



## PASSAGE ACROSS THE CARIBBEAN SEA - AN ISLAND HOPPING VOYAGE FROM COSTA RICA TO BARBADOS

If you have been contemplating a visit to Central America and the Caribbean, then this fascinating voyage from Costa Rica to Barbados could offer the perfect opportunity with its mix of cultural and natural wonders. Each of the destinations we have included in our itinerary has its own culture and this colourful mix of island personalities, varied terrain and lifestyles makes for a marvellous spring break. By and large we will head for the smaller, less visited islands and having our small ship, the all-suite MS Hebridean Sky, as the base for our cruise makes all the difference. Our voyage begins in Costa Rica, a small country with a huge array of wildlife including hundreds of brightly coloured species of bird and we will discover the flora and fauna during our visit to the Cahuita National Park or whilst exploring the canals of Tortuguero. We continue to Panama where we have the opportunity to witness the timeless culture of the ancient Kuna tribe on the stepping stone islands of San Blas before we touch the South American mainland with a call at Cartagena, a wonderfully charismatic port with fine restored colonial buildings, and Santa Marta. From Colombia, our itinerary island hops to Barbados by way of Curacao and Bonaire in the Dutch Caribbean and the wonderful Windward island of Grenada. Such a varied and comprehensive itinerary would be difficult to comprehend or undertake by any other means than a cruise and, in the company of just 100 or so fellow like-minded passengers, we will be able to explore in small groups ashore and enjoy a convivial atmosphere on board. During our voyage there will be opportunities to enjoy swimming and nature walks in some stunning national parks with their endemic plants and wildlife, explore historical sites



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and forts of the Spanish, Dutch and British colonial periods and discover the pretty ports and pastel painted towns whilst learning of the fascinating history of the region, all overseen by our expert onboard team. As we sail relatively short distances, we have the benefit of full days on many of the glorious islands allowing for time to join the included, guided excursions combined with the opportunity to explore further independently or perhaps relax on one of the

Day 3 Puerto Limon.

From our berth in Puerto Limon we head to the Cahuita National Park. The area is filled with wildlife that includes howler monkeys, white-faced capuchin monkeys, raccoons, sloths, otters, coatis, agoutis, armadillos and porcupines. Several avian species also live in the swamp forest including the green ibis, the green kingfisher, the yellow crowned night heron, the frigate bird and the boat-billed heron among others. Our naturalist guides will lead us through the trails of the rainforest, sharing their vast knowledge of this fragile ecosystem. Alternatively, take a boat ride through the scenic Tortuguero canals, known as the Costa Rican Amazon as the surrounding rainforest supports a wide range of flora and fauna. Here we can hopefully spot waterfowl, monkeys, lizards, sloths and toucans. We will return to the ship via a banana plantation where we learn about this staple of the local economy.



beautiful beaches.

## ITINERARY

Day 1 London to San Jose, Costa Rica.

Fly by scheduled flight. Arrive and transfer to our hotel for an overnight stay.

Day 2 San Jose to Puerto Limon.

After breakfast in the hotel enjoy some free time before we transfer to Puerto Limon, enjoying a local lunch on the way. Embark the MS Hebridean Sky this afternoon and moor overnight.

Day 4 Bocas del Toro, Panama.

Arriving in Panama we have a day in the Bocas del Toro archipelago, pristine islands which are now part of a national marine park. We spend the day surrounded by astounding beauty and there will be the option to visit the small town of Bocas del Toro and have free time to wander amongst the fine old Spanish buildings or maybe visit one of the local beaches.

Day 5 San Blas Islands.

After a morning at sea we arrive in the stunning San Blas



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archipelago. The archipelago is made up of over 400 islands that line the north coast of Panama with 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 maintained their traditional way of life including the production of colourful fabric art known as 'molas'. We will have time to take a nature walk or perhaps enjoy a swim from the beach.

Day 6 Cartagena, Colombia.

Cartagena is one of the most fascinating cities in South America and this morning we will enjoy a walking tour of the colonial walled city which is virtually surrounded by water and steeped in history, with a wealth of 16th and 17th century buildings and churches. Our guides will bring the history of the city to life as we walk its streets and ramparts. We will visit the 16th century Fort of San Felipe, the Monastery of San Pedro Claver, the Plaza de la Aduana and Iglesia de Santo Domingo. Enjoy a leisurely afternoon to explore further at your own pace.

Day 7 Santa Marta.

We continue our exploration of Colombia in Santa Marta which is renowned for the eco-diversity and dramatic beauty of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the highest coastal mountain range in the world, that sweep down to the sea. From our berth we will travel slightly inland to the Tayrona National Park this morning. Covered in large part by virgin tropical forest, the park is home to many varied species of mammals, birds and reptiles. On a walk through this semi-tropical jungle, we will be joined by a

local guide who will offer insights into the park's vegetation, animals and ecosystem. Alternatively, explore the town of Santa Marta, see Bolivar Plaza and the bustling streets with their eclectic mix of Spanish Colonial, Republican and contemporary architecture to the 17th century cathedral, Colombia's oldest church. Also visit the small Gold Museum which houses some interesting gold and pottery objects from the indigenous cultures that inhabit the Sierra Nevada Mountains which rise up behind the city.

Day 8 At Sea.

Enjoy a relaxing day at sea as we make our way across the Caribbean.

Day 9 Curacao, Dutch Caribbean.

Moor this morning at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Willemstad. The city has a rich history dating back to the 16th century and the island's colonial Dutch heritage sets a genteel tone amid markets, museums and cafes. Enjoy an excursion to explore the historic downtown district including Fort Amsterdam. The afternoon is free to either explore at your own pace or join an island drive which will include The Old Labour House where we learn about the history of slavery on the island, the dramatic Boca Table National Park and the Salt Pans plantation where, if lucky, we may see some flamingos.

Day 10 Bonaire.



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Spend the day in Bonaire famous for the variety of its corals, fish and clear waters. This morning you may wish to take a scenic island tour to see the saltwater lagoon at Lake Goto, where we may be lucky and see pink flamingos, followed by Mangazina di Rei cultural park which showcases indigenous culture. Alternatively, join a local boat as we make our way to one of the nearby uninhabited islands near Klein Bonaire. Here, there will be the option to swim from the beach or snorkel over the coral reefs. Returning to the MS Hebridean Sky for lunch, the afternoon is free to explore the town of Kralendijk at your own pace from our central berth.

### Day 11 At Sea.

Today maybe join a lecture or find a spot on deck as we spend a day cruising.

### Day 12 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, rum distilleries, 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 before heading to Fort George. Built in 1706 with wonderful views over the harbour, it was here in 1983 that the Prime Minister, Maurice Bishop, was assassinated which prompted the invasion by US troops. We will continue to a spice garden where we learn about the herbs that grow here before we end at one of the island's rum distilleries.

### Day 13 Barbados to London.

Barbados is the most easterly of the Caribbean Islands, with Atlantic surf on the east coast and sparkling Caribbean waters on the west coast. We will disembark this morning and take an island drive including visits to the historic 17th century Sunbury Plantation House and the impressive St John's Church. After lunch there will be some free time before we transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.

### Day 14 London.

Arrive this morning.

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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## YOUR SHIP: HEBRIDEAN SKY

**YOUR SHIP:** Hebridean Sky

**VESSEL TYPE:**

**LENGTH:**

**PASSENGER CAPACITY:**

**BUILT/REFURBISHED:**

Hebridean Sky has always been known for its effortless elegance, impeccable service and atmosphere of charm and camaraderie. Now we add increased adventure options and an on-site Passenger Service Representative. Hebridean Sky is the perfect blend of luxury and adventurous exploration. Is it a luxury ship? An adventure ship? It's both! The vessel underwent a multi-million pound refurbishment in Sweden in Spring 2016.

**ONBOARD DINING** Great expeditions require great food! We are pleased to offer daily changing breakfast, lunch and dinner menus with an emphasis on providing well balanced and nutritional cuisine. Our team of international chefs has boat loads of creativity and you are sure to experience a variety of interesting dishes throughout your voyage. The restaurant is located on Deck 2 and our service team looks forward to providing a memorable dining experience.

**IMPECCABLE SMALL-SHIP AMENITIES** Returning from excursions, passengers enjoy complimentary refreshments, afternoon tea and all-day coffee in The Club, a gracious space for relaxation, surrounded by panoramic windows. Other Sea Explorer features include: Library with Internet access Lounge with audiovisual facilities Dining room Wraparound sun deck with Jacuzzi Exercise room

Medical facilities with available doctor Elevator serving all passenger decks Swimming/zodiac platform All Voyages Include: Up to Two Pre-Voyage Hotel Nights Complimentary Wine or Beer with Dinner Certified Emergency MD and Clinic World Class Cuisine Live Entertainment Complimentary Coffee/Tea station Voyage Photographer Dedicated Passenger Service Manager Complimentary Expedition Jacket Please note deck



plan may vary.

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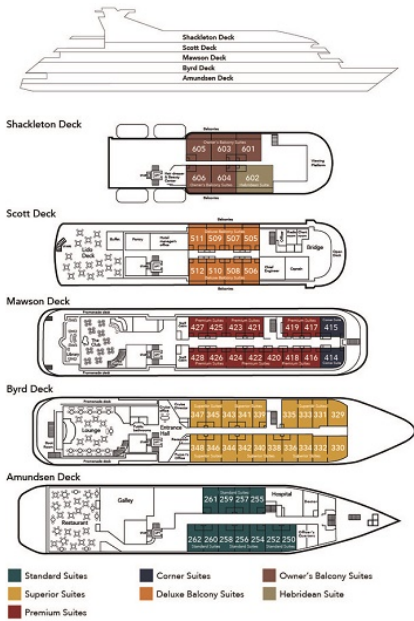
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## INSIDE YOUR SHIP







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