

SPECIAL
OFFER - SAVE
£500
PER PERSON

ISLANDS OF THE AZORES

A nine night voyage around the Azores Archipelago
aboard the MS Island Sky

30th April to 9th May 2024

NOBLE CALEDONIA

Far out in the Atlantic, some 800 miles from the Portuguese coast, the nine islands of the Azores are known for their spectacular volcanic scenery, abundant flora and peaceful lifestyle. The appeal of this remote and unsophisticated archipelago is difficult to define in words, but if you appreciate dramatic scenery, exploring islands where time appears to be standing still, watching for passing whales and learning about the local people and their customs, then this could be the voyage for you. The islands are also perfect for walking enthusiasts with paths through verdant mountain landscapes and we have included some hiking opportunities which, weather permitting, will be a joy for the keen walkers in our group.



Sperm whale, Mount Pico coastline



Traditional windmill, Graciosa

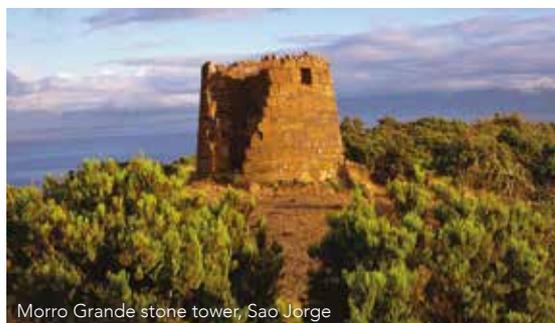
What to Expect

Below are some extracts from a previous voyage in this region which will provide you with an idea of what to expect should you choose to join our Azorean adventure:

Graciosa Island: A new day, a new island to explore! This morning we docked at the harbour of Praia at Graciosa Island, the second smallest island in the archipelago and the most northern of the central group. We spent the morning on a tour taking in the highlights of the island. One of our stops was the largest town on the island, Santa Cruz, where we walked around the beautifully paved town square. This town hosts the only airport on the island and it is located very centrally in town, leading to plane-spotting becoming a popular pastime for the residents! We also visited the 1930s lighthouse known for great views over the Ponta da Barca, a rock that looks somewhat like a giant whale rising above the surface of the sea; the waves crashing around the whale's belly actually making it look rather realistic. The highlight of our tour however was a visit to the Furna do Enxofre – the sulphur caves. Located on the southern part of the island and officially open to the public since 1939, these caves are now a popular tourist attraction. Those who descended the 184 steps leading from the visitors centre into the caves were rewarded with a stunning view of the volcanic cavern with its domed ceiling covered in lava stalactites.

Terceira Island: Terceira Island where we docked this morning is known as a dynamic island and is the second most inhabited in the archipelago. The sun was out and we enjoyed nice views of the pretty town of Angra do Heroismo from the open decks. Today we were not going to use buses to get around, but instead we took off on a walking tour since we were docked conveniently right in town. Angra do Heroismo is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and it is easy to understand why. Walking around the colonial style town centre is a bit like being transported back in time. The beautiful cobbled streets, the large colourful houses and palaces, the forts – all this speaks of a time when Angra was a force to be reckoned with as the central hub for trade ships heading to and from the Americas as well as along the coast of Africa. It also played a large part in the Liberal Wars and was, until Ponta Delgada took over the capital of the Azores, and even at one point in the 1830s, the capital of the whole of Portugal! Today the city has lost its economic and political prowess, but the feeling is still very much there and the town was a delight to walk around, our guides as always giving us wonderful interpretation of what we were seeing. Our groups went different ways but regrouped briefly for a coffee and cake stop at one of the oldest bakeries in town before setting off again in different directions. After lunch on board the afternoon was spent at leisure, strolling around town or having a coffee at the many cafes or relaxing on the ship.





The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Sao Miguel, Azores. Fly by scheduled indirect flight. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the MS Island Sky for embarkation. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we moor overnight.

Day 2 Sao Miguel. Enjoy a full day exploring the island of Sao Miguel, known as Ilha Verde, the green island and home to some of the most stunning viewpoints in the Azores. This morning we head west towards the Sete Cidades volcano from where we can enjoy excellent views over the Lagos de Canarios. We will continue our drive along the attractive northern coast before arriving in the Furnas Valley, an enormous valley and luxuriant garden in the east of the island where we enjoy lunch. We will also visit the village of Furnas and the botanical gardens before returning to the ship and sailing this evening. For the keen hikers, if weather permits, we will arrange to walk the trail in Sete Cidades.

Day 3 Santa Maria. The most southerly of the islands of the Azores, Santa Maria was the first to be inhabited by Portuguese settlers in 1439. It was also the first call made by Christopher Columbus on

his return from the Americas in 1493 and during our island drive we visit the village of Anjos where he attended mass at the chapel of Nossa Senhora dos Anjos. Also see the remote settlement of Sao Lourenco known for vineyards which rise steeply up high sea cliffs in terraces whilst the coastline is accentuated by a dramatic waterfall, lava tubes and caves. Return to the ship via the picturesque village of Santo Espirito with its pretty whitewashed houses and 17th century Baroque church. The afternoon is free to explore the town of Vila do Porto independently.

Day 4 Terceira. This morning explore Angra do Heroísmo, a charming UNESCO heritage town with a distinct Mediterranean flavour of cobblestone streets and a certain quiet charm. Enjoy a walking tour that takes in the Misericordia church, Convent do Sao Francisco, public gardens and museum. In the afternoon there will be free time to hike to Monte Brasil, offering wonderful views over the island, or alternatively relax and wander the historic town at your own pace.

Day 5 Graciosa. Known as the 'White Island', Graciosa has a gentle

rolling landscape, dotted with windmills and traditional whitewashed houses. Visit Furna do Enxofre ('Cave of Sulphur'), a geologically unique phenomenon and one of the original examples of the volcanic Azores and take the winding stairway down to the magnificent volcanic cavern and lake. Also see the village of Santa Cruz and the charming Matrix Church. Return to the ship for lunch and spend the afternoon at leisure to explore the small town of Vila da Praia.

Day 6 Flores & Corvo. Named after its abundant flora, Flores is often regarded as the prettiest of the Azores. A rugged terrain island with flowers growing in the deep canyons and waterfalls casting hues of blues and green as they splash down to the sea. Visit the vertical basalt cliffs of Rocha do Bordoos, formed by the cooling of lava. See a stunning array of natural features including calderas, fajas, rivers, waterfalls and valleys. This afternoon we will use our small ship to circumnavigate the tiny island of Corvo, the smallest island in the archipelago.

Day 7 Sao Jorge. This largely rural island is of geographical interest with its cliff shoreline

marked with flat fajas sweeping to the sea. We start our full day tour on the western part of the island, Ponta dos Rosais, visiting a Forest Park and cheese factory. As we move to the north we enjoy the view over the Fajas, an area of flat land at sea level resulting from the erosion of cliffs. As we make our way to the south side towards Calheta we will stop for lunch at a local restaurant before continuing on to Urzelina to visit the remaining tower of a church buried under lava from the eruption of 1808. Now it is surrounded by fruit trees and vegetation. Upon our return to Velas we will take a walking tour of this charming old-world harbour town. We remain moored overnight for anyone wishing to take an after dinner stroll.

Day 8 Pico. Explore distinctive Pico, home to Portugal's highest peak and numerous black lava flows. The UNESCO-designated Lajido Acros tells the story of early winemakers who used the volcanic soil for the grapes and, on a visit to a vineyard, we will enjoy a tasting of the local product. After a typical Azorean lunch we will learn about whaling life in the Azores at the Museum of Lajes returning to the ship via the Lagoa do Capitaó offering views over the north of the island.

Mount Pico



Volcano dos Capelinhos, Faial



Bird of Paradise, Sao Miguel

Day 9 Faial. Our day begins with an island drive where we explore the fairly recent volcanic activity at Ponta dos Capelinhos. See how a 1957-1958 volcanic eruption transformed the area and created a new land mass. Visit the Volcano Interpretation Centre before continuing to the impressive Caldera, now a nature reserve, which is 400 metres deep and nearly 1500 metres in

diameter. This afternoon a walking tour of Horta will include the Scrimshaw Museum and Café Peter, a famous stopping point for sailors crossing the Atlantic.

Day 10 Sao Miguel to London. Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for our scheduled indirect flight to London.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £500 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY

Deck	Suite Category	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
Magellan	Standard	£5995	£5495
Columbus	Superior	£6195	£5695
Marco Polo	Premium	£6395	£5895
Marco Polo	Corner	£6595	£6095
Erikson	Deluxe Balcony	£7495	£6995
Explorer	Owner's Balcony Suites	£7795	£7295
Explorer	Island Suite	£8795	£8295
Magellan	Standard for sole use	£7295	£6795
Columbus	Superior for sole use	£7495	£6995

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • Nine nights aboard the MS Island Sky on a full board basis • House wine, beer & soft drinks with lunch & dinner • Noble Caledonia onboard team • Shore excursions • Gratuities • Transfers • Port taxes.

Not Included: Travel insurance.

Estoril Pre-cruise Extension

27th to 30th April 2024



Hotel Palacio and Pool

For those who would like to spend some time in Portugal prior to embarking the MS Island Sky, we have arranged a three-night extension at the beautiful Palacio Estoril Hotel, located a short distance from Lisbon. Our stay will include a half day tour of Lisbon and a half day tour of Sintra and the remainder of the time will be yours to explore at leisure.

The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Estoril, Portugal. Fly by scheduled flight to Lisbon. On arrival this afternoon transfer to the Palacio Estoril Hotel and enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure. We will meet tonight for dinner. (D)

Day 2 Lisbon. Set on seven hills on the banks of the River Tagus, Lisbon has been the capital of Portugal since the 13th century. It is a city famous for its majestic architecture, old wooden trams, Moorish features and more than twenty centuries of history. Following disastrous earthquakes in the 18th century, Lisbon was rebuilt by the Marquis de Pombal who created an elegant city with wide boulevards and a great riverfront and square, Praca do Comercio. Today there are distinct modern and ancient sections, combining great shopping areas with culture and sightseeing in the Old Town, built on the city's terraced hillsides. During our panoramic tour we will see the Monument to the Discoveries and Belem Tower and visit the famous Jeronimos Monastery. Return to the hotel for an afternoon and evening at leisure. (B, L)

Day 3 Sintra. This morning we will drive to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Sintra where we will visit Sintra National Palace, famous for its magnificent painted ceilings. The palace is the only survivor of the country's Royal Halls, dating from the Middle Ages. Later enjoy some free time to explore the town which still retains much of its Medieval layout before driving back to the hotel. The remainder of the day and evening are under your own arrangements. (B)

Day 4 Estoril to Sao Miguel, Azores. After breakfast in the hotel we transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to the Azores. On arrival we transfer to the MS Island Sky and embark.

Prices per person based on double occupancy

Twin £795
Single £1095

Price Includes: Three nights accommodation in a classic room at the Palacio Estoril Hotel with breakfast, half day tours of Lisbon & Sintra, meals as indicated (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner), Noble Caledonia Tour Manager, gratuities, transfers.

Not Included: Travel insurance.



Classic Room



The Imperial Room

MS ISLAND SKY



Friendly Service



Deluxe Balcony Suite



The Restaurant

The much loved MS Island Sky is one of our two flag ships and sister vessel to the MS Hebridean 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 Island 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 seating area and some have private balconies, whilst those on the Marco Polo Deck feature tinted, sliding glass doors allowing greatly enhanced viewing opportunities and quick access to the deck. 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 each suite affords considerable comfort with en-suite bathroom featuring marble-topped vanity unit with sink and walk-in shower, a large wardrobe, dressing table and excellent storage. There is a mini-fridge, television and telephone in each suite. Refillable water bottles, dressing gowns and slippers are also provided for your comfort. Other facilities include a safe, hairdryer, assorted Molton Brown toiletries, air-conditioning and heating. The comfortable beds in each suite can be configured as either double or twin.

Your Dining

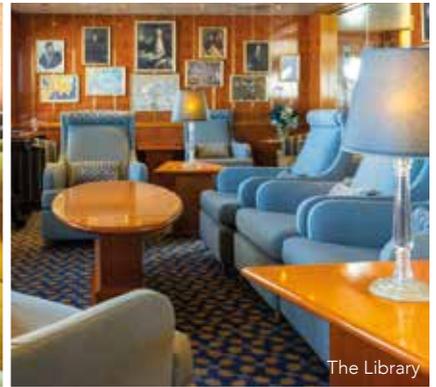
With only one sitting and a maximum of just over 100 passengers, the cuisine on board the MS Island Sky is of a consistent superior quality that befits such a vessel. In keeping with the informal atmosphere on board, when dining you are able to choose your seating arrangements and choice of restaurants 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.



Superior Suite



The Club



The Library

Your Space

The spacious and finely decorated public rooms include a large Lounge on the Columbus 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 Marco Polo 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 Columbus 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 as well as 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 Magellan Deck, and outside there is a rear Lido Deck located on the Erikson Deck where meals are served in warm weather under shade. Further to this on the top Explorer Deck there is an observation area ideal for spotting wildlife, complete with sun loungers for sunbathing, relaxing with a book or catching up with fellow travellers. The Promenade Deck wraps around the whole ship giving outstanding views. There is also a small beauty salon on board with appointments made on request.

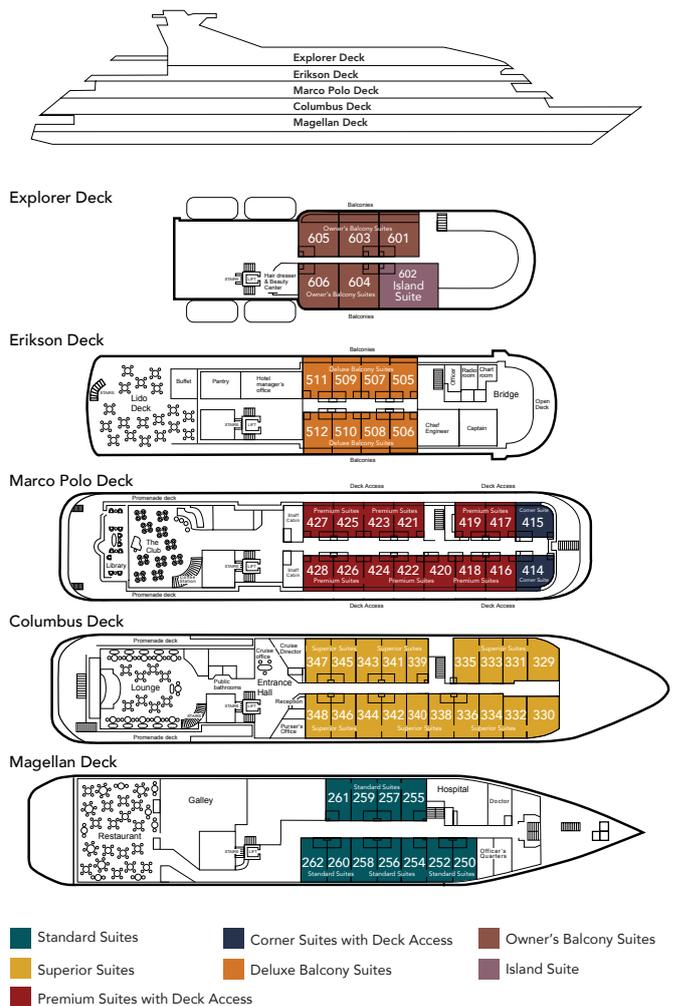
Your Comfort

The MS Island 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 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 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 ISLAND SKY DECK PLAN



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