

SPECIAL
OFFER -SAVE
£300
PER PERSON

CANAL TO CUBA

- AN EXPEDITION FROM PANAMA CITY TO HAVANA
ABOARD THE MS HEBRIDEAN SKY
IN ASSOCIATION WITH ZEGRAHM EXPEDITIONS
5TH TO 21ST APRIL 2018

NOBLE CALEDONIA



Join us aboard the MS Hebridean Sky for our voyage to Cuba by way of the coasts and islands of Panama, Costa Rica and Colombia. Much of the itinerary is far from the ‘big ship’ routes and includes little known, but captivating destinations with magnificently diverse wildlife, beautiful beaches, lush landscapes and fascinating indigenous cultures. A voyage such as this would be difficult to undertake by any other means than a cruise and the MS Hebridean Sky is the perfect vessel for such a journey as our Zodiacs will enable us to land and explore otherwise unreachable places.

Our days will be spent swimming from pristine beaches, searching for endemic flora and fauna, learning about the colonial history of the region and of course, a highlight for many, our daylight transit through the iconic Panama Canal. An engineering marvel when it opened, the 50-mile passage still continues to astonish the most veteran traveller. We will visit some little known, pristine and remote islands including Panama’s San Blas archipelago and Colombia’s Isla Providencia before reaching Cuba, a kaleidoscope of colour in the Caribbean Sea. Cuba is visual feast for the traveller with glorious landscapes, powder white beaches set against a turquoise sea, verdant mountains, delightful people and a lifestyle that is more 1930s than that of today and we have five full days here to explore before our journey ends its vibrant capital Havana.

For this exploration we are working with our American associates, Zegrahm Expeditions and, with the all-suite MS Hebridean Sky as our base, we can enjoy great comfort as we navigate our way from Panama to Cuba. A flexible itinerary and knowledgeable onboard team will enable us to make the most of each day, whether we are landing on remote beaches by Zodiac, watching out for wildlife or learning more of the history and culture of the places we are visiting. With just over 100 passengers, we can explore in small groups ashore and enjoy a convivial atmosphere on board.



Voyage Highlights

- Meet the Embera Indians of the Darien and the Kuna Indians of San Blas who proudly preserve their cultural heritage.
- Enjoy a daylight transit through the historic locks of the Panama Canal.
- Step ashore on seldom-visited Isla de Providencia, Colombia - its long history includes tales of colonisation, conquest, and buried treasure.
- Stroll the atmospheric streets of Havana to discover stunning colonial architecture and plazas, where classic American cars complete the scene of a bygone era.
- Snorkel or dive over coral reefs to view colourful tropical fish, turtles, stingrays, and more.

The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Panama City, Panama. Fly by scheduled indirect flight. Upon arrival transfer to the Le Meridien Panama (or similar) for dinner and an overnight stay.

Day 2 Panama City. After breakfast join a morning tour of this cosmopolitan city before our transfer to the MS Hebridean Sky. Enjoy lunch on board as we set sail for Isla Coiba.

Day 3 Isla Coiba. Anchor off Isla Coiba for an exploration of one of the largest marine parks in the world. Zodiacs will take us on excursions along wild shores and bring us to secluded beaches. On nature hikes search for more than 130 species of birds, including red-legged honeycreepers, crimson-backed tanagers, and brilliantly coloured lance-tailed manakins. The snorkelling here is excellent,



as Coiba is also the site of a large coral reef where a convergence of currents reveals an array of eastern tropical Pacific marine life.

Day 4 At Sea. Enjoy a relaxing day at sea and attend lectures from our experts.

Day 5 Playa del Muerto, Darien Province. Panama's remote Darien Province is one of Central America's last unspoiled regions. This morning enter Embera Indian territory as we land on Playa del Muerto. Enjoy warm welcomes from the Embera community of Playa Muerto, where we will learn about their traditional way of life and enjoy a lively dance performance.

Day 6 Panama Canal. During our daylight transit, the MS Hebridean Sky gracefully navigates the dramatic Gaillard Cut, Gatun Lake, and the canal's three mighty locks. Relax on deck and enjoy a historical perspective as we follow this famed waterway to the Atlantic.

Day 7 San Blas Archipelago. The San Blas Archipelago is a group of over 350 islands stretching for 200 miles along Panama's east coast. Largely without roads, and many ringed with reefs, they vary in size from tiny uninhabited islets with few palm trees to larger

islands clad in jungle. San Blas is also home to the Kuna Indians, a semiautonomous tribe still practicing the traditions of their ancestors, including the crafting of molas, brightly coloured, appliquéd fabrics. Meet the Kuna, learn about their culture, and admire or purchase molas. In the afternoon land at Holandes Caye to snorkel in the inviting waters.

Day 8 Portobelo, Colon. This morning disembark in the historic town of Portobelo, one of Spain's most important strongholds in the Americas during colonial times. Visit Forts San Gerónimo and Santiago de la Gloria, as well as the Church of San Felipe. Set sail for Costa Rica during lunch and spend a relaxing afternoon at sea.

Day 9 Puerto Limón, Costa Rica. Board shallow-draft boats today for an excursion among the Tortuguero Canals, home to 2000 plant species, more than 400 species of birds, and 13 of Costa Rica's 16 endangered mammals. During our exploration of the raffia-lined waterways, we may spy sloths; howler and capuchin monkeys; wood storks, bare-throated tiger herons, roseate spoon-bills, Montezuma oropendolas, and ringed kingfishers; and crocodiles, caimans, turtles, iguanas, as well

as the Jesus Christ lizard, so named for its unique ability to run across water. Return to the ship for lunch and set sail for Colombia.

Day 10 Isla de Providencia, Colombia. Far from mainland Colombia, rarely-visited Isla de Providencia is a warm and friendly, English-speaking island with the nostalgic feel of the Caribbean of yesteryear. A morning island tour takes us to a parochial school and other points of interest ashore. Alternatively, venture out to snorkel among a variety of fish that populate the island's coral reef.

Day 11 At Sea. Attend lectures on the region's history and wildlife or simply relax on deck.

Day 12 Cienfuegos & Playa Larga, Cuba. With its French spirit and fabulous setting along Cuba's most spectacular bay, Cienfuegos has earned UNESCO status for its outstanding architecture, which we will discover on a guided walking tour before departing overland for the UNESCO-designated Zapata Wetland region. Enjoy a nature walk or go snorkelling in a cenote, then visit the Playa Giron (Bay of Pigs) Museum, located at the site of the unsuccessful military invasion by US-backed anti-Castro forces in April 1961.

Day 13 Isla de la Juventud. This beautiful island offers breathtaking beaches, lush forests, and excellent snorkelling and diving. Today you may choose to join naturalists on walks to search for indigenous flora and fauna, explore the rich marine environment, or simply relax and soak in your surroundings on a white-sand beach.

Day 14 Maria La Gorda. Isolated Maria La Gorda is one of the most diverse biological regions in the world - home to a variety of different natural habitats, including coral reefs, beaches, mangroves, scrublands, and evergreen forests with more than 170 species of birds and dozens of reptile and mammal species. Spend the morning snorkelling over pristine reefs and searching for wildlife on nature walks before we set sail for Havana and enjoy a relaxing afternoon at sea.

Day 15 Havana. Disembark after breakfast and get acquainted with Old Havana, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, on a walking tour. Climb into one of Havana's vintage cars for a stylish ride to a paladar (a family-owned restaurant) for lunch and this afternoon visit the Fine Arts Museum. Check in to the Iberostar Parque Central Hotel (or similar) for dinner and an overnight stay.



Day 16 Havana to London. Enjoy a morning at leisure to explore independently. This afternoon, after check-out, explore Hemingway's Cuba on a walking tour. 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'. Enjoy dinner in a local restaurant before transferring to the airport for the scheduled indirect flight to London.

Day 17 London. Arrive this afternoon.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £300 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY

Deck	Suite Category	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
Amundsen	Standard	£8895	£8595
Byrd	Superior	£9095	£8795
Mawson	Premium	£9395	£9095
Mawson	Corner	£9695	£9395
Scott	Deluxe Balcony	£9995	£9695
Shackleton	Owner's Balcony	£10495	£10195
Shackleton	Hebridean	£11995	£11695

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • Overnight stay in Panama with breakfast & dinner • 13 nights aboard the MS Hebridean Sky on a full board basis • Wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner • Shore excursions • Onboard team • Overnight stay in Havana with breakfast and two dinners • Gratuities • Transfers • Port taxes.

Not Included: Travel insurance, visas.

Yellow snappers, Isla de la Juventud



Cienfuegos



MS HEBRIDEAN SKY



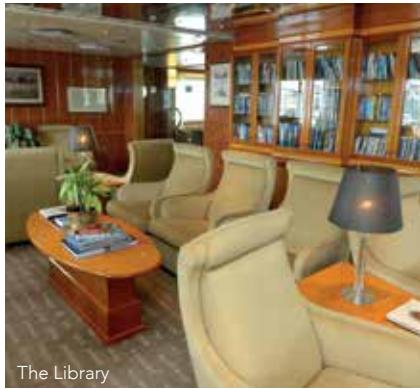
The MS Hebridean Sky is one of our three flag ships and sister vessel to the MS Island Sky and MS Caledonian Sky. All three vessels were built in the same ship yard in Italy at similar times and share the same excellent attributes that make them three of the finest small ships in the world. With a maximum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

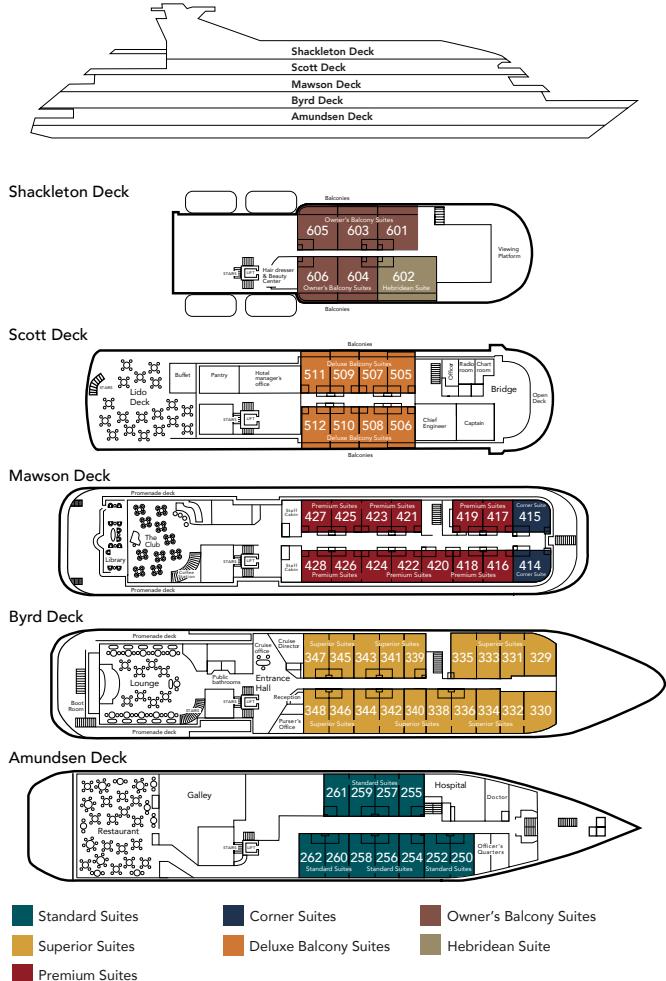
Your Comfort

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



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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