

SPECIAL  
OFFER - SAVE  
**£400**  
PER PERSON

# ANCIENT & NATURAL WONDERS OF CENTRAL AMERICA

A VOYAGE FROM COSTA RICA TO NASSAU  
ABOARD MS HEBRIDEAN SKY

10<sup>TH</sup> TO 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2020



NOBLE CALEDONIA



Sloth



Isla de Providencia



Temple of the jaguar, Lamanai

Let us take you to some of the loveliest and least explored coasts and islands of the Caribbean Sea and Central America. Our voyage promises to be a fascinating one combining as it does an exploration of wildlife-rich Costa Rica with calls to some little-known islands of Colombia, Honduras and Guatemala and visits to the fascinating sites of Lamanai in Belize and Chichen Itza in Mexico. Our days will be spent swimming from pristine beaches, searching for endemic flora and fauna and learning about the history of the ancient Mayan civilisations, the colonial years and the more recent events of the region. Our journey also includes the vibrant capital of Cuba, Havana, a veritable feast for the traveller with its colonial squares and buildings, delightful people and a lifestyle that is more 1930s than that of today. We have two full days here to explore before our last call to the Bahamian island of Bimini, a relaxing end to what promises to be an endlessly fascinating voyage.



The Central American countries have over the past decade grown in their appeal to the UK traveller. No wonder when you consider the attractions; teeming rain forest, cool cloud forest, sugar-sand beaches and a remarkably diverse landscape, wildlife and culture. However, when exploring the region, the usual option is long, overland travel traversing rugged roads in order to get around. There is an easier and more comfortable way to explore the region and that is by small ship and the MS Hebridean Sky is the perfect vessel for such a journey and our Zodiacs will be put to good use in the more remote places allowing us to land and explore otherwise unreachable places. With just over 100 passengers, we can explore in small groups ashore and enjoy a convivial atmosphere on board.

## The Itinerary

**Day 1 London to San Jose, Costa Rica.** Fly by scheduled indirect flight. Arrive this evening and transfer to our hotel for an overnight stay. The remainder of the day and evening are at leisure.

**Day 2 San Jose to Puerto Limon.** Enjoy breakfast in the hotel and a morning at leisure before we transfer to Puerto Limon to embark the MS Hebridean Sky this afternoon. We will have Welcome Dinner and Drinks as we moor overnight.

**Day 3 Puerto Limon.** This morning we head south to the Cahuita National Park. The area is filled with wildlife that includes howler

monkeys, white-faced capuchin monkeys, racoons, sloths, otters, coatis, agoutis, armadillos and porcupines. Several avian species also live in the swamp forest, including the green ibis, the green kingfisher, the yellow-crowned night heron, the frigate bird and the boat-billed heron, among others. Our naturalist guides will lead us through the trails of the rainforest, sharing their vast knowledge of this fragile ecosystem. After lunch on board the MS Hebridean Sky, the afternoon is free to relax or join a restored passenger train and travel through beautiful scenery to catch a glimpse of some more of Costa Rica's amazing wildlife such as sloths and monkeys. The train track is part of the 3' 6" gauge Atlantic Railway, opened in 1890 to link San

Jose with the country's east coast but closed to regular services after severe damage by an earthquake in 1991. For the second part of the trip, we will board a boat and travel along the scenic Tortuguero canals, where waterfowl, white-faced and spider monkeys can be spotted.

**Day 4 Isla de Providencia, Colombia.** Often referred to as 'Old Providence' in English, Providencia is a beautiful Colombian island that is little known and relatively untouched by the hand of tourism. Along with its smaller sister island of Santa Catalina, it is enclosed by an extensive barrier reef system of some 35 kilometres in length, making it one of the most significant reefs in the world. Captured twice by Henry Morgan and his

buccaneers who aimed to make it a British possession, it nevertheless ended up Spanish and is now a remote Colombian island. After a relaxing morning at sea, we arrive at lunchtime and will use our Zodiacs to tender ashore where we spend the afternoon on an island tour and travel in local boats to Crab Cay for snorkelling.

**Day 5 At Sea.** Relax on board, find a spot on deck to read or maybe join one of our lectures as we continue our journey north.

**Day 6 Guanaja Island, Honduras.** The easternmost of the three Bay Islands, Guanaja is covered in a forest of Caribbean pine and, when Christopher Columbus landed on the island in 1502, he named it



Havana



Hummingbird

the Isla de Pinos (Island of Pines). Unlike some of the surrounding islands, only small ships like ours can anchor here. Our Zodiacs will take us ashore and we will spend the day exploring the island and its surroundings. Visit the small town, use local boats to explore the mangrove channels, snorkel in one of the nearby cays, visit the small turtle sanctuary or join nature walks with the local guides.

#### Day 7 Livingston, Guatemala.

Surrounded by water and jungle, Livingston is a settlement of Garifuna people, accessible only by sea, which is just one of the things that makes it unique among Guatemalan cities. We anchor and transfer onto local boats and venture up the Rio Dulce hoping to see pelicans, cormorants and herons as we cruise up the river before arriving at the Ak'tenamit project, a local social development organisation supporting sustainable tourism. Here we will walk the trails viewing birds and plants before returning to spend time in Livingston itself.

#### Day 8 Belize City, Belize.

This morning MS Hebridean Sky will arrive in Belize and anchor off Belize City. We have an interesting day ahead as we travel inland to the ancient Mayan city of Lamanai (translates to 'submerged crocodile'). From the nearby town of Orange Walk Bridge, we board local boats for a wildlife cruise through mangroves, wetlands and forests. Look out for egrets, herons, kingfishers, snail kites and black collared hawks as we make our way up river past Morelet's crocodiles. A short walk through the jungle brings us to the Lamanai Archaeological Reserve with its massive pyramids which are in fact pyramids built upon pyramids. Local guides will tell the story of this site which is the only Mayan city known to have been inhabited through every age of Mayan civilisation.

#### Day 9 Costa Maya, Mexico.

From the port of Costa Maya, we will head inland to the recently excavated site of Kohunlich, named after the giant Cahoon palm trees found nearby. The jungle city appears to have functioned as a regional centre and a stop along trade routes between the Yucatan, Guatemala and Belize. We will find raised platforms, pyramids, citadels, courtyards and plazas all laid out to channel drainage into a system of cisterns and an enormous reservoir to collect rainwater. Its most famous structure, however, is a classic pyramid: the 5th-century Temple of Masks. It features a central stairway flanked by eight 10-foot-high masks that were originally thought to depict the Sun God "Kinich Ahau." We will have lunch in a local restaurant before returning to ship in the late afternoon.

**Day 10 Cozumel.** The island of Cozumel is our base for a choice of tours today. We will travel by boat to mainland Mexico for our full day tour to the Mayan site of Chichen Itza, one of the new "seven wonders of the world". Our visit will include the great main plaza with the adjoining imposing El Castillo, also known as the Pyramid of Kukulcan. Other buildings include the Temple of the Carved Panels, the Temple of the Warriors and the nearby Group of the Thousand Columns, the Ball Court and the Caracol Observatory. Alternatively stay on the island of Cozumel and visit the pre-Columbian Mayan site of San Gervasio. This was a hub of worship for the goddess Ix Chel, the deity of childbirth, fertility, medicine and weaving and women would make a pilgrimage to the site at least once in their lives. Return to the ship for lunch and a free afternoon in the local town.

**Day 11 At Sea.** After a busy few days enjoy a relaxing day at sea, maybe join a lecture or find a spot on deck to settle down with a book.

#### Days 12 & 13 Havana, Cuba.

We have two full days to explore Havana and will offer a choice of several excursions during our time here. Discover Habana Vieja (Old Havana) with its twisting, cobbled streets that lead to beautifully restored Baroque churches, castles and palaces and visit the 16th century Plaza de Armas, the oldest plaza in the city and its original administrative centre. Learn more about Hemingway's Cuba and visit the legendary writer's finca in San Francisco de Paula and the Ernest Hemingway Museum. Later, call into Cojimar Village, the inspiration for 'The Old Man and the Sea'. Explore modern Havana on a drive along the Malecon, Havana's seafront

to Vedado. See the Plaza de la Revolucion and the headquarters of President Fidel Castro and his Council of Ministers. We also hope to embrace one of the traditional industries of Cuba with a visit to a cigar factory learning about the traditional techniques still in practice today. For those wishing to venture further, we will offer a full day tour to the Vinales Valley in the Pinar del Rio Province. It is here that some of the best tobacco is grown, harvested and processed. We will learn about the production techniques, see the traditional Cuban country lifestyle and enjoy lunch before our scenic drive back to the ship. We also hope to have musicians join us on board for a concert as we moor overnight.

**Day 14 Bimini, Bahamas.** After a busy couple of days we have a relaxing morning at sea before we arrive in the Bahamas at lunchtime. The island of Bimini is just 50 miles from the Florida coast and in the prohibition days was used as an offshore speakeasy. Today it is more famous for its miles of pristine beaches and we will have a leisurely afternoon to either wander on the island, sit on the beach or enjoy a swim in the sea.

#### Day 15 Nassau to London.

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

**Day 16 London.** Arrive this morning.

### SHIP TO SHORE

Please note that, although this cruise is not classified as an expedition cruise, the vessel will regularly be at anchor and Zodiacs or tenders will be used to transport guests ashore.

### PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

#### SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £400 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY

Deck	Suite Category	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
Amundsen	Standard	£8395	£7995
Byrd	Superior	£8595	£8195
Mawson	Premium	£8995	£8595
Mawson	Corner	£9495	£9095
Scott	Deluxe Balcony	£9995	£9595
Shackleton	Owner's Balcony	£10795	£10395
Shackleton	Hebridean	£11995	£11595
Amundsen	Standard for sole use	£10695	£10295
Byrd	Superior for sole use	£10995	£10595

**PRICE INCLUDES:** Economy class scheduled air travel • Overnight hotel accommodation in San Jose on a bed and breakfast basis • 13 nights aboard the MS Hebridean Sky on a full board basis • Wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner • Shore excursions • Noble Caledonia onboard team • Gratuities • Transfers • Port taxes.  
**Not Included:** Travel insurance, visas.



## Pre-Cruise Costa Rica Extension

6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Before embarking the MS Hebridean Sky we are offering a six night extension in Costa Rica to explore this wonderful and biologically diverse country. We will visit the Monteverde Cloud Forest, an area of extremely high biodiversity and home to many species of mammal, birds, butterflies, insects, trees and plants as well as Arenal Volcano National Park.

### The Itinerary

**Day 1 London to San Jose, Costa Rica.** Fly by scheduled indirect flight from London to San Jose. On arrival, transfer to the Real Intercontinental Hotel or similar. The remainder of the day is at leisure.

**Day 2 San Jose to Monteverde.** Following breakfast at our hotel we will start our journey to Monteverde stopping on the way at the Scarlet Macaw Sanctuary, a Costa Rican wildlife conservation charity working to save and protect endangered species from extinction. El Manantial works with some of the most endangered native birds of Costa Rica, focusing on the rarest species and the most fragile habitats. Upon arrival at the sanctuary, the scarlet macaw is sure to announce your arrival and their brilliant red plumage is stunning. As you stroll the grounds and gardens of the sanctuary, the macaws and their neighbours fly freely about, affording ample time and opportunity to see these breathtaking beauties. After our visit and lunch we will continue to Monteverde and check in to El Establo Hotel for a two night stay. Meet later on in the evening for dinner.

**Day 3 Monteverde.** Today we will experience one of the five hanging bridges of Monteverde Cloud Forest Biological Reserve which cross the canyons below and bring us face to face with the upper level of the forest canopy. The trails extend for slightly over a mile and a half and we will be accompanied by local guides. Biologists now know that about 90 percent of all organisms in a rainforest is found in the canopy. Among the 400 species of birds, some of the best-known species are the quetzal, the bird bell, the black turkey bird, the mot-mot, the orange-bellied trogon, and the bare-neck umbrella bird. After lunch we will enjoy a further exploration of the forest and make our way up to one of the highest mountains in the area by sky tram, whilst also having the opportunity to participate in a skywalk, a more sedate and tranquil way to take in the natural beauty of the forest. Dinner tonight will be served at a local restaurant.

**Day 4 Monteverde to Arenal.** Leaving Monteverde after breakfast we start our stunning journey to Arenal. We will stop for lunch at Villa Blanca, a hotel set in the cloud forest with the option to explore the manicured

garden or alternatively walk along the nature trails in the forest. If time permits, we may also stop at the Los Angeles Cloud Forest before arriving in Arenal this afternoon where we transfer to the Kioro Hotel for a two night stay.

**Day 5 Arenal.** After breakfast, we depart for a guided visit to Arenal Park. Here, we will take a walk through the area where the Arenal volcanic eruption took place in 1968, learning about the destruction this caused and the subsequent rebirth of life via the rich mineral deposits the eruption provided to the region. There will also be the opportunity to enjoy a treetop cable car ride and, for the more adventurous, to participate in a zip-line adventure providing an exhilarating bird's eye view of the park. Following lunch, there will be time to relax and explore Arenal at leisure and maybe enjoy a dip in one of the hot spring pools.

**Day 6 Arenal to Puerto Limon.** This morning we will drive to the Sarapiquí region where we will find the fertile lands used to grow pineapples, bananas and papaya. In Puerto Viejo we find a river community surrounded by rainforest and plantations but also a gateway to the biodiversity of the Sarapiquí River. We will take a boat ride along the river through the rainforest which is home to toucans, monkeys, sloths and crocodiles before ending at a private farm for lunch. We will continue our journey to Puerto Limon and embark the MS Hebridean Sky this afternoon. Continue as per day 2 of the main itinerary.

### PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Twin: **£1895** Single: **£2475**

**Price Includes:** Overnight hotel accommodation in San Jose on a bed and breakfast basis, two nights hotel accommodation in Arenal and Monteverde on a bed and breakfast basis, lunch on days 2 to 6, dinner on days 2 & 3, excursions as described with English speaking guides, gratuities, transfers.

**Not Included:** Travel insurance.

# MS HEBRIDEAN SKY



Alfresco Dining



Owner's Balcony Suite



The Restaurant

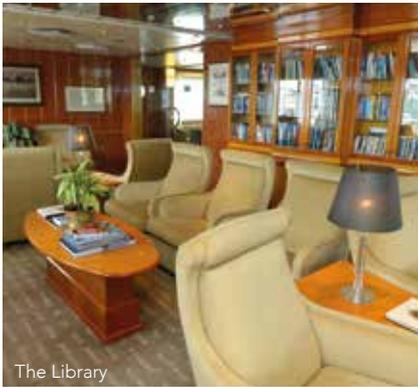
The MS Hebridean Sky is one of our three flag ships and sister vessel to the MS Island Sky and MS Caledonian Sky. All three vessels were built in the same ship yard in Italy at similar times and share the same excellent attributes that make them three of the finest small ships in the world. With a maximum passenger capacity of only 118, a vessel of her size is capable of carrying many more but instead the MS Hebridean Sky has the benefit of unusually large suites, luxuriously appointed public areas and spacious outside decks.

## Your Suite

On board there are 59 exceptionally spacious and well-designed suites. All feature a sitting 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 with those on the Scott and Shackleton Decks featuring private balconies. Each suite affords considerable comfort with en-suite bathroom featuring 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 and a telephone in each suite. Bottled water, Egyptian cotton sheets, dressing gowns and slippers are also provided for your comfort. Other facilities include a programmable electronic safe, hairdryer, assorted Molton Brown toiletries and individually controlled air-conditioning and heating. Soft hues and blended tones enhance the traditional maritime style making the passenger accommodation an inviting and relaxing place to be.

## Your Dining

With only one sitting and a maximum of just over 100 passengers, the cuisine on board the MS Hebridean Sky is of a consistent superior quality that befits such a vessel. In keeping with the informal atmosphere on board, when dining you are able to choose your seating arrangements and choice of restaurants at your leisure; whether that be joining a table of four to six other passengers in the elegant à la carte Restaurant or, outside buffet-style on the Lido Deck in the evening sunshine. In the main Restaurant, breakfast is served buffet-style, with certain items cooked to order on request. Lunch and dinner menus offer plenty of choice, often reflecting the daily catch and local delicacies. The Welcome and Farewell dinners are a sumptuous five course affair. To enhance your dining experience further a selection of wines is included with both meals. Afternoon tea and pre-dinner canapés take place in either the comfort of the Lounge or out on the Lido Deck when the weather is favourable. Tea and coffee are also available 24 hours a day. Special diets can be catered for with sufficient notice.



The Library



Superior Suite



The Club

### Your Space

The spacious and finely decorated public rooms include a large Lounge on the Byrd Deck featuring a selection of seating options from individual armchairs and sofas to side cushioned benches. Daily briefings given by the Cruise Director and talks from Guest Speakers and expedition staff take place in the Lounge. In addition to the main Lounge, there is also The Club, located on the Mawson Deck which features the main bar where the onboard pianist plays periodically throughout the day. The Club also features a 24-hour tea and coffee station. Towards the aft of the ship on the Mawson Deck is the Library. Well stocked with reference books pertaining to the destinations the vessel is visiting and a selection of essential reads, you will not find yourself short of excellent literature on board. A selection of games and two computers offering complimentary internet access can also be found in the Library. The main Restaurant, which can seat all guests at one sitting, is located on the Amundsen Deck, and outside there is a rear Lido Deck located on the Scott Deck where meals are served in warm weather under shade. Further to this on the top Shackleton Deck there is an observation area, complete with sun loungers for sunbathing, relaxing with a book or catching up with fellow travellers. The Promenade Deck wraps around the whole ship providing outstanding views. There is also a small beauty salon on board with appointments made on request. Throughout the vessel, carefully chosen artwork and photos reflect the destinations we sail to.

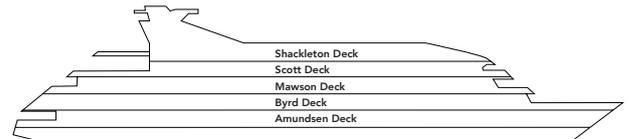
### Your Comfort

The MS Hebridean Sky is equipped with the latest safety, navigation and communications equipment along with roll stabilisers to minimise the ship's motion. During your voyage we hope to offer you the opportunity to visit the Captain and Officers on the Bridge to check the vessel's progress by charts and learn more about your journey. On board you will also find a clinic and Doctor and a lift that serves all decks. When at anchor our nimble Zodiacs will ferry you ashore or, on select cruises, enjoy Zodiac cruises getting you closer to the natural world.

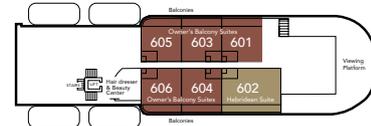
### Your Life On Board

The atmosphere on board is warm and convivial and more akin to a private yacht or country hotel in which you can learn more about the wonderful destinations you are visiting in the company of like-minded people. There is a high ratio of crew to passengers and our friendly crew of 75 are mainly Filipino and Eastern European and our Scandinavian Captains are experienced mariners. After a day ashore you will return to the comfort and peace of a well-run and exceedingly comfortable ship where peace, high quality of service and attention to detail are the order of the day. A little music in the Lounge or bar after dinner, Guest Speakers and informative port briefings and of course good food, all contribute to make any voyage aboard this wonderful vessel a memorable and joyful experience.

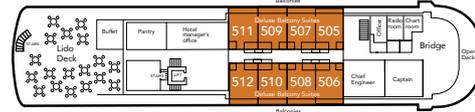
### MS HEBRIDEAN SKY DECK PLAN



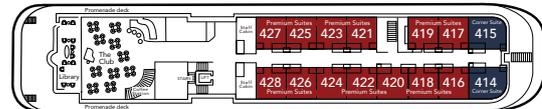
#### Shackleton Deck



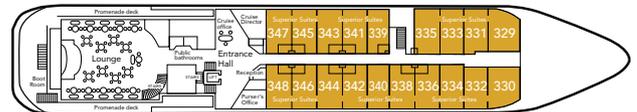
#### Scott Deck



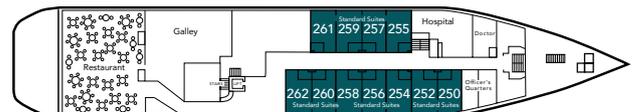
#### Mawson Deck



#### Byrd Deck



#### Amundsen Deck



- Standard Suites
- Corner Suites
- Owner's Balcony Suites
- Superior Suites
- Deluxe Balcony Suites
- Hebridean Suite
- Premium Suites

Please note that beds in each suite can be configured as double or twin with the exception of suites 601 and 602 which feature a fixed double bed.



During this voyage you will be visiting out of the way destinations and will be accompanied by an expedition team. Landings and excursions will be made by Zodiac landing craft. This cruise will appeal to the more adventurous and those who enjoy the natural world.



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