



SPLENDOURS OF THE SEYCHELLES

Sailing in the tropics, when back at home the UK is in the depths of mid-winter, is a pleasurable enough thought; when the destination is the Seychelles such thoughts are irresistible. The islands and atolls of the Seychelles are quite simply some of the most beautiful on earth and remain a natural paradise of deserted beaches of white sand washed by warm, clear turquoise seas and shaded by abundant palms and kindly towering takamakas. The Seychelles epitomises all that is faraway and exotic. Indeed as you stand back to admire the vista there is sometimes an almost surreal quality where the light and nature conspire to produce an impossibly romantic scene. Such beauty also comes with its cast of characters, giant tortoises roam, colonies of birds congregate overhead and in the seas a kaleidoscope of tropical fish swim amongst the coral. Those who have sailed with us through these extraordinary waters have experienced the magic of dropping anchor off a remote atoll at first light and watched the dawn illuminate the watery horizon. Then as the sun rises, have ventured ashore by Zodiac, landing on a deserted beach to discover the rich bird and marine life, the exotic flora, nature reserves and working estates of cinnamon and coconuts, breadfruit and bananas and all wonder of strange tropical fruits. If ever there was a region perfect for expedition cruising it is here and the MS Hebridean Sky is the perfect size and equipped vessel for our voyage. Our journey will include all aspects of this extraordinary island nation from the developed Inner Seychelles with staggeringly beautiful islands such as Praslin and Grande Soeur to the less known and rarely visited Outer Seychelles. Here we will sail all the way to Aldabra, the world's largest coral atoll and a World Heritage

Site. Being one of the most difficult places in the world to access and having a lack of freshwater has saved Aldabra from any tourism development and only small vessels like the MS Hebridean Sky are allowed to visit. It is therefore a great privilege to be able to land on the untouched beaches of Aldabra, the breeding ground for thousands of giant tortoises and home to some of the rarest birds in the Indian Ocean. To explore the abundant crystal clear waters of the vast lagoon and to set foot on atolls which have never been exploited by the hand of man is a rare



experience.

ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Mahe, Seychelles.
Fly by scheduled indirect flight.



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Day 2 Mahe.

Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the MS Hebridean Sky moored in Port Victoria. Enjoy welcome dinner and drinks as we sail the short distance to Praslin and our overnight anchorage.

Day 3 Praslin & Grande Soeur.

Today we will land on Praslin to 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 its natural beauty. Return to the ship for lunch as we sail the short distance to Grande Soeur, an idyllic uninhabited island. We will spend the afternoon walking the island trails which link the island's white sand beaches and maybe catch sight of some of the giant Aldabra tortoises or enjoy the opportunity to snorkel in the turquoise waters.

Day 4 Amirante Islands.

This morning we arrive at the 28 islands in the Amirante Group of islands which were discovered by Vasco de Gama in 1501 and are considered to be some of the most pristine and untouched islands in the world. If conditions permit we will spend the day on Desroches, the largest of the islands, although still only measuring six kilometres by 1.5 kilometres. Enjoy nature walks with our naturalists and members of the island's conservation team observing the flora and fauna and in particular the giant tortoises and nesting turtles. Meanwhile keen snorkellers will have the chance to swim over the outlying coral.

Days 5 & 6 Farquhar Group.

Spend the morning at sea as we cruise to the Farquhar Group which consists of ten islands and atolls which cover an area of

370 square kilometres. We will spend two days here and will discover the Providence Atoll before we anchor off Farquhar where we will use our Zodiacs to explore the sparkling lagoon of this remote, atoll ringed island of coconut and casuarina trees. Hawksbill and green sea turtles come to the atoll to nest and several of the Farquhar Group's islands are Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas. We will visit the island's settlement, take walks looking for the birdlife or snorkel in the clear waters.

Day 7 Cosmoledo.

Today we explore Cosmoledo where a huge ring of twelve islands circles a lagoon. Many of the atolls are still to be surveyed and we will explore some of them by Zodiac. This is an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area with all three species of booby found in the Seychelles including the last breeding site for the brown booby. We also hope to spot sooty terns and great frigate birds on land and have the opportunity to see turtles as we swim and snorkel in the lagoon.

Day 8 Aldabra.

Aldabra, the island referred to by Sir Julian Huxley as "One of nature's treasures and should belong to the whole world" is unique and every time we call at what is believed to be the world's largest atoll we find something new of interest. Sightings have been made of the extremely rare white throated rail and the atoll is also home to the world's second largest colony of frigate birds and to the largest crab, the coconut crab. Whilst exploring by Zodiac it is difficult to know in which direction to look. The clear blue seas abound with life, the skies are alive with varied birdlife and ashore giant land tortoises forage as they have done for millions of years. We hope to explore Picard Island with a short walk to see some of the thousands of tortoises and numerous robber crabs or swim in the lagoon, a

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vast 17 mile stretch of shallow clear water. From our Zodiacs we can watch the ever-changing undersea world and snorkel in colourful coral waters.

Day 9 At Sea.

Spend a relaxing day at sea as we return to the islands of the Inner Seychelles.

Day 10 Alphonse Islands.

There are three islands in the Alphonse group and as we approach the islands you will understand why they are regarded by many to be the most beautiful of the 115 islands in the Seychelles archipelago. On the main island the circular lagoon offers good snorkelling and there are a number of tracks across the island to enjoy island walks.

Day 11 Aride & Curieuse.

Early this morning we will anchor off Aride, one of the finest and most important seabird islands in the Indian Ocean. Over one million seabirds breed on the island including tropical shearwater, lesser noddies, frigatebirds and roseate tern and also five species unique to the Seychelles such as the Seychelles warbler and Seychelles magpie robin. The island is largely covered in native woodland including the endemic wright's gardenia, a shrub with beautifully scented flowers found nowhere else in the world. Sail over lunch to Curieuse, a rugged island which was once home to a leper colony and now houses an eco-museum and visitor centre. The island is an important nesting site for hawksbill turtles and boasts endemic vine and mangroves which we explore on an island walk.

Day 12 Mahe to London.

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

Day 13 London.

Arrive this morning.

Please Note:

Flexibility is the key to an expedition cruise; sometimes the whole day's schedule will be changed to maximise your experience, something that would not be possible on a large cruise ship. Each day holds something new and below are some extracts from the ship's log from last season which will provide you with an idea of what to expect.



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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.

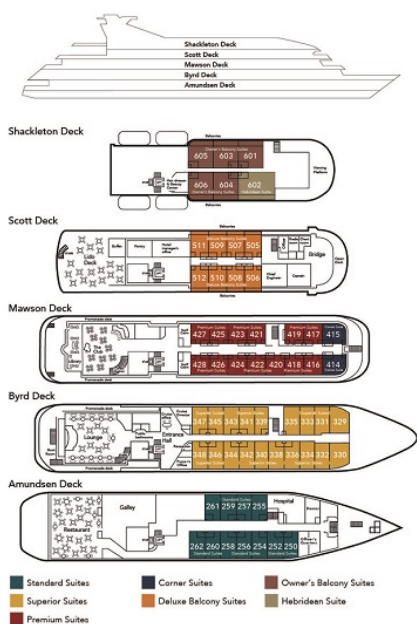
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PRICING



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