

2025 DEPARTURE DATE RELEASED DUE TO POPULAR DEMAND

SPECIAL  
OFFER - SAVE  
**£500**  
PER PERSON

# ISLANDS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

A voyage from Mauritius exploring Madagascar, the Seychelles  
& Tanzania aboard the MS Hebridean Sky

21<sup>st</sup> January to 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024  
& 5<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025



NOBLE CALEDONIA



Giant Tortoise, Aldabra



Boobie, Aldabra



Here is an extraordinary cruise for those who enjoy the natural world and all its wonders and are looking for the opportunity to escape the British winter. Join us aboard the all-suite MS Hebridean Sky and enjoy the warmth and beauty of the Indian Ocean as she undertakes exactly the type of itinerary that suits her many talents best. With the vessel's purpose built Zodiacs we will land on otherwise inaccessible beaches, explore vast lagoons and coral reefs and encounter some of the most extraordinarily beautiful tropical scenery to be found anywhere in the world.

Sailing from Mauritius we will land on its nearest neighbour, Reunion, a little bit of France in the Indian Ocean and a stunning place to spend a day. We will discover the island's truly awesome and dramatic scenery before we continue to Madagascar for four days of exploration of this incredibly verdant and beautiful island with its unique flora and fauna. Continuing to the Seychelles we have three days scheduled in the Aldabra Island group. 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 there is no landing strip so the only viable means of reaching this untouched region is by ship. Aldabra is the last breeding ground of the giant tortoise and in addition to seeing some of these endearing creatures you should also encounter dolphins, turtles and whales as well as countless birds including the flightless rail, the last flightless bird in the Indian Ocean. Our expedition concludes in Tanzania where we visit Kilwa Kisiwani, a site of exceptional historical interest, followed by a full day in atmospheric Zanzibar.

This expedition really is a veritable feast of beauty, the natural world and island culture. You will witness the bounty of the islands, the wildlife from the giant tortoises of Aldabra to the lemurs of Madagascar and an amazingly prolific birdlife.



Waterfalls, Reunion

## What to Expect

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 previous expeditions which will provide you with an idea of what to expect.

**Masoala National Park & Nosy Mangabe:** This morning we were anchored off the Masoala Peninsula and our destination, Nosy Mangabe, is a small island in the national park. We disembarked on a beautiful golden beach backed by primary rainforest and once ashore we split into our various groups and headed off into the forest in search of wildlife. The lemurs appeared, racing through the treetops and there were frogs everywhere. There were the green-backed mantellas, quite brash in their black and green colours, tiny nondescript frogs laying their single egg in the stumps of bamboo. There were a number of leaf-tailed geckos which were so well camouflaged that they were almost impossible to see even at close range. Near the landing site, the lemurs came down to check us out and allowed for some great close up photographs. On walks inland we saw some huge boulders of 3.2 billion year old granodiorite that formed akin to how tors formed in the UK. This afternoon we had the opportunity to land here again for an afternoon exploratory walk or to enjoy a long Zodiac cruise along the peninsula.





## The Itinerary

**Day 1 London to Mauritius.** Fly by scheduled indirect flight.

**Day 2 Mauritius.** Arrive today and transfer to the MS Hebridean Sky moored in Port Louis. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we sail this evening.

**Day 3 Reunion Island.** We arrive at breakfast in Reunion where we have a choice of excursions. On a full day tour we will visit the central highlands where spectacularly rugged peaks of dormant or extinct volcanoes cradle huge amphitheatres known as cirques, where mountains tower to over 10,000 feet and beautiful waterfalls plummet hundreds of feet. The rich soil and mellow climate produce a lush and verdant landscape which is dotted with villages and towns with a uniquely French atmosphere. Fields of sugar cane and plantations of tropical fruits, vanilla and all manner of spices perfume the air. We will enjoy views from the Nez des Boueufs and see the Piton de la Fournaise crater. After enjoying a creole lunch in a local restaurant we will visit the 'Cite du Volcan' museum. Alternatively enjoy a morning tour to a vanilla plantation in St Andre where we learn about the history and culture of this integral part of Reunion's heritage. Continue to Salazie, a verdant landscape and home to many waterfalls including the 'Voile de la Mariee' before spending some free time in St Denis on the way back to the ship. This afternoon is at leisure before we set sail this evening.

**Day 4 At Sea.** Spend the day at sea as we sail towards Madagascar. Maybe join a lecture or find a spot on deck to relax.

**Day 5 Toamasina, Madagascar.** Our first call in Madagascar is Toamasina, the country's main port and second largest city as well as the gateway to the Pangalanes Canals, a series of rivers, waterways and lakes that extend for over 400 miles down the island's east coast. Used mainly for transportation and fishing, the canals are also home to unspoiled beaches, lagoons and lakes whilst providing access to national parks and private reserves. This morning we will take a local boat cruise through the canal to enjoy the scenery followed by a nature walk in one of the private reserves. Enjoy lunch in the reserve before returning to Toamasina this afternoon. Alternatively visit the Ivoloia Zoological Parc, a 282 hectare property combining a small zoo where we will see up to 12 species of lemur as well as indigenous tortoises and chameleons. Meanwhile in the surrounding forests we can see wild lemurs or malachite kingfishers on one of the many walking trails.

**Days 6 & 7 Masoala National Park & Nosy Mangabe.** We will spend a day and a half exploring from our anchorage in Antongil Bay. We discover Nosy Mangabe, a 520-hectare island reserve and one of the most diverse areas of virgin rainforest in Madagascar which has also been an important research centre since the mid-1960s when several aye-ayes and lemurs were released into the forest. We will use our Zodiacs to land on the beach next to the forest and organise a series of nature walks looking at the varied trees, plants and ferns and we hope to spot chameleon, lizards and black and white ruffed lemur. For the birders, we will keep an eye out for Madagascar buzzard, kingfisher and paradise flycatchers. We will also explore Madagascar's largest protected area, the Masoala National Park, which comprises of

coastal rainforest, flooded forests, marsh and mangroves. Mammal species encountered include the red-ruffed lemur, the red-fronted brown lemur and the ring-tailed mongoose. The park is also home to various species of brightly coloured mantella frogs, all manner of extraordinary chameleons and is a refuge of the endangered Madagascar red-owl, Madagascar serpent eagle and many endemic bird species. A series of walks for all levels will operate whilst there will also be the option to swim off the beach or perhaps visit the local village.

**Day 8 Diego Suarez.** This afternoon we will enter dramatic Diego Suarez, a stunning natural harbour with a cosmopolitan mix of inhabitants including Creoles, Indians, Chinese, Comorans and Arabs. Choose from a city tour visiting the Commonwealth Cemetery and Place Joffre, or a visit to the Malagasy rainforest at the Mount Amber National Park. Dividing into short and long walking parties we will go in search of lemurs and chameleons as we explore the rainforest. In the towering vegetation, we may spot several species of lemurs and chameleons as well as endemic birds, including parrots.

**Day 9 Farquhar Group, Seychelles.** Arriving in the Seychelles this morning, we will 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. The island is a haven providing us with a delightful morning of bird watching or snorkelling. Return to the ship for lunch and an afternoon cruising.

**Days 10 to 12 Aldabra Islands.** We have three days to enjoy the Aldabra group of islands and our itinerary will be in the hands of our Expedition Leader and Captain who will monitor the local conditions to ensure we maximise our time here. Whilst our itinerary is flexible, we hope to call at the island of Assumption which was ruthlessly plundered for its vast deposits of guano in the early 20th century. Happily, peace has returned, and the wildlife of rare birds and green turtles are once again in abundance. Our time here will be spent beachcombing, on nature walks or snorkelling. We also hope to reach Cosmoledo where a huge ring of twelve islands circle 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. Also spot sooty terns and great frigate birds. We will also spend time on Aldabra, the island referred to by Sir Julian Huxley as "One of nature's treasures and should belong to the whole world". Aldabra 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 numerous tortoises and robber crabs or swim in the lagoon, a 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.





Turtle



Mantella Frog, Nosy Mangabe



Stone Town, Zanzibar

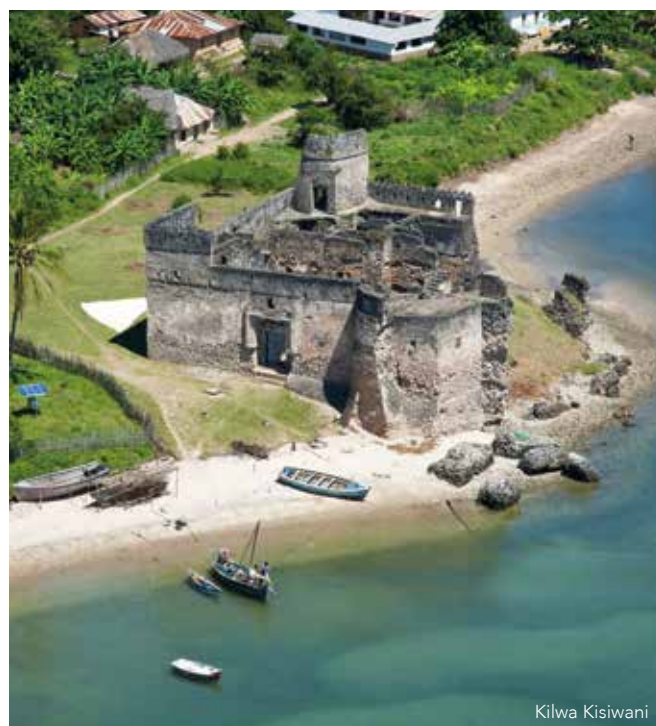
**Day 13 At Sea.** Enjoy the day at sea as we continue our journey north.

**Day 14 Kilwa Kisiwani, Tanzania.** This morning we anchor off Kilwa Kisiwani, a site of exceptional historical interest, where the atmospheric ruins represent a wide sweep of East African coastal history, from the heights of the Swahili and Shirazi trading civilisation to the darker days of slavery and the uprisings against German rule. Once one of Africa's wealthiest towns, Kilwa Kisiwani is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and contains the world's most extensive and best-preserved Swahili ruins. We will spend the morning on a walking tour and see the prominent fort and the Great Mosque which stood at the heart of this ancient city which was once the largest in East Africa. This afternoon we set sail for Zanzibar.

**Day 15 Zanzibar.** Zanzibar's harbour, crowded with dhows, very much sets the scene for our visit to this Arab-style city with its long narrow streets, bazaars, houses with overhanging balconies and intricately carved doorways. On a morning walking tour, soak up the timeless atmosphere of Stone Town including Livingstone House, Sultan's Palace, the slave market and the Old Fort. The afternoon is free to relax and explore independently or join a tour to a spice farm to experience the various fruits and spices cultivated on the island. Alternatively, travel to Jozani Forest which sustains a variety of wildlife and birds, including the rare red colobus monkey, indigenous to the island.

**Day 16 Dar es Salaam to London.** Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for our scheduled indirect flight to London.

**Day 17 London.** Arrive this morning.



Kilwa Kisiwani

## PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

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

Deck	Suite Category	2024		2025	
		Brochure Price	Special Offer Price	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
Amundsen	Standard	£10495	£9995	£10795	£10295
Byrd	Superior	£10795	£10295	£11095	£10595
Mawson	Premium	£10995	£10495	£11395	£10895
Mawson	Corner	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	£11695	£11195
Scott	Deluxe Balcony	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	£12695	£12195
Shackleton	Owner's Balcony	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	£13195	£12695
Shackleton	Hebridean	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	£14295	£13795
Amundsen	Standard for sole use	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	£13795	£13295
Byrd	Superior for sole use	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	£14495	£13995

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

**Not Included:** Travel insurance, Tanzania visa.



Island hopping by Zodiac

# MS HEBRIDEAN SKY



Alfresco Dining



Owner's Balcony Suite



The Restaurant

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 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. 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.

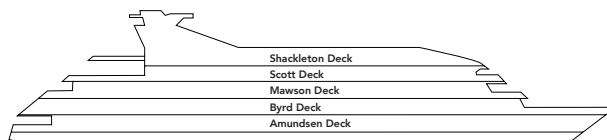
## Your Comfort

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.

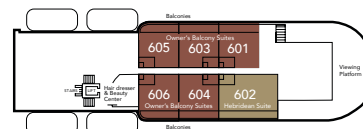
## Your Life On Board

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



### Shackleton Deck



### Scott Deck

