

If you have been contemplating a visit to Central America and the Caribbean, then this fascinating voyage from Costa Rica to Antigua could offer the perfect opportunity with its mix of cultural and natural wonders. Each of the destinations we have included has its own culture, and this colourful mix of island personalities, varied terrain, and lifestyles makes for a marvellous spring break. By and large we will head for the smaller, less visited islands and having our small ship, the all-suite MS Hebridean Sky, as the base for our cruise makes all the difference as we

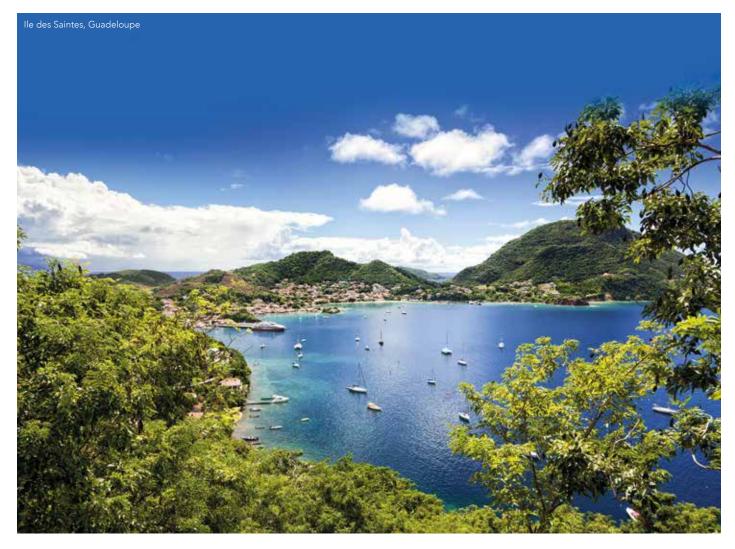
Puerto Plata
Samana
BRITISH VIRGIN
ISLANDS
DUTCH
ANTILLES
Sint Eustatius
Antigua
Antigua
Montserrat
GUADELOUPE
Îles des Saintes

San Jose
Puerto
COSTA RICA
Limon

can discover the smaller, less visited islands in the region.

Our voyage begins in Costa Rica, a small country with a huge array of wildlife including hundreds of brightly coloured species of bird and we will discover the flora and fauna during our visit to the Cahuita National Park or whilst exploring the canals of Tortuguero. Our itinerary then island hops through the lesser visited Caribbean islands to Antigua by way of Colombia, where we explore two beautiful, little-visited islands along the Caribbean coast, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, the British Virgin Islands, Dutch Antilles and Guadeloupe. During our voyage there will be opportunities to enjoy swimming and nature walks in some stunning national parks with their endemic plants and wildlife, explore historical sites and forts dating back to the colonial periods, and discover the pretty ports and pastel painted towns whilst learning of the fascinating history of the region, all overseen by our expert onboard team.

Such a varied and comprehensive itinerary would be difficult to comprehend or undertake by any means other than a cruise and, in the company of just 100 or so fellow like-minded passengers, we will be able to explore in small groups ashore and enjoy a convivial atmosphere on board. As we sail relatively short distances, we have the benefit of full days on many of the glorious islands allowing for time to join the included, guided excursions combined with the opportunity to explore further independently or perhaps relax on one of the beautiful beaches.





### The Itinerary

**Day 1 London to San Jose, Costa Rica.** Fly by scheduled indirect flight. On arrival we will transfer to our hotel for an overnight stay.

**Day 2 San Jose to Puerto Limon.** We will check out in the late morning and drive to Costa Rica's Caribbean coast. After lunch we will embark the MS Hebridean Sky in Puerto Limon and moor overnight.

Day 3 Puerto Limon. After breakfast we head to the Cahuita National Park. The area is filled with wildlife that includes howler monkeys, white-faced capuchin monkeys, raccoons, 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. Alternatively, take a boat ride through the scenic Tortuguero canals, known as the 'Costa Rican Amazon', as the surrounding rainforest supports a wide range of flora and fauna. Here we can hopefully sight waterfowl, monkeys, lizards, sloths and toucans. We return to the ship via a banana plantation where we learn about this staple of the local economy.

Day 4 San Andres, Colombia. After a morning at sea, we arrive in Colombia at San Andres. Due to its location in the far southwest corner of the Caribbean Sea and its relatively undeveloped tourism infrastructure, this island is not on the usual 'cruise run'. The island and its keys are beautiful, and we will spend the afternoon exploring the Botanical Gardens and West View Ecological Park, with good opportunities to see indigenous plants and enjoy birdwatching. Alternatively, you may wish to enjoy a swim from one of the palm fringed beaches.

Day 5 Isla de Providencia. Often referred to as 'Old Providence' in English, Providencia is a beautiful Colombian island that is little known and relatively untouched by 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 under Spanish control and is now a remote Colombian island. We have a whole day to explore on an island tour, take a nature walk, or enjoy a swim from the beach.

Day 6 At Sea. Spend a leisurely day on board as we cross the Caribbean Sea. Perhaps join a lecture in the lounge or find a spot on deck to relax.

Day 7 Port Antonio, Jamaica. This morning we arrive on the north coast of Jamaica at the small, bustling port of Port Antonio, renowned as the world's banana capital and once home to Errol Flynn, who described it as a 'paradise unspoiled by human hands'. This morning, you may opt to join a rafting trip on the Rio Grande, where skilled raftsmen will impart their local knowledge about the native flora and fauna, history and people of the area, as we take in the wonderful natural surroundings. Alternatively, enjoy a scenic drive to Reach Falls situated in the lush Montane Forest. We will have time to enjoy the falls and walk in the surrounding forest which is home to many species of fern as well as a variety of birds. Enjoy a swim in the emerald pool at the foot of the falls before returning to the MS Hebridean Sky for lunch and an afternoon at leisure to stroll around Port Antonio or relax on a local beach.

 ${\bf Day~8~At~Sea.}$  Spend the day at sea as we cruise towards the island of Hispaniola.

Day 9 Santiago de Los Caballeros, Dominican Republic. Sailing along the northern coast of Hispaniola, we arrive in the Dominican Republic this morning. We will berth in Puerto Plata from where we will head inland to Santiago de Los Caballeros which was founded in 1495 by 30 Spanish aristocrats and became the country's first capital. Here we see the 'Monumento a Los Heroes de la Restauracion', dedicated to those who fought for independence from Spain in 1865 and now the city's social hub. At the Centro Cultural Leon we will see exhibits showcasing Dominican history, arts and culture, as well as learning about the city's main industry of cigar production. After lunch in the city, we return to the MS Hebridean Sky and sail this evening.

Day 10 Samana. Arrive this morning at the Samana Peninsula, renowned for its beautiful beaches, turquoise waters and lush mountains. It is also a centre for migrating humpback whales, which are usually resident in the Marine Mammal Sanctuary from January to March. If conditions permit, this morning we will use the Zodiacs or local boats to view these amazing creatures. Alternatively, visit Los Haitises National Park, where we will explore magnificent limestone caves covered in Taino Indian art and we will also visit Bird Island to learn about the many migratory and indigenous birds that inhabit the mangroves. Return to the MS Hebridean Sky for lunch and a relaxing afternoon on board cruising to the British Virgin Islands.

Days 11 & 12 British Virgin Islands. The British Virgin Islands are recognised throughout the seafaring world as one of the finest sailing areas. The 36 islands and cays sit in a dazzling turquoise sea surrounded by beautiful coral reefs. We have a day and a half here, during which we will drop anchor and use our









Zodiacs to explore. We may call at the islands of Virgin Gorda and Jost Van Dyke, allowing ample time for nature walks, to relax on the beautiful beaches and swim in the clear waters.

Day 13 Sint Eustatius, Dutch Antilles. In the 18th century, the port of Oranjestad was a major player in the trade between Europe and the new world. Today the island maintains a low key existence and has avoided the modernisation and development of its neighbours. We will explore the small town, including the 17th century fort and the museum, with information on slavery, colonial relics and historical artefacts. Meanwhile, those feeling active may wish to take the strenuous hike to 'The Quill', the 600 metre hill that dominates the landscape. This afternoon is at leisure for further exploration, or perhaps take the opportunity to swim from the nearby beach.

Day 14 lles des Saintes, Guadeloupe. The eight island lles des Saintes archipelago dots the waters off the southwest coast of Guadeloupe. In 1782, this was the site of one of the greatest naval battles of the sailing era, in which the tactics used by the British Admiral Sir George Rodney foreshadowed those used 20 years later by Nelson at Trafalgar. We will tender ashore and walk up to Fort Napoleon to visit the museum, which focuses on the Battle of the Saintes. This afternoon is free to explore the town or relax on one of the local beaches.

Day 15 Montserrat. Ask any Caribbean connoisseur about their favourite places and Montserrat will always be high on the list. During our guided tour of the island we will learn about the indigenous flora and fauna at the Botanical Gardens before visiting the volcano observatory to see how the islanders coped with the devastation caused by the damaging volcanic eruptions of 1995 and 2010. From Richmond Hill we can see the impact of the eruption before walking through the buried city of Plymouth itself. We will also see some of the untouched areas, which are as beautiful as ever. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at leisure before we sail this evening.

Day 16 Antigua to London. We will disembark after breakfast for an island drive which will include the beautifully restored 18th century dockyard in English Harbour where we will see the impressive collection of restored historic buildings which were occupied by the British Navy from 1707 until 1899. After lunch in a local restaurant, we transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.

Day 17 London. Arrive today.



### PRICES PER PERSON Based on double occupancy

## **SPECIAL OFFER** – SAVE £300 PER PERSON PLUS NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

Deck	Suite Category	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
Amundsen	Standard	£11095	£10795
Byrd	Superior	£11395	£11095
Mawson	Premium	£11695	£11395
Mawson	Corner	£11895	£11595
Scott	Deluxe Balcony	£12795	£12495
Shackleton	Owner's Balcony	£12995	£12695
Shackleton	Hebridean	£13495	£13195
Amundsen	Standard for sole use	£11095	£10795
Byrd	Superior for sole use	£11395	£11095

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • Overnight hotel accommodation in San Jose with breakfast • 14 nights aboard the MS Hebridean Sky on a full board basis • House wine, beer & soft drinks with lunch and dinner • Shore excursions • Noble Caledonia expedition team • Gratuities • Transfers • Port taxes.

Not Included: Travel insurance.

# MS HEBRIDEAN SKY









The much loved MS Hebridean Sky is one of our two flagships and sister vessel to the MS Island Sky. Both vessels were built in the same shipyard in Italy at similar times and share the same excellent attributes that make them two 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, television and a telephone in each suite. Refillable water bottles, towelling dressing gowns and slippers are also provided for your comfort. Other facilities include a programmable electronic safe, hairdryer, assorted Noble Isle 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 the Club. Tea and coffee are also available 24 hours a day. Special diets can be catered for with sufficient notice







#### 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. 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 collection of games and devices to access the internet via the ship's satellite can also be found in the library. Access to the ship's satellite Wi-Fi via your own device is complimentary on board (signal strength varies depending on location and demand). 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.

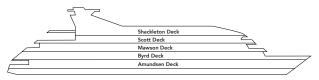
#### Your Comfort

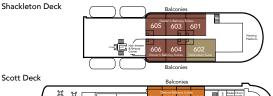
The MS Hebridean Sky is equipped with the latest safety, navigation and communications equipment along with roll stabilisers to minimise the ship's motion. During your voyage we hope to offer you the opportunity to visit the Captain and Officers on the Bridge to check the vessel's progress by charts 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 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.

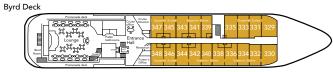
#### MS HEBRIDEAN SKY DECK PLAN

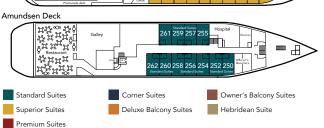












Please note that beds in each suite can be configured as double or twin with the exception of suites 601 and 602 which feature a fixed double bed.



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.



## Noble Caledonia

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