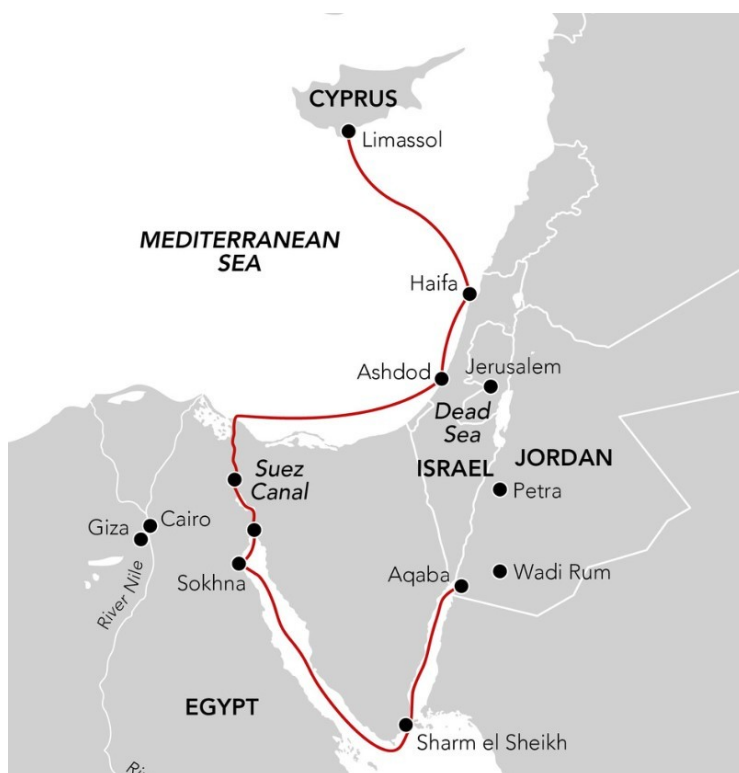




LEVANTINE ODYSSEY - MIDDLE EAST CRUISE

Come with us on a passage through antiquity, an incomparable journey with a wealth of sites on offer including biblical landmarks, Egyptian temples and tombs as well as the magnificent Nabatean, 'Rose Red City' of Petra. We have planned the voyage for autumn when temperatures will be pleasant for exploring and with the aid of our knowledgeable local guides and excellent Guest Speaker, we will learn and reflect on the successive civilisations and a period of history spanning well over 2000 years. Our voyage begins in the Cypriot port of Limassol from where we will visit the Temple of Apollo and the ruins of Kourion with its Greco-Roman Theatre and lovely coastal views. Leaving Cyprus we head to Israel where we discover an extraordinary collection of both classical and Biblical sites including the City of Annunciation, Nazareth, and the ancient port city of Jaffa. Whilst exploring the Holy Land, the architectural and archaeological heritage comes to life from the Canaanites, Egyptians, Assyrians and Babylonians to the Romans, Crusaders and Ottomans and no matter what your faith and beliefs, this land of antiquity offers an insight into the past and the greatest stories that have influenced the course of Western civilisation. Following a transit of the Suez Canal we spend time in Egypt exploring some of the great monuments of the pharaohs, the divine kings of thirty dynasties who ruled Egypt for some thirty-five centuries. See the Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx, visit Cairo's magnificent Egyptian Museum and explore the underwater world of the Red Sea. Continuing on to Jordan we will visit the fascinating city of Petra which, hewn directly from the rock by the Nabateans, is an amazing feat of engineering and construction, and the desert sands of Wadi

Rum. With the all-suite MS Hebridean Sky as our base and in the company of just 100 or so fellow travellers, our trips ashore will be a pleasure and our in-depth touring programme has been combined with time to relax on board, enjoying good food and



informative lectures.

ITINERARY

Day 1 London Gatwick to Limassol, Cyprus.



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Fly by scheduled flight to Cyprus. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the MS Hebridean Sky in Limassol. Moor overnight.

Day 2 Limassol.

Our morning tour will include the Temple of Apollo, one of the main religious centres of ancient Cyprus where Apollo was worshipped as God of the Woodlands. It seems that the worship of Apollo on this site began as early as the 8th century BC and continued until the 4th century AD. We will also spend time at the ruins of Kourion, a city built in 1200 BC. Of particular interest are the public baths, the necropolis, the Fountain House, House of Gladiators and House of Achilles. The most spectacular site at Kourion is the Greco-Roman Theatre that has been completely restored and is used today for open-air musical and theatrical performances. The afternoon is free for independent exploration before we sail tonight.

Day 3 Haifa, Israel.

We begin our exploration of Israel from the northern port of Haifa where we have a choice of excursions today. A full day tour will visit Nazareth, the childhood home of Jesus. Called the City of Annunciation, Nazareth is revered as the spot where the Angel Gabriel appeared before Mary to tell her she was to bear the Son of God. Enjoy panoramic views of the city and visit the Church of the Annunciation, which is built where Mary is said to have lived. Continue to the shores of the Sea of Galilee where we find Capernaum's ancient synagogue and Peter's House before stopping in Tabgha, home to the Church of the Multiplication of Loaves and Leaves, with its 5th century mosaic floor. Alternatively take a morning tour to Acre, one of the oldest continuously inhabited sites of the region and once the chief port of the Crusaders. Visit the underground city seeing the Crusader halls, crypt and tunnels used as a secret route to the

port. Also visit the bazaar and the UNESCO site of Kahn El Umdan (Inn of the Columns), one of the best-preserved caravanserais in Israel. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at leisure to explore Haifa at your own pace.

Days 4 & 5 Ashdod.

Having sailed to Ashdod we spend the next day and a half exploring the south of Israel. Drive inland to Jerusalem including a visit to the Mount of Olives from where we can enjoy spectacular views over the 'Golden City' of Jerusalem. Follow in the footsteps of Jesus as you walk through the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus spent the last moments before his arrest. Wander the streets of the Old City from Jaffa Gate to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and continue through the Christian Quarter to the bazaar, passing the Roman Cardo in the Jewish Quarter and the Western (or Wailing) Wall. Also see Jaffa, the ancient port city from which Tel Aviv developed. Famous for its association with the biblical stories of Jonah, Solomon and St Peter, it has a fascinating history stretching back over four thousand years. We will explore the highlights including the Clock Tower, Flea Market and the renovated alleys and buildings of the city.

Day 6 Suez Canal Transit, Egypt.

Spend the day in transit of the Suez Canal and the Great Bitter Lake. Day 7 Sokhna for Cairo & Giza.

Day 7 Sokhna for Cairo & Giza.

A full day tour is dedicated to the capital city of Cairo. From our berth in Sokhna we drive to the impressive Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx, the only survivor of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, and the tombs of the great pharaohs and their queens. After lunch we visit the Egyptian Museum with 107 halls



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that are separated into seven sections. The museum houses statues, jewels and treasures of Tutankhamun. We will visit the Amarna Room and see the Fayoum portraits and monuments from the later periods from the Greeks and the Romans.

[Day 8 Sharm el Sheikh.](#)

After a morning at sea we arrive at the resort town of Sharm el Sheikh. It is, however, offshore that our interest lies with the clear waters of the Red Sea. Maybe join a snorkelling tour to the Ras Mohamed National Park. Designated a National Park in 1983 the reef ecosystems here protect a diversity of fish species and coral. Alternatively take a glass bottomed boat tour as we view some of the many species of colourful fish, coral and sponges that live in these waters.

[Day 9 Aqaba for Petra, Jordan.](#)

From our berth in Aqaba we drive to the breathtaking Nabatean city of Petra which was carved out of the rose-red sandstone about 2000 years ago and has been voted as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. Walk past the Obelisk Tomb and then through the Siq, the narrow 1.2 kilometre gorge that leads to Petra's most impressive monument, the Treasury, which was carved out of the pale reddish sandstone in the 1st century BC. Pass by the dozens of classical Nabatean ruins and tombs known as the Street of Facades, the remarkable 3000 seat Theatre, the Royal Tombs, the Colonnaded Street, the Byzantine Church, the Temple, the Monumental Arch and the mighty Qasr el-Bint Faroun. After lunch amidst the ruins of Petra you will have the option to return to the ship or stay and explore the site further independently. Those feeling active may choose to climb about 900 steps up to the large, 1st century AD monument known as the Monastery with its remarkable views over Wadi Araba.

[Day 10 Aqaba for Wadi Rum.](#)

This morning we will drive to Wadi Rum, also known as the Valley of the Moon where the desert landscape is mixed with awe-inspiring shapes to create an almost supernatural atmosphere. We will embark on an adventurous excursion by a Bedouin open top four-wheel drive vehicle. We begin at the visitor centre from where there is a view in the distance of the Seven Pillars of Wisdom, the famous landmark named after the book by T.E. Lawrence 'Lawrence of Arabia'. During our excursion we will also see the Alameleh inscriptions which are a good example of ancient rock drawings, Siq Um Al Tawaqi, a short canyon containing a carving of the head of T.E. Lawrence and ruins of Allat (Goddess) Temple of the AAD tribe. After lunch in the desert we will return to Aqaba. Alternatively for those wishing to have a more relaxing day you may wish to explore Aqaba at your own pace or visit one of the beach clubs on the Red Sea coast.

[Day 11 Aqaba to London Gatwick.](#)

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

[Please Note:](#)

Itineraries are subject to change.

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YOUR SHIP: HEBRIDEAN SKY

YOUR SHIP: Hebridean Sky

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LENGTH:

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plan may vary.

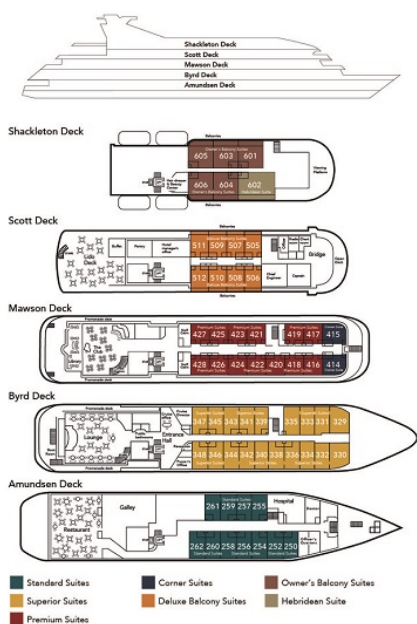
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