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£500
PER PERSON

ISLANDS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN

AN EXPEDITION FROM MAURITIUS TO ZANZIBAR
EXPLORING MADAGASCAR, THE SEYCHELLES & TANZANIA
ABOARD THE MS ISLAND SKY

18TH DECEMBER 2027 TO 4TH JANUARY 2028

NOBLE CALEDONIA

Here is an extraordinary cruise for those who enjoy the natural world and all its wonders and are looking for the opportunity to experience an unforgettable Christmas and New Year in the Indian Ocean. Our journey aboard the all-suite MS Island Sky incorporates some fascinating and exotic calls combining the magnificent Aldabra group of islands with the natural wonders of Madagascar.

Sailing from Mauritius we will land on its nearest neighbour, Reunion, a little bit of France in the Indian Ocean and a stunning place to spend a day. We will discover the island's truly awesome and dramatic scenery before we continue to Madagascar for four days of exploration of this incredibly verdant and beautiful island. Madagascar is unique; the animals, plants, landscapes and people that make up this thousand mile long island are unlike anywhere else. It is a country that has long remained obscure as a destination and is relatively little known even amongst the most serious of travellers. The long separation from the African mainland has given rise to its amazing number of unique species of flora and fauna.

Continuing to the Seychelles we spend time in the Aldabra group of islands. 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 it is the last breeding ground of the giant tortoises. In addition to seeing some of these endearing creatures we should also encounter dolphins, turtles and whales as well as countless birds including the flightless rail, the last flightless bird in the Indian Ocean. Our expedition concludes in Tanzania where we visit Kilwa Kisiwani, a site of exceptional historical interest, followed by an expedition day to explore the treasure trove of islands off the coast which are rich in biodiversity. Our final full day will be spent in atmospheric Zanzibar.

The MS Island Sky is the perfect vessel our expedition. Carrying just over 100 guests, she is a far cry from the latest breed of cruise ships and can visit small islands and backwaters that are denied to larger vessels. Your experience will be made all the more memorable by our expert crew and officers, who along with our expedition team of marine biologists, ornithologists and botanists have many years of experience in the Indian Ocean and will provide commentary on all we see. With the vessel's purpose built Zodiacs and accompanied by our expert team, we will land on otherwise inaccessible beaches, explore vast lagoons and coral reefs and encounter some of the most beautiful tropical scenery and extraordinary wildlife to be found anywhere in the world.



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 extracts from the ship's log from previous expeditions which will provide you with an idea of what to expect.

Masoala National Park & Nosy Mangabe: Coming ashore after lunch, some of us headed off for a naturalist walk with the expedition team and local guides. We soon learned that the timing of our visit was perfect: the weather was excellent, but recent rain had brought out all the wildlife. As a result, the leaf litter in the island's forested interior was crawling with skinks, plated lizards, millipedes, hermit crabs and land snails. In the trees, we discovered huge blue panther chameleons, bright day geckos and common brown lemurs feeding on fruit. Bird life was in evidence too, with white-tailed tropicbirds, Malagasy kestrels and a Humblot's heron amongst the main highlights. Dating back to 1908, a small lighthouse at the island's 200 metre peak provided some historical interest before we turned and headed back down to the beach for refreshments. Several sampled the excellent local rum or sipped fresh juice from freshly harvested coconuts. Many donned their snorkelling gear and headed into the sea, where they were treated to a kaleidoscope of corals interspersed with sponges and anemones, all augmented with myriad colourful reef fish. Even a few rays and turtles were seen during an afternoon of world-class snorkelling in calm waters that offered excellent visibility.



Aldabra: We had lunch, were briefed about Aldabra and had the final biosecurity check. Orange tags in place around our wrists we waited eagerly for the tide to rise so that we could cross the reef and land on Aldabra. There were still a few breaking waves, but we made it to our landing in front of the ranger station on Picard Island. The giant tortoises were waiting for us! Soon we were off on our walks; the back walk, the historic walk, and the shorter La Gigi walk. All of them soon delivered the unique species that Aldabra is famous for. The giant tortoises were all over the place, huge creatures that were decades old. They were unconcerned by our presence, and some were downright curious about us. The Aldabra blue pigeons were spectacular, and equally tame. The smaller creatures were also evident. Hundreds of hermit crabs, many of them climbing trees, acted as the clean-up squad. In the settlement itself we marvelled at the many beautiful gold-tinged webs spun by the red-legged orb web spiders, big and evil looking, but totally benign.



Kilwa Kisiwani: For a place that played such an important role in the history of East Africa and the region, Kilwa is a very sleepy little hollow these days. We sailed in, with the old fort gleaming in the morning sunlight, as it has for many centuries. There was the usual influx of officials, who very quickly cleared the ship, and we were off to our landing on the long, coral pier. Kilwa still has a timeless feel about it. Water still comes from ancient wells and in many ways, life has changed little over the centuries. Apart from the fort, there are the palace ruins. At first glance they don't seem to amount to much, but as we walked, we realised that the palace complex was huge. Crossing the flat floodplain, which is a shallow lake in the rainy season, we came to the main graveyard and the great Baobab tree that was described by Ibn Battuta in the 14th century. The Great Mosque, which dates from the 11th century, and was excavated by British Archaeologist Neville Chittick between 1858 and 1965 is a place of grandeur and peace. The beautiful symmetry of the arches rival some of the great cathedrals in Europe. As we walked birds flitted around us. Beeeaters, swallows and sunbirds. A hornbill flew over, his huge bill distinctive. There were crows, of course, and many other birds teased us with their song while remaining hidden. The grasses were full of butterflies. The fort is a very solid structure. Built by the Portuguese on the foundations of an older Persian fort and then strengthened even further by the Omanis when they evicted the Portuguese, the coral rocks still stand firm. On the way back we passed the school, getting shy waves from some of the children. We watched a few dhows sail in to the beach, a sight that would have been the same fifty, or perhaps even five hundred years ago.





Masoala national Park



Dhow, Tanzania



Waterfalls, Reunion Island



Stone Town



Aldabra

The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Mauritius. Fly by scheduled indirect flight.

Day 2 Mauritius. Arrive and transfer to the MS Island Sky moored in Port Louis. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner as we sail this evening.

Day 3 Port Est, Reunion Island. Over breakfast we arrive in Reunion where we have a choice of excursions. On a full day tour we will visit the central highlands where spectacularly rugged peaks of dormant or extinct volcanoes cradle huge amphitheatres known as cirques, where mountains tower to over 10,000 feet and beautiful waterfalls plummet hundreds of feet. The rich soil and mellow climate produce a lush and verdant landscape which is dotted with villages and towns with a uniquely French atmosphere. Fields of sugar cane and plantations of tropical fruits, vanilla and all manner of spices perfume the air. We will enjoy views from the Nez des Boeuf and see the Piton de la Fournaise crater. After enjoying a Creole lunch in a local restaurant we will visit the 'Cite du Volcan' museum. Alternatively, enjoy a morning tour to a vanilla plantation in St Andre where we learn about the history and culture of this integral part of Reunion's heritage. Continue to Salazie, a verdant landscape and home to many waterfalls including the 'Voile de la Mariee' before spending some free time in St Denis on the way back to the ship. This afternoon is at leisure before we set sail this evening.

Day 4 At Sea. Spend the day at sea as we sail to Madagascar. Maybe watch for wildlife on deck or join a lecture.

Day 5 Toamasina, Madagascar. Our first call in Madagascar is Toamasina, the country's main port and second largest city as well as the gateway to the Ivoloana Zoological Parc, a 282 hectare property combining a small zoo where we will see up to a dozen species of lemur as well as indigenous tortoises and chameleons. In the surrounding forest we can see free roaming wild lemurs and other wildlife along the various lakeside walking trails. Return to the ship for lunch and an afternoon cruising.

Days 6 & 7 Nosy Mangabe & Masoala National Park. Spend two days exploring from our anchorage in Antongil Bay. Discover Nosy Mangabe, a 520-hectare island reserve and one of Madagascar's most diverse areas of virgin rainforest. The island has served as an important research centre since the mid-1960s when several aye-ayes and other lemurs were released into the forest. Using our Zodiacs we will land on a beach next to the forest and enjoy guided nature walks looking at the varied trees, plants and ferns and we hope to spot chameleon, lizards and black and white ruffed lemur. For the birders, we will keep an eye out for Madagascar buzzard, kingfisher, and paradise flycatchers. We will also explore Madagascar's largest protected

National Park, the Masoala Peninsula, which comprises of coastal rainforest, flooded forests, marsh and mangroves. With luck, we may encounter the endemic red-ruffed lemur. The park is also home to various species of brightly coloured Mantella frogs, all manner of extraordinary chameleons and is a refuge for the endangered Madagascar red owl, Madagascar serpent eagle and many endemic bird species. A range of walks for all levels will be on offer, as well as a visit to the local village.

Day 8 At Sea. Celebrate Christmas Day on board as we continue our journey sailing around the coast of Madagascar.

Day 9 Diego Suarez. This morning we will enter the dramatic harbour of Diego Suarez, also known as Antsiranana. The town has a cosmopolitan mix of inhabitants, including Creoles, Indians, Chinese, Comorans and Arabs. The city tour will include the Commonwealth Cemetery, the faded colonial grandeur of Place Joffre, and a baobab viewpoint at French Mountain. Alternatively, drive up to the Amber Mountain National Park at an elevation of 3,200 feet, where we will divide into short and long walking parties to explore the pristine rainforest. Amid the towering vegetation, we may encounter Sanford's brown and crowned lemurs, as well as chameleons, stunningly well camouflaged leaf-tailed geckos, and an array of endemic birds. We will depart late this afternoon, continuing our voyage towards the Seychelles.

Days 10 to 12 Aldabra Islands. Arriving in the Outer Seychelles we have two and a half days to enjoy the remarkable Aldabra group of islands. Our itinerary will be in the hands of our Expedition Leader and Captain, who will monitor the local conditions to ensure we maximise our time here. Whilst our itinerary is flexible, we hope to call at the island of Assumption which was ruthlessly plundered for its vast deposits of guano in the early 20th century. Happily, peace has returned, and the wildlife of rare birds and green turtles are once again in abundance. Our time here will be spent beachcombing, on nature walks or snorkelling. We will also plan time on Aldabra, the island referred to by Sir Julian Huxley as "One of nature's treasures and should belong to the whole world". Aldabra is truly 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 included the extremely rare white-throated rail, while the atoll is also home to the world's second largest colony of frigate birds and the largest crab, the coconut crab. Whilst exploring by Zodiac it is difficult to know in which direction to look first. The clear blue seas abound with life, the skies are alive with varied birdlife and ashore giant 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 numerous tortoises and robber crabs or swim in the lagoon, a vast 17 mile stretch of shallow clear water. From our Zodiacs we can watch the ever-



Cosmoledo by Zodiac



Ring-tailed lemur



Frigate, Aldabra

changing undersea world and snorkel in colourful coral waters. Meanwhile at Cosmoledo 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 13 At Sea. Spend a leisurely day on board as we continue our journey towards the African mainland.

Day 14 Kilwa Kisiwani, Tanzania. Arriving in Tanzania we anchor off Kilwa Kisiwani, a site of exceptional historical interest, where the atmospheric ruins represent a wide sweep of East African coastal history, from the heights of the Swahili and Shirazi trading civilisation to the darker days of slavery and the uprisings against German rule. Once one of Africa's wealthiest towns, Kilwa Kisiwani is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and contains the world's most extensive and best-preserved Swahili ruins. We will spend the morning on a walking tour and see the prominent fort and the Great Mosque which stood at the heart of this ancient city which was once the largest in East Africa. This afternoon we hope to find a local beach to offer the chance to swim, snorkel or take a stroll. Tonight we will welcome in the New Year on board.

Day 15 Expedition Day, Tanzanian Islands. Today we start the new year in the hands of our Captain and Expedition Leader as we explore the islands off the coast of Tanzania. We hope to use the Zodiacs to land on one of the beaches and offer nature walks or swimming opportunities in the clear waters.

Day 16 Zanzibar. Zanzibar's harbour, crowded with dhows, very much sets the scene for our visit to this Arab-style city with its long narrow streets, bazaars, houses with overhanging balconies and intricately carved doorways. On a morning walking tour, soak up the timeless atmosphere of Stone Town including Livingstone House, Sultan's Palace, the slave market and the Old Fort. This afternoon there will be a tour to Jozani Forest which sustains a variety of wildlife and birds, including the rare red colobus monkey, indigenous to the island.

Day 17 Zanzibar to London. Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for our scheduled indirect flight to London.

Day 18 London. Arrive this morning.



Kilwa Kisiwani

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
Magellan	Standard	£12995	£12495
Columbus	Superior	£13495	£12995
Marco Polo	Premium	£13995	£13495
Marco Polo	Corner	£14395	£13895
Erikson	Deluxe Balcony	£14995	£14495
Explorer	Owner's Balcony	£15495	£14995
Explorer	Island	£15995	£15495
Magellan	Standard for sole use	£13995	£13495
Columbus	Superior for sole use	£14495	£13995

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • 15 nights aboard the MS Island Sky on a full board basis • House wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner • Noble Caledonia expedition team • Shore excursions • Gratuities • Transfers • Airport taxes • Port taxes.
Not Included: Travel insurance, Madagascar visa, Seychelles Travel Authorisation, Tanzania visa, Zanzibar mandatory insurance.

MS ISLAND SKY



The Library



Deluxe Balcony Suite



The Restaurant

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

Your Suite

On board there are 59 exceptionally spacious and well-designed suites. All feature a seating area and some have private balconies, whilst those on the Marco Polo Deck feature tinted, sliding glass doors allowing greatly enhanced viewing opportunities and quick access to the deck. The feeling of luxury is enhanced by the wood panelling and brass, which predominates throughout the vessel conveying the atmosphere of a private yacht. The passenger accommodation is arranged over five decks and each suite affords considerable comfort with en-suite bathroom featuring marble-topped vanity unit with sink and walk-in shower, a large wardrobe, dressing table and excellent storage. There is a mini-fridge, television and a telephone in each suite. Refillable water bottles, dressing gowns and slippers are also provided for your comfort. Other facilities include a safe, hairdryer, assorted Noble Isle toiletries, air-conditioning and heating. The comfortable beds in each suite can be configured as either double or twin.

Your Dining

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



Superior Suite



The Lounge



The Club

Your Space

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

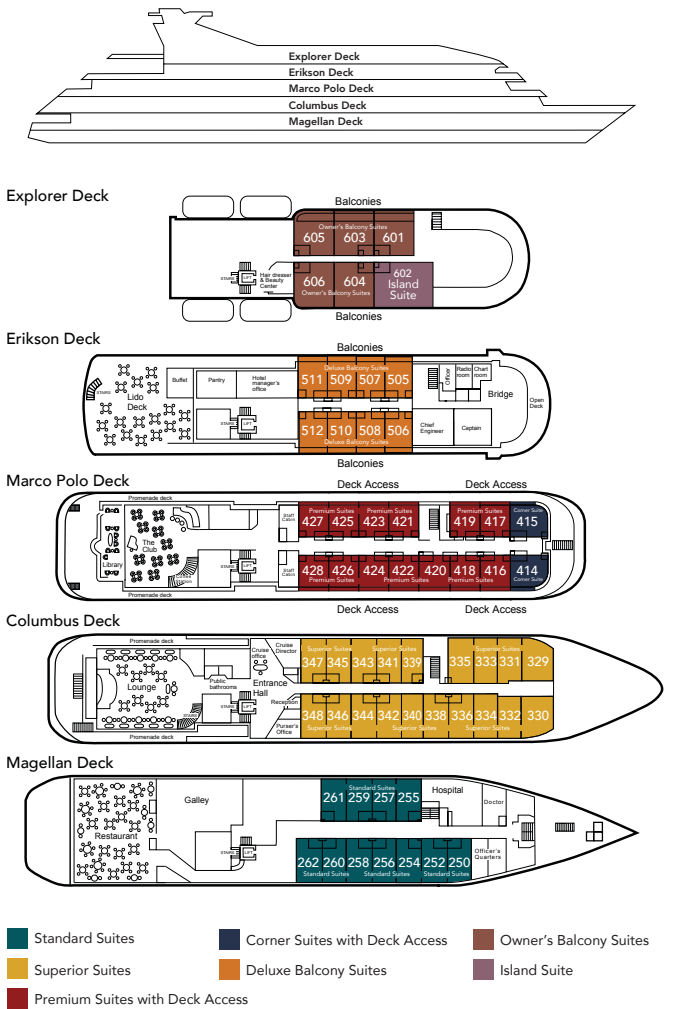
Your Comfort

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

Your Life On Board

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

MS ISLAND SKY DECK PLAN



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



NOBLE CALEDONIA

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All special offers are subject to availability. Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.
 Cover image: Giant tortoise, Aldabra.