

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

# PASSAGE THROUGH ANTIQUITY

A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY VISITING JORDAN, SAUDI ARABIA,  
EGYPT & CRETE ABOARD THE MS HEBRIDEAN SKY

4<sup>TH</sup> TO 17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024



NOBLE CALEDONIA



The imposing Crusader Castle, Kerak



Here is a passage through antiquity, an incomparable journey featuring a wealth of sites including the magnificent ‘Rose Red City’ of Petra and the fascinating ancient city of Hegra in Saudi Arabia which has only recently opened to tourists. These sites are irresistible attractions for the genuine traveller and as you explore these vast and complex Nabataean cities, whose wealth came from their proximity to the ancient Middle East trade routes, you cannot help but be impressed by the industry and sophistication of this ancient civilisation.

We begin our journey with five days of exploration in Jordan, which from the grandeur of Petra to the desert sands of Wadi Rum and the mystical Dead Sea is a country steeped in history and awe inspiring beauty. Petra, a city set deep in the Edom mountains and lost to Western ‘civilisation’ for hundreds of years, was hewn directly from the rock by the Nabataeans and is an amazing feat of engineering and construction. Following our time in Jordan, we will embark the MS Hebridean Sky and sail to Saudi Arabia to discover Hegra, the country’s first UNESCO World Heritage Site and Petra’s sister city. Untouched and inaccessible to visitors until recently, Hegra is a truly captivating site which offers clues about the mysterious Nabataean Kingdom. Continuing on to Egypt, our focus moves to the great achievements of the Ancient Egyptians as we spend time exploring some of the country’s many wonders including the Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx. A highlight for many will be our transit of the iconic Suez Canal enabling access to the Mediterranean city of Alexandria, the cultural and economic centre of the ancient Mediterranean and from where, after a day of exploration we will sail to the Cretan capital of Heraklion before ending our voyage in Athens.

This unusual itinerary offers a fascinating mix of some of the world’s most impressive and historic sites combined with time to relax on board the all-suite MS Hebridean Sky. We have planned the journey for spring when temperatures will be pleasant for exploring and with the aid of our knowledgeable local guides and excellent Guest Speaker, we will learn of some fascinating ancient civilisations and empires.



Ras Mohamed National Park



Little Temple, Petra





Wadi Rum



The Dead Sea



Church of St John The Baptist, Bethany



Ad Deir Monastery, Petra

## The Itinerary

### Day 1 London to Amman, Jordan.

Fly by scheduled flight. Arrive in Amman this evening and transfer to our hotel in the Dead Sea area for a two night stay.

### Day 2 Dead Sea & Bethany.

Enjoy breakfast in the hotel and a leisurely morning. You may wish to swim or float in the Dead Sea which, at 423 metres below sea level is the lowest spot on earth. The high salt content prevents the existence of any life forms but is also believed to provide healing properties with the mud on the seabed being rich in minerals. After lunch in the hotel restaurant we will drive to Bethany, the site where John the Baptist met and baptised Jesus Christ. The excavations conducted at Bethany in Jordan have uncovered a 1st century AD settlement with plastered pools and water systems, which were almost certainly used for mass baptisms, a 6th century Byzantine settlement with churches, a monastery and other structures most probably catering to religious pilgrims. This evening we will meet for dinner at the hotel.

### Day 3 Kerak & Little Petra.

This morning we drive southward along the Dead Sea shore before heading to the imposing Crusader stronghold of Kerak where we visit the fortified castle which was built in AD 1142 and witnessed many battles between the Crusaders and Saladin's Muslim armies. See the network of dimly lit vaulted rooms

and long winding corridors, which lead into each other through heavy arches and doorways. After our visit we continue our journey south to the rose-red city of Petra. We will stop enroute at the spectacular site of Little Petra, where a modest gorge (Siq el-Barid) leads into the area of carved tombs and monuments. See the Painted Cave which is believed to have been a shelter for a sect focused on Dionysus, the ancient Greek god of wine, as it contains remains of Greek-style plaster artwork, quite unique for Petra, displaying tangled vines and flowers with brightly coloured birds and cupid-like figures. After our visit we continue to our hotel and will meet for dinner this evening.

**Day 4 Petra.** After breakfast in the hotel we will explore the breathtaking Nabatean city of Petra which was carved out of the rose-red sandstone about 2000 years ago and has been voted as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. Walk past the Obelisk Tomb and then through the Siq, the narrow 1.2 kilometre gorge that leads to Petra's most impressive monument, the Treasury, which was carved out of the pale reddish sandstone in the 1st century BC. Pass by the dozens of classical Nabatean ruins and tombs known as the Street of Facades, the remarkable 3000 seat Theatre, the Royal Tombs, the Colonnaded Street, the Byzantine Church, the Temple, the Monumental Arch and the mighty Qasr el-Bint Faroun. After

lunch amidst the ruins of Petra you will have the option to return to the hotel for an afternoon at leisure or stay and explore the site further independently. Those feeling active may choose to climb about 900 steps up to the large, 1st century AD monument known as the Monastery with its remarkable views over Wadi Araba. Meet this evening for dinner.

### Day 5 Wadi Rum & Aqaba.

This morning we will drive to Wadi Rum, also known as the Valley of the Moon where the desert landscape is mixed with awe-inspiring shapes to create an almost supernatural atmosphere. We will embark on an adventurous excursion by a Bedouin open top four-wheel drive vehicle. We begin at the visitor centre from where there is a view in the distance of the Seven Pillars of Wisdom, the famous landmark named after the book by T.E. Lawrence 'Lawrence of Arabia'. During our excursion we will also see the Alameleh inscriptions which are a good example of ancient rock drawings, Siq Um Al Tawaqi, a short canyon containing a carving of the head of T.E. Lawrence and ruins of Allat (Goddess) Temple of the AAD tribe. After lunch in the desert we will drive to Aqaba to embark the MS Hebridean Sky and will set sail this evening.

**Day 6 At Sea.** After a busy few days of exploration, spend a relaxing day at sea. Maybe join a lecture in the lounge or find a spot on deck.

### Day 7 Al Wajh & Hegra, Saudi Arabia.

From our berth in Al Wajh there will be a choice of activities today. A full day tour will drive inland to the Alulah region and ancient Hegra, the largest conserved site of Nabataean civilisation south of Petra. Hegra was both a trading centre and military stronghold enabling the Nabataeans to control the Arabian caravan trade and the site has been left practically undisturbed for 2000 years. Here, surrounded by desert, we can find over 100 well-preserved tombs hewn from the rocks of the Hijaz mountains, featuring beautifully carved facades dating back to the first century BC. The largest of the tombs is that of Liyan, son of Kuza at 72 feet tall. Alternatively explore the city of Al Wajh, once a key port for silk road merchant ships. Visit the atmospheric old town and market, the 200-year-old Al-Ashraf Mosque, which overlooks the bay and Al Wajh Castle which was built in 1875 toward the end of the Ottoman period.

### Day 8 Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt.

Arrive in Egypt today at the resort town of Sharm el Sheikh. It is, however, offshore that our interest lies with the clear waters of the Red Sea. Maybe join a snorkelling tour to the Ras Mohamed National Park. Designated a National Park in 1983 the reef ecosystems here protect a diversity of fish species and coral. Alternatively take a glass bottomed

Pyramids of Giza and the Great Sphinx



boat tour as we view some of the many species of colourful fish, coral and sponges that live in these waters. Returning to the ship for lunch we will spend the afternoon cruising through the Gulf of Suez.

**Day 9 Cairo & Giza.** A full day tour is dedicated to the capital city of Cairo. From our berth in Sokhna we drive to the impressive Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx, the only survivor of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World and the tombs of the great Pharaohs and their queens. After lunch we visit the Egyptian Museum with 107 halls that are separated into seven sections. The museum houses statues, jewels and treasures of Tutankhamun. We will visit the Amarna Room and see the Fayoum portraits, and monuments from the later periods from the Greeks and the Romans.

**Day 10 Suez Canal Transit.** Spend the day in transit of the Suez Canal and the Great Bitter Lake.

**Day 11 Alexandria.** Our final day in Egypt finds us in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria. Here we have a choice of excursions and you may want to explore Alexandria with a visit to the Bibliotheca Alexandrina and the Archaeological Museum which contains recent finds of Cleopatra's palace. Also see Pompey's Pillar, the Coptic Cathedral of St Mark, the Catacombs and the Roman

Theatre. Finally take in the views from the Citadel of Qaitbay, which stands where the famous Pharos Lighthouse of Alexandria stood in antiquity. Alternatively take a full day tour into the Western Desert to visit the Museum and graveyards of El Alamein. It was here in October 1942 that thousands of British and Commonwealth soldiers lost their lives in battle. We will visit the Commonwealth War Cemetery as well as the local museum with its collection of memorabilia including tanks, artillery and uniforms from the nations that fought in the North Africa campaigns.

**Day 12 At Sea.** Enjoy a final relaxing day on board as we leave North Africa and sail to Crete.

**Day 13 Heraklion, Crete.** From our berth in Heraklion it is a short distance to the Palace of Knossos, legendary home of the Minotaur. Wander around the site impressively excavated by Sir Arthur Evans, seeing some of the 1300 rooms adorned with lively frescoes where King Minos held court. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at leisure in the town, maybe visit the archaeological museum which holds the world's largest collection of Minoan artefacts.

**Day 14 Athens, Greece to London.** Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.

## Post-cruise Athens Extension 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024

If you would like to spend some time in Athens after disembarking MS Hebridean Sky we are offering the opportunity to join our two night extension.



### The Itinerary

**Day 1 Athens, Greece.** Disembark after breakfast and drive to the Acropolis, a symbol of the glory of ancient Greece. Following our exploration of the fascinating site, a brief walk will bring us to the new Acropolis Museum. After our visit we will make our way to Plaka for a traditional Greek lunch. This afternoon we will check into our hotel and the remainder of the day will be at leisure. (B, L)

**Day 2 Athens.** Today is free to explore independently before we meet this evening for dinner. (B, D)

**Day 3 Athens to London.** After breakfast we check out of the hotel and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London. (B)

### PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Twin: **£845** Single: **£995**

**Price Includes:** Two nights hotel accommodation in Athens, meals as indicated (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner), Noble Caledonia Tour Manager, excursions, gratuities, transfers.

**Not Included:** Travel insurance.

### 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
Amundsen	Standard	<b>£7495</b>	<b>£6995</b>
Byrd	Superior	<b>£7795</b>	<b>£7295</b>
Mawson	Premium	<b>£7995</b>	<b>£7495</b>
Mawson	Corner	<b>£8295</b>	<b>£7795</b>
Scott	Deluxe Balcony	<b>£8995</b>	<b>£8495</b>
Shackleton	Owner's Balcony	<b>£9495</b>	<b>£8995</b>
Shackleton	Hebridean	<b>£9995</b>	<b>£9495</b>
Amundsen	Standard for sole use	<b>£8495</b>	<b>£7995</b>
Byrd	Superior for sole use	<b>£8995</b>	<b>£8495</b>

**PRICE INCLUDES:** Economy class scheduled air travel • Four nights hotel accommodation in Jordan with breakfast • Lunch & dinner daily • Nine nights aboard the MS Hebridean Sky on a full board basis • House wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner • Noble Caledonia onboard team including Guest Speaker • Gratuities • Transfers • Airport taxes • Port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel insurance, visas for Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt (please note it is currently possible to apply for visas online and/or obtain on arrival). Full details pertaining to the procurement of visas will be sent to passengers 12 weeks before departure.



# 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, flat screen 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.

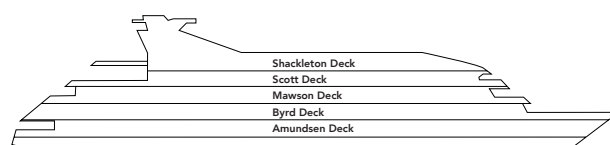
## Your Comfort

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.

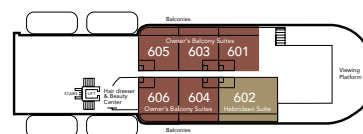
## Your Life On Board

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.

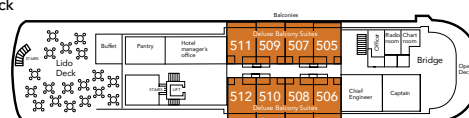
## MS HEBRIDEAN SKY DECK PLAN



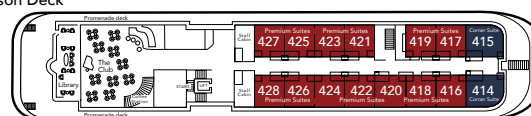
### Shackleton Deck



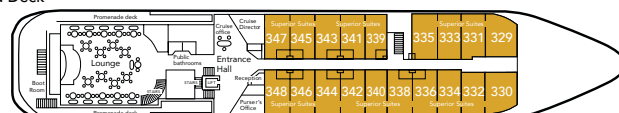
### Scott Deck



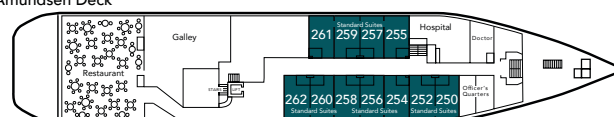
### Mawson Deck



### Byrd Deck



### Amundsen Deck



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

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.



# 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: Hegra, Saudi Arabia.