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SUPPLEMENT

# MARVELS OF MADAGASCAR

DISCOVER THE WILDLIFE & WONDERS OF  
MADAGASCAR ABOARD THE MS HEBRIDEAN SKY

21<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER TO 4<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2024

NOBLE CALEDONIA



The term ‘unique’ is an often overused description in the travel world but certainly applies to the island of Madagascar. The animals, plants, landscapes and people that make up this thousand mile long island are unlike anywhere else in the world. This extraordinary country long remained obscure as a destination and is still relatively unknown amongst even the most serious of travellers. There is minimal infrastructure in many parts of the island and for those wishing to explore in some depth, doing so by small ship, especially one as well-suited as the MS Hebridean Sky is far preferable to exploring by any other means.



Our unique ten night voyage focuses on the wonders of the island of Madagascar with opportunities to explore rainforests full of wildlife including lemurs, chameleons and indigenous birdlife as well as witnessing the underwater world and village life. Our days will be spent exploring ashore, often traversing over rugged terrain and walking through spectacular rainforests and each evening we will have the benefit of returning to our comfortable ship to relax and look forward to the next adventure. With the vessel’s fleet of Zodiacs for forays ashore, allowing access to some wonderful places denied to larger ships, you can enjoy encounters with fabulous endemic wildlife in this immensely rich and timeless corner of the Indian Ocean. Our onboard experts will greatly enrich your experience and ensure that we make the most of our time on the world’s “eighth continent”.

## 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.

**Mahajanga & Ankarafantsika National Park, Madagascar:** This morning we were up bright eyed and bushy tailed in readiness for an exciting day. Women in traditional dress greeted us on the slipway and our transport waited at the end of a strip of market stalls selling local crafts. The convoy of minibuses departed Mahajanga driving through the busy streets before heading out in the countryside. Savannah like landscape could be seen for miles on either side of the tarmac road. The savannah gave way to large swathes of rice paddies. Local rice farmers were seen harvesting the rice, children waved from the roadside, as we passed through beautiful villages. We arrived at the Ankarafantsika National Park, a mere two hours after leaving the dock. Immediately after arriving, we saw a troop of brown lemur and the gorgeous Coquerel's sifaka expertly negotiating their way through the canopy. Our guides took us on prepared trails through the dry forest, spotting a variety of bird species, reptiles, and of course, lemur. Highlights included an eye-height view of a paradise fly-catcher incubating on a nest; a female Milne-Edwards sportive lemur with her juvenile resting on a tree trunk, iguanas basking in a variety of different body positions in spots of sunlight and, the fantastic spot of the Madagascan fish eagle. Combined we saw 51 different species of bird and reptile, and five species of lemur. What an incredible day!

**Nosy Tanikely:** Instead of using the Zodiacs this morning, local boats ferried us to the shore of Nosy Tanikely, a small island rising steeply from the beautiful palm fringed beach on which we arrived. One highlight was

being able to snorkel among the coral reef that was close to shore. The fish diversity of the relatively small reef was impressive; there were colourful butterfly fish, clownfish in the anemones, pipe fish near the surface, even a friendly Hawksbill turtle swam by. The island was equally impressive. Walking up the concrete summit path was well worth it, and we were treated to an acrobatic display by a group of brown lemurs. The panoramic view from the lighthouse was stunning and only bettered by the white-tailed tropicbirds flying close by. Those that walked around the island were treated to seeing rufus and Madagascar flying fox flying but also sleeping in the shade. Hiking certainly worked up an appetite, which was just as well, as lunch was a plethora of local food; crab, zebu kebab, fresh fish, and, fruit. There was just a little time for one more dip, before we hastily departed on the Zodiacs as we were heading out to sea once again.

**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 Johannesburg, South Africa.** Fly by scheduled indirect flight.

**Day 2 Johannesburg.** Arrive today and transfer to our hotel for an overnight stay. The remainder of the day is at leisure before we meet for drinks and dinner.

**Day 3 Johannesburg to Tulear, Madagascar.** Return to the airport this morning to join our specially chartered flight to Tulear. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the MS Hebridean Sky for embarkation. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we sail this evening.

**Day 4 Morondava.** After a morning cruising we arrive during lunch at our anchorage off the town of Morondava. We will use the Zodiacs to land on the local beach from where we will visit the Avenue des Baobabs. Of the eight baobab species in the world, six are endemic to Madagascar and here we will see the *Adansonia grandidieri* species with a row of 20 to 25 trees which border the gravel road. We will learn about the trees and their spiritual significance before returning to Morondava and exploring the local market.

**Day 5 At Sea.** Spend a leisurely day on board as we continue our journey around the Madagascan Coast.

**Day 6 Mahajanga.** Mahajanga is a major port in northwest Madagascar situated on the Betsiboka River and is our base for a full day excursion to the Ankarafantsika National Park. This deciduous forest is a haven for birds, lemurs and reptiles and on a choice of walks, we will explore with our guides. Eight species of lemur have been observed here including the famous microcebus, the smallest primate in the world. Meanwhile over 120 species of birds nest here and we will keep an eye out for the Madagascan fish eagle and banded kestrel whilst the 44 species of reptile include chameleon, turtles and crocodiles that live in Lake Ravelobe. We will enjoy lunch in the park and in the afternoon there will be options to join further walks or watch for birdlife at the nearby lake before returning to the MS Hebridean Sky.

**Day 7 Nosy Tanikely.** We arrive mid-morning at the Nosy Tanikely Island Marine Reserve, an uninhabited island which offers snorkelling opportunities and wonderful beaches. We will take the opportunity to either swim in the clear waters or snorkel over the corals keeping an eye out for reef fish, turtles and morays. Alternatively our naturalists will lead guided walks on the island where we may see the resident lemurs, fruit bats and hermit crabs and enjoy fantastic views from the lighthouse on the island's highest point.

**Day 8 Diego Suarez.** This morning we will enter dramatic Diego Suarez, a stunning natural harbour with a cosmopolitan mix of inhabitants including Creoles, Indians, Chinese, Comorans and Arabs. This morning 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 walk 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. Return to the ship for lunch and an afternoon cruising.

**Days 9 & 10 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 11 At Sea.** Enjoy the day at sea to relax and reflect on our Madagascan adventure as we sail to Reunion.

**Day 12 Reunion.** 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





Lemur



Day Gekko



Masoala National Park

the air. We will enjoy views from the Nez de Boeuf 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 13 Mauritius to London.** Disembark this morning and enjoy a morning tour of Mauritius including the Trou-aux-Cerfs volcano, the Grand Bassin Lake and Black River Gorges. After lunch we transfer to the airport for our scheduled indirect flight to London.

**Day 14 London.** Arrive this morning.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £500 PER PERSON PLUS NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENT FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Deck	Suite Category	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
Amundsen	Standard	£9095	£8595
Byrd	Superior	£9295	£8795
Mawson	Premium	£9495	£8995
Mawson	Corner	£9895	£9395
Scott	Deluxe Balcony	£10495	£9995
Shackleton	Owner’s Balcony	£10795	£10295
Shackleton	Hebridean	£11495	£10995
Amundsen	Standard for sole use	£9095	£8595
Byrd	Superior for sole use	£9295	£8795

**PRICE INCLUDES:** Economy class scheduled air travel from London to Johannesburg & from Mauritius to London • Specially chartered flight from Johannesburg to Tulear • Overnight accommodation in Johannesburg with breakfast • 10 nights aboard the MS Hebridean Sky on a full board basis • House wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner • Noble Caledonia expedition team • Shore excursions • Gratuities • Transfers • Airport taxes • Port taxes.  
**Not Included:** Travel insurance.



Local fisherman



Reunion



# 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.

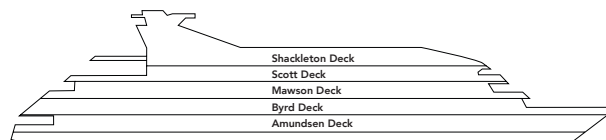
## Your Comfort

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.

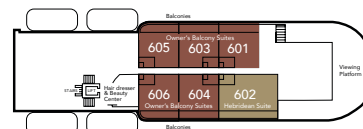
## Your Life On Board

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.

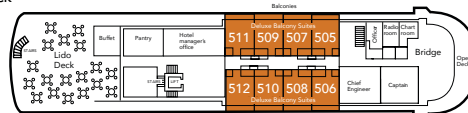
## MS HEBRIDEAN SKY DECK PLAN



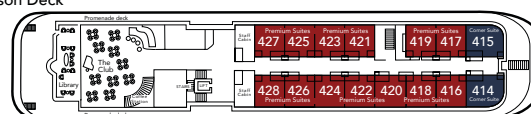
### Shackleton Deck



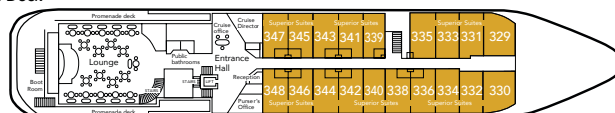
### Scott Deck



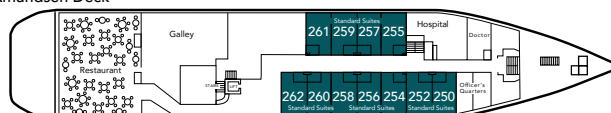
### Mawson Deck



### Byrd Deck



### Amundsen Deck



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

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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All special offers are subject to availability. Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.  
Cover image: Black lemur