

SPECIAL  
OFFER – SAVE  
**£1000**  
PER PERSON

# PEARLS OF POLYNESIA

ISLAND HOPPING IN POLYNESIA  
ABOARD THE MS ISLAND SKY

27<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023 TO 12<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024

NOBLE CALEDONIA

The islands of the South Pacific are an extraordinary world that exceed everyone's expectations. They are as sensuous as the paintings of Gauguin, more adventurous than the tales of Robert Louis Stevenson and more romantic than James Michener's fabled Bali Hai. This voyage tells the story of Polynesia and uncovers its history and legends as we visit some of the most captivating islands in the world.

The name Polynesia means 'many islands' and no one could argue with the suitability of this title. There are islands of low lying coral with some of the most beautiful beaches in the world and contrasting volcanic mountainous landscapes of lush, incomparable beauty. Welcoming others is sacred to Polynesians and that will be evident as we island hop through the region experiencing the genuine warmth of the people as we learn more about their fascinating culture and heritage. Meeting the friendly locals and visiting their villages which have been untouched by the modern world is a truly memorable experience.

Our island hopping expedition aboard the MS Island Sky begins and concludes in Tahiti, the iconic island of the Pacific dream. Envision if you will the evocative paintings of Paul Gauguin, a Paris stockbroker who ditched it all to pursue his art in Tahiti. Gauguin's images of exuberant outdoor settings with vivid lagoons and statuesque palms will become the backdrop of your first days in paradise. We will also discover the volcanic Marquesas Islands and beauty of the Tuamotu Islands which constitute the largest chain of coral atolls in the world and is where we will welcome in the New Year. Our days will be spent on nature walks, searching for endemic birds such as the Tuamotu sandpiper, beachcombing, snorkelling or swimming from the pristine beaches, interacting with the locals and learning about their way of life and traditional handicrafts or, simply experiencing some of the most pristine tropical scenery to be found anywhere in the world.

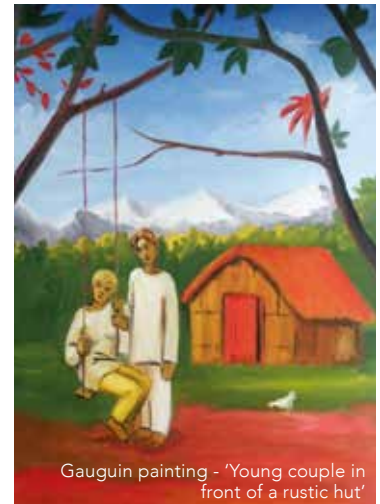
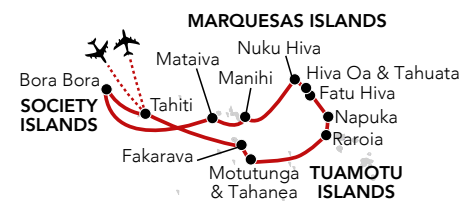
An expedition such as this requires a vessel akin to the MS Island Sky with the ability to adapt to her surroundings, land on remote atolls using the fleet of Zodiac landing craft and follow in the wake of whales and dolphins all while providing a comfortable base. We will explore inlets, lagoons and land in otherwise inaccessible places and although we set sail with a set itinerary, it is often the unscheduled events that become the highlight. We will be joined by a hand-picked expedition team, consisting of naturalists and marine biologists who will share their knowledge and enthusiasm during forays ashore and whilst on board.

## 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 is an extract from the ship's log from a previous expedition which will provide you with an idea of what to expect.

**Raroia:** After an early lunch we arrived just outside the atoll of Raroia. This is the largest atoll we have visited so far with more than 300 motu and the lagoon stretching as far as the eye could see. The ship anchored just outside the lagoon and the expedition team commenced operations to and from the main village which was picture perfect with calm, pale turquoise water, lapping at the shore of a palm fringed white coral beach. After a traditional musical welcome, we made our way over to a shaded area, where the villagers were displaying local handicrafts and pearl jewellery for sale. With the rest of the afternoon at leisure we dispersed in different directions to either swim in the lagoon off another beautiful beach approximately 500 metres from the village or take a Zodiac transfer to an area just inside the shelter of the lagoon where snorkelling platforms had been set up by the expedition team. In the shallow water there were beautiful corals with all sorts of marine life including butterfly, angel, parrot and a variety of damsel fish species as well as moorish idols, chromis and little cleaner wrasse. It was a fantastic snorkelling experience in the sheltered waters of the lagoon.

**Motutunga & Tahanea:** Captain anchored the ship just outside the entrance to the atoll and a large Zodiac platform was established nearby. We were shuttled to the Zodiac platform and could explore the reef at our leisure. The corals were beautiful and we once again enjoyed just drifting and watching this incredible underwater world. For those more adventurous snorkellers the expedition team offered the chance to experience an accompanied 'drift snorkel' through the mouth of the lagoon. In the afternoon we sailed on to Tahanea where there was an afternoon birding expedition with the ornithologists in the expedition team. They had a very specific mission in mind and set off across the lagoon to a distant motu in search of the endemic and exceptionally rare Tuamotu sandpiper.



Gauguin painting - 'Young couple in front of a rustic hut'







Tiki, Nuku Hiva



Stingray



Brown booby



Church, Nuku Hiva

## The Itinerary

**Day 1 London to Los Angeles, USA.** Fly by scheduled flight. Arrive and transfer to our hotel for an overnight stay. The remainder of the day is at leisure.

**Day 2 Los Angeles to Tahiti, French Polynesia.** Return to the airport for our scheduled flight to Tahiti. Arrive and transfer to our hotel for an overnight stay.

**Day 3 Tahiti.** After breakfast in the hotel, we will enjoy a morning excursion including a visit to the Museum of Tahiti and Her Islands. After lunch at a local restaurant we will transfer to the MS Island Sky this afternoon and sail.

**Day 4 Bora Bora.** One of the most stunning islands on the planet, Bora Bora's interior is crowned by majestic eroded volcanic formations and a distinctive black basaltic peak. A tour of the island will take you past colourful villages, archaeological sites and World War II relics. This afternoon explore independently or alternatively take the chance to swim from the beach or enjoy our first snorkelling opportunity in the clear waters.

**Day 5 Mataiva, Tuamotu Islands.** Mataiva means "nine eyes," it was named for the nine narrow channels around the encircling reef that connect the lagoon to the sea. We will go ashore at the village of Pahua which is perched on both sides of a narrow pass and spanned by an unusual bridge - the only one of its type in the Tuamotu Islands. Enjoy a village walk then spend time on hikes learning about the native vegetation or snorkelling at the pass which reveals triggerfish, jacks, and goatfishes, among many others. Tonight we celebrate New Year's Eve as we sail.

**Day 6 Manihi.** Spend the first morning of the New Year at the idyllic atoll of Manihi. It was here, in the inner lagoon, that black pearls were first farmed in French Polynesia and we have the chance to visit a farm to learn about the growing process. Alternatively enjoy a swim in the clear waters, snorkel over the coral reefs where we may see manta rays and tropical fish or meet the islanders and shop for local crafts in the colourful village of Turipaoa. Spend a leisurely afternoon at sea.

**Day 7 At Sea.** Enjoy a day relaxing on the sun deck and join a lecture in the lounge as we sail to our next island group.

**Day 8 Nuku Hiva, Marquesas Islands.** Arrive in the Marquesas Islands which are far removed from the rest of the South Pacific in everything from language and culture to geology. Nuka Hiva is the largest of the islands

and the island group's economic capital. Here, we will immerse ourselves in local culture and geography. Traditional Marquesan dancers welcome us to their village. We will visit the archaeological centres at Kamuihei and Hikoku'a and see the temples, petroglyphs and tiki. Meanwhile a series of island walks will investigate the nature of the island whilst there will also be a chance to swim from the beaches.

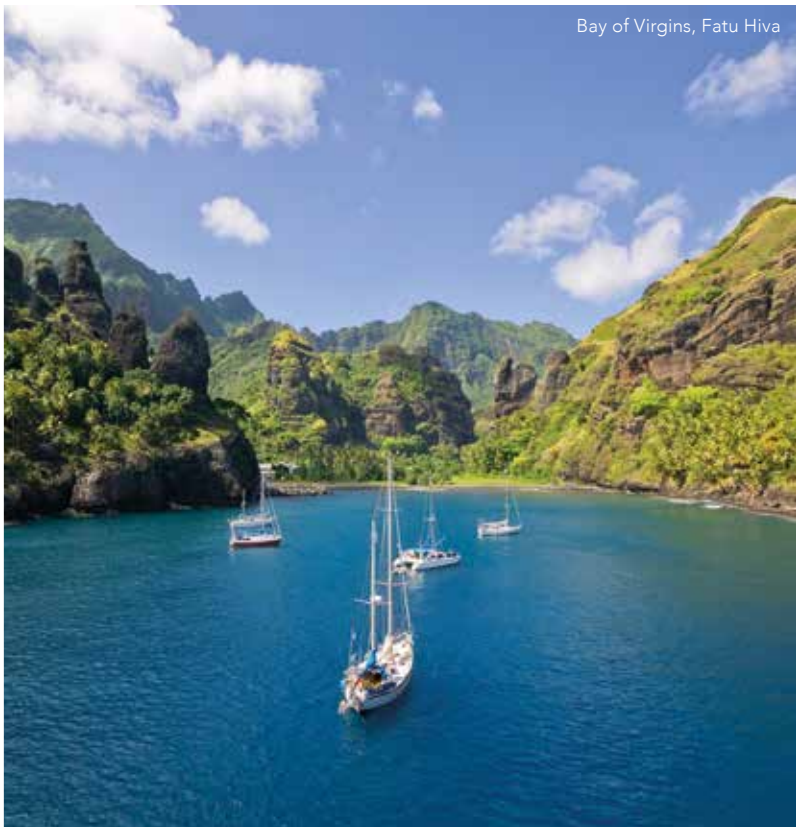
**Day 9 Hiva Oa & Tahuata.** This morning we will explore the life of Gauguin, the iconic artist of the South Pacific. We will visit the museum dedicated to him and make a pilgrimage to his final resting place in the cemetery perched high on a hill overlooking the town. We will soak up the landscape that inspired Gauguin to leave it all behind and go native. Later today we sail to the neighbouring island of Tahuata. This is the smallest inhabited island of the Marquesas but was the first to be visited by Protestant and Catholic missionaries and the first church in the Marquesas was built here. With no airport, the island is only accessible by sea and is off the usual tourist trail. We will explore Hapatoni village, meet the local population and learn about their history and ways of life.

**Day 10 Fatu Hiva.** With a landscape of spectacular pinnacles towering over the cobalt Bay of Virgins, Fatu Hiva is one of the most floral and pristine islands. During our visit, villagers will perform their traditional dances and demonstrate their handicrafts of wood carvings and tapa making. Afterwards our expedition team will run a series of nature walks either climbing to the view point, searching for birds with our ornithologist or a nature walk to the waterfall. Meanwhile a snorkel platform will be set up for those who wish to swim.

**Day 11 Napuka Island, Tuamotu Islands.** After a morning at sea we arrive at the small Napuka Atoll home to just 250 inhabitants. The first recorded European to reach the island was John Bryon, grandfather of Lord Byron who in 1765 named this and neighbouring island the "disappointment islands" due to the hostile reception he received. Today, if the weather and sea conditions permit we will aim to land on the island and explore the beach with our naturalists or set up a snorkelling platform on the surrounding reef.

**Day 12 Raroia.** Raroia is known for its pearl farming and today we will see the strings of oysters all around the local farms. After the traditional welcome to the island including a selection of local fruits and fish we will have the day to explore on a variety of walks or snorkel in the beautiful coral garden with parrotfish, angelfish and butterfly fish.





Bay of Virgins, Fatu Hiva



Fakarava



Snorkelling from the shoreline



Parrot fish

**Day 13 Motutunga & Tahanea.** Motutunga Atoll was first sighted by James Cook in 1773 who named it ‘Adventure’ after his own ship. Both Motutunga and Tahanea are uninhabited atolls and offer some of the finest snorkelling in the Tuamotu archipelago. We will be able to see amazing corals and marine life including triggerfish and surgeonfish. At Tahanea there will be another chance to snorkel or alternatively join our birders on a walk to find the endemic Tuamotu sandpiper or join our naturalists as we beachcomb.

**Day 14 Fakarava.** This protected atoll, along with its six neighbouring islands, make up a UNESCO Classified Nature Reserve. It has been the home to Robert Louis Stephenson in 1888 and Henri Matisse in 1930 whose art was influenced by the landscape for many years. The local villagers of Rotoava will welcome us and demonstrate their handicrafts and cultural traditions. We will have a chance to sample local delicacies before enjoying walks on the island with our naturalists. Alternatively take the last opportunity to relax on a South Pacific beach or explore independently at your own pace. Sail back to Tahiti later this afternoon.

**Day 15 Tahiti, French Polynesia to London.** Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for your scheduled flight to London via Los Angeles.

**Day 16 En-route.** Transit in Los Angeles for our onward flight to London.

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



Tiki statue on the bay of Nuku Hiva

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

**SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £1000 PER PERSON PLUS FIRST 20 BOOKINGS RECEIVE COMPLIMENTARY UPGRADE TO THE NEXT CATEGORY\***

| Deck       | Suite Category         | Brochure Price | Special Offer Price |
|------------|------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Magellan   | Standard               | £11795         | £10795              |
| Columbus   | Superior               | £12295         | £11295              |
| Marco Polo | Premium                | £13295         | £12295              |
| Marco Polo | Corner                 | £13995         | £12995              |
| Erikson    | Deluxe Balcony         | £14995         | £13995              |
| Explorer   | Owner’s Balcony Suites | £15495         | £14495              |
| Explorer   | Island Suite           | £15995         | £14995              |
| Magellan   | Standard for sole use  | £14795         | £13795              |
| Columbus   | Superior for sole use  | £15795         | £14795              |

\* Complimentary suite upgrade applicable for double occupancy bookings only.

**PRICE INCLUDES:** Economy class scheduled air travel • Overnight hotel accommodation in Los Angeles & Tahiti with breakfast • 12 nights aboard the MS Island 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, US ESTA.



# MS ISLAND SKY



Friendly Service



Deluxe Balcony Suite



The Restaurant

The much loved MS Island Sky is one of our two flagships 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, flat screen television with inbuilt DVD/CD player and a 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.

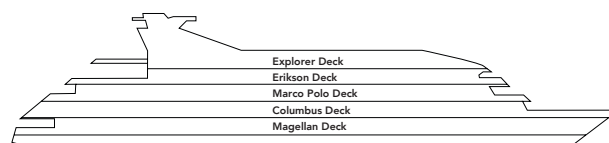
## Your Comfort

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.

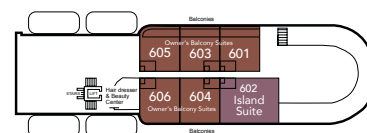
## Your Life On Board

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



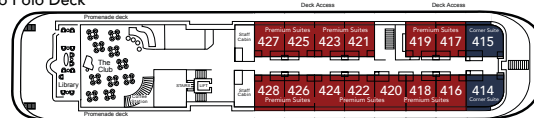
### Explorer Deck



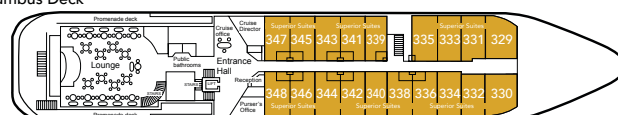
### Erikson Deck



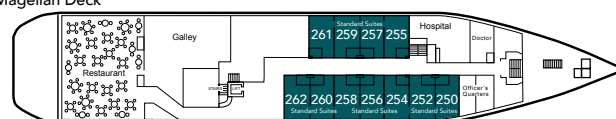
### Marco Polo Deck



### Columbus Deck



### Magellan Deck



- Standard Suites
- Corner Suites with Deck Access
- Owner's Balcony Suites
- Superior Suites
- Deluxe Balcony Suites
- Island Suite
- Premium Suites with Deck Access



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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