

*Voyages aboard*  
**MS SERENISSIMA**  
2017

CENTRAL AMERICA – CARIBBEAN – BRITISH ISLES  
NORWAY – MEDITERRANEAN



**NOBLE CALEDONIA**





## CONTENTS

MS Serenissima	04-06
Your Onboard Team	07
The Voyages	08-09
Ancient & Natural Wonders of Central America	10-13
Sailing the Spanish Main	14-15
Cuban Delights	16-17
An Island Hopping Caribbean Odyssey	18-19
Secret Caribbean	20-21
Island Hopping in the Azores	22-23
Spring on the Edge	24-25
Britain & Ireland in Bloom	26-27
Hebridean Secrets	28-31
Midsummer in the Hebrides	32-33
From the Norwegian Fjords to the Baltic	34-35
Summer in the Land of Vikings, Sagas & Fjords	36-37
Britain & Ireland Odyssey	38-39
Splendours of Normandy, Brittany & the Atlantic Edge	40-41
Iberian Stepping Stones	42-43
In the Footsteps of Laurie Lee	44-45
Historic Islands & Cities of the Mediterranean	46-49
Balkan Odyssey	50-51
Music & History in the Adriatic	52-53
MS Serenissima's 2017 Voyage Schedule	54

# Dear Traveller

The following pages will introduce you to the series of cruises the MS Serenissima will undertake in 2017 which will be our fourth year chartering the vessel in her current guise although our association with her dates back many years. Having the vessel on long-term charter has meant we have full control over her schedule and have devised a fascinating sequence of cruises. From Central America and the Caribbean over the winter to the islands of the Azores and the British Isles over spring and early summer, the rest of the year will be spent exploring the Norwegian fjords, the Western Mediterranean and Adriatic accessing many ports suitable only for vessels the size of the MS Serenissima.

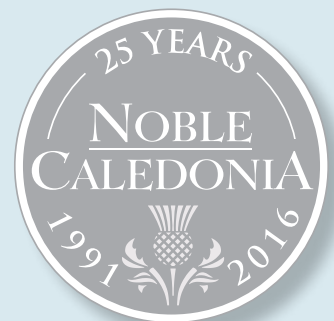
For those not familiar with the MS Serenissima, it is worth noting that she breaks all the rules of modern cruise development. She is of course small, with capacity for only 100 guests and no two cabins are identical although all possess a cosy, traditional style and apart from the upgraded technology on board and new safety and comfort features, the only stylistic concession to the 21st century is a Jacuzzi and fitness area. There is excellent communication equipment and multi-channel televisions on board but otherwise the vessel is an age from today's towering blocks bearing thousands of passengers. The style is Swedish and public areas and cabins a celebration of elegant Gustavian style – bright and light with typical Scandinavian blues and yellows. As soon as you board you are aware that much love and energy has been spent, which only a private owner, rather than a corporation, could achieve.

We are delighted that the MS Serenissima has built up a strong following amongst our regular travellers since 2013 and despite some early issues with the onboard catering, we are happy to report that they have all now been resolved with a new hotel department and crew appointed in 2015 resulting in excellent feedback from guests. Whilst she might not universally appeal – those who have become used to larger resort-style vessels with unlimited entertainment may find her unstimulating – for those who prefer the informal atmosphere of a smaller vessel, interesting itineraries and lectures and have a love for older vessels, the MS Serenissima is the perfect choice.

We look forward to welcoming back our past passengers and also meeting some new faces aboard the MS Serenissima in 2017.



Tim Cochrane  
Managing Director





MS Serenissima

## MS Serenissima

The handsome 100-passenger MS Serenissima began her career as the Harald Jarl, cruising the Norwegian coastline and fjords. Extensively renovated in 2003 she was rechristened MS Andrea and began her life as a classic cruise ship, and was chartered by Noble Caledonia for a number of years. In spring 2012 MS Andrea was purchased by our long-standing associates Volga Dream and renamed the MS Serenissima.

After a thorough renovation and upgrading, the charming MS Serenissima commenced cruise operations in April 2013 and we have chartered her for the majority of each year since knowing her to be perfect for small ship cruising. With her small size she can navigate into small, remote ports inaccessible to the big cruise ships and appears an impressive sight when moored. With her fleet of Zodiacs she is capable of both destination and expedition cruising.

### Your Space

The facilities on board include two lounges – the larger Andrea Lounge is comfortable and spacious and the smaller Harald Lounge is more intimate. There is also a small library with a computer for internet access. The outside areas are something special with a spacious observation deck allowing for 360 degree views of the passing scenery. From here, step down to the lido area with fitness room, Jacuzzi and outside bar. The covered seating area at the back of deck 6 is ideal for relaxing with a drink in hand. Perhaps, one of the best known and loved features of this vessel is its unique style. During the major refit in Sweden the then owners commissioned Swedish interior designers to

create a Gustavian style interior. This bright Swedish 18th century influenced, country house style works particularly well on a vessel of this vintage, providing intimacy and classic nautical sensibility often lacking in larger vessels.

### Cabins & Suites

Accommodating no more than 100 passengers, the cabins are attractively designed for comfort and convenience. All cabins are fully air conditioned with an ensuite bathroom with shower, sink, toilet, a selection of toiletries including shower gel, soaps, shampoo and conditioner, hairdryer, robes and slippers. All cabins come equipped with telephone, flat screen

television, safety deposit box and other thoughtful appointments. Bottles of still and sparkling water are replenished daily. There are ten different grades of cabin arranged over five decks, and with the exception of the three inside cabins, all staterooms feature either windows or portholes. Because of the very nature of the ship, the cabins do vary in shape and size, adding to the vessel's overall charm. Choose from the cosy inside cabins of approx 10 square metres, to the sumptuous newly built executive suites of 25 square metres boasting private balconies and minibar. The ship can also accommodate passengers with mobility restrictions in cabin number 407 and there is an elevator that serves decks 3 to 6.





Harald Lounge



Cruising



Restaurant



Jacuzzi



Andrea Lounge

### Your Dining

The free seating Venice Restaurant accommodates all guests in one sitting. Being on deck 5, it has great views from all tables. The picture windows mean the restaurant is light and airy. Breakfast is served buffet-style with cooked dishes available and eggs to order by the ship's accomplished chef. Lunch is also served buffet-style with hot and cold dishes available. Dinner is served a la carte and is four courses, except for at the Captain's Dinner, which is a six course affair. In addition, there are al fresco dining facilities available in good weather. Where possible, local produce is sourced for an authentic dining experience. A choice of red or white wine, beer, soft drinks, and

water are included at lunch and dinner. Tea and coffee are served around the clock in the Andrea Lounge. In keeping with the relaxed atmosphere on board, when dining you are able to choose your seating arrangements at your leisure and dress is informal except for the Captain's Dinner for which you may wish to dress in smarter attire.

### Life On Board

The MS Serenissima is more akin to a country-hotel than one of the large ships trawling the seas today. The European Captain, Officers and crew offer a first class service and have been selected for their professionalism and caring attitudes. The atmosphere on board is warm and

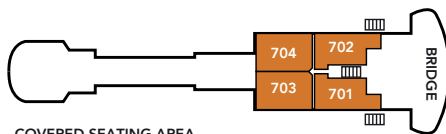
welcoming, and the emphasis is not on around the clock entertainment and dining, but instead on well-thought out itineraries, relaxation, time spent with like-minded passengers and discovery.

### For your Comfort, Safety and Security

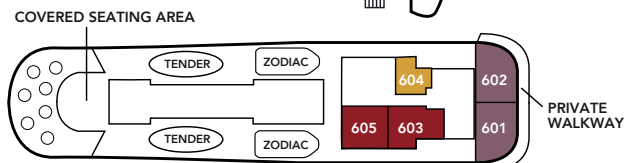
There are so few ships of this generation still cruising and MS Serenissima is a great testament to her present and previous owners that they have seen fit to invest considerable sums over the years to keep her in top form and complying with the stringent health and safety requirements. There is a Doctor on board and during your voyage you will have the opportunity to visit the Captain and Officers on the bridge.

# Deck Plan & Cabins

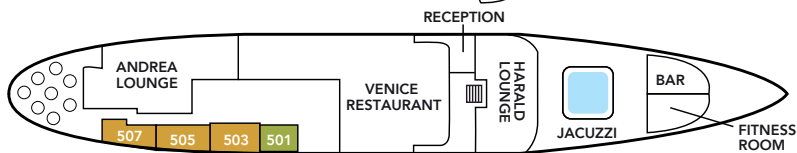
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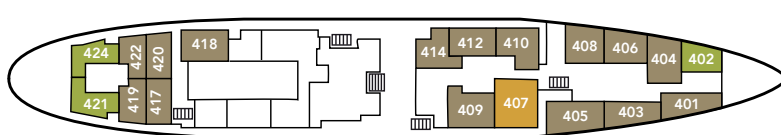
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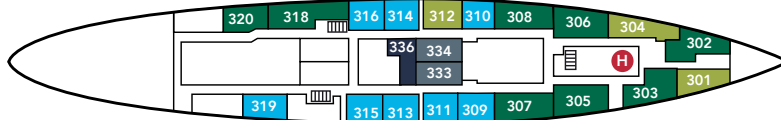
DECK 5



DECK 4



DECK 3



Throughout this brochure, you will see an expedition logo next to some of the cruise names which indicates the cruise is classified as an expedition cruise. During expedition cruises, 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. Expedition cruises will appeal to the more adventurous and those who enjoy the natural world.

- INSIDE TWIN/DOUBLE
- STANDARD STATEROOM
- STANDARD STATEROOM PLUS
- SUPERIOR STATEROOM
- DELUXE STATEROOM
- JUNIOR SUITE
- EXECUTIVE SUITE
- OWNER'S SUITE
- INSIDE SINGLE
- STANDARD SINGLE



**OWNER'S SUITE**  
(approx. 22 square metres)



**EXECUTIVE SUITE**  
(approx. 25 square metres)



**JUNIOR SUITE**  
(approx. 21 square metres)



**DELUXE STATEROOM**  
(approx. 15 to 25 square metres)



**SUPERIOR STATEROOM**  
(approx. 11.5 to 18 square metres)



**STANDARD STATEROOM PLUS**  
(approx. 14 to 19 square metres)



**STANDARD STATEROOM**  
(approx. 10 to 11.5 square metres)



**INSIDE TWIN/DOUBLE**  
(approx. 10 square metres)



**STANDARD SINGLE**  
(approx. 7 to 12.5 square metres)



# Your Onboard Team



On all our voyages you will find informative staff on board and whilst exploring ashore you will be accompanied by excellent English-speaking local guides. Working with the Captain and crew, our cruise staff are responsible for the day to day organisation of the itinerary and briefings and they are in regular contact with the Noble Caledonia office. We have the very best in their field and they are also joined by Guest Speakers who are chosen for their in-depth knowledge of a specific subject or geographical area. Briefings by the cruise staff and informal talks by our Guest Speakers add an extra dimension to all we see and do. Below are just some of the excellent team we have lined up to join the MS Serenissima in 2017. There are many more and full details of who will be joining you onboard can be viewed at [www.noble-caledonia.co.uk](http://www.noble-caledonia.co.uk)



## Major JGH Corrigan – Guest Speaker

Commissioned from The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 1962, Gordon Corrigan was an officer of the Royal Gurkha Rifles before retiring from the Army in 1998. He served mainly in the Far East but also in Berlin, Cyprus, Belize and Northern Ireland. His last appointment was Commanding Officer of the Gurkha Centre

in Hampshire. He is now a military historian and author. His television appearances include *The Gurkhas*, *Napoleon's Waterloo* and *Battlefield Detectives*, and so far he has presented five series on various aspects of military history. He is a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society, a Member of the British Commission for Military History, a Freeman of the City of London and a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Farriers.



## Alan Hardwick – Guest Speaker

Initially trained as a biologist Alan spent several years after university working in fish farming and learnt to dive, naturally enough, in a fish tank on the West coast of Scotland. Fascinated by the underwater world he spent much of the next 25 years exploring the seas around the Scottish Islands, leading expeditions to places such as

St Kilda and further afield in the Faroe Islands. He considers himself lucky to have been able to travel to Africa and to have worked on a research project in Costa Rica studying the seasonal dynamics of a tropical dry forest. He does, however, share with many others the love of travel and exploration and has been fortunate in working as a Zodiac driver on cruises to Antarctica, Spitsbergen, Norway, and the Scottish Islands.



## Imogen Corrigan – Guest Speaker

Imogen Corrigan served for twenty years in the British Army retiring in the rank of Major. In 2004 she graduated from the University of Kent with a 1st in Anglo-Saxon and Medieval History and is currently studying for PhD at Birmingham University. She runs study tours and has lectured extensively on Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

subjects in Britain and Europe and is a NADFAS lecturer as well as being a speaker for the Kent Federation of History and East Kent National Trust. Her first book, *The Race for the Sky: the Building of the English Cathedrals*, is to be published by Atlantic Books.



## Ian Bullock – Expedition Team Member

Ian Bullock is a British biologist who since 1978 has specialised in seabird surveys, habitat management for endangered species and the conservation of remote island nature reserves. For 25 years he worked for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds as both research biologist and warden, establishing new reserves for

conservation and managing offshore islands. In spare moments since 1990 he has worked as guide and lecturer on board expedition ships. He loves the sea, wildlife and wilderness and relishes any opportunity to share this enthusiasm with fellow adventurers.



## Colin Baird – Expedition Team Member

Colin grew up on the west coast of Canada and developed a love for the sea at an early age, sailing and scuba diving the local waters off Vancouver Island. He spent 10 years as a marine mammal trainer working with seals, sea lions and orca. In 2002 he was hired by Jean Michel Cousteau as the director of field

operations for the Free Willy/ Keiko Project in Iceland and Norway. This was and remains today the only attempt to release a previously captive orca back into the wild. Since then, Colin has been expedition cruising to many out of the way places; including Iceland, Norway, Svalbard, the high arctic and Antarctic.



## John Love – Guest Speaker

Born in Inverness, John Love graduated in zoology at Aberdeen University. In 1975 he went to live on the Isle of Rum where he managed a highly successful project to reintroduce the white-tailed sea eagle. While he remains involved with birds of prey, seabirds are another passion. In the 1990s John acted as guide and lecturer on several

small charter vessels round the Hebrides and has lectured on cruises, round Scotland and to Norway, for the National Trust for Scotland. He first worked for Noble Caledonia in 2009 and now participates in various expedition cruises for three to five months each year. This is mainly around the UK, the Hebrides in particular.



## Sir Michael Burton – Guest Speaker

Michael Burton played a prominent part in the closing stages of the Cold War. As the last British Minister in Berlin during the final four years of Allied Occupation, he remained as the senior British diplomat after the fall of the Berlin Wall during the run-up to German Re-unification a year later. After returning to the Foreign Office as the

Assistant Under- Secretary for the Middle East and North Africa, Michael's final posting was as ambassador in Prague. Since retirement he has been a member of Council of the Royal Society of Asian Affairs, and Chairman of the European-Atlantic Group and the Hurlingham Club in London.



## Valerie Grove – Guest Speaker

Valerie has been a journalist for 50 years, beginning on the *Shields Gazette* in her gap year, and then on *Varsity* at Cambridge. She wrote profiles and interviews in the *Sunday Times* and *The Times* from 1986 to 2014. Before that she was a columnist and literary editor of the *Evening Standard* for 19 years. She has four children and

is the author of four biographies of writers, including Dodie Smith, John Mortimer and Laurie Lee. Valerie will be joining "In the Footsteps of Laurie Lee", a voyage from Seville to Barcelona, and has been instrumental in its planning.

# *The Voyages*

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Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bow lines, sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails.

Explore. Dream. Discover.

*Mark Twain*

”







# Ancient & Natural Wonders of Central America

A voyage linking the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea including the Panama Canal  
22nd January to 9th February 2017

Join us aboard the MS Serenissima as we explore Central America's Pacific Coastline visiting Guatemala, Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica before we transit through the Panama Canal to the Caribbean Coast. Such a comprehensive and in-depth itinerary would be difficult to comprehend or undertake by any other means than a cruise.

Daily, guided excursions will introduce you to the natural and cultural wonders of the region and with the MS Serenissima as our base, we are able to visit some small islands and ports which the larger cruise vessels simply cannot access. The history of the ancient Mayan civilisation, the colonial years and the more recent events of the region will be brought to life by our onboard team and local guides. There is also much of the natural world to occupy us on our journey including our visit to El Salvador's most important marine ecosystem, the Jiquilisco Bay Biosphere Reserve and Costa Rica's Curu National Wildlife Refuge, the Manuel Antonio National Park and the spectacular Corcavado National Park.

Our days will be spent swimming from pristine beaches, searching for endemic flora and fauna with our onboard naturalists, learning about the colonial and often turbulent history of the region and of course not forgetting what will be one of the highlights for many, our daylight transit through the iconic Panama Canal. In addition we visit some beautiful and uncommercialised little known islands. If you have been contemplating a visit to Central America, then this fascinating voyage could offer you the perfect opportunity with its mix of natural and ancient wonders.



Antigua Guatemala



## The Itinerary

**Day 1 London to Guatemala City, Guatemala.** Fly by scheduled indirect flight. Arrive this evening and transfer to our hotel in Guatemala City for an overnight stay.

**Day 2 Antigua to Puerto Quetzal.** After breakfast in the hotel we will drive to Antigua and enjoy a morning exploring this UNESCO World Heritage Site. Built between three magnificent volcanoes in 1542 it is one of the oldest and most beautiful cities in the Americas. Antigua remained an economic and political heart of Central America until a devastating earthquake in 1773 destroyed much of the city. We will explore the city which is a wonder of colonial buildings, beautiful squares, cobblestone streets and Baroque churches and after a local lunch we transfer to Puerto Quetzal and embark the MS Serenissima. Sail this evening.

**Day 3 Puerto Chiapas, Mexico.** Overnight we will have crossed the border awaking in Mexico and the port of Chiapas. This morning we will take an historical tour exploring the ancient Mayan site of Izapa which grew from a small village to be one of the region's most influential cities and a cultural and commercial centre. After viewing the site we will continue to Tapachula with its history which has been shaped by the Mayans, Mestizos and Spanish. We will enjoy a walking tour of the city's colourful streets before visiting the archaeological museum. After lunch onboard there will be a choice of options

this afternoon. Nature lovers can enjoy a boat trip amongst the nearby mangrove streams and lagoons, learning about the areas eco-system whilst our guide points out the various species of flora and fauna. Alternatively learn a little about modern life in the region visiting a banana plantation and the local community to understand the role the crop has in sustaining their lifestyle.

**Day 4 Acajutla, El Salvador.** Enjoy a relaxing morning at sea before we make our first call in El Salvador and the main port of Acajutla. This afternoon we will explore some of the colonial towns and communities on the 'Flower Route' named after the abundance of flowers found along the roadsides and in the villages. Leaving the port we will drive through the beautiful mountains to the town of Nahuizalco, home to one of the most longstanding native communities and arts and crafts production sites in the country. We continue to Ataco, the final stop on the Ruta de las Flores. Ataco is a quaint, colonial village that is known for its natural beauty, as well as, its brightly painted homes, cobblestone streets, colourful murals and unique arts and crafts. Return to the ship for dinner and an overnight mooring.

**Day 5 Acajutla.** Today's full day excursion discovers the Mayan route starting at the archaeological site of Joya de Ceren, a UNESCO World Heritage Site known as the Pompeii of America. The site was covered by the Loma Caldera





Squirrel Monkey



Isla Tortuga



Volcano, Lake Nicaragua

volcano explosion which kept the remains of pre-Hispanic civilisation for hundreds of years and provides a unique insight into everyday life in a Mesoamerican farming community of the 6th century AD. We continue to the ruins of San Andres, once an important political and religious centre and testimony of the Indigo industry during the colonial period, better known as the 'Blue Gold'. After lunch in a local restaurant we will continue to Santa Ana and see the beautiful Gothic cathedral and National Palace before our tour ends at the ruins of Tazumal, the largest pyramid in El Salvador dating from 1500 B.C. and an important Mayan settlement. Return to the MS Serenissima in the late afternoon and sail this evening.

#### Day 6 Bahia de Jiquilisco.

Covering over 400 square kilometres, the Jiquilisco Bay Biosphere Reserve is El Salvador's most important marine ecosystem with the coastal area being made up of remote islands, mangrove canals and desolate beaches whilst inland we find beautiful forests and cacao plantations. It is an important base for migratory birds as well as a nesting site for four sea turtle species including one of only two sites in the Pacific for the endangered Hawksbill Turtle. We have a full day to explore the different areas of the reserve spending time with the environmentalists and scientists who will teach us about the conservation of the turtles, walking through the forest on the lookout for spider monkeys before learning about the cultivation of cacao,

which creates some of the finest chocolate, on one of the local plantations.

**Day 7 La Union.** Today we follow the 'peace route' set up to remember the events of the 1980s when El Salvador experienced a bitter civil war. It is estimated that over 100,000 were killed in the fighting whilst half a million fled into exile. We will visit Perquin, once a stronghold of the guerrillas and home to the Museum of the Revolution where former members of the rebel army are willing to share their experiences. We continue to the village of El Mozote in December 1981 where one of the worst atrocities occurred and more than 1,000 people were killed in a single day. Our local guides will explain about living in the country during this time and we will see the monument erected for the victims and the memorial garden decorated with brightly coloured murals. Alternatively join a tour to Alegria, the birthplace of the writer Alberto Masferrer and visit the museum before continuing to the lagoon known as the "Emerald of America" located in the Tecapa Volcano.

**Day 8 Corinto for Leon, Nicaragua.** Our first call in Nicaragua is the port of Corinto, our base for our visit to Leon the former capital of Nicaragua. Here we will explore the colonial architecture and the 18th century cathedral which is one of the most prominent buildings in the city with fantastic views from the rooftop. Inside we will see the fresco paintings, statues and the lion that

guards the tomb of Ruben Dario, the famous Nicaraguan poet.

**Day 9 San Juan del Sur.** After an early breakfast we will leave from the friendly fishing village of San Juan del Sur for a full day tour to Granada and Lake Nicaragua. Founded in 1523 Granada is Nicaragua's oldest Spanish city and has retained much of its Spanish character with colonial churches, narrow streets and colourful Spanish style homes. We will enjoy a walking tour including the cathedral and convent of San Francisco where we find around 30 pre-Colombian stone statues dating back to 800 A.D. sculpted by the inhabitants of Zapatera Island on Lake Nicaragua. After a local lunch we continue to Lake Nicaragua and enjoy a relaxing boat ride amongst the 365 small islands created by the volcanic activity of the Mombacho volcano around 20,000 years ago. Whilst some islands are inhabited most remain unspoiled and are home to the exotic plants, howler monkeys and orchids. This is also the location of the world's only freshwater shark.

**Day 10 Curu National Park and Isla Tortuga, Costa Rica.** We spend our first morning in Costa Rica exploring the Curu National Wildlife refuge which boasts a rich and diverse wildlife in five different habitats ranging from marine zones, including a wide beach area, mangrove swamps and tropical forests. Here on a range of walks we will find over 200 species of birds, howler and capuchin monkeys, mammals such as otters,

“

If you have been contemplating a visit to Central America, then this fascinating voyage could offer you the perfect opportunity with its mix of natural and ancient wonders.

”





Isla Coiba



Monteverde National Park



Manuel Antonio National Park

ocelots and pumas and turtles. Over lunch we sail the short distance to Tortuga Island where we have the chance to snorkel over the volcanic reef home to angelfish, morays and needlefish. Alternatively spend the afternoon relaxing on the white sand beaches.

**Day 11 Puntarenas.** Our berth at Puntarenas is our starting point for a choice of full day excursions today. Either choose to visit Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve, a nature reserve boasting over 3000 species of animals and plants. On guided walks we will learn how the forests location ensures it receives a steady supply of clouds and the moisture they contain sustains and supports this eco system. Alternatively join an excursion to the Costa Rican capital of San Jose. Our route will take us through the Braulio Carrillo National Park before arriving into San Jose where we will visit the Gold Museum and the National Museum with a wealth of archaeological and historical artefacts.

**Day 12 Manuel Antonio National Park.** From our berth in Quepos we travel to the Manuel Antonio National Park which is one of the most stunning and bio-diverse areas of the world. Spread out over 683 hectares it is filled with diverse wildlife, has both primary and secondary forests, boasts a stunning shoreline ideal for bird watching or swimming and is home to a number of endemic species of plants and animals. We will make an early start this morning allowing for the best viewing of monkeys, vividly coloured birds and the lethargic three-toed sloth. This afternoon we will enjoy time to swim from the local beaches.

#### Day 13 Corcovado National Park.

Resting on the northern side of the Osa Peninsula, Drake Bay (Bahía Drake) is our gateway to the Corcovado National Park. We will use the Zodiacs to land on one of the beaches before enjoying a walk through the primary and secondary forest with our naturalist guides. The rich biological diversity of the biological corridor of Corcovado National Park is astounding and bird lovers will be enchanted by a wide variety of birds, including tanagers, flycatchers, kingfishers, manakins, trogons, crested guans, and spectacular scarlet macaws and toucans. We return to the ship for lunch and this afternoon hope to find a local beach for snorkelling and beachcombing activities.

**Day 14 Golfo Dulce.** For our final call in Costa Rica we will visit the famous gardens at Casa Orquideas (Orchid House) where we find a profusion of over 100 varieties of orchids along with heliconias, bromeliads, ornamental and fruit trees. Keen birders can also keep an eye out for hummingbirds, parrots and colourful toucans attracted by the plants.

**Day 15 Isla Coiba, Panama.** This once infamous prison island, now a National Park, has reverted to an island paradise. We will anchor off the ranger station and use our Zodiacs to land on the island. Here our onboard naturalists will lead some guided walks as we explore the main island, which boasts some 147 species of birds, and walk up to the observation tower. Alternatively there is the option to relax on the beach.

**Day 16 Panama City.** After a morning at sea we will arrive in

Panama City, a combination of the historic old town, declared a UNESCO Historical monument, and the ultra-modern new town. Choose to either join a city walk where we will stroll along the cobblestone streets of the Casco Viejo visiting the colonial mansions before continuing to Panama Viejo and the original ruins of the city founded in 1517 which was burnt to the ground by British pirate Henry Morgan. Alternatively visit the Panama Canal Observation Centre. Here we will learn about the expansion of the Canal before visiting the Miraflores Locks Visitor centre where we see the history of the canal and watch the ships as they pass through.

#### Day 17 Panama Canal Transit.

An undisputed destination on the travel bucket list has to be the Panama Canal. The Canal is around 50 miles long and takes between eight to ten hours to cross. Unlike many cruise ships we are planning a daytime transit allowing us the best conditions to experience this engineering marvel. This evening we arrive in Colon where we moor overnight.

#### Day 18 Panama City to London.

Disembark after breakfast and transfer to the airport for our scheduled indirect flight to London.

**Day 19 London.** Arrive this morning.

## PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £1000 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	£7095	£6095
2	Standard Stateroom	£7595	£6595
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	£7895	£6895
4	Superior Stateroom	£8095	£7095
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£8295	£7295
6	Junior Suite	£8695	£7695
7	Executive Suite	£9195	£8195
8	Owner's Suite	£9195	£8195
9	Inside Single	£7095	£6095
10	Standard Single	£7995	£6995
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£10895	£9895
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£11095	£10095

**Price Includes:** Economy class scheduled air travel, overnight hotel accommodation in Guatemala City on a bed and breakfast basis, 16 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis, house wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner onboard, Noble Caledonia onboard team, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel insurance, visas.

**Ship to Shore:** Please note that although this cruise is not classified as an expedition cruise, the vessel will be at anchor and Zodiacs used to transport passengers ashore in all ports with the exception of Acajutla, Corinto, Puntarenas, Quepos and Colon where we will be alongside.







# Sailing the Spanish Main

From Panama to Havana  
6th to 24th February 2017

Our voyage from the shores of Panama to Cuba offers the perfect opportunity to escape the British winter to destinations with teeming rainforests, cool cloud forests, beautiful beaches, remarkably diverse landscapes, pristine coral reefs, magnificently diverse wildlife and fascinating cultures and history.

We visit some little known, pristine and remote islands including Panama's San Blas archipelago, Colombia's Isla Providencia, Guanaja Island in Honduras and Belize's Half Moon Caye. Our time spent on these island paradises is interspersed with excursions to some of the region's most fascinating Mayan sites including the opportunity to explore both Tulum and Chichen Itza in Mexico and the lesser known Lamanai Archaeological Reserve in Belize with its massive pyramids. Not forgetting the incredible biodiversity of the region, we also visit some of Costa Rica's national parks to view endemic and diverse flora and fauna. Our itinerary ends on a high note with two nights moored in the vibrant Cuban capital of Havana, a fitting finale to our unique itinerary.

A flexible itinerary and knowledgeable onboard team will enable us to make the most of each day, whether we are landing on remote beaches by Zodiac, watching out for wildlife or learning more of the history and culture of the places we are visiting. With just over 100 passengers, we can explore in small groups ashore and enjoy a convivial atmosphere onboard.

## The Itinerary

**Day 1 London to Panama City, Panama.** Fly by scheduled indirect flight. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to our hotel for a two night stay.

**Day 2 Panama City.** Panama City is a combination of the historic old town, declared a UNESCO Historical monument, and the ultra-modern new town. We will stroll along the cobblestone streets of the Casco Viejo visiting the colonial mansions and 17th century churches and convents before continuing to Panama Viejo and the original ruins of the city which was founded in 1517 and burnt to the ground by British pirate Henry Morgan. This afternoon is free to either explore

further or join an excursion to the Panama Canal observation Centre.

**Day 3 Portobelo & Gatun Locks.** After breakfast in the hotel we will leave the Pacific coastline of Panama City and head to the colonial city of Portobelo on the Caribbean side. Discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1502, this delightful town is in an area once known as the paradise for pirates. We will visit Fort San Geronimo, Fort San Felipe, Customs House and the Black Christ Church (the patron Saint of Portobelo) before making our way to the Gatun Locks. These are the largest locks on the Panama Canal and raise ships 29.5 metres from the Caribbean waters

to the level of Lake Gatun. After our visit we will transfer to the MS Serenissima moored in Colon and sail tonight.

**Day 4 San Blas Islands.** Arrive this morning at the stunning San Blas Archipelago which is made up of over 400 islands which line the north coast of Panama with dazzling white sandy beaches set in a turquoise sea. The islands are home to the indigenous Kuna Indians who gained self-rule from the government of Panama in the 1920s and maintain their traditional way of life including the production of colourful fabric art known as 'molas'. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at sea.

**Day 5 Bocas del Toro.** Today we explore the Bocas del Toro archipelago, pristine islands which are now part of a national marine park. We spend the morning surrounded by astounding beauty and using local boats will explore the mangroves where we hope to see sloths, dolphins in the water and find a remote beach to swim and snorkel on the coral reefs. This afternoon we will visit the small town of Bocas del Toro and have free time to wander amongst the fine old Spanish buildings.

**Day 6 Puerto Limon, Costa Rica.**

This morning we head south to the Cahuita National Park. The area is filled with beautiful wildlife that includes howler monkeys and porcupines. Several avian species also live in the swamp forest, including the green ibis, the green kingfisher and the boat-billed heron, among others. Our naturalist guide will lead us through the trails of the rainforest, sharing his vast knowledge on this fragile ecosystem. After lunch onboard the afternoon is free to relax or join an excursion to the Tortuguero National Park which is home to a number of endangered mammals. We will drive through vast banana plantations to the tiny port of Moin where we board long boats that take us into the waterways of the park for eye-level views of the astounding flora and fauna.

**Day 7 Isla Providencia, Colombia.** Often referred to as 'Old Providence' in English, Providencia is a beautiful Colombian island that is little known and untouched by the hand of tourism. Along with its smaller sister island of Santa Catalina, it is enclosed by an extensive barrier reef system of some 35 kilometres in length, making it one of the most significant reefs in the world. Arriving at lunchtime we have an opportunity





to spend the afternoon on an island tour and travel in local boats to Crab Cay for snorkelling.

**Day 8 At sea.** Relax onboard as we continue our journey north.

**Day 9 Guanaja Island, Honduras.** Arrive this morning in Honduras and the small island of Guanaja. The easternmost of the three Bay Islands, Guanaja is covered in a forest of Caribbean pine and when Christopher Columbus landed on the island in 1502, he named it the Isla de Pinos (Island of Pines). Unlike some of the surrounding islands only small ships like ours can anchor here and we will spend the day exploring the island and its surroundings. Spend time in the small town, use local boats to explore the mangrove channels, snorkel on one of the nearby cayes, visit the small turtle sanctuary or join nature walks with the local guides.

**Day 10 Livingston, Guatemala.** Surrounded by water and jungle, Livingston is a settlement of Garifuna people accessible only by sea which is just one of the things that makes it unique among Guatemalan cities. We will transfer onto local boats and venture up the Rio Dulce hoping to see pelicans, cormorants and herons as we cruise up the river before arriving at the Ak'tenamt project, a local social development organisation supporting sustainable tourism. Here we will walk the trails viewing birds and plants before returning to spend time in Livingston itself.

**Day 11 Belize City, Belize.** We have an interesting day ahead as we travel inland to the ancient Mayan city of Lamanai (translates to 'submerged crocodile'). From the nearby town of Orange Walk Bridge we board local boats for a wildlife cruise through mangroves, wetlands and forests. A short walk through the jungle brings us to the Lamanai Archaeological Reserve with its massive pyramids which are in fact pyramids built upon pyramids. Local guides will tell the story of this site which is the only Mayan city known to have been inhabited through every age of Mayan civilisation.

**Day 12 Half Moon Caye.** We will sail out into the Caribbean Sea during the night for a morning in paradise. Here there are reefs for the snorkellers to explore, the area was the first area to be environmentally protected in 1982 and is now part of the larger Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System, a World Heritage Site of UNESCO. On Half Moon Caye there will be the opportunity to visit the red footed booby sanctuary, the only nesting site in the region.

**Days 13 & 14 Cozumel for Tulum & Chichen Itza, Mexico.** The island of Cozumel is our base for two days as we plan trips to the Mayan sites of Tulum and Chichen Itza. We will travel by boat to mainland Mexico for our tour to the Mayan site of Tulum, perched forty feet above the sea on a cliff and with its impressive defensive walls made it one of the best fortified sites of the Maya. It has a fascinating history and architecture with the pyramid, El Castillo, being the most impressive. Meanwhile our full day tour to Chichen Itza will include the great main plaza with the adjoining imposing El Castillo, also known as the Pyramid of Kukulcon. Other buildings include the Temple of the Carved Panels, the Temple of the Warriors and the nearby Group of the Thousand Columns, the Ball Court and the Caracol Observatory.

**Day 15 At sea.**

**Day 16 Havana, Cuba.** On our first morning in the Cuban capital we will discover Habana Vieja (Old Havana) which was once enclosed within fortified walls. We will explore its twisting, cobbled streets that lead to beautifully restored Baroque churches, castles and palaces. In the afternoon we will explore Hemingway's Cuba on a walking tour. Visit the legendary writer's finca in San Francisco de Paula and the Ernest Hemingway Museum. Later, call into Cojimar Village, the inspiration for 'The Old Man and the Sea'. This evening we hope to be entertained after dinner by local musicians.

**Day 17 Havana.** Today we offer a choice of excursions. For those who wish to explore Havana further we will enjoy a morning in new Havana driving along the Malecon, Havana's seafront to Vedado. See the Plaza de la Revolucion and the headquarters of President Fidel Castro and his Council of Ministers. In the afternoon we will embrace one of the traditional industries of Cuba with a visit to a cigar factory learning about the traditional techniques still in practice today. Alternatively enjoy a full day tour to the Vinales Valley in the Pinar del Rio Province. It is here that some of the best tobacco is grown, harvested and processed. We will learn about the production techniques, see the traditional Cuban country lifestyle and enjoy lunch.

**Day 18 Havana to London.** Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for your scheduled indirect flight to London.

**Day 19 London.** Arrive this morning.



Sloth



Tulum



Havana



French Angelfish



Chichen Itza

## PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £1000 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	£7095	£6095
2	Standard Stateroom	£7595	£6595
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	£7895	£6895
4	Superior Stateroom	£8095	£7095
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£8295	£7295
6	Junior Suite	£8695	£7695
7	Executive Suite	£9195	£8195
8	Owner's Suite	£9195	£8195
9	Inside Single	£7095	£6095
10	Standard Single	£7995	£6995
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£10895	£9895
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£11095	£10095

**Price Includes:** Economy class scheduled air travel, two nights hotel accommodation in Panama City on a bed and breakfast basis, 15 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis, house wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner onboard, Noble Caledonia onboard team, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel insurance, visas.

**Ship to Shore:** Please note that although this cruise is not classified as an expedition cruise, the vessel will be at anchor and Zodiacs used to transport passengers ashore in all ports with the exception of Colon, Puerto Limon, Cozumel and Havana where we will be alongside.

# Cuban Delights

A semi-circumnavigation of Cuba  
23rd February to 6th March 2017

Cuba pulsates to a rhythm of a bygone age. A kaleidoscope of colour in the Caribbean Sea, the island is a visual feast for the traveller. Despite a famously controversial political system and a humbled economy, the culture, architecture and landscape of the country remain as rich as ever. It is fascinating to be transported back to the 1930s but equally captivating is the natural beauty of the region. Glorious landscapes, powder white beaches against a turquoise sea, delightful people and a lifestyle that is more 1930s than that of today. Very few cars travel the roads through the soft and gentle countryside, horse drawn carriages or pedal power are the order of the day. Our comprehensive journey around this fascinating island offers a chance to step back in time and enjoy the beauty of the landscape, the historic cities and take a rest from 21st century capitalism.



## Our View

*"As large as all the other Caribbean islands put together, Cuba stands out in many ways from the remaining Caribbean Islands. The island is hugely varied ranging from the mountain peaks of the legendary Sierra Maestra to unspoilt beaches, a moving history, splendid buildings and dramatic monuments. But perhaps most of all it is the friendliness of the Cuban people which will leave a lasting impression on you. During our voyage we will have the opportunity to explore the city of Santiago de Cuba, which because of its French influence, reminds us a little of the laid back atmosphere of New Orleans. We will have the chance to discover two historical, but very different cities both on the UNESCO list for world cultural heritage sites. Cienfuegos also known as "the pearl of the south" has one of the largest concentrations of neo classical buildings in the Caribbean. Just 80 kilometres away from Cienfuegos we will discover Trinidad with its cobblestone streets and pastel coloured houses where music sounds around every corner. Having the chance to explore Cuba aboard the MS Serenissima will give us the opportunity to discover the third largest coral reef on our planet as well as the pristine reefs of Punta Frances on Isla de Juventud."*



## The Itinerary

**Day 1 London to Havana, Cuba.** Fly by scheduled indirect flight. Arrive in Havana in the early afternoon and transfer to the MS Serenissima. Moor overnight.

**Day 2 Havana.** On our first morning in the Cuban capital we will discover Habana Vieja (Old Havana) which was once enclosed within fortified walls. We will explore its twisting, cobbled streets that lead to beautifully restored Baroque churches, castles and palaces and visit the 16th century Plaza de Armas, the oldest plaza in the city and its original administrative centre. In the afternoon we will explore Hemingway's Cuba on a walking tour. Visit the legendary writer's finca in San Francisco de Paula and the Ernest Hemingway Museum. Later, call into Cojimar Village, the inspiration for 'The Old Man and the Sea'. This evening we hope to be entertained after dinner by local musicians onboard as we remain moored overnight.

**Day 3 Havana.** Today we offer a choice of excursions. For those who wish to explore Havana further we will enjoy a morning in new Havana driving along the Malecon, Havana's seafront to Vedado. See the Plaza de la Revolucion and the headquarters of President Fidel Castro and his Council of Ministers. In the afternoon we will embrace one of the traditional industries of Cuba with a visit to a cigar factory learning about the traditional techniques still in practice today. Alternatively enjoy a full day tour to the Vinales Valley in the Pinar del Rio Province. It is here that some of the best tobacco is grown, harvested and processed. We will learn about the production techniques, see the traditional Cuban country lifestyle and enjoy lunch before our scenic drive back to the ship.

**Day 4 Maria La Gorda.** Enjoy a relaxing morning at sea as we cruise around the west coast of Cuba and the resort of Maria La



Parque Marti, Cienfuegos





Gorda. We will use our Zodiacs to land and then offer the chance to snorkel amongst the varieties of fish, sponges and molluscs. Alternatively join a nature walk amongst the coconut trees as we search for West Indian woodpecker, cormorants and royal terns or simply relax on the white sand beaches.

**Day 5 Isla de Juventud.** Located some fifty miles from Cuba's south coast, this attractive island is famous for its beaches, coral reefs and densely forested hills. We have the morning to enjoy its natural beauty as we moor off Punta Frances and use the Zodiacs to tender ashore. Choose to swim in the clear waters or alternatively join a nature walk through the fan palm trees where if we are lucky we will see the endemic Cuban trogon and Cuban emerald hummingbird. Enjoy an afternoon at sea as we sail north and return to mainland Cuba.

**Day 6 Cienfuegos.** Cienfuegos is a laid back maritime city with a lazy, tropical atmosphere. In colonial times it was known as the 'Pearl of the South', a name earned from its lovely location on a picturesque Caribbean bay. Explore the town including a visit to the botanical gardens which are spread over 90 hectares and include 2000 species of plants. We will also see the Parque Marti with its 19th century architecture including the Therry theatre and enjoy the views and a cocktail on the terrace of the Palacio del Valle. The afternoon is free to explore this charming city further at leisure.

**Day 7 Trinidad.** The compact colonial centre of Trinidad is one of the most sublime in Latin America. The cobbled streets, terracotta rooftops and pastel coloured houses are a delight.



We will spend the morning here exploring the town and visit either the Romantic Museum or the City Museum and also hope to visit a bar for local rum speciality. After a local lunch we will head to the Valley of the Sugar Mills. These three valleys were the centre of the Cuban sugar industry in the 19th century and contained around 70 sugar mills in their peak.

**Day 8 At sea.** We continue cruising along the south coast of Cuba and will pass near the Jardins de la Reina archipelago. The area was named by Christopher Columbus to honour the Queen of Spain and at 75 miles long contains the third longest barrier reef in the world. Enjoy a day of lectures or find a spot on deck and watch the world go by.

**Day 9 Santiago de Cuba.** During breakfast we arrive at our final Cuban port of Santiago de Cuba. A morning tour commences with a panoramic drive through the city including stops at the Moncada Garrison, which still bears bullet holes from Fidel Castro's attempted coup in 1953 and also take in the imposing Plaza de la Revolucion and the 16th century Casa de Diego Valazquez considered the oldest house in Cuba. We will also drive out of the city through lush tropical scenery to the Castillo del Morro which guards the entrance to the harbour, affording magnificent

views. This afternoon is free to explore further independently or maybe join us as we visit one of the local rum factories learning about the production and enjoying a sample.

#### Day 10 Port Antonio, Jamaica.

Arrive this morning on the north coast of Jamaica and the small bustling port of Port Antonio renowned as the world's banana capital and once home to Errol Flynn who described it as a "paradise unspoiled by human hands". Enjoy a choice of excursions this morning. Join a rafting trip on the Rio Grande as skilled raftsmen will impart their local knowledge about the native flora and fauna and the history and people of the area as we take in the wonderful natural

surroundings. Alternatively enjoy a scenic drive to Reach Falls situated in the lush Montane Forest. We will have time to enjoy the falls and walk in the surrounding forest home to many species of fern as well as a variety of birds. Enjoy a swim in the emerald pool at the foot of the falls before returning to the MS Serenissima for lunch. Enjoy a relaxing afternoon in Port Antonio, relax on a local beach or if weather permits we may enjoy a Zodiac cruise in the bay.

#### Day 11 Kingston to London.

Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for your scheduled indirect flight to London

**Day 12 London.** Arrive this morning.

### PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £500 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	£4695	£4195
2	Standard Stateroom	£5295	£4795
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	£5495	£4995
4	Superior Stateroom	£5695	£5195
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£5895	£5395
6	Junior Suite	£6395	£5895
7	Executive Suite	£6995	£6495
8	Owner's Suite	£6995	£6495
9	Inside Single	£4695	£4195
10	Standard Single	£5595	£5095
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£8295	£7795
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£8495	£7995

**Price Includes:** Economy class scheduled air travel, 10 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis, house wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner onboard, Noble Caledonia onboard team, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel insurance, visas.

**Ship to Shore:** Please note that although this cruise is not classified as an expedition cruise, the vessel will be at anchor and Zodiacs used to transport passengers ashore in all ports with the exception of Havana, Cienfuegos, Casilda for Trinidad, Santiago de Cuba, Port Antonio and Kingston where we will be alongside.

# An Island Hopping Caribbean Odyssey

From Jamaica to Barbados

5th to 20th March 2017

When it comes to pure escapism there are few places in the world more fitting than the Caribbean. Join the MS Serenissima in Jamaica and set sail on our voyage through sub-tropical waters of beautiful scenery and island diversity. Every island has its own culture and this colourful mix of island personalities, varied terrain and lifestyles makes for a marvellous winter break. We have developed this itinerary to enable exploration of the chain of Caribbean islands from Jamaica to Barbados. With relatively short sailing distances along the way, we are able to maximise our time on each island, exploring the historical sites of the Spanish, Dutch and British colonial periods combined with the pretty ports, wonderful beaches and the rich natural world of flora and fauna of the region. In addition to our included excursions, we have allowed time for individual exploration of the islands and ample opportunity to swim in the warm waters of the Caribbean Sea.



## The Itinerary

**Day 1 London to Kingston, Jamaica.** Fly by scheduled indirect flight. On arrival transfer to the MS Serenissima and sail this evening.

**Day 2 Port Antonio.** Arrive this morning on the north coast of Jamaica and the small bustling port of Port Antonio renowned as the world's banana capital and once home to Errol Flynn who described it as a "paradise unspoiled by human hands". This morning you can opt to join a rafting trip on the Rio Grande as skilled raftsmen will impart their local knowledge about the native flora and fauna and the history and people of the area as we take in the wonderful natural surroundings. Alternatively enjoy a scenic drive to Reach Falls situated in the lush Montane Forest. We will have time to enjoy the falls

and walk in the surrounding forest home to many species of fern as well as a variety of birds. Enjoy a swim in the emerald pool at the foot of the falls before returning to the MS Serenissima for lunch. Enjoy an afternoon at leisure in Port Antonio, relax on a local beach or if weather permits we may enjoy a Zodiac cruise in the bay.

**Day 3 Santiago de Cuba, Cuba.** During breakfast we arrive into Cuba and the port of Santiago de Cuba. A morning tour commences with a panoramic drive through the city including stops at the Moncada Garrison, which still bears bullet holes from Fidel Castro's attempted coup in 1953 and the imposing Plaza de la Revolucion and the 16th century Casa de Diego Valazquez considered the

oldest house in Cuba. We will also drive out of the city through lush tropical scenery to the Castillo del Morro which guards the entrance to the harbour, affording magnificent views. This afternoon is free to explore further independently or maybe join us as we visit one of the local rum factories learning about the production and enjoying a sample.

**Day 4 At sea.** Enjoy a leisurely day onboard, maybe join a lecture in the lounge or find a spot on deck to relax with a good book.

**Day 5 Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic.** We will arrive in the Dominican Republic this morning and our guided tour of Puerto Plata will include the colonial San Felipe Fort. Completed in 1577, it



is the oldest military fortification in the Americas and where the hero of the independence movement, Juan Pablo Duarte was briefly confined. We will take the cable car to the top of the Isabel de Torres Mountain where, at the summit we will see the statue of Christ the Redeemer, a smaller copy of the one in Rio de Janeiro. Here we can explore the gardens with its exotic flowers and plantations and take the trails around the lake. Return to the MS Serenissima via the Brugal Rum Factory and enjoy a tasting of this local speciality. After lunch onboard enjoy a free afternoon to explore the town.

**Day 6 Samana.** Arrive this morning at the Samana Peninsula renowned for its unspoiled beaches, turquoise waters and lush mountains. In addition it is a centre for migrating humpback whales that are usually resident in the Marine Mammal Sanctuary from January to March. If conditions permit this morning we will use the Zodiacs or local boats to view these amazing creatures. This afternoon we visit Los Haitises National Park where we will explore magnificent limestone caves covered in Taino Indian art and visit Bird Island where we learn the importance of the many migratory and indigenous birds that inhabit the mangroves.





**Days 7 & 8 British Virgin Islands.**

These islands are recognised throughout the seafaring world as one of the finest sailing areas. The 36 islands and cays sit in a dazzling turquoise sea surrounded by beautiful coral reefs. We have a day and half here and will drop anchor and use our Zodiacs to explore. We may make calls at the islands of Virgin Gorda, Jost Van Dyke and Tortola but if time and weather permit we also hope to make an expedition call onto one of the small uninhabited islands. We will enjoy island drives and allow for time to relax on the beautiful beaches and swim and snorkel in the clear waters.

**Day 9 Saint Eustatius.** In the 18th century the port of Oranjestad was a major player in the trade between Europe and the new world. Today the island maintains a low key existence and has avoided the modernisation and development of her neighbours. We will explore the small town including the 17th century fort and the museum with information on slavery, colonial relics and historical artefacts. Meanwhile, the more active may wish to take the strenuous hike to "The Quill" the 600 metre hill that dominates the landscape. This afternoon is free to explore at leisure and shuttle buses will be available to take you to the town or to one of the local beaches.

**Day 10 St Kitts & Nevis.** We will make a landing this morning on the delightful island of St Kitts. This lovely island has it all, restful green fields of sugar cane plantations, rainforests and long stretches of uncrowded beaches. The atmosphere here is wonderfully relaxed and full of old-world charm. Either wander the streets of Basseterre including the colonial buildings or see the impressive UNESCO fortress at Brimstone Hill. This 18th century British garrison played a key role in the battles with the French and is situated on a hill offering fine views over to Nevis to where we will sail over lunch. The island of Nevis featured significantly in Nelson's time in the West Indies. It was here that he met Fanny Nisbet and later married her in the old Montpelier House, on the site where a hotel now stands. On an island drive we will stop at the Nelson Museum and also the Botanical Gardens.

**Day 11 Antigua.** A one time British colony, Antigua is justly famous for its beaches, said to total more than 300. We have a day here and on a morning tour will enjoy the



Santiago de Cuba



Black iguana



Exploring in the Zodiacs

views from Shirley Heights before heading to Nelson's Dockyard, beautifully located in English Harbour. See the impressive collection of restored historic buildings which were occupied by the British Navy from 1707 till 1899. In the afternoon either spend time in St Johns, on one of the local beaches or join a cricketing tour of the island including the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, Stanford Cricket Ground and the Antigua Cricket Ground (ARG). Keith Fredericks (Freddo), a cricketer who represented Antigua at regional level and Head Groundsman at the ARG will delight in giving a talk and guided tour of the club house and the ground. Finally before returning to the vessel there will be a private appearance by one of Antigua's cricket West Indian Legends.

**Day 12 Montserrat.** Ask any Caribbean connoisseur about their favourite places and Montserrat will always be high on the list. Following the damaging volcanic eruptions of 1995 and 2010, much of the island is now returning to normal. We will visit the volcano observatory and learn how the islanders coped with the devastation it caused. Even now we will drive through areas where volcanic material lies in the roads. We also see some of the untouched areas which are as beautiful as ever and if weather permits we will cruise by the destroyed town of Plymouth.

**Day 13 Dominica.** Stepping back in time, the island of Dominica is still the primitive garden that Columbus first sighted in 1493. An area of tropical rainforests, flowers of incredible beauty and animals that exist nowhere else in the world. No doubt in time this lovely place will succumb to the developers but for now it is a place of beauty and solitude. We arrive this morning in the small

port of Cabrits, just below the national park and the former British garrison of Fort Shirley. We have a few options today, the active can climb to the Fort to explore the ruins, visit the small museum and maybe wander the surrounding trails on the lookout for birds, hermit crabs and lizards. For the keen birders we will offer a tour driving through the plantations to the Morne Diablotin National Park where from the viewpoint we hope to see the two endemic parrots of Dominica. Alternatively join a local boat for a journey along the Indian River, a mangrove lined creek with interesting bankside vegetation including gnarled tree roots and which is home to herons, egrets, hummingbirds and iguanas.

**Day 14 St Lucia.** A splendidly rugged island of towering mountains, lush green valleys and

acres of banana plantations. We will moor in sight of the island's best known feature, the twin peaks of the Pitons, which rise dramatically from the sea to more than 2400 feet. In the nearby town of Soufriere we can visit the bubbling sulphur springs, part of a low lying volcano which erupted thousands of years ago. Our island tour will also include the splendid botanical gardens, a delight for photographers with walkways surrounded by bright tropical flowers and towering trees, and one of the local plantations where we learn about cacao production

**Day 15 Barbados to London.**

Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.

**Day 16 London.** Arrive this morning.

**PRICES PER PERSON**

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £500 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	£6195	£5695
2	Standard Stateroom	£6595	£6095
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	£6895	£6395
4	Superior Stateroom	£7095	£6595
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£7295	£6795
6	Junior Suite	£7695	£7195
7	Executive Suite	£8295	£7795
8	Owner's Suite	£8295	£7795
9	Inside Single	£6195	£5695
10	Standard Single	£6995	£6495
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£9595	£9095
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£9995	£9495

**Price Includes:** Economy class scheduled air travel, 14 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis, house wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner onboard, Noble Caledonia onboard team, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel insurance, visas.

**Ship to Shore:** Please note that although this cruise is not classified as an expedition cruise, the vessel will be at anchor and Zodiacs used to transport passengers ashore in all ports with the exception of Kingston, Port Antonio, Santiago de Cuba, Puerto Plata, St Kitts, Antigua and Barbados where we will be alongside.

# Secret Caribbean

An island hopping voyage from Barbados to Antigua  
19th March to 2nd April 2017

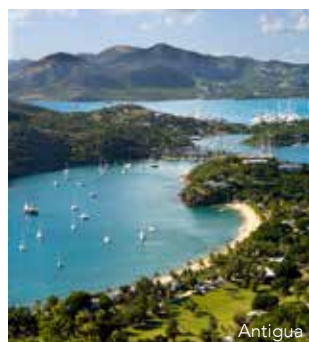
If you have been contemplating a cruise in the Caribbean but the thought of crossing paths with one of the mega-factory like cruise ships with their thousands of passengers who operate in the area has deterred you from doing so, this could be the perfect voyage. With so many ships sailing in the Caribbean Sea you might well ask what is so different about our journey. The answer is the itinerary. By and large we will head for the smaller, less visited islands and with the MS Serenissima as our base and only 100 fellow passengers, we have the advantage of berthing or anchoring at some of the smaller islands. As we will be sailing short distances, we have full days on many of the islands allowing time to wander and explore at our own pace in addition to joining the included guided excursions. If you have a desire to see the forts and learn of the history of the region, visit national parks and botanical gardens with their endemic plants and wildlife or simply relax on pristine beaches all in the company of a small number of like-minded travellers then this is the itinerary for you.

## The Itinerary

**Day 1 London to Barbados.** Fly by scheduled flight. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the MS Serenissima.

**Day 2 Tobago.** Today is dedicated to exploring the natural wonders of Tobago. We will anchor in the small fishing village of Charlotteville which is situated in Man of War Bay and run a choice of activities. There will be an island drive which will include the Argyle Waterfall for a refreshing swim and a chance to explore the lush surrounding forest. The keen birders will enjoy a visit to Little Tobago, a hilly arid island situated 1.5 miles offshore and an important seabird sanctuary for frigate birds, brown boobies and red billed tropic birds. Meanwhile the waters around Goat Island offer some of the region's best coral reefs and are abundant with marine life and perfect for snorkelling.

**Day 3 Trinidad.** Due to its location close to the South American mainland, Trinidad has a unique diversity of plant and animal species which we will discover today. From our berth at Port of Spain we will drive inland to the Asa Wright Nature Centre. Founded on a former cocoa and coffee plantation in 1967 it comprises 1500 acres of forest providing habitat for a range of wildlife. We will explore on a series of guided walks, searching for the 166 species of birds including toucans, hummingbirds and manakins or some of the hundreds of varieties of butterflies. Return to the MS Serenissima for lunch and this afternoon either take time to explore Port of Spain and maybe visit the Botanical gardens or national museum. Alternatively in the late afternoon join a tour to the Caroni Nature Sanctuary, a mangrove swamp covering an area of 40 square miles. On arrival at the sanctuary we board a flat-bottomed



Antigua

boat and slowly travel along the beautiful peaceful waterways and lagoons admiring the beauty of the landscape and a variety of birds including egrets and herons and other wildlife. The most astounding bird is the Scarlet Ibis, a large bright red bird feeding and nesting here and we hope to catch them as they return to their nests at sunset.

**Day 4 Grenada.** Explore this wonderful Windward Island

which many regard as the most beautiful in the Caribbean. It is a lush and verdant island with spice plantations, tropical forests, secluded coves, nature trails and select hotels which cling to the hillsides overlooking the ocean. We will moor in the picturesque capital of St George's and have time to walk amongst the picturesque buildings, see the 18th century French Fort Frederick with great views before visiting one of the spice plantations. After lunch onboard, enjoy free time to explore St George's before sailing in the early evening.

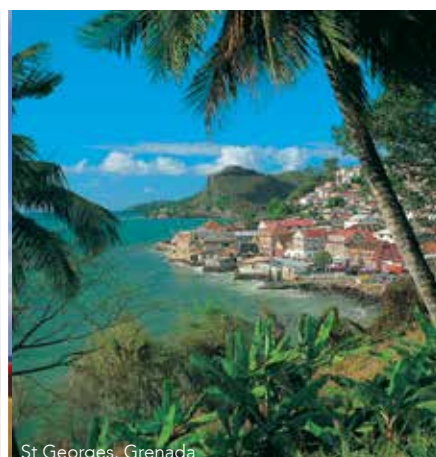
**Day 5 St Vincent & Bequia.** Arrive this morning in bustling Kingstown, capital of St Vincent and gateway to the Grenadines. This morning we drive to the outskirts of the city to the 19th century Fort Charlotte and the oldest botanical gardens in the western hemisphere. Dating from 1765, this 20 acre site was



Soufriere Volcano, St Lucia



Fishing boat, St Kitts



St Georges, Grenada



developed to provide medicinal plants. Over lunch we sail to Bequia. This delightful Grenadine island is totally unspoilt, a place of pure escapism in a charming old world atmosphere. Only seven miles by two it is a long way from the well beaten tourist track, a serene and peaceful island with some of the best beaches in the Caribbean. Choose to spend time in the main town of Port Elizabeth, find a spot on a local beach and relax or join a drive to Spring Bay where we can visit the Hawksbill Turtle sanctuary.

**Day 6 St Lucia.** A splendidly rugged island of towering mountains, lush green valleys and acres of banana plantations. We will moor in sight of the island's best known feature, the twin peaks of the Pitons, which rise dramatically from the sea to more than 2400 feet. In the nearby town of Soufriere we can visit the bubbling sulphur springs, part of a low lying volcano which erupted thousands of years ago. Our island tour will also include the splendid botanical gardens, and one of the local plantations where we learn about cacao production.

**Day 7 Martinique.** Martinique is a truly cosmopolitan island and a Department of France. The strong French influence is seen everywhere and without doubt Martinique is one of the most sophisticated islands in the West Indies enjoying a remarkably high standard of living. We will base ourselves at the small port of Le Marin and enjoy a morning scenic drive including the Musee de la Pagerie, the birthplace and childhood home of Empress Josephine, see the impressive plantations and have a chance to sample some of the local rum. This afternoon there will be time to relax in the small town or on a local beach.

**Day 8 Dominica.** Stepping back in time, the island of Dominica is still the primitive garden that Columbus first sighted in 1493. An area of tropical rainforests, flowers of incredible beauty and animals that exist nowhere else in the world. We arrive this morning in the small port of Cabrits, just below the national park and the former British garrison of Fort Shirley. There will be a choice of activities today and the active can climb to the fort to explore the ruins, visit the small museum and maybe wander the surrounding trails on the lookout for birds, hermit crabs and lizards. For the keen birders we will offer a tour driving through the plantations to the Morne Diablotin National Park where from the viewpoint we hope to see the two endemic parrots of Dominica. Alternatively join a local



Admiralty Bay, Bequia



Dominica

boat for a journey along the Indian River, a mangrove lined creek with interesting bankside vegetation including gnarled tree roots and which is home to herons, egrets, hummingbirds and iguanas.

**Day 9 Les Saintes, Guadeloupe.**

At first light we sail to this eight-island archipelago which dots the waters of the southwest coast of Guadeloupe. Still untouched by the hand of tourism these attractive islands offer lovely coves and beaches and colourful fishing villages. On an island drive this morning in Terre de Haut we will visit Fort Napoleon with its museum and gardens, the Catholic Church and Town Hall. After lunch you will have time to explore the town independently or maybe relax on one of the inviting local beaches.

**Day 10 Montserrat.** Ask any Caribbean connoisseur about their favourite places and Montserrat will always be high on the list. Following the damaging volcanic eruptions of 1995 and 2010, much of the island is now returning to normal. We will visit the volcano observatory and learn how the islanders coped with the devastation it caused. Even now we will drive through areas where volcanic material lies in the roads. We also see some of the untouched areas which are as beautiful as ever and if weather permits we will cruise by the destroyed town of Plymouth.

**Day 11 St Kitts & Nevis.** We will make a landing this morning on the delightful island of St Kitts. This lovely island has it all, restful green fields of sugar cane plantations, rainforests and long stretches of uncrowded beaches. The atmosphere here is wonderfully relaxed and full of old-world charm. Either wander the streets of Basseterre including the colonial buildings or see the impressive UNESCO fortress at Brimstone Hill. This 18th century British garrison played a key role in the battles with the French and is situated on a hill offering fine views over to Nevis to where we will sail over lunch.

On an island drive we will stop at the Nelson Museum and also the Botanical Gardens.

**Day 12 Saint Eustatius.** In the 18th century the port of Oranjestad was a major player in the trade between Europe and the new world. Today the island maintains a low key existence and has avoided the modernisation and development of her neighbours. We will explore the small town including the 17th century fort and the museum with information on slavery, colonial relics and historical artefacts. Meanwhile, the more active may wish to take the strenuous hike to "The Quill" the 600 metre hill that dominates the landscape. This afternoon is free to explore at leisure and shuttle buses will be available to take you to the town or to one of the local beaches.

**Day 13 Antigua.** A one time British colony, Antigua is justly famous for its beaches, said to total more than 300. We have a day here and on a morning tour will enjoy the views

from Shirley Heights before heading to Nelson's Dockyard, beautifully located in English Harbour. See the impressive collection of restored historic buildings which were occupied by the British Navy from 1707 till 1899. In the afternoon either spend time in St Johns, on one of the local beaches or join a cricketing tour of the island including the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, Stanford Cricket Ground and the Antigua Cricket Ground (ARG). Keith Fredericks (Freddo), a cricketer who represented Antigua at regional level and Head Groundsman at the ARG will delight in giving a talk and guided tour of the club house and the ground. Finally before returning to the vessel there will be a private appearance by one of Antigua's cricket West Indian Legends.

**Day 14 Antigua to London.**

Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.

**Day 15 London.** Arrive this morning.

## PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £500 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	£5895	£5395
2	Standard Stateroom	£6395	£5895
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	£6695	£6195
4	Superior Stateroom	£6895	£6395
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£7095	£6595
6	Junior Suite	£7495	£6995
7	Executive Suite	£7995	£7495
8	Owner's Suite	£7995	£7495
9	Inside Single	£5895	£5395
10	Standard Single	£6795	£6295
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£9395	£8895
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£9695	£9195

**Price Includes:** Economy class scheduled air travel, 13 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis, house wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner onboard, Noble Caledonia onboard team, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel insurance.

**Ship to Shore:** Please note that although this cruise is not classified as an expedition cruise, the vessel will be at anchor and Zodiacs used to transport passengers ashore in all ports with the exception of Barbados, Trinidad, Grenada, Kingstown, St Kitts and Antigua where we will be alongside.

# Island Hopping in the Azores

## Island Hopping adventures in the Azores Archipelago

9th to 18th April 2017

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. However, the appeal of this remote and unsophisticated archipelago is difficult to define in words. 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 these voyages could be 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.



### Voyage Highlights

- Our small ship enables us access to many ports not possible for larger cruise vessels.
- In depth exploration of the islands with full days in most places due to relatively short sailing distances.
- Hiking opportunities for the keen walkers.
- Local experts will join us onboard and highlight the main points of interest including the wildlife and flora plus geological phenomenon.

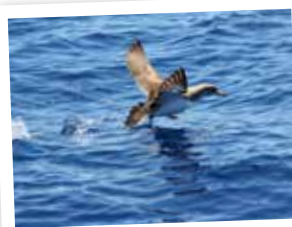
### What To Expect...

To provide you with an understanding of what a typical day involves whilst exploring the Azores, below are some extracts from last year's ship log.

#### Tuesday April 16, 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. After lunch onboard we set out to explore the harbour and coastline by sea. Despite the wind and the squalls we had a good turnout of well-dressed Zodiac-riders proving true the saying that there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing! In fact the sun broke through the clouds with perfect timing, and under the protection of the tall cliffs we had lovely conditions to cruise, the layers of volcanic ash and lava making interesting viewing. As we were returning to the ship the Zodiacs were surrounded by hundreds of Cory's shearwaters effortlessly and beautifully gliding on the waves.



#### Sunday April 21, 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 take off on a walking tour since we were docked conveniently right in town. Angra do Heroismo is a UNESCO world heritage sight 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 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 onboard the afternoon was spent at leisure, strolling around town or having a coffee at the many cafes or relaxing on the ship.



Azores coastline





Terceira



Windmill, Pico



Flores



Sao Miguel

## The Itinerary

**Day 1 London to Ponta Delgada, Sao Miguel, Portugal.** Fly by scheduled flight via Lisbon. On arrival transfer to the MS Serenissima for embarkation.

**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 where we have 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 see 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 the chance to walk the 13 kilometre trail in Sete Cidades.

**Day 3 Santa Maria.** Today's planned itinerary includes visits to the remote settlements of Sao Laurencio and Maia, known for vineyards which rise steeply up high sea cliffs in terraces. This coastline is accentuated by a dramatic waterfall, lava tube caves, seabirds and marine life. Time and conditions permitting, the MS Serenissima will continue its circumnavigation of Santa Maria and cruise around the Formigas (or Ant Islands).

**Day 4 Terceira.** This morning explore Angra do Heroismo, a charming UNESCO heritage town with a distinct Mediterranean flavour. 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 or wander around the town.

**Day 5 Graciosa.** Known as the 'White Island', Graciosa has a gentle rolling landscape, dotted with windmills and traditional whitewashed houses. We will 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. In the afternoon enjoy some free time or if the weather permits we will use the Zodiacs to cruise the cliffs of Baia do Folga or around the bird sanctuary islands of Praia or Braxio.

**Day 6 Flores & Corvo.** Named after its abundant flora, Flores is often regarded as the prettiest of the Azores. Visit the vertical basalt cliffs of Rocha do Bordoies, formed by the cooling of lava. This afternoon, conditions permitting, we will visit the tiny island of Corvo (by Zodiac), the smallest island in the archipelago. Here we simply enjoy the peace of the island with walks in the small community or to the caldera.

**Day 7 Sao Jorge.** This largely rural island is of geographical interest with its cliff shoreline marked with flat fajãs sweeping to the sea. After visiting the charming old world harbour town of Velas and a cheese factory, the ship cruises the coastline to find a tranquil fajã where, weather permitting, we hope to make a Zodiac landing.

**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.

**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. Continue to the impressive Caldera, now a nature

reserve, which is 400 metres deep and nearly 1500 metres in diameter. As we return to the ship we will see the botanical gardens which are devoted to the endemic plants of the Azores. Alternatively, if weather permits we will arrange a chance to hike the Caldera. This afternoon we enjoy a walking tour of Horta.

**Day 10 Ponta Delgada, Sao Miguel to London.** Disembark after breakfast and transfer to the airport for the return scheduled flight to London via Lisbon.

### Pre-Cruise Lisbon Extension - 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> April 2017



Before embarking the MS Serenissima in Ponta Delgada, we are offering the opportunity to join our two night pre-cruise extension in Lisbon.

**Prices per person based on double occupancy**  
Twin: £340 Single: £445

**Price Includes:** Two nights accommodation at a centrally located Lisbon hotel on a bed and breakfast basis, airport transfers and a panoramic city tour.

### PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £200 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	£3195	£2995
2	Standard Stateroom	£3595	£3395
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	£3795	£3595
4	Superior Stateroom	£4095	£3895
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£4395	£4195
6	Junior Suite	£4695	£4495
7	Executive Suite	£4995	£4795
8	Owner's Suite	£4995	£4795
9	Inside Single	£3195	£2995
10	Standard Single	£3595	£3395
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£4795	£4595
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£4995	£4795

**Price Includes:** Economy class scheduled air travel, 9 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis, house wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner onboard, Noble Caledonia onboard team, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel Insurance.

# Spring on the Edge

A voyage from Lisbon to Portsmouth  
30th April to 11th May 2017

In the late spring, join us aboard the MS Serenissima in the historic port of Lisbon as we prepare to journey on a 1500 mile coastal voyage that will take us along the Atlantic shores of Portugal, Spain and France. These are perfect sailing waters allowing us to visit some marvellously historic and scenic places. In the main we will give the large ports a wide berth, preferring to call into small islands and out of the way places.

We will enjoy many marvellous gardens in all their springtime glory, meander through the Galician and Basque countryside, step into the pilgrimage cathedral of Santiago de Compostela and wonder at the treasures of the Guggenheim Museum. Few itineraries in Europe can offer such a wide ranging and endlessly fascinating cultural experience. The contrasting architecture, the port Lodges of Porto, the fine wines of Bordeaux, the rich maritime history and the sheer beauty of the coastal landscapes. Everyone should undertake this journey once in their life to appreciate how much these Atlantic shores have contributed to the history and culture of Western Europe.

## The Itinerary

**Day 1 London to Lisbon, Portugal.** Fly by scheduled flight. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the MS Serenissima.

**Day 2 Leixoes for Oporto.** Arrive during lunch in the port of Leixoes, our base for our afternoon of activities around Oporto. This afternoon we have a choice of excursions on offer. Either choose to explore Oporto seeing the impressive St. Francis Church and the Ribeira, a riverside Quarter made up of narrow, twisting streets and shadowy arcade, before continuing to a local port wine cellar. Here you will also be able to learn all about these wines and how they are produced. Alternatively the keen gardeners may prefer to drive to the 17th century Casa do Campo which has been with the Meireles Pereira Leite Teixeira Coelho

family since its foundation and whose origins go back to the 12th century. The Baroque style garden was built around the 18th century and is crossed by a unique and graceful set of pathways of box-trees and trimmed camellias and through these alleyways we find stone tables, fountains and a pond surrounded by cylinders, rings, sunshades, arches and camellia cupulas making it one of the most artistic gardens in Portugal.

**Day 3 Villagarcia De Arousa, Spain.** Arrive in Galicia this morning from where we have a choice of excursions. There will be a half day tour to some of the wonderful houses and gardens of the Galicia region. Visit the Pazo de Oca, a Baroque stately home known as the 'Galician Versailles' and 'El Generalife of the north'

due to the beauty of its gardens. Continue to Pazo de Ribadulla dating from the 16th century and set in a beautiful location on the shores of the Ulla Valley. The garden was developed by the Armada family in the 1870s and is today renowned for its outstanding collection of camellia trees, giant magnolias, olive trees and Liriodendrons. Return to the vessel for lunch and an afternoon at leisure. Alternatively enjoy a full day discovery of 'Rias Baixas' which translates as low estuaries. Visit the 15th century Pazo de Rubianes where we find one of the three official lordships in Spain. Visit the 11 hectare garden with eucalyptus trees and the French style flowerbeds of sequoias and camphors. Continue to the cellar of Martin Codax where we will learn about local wine production and techniques and enjoy a tasting. After a tapas lunch we drive to El Grove and board a catamaran for a journey along the estuary towards the bateas, the floating docks used for mussel farming. Learn about the local industry before enjoying some freshly caught mussels on the way back to the vessel.

**Day 4 La Coruna for Santiago de Compostela.** We arrive in La Coruna for our tour to Santiago de Compostela, the capital of the autonomous community of Galicia. The city's cathedral is the destination of the important Medieval pilgrimage route, the Way of St James (in Spanish the 'Camino de Santiago'), which is still walked today. For those keen to walk some of the route there will be the chance to hike a short section towards Santiago. Otherwise transfer directly to the site where we will visit the Conventual de San Francisco, the Faculty of Medicine and the world-famous known Plaza del



Obradoiro. Enjoy lunch at a Parador and some free time before returning to the ship this afternoon and sailing.

**Day 5 Gijon.** Gijon is the largest city in Asturias and our base for a day of discovery in the region. Choose from a full day at the lakes of Covadonga nestled in the Picos de Europa Mountains. We will drive into the mountains where we will see the two glacial lakes of Covadonga: Lagos Enol and Lagos Ercina, the original centre of the Picos de Europa National Park. Marvel at the serene, mirror-like waters before we see the beautiful, pink-hued, twin-spired Basilica of Santa Maria la Real. Lunch will be served at the Parador of Cangas, followed by some free time to explore the village of Cangas de Onis before returning to Gijon. Alternatively enjoy a morning in Oviedo, the modern capital of the Asturias region. Oviedo is recognised as the most culturally significant and historically interesting city of the province and after a panoramic drive we begin a walking tour where we will see the San Salvador Gothic Cathedral before exploring





the restored Old Town decorated with beautiful sculptures. Return to Gijón for lunch and enjoy a free afternoon to explore the city at your own pace.

**Day 6 San Sebastian.** Our last call in Spain will be the charming town of San Sebastian. You can choose to explore the nearby town of Hondarribia, one of the most beautiful towns in the Basque region. Spend the morning walking the broad boulevards by the harbour and climbing to the charming fortified enclave Casco Antigua, filled with Medieval mansions, cobbled streets and Baroque architecture. We will enjoy lunch onboard before a free afternoon in the town to explore the old quarter at your own pace. Alternatively there will be a full day tour to Bilbao where we will visit the impressive Guggenheim Museum which includes an unparalleled collection of twentieth century art including Picasso, Cezanne, Kandinsky and Warhol. We will also enjoy some time in the old quarter, a labyrinth of stone lanes filled with bars and restaurants. After lunch of local pintxos we will return to San Sebastian stopping at Getaria an area famous for its Txacoli wines. We will visit a local vineyard, see the cellars and enjoy a tasting of the white wines.

**Day 7 Medoc, France.** After a relaxing morning at sea we arrive at the port of Le Verdon, our base for an afternoon in the Medoc vineyards. Despite its location close to the Atlantic the area was developed from the late 17th century as a wine centre and it is the quality of the soil, rather than the weather, which is thanked for providing the impressive wines from the region. From our berth we will drive through the enchanting countryside along the Medoc wine route also known as the 'Route des Chateaux'. On our journey we will pass by a number of renowned vineyards which are based here such as Chateau Lafite Rothschild, Chateau Margaux and Pauillac and see their well-kept grounds buildings. Afterwards we will explore the expansive cellars at one of the Chateaux before enjoying a tasting.

**Day 8 Ile D'Aix & La Rochelle.** Spend the morning on the traffic free Ile D'Aix which at just two kilometres long by 600 metres wide is easy to explore by either foot or maybe hire a bicycle. Once heavily fortified to protect the naval base at Rochefort today it is a much more peaceful place. Enjoy time



Medoc vineyard



Belle Ile

to explore Fort Liedot, which was used as a prison during the French Revolution, see the house where Napoleon spent his last hours before his exile to St Helena or simply stroll the cobbled streets of the small village which showcases the authentic local architecture. Over lunch we sail to La Pallice where we have a choice of activities this afternoon. Maybe choose a tour to Ile de Re, where after a guided tour of the village there will be some time to explore at leisure or visit the lovely food market before we return to La Rochelle through the island's southern villages and salt marshland. Alternatively drive inland and discover the splendid Chateau La Roche Courbon. Built in the 15th century, this fortified castle was transformed into a comfortable residence in the 17th century by Jean-Louis de Courbon. Both tours will return to La Rochelle for some time at leisure to discover the old town and the harbour before we sail this evening.

**Day 9 Belle Ile.** Belle Ile is the largest of all Breton islands with a dramatic coastline comprising cliffs, creeks and beaches. We will spend the morning in Le Palais, the island's capital which is dominated by a star shaped 16th century citadel. Enjoy time to explore the small town at your leisure, maybe visit the citadel known as the 'Battleship of the Atlantic' which was stormed by British troops in 1761 as they took control of the island for two years. Maybe visit the museum overlooking the harbour whilst from the Governor's Bastion see the gardens and the view over the port and the islands beyond. Alternatively enjoy time to wander through the streets of the town or stop for a coffee before returning to the vessel for lunch and an afternoon at sea.

**Day 10 Ile de Batz & Roscoff.** This morning we arrive in the

Brittany port of Roscoff from where we take a short ferry ride to the nearby charming Ile de Batz. This small traffic free island, at only three square miles, is a perfect place to spend a morning. From the harbour you may wish to join us as we walk to the Jardin George Delaselle. This exotic garden was developed in 1897 and now contains more than 2500 different varieties of plants. Return to the vessel for lunch and this afternoon we will explore the town and its environs. See the impressive Renaissance mansions, such as Maison de Marie Stuart, built by wealthy ship owners around the church and harbour. Continue to Saint Vougay and see the 'Chateau de Kerjean', one of the finest Renaissance buildings in Brittany with a fine collection of traditional Leon furniture.

**Day 11 Dartmouth, England.** Awake this morning at our

anchorage in the River Dart. On a choice of excursions you may choose to visit 'Greenway', the wonderful historic house and garden that was once home to Agatha Christie. There will be time to explore many of its restored gardens, including the Camellia Garden, a wonderful place to sit and ponder on the history of the house and the notable residents and visitors that have included Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Francis Drake. Alternatively visit the 1920s country retreat of the D'Oyly Carte family at Coletton Fishacre. Lose yourself in the RHS accredited garden by the sea. Return to the vessel for lunch followed by an afternoon at leisure to explore Dartmouth independently.

**Day 12 Portsmouth.** Disembark this morning. Transfers will be provided to Portsmouth Harbour Railway station and our departure London airport at a fixed time.

## PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £500 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	£3695	£3195
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7	Executive Suite	£5395	£4895
8	Owner's Suite	£5395	£4895
9	Inside Single	£3695	£3195
10	Standard Single	£3995	£3495
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£6145	£5645
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£6595	£6095

**Price Includes:** Economy class scheduled air travel from London to Lisbon, 11 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis with house wine and beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner onboard, Noble Caledonia onboard team, Guest Speaker, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel Insurance.

**Ship to Shore:** This cruise is not classified as an expedition cruise, however Zodiac landing crafts are integral to the operation of the voyage due to the small ports we will be visiting where we will be at anchor and will utilise the Zodiacs to transport guests ashore.

# Britain & Ireland in Bloom



A voyage to the castles and gardens of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales  
11th to 22nd May 2017

During the month of May our western shores and Ireland become alive with colour. This is a spectacularly beautiful time when many of the gardens, estates and national parks are at their most appealing and the countryside will be lush and inviting. This, combined with the sheer diversity of the coastline, makes for a most appealing sea journey, whether you be an avid gardener, birdwatcher or simply enjoy sailing past and visiting some of the most enchanting places in the world.

The gardens of Britain and Ireland have a unique quality, the temperate weather and green mountain backdrops make for lovely views whether you are in a grand and dramatic highland setting or in a simpler island setting. From the formal and manicured, to the wilder and more natural, our itinerary includes our most beautiful and diverse gardens which, in spring are a sight to gladden any heart.

Of course our main emphasis will be on gardens and without doubt we shall visit some of the best in the United Kingdom and Ireland; the splendid gardens of Gigha which defy the Atlantic elements so admirably and some stunning Irish gardens which have a unique quality, the 'soft' weather and green mountain backdrops make for lovely views whether you are in the dramatic Wicklows or in the more gentle countryside of Waterford.



## The Itinerary

**Day 1 Portsmouth, England.** Embark this afternoon in Portsmouth. Transfers will be provided from Portsmouth Harbour railway station at a fixed time.

**Day 2 Guernsey & Sark, Channel Islands.** Arrive this morning on Guernsey, the 'Island of Flowers'. There will be the option of a walking tour of St Peter Port including a visit to Castle Cornet, a 12th century battlement which guards the entrance to St Peter Port Harbour. Alternatively enjoy an island drive including Sausmarez Manor where we can explore the house and subtropical gardens which are the setting for over 200 sculptures by over 90 international artists. Afterwards

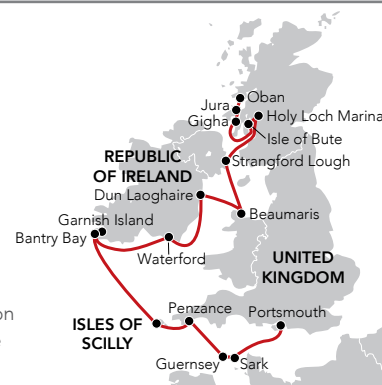
we enjoy the wonderful scenery and views of the coastline before travelling to the Little Chapel. We will admire this fascinating building which was built in 1914 to replicate the grotto at Lourdes and is beautifully decorated with seashells, pebbles and colourful pieces of broken china. Over lunch we sail to Sark where we will use our Zodiacs to land on this peaceful, traffic free island. Horse drawn carriages take us along the narrow lanes and we will see the narrow isthmus which joins Little Sark and Big Sark and the enchanting gardens at La Seigneurie.

**Day 3 Penzance.** Today we arrive off Penzance, our base for our day

in Cornwall. A morning excursion will visit St Michael's Mount, the family home of the St Aubyn's who have resided here since 1647. Cut off from the mainland at high tide, it is a fascinating place with an intriguing history. It was here in 1588 that the first beacon was lit to warn of the approaching Spanish Armada. After lunch onboard join the excursion to the beautiful Helford River and the 26 acre ravine garden of Trebah. This sub-tropical paradise of rare and exotic plants, trees and shrubs winds down the Helford river bank to a secluded private beach.

**Day 4 Isles of Scilly.** Spend the morning on traffic free Treco, walking its idyllic lanes from the beach to the famous sub-tropical Abbey Gardens. Defying the Atlantic weather, this miracle of a garden is home to more than 20,000 species of plants from over 80 countries. Enjoy time to wander at your own pace along the paths, maybe visit the Valhalla collection of ship figureheads from ships wrecked on the islands or relax in the cafe. After lunch we will tender ashore to Bryher, the smallest of the inhabited Isles of Scilly. Our naturalists will lead a number of guided walks along the tracks that cross the island amongst hedgerows and fields bursting with wildflowers. The active may wish to climb Watch Hill, where in the past islanders would keep watch for ships in distress or alternatively take a stroll to one of the beautiful beaches.

**Day 5 Garnish Island and Bantry Bay, Ireland.** Sail this morning into the sheltered harbour of Glengarriff. Here local boats will take us to Garnish Island and the beautiful Innacullin Gardens. The sheltered position and Gulf Stream is favourable to the growth of ornamental plants, many normally only found in sub-tropical or Mediterranean climates. We return by local boats sailing past 'Seal



Island' the home to 250 common seals before enjoying lunch onboard. This afternoon you may wish to stay onboard, enjoy some free time in the small town or join the excursion to Bantry House, overlooking Bantry Bay. We will explore the house, one of the finest historic houses in Ireland along with the gardens.

**Day 6 Waterford.** From our berth in the town of Waterford we will drive to Mount Congreve, a spectacular woodland garden on the banks of the River Suir. This privately owned seventy acre garden has a collection of over three thousand trees and shrubs and is particularly stunning in spring when the gardens are awash with magnificent sweeps of flowering azaleas, camellias, magnolias and rhododendrons. Enjoy time to walk the numerous paths bordered with wisterias or bluebells and visit the vantage points with views over the landscape and meadows beyond. Return to the MS Serenissima for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at leisure to explore Waterford independently.

**Day 7 Dun Laoghaire.** From our berth at Dun Laoghaire we will drive out into the Wicklow Mountains and the wonderfully sited gardens of Powerscourt.







Tresco Abbey Gardens, Isles of Scilly



Bantry Bay House &amp; Gardens



Beaumaris



Comeragh Mountains

Spread out over 47 acres we will explore the Italianate Terraces, the Japanese Garden where the azaleas should be in bloom and maybe take a walk through the wooded Tower Valley. We will enjoy lunch before continuing to Mount Usher, a lovely romantic garden on the banks of the River Vartry with over 5000 species of plants and shrubs. Alternatively you may prefer to spend the day in Dublin, our onboard staff will be able to advise on travel arrangements to the city centre.

#### Day 8 Beaumaris, Anglesey.

Translated from 'beau marais' meaning fair marsh, it was here that Edward I chose as a garrison town building one of his 'iron ring' of castles aiming to stamp his authority on the Welsh. Today the impressive 13th century castle is a wonderful example of architectural and ingenious design of fortifications. We will anchor in the bay at Beaumaris and use our Zodiacs to tender ashore for a morning excursion to Bodnant Garden. Situated above the River Conwy the gardens have stunning views across Snowdonia. Begun in 1875, Bodnant Garden is the creation of four generations of Aberconway and features huge Italianate terraces and formal lawns on its upper level, with a wooded valley, stream and wild garden below. There are dramatic colours throughout the season, with herbaceous borders, roses, hydrangeas, water lilies and clematis delight throughout the summer. We return to the ship via the magnificent landscape of the Snowdonia National Park, through the beautiful villages of Betws-y-Coed and Llanberis which lies beside the Llyn Padarn Lake in Snowdonia and we will take the incredible Llanberis pass that skirts the base of Snowdon. This afternoon we will have time to explore the castle, the 19th century



Siegneury Gardens, Sark

jail or the shops in the town of Beaumaris at your own pace.

#### Day 9 Strangford Lough & Mount Stewart, Northern Ireland.

From our anchorage at Portaferry we will go ashore to the famous gardens at Mount Stewart which were planted in the 1920s by Edith, Lady Londonderry and are of international importance. The magnificent series of outdoor 'rooms' and vibrant parterres contain many rare plants that thrive in the mild climate of the Ards Peninsula. The formal areas exude a strong Mediterranean feel and resemble an Italian villa landscape; the wooded areas support a range of plants from all corners of the world which are particularly vibrant in spring. There will be time to explore the opulent house which reveals a fascinating heritage and historic world-famous artefacts and artwork. Do not leave without taking in the magnificent views of Strangford Lough from Temple of the Winds. Return to the ship for lunch and if weather permits this afternoon we will use the Zodiacs to explore the Lough further.

#### Day 10 Holy Loch Marina & Isle of Bute, Scotland.

Our first call in Scotland is the Cowal Peninsula where we find the magnificent Benmore Botanic Garden situated in a mountainside setting. During springtime there is a blaze of colour as the 300 species of rhododendrons put on a spectacular display. Take time to walk the paths, see the Victorian Fernery and walk

along Redwood Avenue, a line of 50 sierra redwoods planted in 1862. During lunch we sail the short distance to the Isle of Bute where we will visit one of Britain's most astounding Victorian Gothic mansions, Mount Stuart House. After the original building was destroyed by fire the mansion was rebuilt between 1880 and 1912 using the finest craftsmen of the time. After viewing the house we will visit the wonderful grounds made up of over 300 acres of pasture, woodland and gardens combining exotic and native plants. Maybe enjoy one of the trails that pass through the woodland down to the shoreline or visit the Rock Garden and Kitchen Garden situated closer to the house. Alternatively you may prefer to stay in Rothesay and explore the small town and its impressive 13th century castle.

**Day 11 Gigha & Jura.** Today we will visit the gardens of Achamore House on the small island of Gigha. The Horlick family have created a stunning garden with their collection

of azaleas, rhododendrons and exotic plants. Gigha is a place apart; heather covered hills, deserted beaches and a single lane verged with wild flowers that meander for some six miles between cottages and farms. Privately owned by its 120 inhabitants, it is a gem of a place and somewhere not easily forgotten. Return to the ship for lunch as we sail the short distance to Jura. Dominating the views of Jura are the three hills called 'The Paps of Jura', the highest being Beinn an Oir at 785 metres (2576 feet). We will go ashore at Craighouse and will be welcomed in the cooperage where we will be given an introduction to the Jura Distillery and an opportunity for a dram. Alternatively enjoy some free time to explore Craighouse, join one of the naturalists on a walk or join an island drive.

**Day 12 Oban.** Disembark this morning. Transfers will be provided to Glasgow Central Station and Glasgow International Airport at a fixed time.

## PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £200 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	N/A	N/A
2	Standard Stateroom	£3795	£3595
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	£3995	£3795
4	Superior Stateroom	£4750	£4550
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£5050	£4850
6	Junior Suite	£5395	£5195
7	Executive Suite	£5895	£5695
8	Owner's Suite	£5895	£5695
9	Inside Single	£3795	£3595
10	Standard Single	£3995	£3795
1	Inside Twin/Double for sole use	£3795	£3595
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£5995	£5795
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£6295	£6095

**Price Includes:** 11 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis, house wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner onboard, Noble Caledonia onboard team, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes.  
**Not Included:** Travel Insurance.

# Hebridean Secrets



An island hopping expedition in the Hebrides  
22nd to 30th May & 30th May to 7th June\* 2017

Words do not do justice to the spectacular beauty, rich wildlife and fascinating history of the Inner and Outer Hebrides which we will explore during this expedition aboard the MS Serenissima. One of Europe's last true remaining wilderness areas affords the traveller a marvellous island hopping journey through stunning scenery accompanied by spectacular sunsets and prolific birdlife. With our naturalists and local guides we will explore the length and breadth of the isles, and with our nimble Zodiac craft be able to reach some of the most remote and untouched places.



Having arranged hundreds of small ship cruises around Scotland, we have realised that everyone takes something different from the experience. Learn something of the island's history, see their abundant bird and marine life, but above all revel in the timeless enchantment that these islands exude to all those who appreciate the natural world. We are indeed fortunate in having such marvellous places so close to home. Now, more than ever there is a great appreciation for the peace, beauty and culture of this special corner of the UK. Whether your interest lies in horticulture or the natural world, history or bird watching or simply being there to witness the timeless beauty of the islands, this trip will lift the spirits and gladden the heart.

## What To Expect...

*Flexibility is the key to an expedition cruise. Each day holds something new and below are some extracts from our vessel's logs from our previous expeditions in the Hebrides which will provide you with an idea of what to expect should you choose to join our island hopping adventure:*

### **Iona, Staffa, Lunga – 18th June:**

*We awoke to find ourselves anchored in the Sound of Iona for our walk up to the Abbey. Little remains of the early Christian settlement, founded around AD 563 by St Columba and 12 companions who had sailed from Ireland. It became one of the most important monasteries in early Medieval Europe, renowned as a centre of learning and artistic*

*excellence. During our walk, many passengers heard corncrakes calling in the gardens and fields around the village and some were lucky enough to catch sight of one. All too soon it was time to return to the ship for lunch as we still had a full day ahead. Once the ship had repositioned to anchor off Staffa half of our compliment were landed on the island to walk round into Fingal's Cave, while others were taken by Zodiac into the cave, swapping over later. The latter was a distinct highlight, made possible only by the ship's Zodiacs so not many visitors are able to view the wondrous basalt columns from within the cave itself! John showed a short but spectacular slide presentation to Mendelssohn's Hebrides Overture as the ship moved on to Lunga. It was after five when we began our landing but it had brightened to a bright sunny afternoon showing the Hebridean vista to full effect – from the Cuillin of Rum to the Paps of Jura, even distant Ben Nevis was just visible. But the climax of a very*

*full day must be the puffins that awaited us at the top of a short, slightly rocky path.*

*Lying down meant that the birds soon became used to our presence, providing unparalleled close encounters – well worth the climb! Some of the more energetic followed John along a cliff path to Harp Rock, which was crammed with nesting guillemots, some razorbills, more puffins, fulmars, kittiwakes and shags – all presenting wonderful photo opportunities. Those who could not face the climb were still able to*

*enjoy the spectacle from the Zodiacs as thousands of puffins and other seabirds were resting on the sea.*



St Kilda



### Shiant Islands – 21st June:

By breakfast the ship had anchored amongst the Shiant Islands in the Minch – Eilean Mhuire (Mary's Isle) to the north, Eilean Tighe (House Island) and the spectacular Garbh Eilean (Rough Island) to the south, the two joined by a boulder beach. Once more we were viewing tertiary basalt columns just like Staffa and Canna but this time several hundred feet tall and thronging with seabirds, many of whom sat on the calm sea as our Zodiacs cruised close off shore. The islands are owned by Adam Nicholson who wrote about them so eloquently in his book 'Sea Room' and are uninhabited. We made first for the tall basalt cliffs where we enjoyed a fly-past of a white-tailed sea eagle which then landed near its mate on a grassy ledge. They sat side by side for the rest of our visit. This very cliff housed one of the very last breeding pairs early in the 20th century but a highly successful reintroduction programme (begun on the Isle of Rum in 1975) has resulted in some 60 pairs now nesting in Britain (mainly the Hebrides) once again. We saw some grey and common seals hauled out ashore, and investigated some interesting sea caves before turning along the huge boulder scree along the east side of Garbh Eilean with its huge numbers of razorbills, puffins and shags. There were also some great skuas flying around, looking for an opportunity to rob the auks of the food they carried to feed chicks.



### St Kilda – 22nd June:

The early risers were rewarded with fine views of our approach to the archipelago of St Kilda, its tops draped mysteriously in mist. It had been a calm crossing and some dolphins and minke whales had been spotted on route. We breakfasted quickly so as to

hear an introduction to the islands by the ranger. Soon after the Zodiacs began shuttling people ashore to the pier, although several options had been offered, many people opted first to join John on a guided historical walk along the village street from the Manse (now the staff quarters which also housed the shop). Many then progressed up The Gap to find Jamie and his party of longer walkers, while Karin had led an energetic walk up the road to the summit ridge and the radar installation. John's group then dispersed to explore on their own and most of us, of course, found time to visit the shop for postcards and souvenirs. On return to the ship, lunch consisted of a barbecue prepared by the galley staff and many opted to eat outside on the afterdeck with the impressive backdrop of St Kilda's Village Bay.

But we were not finished yet, for the Expedition Team then filled their Zodiacs with enthusiastic and intrepid passengers, keen to explore the rocky shores and dramatic caves of Dun, seeing seals and seabirds, notably, of course, puffins. This highlight was quickly overshadowed by the final offering – the Captain taking his ship for a circumnavigation of St Kilda, around Dun, under the Lover's Stone and the Carn Mor boulder field on Hirta to Soay, and then past Glen Bay to view, Conachair, at 1400 feet the highest sheer cliff in Britain. As if on cue, the cloud lifted briefly to reveal its summit before we struck east, across the four mile volcanic caldera 60 metres under us, towards Boreray and the stacs. Approaching Stac Lee (564 ft) the Captain opted to take a wide sweep and circumnavigate this hugely impressive tooth of rock, smothered in 9000 pairs of nesting gannets. The noise – and the smell! – were palpable as we stared up at the sheer face in its cloud of gannets, constantly changing shape and almost close enough to touch. We next moved on to the pyramid shape of Stac an Armin – at 644 ft the highest sea stack in Britain, home again to 9000 pairs of gannets, the remaining 40,000 pairs of St Kilda's largest colony dispersed around the soaring 1260 ft cliffs of Boreray. Dozens of great skuas were patrolling the skies seeking out gannets returning to feed their chick with a crop full of fish. The pirates often acted in groups forcing their victim to regurgitate.



Puffins



Callanish Standing Stones

## The Itinerary

**Day 1 Oban.** Embark this afternoon. Transfers will be provided from Glasgow Central Railway Station and Glasgow International Airport at a fixed time. Sail this evening.

**Day 2 Iona & Lunga.** Iona has been occupied for thousands of years and a place of pilgrimage and Christian worship for several centuries. It was to this flat, Hebridean island that St Columba fled from Ireland in 563 and established a monastery. Here his followers were responsible for the conversion of much of pagan Scotland and Northern England. No less than 62 Scottish Kings are buried in the Abbey. You can spend your time on the island either visiting the Abbey, enjoying a walk along the white sandy beaches or perhaps searching for the corncrake amongst the irises. Back onboard as we sail towards the Treshnish Isles, we hope to drop anchor off the south side of Staffa where the perpendicular rock face feature an imposing series of black basalt columns, known as the Colonnade, which have been cut by the sea into cathedralesque caverns, most notably Fingal's Cave. Weather permitting we

will use our Zodiacs to explore closer. Northwest of Staffa lie the Treshnish Isles, an archipelago of uninhabited volcanic islets. The most distinctive, and where we hope to land is Lunga, the largest island often described as a 'green jewel in a peacock sea'. The island is a summer nesting-place for hundreds of sea birds, in particular kittiwakes, shags, fulmars, guillemots, razorbills and puffins.

### Day 3 Canna & Loch Scavaig.

Strategically placed between the mountains of Rum and the Outer Hebrides, the island of Canna and its adjoining neighbour Sanday are bound together like some rare text that reveals over 60 million years of Hebridean geology and history. They have an amazingly rich archaeological landscape with remains dating to all periods of settled occupation in Scotland. Canna is run as a single farm and bird sanctuary by the National Trust for Scotland and enjoys the best harbour in the Small Isles, a horn-shaped haven. The fertile soil and its diversity of habitats mean that the island has an incredibly rich plant life with 248 native flowering plants recorded. We will see Canna House, and wander across grassy basalt plateaus to the 600 foot cliffs on the north shore. Over lunch we will sail to lovely Loch Scavaig. Just beyond is the freshwater Loch Corruisk with its breathtakingly beautiful view over the Cuillins. This is great walking country, but for those who prefer a less energetic afternoon our Zodiacs will explore the coast looking out for seals.



Iona Abbey

#### Day 4 Lochmaddy & Dunvegan.

This morning sail into Lochmaddy for a visit to the famous bird reserve of Balranald on North Uist. Listen for the call of the rare corncrake over the machair and enjoy a walk amongst the dramatic scenery of sandy beaches, dunes and marshy loch where we hope to see corn buntings, skylarks and breeding waders such as lapwing and oystercatchers. As we return to the MS Serenissima we will visit the Barpa Langais burial chamber, dating from neolithic times and the standing stones and stone circles at Fir Bhreige and Pobull Fhinn. Over lunch we sail to the MacLeod stronghold of Dunvegan Castle on the Isle of Skye. Remarkably, the castle has been almost continuously occupied by the MacLeods for nearly eight centuries. We will tour the castle, a fascinating place that features work of at least ten building periods. Then explore the gardens, following paths through woodland glades past pools and burns fed by a waterfall. Look out for the seal colony on the adjoining rocks as we return to the ship.

#### Day 5 Stornoway & Shiant Islands.

On leaving the island capital of Stornoway, we will travel across Lewis to the beautiful west coast of the island and to Callanish. Described as Scotland's Stonehenge, the Callanish Standing Stones date from around 3000 BC. There are a total of 32 stones in a circular and avenue design which stand like a petrified forest on the flat top of a peninsula which reaches out into East Loch Roag. We will visit the excellent visitor centre to learn more about the site and venture out amongst the stones themselves to experience their mysterious atmosphere. Continuing around the west coast we visit the site of Dun Carloway Pictish Broch. Probably built sometime in the last century BC, it would have served as an occasionally defensible residence for an extended family complete with accommodation for animals at ground floor level. We

then head north to Gearranan Blackhouse Village, a reconstructed settlement of traditional black houses where people and animals lived in close proximity. Visit the small museum, enjoy a display of a typical crofting activity such as weaving and take in the views at this dramatic site on the wild Atlantic coast. This afternoon we will board the Zodiacs for a cruise around the spectacular basalt cliffs of the Shiant Islands, a group of little islands located a few miles off the shores of Lewis. This is an excellent place to spot puffins, razorbills, guillemots, seals and hopefully White Tailed Eagles.

**Day 6 St Kilda.** Arrive at first light in St Kilda, a remarkable uninhabited archipelago some fifty miles beyond the Outer Hebrides. Dominated by the highest cliffs and sea stacks in Britain, Hirta, St Kilda's main island was occupied on and off for at least two thousand years, with the last 36 Gaelic speaking inhabitants evacuated at their own request in 1930. Immediately after the evacuation, the island was bought by the Marquess of Bute to protect the island's thousands of seabirds including puffin and fulmars, and in 1957 it was bequeathed to the National Trust for Scotland. St Kilda is one of only two dozen UNESCO World Heritage Sites with dual status reflecting its natural and cultural significance. The local ranger will join us onboard before our expedition staff lead a number of guided walks on the island. Later we will cruise past two of the largest gannetries in the world at Stac Lee and Boreray. These impressive stacs rise 170 metres from the sea and are home to up to 60,000 breeding pairs of northern gannet.

**Day 7 Barra & Mingulay.** This morning we will land on Barra which is near the southern tip of the Outer Hebrides and visit Castlebay which curves around the barren rocky hills of a beautiful wide bay. Here we find the 15th century Kisimul Castle, seat of the Clan Macneil and a key



Elgol Beach, Loch Scavaig, Isle of Skye

defensive stronghold situated on a rock in the bay. During lunch, we will sail the short distance to Mingulay, which is nearly 1600 acres and the largest of the group of islands south of Barra. Its towering cliffs and stacks face the Atlantic while the east side slopes gradually down to the sandy beach of Mingulay Bay. Despite there being a continuous population on the island for at least two thousand years, evacuation began in 1907 and the island was completely abandoned in 1912. Ruins of the village remain close to the shore which we will explore on a guided walk. The islands are also a nature reserve with important breeding populations of razorbills, guillemots, puffins, fulmars and shags.

**Day 8 Colonsay & Jura.** Lying between Mull and Islay, we will spend the morning exploring the island of Colonsay, with her craggy, heather-backed hills, sparse woodland yet impressive array of plant and birdlife. Near Colonsay House, built in 1722 by Malcolm MacNeil and bought by Lord

Strathcona in 1904, we will visit the attractively dilapidated wooded gardens which protect the tiny, enigmatic 8th century St Oran's Cross. Return to the vessel for lunch as we sail through the Sound of Islay to Jura, arriving in the late afternoon. Dominating the views of Jura are the three hills called 'The Paps of Jura', the highest being Beinn an Oir at 785 metres. We will go ashore at Craighouse and will be welcomed in the cooperage where we will be given an introduction to the Jura Distillery and an opportunity to taste the local product. Alternatively, join one of our naturalists on a walk along the shore or join the local bus for a short drive around the island.

**Day 9 Fairlie.** Disembark this morning after breakfast. Transfers will be provided to Glasgow International Airport and Central Station at a fixed time.

*\* Please note that the 30 May departure operates in the reverse direction to that shown, from Fairlie to Oban.*

#### PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £400 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	£3095	£2695
2	Standard Stateroom	£3495	£3095
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	£3695	£3295
4	Superior Stateroom	£3895	£3495
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£4095	£3695
6	Junior Suite	£4495	£4095
7	Executive Suite	£4895	£4495
8	Owner's Suite	£4895	£4495
9	Inside Single	£3095	£2695
10	Standard Single	£3495	£3095
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£4495	£4095
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£4695	£4295

**Price Includes:** 8 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis, house wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner onboard, Noble Caledonia Expedition Team, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel Insurance.



Castlebay, Barra





Dunvegan Castle



# Midsummer in the Hebrides



An Island Hopping Expedition in the Hebrides  
7th to 15th June 2017

If ever an archipelago was made for expedition cruising it is the islands off Scotland's west coast. You can travel the world visiting all manner of exotic and wonderful places, but remember that some of the finest scenery, fascinating history and most endearing people may be close to home. Nowhere is that truer than around Scotland's magnificent coastline, an indented landscape of enormous natural splendour with offshore islands forming stepping stones into the Atlantic. In the northern summer there is a stillness and an almost wistful feeling in the air. This is the time when the enchanted visitor will be moved and seduced by the majesty of the islands, lochs and seascapes.

One of Europe's last remaining wilderness areas affords the traveller a marvellous island hopping journey through stunning scenery accompanied by spectacular sunsets and prolific wildlife. With our naturalists and local guides we will explore the isles, and with our nimble Zodiac craft be able to reach some of the most remote and untouched places. There is no better way to explore this endlessly fascinating and beautiful region that will cast its spell on you than by small ship. With no more than 100 travelling companions, the atmosphere is more akin to a private yacht trip and ashore, with our local experts we will divide into small groups thereby enjoying a more comprehensive and peaceful experience. Learn something of the island's history, see their abundant bird and marine life, but above all revel in the timeless enchantment that these islands exude to all those who appreciate the natural world.



Gannets

## The Itinerary

**Day 1 Oban, Scotland.** Embark the MS Serenissima this afternoon in Oban. Transfers will be provided from Glasgow Central Railway station and Glasgow International Airport at a fixed time. Sail this evening.

**Day 2 Iona & Lunga.** Iona has been occupied for thousands of years, but also a place of pilgrimage and Christian worship for several centuries. It was to this flat, Hebridean island that St Columba fled from Ireland in 563 and established a monastery. Here his followers were responsible

for the conversion of much of pagan Scotland and Northern England. No less than 62 Scottish Kings are buried in the Abbey. Visit the Abbey or perhaps walk along the white sandy beaches or go in search of the corncrake amongst the irises. Later today as we sail towards the Treshnish Isles we hope to drop anchor off Staffa, the south side where the perpendicular rock face feature an imposing series of black basalt columns, known as the Colonnade, which have been cut by the sea into cathedralesque caverns, most notably Fingal's

Cave. Weather permitting we will use our Zodiacs to explore closer. Northwest of Staffa lie the Treshnish Isles, an archipelago of uninhabited volcanic islets. The most distinctive, and where we would hope to land, is Lunga which is often described as a 'green jewel in a peacock sea' and is a summer nesting-place for hundreds of sea birds, in particular kittiwakes, shags, fulmars, guillemots, razorbills and puffins.

**Day 3 Barra & Mingulay.** This morning we will land on Barra which is near the southern tip of the Outer Hebrides and visit Castlebay, which curves around the barren rocky hills of a beautiful wide bay. Here we find the 15th century Kisimul Castle, seat of the Clan Macneil and a key defensive stronghold situated on a rock in the bay. We have time to explore the castle and then explore the town and maybe visit the 'Dualchas', the Heritage Centre with collections showcasing the history of the islands. During lunch, we will sail the short distance to Mingulay which is nearly 1600 acres and the largest of the group of islands south of Barra. Its towering cliffs

and stacks face the Atlantic while the east side slopes gradually down to the sandy beach of Mingulay Bay. Despite there being a continuous population on the island for at least two thousand years, evacuation began in 1907 and the island was completely abandoned in 1912. Ruins of the village remain close to the shore which we will explore on a guided walk. The islands are also a nature reserve with important breeding populations of razorbills, guillemots, black guillemots, puffins, fulmars and shags.

**Day 4 St Kilda.** Arrive at first light in St Kilda, a remarkable uninhabited archipelago some fifty miles beyond the Outer Hebrides. Dominated by the highest cliffs and sea stacks in Britain, Hirta, St Kilda's main island was occupied on and off for at least two thousand years, with the last 36 Gaelic speaking inhabitants evacuated at their own request in 1930. Immediately after the evacuation, the island was bought by the Marquess of Bute to protect the island's thousands of seabirds including puffin and fulmars and in 1957 it was bequeathed to The National



Canna



Exploring by Zodiac





Trust for Scotland. St Kilda is one of only two dozen UNESCO World Heritage Sites with dual status reflecting its natural and cultural significance. The local ranger will join us onboard before our expedition staff lead a number of guided walks on the island. Later, we will cruise past two of the largest gannetries in the world at Stac Lee and Boreray. These impressive stacs rise 170 metres from the sea and are home to up to 60,000 breeding pairs of northern gannet.

**Day 5 North Rona & Sula Sgeir.** Spend the day around North Rona, an isolated island some fifty miles north of Cape Wrath. The last islanders left North Rona in 1844 and today it is home to thirteen species of breeding seabirds including large colonies of great black-backed gulls, great skuas and puffins. There is also a large population of grey seals which we hope to observe on a Zodiac cruise. If weather permits we will also visit the gannet colony on Sula Sgeir home to over 5000 breeding pairs and renowned as the least visited national nature reserve in Britain.

**Day 6 Handa & Tanera Mor.** Arrive over breakfast at Handa where we will use our Zodiacs to explore the magnificent sea cliffs of Torridonian sandstone which rise from the Atlantic. The island comes alive each summer when nearly 100,000 seabirds gather to breed including internationally important numbers of guillemot, razorbill, puffins and great skua. Over lunch we sail down the coast to Loch Broom and the Summer Isles where we hope to land on the only inhabited island of Tanera

Mor. On a guided walk enjoy the stunning views, look out for otters and seals and the prolific bird life. Stop at the unique post office, whose own rare stamps are much sought after by collectors.

**Day 7 Stornoway & Shiant Islands.** On leaving the island capital of Stornoway, today's tour takes you across the island to the beautiful west coast of the island and to Callanish. Described as Scotland's Stonehenge, the Callanish Standing Stones date from around 3000 B.C. There are a total of 32 stones in a circular and avenue design which stand like a petrified forest on the flat top of a peninsula which reaches out into East Loch Roag. Visit the excellent visitor centre to learn more about the site and venture out amongst the stones themselves to experience their mysterious atmosphere. Continue around the west coast to the site of Dun Carloway Pictish Broch which was probably built sometime in the last century BC, it would have served as an occasionally defensible residence for an extended family complete with accommodation for animals at ground floor level. We then head north to Gearrannan Blackhouse Village, a reconstructed settlement of traditional black houses made using dry stone masonry with thatched roofs, distinctively weighted down with rocks. Visit the small museum, enjoy a display of a typical crofting activity such as weaving and take in the views at this dramatic site on the wild Atlantic coast. This afternoon we will board

the Zodiacs for a cruise around the spectacular basalt cliffs of the Shiant Islands, a group of little islands located a few miles off the shores of Lewis. This is an excellent place to spot puffins, razorbills, guillemots, seals and hopefully white tailed eagles.

**Day 8 Canna & Muck.** Strategically placed between the mountains of Rum and the Outer Hebrides, the island of Canna and its adjoining neighbour Sanday are bound together like some rare text that reveals over 60 million years of Hebridean geology and history. Canna is run as a single farm and bird sanctuary by The National Trust for Scotland and enjoys the best harbour in the Small Isles, a horn-shaped haven. Canna and Sanday have an amazingly rich archaeological landscape with remains dating to all periods of settled occupation in Scotland.

The fertile soil and its diversity of habitats mean that the island has an incredibly rich plant life with 248 native flowering plants recorded. We will see Canna House and wander across grassy basalt plateaus to the 600 foot cliffs on the north shore. Sail past the island of Rum during lunch to the neighbouring island of Muck. The smallest of the Small Isles measuring just one mile by two we have the afternoon to explore on foot. The energetic may want to climb to the highest point on Beinn Airein and enjoy the views across the islands or alternatively join one of our onboard team for a nature walk on the lookout for seals and birdlife.

**Day 9 Oban.** Disembark this morning after breakfast. Transfers will be provided to Glasgow International Airport and Central Station at a fixed time.

## PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £400 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	£3095	£2695
2	Standard Stateroom	£3495	£3095
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	£3695	£3295
4	Superior Stateroom	£3895	£3495
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£4095	£3695
6	Junior Suite	£4495	£4095
7	Executive Suite	£4895	£4495
8	Owner's Suite	£4895	£4495
9	Inside Single	£3095	£2695
10	Standard Single	£3495	£3095
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£4495	£4095
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£4695	£4295

**Price Includes:** Eight nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis, house wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner onboard, Noble Caledonia onboard team, shore excursions, transfers, port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel Insurance.

# From the Norwegian Fjords to the Baltic

A voyage from Tromso to Gothenburg  
27th June to 11th July 2017

A voyage along Norway's beautiful coastline offers the traveller scenery on an epic scale. The immense size of the magnificent fjords, the cascading waterfalls, the picturesque fishing villages and dramatic snow-capped mountains with farms clinging to their slopes are a sight to behold. The region is certainly one of our most popular destinations and simply perfect for exploration by small ship.

With almost 25 years of experience in operating cruises in Norway, we believe we have the perfectly balanced itinerary featuring as it does a combination of majestic fjords, small towns, cultural history and wildlife. We begin in the Arctic Circle at Tromso from where we sail south to the enchanting Lofoten Islands for a full day to explore the villages and experience life on the islands. For those interested in the history of the region we visit both Trondheim, Norway's first capital and Haugesund where King Harald Fairhair united Norway into a single kingdom and from where the Viking Kings ruled Norway for more than 500 years. We will also see the best preserved Viking ships in existence during our guided tour of Oslo.

Our days will be spent on guided excursions with local guides, on walks with our naturalists and on deck of the MS Serenissima as we cruise amongst the fjords. There will also be ample time to relax and enjoy the summer days independently when in some of the delightful towns such as Lillesand, Kragero and Denmark's Skagen, ports which the larger cruise vessels in the region are unable to access.



Bronnoysund and Mount Torghatten

## The Itinerary

**Day 1 London to Tromso, Norway.** Fly by scheduled indirect flight. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the MS Serenissima.

**Day 2 Lofoten Islands.** Our first morning of exploration sees us in the Lofoten Archipelago, an enchanting area of picturesque villages with jagged granite mountain peaks forming a dramatic backdrop. We will have a full day tour to explore the villages and see the life of these islands. We will disembark in Svolvær and drive to the picturesque seaside village of Vikten and the Viking Museum at Borg before driving through the dramatic Lofoten scenery to Nusfjord. Here we will enjoy a guided walk around this UNESCO World Heritage Site seeing the restored fishing cabins and local stores, followed by lunch. Our day ends in the small fishing village of Reine where the MS Serenissima will have sailed to meet us.

**Day 3 Torghatten.** Over breakfast we will cross the Arctic Circle as we pass by the island of Vikingen, where we will see the Arctic Circle Monument marking the location. We will continue to cruise through Bronnoysund and in the early afternoon Mount Torghatten will come into view, one of the most famous landmarks on the Norwegian coast. A fairly strenuous walk will take you to the 'hole' in the mountain which has been eroded by the sea. For those wishing to have a more relaxing afternoon our naturalists will lead some gentler walks.

**Day 4 Trondheim.** Arrive this morning into Trondheim. Founded in AD997 by Viking King Olav Trygvason, Trondheim was Norway's first capital city and we will discover its historical treasures today. We will drive past the old wooden buildings and visit the 11th century Nidaros Cathedral built over the grave of St Olav and richly ornamented in stone with stunning

stained glass windows. We continue to Ringve Manor, a typical manor house of the Trondelag district and home to Norway's only musical instrument museum, before enjoying a panoramic view of the city from the Sverresli Viewpoint. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy an afternoon cruising.

**Day 5 Runde & Alesund.** Be on deck early this morning as we cruise by the bird cliffs at Runde, one of the largest nesting cliffs in Norway and home to half a million birds. We continue to Alesund, one of the most beautiful towns in Norway, arriving at lunchtime. It is a great place to spend an afternoon exploring the streets with their Art Nouveau buildings.

**Day 6 Nordfjord & Olden.** At dawn we will enter the spectacular scenery of Nordfjord as we cruise towards the small village of Olden. From here we travel up the beautiful Olden Valley and where the road ends we continue on foot to the great cascade of water which rushes from beneath the Briksdal Glacier. After

lunch onboard you can choose to enjoy some free time in Olden or join us on a visit to Jostedal National Park, home to one of the last great ice sheets in Europe with some sections over 1200 feet deep.

### Day 7 Dalsfjord & Bygstad.

Dalsfjord lies at the heart of Western Norway with its starkly contrasting fjord scenery, half way between Bergen and Alesund. Its little known fjord arms and gentler landscape in harmony with powerful and diverse watercourses have left their impression on the landscape and settlement. Today's tour will take us through this beautiful environment with its magnificent waterfalls and mountains. We will visit Sunnfjord Museum, which provides an insight into how life was in Sunnfjord settlements in the mid-1800s, before taking a scenic drive to the region known as 'the waterfall country' making various stops at waterfalls and small settlements.

**Day 8 Bergen.** We arrive this morning in the lovely fjord capital of Bergen. A guided excursion



Tjoløholm's Manor House

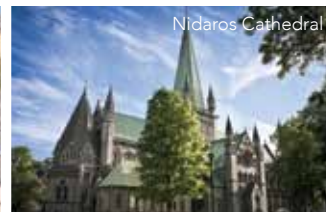




Olden, Norway.



Trondheim



Nidaros Cathedral



Lofoten Islands

will include King Hakon's Hall, the Rosenkrantz Tower, the Bergen Theatre and St. Mary's Church which was built around 1170 and is one of the finest examples of Romanesque architecture in Norway. Continue to Trolldhaugen, the home of Norway's most famous composer, Edvard Grieg where we explore the house and gardens before enjoying a private concert of his music. We return to the ship via the Hanseatic Quarters of 'Bryggen'. After lunch onboard you can enjoy an afternoon at leisure to explore at your own pace.

**Day 9 Haugesund.** It was in Haugesund where, a thousand years ago, King Harald Fairhair united Norway into a single kingdom, and it was from this area that the Viking Kings ruled Norway for more than 500 years. The region has laid claim to the title of Norway's Birthplace and Homeland of the Viking Kings. On a morning tour we will visit the 13th century St Olav's church before learning about the Viking Age at the Nordvegen Heritage centre. We will return to the MS Serenissima via the national monument, Haraldshaugen which commemorates Norway's unification. After lunch onboard the afternoon is free to explore this small town independently. Alternatively join us as we visit the charming old town of Skudeneshavn which consists of 130 white wooden houses originating from the 1800's, when herring fishing was at its peak. We will stroll through the streets and our guide will share stories about the locals that lived here before we visit the Maelandsgarden Museum which highlights the development of the town.

**Day 10 Lillesand.** Enjoy a relaxing morning cruising before we arrive over lunch at one of Norway's best kept secrets, the charming summer resort of Lillesand. Using our small ship we navigate the small islands and skerries which dot the coastline making the approach to the town from the sea a truly memorable sight. We will enjoy a few hours ashore in Lillesand exploring the old town with its old white clapboard houses, beautiful gardens and the local



Atlantic Puffin

shipping museum whilst enjoying the unique atmosphere of a Norwegian summer resort.

**Day 11 Kragero.** Surrounded by nearly 500 islands and skerries, Kragero is a charming town in the region of Telemark and a popular summer retreat. Enjoy a morning at leisure to explore the downtown area, walking through the narrow streets and alleyways amongst the old wooden houses. Alternatively join a cruise through the hundreds of large and small islands that line the coast which are home to wildflowers, seabirds and lighthouses. After lunch onboard we head inland to the Telemark Canal. When completed in 1892, after five years of construction, it was described as the 'eighth wonder of the world'. We will join one of the local nostalgic boats as they transit the 18 locks, lifting the ship 72 metres above sea level and enjoy the changing scenery as we travel from the sea to the mountains.

**Day 12 Oslo.** Be on deck this morning as we navigate the Oslo Fjord, a marvellous sight as the fjord dramatically narrows on the approach to the city. Founded in the 11th century, Oslo has much to offer the visitor and on a morning tour we will see the Akershus Fortress, Royal Palace and Parliament Building before spending some time at the Viking Ship Museum. Here we find discoveries from the great ship burials at Oseberg, Gokstad and Tune as well as finds from the chieftain grave at Borre. The three ships, which are the best preserved Viking ships in existence, were found in large burial mounds in the Oslo fjord region. As they were burial ships, they contained rich furnishings of wood and textiles and these materials, dating from the Viking Period, are rarely found in such

a good state of preservation. Our tour will end at Holmenkollen Hill where we find the world renowned ski jumping area and ski museum. Return to the MS Serenissima for lunch and enjoy a free afternoon to explore the city at leisure.

**Day 13 Skagen, Denmark.** After a leisurely morning at sea we arrive in Denmark at its northernmost port of Skagen, a 600 year old market town. The breathtaking scenery and light has inspired artists such as Ancher and Kroyer whilst the surrounding area has been designated by the World Wide Fund for Nature as a rare, authentic natural beauty spot. Enjoy an afternoon exploring the winding alleys in the atmospheric old quarters or the vibrant atmosphere at the marina. Alternatively take a chance to see the artwork inspired by the region in the local museum.

**Day 14 Gothenburg, Sweden.** Today we arrive in Sweden's second

city, Gothenburg which has been a thriving maritime centre since the 18th century when it was used by the East India Company and is today Scandinavia's largest port. On our morning excursion we will leave the city and drive to see the spectacular views from Fjaras Bracka, a 25-mile long ridge near beautiful Lake Lygnern. We will continue to Tjoloholm, a beautiful Elizabethan-styled manor house developed in the late 19th century. We will explore the house with its wonderful examples of Art Nouveau styles and craftsmanship before visiting the gardens which continue to the sea and are linked to the surrounding wild countryside by a series of terraces. Return to the MS Serenissima for lunch and enjoy an afternoon to explore Gothenburg at your own pace.

**Day 15 Gothenburg to London.** Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.

## PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £200 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	£4895	£4695
2	Standard Stateroom	£5395	£5195
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	£5595	£5395
4	Superior Stateroom	£5795	£5595
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£6195	£5995
6	Junior Suite	£6295	£6095
7	Executive Suite	£6795	£6595
8	Owner's Suite	£6795	£6595
9	Inside Single	£4895	£4695
10	Standard Single	£5295	£5095
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£6395	£6195
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£8395	£8195

**Price Includes:** Economy class scheduled air travel, 14 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis, house wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner onboard, Noble Caledonia onboard team, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel Insurance.

**Ship to Shore:** This cruise is not classified as an expedition cruise, however Zodiac landing crafts are integral to the operation of the voyage due to the small ports we will be visiting where we will be at anchor and will utilise the Zodiacs to transport guests ashore.

# Summer in the Lands of Vikings, Sagas & Fjords

A voyage from Copenhagen to Aberdeen  
8th to 20th August 2017

Here is a perfect summer voyage for those who enjoy visiting picturesque villages, cities and towns, learning of their past inhabitants, most notably the Viking settlements of the region combined with an interest in the natural world.

Setting sail from Copenhagen, we continue our exploration of Denmark with a day in Aalborg with its rich Viking history before sailing to the northernmost tip of the country for a day in the delightful resort of Skagen. The following morning we will enter the Oslo Fjord, a truly marvellous sight, and begin our discovery of Norway which will include some stunning fjord scenery and time in the charming summer resorts of Lillesand and Kragero. Our time spent on deck as we cruise through some of Norway's most impressive scenery promises to astound even the most jaded of travellers. Our voyage ends on Scotland's east coast after we have visited the ancient ruins on the Orkney Islands and the Shetland capital, Lerwick.

## The Itinerary

**Day 1 London / Manchester to Copenhagen, Denmark.** Fly by scheduled flight. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the MS Serenissima.

**Day 2 Copenhagen.** After breakfast we will enjoy a tour of Copenhagen driving past the Tivoli Gardens and Nyhavn before seeing the Palace of Amalienborg, the four identical Rococo buildings which have been the Royal Residence since 1784. We will continue to Christiansborg Palace, the seat of the Danish Parliament built in 1167 and the city's first fortress which was once the home of the Royal Family. We return to the MS Serenissima for lunch via the Little Mermaid fountain. This afternoon either choose to return to explore Copenhagen at your own pace or join an excursion to Roskilde where we will visit the impressive UNESCO listed cathedral dating back nearly 1000 years where almost 40 kings and queens of Denmark are buried. Continue to the Viking Ship Museum which houses five original

Viking vessels dating from the 11th century.

**Day 3 Aalborg.** Aalborg was founded by the Vikings in the late 10th century across the Limfjord and prospered on the fishing and sea trade on the fjord. On a morning excursion we will explore the ancient Viking site of Lindholm Hoje, one of the most important ancient monuments in Scandinavia which was dug out from a thick layer of sand. We will visit the burial site of 700 graves, scattered on a hilltop with a beautiful view of the fjord. Continue to the onsite museum that contains a fascinating exhibition on the Viking settlements found close to the burial ground. We will end with the chance to enjoy authentic Viking cuisine with some small dishes prepared using traditional recipes. After lunch onboard we will have an afternoon to explore the old town of Aalborg. A guided tour will include the Renaissance styled Merchant houses, the Baroque town hall, the 16th century Budolfi cathedral and Aalborghus Castle.

For anyone interested in sampling the local beers there will be the chance to join a guided walk of the old town including a tasting of the local specialities.

**Day 4 Skagen.** For our last day in Denmark we are at its northernmost port of Skagen, a 600 year old market town. The delightful scenery and light has inspired artists such as Ancher and Kroyer whilst the surrounding area has been designated by the World Wide Fund for Nature as a rare, authentic natural beauty spot. On a morning excursion we will head to Skagen Odde, the narrow spit at the headland of Skagen where the North Sea and Baltic Sea meet. Due to the strong currents and shallow waters, the shifting sands create a constantly changing landscape. We return to Skagen and enjoy an afternoon exploring the winding alleys in the atmospheric old quarter or the vibrant atmosphere at the marina.

**Day 5 Oslo, Norway.** Be on deck this morning as we navigate the Oslo Fjord, a marvellous sight as the fjord dramatically narrows on the approach to the city. Founded in the 11th century, Oslo has much to offer the visitor and on a morning tour we will see the Akershus Fortress, Royal Palace and Parliament Building before spending some time at the Viking Ship Museum. Here we find discoveries from the great ship burials at Oseberg, Gokstad and Tune as well as finds from the chieftain grave at Borre, Vestfold



County. Our excursion will end at Holmenkollen Hill where we find the world renowned ski jumping area and ski museum as well as offering wonderful views to the city and Oslo Fjord below. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy a free afternoon to explore the city at leisure.

**Day 6 Kragero.** Surrounded by nearly 500 islands and skerries, Kragero is a charming town in the region of Telemark and a popular summer retreat. Enjoy a free morning to explore the downtown area, walking through the narrow streets and alleyways amongst the old wooden houses. Alternatively join a cruise through the hundreds of large and small islands that line the coast which are home to wildflowers, seabirds and lighthouses. After lunch onboard we head inland to the Telemark Canal. When completed in 1892, after five years of construction, it was described as the 'eighth wonder of the world'. We will join one of the local nostalgic boats as they transit the 18 locks, lifting the ship 72 metres above sea level, and enjoying the changing scenery as we travel from the sea to the mountains.

**Day 7 Lillesand.** This morning we arrive at one of Norway's best kept secrets, the charming summer resort of Lillesand. Using our small ship we will navigate the small islands and skerries which dot the coastline making the approach to the town from the sea a truly memorable sight. We will enjoy a few hours ashore in Lillesand exploring the old town with its old white clapboard





houses, beautiful gardens and the local shipping museum whilst enjoying the unique atmosphere of a Norwegian summer resort. Return to the ship for lunch and a relaxing afternoon at sea. *Please note that we will be at anchor today and Zodiacs will be used for transportation ashore.*

#### Day 8 Lysefjord & Stavanger.

Enjoy a morning cruising Lysefjord, which measures 23 miles end to end and has walls up to 1100 metres in height. We will cruise by Preikestolen (Priest Rock) and Kjerag Mountain, both towering above whilst waterfalls cascade down the rock faces into the fjord. In the early afternoon we will arrive in Stavanger for a stroll in the small harbour with its multi-coloured traditional wood buildings. Alternatively join a local boat to the garden at Sor Hidle where we find a tranquil, blossoming garden full of exotic plants and palm trees offering stunning sea views.



**Day 9 Haugesund.** It was in nearby Avaldsnes where, a thousand years ago, King Harald Fairhair united Norway into a single kingdom, and it was from this area that the Viking Kings ruled Norway for more than 500 years. The region has laid claim to the title of Norway's Birthplace and Homeland of the Viking Kings. On a morning tour we will visit the 13th century St Olavs church which was built by Haakon Haakonson and seen as a symbol of the unification of the Norwegian Kingdom. Later we will learn about the Viking age at the Nordvegen Heritage Centre before ending at a Viking Farm complete with long houses, round houses and a large boat shed. After lunch onboard the afternoon is free to explore this small town independently. Alternatively join us as we visit the charming old town of Skudeneshavn which consists of 130 white wooden houses originating from the 1800's, when herring-fishing was at its peak. We will stroll through the streets and the guide will share stories about the locals that lived here before visiting the Maelandsgarden Museum highlighting the development of the town.

**Day 10 Bergen.** Our final call in Norway is the lovely fjord capital of Bergen. A guided excursion

will include King Hakons Hall, the Rosenkrantz Tower, Bergen Theatre and St. Mary's Church which was built around 1170 and is one of the finest examples of Romanesque architecture in Norway. Continue to Trolldhaugen, the home of Norway's most famous composer, Edvard Greig where we explore the house and gardens before enjoying a private concert of his music. We return to the ship via the Hanseatic Quarters of "Bryggen". Enjoy lunch onboard and an afternoon at leisure.

#### Day 11 Lerwick, Shetland Islands.

After a morning at sea we arrive, during lunch, in the capital of the Shetland Islands. From here we have a choice of afternoon excursions. You may wish to visit the remarkable archaeological site of Jarlshof. The site was uncovered by a violent storm in the winter of 1896/7, revealing an extraordinary settlement site embracing at least 5000 years of human history. Alternatively stay in Lerwick and discover the historic port wandering through its narrow stone lanes. We will visit the excellent Shetland Museum, containing historical artefacts from the Neolithic period, Viking memorabilia and items from the whaling era.

**Day 12 Papa Westray & Kirkwall, Orkney Islands.** Our first call in the Orkney Islands is the island of Papa Westray. Here we will visit the 3500 year old Knap of Howar, a Neolithic farm building that claims to be the oldest standing house in Europe and the 12th century St Boniface Kirk. In the north of the island is the North Hill reserve, home to arctic terns and skuas and also the extremely rare Scottish primrose. Over lunch we sail to the Orkney capital of Kirkwall from where we will head into the Neolithic Heartland of Orkney; an area designated as a World Heritage Site due to its wealth of pre-historic archaeology. We will see the Standing Stones of Stenness and the Ring of Brodgar; a huge ceremonial circle of stones dating back almost 5000 years. We continue to the 5000 year old village of Skara Brae and see the remarkable dwellings revealed from beneath the sand dunes by storms only 150 years ago. *Please note that we will be at anchor this morning and Zodiacs will be used for transportation ashore.*

**Day 13 Aberdeen, Scotland to London.** Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for the return scheduled flight to London. Alternatively, join the transfer to the railway station at a fixed time.



### PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £200 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	£4495	£4295
2	Standard Stateroom	£4795	£4595
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	£5095	£4895
4	Superior Stateroom	£5345	£5145
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£5595	£5395
6	Junior Suite	£5845	£5645
7	Executive Suite	£6395	£6195
8	Owner's Suite	£6395	£6195
9	Inside Single	£4495	£4295
10	Standard Single	£4795	£4595
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£7195	£6995
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£7645	£7445

*For those who do not wish to join our scheduled flight from Aberdeen to London, a credit of £85 per person will apply.*

**Price Includes:** Economy class scheduled air travel, 12 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis, house wine and beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner onboard, Noble Caledonia onboard team, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel Insurance.

**Ship to Shore:** This cruise is not classified as an expedition cruise, however Zodiac landing crafts are integral to the operation of the voyage due to the small ports we will be visiting where we will be at anchor and will utilise the Zodiacs to transport guests ashore.

# Britain & Ireland Odyssey



An exploration of the outlying islands of England, Scotland and Ireland  
20th to 31st August 2017

This expedition voyage will appeal to those who wish to visit some of the remotest and inaccessible islands in England, Scotland and Ireland. This is a truly unique voyage visiting as it does the remarkable islands on the edge of the British Isles with only one non-island call during our voyage; such is the advantage of having a self-sufficient vessel with the qualities of the MS Serenissima. We will sail from Aberdeen and during our cruise visit both inhabited and uninhabited islands and places of great natural beauty, rich in wildlife and mystical history. We have also included a number of gardens and for keen birders there are numerous highlights including sailing past the Cliffs of Moher which are home to an estimated 30,000 birds and also cruising past two of the largest gannetries in the world.

## The Itinerary

### Day 1 Aberdeen, Scotland.

Embark the MS Serenissima this afternoon. Transfers will be provided from Aberdeen railway station and airport at a fixed time.

### Day 2 Mousa & Lerwick, Shetland Islands.

This morning we arrive at the island of Mousa to see the forty-foot defensive tower built by the Picts more than 2000 years ago, and the tallest, best preserved example of an Iron Age broch (tower) in Britain. After lunch we arrive in the Shetland capital of Lerwick and there will be a choice of excursions this afternoon. Enjoy a visit to the remarkable archaeological site of Jarlshof which was uncovered by a violent storm in the winter of 1896, revealing an extraordinary settlement site embracing at least 5,000 years of human history. The site contains a remarkable sequence of stone structures – late Neolithic houses, a Bronze-Age village, an Iron-Age broch and wheelhouses, several Norse longhouses, a Medieval farmstead, and the 16th-century laird's house. Alternatively, explore the historic port of Lerwick with a tour that wanders through its narrow stone lanes. We will also visit the excellent Shetland

Museum, containing historical artefacts from the Neolithic period and memorabilia from the Viking through to the whaling era. This evening we will be entertained by local musicians on board the ship before we sail in the late evening.

### Day 3 Papa Westray & Kirkwall, Orkney Islands.

Spend the morning on one of the smaller islands of the Orkney group as we anchor and use our Zodiacs to land on Papa Westray. Here we will visit the 3,500 year-old Knap of Howar, a Neolithic farm building that claims to be the oldest standing house in Europe, and the 12th century St Boniface Kirk. In the north of the island is the North Hill Reserve, home to Arctic terns and skuas and also the extremely rare Scottish primrose. Over lunch we arrive at the capital, Kirkwall, and head into the west of Mainland, Orkney's largest island. We will pass through gentle rolling landscape and into the Neolithic heartland of Orkney; an area designated as a World Heritage Site due to its wealth of pre-historic archaeology. We will see the Standing Stones of Stenness, the Ring of Brodgar; a huge ceremonial circle of stones dating back almost 5000 years.

We continue to the 5000-year-old village of Skara Brae and see the remarkable dwellings revealed from beneath the sand dunes by storms only 150 years ago. Time permitting we will also visit Birsay, the ancient centre of Viking power and explore St Magnus Church which dates back over 900 years.

**Day 4 Scrabster.** Spend the day in Scrabster, the most northerly port on the Scottish mainland. This morning we will visit the Castle and Gardens of Mey, built between 1566 and 1572 by George Sinclair, 4th Earl of Caithness. The castle was purchased by Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, in 1952 who restored the castle for use as a holiday home. Having acquired the most northerly inhabited castle on the British mainland, The Queen Mother renovated and restored it and created the beautiful gardens which we will see today. This afternoon we drive along the coast to Dunnet Bay, a glorious crescent of sand and dunes and home to many seabirds and unusual flora that we will discover on a guided walk with the local ranger. We continue to Dunnet Head to see the lighthouse, built in 1831 by Robert Stevenson, and enjoy the views over to Orkney. Before our return to the ship we will visit the Medieval Canisbay Kirk whose position over the Pentland Firth has made it a shipping landmark for centuries. We will sail around Cape Wrath tonight on our way to the Hebrides.

### Day 5 Stornoway & Shiant Islands.

For our visit to the Isle of Lewis we anchor off the island capital of Stornoway and

today's tour takes you across the island to the beautiful west coast and to Callanish. Described as Scotland's Stonehenge, the Callanish Standing Stones date from around 3000 B.C. There are a total of 32 stones in a circular and avenue design. The stones stand like a petrified forest on the flat top of a peninsula which reaches out into East Loch Roag. Visit the excellent visitor centre to learn more about the site and venture out amongst the stones themselves to experience their mysterious atmosphere. Continue around the west coast to the site of Dun Carloway Pictish Broch. Probably built sometime in the last century B.C., it would have served as an occasionally defensible residence for an extended family complete with accommodation for animals at ground floor level. We then head north to Gearranan Blackhouse Village, a reconstructed settlement of traditional black houses where people and animals lived in close proximity. The houses are made using dry stone masonry and have thatched roofs, distinctively weighted down with rocks. Visit the small museum, enjoy a display of a typical crofting activity such as weaving and take in the views at this dramatic site on the wild Atlantic coast. This afternoon we will board the Zodiacs for a cruise around the spectacular basalt cliffs of the Shiant Islands, a group of little islands located a few miles off the shores of Lewis. This is an







Gannet in flight



Zodiac, St Kilda



View from St Agnes



Ring of Brodgar, Orkney Islands

excellent place to spot razorbills, guillemots, seals and hopefully White-tailed eagles.

**Day 6 St Kilda.** Arrive at first light in St Kilda, a remarkable uninhabited archipelago some fifty miles beyond the Outer Hebrides. Dominated by the highest cliffs and sea stacks in Britain, Hirta, St Kilda's main island was occupied on and off for at least two thousand years, with the last 36 Gaelic speaking inhabitants evacuated at their own request in 1930. Immediately after the evacuation, the island was bought by the Marquess of Bute to protect the island's thousands of seabirds including puffin and fulmars, and in 1957 it was bequeathed to The National Trust for Scotland. St Kilda is one of only two dozen UNESCO World Heritage Sites with dual status reflecting its natural and cultural significance. The local ranger will join us on board before our Expedition Staff lead a number of guided walks on the island. Later we will cruise past two of the largest gannetries in the world from the sea and are home to up to 60,000 breeding pairs of northern gannet.

**Day 7 Tory Island, Northern Ireland.** Today we will anchor at Tory Island, located off the northwest coast of Ireland and home to 150 or so Gaelic speakers. Although only 14 miles offshore, it feels like many more and island life here is full of traditions. Meet some of the local community in the village hall and enjoy some of their legendary

storytelling, music and dance. Tory Island is also famous for its birds and if we are lucky we may see the corncrake which has become a main attraction on the island. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at sea.

**Day 8 Aran Islands.** Continuing our journey along the Irish Atlantic coastline we arrive this morning at the Aran Islands. We will call into Inishmore, the largest of the islands, and explore some of the early Christian sites as this island was a place of monastic study from the earliest Christian times. Also, see the dramatic stone fort of Dun Aengus, situated on the top of the steep cliffs, which dates back some 3000 years. We will sail over lunch and in the early afternoon we will cruise by the magnificent Cliffs of Moher. Rising to 213 metres and over five miles long, in peak season they are home to an estimated 30,000 birds including fulmars and coughts.

**Day 9 Glengarriff, Ireland.** Sail over breakfast into the sheltered harbour of Glengarriff, our base for the day in County Cork. Here we will board local boats which will take us to Garnish Island and the beautiful Inacullin Gardens. These remarkable gardens owe their existence to the creative partnership, some seventy years ago, of Anna Bryce, then owner of the island and Harold Peto, architect and garden designer. The sheltered position and Gulf Stream is favourable to the growth of ornamental plants, many normally only found in sub-tropical or Mediterranean climates. We return by local boats sailing past "Seal Island", the

home to 250 common seals. After lunch on board we will take the short journey to Bantry House, overlooking Bantry Bay, where we will explore the house, one of the finest historic houses in Ireland along with the gardens.

**Day 10 Tresco, Isles of Scilly.** Enjoy a relaxing morning at sea as we cruise over to the lovely Isles of Scilly arriving at lunchtime. We will spend the afternoon on traffic-free Tresco, walking its idyllic lanes from the beach to the famous sub-tropical Abbey Gardens. Defying the Atlantic weather, this miracle of a garden is home to more than 20,000 species of plants from over 80 countries. Enjoy time to wander at your own pace along the paths, maybe visit the Valhalla collection of ship figureheads from ships wrecked on the islands or relax in the cafe. We will remain anchored

overnight between Tresco and Byher.

**Day 11 St Agnes, Isles of Scilly.** Our final call will be at St Agnes, the most south westerly community in the UK. Surrounded by rocks and reefs, this delightful, tiny island offers marvellous coastal walks. Enjoy walks in the old town, see the lighthouse or maybe visit the local museum. Meanwhile the small island of Gugh lies across a narrow sandbar and here we find a single stone monolith called the 'Old Man of Gugh' which dates back to the Bronze Age. Return to the ship for lunch as we sail this afternoon for Portsmouth.

**Day 12 Portsmouth.** Disembark this morning at the cruise terminal in Portsmouth. Transfers will be provided to Portsmouth Harbour railway Station at a fixed time.

## PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £200 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	£3795	£3595
2	Standard Stateroom	£4195	£3995
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	£4395	£4195
4	Superior Stateroom	£4895	£4695
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£5195	£4995
6	Junior Suite	£5495	£5295
7	Executive Suite	£6495	£6295
8	Owner's Suite	£6495	£6295
9	Inside Single	£4095	£3895
10	Standard Single	£4495	£4295
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£5195	£4995
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£5895	£5695

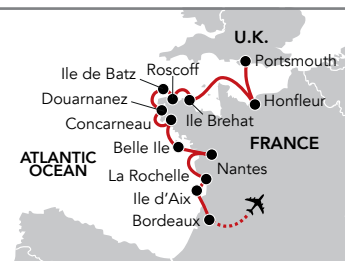
**Price Includes:** 11 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis, house wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner, Noble Caledonia onboard team, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel Insurance.

# Splendours of Normandy, Brittany & the Atlantic Edge

A French Island Odyssey from Portsmouth to Bordeaux  
31st August to 10th September 2017

This is very much a cruise which the owner of a small, private yacht may plan and the perfect voyage for those who love France yet may not have experienced her many off shore islands. The mileage covered over the course of ten nights may be relatively small but the interest along the way is immense. Our voyage is veritable odyssey of French island life culminating in a cruise along the Garonne River for an overnight mooring in the elegant city of Bordeaux. True the islands we will explore may be only a few miles off shore but their isolation has given them an individuality and a charm which make them very special places.



## The Itinerary

**Day 1 Portsmouth, United Kingdom.** Embark the MS Serenissima this afternoon. Transfers will be provided from Portsmouth Harbour railway station at a fixed time.

**Day 2 Honfleur, France.** The picturesque port of Honfleur is the base for our day's exploration of Normandy. You will have the choice of a full day excursion to Les Andelys and Giverny including a visit to the Chateau Gaillard, perched high on a cliff overlooking the river. Built by Richard the Lionheart and the Duke of Normandy in 1196, this magnificent castle is the most dramatic sight anywhere along the Seine between the coast and Paris. After lunch we continue to Monet's home and famous colourful garden at nearby Giverny. Claude Monet lived here from 1883 until his death in 1926, and laid out the gardens to his own designs. In the museum we will see reproductions of his famous works as well as the Japanese prints he collected. Alternatively, enjoy a morning tour to Rouen. After a scenic drive along the Seine Valley

a walking tour of the historical centre will include the Old Market Place, lined by timber framed houses and where Joan of Arc was burned in 1431, Saint Maclou Church and the gothic cathedral. Return to the MS Serenissima for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at leisure.

### Day 3 Ile Brehat & Sept Iles.

Located just ten miles off the Pink Granite Coastline, Ile Brehat is a popular retreat for Parisians, many of whom have holiday homes on the island. From the harbour at Port Clos we will enjoy walks along the scenic coastal paths alive with wildflowers and subtropical flora which thrive in the gentle climate. We will visit the 17th century Birlot Windmill and climb to the highest point, at 33 metres above sea level to visit the Chapelle Saint Michel and enjoy the views over the archipelago. Return to the ship for lunch as we sail to the Sept Iles. These wonderful islands are uninhabited by humans, but are home to vast numbers of seabirds. In Medieval times monks tried to

settle here on the aptly named Ile aux Moines but the harsh conditions made it impossible.

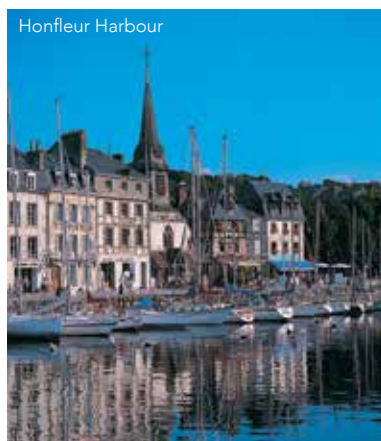
**Day 4 Roscoff & Ile de Batz.** This morning we arrive in the Brittany port of Roscoff from where we take a short ferry ride to the nearby charming Ile de Batz. This small traffic-free island, at only three square miles, is a perfect place to spend a morning. From the harbour you may wish to join us as we walk to the Jardin George Delaselle where we will be shown around by the head gardener. This exotic garden was developed in 1897 and now contains more than 2500 different varieties of plants originating from as far afield as New Zealand and Chile as well as an excellent collection of palms. Return to the vessel for lunch and this afternoon we will explore the town and its environs. See the impressive Renaissance mansions, such as Maison de Marie Stuart, built by wealthy ship owners around the church and harbour. Continue to Saint Vougay and see the 'Chateau de Kerjean', one of



the finest Renaissance buildings in Brittany with a fine collection of traditional Leon furniture. Built in the second part of the 16th century, the castle also has a park covering a total area of around 25 acres, completed with a Renaissance fountain.

### Day 5 Douarnenez & Ile de Sein.

In the late 19th century the port of Douarnenez prospered as it was a major centre for the sardine industry. Traces of these days still show in the architecture and old fisherman's houses that line the harbour, whilst at the Port Musee we will find a number of traditional boats at anchor. This morning you can choose to explore the pretty fishing village or join a tour inland to Locronan, one of the most picturesque and preserved Medieval Breton villages which grew from the manufacture of sailcloth. Visit the 15th century church, remarkable for its stone vaulting and stained glass windows, before walking through the craft workshops. You might also be tempted to taste the famous "kouignamann", a traditional Breton butter cake.





Return to the MS Serenissima for lunch as we sail the short distance to Ile de Sein.

**Day 6 Concarneau.** Another of Brittany's main fishing ports and a centre for the French tuna industry, the town of Concarneau also appeals as a destination in its own right with its historic ville close, the walled city, built on a small island in the centre of the harbour. Spend the morning exploring the narrow streets or climb onto the ramparts for spectacular views. Return to the ship for lunch and there is a choice of excursions this afternoon. You may choose to explore the town further, maybe visit the Musee de la Peche which explores the history of the fishing industry or the nearby Chateau de Keriolet. Alternatively, join us as we visit pretty Pont Aven, located on the estuary of the Aven River made famous by the many painters including Paul Gauguin, who were attracted by the village setting and came here at the end of the 19th century and formed "L'Ecole de Pont Aven" school of painting which focused on colour and symbolism. We will enjoy riverside walks, view the numerous watermills and see the spots where the artists used to paint. We return to the ship via the traditional village of Kerascoet, a lovely site offering wonderfully preserved thatched cottages dating back to the 15th century.

**Day 7 Belle Ile.** We have a day to explore Belle Ile which is the largest of all Breton islands with a dramatic coastline comprising of cliffs, creeks and beaches. This morning we will leave our berth in La Palais and drive to see the Grand Phare, the island's tallest lighthouse, the Port Coton needles lying off the coast and the village of Kervilahouen where Claude Monet spent time painting the wild coast. We end our tour at the picturesque harbour at Sauzon before returning to the MS Serenissima for lunch. This afternoon is free to see the sights of Le Palais, the island's capital, which is dominated by a star shaped 16th century citadel.

**Day 8 Nantes.** The former capital of Brittany, Nantes grew as a shipbuilding and industrial centre throughout the 18th and 19th centuries to become one of France's most important ports. We will discover the sights on a walking tour this morning including the Gothic masterpiece of St Pierre Cathedral and the castle of the Dukes of Brittany, one of the last feudal buildings

to be built in the Loire Valley and where several French kings have stayed. We will also see the town hall, Graslin Theatre, Feydeau Island and the Place Royale and admire views of the town, harbour and Loire River from St Anne Mound. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy an afternoon to explore further independently. For those who wish to travel further afield join us as we drive past rocky headlands and long sandy beaches, to the fortified town of Guerande, a colourful town surrounded by ramparts. Our guide will show you the highlights of this pretty town on a walking tour followed by time at leisure to explore the Medieval streets lined with beautiful 17th and 18th century houses before returning to the MS Serenissima this evening.

**Day 9 La Rochelle & Ile D'Aix.** Over breakfast we arrive at La Pallice, our base for a morning on Ile de Re and one of the jewels of the Charentaise coast. Enjoy a guided tour of the village of St Martin, the island's capital, and some free time to explore the port and the narrow streets or visit the lovely food market before we return to La Rochelle through the island's southern villages and salt marshland. Enjoy some time at leisure in La Rochelle to discover the old town and harbour or maybe explore the World War Two museum located in a former German underground bunker before we sail over lunch. Spend the afternoon on the traffic-free Ile D'Aix which at just two kilometres long by 600 metres wide, is easy to explore by foot. Once heavily fortified to protect the naval base at Rochefort, today it is a much more peaceful place. Enjoy time to explore Fort Liedot, which was used as a prison during the French Revolution, see the house where Napoleon spent his last hours before his exile to St Helena or simply stroll the cobbled streets.

**Day 10 Bordeaux.** During the early morning we will sail down the Garonne River arriving at our central berth during breakfast. On our morning tour we will explore the history and beauty of the elegant 18th century city centre with its stunning buildings including the Grand Theatre, built in 1773 by Victor Louis, the 13th century Cathedrale St Andre as well as the Chartrons district, a lively quarter which used to be the cradle of the wine trade in Bordeaux. We will also see the World War Two German submarine base, the beautiful squares including the Place de



St Martin, Ile de Re



Ile Brehat

la Bourse and the right bank where we discover the wonderful view over the 18th century river front. Return to the ship for lunch and this afternoon either choose to explore the city further independently or join us on an excursion to the UNESCO World Heritage classified Saint Emilion region and village. We will visit the main monuments of the town including the Collegiale church

and its magnificent cloister, the ramparts and the market place before driving to a nearby vineyard where we learn about the local techniques of wine making during the visit of the cellars, before enjoying a wine tasting.

**Day 11 Bordeaux to London.** Disembark after breakfast and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.

## PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £300 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	£3895	£3595
2	Standard Stateroom	£4095	£3795
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	£4195	£3895
4	Superior Stateroom	£4395	£4095
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£4595	£4295
6	Junior Suite	£5295	£4995
7	Executive Suite	£5595	£5295
8	Owner's Suite	£5595	£5295
9	Inside Single	£3895	£3595
10	Standard Single	£4095	£3795
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£5095	£4795
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£5195	£4895

**Price Includes:** Economy class scheduled air travel from Bordeaux to London, 10 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis, house wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner onboard, Noble Caledonia onboard team, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel Insurance.

**Ship to Shore:** The ship will be at anchor at Ile Brehat, Ile de Sein, Belle Ile and Ile D'Aix and Zodiacs or tenders will be used to transport passengers ashore. In the event that we are unable to anchor off these ports due to bad weather we will call into larger nearby ports where we will be able to berth.

# Iberian Stepping Stones

A voyage from Burgundy to Andalusia

10th to 20th September 2017

Our late summer voyage from Bordeaux to Cadiz around the Iberian Peninsula offers an opportunity to experience the wonderful wine and food of the region as well as an insight into the splendid architecture and fascinating history. Who could fail to be enchanted by the natural splendour of the coastal scenery and vineyards, or by the timeless beauty of Lisbon and Oporto.

During our voyage there will be ample opportunity to taste a variety of some magnificent French, Spanish and Portuguese wines and our visits to some of the vineyards should coincide with the grape harvests. We have ensured our voyage is a well-balanced itinerary incorporating visits to vineyards, Medieval towns and natural wonders as well as allowing time for individual exploration made easy due to our ability to moor centrally in the towns and cities we visit.

## The Itinerary

**Day 1 London to Bordeaux, France.** Fly by scheduled flight. Arrive into Bordeaux this afternoon and on arrival transfer to the MS *Serenissima* where we moor overnight.

### Day 2 Bordeaux & Medoc.

A morning tour will explore the history and beauty of the elegant 18th century city centre with stunning buildings including the Grand Theatre, built in 1773 by Victor Louis and the 13th century Cathedrale St Andre as well as the Chartrons district, a lively quarter which used to be the cradle of wine trade in Bordeaux, the World War II German submarine base, the beautiful squares and the right bank. We will enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before continuing this afternoon to the Medoc vineyards. Despite its location close to the Atlantic the area was developed from the late 17th century as a wine centre and it is the quality of the soil, rather than the weather, which is thanked for providing the impressive wines from the region. From our berth we will drive through the enchanting countryside along the Medoc wine route also known as the "Route des Chateaux". Afterwards we will explore the expansive

cellars at one of the Chateaux's and discover the secret techniques used to produce the high quality wines of the region before enjoying a tasting. From here we continue to the MS *Serenissima* which will have sailed to the port of Le Verdon to meet us.

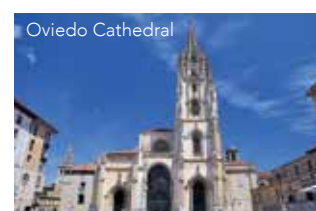
**Day 3 Bayonne.** Situated at the junction of the Nive and Adour rivers lies Bayonne, the regional capital steeped in history. Originally a Roman garrison, Medieval Bayonne developed on the same site, under the coat-of-arms of both France and England. The town became a flourishing port during 300 years of English rule, which originated in the famous marriage between Alienor of Aquitaine and Henry Plantagenet. We spend the morning strolling the narrow pedestrian streets of "Old Bayonne" which are lined with 18th century homes. After lunch on board we enjoy a taste of Basque culture as we visit Ainhoa and Sare, two charming French villages with particularly rich Basque influences. In Sare village we visit a traditional farmhouse and sample delicious local delicacies of cheese and Basque cake as well as local wine and cider. In Ainhoa we explore a town that was virtually destroyed

by the Spanish in 1629 and rebuilt during the 17th and 18th centuries. Its main street boasts some of the finest houses in the Labourd style.

### Day 4 San Sebastian, Spain.

Our first call in Spain will be the charming town of San Sebastian. A morning tour will explore the town including driving up to Monte Igledo from where there are wonderful views over the town and bay below. Enjoy lunch on the ship or stay in town and enjoy tapas at one of the many restaurants situated in the cobbled old town. This afternoon is free to explore San Sebastian at your leisure or alternatively join us on a tour to nearby Getaria and a cellar which produces Txakoli wine which is unique to this region. We will visit the vineyard, the cellar and after the visit enjoy a taste of white wine and local specialities before returning to the ship and sailing this evening.

**Day 5 Gijon.** Gijon is the largest city in Asturias and our base for a day of discovery in the region. Choose from a full day at the lakes of Covadonga nestled in the Picos de Europa Mountains. Drive into the mountains where we will see the two glacial lakes of Covadonga: Lagos Enol and Lagos Ercina-the original centre of the Picos de Europa National Park. Marvel at the serene, mirror-like waters before going to check out the beautiful pink-hued, twin-spired Basilica of Santa Maria la Real. Lunch will be served at the Parador of Cangas, before returning to Gijon. Alternatively, enjoy a morning in Oviedo, the modern capital of the Asturias region. Oviedo is recognised as the most culturally significant and historically interesting city of the province and after a panoramic



drive we begin a walking tour during which we will see the San Salvador Gothic Cathedral before exploring the restored Old Town. Return to Gijon for lunch and an afternoon at leisure.

### Day 6 Villagarcia de Arousa.

Enjoy a morning at sea arriving in the Galician port of Villagarcia de Arousa at lunchtime. Here we have a choice of tours. Maybe take a half day tour to some of the wonderful houses and gardens of the Galicia region or visit the Pazo de Oca, a Baroque stately home known as the "Galician Versailles" and "El Generalife of the north" due to the beauty of its gardens. Continue to Pazo de Ribadulla dating from the 16th century and set in a beautiful location on the shores of the Ulla Valley. The gardens were developed by the Armada family in the 1870s and today are renowned for its outstanding collection of trees and flowers. Alternatively enjoy an afternoon discovery of "Rias Baixas" which translates as low estuaries and taste some of the local wines. Visit the 15th century Pazo de Rubianes where we find one of the three official lordships in Spain. Visit the 11 hectare garden with eucalyptus trees and the French style flowerbeds of sequoias and camphors. Continue to the cellar of Martin Codax where we will learn about local wine production. The grape harvest starts in September and we hope to time our visit with this event.







**Day 7 Vigo.** From our berth in Vigo we embark on a full day tour to Tui and Bayona. The beautiful walled Medieval city of Tui is located on a hill next to the Portuguese border on the River Mino. We will visit the imposing cathedral, built in the 12th century and later converted into a battlement-studded fortress, the logical response to the frequent invasions endured by the town. Its tower forms a magnificent balcony over the river and, from it the city appears to be terraced out of the hill. A tasting of local produced wines awaits us at the beautiful Parador, which is a reproduction of a rural Galician country house set among mountains and rivers. Afterwards we continue to Bayona, one of the most important coastal towns in Galicia because of its harbour and fishing fleet. We enjoy some free time to walk around before going up along the walls of the Castle of Monterreal to get to the Parador and taste some wines and tapas from Galicia.

**Day 8 Oporto, Portugal.** Arrive this morning into the port of Leixoes, the base for our day of activities around Oporto. This morning we will see the impressive St. Francis Church and the Ribeira, a riverside quarter made up of narrow, twisting streets and shadowy arcade, before continuing to a local wine cellar. Here we will learn all about the wines and how they are produced and enjoy a tasting. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy a free afternoon to explore independently or for those keen to learn more about the local wine industry enjoy lunch ashore and continue to Penafiel, situated 30 kilometres east of the city of Oporto in the heart of the Vinho Verde Demarcated region. The Atlantic climate together with the granitic soil produces the characteristics so appreciated in Vinho Verde - a young fresh wine with a low alcoholic content and a lightly fruity flavour.

**Day 9 Lisbon.** Set on seven hills on the banks of the River Tagus, Lisbon has been the capital of Portugal since the 13th century. 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 a morning tour we enjoy a relaxing drive through the town, seeing the famous landmarks and places of interest such as the Monument to the Discoveries and Belem Tower. Return to the ship for lunch and an afternoon at sea.

**Day 10 Cadiz, Spain.** After a morning at sea we arrive in Cadiz. The town stands on a peninsula jutting out into a bay, and is almost entirely surrounded by water. It is the oldest surviving city in Spain which was founded by the Phoenicians in 1100 B.C. and was later occupied by the Carthaginians, Romans, Visigoths and Moors. Enjoy a choice of tours this afternoon. Either discover the most beautiful monuments and landmarks including the Mudéjar-style tobacco factory, Santo Domingo Church, the Santa Catalina Fortress and finally the cathedral of Cadiz and Diocesan Museum in the old city or join a tour to nearby Jerez where we will visit one of the most famous wine cellars, 'Bodegas Real Tesoro' and learn about the different types of sherry produced here including the Tio Mateo Sherry. We will also visit the Bodega's stud where Spanish thoroughbred horses are bred and there will be time to admire these magnificent animals and to visit a collection of antique harnesses and carriages before we end at the Bodega's Art gallery where you can see over 100 engravings by Picasso as well as works by Chillida, Miró, Zuluaga, Tàpies, Dalí and many other contemporary artists. Our visit will end with a tasting of the local produce.

**Day 11 Seville to London.** Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for our return scheduled flight to London.

## Post-Cruise Seville Extension - 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017

Extend your stay with our two night post-cruise tour in the beautiful city of Seville including tours to some of the most interesting sites of the city and surroundings.

### The Itinerary

**Day 1 Seville.** Disembark this morning and enjoy a tour of Seville including one of Seville's greatest monuments, the Alcazar with its exotic terraced garden. Also see the Christian Cathedral, reputed to be the largest Gothic style church in the world. This afternoon will be at leisure for individual exploration. You may wish to explore the maze of cobble streets which was once the Jewish Quarter of the city, taking in the atmosphere of this historic town. Meet tonight for dinner at one of the city's many tapas restaurants.



**Day 2 Cordoba.** After breakfast in the hotel we will embark on a full day tour of Cordoba, a beautiful city that demonstrates a past where Jews, Christians and Muslims peacefully coexisted and left a beautiful legacy of architecture to be appreciated for centuries to come. In the early afternoon we will visit the Royal Stables, created in 1570 by King Philip II and where they bred the Andalusian horses before returning to Seville. Dinner tonight is under your own arrangements.

**Day 3 Seville to London.** After breakfast in the hotel transfer to the airport for our return scheduled flight to London.

### Prices per person based on double occupancy

Twin: £395 Single: £495

**Price Includes:** Two nights in a centrally located hotel on a bed and breakfast basis, half day Seville tour, full day Cordoba tour, dinner on day 1 and lunch on day 2, Noble Caledonia Tour Manager, gratuities.

**Price Includes:** Travel Insurance.

## PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £300 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	£3895	£3595
2	Standard Stateroom	£4225	£3925
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	£4325	£4025
4	Superior Stateroom	£4520	£4220
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£4725	£4425
6	Junior Suite	£5425	£5125
7	Executive Suite	£5725	£5425
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2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£5325	£5025
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£5325	£5025

**Price Includes:** Economy class scheduled air travel, 10 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis, house wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner onboard, Noble Caledonia onboard team, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel Insurance.

# In the Footsteps of Laurie Lee

A Journey from Andalucia to Catalonia with Valerie Grove  
20th to 30th September 2017

“ I was in Spain, and the new life beginning. I had a few shillings in my pocket, and no return ticket... ”



So writes Laurie Lee in the first chapter of *‘As I Walked out One Midsummer Morning’*, the classic travel memoir of how he set out on foot from his Gloucestershire village in 1934, at the age of twenty. He had left behind the breathless girls and the rural childhood he later described so vividly in *‘Cider with Rosie’*.

He knew nothing of Spain, but a girl who came from Argentina had taught him to ask for a glass of water in Spanish yet as soon as he landed in the port of Vigo he felt at home. That youthful journey through Spain, surviving by playing his violin was the key to Laurie Lee’s future life as a writer, to his poetry and his eventual fame.

Our journey aboard the MS Serenissima will follow his footsteps in Andalucia, where he spent most of that year of 1935-6, until he found himself caught up in the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Away from the coast, despite the epidemic of tourism in the late 20th century on the Costa del Sol, the heart of all the old Spanish places described by Laurie in such rich detail, remain much as he saw them, peopled by the same characters.

We pick up his trail in Seville. *“Ever since childhood,”* he writes, *“I’d imagined myself walking down a white dusty road through groves of orange trees to a city called Seville.”* He found the city *“white and gold, the gold-lit river reflecting the Torre de Oro, with flashes of sun striking the Giralda Tower and the spires of the prostrate cathedral.”* We will spend time in some of his favourite places, including the historic ports of Cadiz and Algeciras, *“that blistering smugglers’ town”* where you could then get a glass of wine and a plate of shrimps for two pence. *“I was half in love with Algeciras and its miniature villainies, and felt I could have stayed on there indefinitely.”* We pass the bay of Trafalgar and windswept Tarifa, making a detour to Gibraltar, which *“lay apart like an interloper, as though it had been towed out from Portsmouth and anchored offshore... where Africa and Europe touched fingertips in this merging of day and night.”* We will sail by the *“salt fish”* villages Laurie walked through when they were still small, poor, undeveloped: San Pedro, Estepona, Marbella, Fuengirola. *“At that time,”* he wrote, *“one could have bought the whole coast for a shilling.”* We will also explore Granada, which Laurie called *“the most beautiful and haunting of all Spanish cities: an African paradise set under the Sierras like a rose preserved in snow”* and the Alhambra, and the cathedral where the Catholic Kings, Ferdinand and Isabella, are entombed in marble. Most importantly we visit Almunecar, sixty miles east of Malaga, which was in 1934 a poor fishing village on an outcrop of rock, but where Laurie discovered a pioneering hotel, the Mediterraneo, where he played his violin every evening for the guests (on the site of that hotel there is now a memorial to *“el gran escritor, Lorenzo Lee”*). In the hills above Almunecar we visit the old castillo, now an artists’ retreat, where Laurie returned many times until he died in 1997. He had spent several months in Almunecar when suddenly the Spanish Civil War encroached on the village, and the English benefactress in whose house he lodged managed to get a British battleship to take them home to safety. But Laurie felt so guilty about leaving behind his friends, he was determined to return and volunteer for the International Brigade. In 1937 he walked back across the Pyrenees and enlisted – the story told in his third volume of memoir, *‘A Moment of War’*. The nearest ports to Laurie’s wartime adventures are Valencia (close to the International Brigades assembly point, at Albacete) and Barcelona. Laurie’s youthful forays into Spain entered his soul, and were a passport to literary success. His accounts of his travels have been an inspiration to countless travellers ever since and we believe our passengers will be infected too by visiting the places that invigorated his prose.



## The Itinerary

### Day 1 London to Seville, Spain.

Fly by scheduled flight. On arrival embark the MS Serenissima.

**Day 2 Seville.** This morning we enjoy a tour of Seville Cathedral, the alcazar and the old quarter. Laurie refers to *“the special femininity of Seville, a mixture of gaiety and languor... Seville is set apart like a mistress, pampered and adored... Men turn to Seville as a symbol; it is the psyche of their genius, the coil that regenerates their sharpest pleasures and instincts.”* *“A city where, more than in any other, one may bite on the air and taste the multitudinous flavours of Spain – acid, sugary, intoxicating, sickening -- but flavours which, in a synthetic world, are real as nowhere else.”*

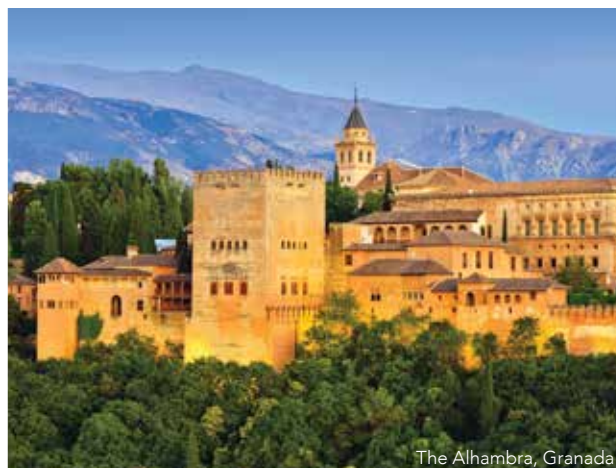
**Day 3 Seville to Cadiz.** This morning’s guided tour is to the Casa Pilatos Palace and the Palace of the Condesa de Lebrija. Sail in the afternoon down the Guadalquivir to Cadiz and moor overnight.

**Day 4 Cadiz.** Laurie Lee wrote of Cadiz, *“...a city of sharp incandescence’s...lying curved on the bay like a scimitar and sparkling with African light.”* This morning there will be a tour of this historic naval port, the old Medieval town

encased in defensive walls, surrounded on three sides by the sea. It is now one of the most beautiful of Andalucia’s towns. In the Plaza de Mina is the house where Manuel de Falla lived and paintings by Goya and Zurbarán. Plaza de Mina, where the Museo stands, is a delightful square filled with pines, palms and oleanders. We will see the massive cathedral, Medieval arch leading to the remains of Medieval Cadiz, with early 16th century buildings, and north of the plaza, the markets, surrounded by bars. Alternatively join an optional full day tour to Jerez, the centre of the centuries-old sherry trade and home of the dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera. Laurie recommended a visit to a bodegas, the main ones (eg Gonzalez Byass, whose 19th century ironwork is designed by Gustave Eiffel of the eponymous Tower) are all in the town centre. Sail in the late evening for Algeciras.

**Day 5 Algeciras to Gibraltar.** *“The port of Algeciras had a potency and charm which I’d found nowhere else since then,”* wrote Laurie Lee. He loved Algeciras’ scruffy old quarter, its *“brawling bars and modest brothels”*, its air of modest busyness and the fact that it remained un-showy, un-touristic





and unpretentious. He especially loved the seediness of the sea-port. *"In Algeciras, which the tourist ignores, you can talk to smugglers loaded with watches. Or go to the small local theatre (hard seats, one shilling) and see some of the best strolling players in Spain."* It seemed to him to be *"a town entirely free of malice."* *"I remember the fishing boats at dawn bringing in tunny from the Azores, the markets full of melons and butterflies, the sly yachts running gold to Tangier..."* During lunch we will sail to Gibraltar: *"It lay on the waters like a glass-blue prawn, or crouched like a dog and threw off aircraft like fleas"*. When he first arrived in Gibraltar, 20 minutes across the bay from Algeciras by paddle-wheel ferry, the water leaping with dolphins, Laurie was intending just to drop in for some tea but was detained by customs, being penniless, and obliged to sleep two nights in the police station cell, but allowed out during the day. *"After a few days of bacon and eggs, a policeman escorted me back to the frontier"* whereupon *"Spain enclosed me once more with its anarchic indifference."* This afternoon we will explore this little bit of Britain sandwiched between Spain and Morocco before sailing late this evening.

**Day 6 & 7 Motril.** From Motril we will drive to Granada for a full day tour. Laurie writes of the tremendous view from the highest point in the city of Granada, *"over a wide and populous plain, shafted with light, scattered with tiny villages and tiny figures as though in a landscape by Breughel."* The Alhambra was *"an oasis in the dry burnt south"* with *"green trees, banks of ivy, flowers and gushing water."* Inside the cathedral, Laurie writes of gazing upon *"the marble tombs of Ferdinand and Isabella - extravaganzas of sugar-icing most cold and rhetorical"* – but these tombs are in fact in the Capillo Real nearby, along with the prostrate

images of Philip the Handsome and Joanna the Mad (Juana la Loca) and many other treasures. We will moor overnight in Motril and the following morning drive to Almunecar, an ancient Phoenician fortress and once a small fishing village with its traditional central square and market and now there is a beachside monument to Laurie Lee who spent six months here of his year in Spain 1935-6. *"A tumbling little village built on an outcrop of rock in the midst of a pebbly delta, backed by a bandsaw of mountains and fronted by a grey strip of sand which some hoped would be an attraction for tourists."* Laurie played his violin for residents of the first tourist hotel, the Mediterraneo, in 1935-6. Almunecar became a hotbed of unrest and strikes as the Civil war began in July 1936 and Laurie was rescued from here on the 1st August, just after the rebel forces had seized Cadiz, Jerez and Algeciras. Later today we will drive into the hills to the Castillo San Rafael. When Laurie first wrote about Spain in 1955, he disguised Almunecar as *"Castillo"*. It was not until a 1984 BBC film was made of his travels that the director discovered the exquisite Castillo San Rafael in the still wild hills above Almunecar. Surrounded by acres of olive and almond groves, this former monastery dates from 1050 and has been transformed by its British owner to an artist's retreat. Laurie loved the beauty and tranquillity of the Castillo with its lemon, mango and pomegranate trees and 100 foot serpentine pool shaded by jacaranda and spent many holidays here for the rest of his life. We will enjoy some sherry and tapas in this wonderful setting before continuing to Palazete de Cazulas for lunch, a gem of 15th century Andalusian architecture. Set amidst stunning scenery the British owners have restored this private house and garden to its former glory.

**Day 8 Cartagena.** After a leisurely morning at sea we will explore the great port of Cartagena which dates back to the Phoenicians.

**Day 9 Valencia.** Our morning tour today will include Valencia's fine Baroque buildings including the cathedral, Silk Exchange and the old La Carmen quarter. It was in Valencia that Laurie Lee, on his return visit in 1937-8 at the height of the Spanish Civil War, experienced his first air-raid. As he describes it in *A Moment of War*: *"Franco's airfields in Majorca, armed by Italian and German warplanes, were only a few minutes' flight from the mainland. Barcelona and Valencia lay as open cities, their defences but a few noisy and ineffectual guns"...* *"As the bombers closed in, spreading their steady roar above us, I felt a quick surge of unnatural excitement... New images of outrage which Spain was the first to show us, and which in some idiotic way I was impatient to share... I was surprised by my detachment and lack of fear. I*

*may even have felt some queer satisfaction. It was something I learned about myself that night which I have never quite understood."* *"It was a small, brief horror imposed on the sleeping citizens of Valencia, and one so slight and routine, compared with what was happening elsewhere in Spain, as to be scarcely worth recording. Those few minutes' bombing I'd witnessed were simply an early essay in a new kind of warfare, soon to be known – and accepted – throughout the world."*

**Day 10 Barcelona.** Our final port of call is Barcelona where we will enjoy a morning tour of the city and an afternoon at leisure. In later years Barcelona became a favourite Spanish bolt-hole where Laurie and his friend Julian Bream would enjoy startling the locals in Los Caracoles restaurant by striking up on Laurie's fiddle and Julian's guitar.

**Day 11 Barcelona to London.** Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for the return scheduled flight.

## PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £200 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	£3795	£3595
2	Standard Stateroom	£4195	£3995
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	£4295	£4095
4	Superior Stateroom	£4595	£4395
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£4895	£4695
6	Junior Suite	£5395	£5195
7	Executive Suite	£5895	£5695
8	Owner's Suite	£5895	£5695
9	Inside Single	£3795	£3595
10	Standard Single	£3995	£3795
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£5995	£5795
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£6445	£6245

**Price Includes:** Economy class scheduled air travel, 10 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis, house wine and beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner onboard, Noble Caledonia onboard team, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel Insurance.

# Historic Islands & Cities of the Mediterranean

A voyage from Catalonia to Puglia

30th September to 11th October 2017

**F**ly to Barcelona and board the charming MS Serenissima for a 12 day voyage which will take you to some of the most historic and scenically beautiful places in the Mediterranean. We will call into some beautiful islands, visit timeless villages and ancient sites as we sail to Puglia.

Our voyage is timed perfectly to take advantage of cooling temperatures and dispersing of summer holiday crowds leaving us free to explore some spectacular Greek ruins such as the theatre at Taormina and Syracuse on the island of Sicily and the ancient city of Butrint in Albania.

Our voyage promises to be an informative and above all relaxing journey through the Western Mediterranean with each day offering a new port of call and a new experience. From the Provencal port of Sanary sur Mer and whilst on the charming islands of Elba and Kefalonia we will visit local vineyards for a tasting of some specialty wines of the regions and will enjoy an exclusive visit to a Palazzo in Lecce with lunch of local specialties accompanied by traditional music. We will explore some stunning gardens in Corisca and Naples, view some magnificent architecture in Lecce and have ample time to wander the Medieval streets of Le Castellet, Portoferraio and Taormina.

## The Itinerary

**Day 1 London to Barcelona, Spain.** Fly by scheduled flight. On arrival transfer to the MS Serenissima and sail this evening.

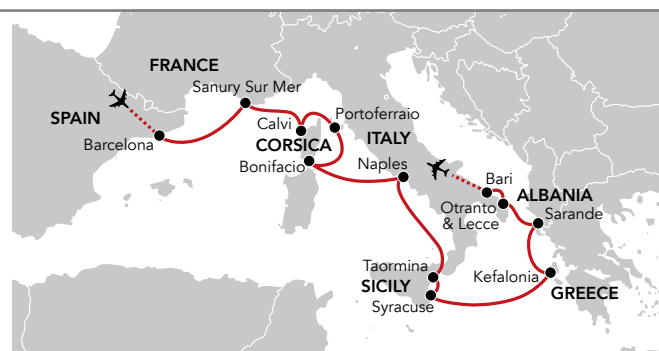
**Day 2 Sanary sur Mer, France.** After a morning at sea we will anchor off the picturesque and typically Provencal port of Sanary sur Mer. Colourful 'pointu' fishing boats bob in the harbour and pretty white and pink cottages line the shallow sandy beach. Spend the afternoon either strolling around the town at leisure, perhaps visit the 13th century watchtower and explore the pretty squares or join the excursion inland to the hilltop Medieval village of Le Castellet. This remarkable stronghold, formerly owned by the Lords of Les Baux, has well preserved ramparts, a carefully restored 12th century church and a castle dating back to the 11th century. We will have time to explore the

village and its winding streets before enjoying a wine tasting at one of Le Castellet's centuries-old vineyards.

**Day 3 Calvi, Corsica.** Calvi is the capital of the prosperous Balagne region of the island. Enjoy the vista of the surrounding green hills which form a natural amphitheatre and is known as the 'Garden of Corsica'. A



Calvi, Corsica



guided tour will lead us through the alleyways and cobbled streets before continuing to the imposing citadel. Built by the Genoese, this 15th century structure has fended off several assaults through the centuries and offers wonderful views from its five bastions. We will also see the Caserne Sampiero and the 13th century Cathedral St Jean Baptiste. This afternoon there will be an opportunity to explore the flora of Corsica with a visit to the seven hectare Parc de Saleccia. Here you can explore the range of paths through the gardens.

**Day 4 Portoferraio, Elba.** Today we call into the enchanting island of Elba, best known as Napoleon's island of exile from 1814 to 1815. Departing the island's busy capital Portoferraio we set out for a delightful drive exploring the southern region of this charming island with superb views over the coastline. The first stop will be Villa San Martino, the summer residence of Napoleon Bonaparte, which has since been transformed into a museum. Later enjoy some time at leisure in

Porto Azzurro to browse around and shop among the many local boutiques of this delightful town which is dominated by an ancient Spanish fortress and a picturesque harbour. Our drive continues along the coast to the 17th century country wine farm, La Chiusa, beautifully nestled in a vineyard estate surrounded by olive trees and overlooking the ocean. As with any self-respecting mansion on Elba, La Chiusa claims to have once housed Napoleon during his exile. Experience the estate's interesting cellar to learn how the wine is handled and produced. A delicious sampling of the local wine will be served in the garden facing the sea. Return to the MS Serenissima for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at leisure in Portoferraio.

**Day 5 Bonifacio, Corsica.** We return this morning to Corsica and berth in Bonifacio's stunning natural harbour. Well known by Odysseus as the home of the savage and giant Laestrygonians, today Bonifacio's breathtaking cliff-top setting and relaxed



La Mortella Garden, Ischia Island





Portoferraio, Elba



Bonifacio, Corsica

pace make it one of the most welcoming ports in the Mediterranean. On our morning tour we explore the narrow streets and the historical heart of the town. We will also discover the Bosco quarter with the St Francis convent, the 14th century church of St Marie Majeure and take in the views. Return to the vessel for lunch and a relaxing afternoon at sea.

**Day 6 Naples, Italy.** Arrive this morning in Naples and see the Norman castle that protects the port and the backdrop of Vesuvius in the distance. There will be a choice of excursions today and you may choose to take the ferry and spend the day on the garden island of Ischia. A tour of the island will focus on La Mortella, a wonderful garden designed by architect Russell

Page for Lord and Lady William Walton. Divided into two parts called the Valley and Upper Garden, the areas are linked by a network of paths and inviting walks from where you can enjoy the breathtaking views of the Bay of Forio. Spread over two hectares there are fountains, ponds, streams and scattered everywhere are water loving plants. We will have lunch at a local restaurant before enjoying free time to explore the main town. Alternatively enjoy a day in Naples where a morning tour will take us to Herculaneum. This wealthy Roman town was completely submerged by volcanic mud following the A.D. 79 eruption of Vesuvius. Since its rediscovery in 1709, excavations have revealed beautiful public baths, villas and gardens of noble families, decorated with murals and floor mosaics, and the remains of a theatre. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at leisure in Naples.

**Day 7 Taormina, Sicily.** From the nearby port of Messina we will visit Taormina, a walled town lying in the shadow of Mount Etna, Europe's highest volcano. The town has been a popular tourist destination since the 19th century and our guided tour will include walking the characteristic

alleys before visiting the 15th century Palazzo Corvaja and the impressive Greek Theatre, from where there are marvellous views over the town and coast. For those who wish to enjoy longer here you will be able to take lunch independently in one of the local restaurants and enjoy an afternoon exploring at leisure before our coach returns to Messina. Alternatively return to the MS Serenissima for lunch and enjoy free time in Messina before we sail this evening.

**Day 8 Syracuse.** Syracuse was founded by the Greeks in 734 B.C. and by the 5th century was a political and military power throughout the Mediterranean and rivalled Athens as the largest and most beautiful city in the Greek world. On leaving the vessel we visit the Neapolis Archaeological Park where we find a well preserved Greek theatre with seats carved from limestone. Paradise Quarry, now an attractive garden and orange grove, was the primary source of that limestone and is the site of the curious 'Dionysus' Ear' - a vast grotto with an amplifying resonance. We will continue to explore the island of Ortigia where we find the Temple of Apollo, considered to be Sicily's most ancient Doric temple and the Baroque Cathedral, erected over the remains of the Temple of Minerva. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy a relaxing afternoon at sea.

**Day 9 Kefalonia, Greece.** Made famous by the filming of 'Captain Corelli's Mandolin' this Ionian island has great charm. We will arrive in the capital Argostoli and see the famous lighthouse before driving to the nearby Botanical Gardens which were founded in 1998 to display and preserve the wild and endemic plants of the



Taormina

“

Our voyage combines some 'must see' sites together with little known and rarely visited places that are totally unsuitable for vessels larger than ours. We will visit ancient sites and see some of the loveliest scenery imaginable, whilst enjoying all the civilised comforts of our delightful vessel.

”



island. We will return to the MS Serenissima via one of the local vineyards for a tasting of the excellent Robala wines.

#### Day 10 Sarande, Albania.

During our day in Albania we will discover the ancient city of Butrint, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. On a guided tour we will explore the ruins that feature the remains of many eras and cultures. From the Hellenistic period there are temples, the promenade and the 4th century B.C. theatre. From the Roman era are the public baths, gymnasium and fountains. From the Byzantine era we see chapels and the large Basilica of St Peter and St Paul, whilst the Venetians are represented by a watchtower and a small castle with commanding views over the Straits of Corfu.

#### Day 11 Otranto & Lecce, Italy.

From the port of Otranto we will drive to Lecce, often referred to as 'The Florence of the South' with its amazing collection of

Baroque architecture. A guided walk will include a visit to the beautifully decorated Santa Croce Basilica and Piazza Duomo, considered one of the finest and most impressive squares in southern Italy. After the tour, there will be an exclusive, private visit to the 15th century Palazzo Tamborino-Cezzi. The owner of the palazzo will personally take us on a tour, sharing interesting stories and anecdotes regarding his family and the palazzo itself. Enjoy a light lunch of local specialties before a concert of traditional music of the Salento region called La Pizzica. Return to Otranto this afternoon and enjoy some time at leisure to explore the old town independently before we sail tonight.

**Day 12 Bari to London.** Arrive this morning and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London. Alternatively for those who wish to spend longer in Puglia we have arranged a three night extension.



Lecce Cathedral

## PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £300 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	£4225	£3925
2	Standard Stateroom	£4455	£4155
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	£4585	£4285
4	Superior Stateroom	£4805	£4505
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£5025	£4725
6	Junior Suite	£5795	£5495
7	Executive Suite	£6125	£5825
8	Owner's Suite	£6125	£5825
9	Inside Single	£4225	£3925
10	Standard Single	£4455	£4155
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£5455	£5155
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£5585	£5285

**Price Includes:** Economy class scheduled air travel, 11 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis, house wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner onboard, Noble Caledonia onboard team, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel Insurance.

**Ship to Shore:** The ship will be at anchor at Sanury Sur Mer and Zodiacs or tenders will be used to transport passengers ashore. In the event that we are unable to anchor off these ports due to bad weather we will call into larger nearby ports where we are able to berth.

## Pre & Post-Cruise Extensions



Laguardia village

## Pre-Cruise Northern Spain Extension

24<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017

### The Itinerary

**Day 1 London to Bilbao, Spain.** Fly by scheduled flight. On arrival transfer to our hotel for an overnight stay. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure before we meet tonight for a pintxos tour and dinner including a chance to enjoy the local specialties matched with local wines.

**Day 2 Bilbao to Rioja.** After breakfast in the hotel we will drive towards the famous Rioja wine region where we stop at the beautiful village of Laguardia to visit one of the local vineyards and enjoy a tour of the cellars and a wine tasting. We will overnight in Rioja and enjoy dinner at our hotel.

**Day 3 Olite & Pamplona.** Our first call today will be the beautiful small town of Olite where we will see the magnificent Palacio Real del Olite. The castle was renowned as one of the most luxurious Medieval castles in Europe and today we can explore the wonderful halls, keeps and dungeons as well as the views over the old town. Continue to Pamplona where we enjoy lunch before checking into our hotel and enjoying an afternoon at leisure. Tonight enjoy dinner under your own arrangements and choose from one of the wonderful restaurants in the city.

## Post-Cruise Puglia Extension

11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Our three night post cruise extension is based at the Masseria Torre Cocco, an ancient fortified farmhouse close to the coast near Fasano which has been sympathetically restored and surrounded by olive groves. The five-star boutique hotel has 37 elegant guest rooms, all featuring a small private garden and patio. All rooms have a bathtub or shower, daily newspaper, bathrobes, slippers, bathroom amenities, minibar, safe and internet connection. The state of the art Aveda spa is set in an underground cave complex complete with an indoor pool. Fresh fruit and vegetables are grown in the hotel's organic farm and some late-summer sun can be enjoyed at the hotel's own beach club on its private beach or around the delightful outdoor pool.

### The Itinerary

**Day 1 Bari to Masseria Torre Cocco, Italy.** Disembark the MS Serenissima after breakfast for a morning drive through the Puglia countryside. We will enjoy a pleasant walk in Alberobello, a fairy-tale trulli village and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. After our visit we will transfer to the Masseria Torre Cocco and have the remainder of the day at leisure to enjoy the hotel facilities.





Pamplona



Parador De Cardona Hotel



Castle Olite

**Day 4 Pamplona.** This morning enjoy a tour of Pamplona including the Cathedral de Santa Maria, the city walls and learn about Hemingway's time in the city and the festivals including the famous "running of the bulls". The remainder of the day is free to explore the compact Casco Antiguo and enjoy the architecture, parks, churches and enticing cafes at your own pace. We will meet this evening for dinner in a local restaurant.

**Day 5 Leyre & San Juan de La Pena.** After breakfast we will drive to the Monastery of Leyre, situated in the foothills of the mountains surrounded by beautiful scenery. We will explore the 11th century crypt, a Gothic church vault and the Porta Speciosa, a beautiful Romanesque portico from the 12th century whilst if we are lucky we will hear the moving Gregorian chants of the Benedictine monks. This afternoon we head to the Aragon's Pyrenees region and the stunning Monastery of San Juan de la Pena which is built into the surrounding mountains surrounded by parkland and where we stay the night. We enjoy a guided tour of both the 10th century Royal Monastery including the Romanesque church and the gothic San Victorian Chapel. Tonight we enjoy dinner in the monastery.

**Day 6 Lleida & Cardona.** This morning we drive the short distance to Jaca where we will see the magnificent cathedral and watchtower before having time to explore the atmospheric plazas and streets. Lleida is one

of the oldest towns in Catalonia dating to the Bronze Age, its strategic location on the River Sicoris meant it was targeted by the Roman Empire before being conquered by the Moors in the 8th century. A city drive will include the old cathedral with its impressive gothic cloisters. We will enjoy lunch before heading to a nearby bodega to enjoy a tasting of the local cava. We end our day in Cardona. Dating from the 11th century the town grew as a centre for salt extraction from the Vali Salina which was traded through Western Europe. We will have time to explore the historic centre before enjoying our overnight stay at the Parador de Cardona situated in the 9th century castle overlooking the town and the lands along the Cardoner River below.

**Day 7 Cardona to Barcelona.** Enjoy a morning at leisure to explore Cardona before transferring to the MS Serenissima moored in Barcelona.

#### Prices per person based on double occupancy

Twin: **£1595**; Single: **£1995**

**Price includes:** Six nights hotel accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis, all excursions, English speaking guides, dinners on days 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6, lunch on days 2 and 6, Tour Manager,, all gratuities.

**Not Included:** Travel Insurance.

**Days 2 & 3 Masseria Torre Coccaro.** We have two full days to enjoy our time in this wonderful setting and your time is your own to be as active as you wish. Maybe enjoy time by the pool or at the hotel's beach or for those interested in cooking the hotel can provide an optional half day learning how to prepare some typical Puglian dishes using local ingredients before enjoying a lunch of what has been prepared. On the evening of Day 3 we will enjoy a wine tasting of the many varieties of Puglian wines including Primitivo, Malvasia and Negroamaro with a local wine expert.

**Day 4 Bari to London.** Depart the hotel after breakfast and transfer to Bari for our scheduled flight to London.

#### Prices per person based on double occupancy

Standard Room: **£745**

Junior Suite: **£845**

Single Room: **£995**

**Price includes:** Three nights accommodation at the Masseria Torre Coccaro on a bed and breakfast basis, Tour Manager, gratuities, transfers, half day Alberobello tour, wine tasting at the hotel.

**Not Included:** Travel Insurance.



Trulli Houses, Alberobello



Vineyard in Puglia



Puglia coast

# Balkan Odyssey

A voyage from Bari to Venice  
11th to 21st October 2017

Despite its often turbulent past, cultural and natural wonders abound in the Balkans and the region offers so much for the genuine traveller. At the crossroads of east and west and with a history forged over the centuries and influenced by so many, there are a wealth of cultural sights to discover during our voyage from Medieval towns and cities, impressive monasteries and UNESCO World Heritage Sites to remnants of the more recent communist past. In addition the coastal scenery is amongst the most beautiful Europe has to offer with mountains that sweep down to the sea covered in rich vegetation and islands that lace the coast creating endless inviting waterways perfect for small ship cruising.

## The Itinerary

### Day 1 London to Bari, Italy.

Fly by scheduled flight. On arrival transfer to the MS Serenissima and sail this evening.

### Day 2 Sazan Island, Albania.

Located around ten miles from the port of Vlore, Sazan is Albania's largest island albeit at only 2.2 square miles. Due to its strategic location it has been under Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman control and it was occupied by the Italians in 1914 only to be returned to Albania in 1947. During the Cold War the Russians built a submarine base and the Albanian Communist regime built a military base complete with bunkers and tunnels which could withstand a nuclear attack or western invasion. Since 1992, following the end of communism, the island has fallen into disrepair but we are able to explore this derelict base, the ruined buildings which still contain original furniture and the tunnels. We return to the

MS Serenissima for lunch and this afternoon explore the rest of the island which is situated in the Karaburan-Sazan National Marine Park.

**Day 3 Durres.** From our berth in Durres we embark on a full day tour to include the Albanian capital of Tirana. Here we will see the fascinating nuclear bunker built by the dictator Enver Hoxha in the 1970's and only opened to the public in 2014. This five storey underground building is packed with original artefacts from the communist period. We continue to the National Museum where we will learn of Albanian history from ancient to modern before walking through the city centre to see the Mosque, Clock Tower and the "Blok" area of the city. It is here where the politburo officers once lived, an area forbidden to ordinary Albanian citizens. We will enjoy lunch in the city before returning to Durres which was colonized by the Greeks in

627 B.C. and still has the remains of a 15,000 seat amphitheatre, the second largest in the Balkans. We will explore the Medieval city before returning to the MS Serenissima this afternoon.

### Day 4 Shkodra, Albania & Kotor, Montenegro.

There will be a choice of activities today including a full day tour visiting the town of Shkodra followed by a drive to Kotor through the Montenegro countryside. Shkodra was founded in the 4th century B.C. and has been occupied by the Romans, Serbians and Venetians. Here we will visit the Rozafa Castle, which rises majestically on a rocky hill just outside the city, and explore the museum within the walls. After our visit we will cross the border into Montenegro and enjoy lunch before joining the MS Serenissima in Kotor. Alternatively, you may prefer to stay on board and enjoy a day cruising along the coastline before entering the Kotor fjord in the early afternoon.



**Day 5 Kotor.** This morning we explore the Medieval town and UNESCO World Heritage Site of Kotor. This really is an extraordinary place full of marvellous architecture and pretty town squares. Our morning guided walk will include the 12th century Cathedral of St Tryphon, the ancient town gates, the Maritime Museum and Romanesque churches including St Luke's. The more active amongst us may wish to climb to the Castle of San Giovanni which offers wonderful views over the bay and town below. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy the afternoon cruising through the bay towards Dubrovnik where we will arrive in the early evening and moor overnight.

**Day 6 Dubrovnik, Croatia.** Dubrovnik is a breathtaking sight and its many historic and cultural treasures have earned it the designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Founded by the Romans in the 7th century, it eventually came under the influence of the







Dubrovnik



Mljet



Medieval Korcula



Rab, Croatia

Byzantine Empire, then Venice, Hungary and finally Turkey. This morning our local guides will lead us through the bustling old town taking in the beautiful civic buildings, the Rector's Palace, the Romanesque-Gothic Dominican and Franciscan Monasteries and the Sponza Palace. We will also hear of the siege of Dubrovnik, in the early 1990's, where Serbian forces blockaded the city for three months and the bullet-marked buildings seen today bear testimony to this dreadful period of Balkan history. This afternoon is free to explore independently and perhaps enjoy a walk on the city walls.

**Day 7 Mljet & Korcula.** Arrive this morning at the idyllic island of Mljet. This is one of the few Dalmatian islands that was never ruled by Venice and this is apparent in the architecture and the absence of any sizeable historic town. What it lacks in great architecture it more than makes up for in natural beauty and there will be a tour to the National Park including its beautiful lakes. Over lunch we sail to Korcula, the reputed birthplace of Marco Polo, and enjoy a walking tour to see the crooked Medieval streets and elegant squares which are flanked by palaces of the old nobility.

**Day 8 Mostar, Bosnia & Herzegovina.** From our berth in Ploce we will embark on an excursion to Mostar which in the 15th century became a thriving centre on the banks of the emerald Neretva River under the Ottoman Turks. Damaged by the military conflict in the 1990's, the town has been carefully restored by UNESCO and declared a World Heritage Site. Admire the

ethereally graceful Stari Most ("The Old Bridge"), originally built in 1566, the nearby Tabacica Mosque and an old Turkish house, among other sites. After lunch at a local restaurant there will be time to explore the old bazaar independently, a haven for the city's artists and craftsmen, before returning to the ship.

**Day 9 Split, Croatia.** Enjoy a full day in Split. Our morning walking tour will include The Diocletian Palace, St Dulmus Cathedral and the treasury and the Diocletian's cellars. Split, the second largest city in Croatia and "the capital of Dalmatia", had gradually developed around the palace of the Roman emperor Diocletian which was built more than 1700 years ago by the emperor as his retirement villa. Much of this large building is well preserved and the palace contains Split's old town within its walls, making it the only Roman palace that has been continuously inhabited since Roman times. This afternoon is free to explore independently or join a tour to ancient Solin, the archaeological site of the ancient Roman settlement of Salona whose excavations have revealed temples, an amphitheatre, early Christian churches and Roman baths, illustrating centuries of both war and peace as well as great prosperity.

**Day 10 Rab.** Perched on a sloping peninsula overlooking a spacious bay, Rab, the only town on the small island by the same name, is one of the most beautiful towns along Croatia's coast. Four graceful belfries pointing to the sky dominate the unspoiled Medieval town, with its narrow streets that are lined with stately mansions and other buildings. The Cathedral

of Sveta Marija Velika (Saint Mary the Great), consecrated in 1177, is an excellent example of a Romanesque basilica, while its magnificent Bell Tower is a masterpiece of 12th century architecture. Our walking tour of this lovely town will include all its

landmark sites. This afternoon there will be a chance to explore the town further before we set sail.

#### Day 11 Venice, Italy to London.

Arrive this morning and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.

#### Pre-Cruise Puglia Extension - 8th to 11th October 2017



Before joining the MS Serenissima we are offering the opportunity to join a three night pre-cruise extension in Puglia staying at the five star Masseria Torre Coccaro. Details of the property and itinerary are shown on page 48 but please note that the itinerary for the pre-cruise extension operates in the reverse direction to that shown and full details can be viewed at [www.noble-caledonia.co.uk](http://www.noble-caledonia.co.uk)

#### PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

##### SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £300 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY

Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	£3895	£3595
2	Standard Stateroom	£4095	£3795
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	£4195	£3895
4	Superior Stateroom	£4395	£4095
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£4595	£4295
6	Junior Suite	£5295	£4995
7	Executive Suite	£5595	£5295
8	Owner's Suite	£5595	£5295
9	Inside Single	£3895	£3595
10	Standard Single	£4095	£3795
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£5095	£4795
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£5195	£4895

**Price Includes:** Economy class scheduled air travel, 10 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis, house wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner, Noble Caledonia onboard team including Cruise Director and Guest Speaker, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes.

**Not Included:** Travel Insurance.

**Ship to Shore:** The ship will be at anchor at Sazan Island, Korcula and Mljet and Zodiacs or tenders will be used to transport passengers ashore. In the event that we are unable to anchor off these ports due to bad weather we will call into larger nearby ports where we are able to berth.

# Music & History in the Adriatic

From La Serenissima to the Pearl of the Adriatic with London Festival Opera  
21st to 31st October 2017

Our autumn cruise in the Adriatic offers a delightful combination of beautiful scenery, fascinating history and wonderful music. October is of course, a lovely time in the Mediterranean, comfortable temperatures and uncrowded resorts make for a most enjoyable trip. We will begin our journey with a two night stay in Venice, a fitting starting place given the city is one of the musical cities in the world and the influence La Serenissima exerted over the region in bygone days. As we make our way along the Adriatic coast of Italy and across to Montenegro and Croatia we will call into cities and towns, learning of their intriguing history from our informative local guides and witnessing some stunning architecture. We will be joined by London Festival Opera who will perform on board and ashore. One of the highlights for many will be Dubrovnik where, unlike most vessels we will moor overnight and enjoy an exclusive concert in one of the city's splendid palaces.



## The Itinerary

**Day 1 London to Venice, Italy.** Fly by scheduled flight. Arrive into Venice this afternoon and transfer to the MS Serenissima for embarkation. Moor overnight in Venice.

**Day 2 Venice.** After breakfast we will enjoy a half day tour by private motor launch visiting two of the most beautiful islands of the lagoon and exploring fascinating aspects of Venice that are quickly disappearing: the handicrafts of the glassblowers and lacemakers. We will pass many of the 40 picturesque islands that surround the Venetian lagoon and visit Murano, renowned since 1291 for its glass manufacture and where you will witness masters of this delicate craft at work during a visit to a leading factory. Continue to Burano, a tiny island dotted with brightly painted houses and famous for its traditional lace making, an art still practiced by many of the local women. We will return to the vessel for lunch and, in the afternoon, head to St. Mark's Square to visit the famous Doge's Palace and St. Mark's Cathedral. After our visit we will walk a short distance for an exclusive private concert of Vivaldi themed music at the Chiesa della Pietà, the church where Vivaldi composed the

Four Seasons. The Four Seasons were a revolution in musical conception in the 18th century and it will be a thrilling experience to hear the music performed where it was originally composed.

**Day 3 Venice.** After breakfast we embark on a walking tour to discover the hidden corners of Venice. An off the beaten track itinerary will take us through the Arsenale, a colossal shipyard of the Serenissima Republic; the San Giorgio dei Greci church and its secret courtyard; Campo Santa Maria Formosa, one of the city's largest squares and perhaps the most Venetian place in town and Marco Polo's House, before we reach the famous Rialto bridge. Here you will have time to stroll around the market square, admiring the eye-catching contrast of different colours, lights, people and reflections on the glittering Grand Canal. We will return to the ship for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at leisure to explore the city further. After an early dinner on board we will travel by water taxis to Palazzo Zen and enjoy a concert by London Festival Opera. We have hired this delightful venue for the evening



which will be lit by candlelight and is acoustically perfect for the performance. During the evening we will enjoy Venetian canapés and refreshments including, of course, some Italian Prosecco. Return to the ship and sail this evening.

**Day 4 Ravenna.** Ravenna has a rich history being the capital of the Western Roman Empire and capital of the Ostrogoth Kingdom of Italy whilst the port of Classe was one of the largest in the Roman world. From the 4th to 6th century the city became a hub for skilled craftsmen who covered the city's churches in stunningly beautiful

mosaics which were described by Dante as a "symphony of colour". Our tour will include the Basilica di Sant'Apollinare, named after Ravenna's patron and featuring mosaics of biblical figures such as Abraham and Emperor Constantine IV. Meanwhile, at the Basilica di San Vitale we will see mosaics representing old testament scenes and the Byzantine Emperor Justinian.

**Day 5 Urbino & Pesaro.** From our berth in Ancona we will travel into the Marche region and to the UNESCO site of Urbino which grew in the 15th century attracting poets, painters and scholars from Italy and beyond to become one of the most illustrious courts in Europe. On a walking tour we will wander through the Renaissance buildings and see the Palazzo Ducale with its fairytale twin towers, arcaded courtyards, stunning halls and a remarkable collection of paintings in the gallery including works by Rafael and Titian. After lunch we will drive to Pesaro, an attractive seaside resort on the Adriatic coast. We will explore the town and see the remarkable





mosaic floor of the cathedral and in the Civic Museum we will find one of the finest collections of Renaissance pottery. However, our main reason for visiting is to see the birthplace of the composer Gioachino Rossini. Our tour will visit the house where he was born in 1792, the small museum and the local theatre which was named after him and where we hope to enjoy a concert of his music. Return to Ancona this evening and moor overnight.

**Day 6 Ancona.** This morning you may choose to stay in Ancona and explore the city independently. From the 11th century Cathedral of San Ciriaco, and the port, you can enjoy wonderful sea views and worth a visit is the art gallery (Pinacoteca Comunale), situated in a historic palazzo, and the remains of the Roman amphitheatre. Alternatively, join us on an excursion to nearby Loreto, a site of worldwide pilgrimage. The "Santa Casa" or Holy House of Loreto is one of the most revered shrines in the world. Since Medieval times, the Holy House is believed to have been the home in which the Virgin Mary lived and raised the young Jesus and which was transferred from the Holy Land in the 13th century. A large basilica has been built around the small shrine and our guides will explain the icons and images. Return to the MS Serenissima for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at sea as we cruise to the heel of Italy. Enjoy a concert by London Festival Opera on board this evening.

**Day 7 Lecce.** After a morning at sea we arrive into the Puglia port of Brindisi, our base for an afternoon tour to Lecce which is often referred to as 'The Florence of the South' with its amazing collection of Baroque architecture. A guided walk will include a visit to the beautifully decorated Santa Croce Basilica and Piazza Duomo, considered one of the finest and most impressive squares in southern Italy. After the tour there will be an exclusive, private visit to the 15th century Palazzo Tamborino-Cezzi. The owner of the palazzo will personally take us on a tour, sharing interesting stories and anecdotes regarding his family and the palazzo itself. Enjoy a chance to taste some of the local food specialties before a concert of traditional music of the Salento region called La Pizzica.

**Day 8 Kotor, Montenegro.** Be on deck early this morning as we sail through the stunning fjord-like scenery into Kotor. On arrival at our berth a morning walking tour will explore this Medieval town and UNESCO World Heritage Site. This

really is an extraordinary place full of marvellous architecture and pretty town squares. Our walk will include the 12th century cathedral of St Tryphon, the ancient town gates, the Maritime Museum and Romanesque churches including St Luke's. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy the afternoon to explore at your own pace. The more active amongst us may wish to take the strenuous climb to the Castle of San Giovanni which offers wonderful views over the bay and town below. Alternatively, find a cafe to watch the world go by before sailing in the early evening.

**Day 9 Hvar & Korcula, Croatia.** The Adriatic is famous for the many islands that line the Croatian coastline and today we enjoy the benefits of our small ship as we explore two of the most interesting islands. Sailing into Hvar we are greeted by an impressive sight with the town's elegant Renaissance churches and old stone buildings forming three sides of a picturesque harbour. Explore the old town, starting in the main square which is the largest piazza in Dalmatia, the cathedral and the palatial quarter of Grad and the more humble residential area of Burg. Over lunch we will sail to Korcula, the reputed birthplace of Marco Polo, where on a walking tour we will see the crooked Medieval streets and the elegant squares which are flanked with palaces of the old nobility. *Please note that the vessel will be at anchor today and Zodiacs or local tenders will be used as transport ashore.*

**Day 10 Dubrovnik.** Dubrovnik is a breathtaking sight and its many historic and cultural treasures have earned it the designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Founded by the Romans in the 7th century, it eventually came under the influence of the Byzantine Empire, then Venice, Hungary and finally Turkey. This morning our local guides will lead us through the bustling old town taking in the beautiful civic buildings, the Rector's Palace, the Romanesque-Gothic Dominican and Franciscan Monasteries and the Sponza Palace. After lunch we have free time to explore further at our own pace and perhaps walk along the city walls to enjoy the views. Tonight we will enjoy a farewell concert with London Festival Opera at one of the city's palaces.

**Day 11 Dubrovnik to London.** Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.



Hvar



Basilica di Santa Croce, Lecce



Dubrovnik

## PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SPECIAL OFFER – SAVE £300 PER PERSON FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY			
Cat	Cabin Description	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
1	Inside Twin/Double	£4225	£3925
2	Standard Stateroom	£4455	£4155
3	Standard Stateroom Plus	£4585	£4285
4	Superior Stateroom	£4805	£4505
5	Deluxe Stateroom	£5025	£4725
6	Junior Suite	£5795	£5495
7	Executive Suite	£6125	£5825
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9	Inside Single	£4225	£3925
10	Standard Single	£4455	£4155
2	Standard Stateroom for sole use	£5455	£5155
3	Standard Stateroom Plus for sole use	£5585	£5285

**Price Includes:** Economy class scheduled air travel, 10 nights aboard the MS Serenissima on a full board basis, house wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner, Noble Caledonia onboard team, shore excursions, gratuities, transfers, port taxes, performances by London Festival Opera.

**Not Included:** Travel Insurance.

# MS Serenissima 2017 – The Voyages

VOYAGE NAME	DEPARTURE DATE	TO/FROM (from London)	PAGE
Central American Odyssey	3rd January	Trinidad to Guatemala City	*Limited Availability
Ancient & Natural Wonders of Central America	22nd January	Guatemala City to Panama City	10-13
Sailing the Spanish Main	6th February	Panama City to Havana	14-15
Cuban Delights	23rd February	Havana to Kingston	16-17
An Island Hopping Caribbean Odyssey	5th March	Kingston to Barbados	18-19
Secret Caribbean	19th March	Barbados to Antigua	20-21
Island Hopping in the Azores	9th April	Ponta Delgada to Ponta Delgada	22-23
Spring on the Edge	30th April	Lisbon to Portsmouth	24-25
Britain & Ireland in Bloom	11th May	Portsmouth to Oban	26-27
Hebridean Secrets	22nd & 30th May	Oban to Fairlie	28-31
Midsummer in the Hebrides	7th June	Oban to Oban	32-33
Norwegian Wonders in Midsummer	15th June	Oban to Tromso	*Limited Availability
From the Norwegian Fjords to the Baltic	27th June	Tromso to Gothenburg	34-35
Summer in the Islands & Cities of the Baltic	11th July	Gothenburg to Helsinki	*Limited Availability
Hidden Treasures of the Baltic	25th July	Helsinki to Copenhagen	*Limited Availability
Summer in the Land of Vikings, Sagas & Fjords	8th August	Copenhagen to Aberdeen	36-37
Britain & Ireland Odyssey	20th August	Aberdeen to Portsmouth	38-39
Splendours of Normandy, Brittany & the Atlantic Edge	31st August	Portsmouth to Bordeaux	40-41
Iberian Stepping Stones	10th September	Bordeaux to Seville	42-43
In the Footsteps of Laurie Lee	20th September	Seville to Barcelona	44-45
Historic Islands & Cities of the Mediterranean	30th September	Barcelona to Bari	46-49
Balkan Odyssey	11th October	Bari to Venice	50-51
Music & History in the Adriatic	21st October	Venice to Dubrovnik	52-53

\*Limited Availability/Please Call



MS Serenissima in Venice

Please note that ports and itineraries are subject to change based on weather and local conditions. In addition, owing to the fact that flight schedules are not released until 11 months prior to departure, in some instances itineraries may change upon their release.









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