



A beautiful late spring day in Brasov

EMPIRES AND TSARS OF THE BLACK SEA

ABOARD MS ISLAND SKY

Turkey | Georgia | Russia | Ukraine | Romania | Bulgaria
14 May – 7 June 2017 (25 Days)

AN UNLIKELY MUSE

A bright morning of golden rays rouses the emerald valley from slumber. Across terracotta rooftops and medieval spires, lazy summer mornings are awakened with espressos in charming cobbled squares to celebrate a new bohemia. With such a sunny disposition, it's hard to believe you're so close to the formidable turrets of Dracula's Castle. The Gothic shade barely casts a shadow. On such a balmy day, Transylvania's most notorious legend won't even send a shiver down the spine.



DEPART AUSTRALIA

Day 1: Sunday 14 May

Bound for the exotic delights of Europe's Far East, we board our Emirates flight and fly via Dubai on the way to the mystical city of Istanbul.

ISTANBUL (TURKEY)

Day 2: Monday 15 May

Straddling the Bosphorus, Istanbul sits with one foot in Europe and one in Asia. Behold a magnificent and heady mix of thousands of years of history, set amongst one of the world's most remarkable cities. The Ciragan Palace Kempinski, a former Sultan's castle on the shores of the Bosphorus is your



You'll be all aglow at Istanbul's Grand Bazaar

home for the next three nights. Sink into the luxury of your room – inspired by Turkish decor with a modern touch. The day is yours to unwind after your flight. Come together with fellow travellers at our Welcome Dinner.

ISTANBUL

Day 3: Tuesday 16 May

The glory of the Ottoman Empire beams at us from the marble pillars of the ornate Dolmabahce Palace. The interior displays the extraordinary wealth of the Sultans. Wafts of cardamom, cinnamon and other exotic aromas encircle us as we explore the Spice Market. Search for quality silk scarves and unique handmade jewellery as well as the ubiquitous spices.

► This evening, choose from a selection of the hotel's restaurants and local dining establishments on a dine-around dinner.

ISTANBUL

Day 4: Wednesday 17 May

The Blue Mosque is one of Islam's most sacred buildings. Low burning lights hung in circular patterns welcome us inside this place of worship. We continue our discovery of the ancient district of Sultanahmet, visiting the Hippodrome, the magnificent Byzantine Church of St Sophia and opulent Topkapi Palace. Take in views across the Bosphorus over lunch before trawling the



Pay your respects at Lone Pine Cemetery, Gallipoli

labyrinths of the Grand Bazaar. A bargain hunters heaven – jewellery, souvenirs, clothing, artwork and antiques abound. It's easy to lose yourself in its 61 narrow streets and aisles.

GALLIPOLI

Day 5: Thursday 18 May

Gallipoli, birthplace of the ANZAC spirit, should be visited by everyone at least once in their life. Wonder at the incredible odds against our countrymen at the ANZAC Cove landing site and take time to reflect at Lone Pine Cemetery, sifting through the heartfelt homages of the visitor book. The ANZAC sites will both move and surprise you. We travel to Gallipoli by road and stay this evening in nearby Canakkale.





Admire the bay of Amasra

PERGAMON

Day 6: Friday 19 May

In Troy we find an enormous replica of the Trojan Horse before driving south to Pergamon with its impressive hilltop ruins, dominated by the Acropolis. We continue to Izmir, the gateway to the best preserved of all the classical ruins; the Roman capital of Asia Minor, Ephesus.

EPHESUS

Day 7: Saturday 20 May

Standing in front of the ruins, it's no stretch to cast your mind back 2,000 years, when Ephesus was a strategic entry point to the eastern world. Over 250,000 people lived there and even to this day, fascinating relics of their legacy are still being unearthed.

Walk down the marble paved street, stepping in the grooves made by ancient chariot wheels, past the ruins of major civic buildings and temples. The Library of Celsus, a structure of unique beauty with a spectacularly restored facade, once contained 12,000 scrolls of papyrus manuscripts. Sit in the Grand Theatre and a little imagination transports you among thousands of spectators hurling support and derision at the gladiators.

► This evening enjoy a dine-around in Izmir.

PAMUKKALE

Day 8: Sunday 21 May

Recline your seat and relax as picturesque mountain scenery passes by your window on our drive to the ancient village of Pamukkale. The amazing white travertines have lured visitors seeking the therapeutic waters since Roman times. Take in the hillside view of this cascading cotton castle. Staying at a comfortable hotel close by, they're well within your reach.

Opposite: Float over the fairy chimneys of Cappadocia

CAPPADOCIA

Day 9: Monday 22 May

A scenic drive takes us high into the Taurus Mountains to Konya, bestowed with Seljuk architectural treasures. We step further back in time when we pause at a caravanserai, before reaching Cappadocia and the extraordinary Goreme Valley. Cappadocia is renowned for its bizarre lunar landscapes made from soft volcanic rock. We have three nights in this fairytale like wonderland staying in the unique – and subterranean – Cappadocia Cave Resort.

CAPPADOCIA

Day 10: Tuesday 23 May

Immerse yourself in the surrealistic landscape of Cappadocia. The fairy chimneys, carved by wind, rain and volcanic activity, produce a charming, cartoonish effect. We visit magnificently decorated caves with incredible scenes dating from the 6th century. Lunch inside is an otherworldly experience.

► Enjoy a dine-around dinner at a choice of restaurants this evening.



Make the pilgrimage to Pamukkale

CAPPADOCIA

Day 11: Wednesday 24 May

► A pre breakfast hot air balloon flight over the dramatic landscape offers a once in a lifetime bucket list dream moment (additional cost).

► This morning simply soak up the atmosphere of Cappadocia; or take a shopping tour of a nearby carpet and ceramic factory. This area once provided refuge for thousands of Christians hiding in underground cities. An exploration of subterranean Kaymakli is a humbling experience.

► Gozleme, kebab and baklava – find your Turkish delight on a dine-around evening.

ISTANBUL JOIN MS ISLAND SKY

Day 12: Thursday 25 May

Sail 6.00pm

We return to Istanbul by air and join our luxury expedition ship, MS Island Sky, this afternoon. Relax into your comfortable stateroom as we sail out from the Bosphorus Strait. Meet your Expedition Team and crew at dinner this evening.

AMASRA

Day 13: Friday 26 May

Arrive 7.30am – Sail 1.00pm

We dock in Bartın and drive to the nearby coastal village of Amasra, set idyllically between two bays. Amasra was founded by the Milesians in 6 BC and later became an important possession of both the Byzantium and Genoese empires. Expert local guides lead us through the charming old town, bringing its Greek and Roman past to life.



Pillars of wisdom at Ephesus

SAMSUN – AMASYA

Day 14: Saturday 27 May
Arrive 8.00am – Sail 6.00pm

Leaving the ship in Samsun, we drive to Amasya, believed to have been founded by the Amazon queen, Amasis. The setting is certainly fit for royalty – the deep narrow gorge of the Iris River surrounds a town famous for growing apples. We see the tombs of the Pontic kings carved into the cliff face and later visit the 15th century Sultan Beyazit Mosque. The humble Archaeology Museum reveals a surprising display of uncovered Egyptian mummies.

TRABZON

Day 15: Sunday 28 May
Arrive 7.30am – Sail 8.00pm

The lush valleys and mountains of the Trabzon Highlands are akin to a slice of Switzerland, yet the Byzantine architecture of the Aya Sofia church reminds us that we are far from Western Europe. A picturesque drive takes us to the villa of Turkey's national hero, Atatürk. Continue through the mountains to an extraordinary Byzantine monastery carved out of the sheer rock face.

BATUMI (GEORGIA)

Day 16: Monday 29 May
Arrive 7.00am – Sail 6.00pm

In the shadow of the Caucasus Mountains, the seaside Georgian city of Batumi is blooming into a popular resort town. We wander around the vast Botanical Gardens before the chaotic marketplace provides fascinating insight into Georgian culture and life. The nearby Gonio Apsaros Fortress reveals itself as one of the largest and best preserved Roman forts in the world.

SOCHI (RUSSIA)

Day 17: Tuesday 30 May
Arrive 7.00am – Sail 6.30pm

Overnight, the Black Sea has guided us into a new country. You're sure to be intrigued by Sochi, the jewel of the Russian Riviera and host of the 2014



Feel a rejuvenating spring breeze over Amasya

Winter Olympics. Its mild summer climate and claims of personal restoration have long lured the country's elite.

► Take a walk along the pleasant seafront and enjoy a drink at one of the many cafes; or join us on a trip to visit Stalin's former summer home.

CRUISING

Day 18: Wednesday 31 May

Feel the invigorating breeze on deck as you relish a full day on the water aboard MS Island Sky crossing the Black Sea. Why not find out more about the history of the region at an informative presentation from regional experts onboard?

ODESSA (UKRAINE)

Day 19: Thursday 1 June
Arrive 7.00am – Sail 11.00pm

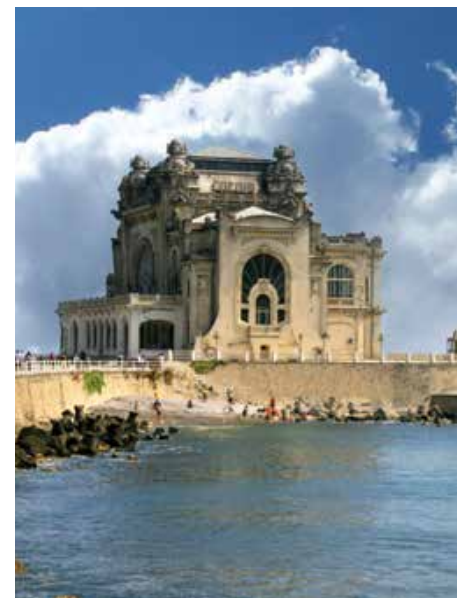
Odessa is a Ukrainian gem founded by Catherine the Great in 1794, following the Russian victory over the Turks. Today we see why Forbes Magazine lists the Odessa Opera House as one of the must see highlights of Eastern Europe. We also walk the city's promenade filled with high end boutiques, cafes and impeccably dressed fashionistas.

CONSTANTA, BUCHAREST & BRASOV (ROMANIA)

Day 20: Friday 2 June
Arrive 6.00pm

Docking in Constanta, we journey through the Romanian countryside to Bucharest. From splendid baroque style palaces, medieval churches and sombre, grey housing blocks, Bucharest beguiles with a mass of architectural contradiction.

We pay homage to Romanian heritage at the Open Air Museum and wonder the city's noble landmarks, including the Arc de Triomphe, the Cotroceni Palace and the Palace of Parliament, the world's second largest building. Our journey then continues through the Carpathian Mountains to the medieval city of Brasov, in the heart of Transylvania. We stay overnight at the region's finest establishment, the Kronwell Hotel, where we enjoy a taste of Transylvania to finish another splendid day.



The formidable old casino building in Constanta



The impossibly ornate Opera House at Odessa will take your breath away

SINAIA & CONSTANTA

Day 21: Saturday 3 June

Delving deeper into this fabled region, we start the day with a tour of historic Brasov and the many churches nestled among winding cobbled streets.

Heading out of the city later today the legend comes alive as we venture into the hills to Bran Castle, where Vlad the Impaler is believed to have acted out some of the more grisly chapters of his story. With ominous turrets dominating the hilltop overlooking a deep gorge, it's no stretch of the imagination to invoke the macabre myths surrounding 'Dracula's Castle'. We head south through the Carpathian Mountains to the winter resort of Sinaia dominated by Peles Castle, a former royal residence, playing white knight to the dark heart of Bran Castle.



Live the legend of Peles Castle, Sinaia

CONSTANTA

Day 22: Sunday 4 June

Depart 6.00pm

After an insightful morning tour, why not while away a day in Constanta? There's no question it's a captivating place to visit. The Archaeological Museum details the area's Greek and Roman heritage, whilst a walk through the city brings you back to the present day with a hum of espresso machines and chink of expensive glassware in cheers as locals enjoy a lazy lunch.

Cuisine in Constanta is supposed to be the best in this part of the country – why not step into one of the many cosy restaurants and sample some for yourself?



Push the boat out in Nessebar



Sail into the Russian port of Sochi

NESSEBUR (BULGARIA)

Day 23: Monday 5 June

Arrive 6.00am – Sail 6.30pm

Jutting out from the Bulgarian coast on a rocky peninsula, the captivating town of Nessebur beckons us. Our ship brings us right to Nessebur's old town, the best place for discovering why the city has been included on UNESCO's World Heritage List. Walk beside Roman remains, step inside stone churches dating to the early Middle Ages and amble down winding cobbled lanes lined with traditional Bulgarian houses, with their overhanging first floors.

DEPART ISTANBUL

Day 24: Tuesday 6 June

Arrive 8.00am

We say goodbye to new found friends today before driving to the airport for our late afternoon flight home.

ARRIVE AUSTRALIA

Day 25: Wednesday 7 June

Landing back into Australia, don't forget to declare your purchases from the Spice Market!

TOUR COST

Based on per person, twin share in Standard Suite – from Sydney, Melbourne or Brisbane flying with Emirates. Prices from other cities are available on request.

Economy Class	\$25,340
Business Class	\$32,940
First Class	\$36,920

First Class guests fly Business Class Istanbul to Dubai and Economy Class Cappadocia to Istanbul.

Cruise & Land Only

(Join in Istanbul for dinner on Day 2 and depart Istanbul after breakfast on Day 24)\$22,990

Cruise Only

(Join in Istanbul for dinner on Day 12 and depart Istanbul after breakfast on Day 24)\$15,450

Supplements (Add to base tour cost, per person twin share)

Superior Suite	\$1,000
Premium Suite	\$1,800
Corner Suite	\$2,860
Balcony Suite	\$3,390
Owner's Balcony Suite	\$5,770

Single Suite Supplements including hotels (Add to base tour cost)

Standard Suite	\$5,440
Superior Suite	\$5,840

Single suites at the above costs are limited. Please enquire for additional single supplement upgrade costs.

Please note: The overland Turkish component of this tour involves some long road journeys aboard very comfortable coaches. Whilst the hotels in Turkey are rated 5 star they may not always match western expectations of 5 star hotels.

Please refer to pages 40 – 41 for deck plans.

MS Island Sky

Luxury and adventure meld flawlessly as you drift between isolated tropical isles and remote coastlines aboard the MS Island Sky. Privately chartered for Captain's Choice guests, venturing out to these remote parts of the world becomes a highly personalised affair. It also allows much freedom. We may dock at an untouched oasis for a quick dip in secluded crystal waters or take the scenic route in lieu of the main thoroughfare.

Refurbished in 2013, this is one of the finest vessels on the water. Accommodation is arranged over five decks and all suites boast views to the sea. Your comfort is assured with an en suite bathroom featuring a marble topped vanity unit and walk in shower, generous wardrobes, dressing table with large mirror and excellent storage. There is a mini fridge, flat screen television with inbuilt DVD/CD player and a telephone in each suite. Bottled water, comfortable dressing gowns and slippers are also provided. Other facilities include a programmable electronic safe, hairdryer, Molton Brown toiletries and individually controlled air conditioning and heating. We include the standard suite within the cost of your tour, but upgrades can be requested at additional cost.

Additionally, a capable fleet of ten Zodiac inflatable crafts are present to whisk you ashore whenever the adventure calls. Plus, you'll never have to worry about a map or navigating on your own as your Expedition Team is always on hand to help. Experts in their field, navigating between tiny islands, getting you closer than ever to wildlife and illuminating the environment around you is all in a day's work.



■ Owner's Balcony Suite

Owner's Balcony Suites are spacious suites measuring 22m² plus a large private balcony measuring 8m², en suite bathroom with a shower and a spacious wardrobe.



■ Premium Balcony Suite

Deluxe Balcony Suites feature a private balcony measuring 4m², en suite bathroom with a shower, and a spacious walk in wardrobe, measuring 20.9m² inside.



■ Corner Suite

At 22m², Corner Suites feature dual aspect windows, en suite bathroom with a shower, and a spacious walk in wardrobe.



■ Premium Suite

Premium Suites measure 21m² and feature a large window, en suite bathroom with a shower, and a spacious wardrobe.



■ Superior Suite

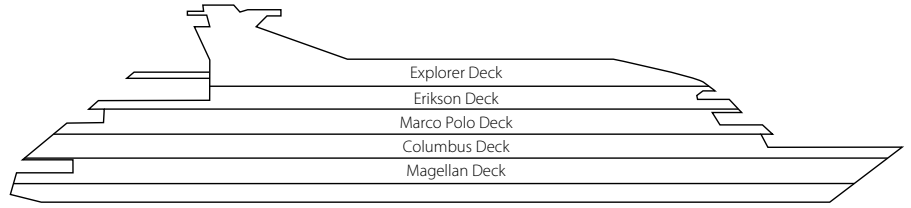
Superior Suites feature a large window, en suite bathroom with a shower, and a spacious wardrobe and measure 22m².



■ Standard Suite

Standard Suites feature a large port hole, en suite bathroom with a shower, and a spacious wardrobe and measure 21m².

MS ISLAND SKY

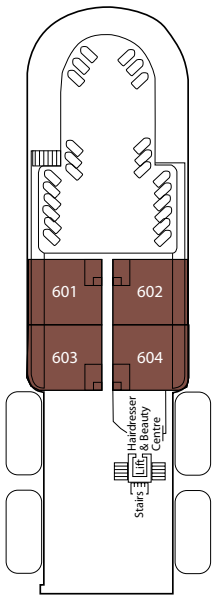


Legend

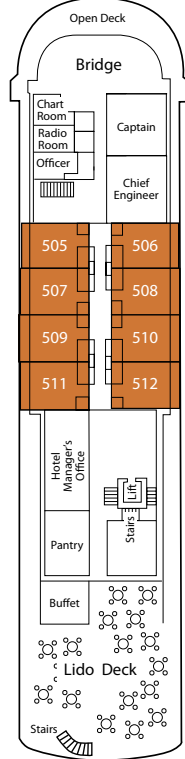
- Owner's Balcony Suite
- Premium Balcony Suite
- Corner Suite
- Premium Suite
- Superior Suite
- Standard Suite

Ship Specifications

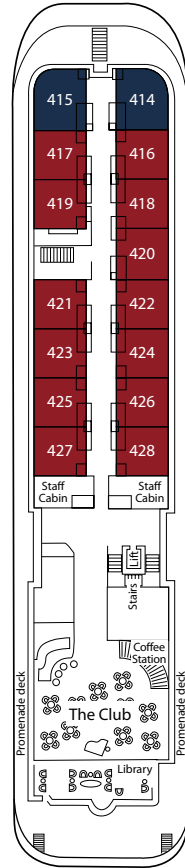
Guests: 98
 Crew: 75
 Passenger Decks: 5
 Tonnage: 4200 gt
 Length: 90.6m
 Width: 15.3m
 Speed: 12 knots
 Refurbished: 2013
 Registry: Marshall Islands



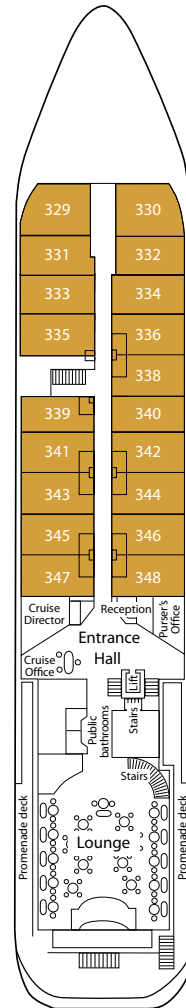
Explorer Deck



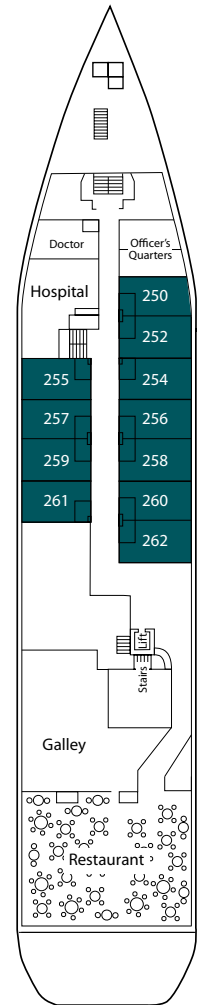
Erikson Deck



Marco Polo Deck



Columbus Deck



Magellan Deck