

The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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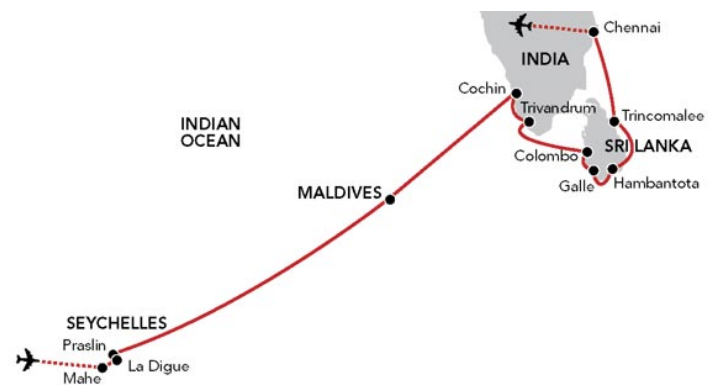
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PASSAGE TO INDIA

We find it difficult to imagine a more perfect way to escape the British winter than to enjoy the warmth and beauty of the Indian Ocean aboard the wonderfully comfortable MS Island Sky as she undertakes exactly the type of itinerary that suits her best. Join us in the tropics as we journey from the islands and atolls of the Indian Ocean and around India's beautiful southern coast. Our journey to the Indian continent first allows us to explore the Seychelles and Maldives, two of the world's most pristine and picturesque archipelagos. With our purpose built Zodiacs we will land on otherwise inaccessible beaches, explore vast lagoons and coral reefs and encounter some extraordinarily beautiful tropical scenery. Our small ship is ideal for such a region, allowing us to enjoy the peace and tranquillity of this paradise. After all, it would be disappointing to find yourself in the company of hundreds on what was a deserted beach. Contrasting well with this natural world exploration, our itinerary then takes a more cultural focus as we reach the Indian state of Kerala. Our first port of call is Cochin, an ancient city of islands which has for centuries attracted traders and adventurers from Europe and the far Orient. Hugging the Kerala coast, we move on to Trivandrum, then across to Sri Lanka. Here, an overnight trip allows us to explore the interior and the old capital of Kandy, and we then move around the southern coast of the island to take in the Dutch colonial town of Galle, and Yala National Park, renowned for its rich wildlife, most notably its many elephants and vast array of bird life. This unusual itinerary will appeal to those looking for something different, incorporating explorations of the natural world with a more expedition focus, followed by a fascinating look at southern

India, visiting a number of ports which are off the usual cruise route. From the luxury of the MS Island Sky, we can enjoy great food, company and an expert team which makes travellers cruise on her time and



time again.

ITINERARY

Day 1 - LONDON TO MAHE.

Fly by scheduled indirect flight.

Day 2 - MAHE.

Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the MS Island Sky for embarkation. Enjoy dinner onboard as we moor overnight.

Day 3 - PRASLIN & LA DIGUE.

Sail at first light to the island of Praslin. We will explore the 'Vallee de Mai', the last remnant of the original high-canopied Seychelles palm forest and home to the coco de mer. We will walk its paths looking out for the rare black parrot and enjoying

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its natural beauty which so overpowered General Gordon. Sail during lunch to nearby La Digue. There is a hint of Henry Moore in the huge granite boulders that lie like giant sculptures on the brilliant white beaches of the island. Tour the forested nature reserve and the L'Union Estate, a superbly restored 19th century colonial house. Rent a bicycle, ride in an ox-drawn cart or relax, swim and snorkel from one of the amazingly beautiful beaches.

Days 4-6 - AT SEA.

Relax and enjoy our days at sea. Watch the bird and marine life and listen to the intriguing talks by our expedition team. We are assured of warm weather so make the most of the fresh air, get lost in a novel from your deck chair and enjoy all the comforts of the MS Island Sky.

Days 7-10 - MALDIVES.

We spend four days exploring the whole archipelago. This vast area of ocean is scattered with staggeringly beautiful dots of land surrounded by a cerulean sea. It offers some of the finest lagoons, beaches and coral reefs in the world. Our day to day schedule will be left in the capable hands of the Captain and Expedition Leader, but we hope to include visits to Hithadhoo, Meenu Atoll and Baa Atoll. Our expedition staff will be on hand to lead guided walking tours to view the birds and wildlife on land whilst our snorkel master will take us to some exceptional reefs to view stunning coral and marine life. On our last day we will clear customs at Uligamu Island and enjoy an afternoon at sea as we sail to India.

Day 11 - COCHIN.

Our first port of call in India is Cochin, an extraordinary city with strong influences of Portuguese, Chinese, Arab, Dutch and of course British still much in evidence today. This morning we will

drive to Alleppey, known as the "City of Canals" where will board a local boat for a cruise in the backwaters sailing past colonial warehouses and coconut thatched houses on traditional rice barges. After a local lunch we will return to Cochin to explore the curious mix of cultures and religions that together, with its strong trading past in spices and silks, make a fascinating city. We will visit Mattancherry Palace with its ornately decorated rooms including some marvellous ancient murals. Later, continue to the oldest European church in India, St Francis, the ruins of Fort Cochin and time permitting, the Pardesi Synagogue. We return to the ship for dinner and this evening will enjoy a Kathakali performance onboard. Kathakali is one of the main forms of classical dance drama of India and indigenous to Kerala and based on the subject from the Ramayana, Mahabharata and stories from Saiva literature.

Day 12 - TRIVANDRUM.

Be on deck as we sail into the Kerala port of Trivandrum, a magical sight. Built over seven hills, the 'city of the sacred serpents' retains some of old Kerala's ambience, with its pagoda shaped buildings, redtiled roofs and narrow winding lanes. There is much to see here and on our morning excursion we will include the old fort area around the 260 year old Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple. In the afternoon there is free time to relax on the local beaches or explore the town independently. Alternatively there will be an optional excursion to Padamanabhapuram Palace situated in a complex of buildings which date from the 16th century and built by the maharajas of Travencore that resided there. It is one of the best examples of Keralan architecture and the hall mark of Keralan and Dravidian building art.

Days 13 & 14 - COLOMBO

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After a morning at sea we arrive in Sri Lanka's capital city where there is a choice of activities for the next two days. Join an overnight visit to Kandy during which we will visit the elephant orphanage at Pinnawela en route. The orphanage looks after elephants that have been abandoned or injured until they can be released back into the wild. Once in Kandy, there will be a visit to the "Temple of the Tooth" which holds the Sacred Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha and surrounded by the Bogambara Lake. The following morning there will be a visit to the botanical gardens before returning to the ship in Colombo in the late afternoon. Alternatively you may wish to remain in Colombo and enjoy an afternoon tour which includes the Gangarama Buddhist Temple, Colombo National and Dutch period museums and the Pettah area with its bustling local market. The following day we will travel to the tea growing area of Ingiriya, a lush region boasting ideal conditions for growing tea and rubber. We will see the process of making tea which has been grown here since 1867 and have a chance to enjoy a fresh cup of the final product.

Day 15 - GALLE.

Awake this morning in Galle where, on a morning tour, we visit the Old Dutch Fort, the museum which is housed in an old Dutch house depicting life in the Dutch colony, the lighthouse, mosque and church. In the afternoon there will be free time to wander the narrow streets of traditional houses and shop for lace and local handicrafts.

Day 16 - HAMBANTOTA.

From our berth at Hambantota we will drive inland to Yala National Park. Also known as Ruhuna, it is an important national park on the south east coast of Sri Lanka. Much of the reserve is parkland, but it also contains jungle, beaches, freshwater lakes

and rivers and scrubland. Yala has the world's highest concentration of leopards, although seeing this largely nocturnal carnivore still requires some luck. There are good numbers of Asian elephants, crocodile, wild boar, water buffalo and grey langurs amongst other large animals. The open parkland attracts birds of prey such as whitebellied sea eagle and the wetlands have waders, painted storks and the rare black-necked stork. Land birds are in abundance and include sirkeer malkoha, Indian peafowl and Sri Lanka jungle fowl.

Day 17 - TRINCOMALEE.

Today we are on the north east coast of Sri Lanka in one of the finest deep water harbours of the world. Choose to join an excursion of Trincomalee which includes the Fort Frederick built in 1676 by the Dutch, or perhaps relax on one of the local beaches renowned as some of the best in Sri Lanka. Alternatively join a longer excursion to Polonnaruwa, the former capital with ruins that date back to the 12th century which were the original site of the sacred Buddha's tooth. Set in mature lush greenery with an abundance of wildlife that includes monkeys and many species of bird, we will have a chance to explore the ruins and visit the excellent museum.

Day 18 - CHENNAI.

After a morning and afternoon at sea we return to India and the city of Chennai this evening. Founded in 1639 by the East India Company, it was established as a fort and trading post. Time permitting we will have a chance to walk through the city to see the Kapaleswarar Temple, Cathedral of Saint Thomas and see the excellent collection of Raj memorabilia at the Fort of St George.

Day 19 - CHENNAI TO LONDON.

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Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for your scheduled indirect flight to London.

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YOUR SHIP: ISLAND SKY

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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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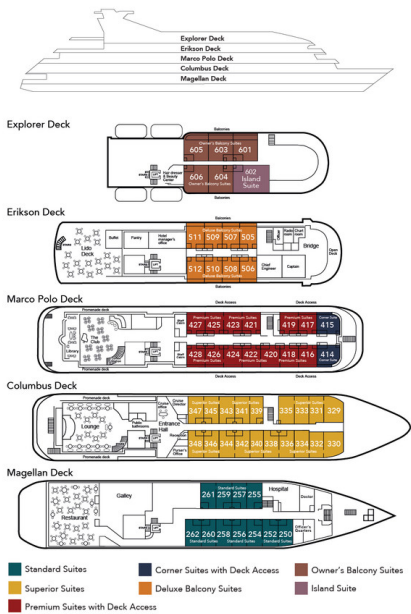
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PRICING



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