristine golden sand. Nestled on the north-eastern coast of Brazil, reaching towards the equator, the city is as off the beaten track as a vast state capital can be, and it moves to its own infectious forró rhythms. Get energised for a day exploring - or relaxing - with a morning swim. Dip into the sea at Praia do Futuro, or settle on the sand to listen to the soundtrack of the waves. Fresh coconut water served up from barracas - beach bars - will keep you feeling nice and refreshed. Iracema beach is another urban favourite, while Cumbuco Beach is a tempting option outside of Fortaleza, boasting a vast stretch of idyllic white sand that's punctuated only by the occasional leaning palm tree. Raise the pulse by skidding and roll across sand dunes while you're out here. If you've had your fill of sea and sand, explore Fortaleza itself to discover more of Brazil's fifth-largest city. Walk streets of ice-cream coloured colonial buildings, or head to Dragão do Mar Cultural Center - a mini-city of arts venues alive with culture and creativity. The Metropolitan Cathedral squeezes a congregation of 5,000 into its Neo-Romanesque architecture, and its stain glass windows blaze vivid colours across its elegant, white-wash interior.

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Days 11 - 15 Day at sea

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Day 16 Tokeh

Tokeh, or Tokeh Town as it is also known, is a coastal resort town that relies mainly on fishing and tourism. Only twenty miles outside Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, this town is nestled in an area of beautiful scenery, surrounded by mountains, forests and beaches. The Tokeh Beach is considered one of the largest and most attractive beaches in West Africa. This town was first founded by a Sherbo fisherman who settled along the river bank. Much later, in 1968, a prominent barrister from Sierra Leone purchased the land, and in partnership with a French company, developed the village. Today, it is a thriving town with the resort, a church, mosque, community center, school and about 6000 residents.

Day 17 Aberdeen

Standing on the rocks of Sierra Leone's Western Peninsular, the rusting, photogenic Aberdeen Lighthouse welcomes sea-faring visitors ashore. Aberdeen juts out into the Atlantic waves to the north of Sierra Leone's sprawling capital city, Freetown. A lively, well-heeled spot, Aberdeen has a relaxed and leisurely atmosphere, which attracts adventurous holidaymakers and explorers to these shores. The air is thick with history too - a colony was established here to repatriate former slaves of the British Empire, and you can explore the monuments and reminders of this important past in Freetown. The Cotton Tree is

a national symbol of liberation, while former slaves would walk through King's Yard Gate as they reclaimed their freedom. Sierra Leone is known for offering up some of the best beaches in Western Africa. The most accessible of which is the golden band of sand of Lumley Beach, which stretches from Aberdeen for three miles down to Lumley - the southern portion forms a palm-backed party spot for locals. Quieter, tranquil options fringe the Western Peninsular's wider coastline, away from Aberdeen, where the lush Western Area National Park rolls down to meet the sandy shores. River No 2 Beach is a gorgeous option on an unspooling river estuary, with coils of silky sands all around. Enjoy the peace, while watching as the pink sun is subdued by the Atlantic's waves.

Days 18 - 20 Bijagos Archipelago

Sacred, serene and secluded, the Bijagos Archipelago is one of the most intriguing island collections the world can offer. Almost falling off the map, the string of 88 lands form an archipelago of tropical beauty, scattered from the west of Guinea Bissau. The sprawling archipelago's challenging location cocooned the islanders from much of the colonial interference for many years. So local traditions - of ancient ritual and colourful initiation ceremonies - have remained strong and safeguarded here. Thatch-roofed houses host welcoming locals, in villages where diminutive pygmy cows wander freely. Anthropologists note the islands for matriarchal elements in society, and priestesses play a significant role here, sermonising the islanders' bonds with the natural world. Many of the islands are uninhabited, instead declared sacred and reserved for spirits. This has also helped form a protected paradise for some of Africa's most exotic wildlife. UNESCO declared the archipelago a Biosphere Reserve in 1996 and its sprawling mangrove forests, undisturbed

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savannahs and muddy flats attract long-legged migrating birds, as well as beady-eyed crocodiles. West Africa's largest saltwater hippo colony lurks in the waters of Orango National Park - see them smashing their way in and out of the water. Endangered sea turtles also faithfully return to the tranquil beaches each year, digging out over 25,000 nests. Extraordinary and authentic - an expedition to this enchanted, off-the-grid archipelago is one to cherish.

Day 21 Banjul

Emerging from The Gambia's wild mangrove swamps, Banjul sits at the spot where the River Gambia's yawning mouth opens up to meet the salty tang of the Atlantic. Punctuated by a soaring 35-metre arched gateway, constructed following the coup d'etat that broke out in 1994, The Gambia's capital is a place of scorched sunlight and faded colonial history, which provides flavours of laidback beachside relaxation mixed with exotic old-world African seaport charm. Despite its capital status, Banjul, with its soft lyrical name, often has more of a village feel to it. You'll feel it most acutely as you explore the tight-knit labyrinth of Albert Market. The orchestral sounds of bartering rise to a pitched crescendo in the early morning - the perfect time to plunge in for a dizzying hit of sensory overload. A beloved gathering spot since the 19th century, the market is a riot of colour, with spit and nail stalls buckling below the weight of print fabrics, salt-crusted fish and colourful textiles. While the market can be a disorientating whirl of activity, the city as a whole tends to move at a more lackadaisical, laidback pace. Visit Oyster Creek, to let an afternoon float by fishing rod in hand, as the sunlight slants across the water, and you treasure the hint of an afternoon breeze. Cormorants and pelicans step gingerly across the sinking mudflats that line the riverbank.

Those craving cultural immersion can visit a local home for a cooking experience, helping to descale fresh red snapper, sipping baobab juice, and mixing spices into an authentic benachin pot.

Days 22 - 23 Dakar

Capital of Senegal, and a major gateway to Western Africa, the former colonial trading post of Dakar stamps the Cap-Vert peninsula with glorious surf-fringed beaches. Enjoy the thrum of markets - where colourful textiles are exchanged - and wander streets where jazz, sambar and mbalax spill from every ajar door. Offering tropical island-style beaches in an incongruous urban setting, Dakar is a wild and urgent experience for the senses. Watch on as surfers revel in consistent rollers on this, the most westerly peninsula of continental Africa. Scuba divers can explore worlds below the surface in Dakar's diving areas, or you can head to sandy beaches like Plage des Mamelles' cove, which provide endless options for cooling off. Looking for a little more activity, loosen up and play on golf courses that unroll along the sun-kissed Senegalese coastline, or visit startling natural sites like the vivid pink water of the salty pink Lake Retba. Cultural relevance abounds in Dakar - those wanting to delve a little deeper into the dark history of Senegal should visit the House of Slaves on the UNESCO World Heritage Site listed Goree Island, or duck into the Theodore Monod Museum to pour over an incredible collection of masks, artefacts, and treasures. Sandaga Market is a full-on experience of choreographed chaos, sound and flavours. Tear into fish fresh off the boat, and don't be afraid to get your hands a little greasy while handling Dibi - the national street food - soft mutton, simmered with onions and zesty orange spice.

Day 24 Day at sea

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Day 25 Fogo

Fogo and neighboring Ilha Brava are the southernmost islands of Cape Verde and at the western end of the Sotavento group. Unlike some of the other islands in the archipelago which were named after saints, Fogo's name goes back to the volcanic activity of its dominant feature Pico do Fogo, at 2,829 meters the highest elevation of Cape Verde and also its largest volcano. The third Cape Verde island to be settled by Portuguese - there is no indication of human activity before the Portuguese voyages of exploration - the discovery of Fogo is celebrated with horse races and the "Festas do São Filipe" on May 1. Sao Filipe is Fogo's largest city with 20,000 inhabitants and the fourth-largest of Cape Verde. Sao Filipe lies on the western flank of a giant volcano which in his 9 kilometer wide caldera has the Pico do Fogo, an active stratovolcano which last erupted in 2014-15 and still today emits sulphur vapor through its fumaroles.

Day 26 Boa Vista

Let out a deep exhale, and let the languid calm of an island of flowing sand dunes, gentle waters and generous sunshine wash over you. Waiting 300 miles out to sea from the shore of Western Africa, Boa Vista is the third biggest of Cape Verde's islands, which are celebrated for their gorgeous year-round temperatures. Boasting dozens of miles of untouched, world-class beaches, Boa Vista is a soothing balm for the soul.

The island's name literally translates to 'Beautiful View' and it's not too much of a stretch to see where the etymological inspiration came from. Marvel at the majesty of Boa Vista's finest panoramas - like endless banana arcs of golden beaches, and turquoise seascapes dotted with rusting shipwrecks. If you're feeling adventurous, soar and skim across the waves, while trying out your pick of watersports. Or bounce into the desert interior, roaming across rolling dunes on undulating 4X4 adventures. You'll discover a sandy desert playground, punctuated by explosions of date palms. The island's immaculate beaches are highly sought after, and not just by humans. Boa Vista is an important nature hub and home to the third biggest common turtle reserve in the world. Humpback whales also drop in, watch out for their mighty tails, flicking out of the water early in the year. Be sure to visit the island's small capital, Sal Rei, where pops of colourful paint light up quaint streets, and donkeys mooch around enjoying afternoon shade.

Day 27 Sao Nicolau

Transcend the typical Cape Verde itinerary to discover the bashful beauty of Sao Nicolau - an under-the-radar island of rugged beaches and natural rock sculptures. Cape Verde's Atlantic idylls all serve up a healthy helping of tranquil escape - but Sao Nicolau is a veritable banquet of sleepy island scenery and sea visions. Surprisingly overlooked, it can feel as though you've slipped off the map while in this isolated realm of spiky, cloud-wisped mountains, pine-forested volcano slopes and colourful colonial architecture. Watch your ankles on the main town Ribeira Brava's rustic cobbled streets, as you wander among lemon and pink facades gleaming in the sunshine and soak in the sleepy charms. Stop off for a Portuguese-inspired pastry or sit to try some freshly scooped fish. Sao Nicolau is the

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real deal, a place to discover the Cape Verde islands beyond the holiday crowds. Adventurous visitors are rewarded with a raw and ravishing island of mountain hikes between iconic dragon trees, isolated beaches and lush trails that beg to be hiked - all without having to share any of the spoils. There are coastal sights that would shock the surrealists - like the Carbeirinho rock formation, a flowing natural rampart of undulating layered limestone, carefully polished by the forces of the wind and sea. Be sure to visit Sao Nicolau while you can - momentum is building and, with natural assets like these, the island is unlikely to cling on to its low profile for long.

Day 28 Porto Novo

Porto Novo is found on Sao Antonio, the northwesternmost of the Cape Verde Islands, and is the island's largest town with approximately 17,400 inhabitants. Located on Sao Antonio's southeastern and arid side, Porto Novo began as a fishing village and only in 2005 it was recognized as a city. Since the island has no airport and Porto Novo faces the town of Mindelo on the island of Sao Vicente, this harbor is the main link to the other islands in Cape Verde and the outside world. A monument above the port shows a woman waving goodbye to those emigrating from the Cape Verde Islands. Roads leading out of Porto Novo have to either go along the impressive northeast coast or cross the island's mountains through a rugged and even more spectacular landscape. The third highest peak of the Cape Verde islands at 1,979 meters is the Tope de Coroa to the west of Porto Novo.

Days 29 - 30 Day at sea

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up on your reading or simply topping up your tan, these blue sea days are the perfect balance to busy days spent exploring shore side.

Day 31 Las Palmas, Canary Islands

Watch the stars glittering at night, climb jungled volcano calderas, and explore the historical allure of this entry point to the sun-gorged island of Gran Canaria. The sprawling capital of the Canaries is Spain's ninth biggest city, stretched out along the sparkling coastline. Visitors and locals alike blow off steam on the city's urban beaches, before filling out bustling, authentic tapas bars. An offshore barrier of lava strips waves of their power, making Las Canteras's urban beach expanse one of the best and calmest in the Canaries. Strap on your snorkel to explore the seabed, which blooms with colourful fish and tropical reefs. Or, settle back to soak in the warm glow of one of the best climates in the world, while reclining on the soft sand, which arcs along the capital's fringe. At the other end of town, La Vegueta old town is a charming stroll along cobbled streets, wandering past decorative doorways and balconies that beg to be photographed. The narrow 15th-century streets take on an extra romantic air in the evenings, as lanterns cast a soft glow over them. Calle Colon offers a hint of the street's history - and it's here where the handsome colonial house - turned museum - of Christopher Columbus stands. Columbus stayed here to recuperate, between his boundary-redefining voyages. Out of Las Palmas, diverse and exciting volcanic landscapes await, including the spectacular Caldera de Bandama, which plunges 200 metres into the earth. From the summit, views stretch out to the looming island of Fuerteventura unravel. You can also discover pretty white-wash fishing villages, dazzling gardens, and the sun-bathed vineyards that produce Gran Canaria's crispest wines.

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Day 32 San Sebastian (La Gomera)

Unspoiled, green and lush, this UNESCO Biosphere Reserve has many secrets to reveal. A Canary Island capital like no other, life is lived at a refreshingly lackadaisical pace here. Wander between San Sebastian's faded pastel hues, which spill across the coastline, and bathe in this seaside city's warm sunshine, as waves splash onto sunny beaches. A sleepy capital city, travellers have been resting, relaxing and rejuvenating here for centuries – including Christopher Columbus, whose presence remains in museums dedicated to his visit. He called in to restock water supplies while voyaging to discover the new world. Silbo, an extraordinary whistling language, used to communicate over great distances, adds even more cultural fascination to this luscious island's mountain scenery, crafts and traditions. Head to beaches like Playa de San Sebastian to revel in the black volcanic sand that the Canaries are known for, and Playa de la Cueva, where you can look across to Tenerife's soaring cone. Or explore this island's own natural wonders, at the verdant terraced landscapes of La Gomera's UNESCO World Heritage Site, Garajonay National Park. Trek through the trails of Laurisilva forests, laurel plants and heather trees. La Laguna Grande is another elegant location of colourful natural beauty, where island legends of witchcraft swirl. Discover ceramic traditions - handed down through generations - at El Cercado, where glazed jugs used to store chestnuts are moulded by hand. Squeeze more local charms into your bulging suitcase along San Sebastian's pretty Calle Real street - where everything from palm honey to woven baskets and local snacks are up for grabs. Or settle into city squares, where life plays out in palm tree shade and café gatherings.

Day 33 Day at sea

Days at sea are the perfect opportunity to relax, unwind and catch up with what you've been meaning to do. So whether that is going to the gym, visiting the spa, whale watching, catching up on your reading or simply topping up your tan, these blue sea days are the perfect balance to busy days spent exploring shore side.

Day 34 Agadir

Boasting an impressive 300 days of sun per year, there is a reason why Agadir is Morocco's premier holiday resort. Nicknamed the "Miami of Morocco", the resort has sea and sand in abundance, along with a dreamy 10 km beach – perfect for travellers who want sheltered swimming or enjoy water-based fun in the sun. By contrast to the rest of the country, Agadir is thoroughly modern. An earthquake destroyed the city in 1960, killing 15,00 in 13 seconds and leaving another 35,000 homeless. In its place, and under the direction of Le Corbusier, a new city with a new direction was built. Instead of souks and medinas, think modern architecture, wide, tree-lined avenues, open squares and pedestrian precincts. Low rise hotels, boutiques and apartment blocks line the splendid waterfront. While all the original landmarks were destroyed (many not once, but twice, in the 1960 earthquake but also in the 1755 Lisbon earthquake), Agadir strove to rebuild as much as it could. Thus the fabled 1540 Oufia Fort, originally built in the mid-16th century by Saadian Sultan Mohammed ech Cheikh was painstakingly recreated with as much authenticity as possible. The ancient kasbah sits at an amazing vantage point (Oufia being the Amazigh word for 'above'). The inscription "God, King, Country" over the entrance in both Dutch and Arabic is one of the few original elements and dates back to the middle of the 18th century, when the kasbah was initially restored. The Kasbah offer by far the best views of the city.

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Day 35 Safi

Lying in a natural harbour to the west of Morocco, Safi (formerly Asafi) carries the weight of legend. As one of the oldest cities in Morocco, it is thought to have been founded by Hanno the Navigator in the 5th or 6th century BC. The etymology of the city's name allegedly comes from a sailor who got lost and sighed as he passed Safi's coastline (Safi meaning "oh my regret"). However, there could be another, more literal translation. In Berber, the word Asafi means to spill or flood, undoubtedly referring to the rich sea that makes Safi one of the biggest and safest seaports in the country. The city has been - and still is - a major player in Morocco's trading industry. Its port has seen everything from gold in the 11th century to today's principal export, sardines. Portuguese rule in the 1500s saw the Castelo do Mar be built, an imposing fortress that still presides over the city today. Under Portuguese rule, other Europeans came and by the mid-16th century, Safi was Morocco's principal trading hub. This would all cease however under Sultan Mohammed ben Abdallah in the mid-18th century, who would order that all foreign trade must take place in his newly built city of Mogador (Essaouira). Famous for its pottery of all shapes and sizes, Safi is one destination where you will want to support the local economy. The potter's quarter, just out of the city walls, boasts the country's oldest kilns and is a mecca for all those who love both ceramics and tradition.

Day 36 Day at sea

Days at sea are the perfect opportunity to relax, unwind and catch up with what you've been meaning to do. So whether that is going to the gym, visiting the spa, whale watching, catching up on your reading or simply topping up your tan, these blue sea days are the perfect balance to busy days spent exploring shore side.

Day 37 Lisbon

A glorious mosaic of beauty, freedom and authenticity, Portugal's capital is a stirring artwork of a city. Known for the seven hills it spreads across, and its stirring fado music, Lisbon is a pastel-coloured blend of houses and beautiful tile artworks - and this creative city strikes a perfect harmony between natural and manmade beauty. Stroll along Alfama's steep, cobbled streets as you explore one of the city's oldest neighbourhoods - where each house and door could be its own photograph. Look for the decorative tiles, with the distinctive blues and whites of Azulejo ceramics, and visit the dedicated museum to learn more. Afterwards, wind up to São Jorge Castle, where views out across Lisbon's red rooftops unravel. Just one of many majestic viewpoints, you can also seek out Miradouro da Graça for perhaps Lisbon's finest panorama, with the copper-coloured suspension bridge stretching over sparkling water beyond the sea of buildings. The elegant Tower of Belém rises in the Tagus estuary and is a historic defender of these shores. The grand, carved cloisters of Jerónimos Monastery spread out close by, and there's another UNESCO recognised location close by at Sintra, where a colourful town is set amid thick gardens and towering mountains - capped by the royal Pena Palace. Later, relax and take a quick break to drink Ginjinha, a cherry liqueur made from chocolate cups instead of coffee. Lisboetas have a sweet tooth, and the famous Pastel de Nata's crumbling pastry and caramelised-custard topping is the essential accompaniment to any coffee stop.

Day 38 Post Cruise

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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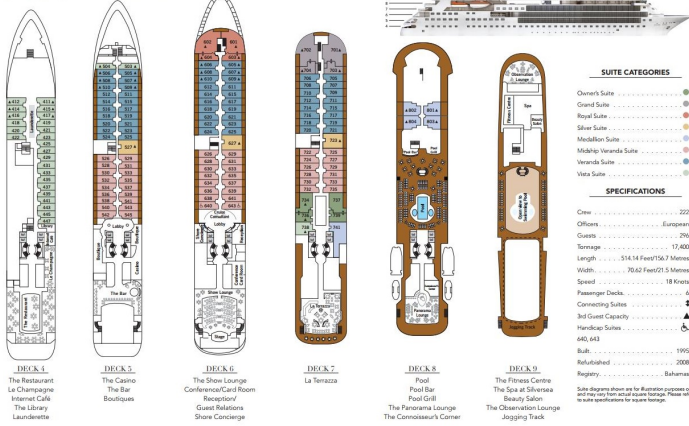
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