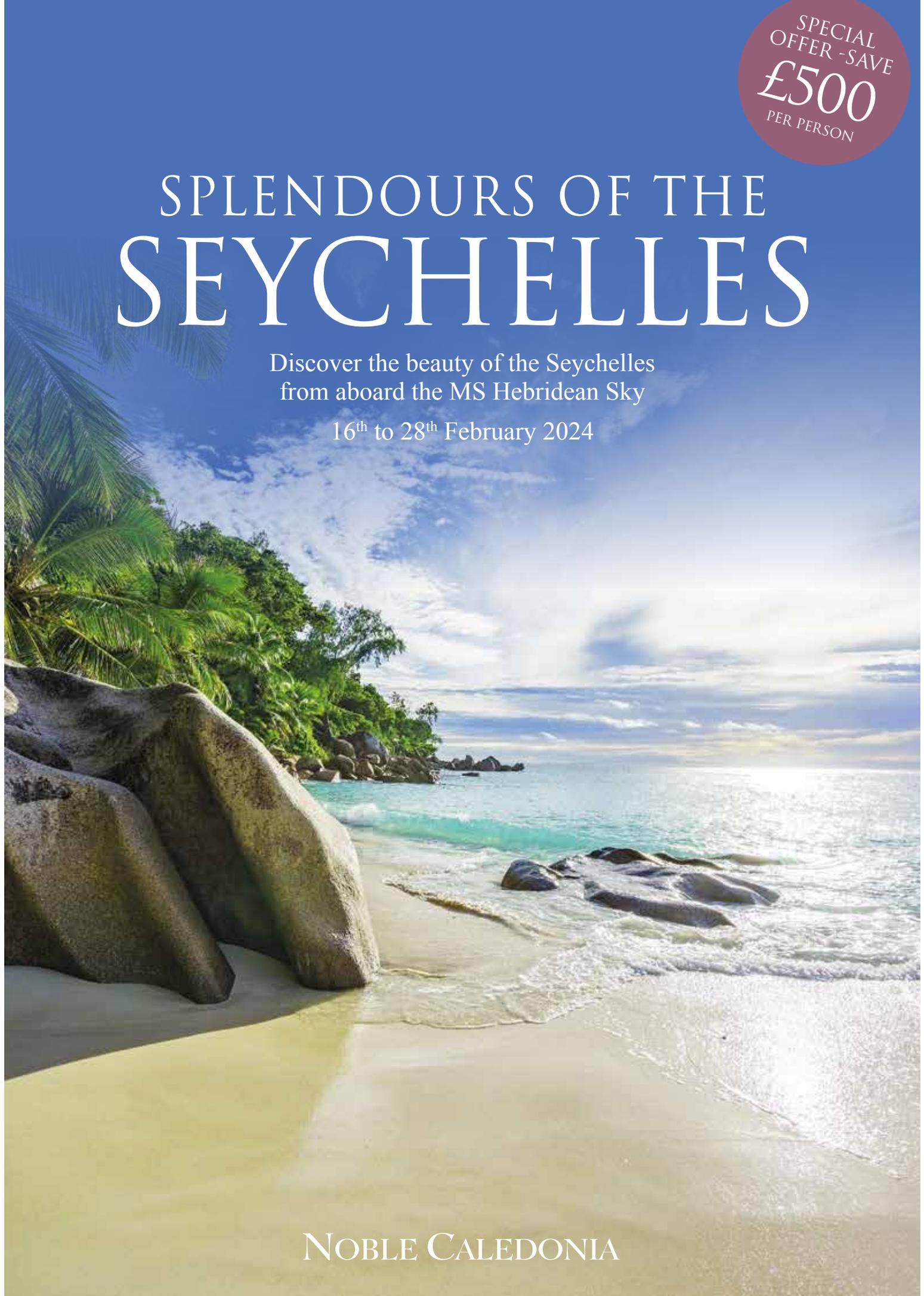


SPECIAL
OFFER - SAVE
£500
PER PERSON

SPLENDOURS OF THE SEYCHELLES

Discover the beauty of the Seychelles
from aboard the MS Hebridean Sky

16th to 28th February 2024



NOBLE CALEDONIA

Giant tortoise, Aldabra



Sailing in the tropics, when back at home the UK is in the depths of mid-winter, is a pleasurable enough thought; when the destination is the Seychelles such thoughts are irresistible. The islands and atolls of the Seychelles are quite simply some of the most beautiful on earth and remain a natural paradise of deserted beaches of white sand washed by warm, clear turquoise seas and shaded by abundant palms and kindly towering takamakas. The Seychelles epitomises all that is faraway and exotic. Indeed as you stand back to admire the vista there is sometimes an almost surreal quality where the light and nature conspire to produce an impossibly romantic scene. Such beauty also comes with its cast of characters, giant tortoises roam, colonies of

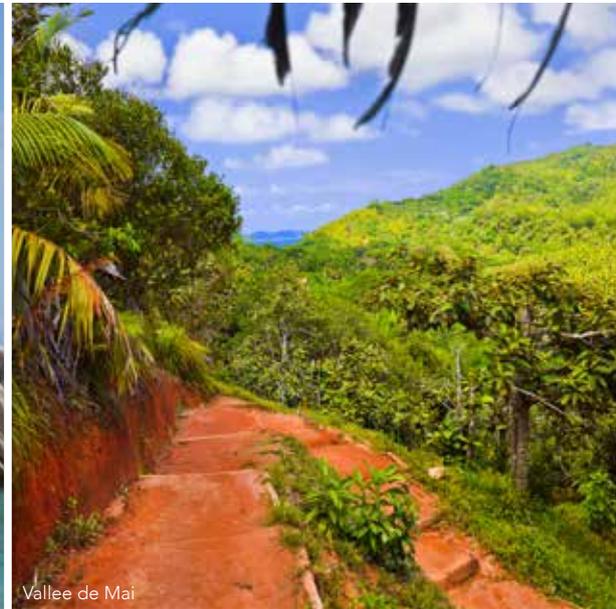
birds congregate overhead and in the seas a kaleidoscope of tropical fish swim amongst the coral.

Those who have sailed with us through these extraordinary waters have experienced the magic of dropping anchor off a remote atoll at first light and watched the dawn illuminate the watery horizon. Then as the sun rises, have ventured ashore by Zodiac, landing on a deserted beach to discover the rich bird and marine life, the exotic flora, nature reserves and working estates of cinnamon and coconuts, breadfruit and bananas and all wonder of strange tropical fruits.

If ever there was a region perfect for expedition cruising it is here and the MS Hebridean Sky is the perfect size and equipped vessel for our voyage. Our journey will include all aspects of this extraordinary island nation from the developed Inner Seychelles with staggeringly beautiful islands such as Praslin and Grande Soeur to the less known and rarely visited Outer Seychelles. Here we will sail all the way to Aldabra, the world's largest coral atoll and a World Heritage Site. Being one of the most difficult places in the world to access and having a lack of freshwater has saved Aldabra from any tourism development and only small vessels like the MS Hebridean Sky are allowed to visit. It is therefore a great privilege to be able to land on the untouched beaches of Aldabra, the breeding ground for thousands of giant tortoises and home to some of the rarest birds in the Indian Ocean. To explore the abundant crystal clear waters of the vast lagoon and to set foot on atolls which have never been exploited by the hand of man is a rare experience.



Praslin



Vallee de Mai

What to Expect

Flexibility is the key to an expedition cruise; sometimes the whole day's schedule will be changed to maximise your experience, something that would not be possible on a large cruise ship. Each day holds something new and below are some extracts from the ship's log from last season which will provide you with an idea of what to expect.

Aldabra, Seychelles: We set off soon after breakfast, entering through the west channels, dropping some of our party at the research base for guided walks, while the rest of us continued into the lagoon to explore. At this time the lagoon was full of water, so we circled round some of the limestone islets. One had a small flock of the beautiful black-naped terns on it. Beneath our boats eagle rays sped away and small schools of coloured fish seemed to be everywhere. At one point we entered a narrow channel deep into the red mangroves, with sunbirds twittering around us and, at a sunny bend a huge green turtle swam around. Then along the mangrove edge we came to the best patch of all: a mixed nesting colony of red-footed boobies and both lesser and greater frigate birds. Some nests had chicks almost 12 months old which will soon fledge. Others were sat tight on tiny white fluffy chicks. The strangest thing was to see boobies fast asleep in the branches, their bright red feet clutching hard, their head and beak hanging down below their feet, and their eyes closed tight. That afternoon we saw why they get so tired. Watching from the decks, we passed through some large flocks of birds scanning for fish at the surface, while the most agile individuals queued up alongside our ship to plunge down in split second dives to try and catch flying fish bursting out of the water. Those successful birds that get back to the lagoon may then be chased and harried by frigates until they disgorge their catch.

Cosmoledo, Seychelles: At first light the scout boat set out to the west to search for potential snorkel sites. Within minutes we had spinner dolphins bow riding. The 'Special Booby Squad' set off first with Guy to the far western end of Ile du Sud. Here, in a sheltered bay they could step ashore at the best masked booby colony in the Seychelles with birds everywhere and immaculate black and white birds swooping low overhead, or sitting tight on the ground on two pure white eggs. Brown boobies were also present, which means we have seen all three species of the Indian Ocean boobies, and, even more remarkably, at their breeding colonies. The rest of us set off into the main passage, landing on a mile-long coral sand beach on the inner shore of Wizard Island. Perfect turquoise waters in which to swim, the sun rising in a perfectly clear sky, and to add that little touch of genius, a Zodiac came ashore with kitchen crew, their striped parasol and a cold box containing three different flavours of ice cream! Would Darwin have ever gone home if the Beagle had been as perfectly equipped as our maritime palace? Some walked the length of the beach for exercise, others fell asleep in the shade of beach crest bushes, the energetic castaways explored inland and found two new birds: the Madagascar cisticola and Abbott's sunbird, the latter gorging on nectar in the high heads of flowering sisal bushes. A view from the high dunes showed turtles mating at sea and numerous turtle nest mounds on the outer shore. The colours of the lagoon, as seen from the beach were an unforgettable series of intense pastel hues: bright chalky blue high with swirls of cirrus, a milky blue below that, coming down through vivid pale indigo at the horizon. Then a clean horizontal band of the creamy coral strand, and below this, pure turquoise water over the sand bar before us.



Exploring by Zodiac



Seychelles lilies

The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Mahe, Seychelles. Fly by scheduled indirect flight.

Day 2 Mahe. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the MS Hebridean Sky moored in Port Victoria. Enjoy welcome dinner and drinks as we sail the short distance to Praslin and our overnight anchorage.

Day 3 Praslin & Grande Soeur. Today we will land on Praslin to explore the 'Vallee de Mai', the last remnant of the original high canopied Seychelles palm forest and home to the coco de mer. We will walk its paths looking out for the rare black parrot and enjoying its natural beauty. Return to the ship for lunch as we sail the short distance to Grande Soeur, an idyllic uninhabited island. We will spend the afternoon walking the island trails which link the island's white sand beaches and maybe catch sight of some of the giant Aldabra tortoises or enjoy the opportunity to snorkel in the turquoise waters.

Day 4 Amirante Islands. This morning we arrive at the 28 islands in the Amirante Group of islands which were discovered by Vasco de Gama in 1501 and are considered to be some of the most pristine and untouched islands in the world. If conditions permit we will spend the day on Desroches, the largest of the islands, although still only measuring six kilometres by 1.5 kilometres. Enjoy nature walks with our naturalists and members of the island's conservation team observing the flora and fauna and in particular the giant tortoises and nesting turtles. Meanwhile keen snorkellers will have the chance to swim over the outlying coral.



Curieuse

Days 5 & 6 Farquhar Group.

Spend the morning at sea as we cruise to the Farquhar Group which consists of ten islands and atolls which cover an area of 370 square kilometres. We will spend two days here and will discover the Providence Atoll before we anchor off Farquhar where we will use our Zodiacs to explore the sparkling lagoon of this remote, atoll ringed island of coconut and casuarina trees. Hawksbill and green sea turtles come to the atoll to nest and several of the Farquhar Group's islands are Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas. We will visit the island's settlement, take walks looking for the birdlife or snorkel in the clear waters.

Day 7 Cosmoledo. Today we explore Cosmoledo where a huge ring of twelve islands circles a lagoon. Many of the atolls are still to be surveyed and we will explore some of them by Zodiac. This is an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area with all three species of booby found in the Seychelles including the last breeding site for the brown booby. We also hope to spot sooty terns and great frigate birds on land and have the opportunity to see turtles as we swim and snorkel in the lagoon.

Day 8 Aldabra. Aldabra, the island referred to by Sir Julian Huxley as "One of nature's treasures and should belong to the whole world" is unique and every time we call at what is believed to be the world's largest atoll we find something new of interest. Sightings have been made of the extremely rare white throated rail and the atoll is also home to the world's second largest colony of frigate birds and to the largest crab, the coconut crab.

Whilst exploring by Zodiac it is difficult to know in which direction to look. The clear blue seas abound with life, the skies are alive with varied birdlife and ashore giant land tortoises forage as they have done for millions of years. We hope to explore Picard Island with a short walk to see some of the thousands of tortoises and numerous robber crabs or swim in the lagoon, a vast 17 mile stretch of shallow clear water. From our Zodiacs we can watch the ever-changing undersea world and snorkel in colourful coral waters.

Day 9 At Sea. Spend a relaxing day at sea as we return to the islands of the Inner Seychelles.

Day 10 Alphonse Islands. There are three islands in the Alphonse group and as we approach the islands you will understand why they are regarded by many to be the most beautiful of the 115 islands in the Seychelles archipelago. On the main island the circular lagoon offers good snorkelling and there are a number of tracks across the island to enjoy island walks.

Day 11 Aride & Curieuse. Early this morning we will anchor off Aride, one of the finest and most important seabird islands in the Indian Ocean. Over one million seabirds breed on the island including tropical shearwater, lesser noddy, frigatebirds and roseate tern and also five species unique to the Seychelles such as the Seychelles warbler and Seychelles magpie robin. The island is largely covered in native woodland including the endemic wright's gardenia, a shrub with beautifully scented flowers found nowhere

else in the world. Sail over lunch to Curieuse, a rugged island which was once home to a leper colony and now houses an eco-museum and visitor centre. The island is an important nesting site for hawksbill turtles and boasts endemic vine and mangroves which we explore on an island walk.

Day 12 Mahe to London.

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

Day 13 London. Arrive this morning.



Red-footed booby, Cosmoledo

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

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

Deck	Suite Category	Brochure Price	Special Offer Price
Amundsen	Standard	£7995	£7495
Byrd	Superior	£8295	£7795
Mawson	Premium	£8495	£7995
Mawson	Corner	£8695	£8195
Scott	Deluxe Balcony	£9495	£8995
Shackleton	Owner's Balcony	£9995	£9495
Shackleton	Hebridean	£10895	£10395
Amundsen	Standard for sole use	£9995	£9495
Byrd	Superior for sole use	£10295	£9795

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • 10 nights aboard the MS Hebridean Sky on a full board basis • House wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch & dinner • Noble Caledonia expedition team • Gratuities • Transfers • Airport taxes • Port taxes.
Not Included: Travel insurance.

MS HEBRIDEAN SKY



Alfresco Dining



Owner's Balcony Suite



The Restaurant

The much loved MS Hebridean Sky is one of our two flagships and sister vessel to the MS Island Sky. Both vessels were built in the same shipyard in Italy at similar times and share the same excellent attributes that make them two of the finest small ships in the world. With a maximum passenger capacity of only 118, a vessel of her size is capable of carrying many more but instead the MS Hebridean Sky has the benefit of unusually large suites, luxuriously appointed public areas and spacious outside decks.

Your Suite

On board there are 59 exceptionally spacious and well-designed suites. All feature a sitting area and some have private balconies. The feeling of luxury is enhanced by the wood panelling and brass, which predominates throughout the vessel conveying the atmosphere of a private yacht. The passenger accommodation is arranged over five decks and all suites have outside views with those on the Scott and Shackleton Decks featuring private balconies. Each suite affords considerable comfort with en-suite bathroom featuring vanity unit with sink and walk-in shower, large wardrobes, dressing table with large mirror and stool and excellent storage. There is a mini-fridge, flat screen television and a telephone in each suite. Refillable water bottles, towelling dressing gowns and slippers are also provided for your comfort. Other facilities include a programmable electronic safe, hairdryer, assorted Molton Brown toiletries and individually controlled air-conditioning and heating. Soft hues and blended tones enhance the traditional maritime style making the passenger accommodation an inviting and relaxing place to be.

Your Dining

With only one sitting and a maximum of just over 100 passengers, the cuisine on board the MS Hebridean Sky is of a consistent superior quality that befits such a vessel. In keeping with the informal atmosphere on board, when dining you are able to choose your seating arrangements and choice of restaurants at your leisure; whether that be joining a table of four to six other passengers in the elegant à la carte Restaurant or, outside buffet-style on the Lido Deck in the evening sunshine. In the main Restaurant, breakfast is served buffet-style, with certain items cooked to order on request. Lunch and dinner menus offer plenty of choice, often reflecting the daily catch and local delicacies. The Welcome and Farewell dinners are a sumptuous five course affair. To enhance your dining experience further a selection of wines is included with both meals. Afternoon tea and pre-dinner canapés take place in either the comfort of the Lounge or out on the Lido Deck when the weather is favourable. Tea and coffee are also available 24 hours a day. Special diets can be catered for with sufficient notice.



The Library



Superior Suite



The Club

Your Space

The spacious and finely decorated public rooms include a large Lounge on the Byrd Deck featuring a selection of seating options from individual armchairs and sofas to side cushioned benches. Daily briefings given by the Cruise Director and talks from Guest Speakers and expedition staff take place in the Lounge. In addition to the main Lounge, there is also The Club, located on the Mawson Deck which features the main bar. The Club also features a 24-hour tea and coffee station. Towards the aft of the ship on the Mawson Deck is the Library. Well stocked with reference books pertaining to the destinations the vessel is visiting and a selection of essential reads, you will not find yourself short of excellent literature on board. A collection of games and devices to access the internet via the ship's satellite can also be found in the library. Access to the ship's satellite Wi-Fi via your own device is complimentary on board (*signal strength varies depending on location and demand*). The main Restaurant, which can seat all guests at one sitting, is located on the Amundsen Deck, and outside there is a rear Lido Deck located on the Scott Deck where meals are served in warm weather under shade. Further to this on the top Shackleton Deck there is an observation area, complete with sun loungers for sunbathing, relaxing with a book or catching up with fellow travellers. The Promenade Deck wraps around the whole ship providing outstanding views. There is also a small beauty salon on board with appointments made on request.

Your Comfort

The MS Hebridean Sky is equipped with the latest safety, navigation and communications equipment along with roll stabilisers to minimise the ship's motion. During your voyage we hope to offer you the opportunity to visit the Captain and Officers on the Bridge to check the vessel's progress by charts and learn more about your journey. On board you will also find a clinic and Doctor and a lift that serves all decks. When at anchor our nimble Zodiacs will ferry you ashore or, on select cruises, enjoy Zodiac cruises getting you closer to the natural world.

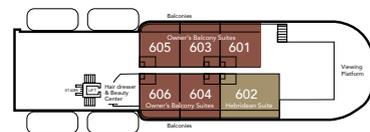
Your Life On Board

The atmosphere on board is warm and convivial and more akin to a private yacht or country hotel in which you can learn more about the wonderful destinations you are visiting in the company of like-minded people. There is a high ratio of crew to passengers and our friendly crew of 75 are mainly Filipino and Eastern European and our Captains are experienced mariners. After a day ashore you will return to the comfort and peace of a well-run and exceedingly comfortable ship where peace, high quality of service and attention to detail are the order of the day. A little music in the Lounge or bar after dinner, Guest Speakers and informative port briefings and of course good food, all contribute to make any voyage aboard this wonderful vessel a memorable and joyful experience.

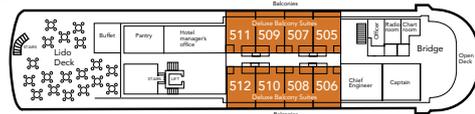
MS HEBRIDEAN SKY DECK PLAN



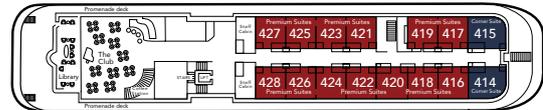
Shackleton Deck



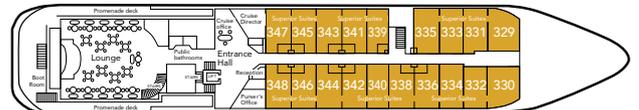
Scott Deck



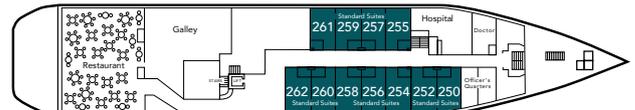
Mawson Deck



Byrd Deck



Amundsen Deck



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

Please note that beds in each suite can be configured as double or twin with the exception of suites 601 and 602 which feature a fixed double bed.



During this voyage you will be visiting out of the way destinations and will be accompanied by an expedition team. Landings and excursions will be made by Zodiac landing craft. This cruise will appeal to the more adventurous and those who enjoy the natural world.



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