LAS PALMAS TO LISBON: THE SANDS OF TIME - PORTUGAL, SPAIN & MOROCCO ADVENTURE

Welcome to Aurora Expeditions' The Sands of Time This thought-provoking voyage explores the intertwined histories of the Canary Islands, Morocco, Spain and Portugal. From the Moorish conquest of Iberia to the Reconquista, and the 'Age of Exploration' to the tragic legacy of the slave trade, these regions have forged alliances and rivalries that influenced the world. This journey invites reflection on the human stories behind historical events, as we hear tales of the battles, trade routes and monarchical intrigue, which shaped the region's collective heritage. From the islands of the Canaries to the medinas of Morocco, the whitewashed villages of Andalusia to the famed rock of Gibraltar, and the lively laneways of Seville to the sun-drenched coast of the Algarve, we discover the enduring legacies born from centuries of resilience and the abundant cultural richness of these remarkable nations.

ITINERARY

Day 1 Arrive Las Palmas, Spain

Welcome to Las Palmas, the sun-drenched heart of Gran Canaria, where colonial charm meets golden shores and Atlantic breezes. On arrival at Gran Canaria Airport, make your way to the arrivals hall to meet our representative, followed by a transfer to our group hotel. At the hotel, visit our hospitality desk in the lobby to meet our team who will provide you with useful information regarding pre-embarkation procedures and about your time in Las Palmas. You will also receive cabin tags for your luggage. Please clearly label the tags with your name and your cabin number on the ship.

Join us this evening for a Welcome event to celebrate the start of your journey*

Accommodation: Las Palmas Hotel (or similar)

Meals: *Welcome social (includes drinks and snacks)

Note: to not miss out on the welcome event, please ensure your flight to arrives in Las Palmas no later than 2:00pm

Day 2 Embark Las Palmas (Port: Las Palmas – La Luz Port)

Known as the 'miniature continent', Gran Canaria is celebrated for its striking contrasts. The island offers a variety of landscapes, from beaches framed by dunes to peaks covered in Canary Island pine forests, whose greenery stands out against the dark volcanic earth. Las Palmas, the capital, combines historical architecture with modern attractions, featuring bustling markets and urban beaches.

There's time to explore Las Palmas this morning before we set off on a scenic drive that reveals more of Gran Canaria's vibrant eastern side. As we travel through traditional towns and coastal stretches, we'll see a blend of heritage, natural beauty, and everyday island life, while passing banana plantations and aloe vera farms gives us a glimpse into the island's pastural economy.

Inland, archaeological sites and rugged volcanic landscapes hint at Gran Canaria's ancient past, while bustling town centres reflect its modern rhythm. Each small town offers something unique, whether it's a quiet chapel, a leafy plaza, a shaded reading park, or palm-lined streets made for wandering. We spend time in Aguimes, where colourful houses and striking bronze sculptures bring local stories and folklore vividly to life. It's a town full of character, perfect for exploring on foot, with inviting cafes, small galleries, and corners that feel like open-air storytelling.

Our route blends the character of the modern Canary Islands with the enduring charm of its past, before circling back to Las Palmas, where we board _Sylvia Earle_.

This evening, you'll join your fellow travellers for an onboard Welcome Dinner, where your host will introduce you to the voyage ahead and raise a toast to the adventures to come.

Meals: Breakfast, dinner onboard

Day 3 Arrecife (Port: Arrecife)

While the Canary Islands are famed for their resorts and sun-soaked beaches, they offer much more than typical package holidays. The eight volcanic islands that make up the archipelago, are under Spanish jurisdiction but historically linked to Africa, and have a complex history that includes the early slave trade. Today, the islands stand as a testament to resilience and cultural diversity, blending influences from Spanish settlers and indigenous Guanches.

We explore Lanzarote, the northernmost Canary Island, known as 'Volcano Island,' for its dramatic volcanic terrain. Lanzarote's volcanic landscape includes expansive lava fields and uniquely shaped rocks set against a backdrop of black and red soil that vividly contrasts with traditional whitewashed houses.

Our 'Your Choice' morning experiences offer a chance to discover this diverse landscape, from dramatic mountains and golden beaches to lush palm groves and dunes, highlighting the

island's exceptional natural beauty, followed by a chance to explore Arrecife independently. This afternoon, enjoy a complimentary shuttle service between the port and town, with the Sylvia Earle sailing late afternoon towards Africa.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 Morning experience: A Day at the Beach - Puerto del Carmen

Hop on our shuttle for a 15-minute transfer to the vibrant Puerto del Carmen. Once a small fishing village, Puerto del Carmen is now Lanzarote's top beach resort. At the heart of it all is Playa Grande, a 2-mile stretch of dark sand lining the boulevard-style, Avenida de las Playas. The beach is perfect for a relaxing day in the Canary Islands. Soak up the sun, swim in the clear, tranquil sea or try snorkelling at Playa Chica beach, located between the main beach and the harbour. For your convenience, beach chairs, umbrellas and sports equipment are available for hire. While this is not a guided tour, a local host on the shuttle will be available to answer any questions about the area.

Option 2 - Morning experience: Haria, the Valley of 1,000 Palm Trees

Embark on a panoramic tour beginning at the Mirador de Haria, where sweeping views reveal Lanzarote's dramatic northern landscapes of rugged cliffs, rolling hills, and the lush green contrast of the valley below. From here, descend into the quaint town of Haria, home to around 1,000 residents and known for its whitewashed houses, wooden balconies, and traditional Canarian charm.

Nestled in the Valley of 1,000 Palms, Haria feels like an oasis in the island's otherwise arid terrain. Life here moves at a gentle pace. Locals gather in shaded plazas, tend small gardens, and keep age-old traditions alive. The town's peaceful rhythm and natural beauty have long attracted artists and writers, including Cesar Manrique, whose former home now serves as a museum. For residents, Haria offers a quiet refuge -- surrounded by nature, steeped in culture, and far from the bustle of Lanzarote's tourist hubs.

Option 3 Morning experience: Timanfaya National Park

Our panoramic tour of Timanfaya National Park offers a truly otherworldly experience. The park's stark lava fields and striking craters, shaped by 18th- and 19th-century eruptions, create a dramatic and surreal landscape. At the Timanfaya Visitor's Centre, our guides perform geothermal demonstrations, showcasing the intense heat from beneath the Earth's surface by igniting brushwood and triggering geysers. The park's vibrant colours and unique formations offer a fascinating glimpse into Lanzarote's volcanic history. With its almost extraterrestrial scenery, Timanfaya National Park vividly highlights Lanzarote's exceptional natural beauty and geological significance. (Note: as Timanfaya National Park is an active volcanic region, visitors should be aware of its potential risks. Entry is at your discretion.)

Day 4 At Sea

Our voyage from Arrecife to the Moroccan coast offers a tranquil interlude, during which our host will introduce you to the

fascinating cultures and histories of the destinations ahead through engaging presentations.

A day at sea affords you the opportunity to explore the ship's amenities. Whether you choose to invigorate yourself in the gym, relax in the library, or enjoy panoramic views from the observation lounge, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

Day 5 Disembark Agadir - Overnight Marrakech (Port: Agadir)

This morning marks a change of pace as we bid farewell to the Sylvia Earle and journey inland on a three-hour drive to the vibrant city of Marrakech. Located at the foothills of the Atlas Mountains, Marrakech is an eclectic mix of centuries-old architectural styles. The fabled ochre city was founded over 1,000 years ago during the Almoravid dynasty and still beats an age-old rhythm. Famed for its outstanding artisanship, the city has boomed as one of Africa's key hubs for contemporary art, architecture and design.

We arrive in time to enjoy lunch at a popular local restaurant, before visiting one of its architectural wonders. Built in the late 19th century for Grand Vizier Si Moussa, the Bahia Palace was designed to showcase the finest craftsmanship of the time. Its name, meaning "brilliance," is reflected in the intricate zellij mosaics, carved cedar ceilings, and graceful arches that line its courtyards. Light filters through stained glass windows, casting patterns across tiled floors, while orange trees and fountains lend a sense of calm to the open spaces, making it an ideal introduction to Marrakech.

Check-in to our hotel and enjoy some free time in the afternoon, before we gather for some Moroccan fare and entertainment this evening.

Accommodation: Marrakech Hotel

Meals: Breakfast (onboard), Lunch, Dinner

Day 6 Casablanca (Port: Casablanca)

After breakfast, join your local guides for your chosen 'Your Choice' experience exploring the city's main attractions, followed by a lunch inspired by the vibrant flavours of Marrakech. Afterwards, we transfer by road to Casablanca, where to reboard Sylvia Earle and set sail north to Tangier.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences

Option 1 - Morning experience: Introducing Marrakech

This morning, your local guide will lead you on a brief walking tour of Marrakech's famous medina. Amongst its maze of alleyways, you will find artisan shops brimming with pottery and hand-crafted leather goods, quirky trinkets, and traditional Moroccan souvenirs. The medina is a feast for the senses: fragrant spices fill the air, vibrant stalls spill over with colour, and the rhythm of daily life unfolds in every corner. Even a simple stroll becomes a memorable experience. Designed for those wanting a taste of Marrakech's medina, this limited walking tour offers an insight into its eclectic character with time to browse its craft and artisan shops, before we unwind to enjoy a traditional mint tea and morning pastry.

Option 2 - Morning experience: Meet me in the Medina

This locally guided walking tour explores Marrakech's medina further with visits to a selection of it sites, including the Almohad wonders of the Koutoubia Mosque, renowned for its geometric zellij (mosaics) and intricate cedarwood. We delve deeper into the medina, walking through its maze of laneways and covered markets bursting with energy. Stop by the Spice Square where herbs, spices, snakeskins and chameleons have been traded for centuries, followed by a discovery of the fabled Djemaa el Fna Square. This bustling space is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, famed for its vibrant atmosphere, traditional storytellers, musicians, hawker food stalls and bustling market activity.

Option 3 - Morning experience: Yves Saint Laurent and the Majorelle Gardens

At the Berber Museum, the story of North Africa's oldest civilisation - the Berber, offers an insight into the roots of the Moorish Empire. The private collection of Yves Saint Laurent and his companion, Pierre Berge, this museum is the centrepiece of the Majorelle Gardens. Saint Laurent, on whom Morocco had a profound influence, bought a house nine days after arriving in Marrakech and held residences here until his passing. According to Saint Laurent, it was in Morocco that he discovered the colourful palettes that featured in his creative work. Enjoy a moment to view the memorial in the rose garden, marking the spot where the ashes of Saint Laurent were scattered, before visiting the nearby Yves Saint Laurent Museum dedicated to the work of the master couturier, featuring a rich display of haute couture garments, accessories and sketches.

Day 7 Tangier (Port: Tangier)

After a morning sailing the Moroccan coast, we arrive around midday at a city located at the crossroads of Africa and Europe -- Tangier. Unique among Moroccan cities, Tangier has a chequered past, offering one of Europe's most tantalising stories. Designated an 'International Zone' in the early 20th century, Tangier harboured no taxes, no banking restrictions, no drug, censorship or morality laws. Attracting a mix of expat residents, it played house to everyone from eccentric British nobility to American authors, Franco's civil army to Nazi spies, while it awaited its inclusion in the post-war nation of Morocco. Stories of elicit affairs, underworld deals, and espionage abound in this city, which remains as colourful as its history suggests.

Our 'Your Choice' experiences highlight Morocco's vibrant artisan revival, with guided visits to the medina in Tangier, or a chance to enjoy the culinary heritage of Tangier.

For a more relaxed alternative, a complimentary shuttle will take you from the ship to the centre of Tangier, where you can discover a gentler side of the city. Enjoy time at your leisure to sip mint tea in a local cafe, browse traditional craft shops, or take in the atmosphere at your own pace, before we sail north to Spain.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences

Option 1 - Afternoon experience: Tangier Kasbah District, Kasbah Museum and American Legation Museum

We begin our journey at Tangier's fabled Kasbah. Largely unchanged since Roman times, the Kasbah was the traditional

residence of the Sultan and his harem and is now one of the most fashionable residential areas of Tangier. During a guided stroll, we discover the Grand Socco. This cafe-filled plaza serves as the gateway to Tangier´s medina and was once the haunt of Paul Bowles, William Burroughs and their Beatnik friends who gathered here to discuss life and literature while mingling among alleged spies and expats during the notorious time of international rule. Our next stop is at the American Legation. The first American public property outside the United States, the American Legation is now a museum that traces the history of the relationship between the US and Morocco. As one of the first countries to recognise America's independence, Morocco permitted the new United States government to establish a legation in Tangier in 1821. It is the only historical monument to have remained in American possession since the birth of the American nation. Among several displays here is a letter from George Washington to the Sultan Moulay Abdellah.

Option 2 - Afternoon experience: A Taste of Tangier

This 'foodie' tour of Tangier allows you to dive into the city's culinary heritage. Tangier's cuisine reflects a fascinating blend of Moorish and Spanish influences, with each bite telling a story of its past. From the Moorish tradition of intricate spice blends to Spanish elements like rich, savoury stews, and delicious colonial French deserts, the food here is a testament to the city's eclectic past. Stroll through the historic M'sallah and the old town district, where narrow alleyways and traditional architecture set the stage. Taste local delights like caliente, stuffed dates, and bissara, each crafted with time-honoured techniques. As you visit bustling markets and interact with market sellers, your guide will reveal how these diverse cultural influences have shaped Tangier's unique identity, while we snack like a true local.

Day 8 Málaga, Spain (Ports: Málaga)

Although very much a modern-day city, the apartment blocks and 'expat' clubs of Malaga and the Costa del Sol hide an undercurrent of ancient traditions. Long before beach bars and resorts, this coastline was part of Al-Andalus, ruled by the Moors for nearly eight centuries. Their legacy runs deep, visible in the arches of the Alcazaba, the layout of the old town, and the way the city seemingly harbours something older beneath its surface, steady and enduring.

Our 'Your Choice' experiences today range from an introduction to Malaga's magical sites, or a visit to the Moorish enclave of Ronda. A complimentary shuttle service will operate between the ship and the city centre throughout the day allowing you to explore Malaga at leisure or return to the town after lunch on board.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences

Option 1 - Morning experience: Magical Malaga

Discover the layered history and charm of Malaga on this scenic driving tour, complete with photo stops and minimal walking. Founded nearly 3,000 years ago by the Phoenicians, the city reflects a rich tapestry of Roman roads, Moorish fortresses and Christian cathedrals. Drive along elegant, tree-lined boulevards and admire the grand neo-Baroque Town Hall, one of many architectural highlights. Pause to take in views of the Castillo de

Gibralfaro, a 10th-century Moorish fortress that played a pivotal role in the 1487 Reconquista and remains a powerful symbol of the city. Continue past the majestic Catedral de Malaga, affectionately nicknamed La Manquita, "the one-armed lady "--for its famously unfinished second bell tower. Choose to hop off the coach in town and explore independently or return to the ship for lunch with a free afternoon to enjoy Malaga.

Option 2 - Half Day experience: The Moorish Enclave of Ronda

Venture an hour inland to Andalusia's favourite 'whitewashed town' - Ronda. This famed city excites visitors with a fascinating story of early guerilla warfare and its part in the eventual demise of the Moorish Empire. Straddling the El Tajo gorge, Ronda was once an Islamic stronghold. Here, we visit La Mina de Agua, the former gateway to the city and located at the bottom of the gorge. As Ronda was an Islamic city, all those who entered were obliged to wash and pray beforehand. In 1485, Ronda was besieged by Christian armies, which cut off the city's water supply, and within 10 days, Ronda fell. In less than a decade, the Spanish decreed that all Muslims must leave the peninsula or convert to Christianity.

Day 9 Gibraltar, United Kingdom (Port: Gibraltar)

In the wake of centuries of maritime vessels, we sail into the Port of Gibraltar early morning. More than just an array of Royal Mail red pillar post boxes, fish and chip shops and corner pubs, Gibraltar is a British Overseas Territory and naval stronghold, strategically located at the base of the Iberian Peninsula. Caught up in the legacy of the War of the Spanish Succession, it became embroiled in European politics when the King of Spain died without an heir. Thirteen years later, Sir George Rooke, an English naval commander, captured it for England's King George I, and Gibraltar has remained a British territory ever since. Three hundred years of swashbuckling pirates, fierce naval battles, yellow fever outbreaks and world wars tell a tale of this tiny slice of Britain, simply known by those who live here as 'The Rock'.

Our quintessential British 'Your Choice' experiences showcase the Rock's rich history, iconic mascots and breathtaking views across the Straits of Gibraltar. At the end of your tour, return to the ship for lunch, with views of 'The Rock' from the deck. Join our complimentary afternoon shuttle to explore Gibraltar further. Shop at Marks & Spencer, relax with a pint at a corner pub or send a postcard home from one of Gibraltar's iconic red pillar boxes, with each activity offering a delightful touch of British charm.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Highlights of 'The Rock'

This quintessential British tour of Gibraltar showcases the Rock's rich history, iconic mascots and breathtaking views across the Straits of Gibraltar. Enjoy a scenic drive along Winston Churchill Avenue, a tribute to the 1967 referendum when Gibraltar's residents overwhelmingly voted to remain British rather than join Spain. This historic event remains a cornerstone of Gibraltar's identity. Stop for a photo opportunity at the island's most popular lookout, where on a clear day you can glimpse the coast of the African continent across the famous Strait where Atlantic and Mediterranean waters meet. Continue to the top of The Rock where you will meet Gibraltar's famous macaques,

also known as Barbary apes, the tail-less monkeys that proudly serve as The Rock's mascots.

Option 2 - Morning experience: The Great Siege of Gibraltar

This tour delves into one of The Rock's darkest periods appropriately known as the Great Siege of Gibraltar.

During a dramatic 18th-century battle, Spanish and French forces sought to retake Gibraltar from the British. This intense battle aimed to reclaim the strategic fortress, vital for controlling the crucial naval passage into the Mediterranean. Our locally guided tour offers an insight into the harsh realities faced by the garrison and civilians, such as severe food shortages, when people survived on seaweed and wild onions. We uncover the stringent discipline enforced, including whipping, with one drummer receiving 30,000 lashes in 14 years. Diseases like smallpox and influenza were rife, and scurvy spread widely due to the lack of available fresh produce. Despite only receiving one relief convoy per year, the 5,000 troops heroically defended Gibraltar against 60,000 troops and 49 ships. During the tour, you'll explore the ingenious Great Siege Tunnels carved from solid limestone, which played a vital role in the fortress's defence. Today, the tunnels stand as a museum dedicated to preserving this story. The tour showcases the resilience that cemented Gibraltar's reputation as 'Strong as the Rock of Gibraltar.'

Day 10 Seville, Spain (Port: Seville)

This morning, we cruise the Guadalquivir River, expertly guided by our Spanish pilot, arriving in Seville, Spain's most iconic southern city. We enjoy lunch on board with the skyline of Seville as our backdrop, before joining a 'Your Choice' experience. The Guadalquivir has been a central part of Seville's history and a launchpad for significant voyages. From its banks, explorers like Ferdinand Magellan embarked on their landmark journeys, including Magellan's famous 1519 expedition to circumnavigate the globe. The river was also crucial for trade, linking Seville with distant lands and shaping global commerce.

In the 8th century, the Moors, a diverse brotherhood of Arabs, Berbers, and North Africans, arrived on the Iberian Peninsula and, like a child leaving home, remained away from their homelands for nearly 700 years. They brought with them a spirit of tolerance, coexisting peacefully with Christian and Jewish communities while ruling over the land through small kingdoms characterised by castle-topped villages and fortified cities. Their remarkable contributions in mathematics, astronomy, and Moorish architecture left a lasting mark on Europe.

Choose between two locally guided tours of Seville for an unforgettable experience, before we sail the river mid-evening, following its path to the coast, where it meets the sea at Cadiz. (Note: as Seville is a piloted port our arrival time will not be confirmed until closer to our date of arrival, therefore the times of the excursions may need to be adjusted)

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Afternoon experience: Introducing Seville

Take in the sights that shape Seville's unique character on this introductory coach tour. Pass by Spain's most impressive

medieval traffic control tower, the 13th-century Gold Tower, which once managed river traffic and protected the city's busy port. Drive through the lively neighborhood of Triana, famous for flamenco, colorful houses, historic churches, and traditional pottery workshops, and see parts of the city built for the Universal Expositions of 1929 and 1992, including the striking Alamillo Bridge by Santiago Calatrava and the beautiful Plaza de España, where a short stroll reveals its grand pavilions and lush surroundings. Choose to remain in Seville's historic heart, where you can visit its Alcazar, Cathedral and other 'walkable' sites at your own pace or return to the ship.

Option 2 - Afternoon experience: Walking the Heart of Seville

Our local guide tells a tale of Seville on this extensive walking tour, with stories of history's famed conquerors, stories of the 'New World,' and a clash of cultures as compelling as the buildings we visit. This walking tour of Seville's UNESCO World Heritage sites begins with the Alcazar. Built in the 14th century in Mudejar style, the Alcazar is the oldest royal residence in Europe still in use. Islam and Christianity vied for power here, with Christianity asserting dominance by constructing Europe's third-largest cathedral directly over a 12th-century mosque. The largest Gothic structure in the world, the cathedral houses many notable figures. In 1899, 400 years after his death, the renowned explorer Christopher Columbus was finally laid to rest in Seville Cathedral, where our guide introduces us to this magnificent structure with time to pull up a pew. We'll also explore areas of Seville developed for the Universal Expositions of 1929 and 1992, including the magnificent Plaza de España, a semi-circular square framed by ornate pavilions built for the earlier Expo, before returning to the ship.

Day 11 Cádiz (Port: Cádiz)

The proud city of Cadiz sits at the mouth of the Guadalquivir River. As the gateway to the Mediterranean, Cadiz is touted as the oldest continuously inhabited settlement in Europe, with its dominant families claiming ancestry dating back to Roman times, when the city was called Ceret, and the wine, Vinum Ceretensis. Moorish rule over the port, which was renamed Jaz rat Q dis, lasted for 500 years, with the capture of Cadiz by Alfonso X of Castile. Its renewed prosperity dated from the discovery of America in 1492, when it became the headquarters of the Spanish treasure fleets, and the port to nearby Jerez, which produced liquid gold.

Choose your preferred 'Your Choice' morning experience to discover the unique character of Andalusian life. This afternoon, enjoy free time to explore Cadiz at your own pace, with Sylvia Earle moored directly in town. Browse its boutique shops, sample tapas in the many lively bars, or visit local craft stores showcasing traditional Andalusian wares.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Jerez - More than a Simple Sherry

Head west to the coastal town of Jerez to discover a rich mix of Islamic and Christian monuments surrounding the Alcazar, as we journey through the region's history and learn how each ruling empire left a lasting impression on the city's culture. It is the fortified wine, known worldwide as sherry, which has dictated the fate of Jerez. Introduced by the Phoenicians in

1,100 BCE, this popular wine has brought both wealth and strife. Jerez's bodegas and local rural wineries remain the world's largest producers of sherry, which although considered by some as a wine that has seen better days, is as popular in Spain today as it was in centuries past. After a short walk of the historic centre of Jerez, we spend time with a wine expert who will teach us how to distinguish wine quality, with the opportunity to sample some fine drops for ourselves.

Option 2 - Morning experience: The Andalusian Enclave of Vejer de la Frontera

No visit to Andalusia is complete without time spent in one of its whitewashed hilltop towns. We spend our morning in Vejer de la Frontera, a historic stronghold that once marked the borderlands between Muslim territories and encroaching Catholic lands. Renowned as one of the most authentic of the Pueblos Blancos, Vejer's whitewashed buildings are designed to reflect the sun and ward off the intense summer heat. As we stroll through its narrow, winding streets, we will be inspired by the ancient Moorish Castle, the majestic Church of the Divine Saviour, and the vibrant Plaza España, all while uncovering tales of Moorish conquerors, Castilian kings, and feudal uprisings. With views to the coast, Vejer offers a glimpse into the rich history that defines the hilltop towns of Andalusia and their connection to the surrounding lowlands, linking inland Spain to the coastline.

Option 3 - Midday experience: Historic Cadiz on the Tapas Trail

Join us on a tapas tour through the historic heart of Cadiz, where every bite tells a story shaped by sea, trade, and tradition. We weave through the whitewashed lanes of the Casco Antiguo, past sun-dappled plazas, baroque churches, and grand 18th-century merchant houses--reminders of Cadiz's Golden Age, when riches from the Americas poured into its bustling port. Today, the city trades in flavours rather than silver, especially those of the sea. As we hop from tavern to tavern with our local guide, we enjoy delicacies that have fed Cadiz for millennia.

Day 12 Portimão, Portugal (Port: Portimão)

Set on the estuary of the Rio Arade, Portimao was a flourishing fishing village until only 30 years ago. Greeks, Phoenicians and Carthaginians all plied their trade but in the 11th century the Moors arrived, and Burj Munt as it became known, never looked back. A gateway to the fortified town of Silves and neighbour to a coast of classic, caved beaches, Portimao fishes for a different catch these days, with its marina home to a flotilla of gently bobbing yachts, and riverfront promenade host to casual cafes and bars.

Our 'Your Choice' experiences today offer three distinct ways to explore the region. Choose a visit to the nearby hilltop town of Silves, accompanied by a Portuguese pottery demonstration or winery visit and tasting. Alternatively, take in sweeping coastal views on a panoramic drive, accompanied by a stroll along a section of the Caminho dos Promontorios, for a magical morning on the Algarve.

We return to the ship for lunch, after which you may wish to explore the shops, bars, and cafes of Portimao at your own pace, before we sail for Portugal's capital city, Lisbon, late-afternoon.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Silves and Portuguese wine tasting

Once the capital of the Algarve's Moorish kingdom, Silves hosts us this morning with an introductory locally guided tour, and time to explore at our own pace. Silves is famous for its 11th century red sandstone Castelo de Silves, whose square turrets and impenetrable ramparts loom over the town from an immense orange grove. This impressive castle once formed part of the wall that encircled the city and was an important defence as the residence of the Moorish kings of the Al-Garb.

From Silves, we take a short drive to the Quinta dos Vales estate for a Portuguese wine tasting experience. Surrounded by peaceful countryside, we'll sample a variety of regional wines, which may include a crisp rose, a viognier with light tropical notes, or a smooth red blend of cabernet sauvignon and trincadeira -- all accompanied by local delicacies, offering a delicious glimpse into the flavours of the Algarve.

Option 2 - Morning experience: Silves Castle and Portuguese Pottery

This morning, we're welcomed by the historic town of Silves, once the capital of the Algarve. Our visit includes a locally guided tour of its castle ramparts and a pottery demonstration that connects us to the region's artisanal traditions. Showcasing a unique blend of heritage, culture and imagination, emphasised by determination and passion, Portuguese ceramics are famous worldwide. We enjoy time with a local ceramicist, who welcomes us to their studio. They share the art of modelling clay pieces into works of art and demonstrate how to make various pieces by using the potter's wheel and hand-working clay. In Silves we tour the 11th-century red sandstone Castelo de Silves, whose square turrets and impenetrable ramparts loom over the town from an immense orange grove. This impressive castle once formed part of the wall that encircled the city and was an important defence as the residence of the Moorish kings of the Al-Garb. Steeped in history, the castle has a 60-metre-deep well and a set of vaulted cisterns that still supplies the town with water. We return to the ship for lunch, with time this afternoon to explore Portimao independently.

Option 3 - Morning experience: Ferragudo and the Path of the Headlands

A short drive takes us to Ferragudo, a traditional fishing village that captures the essence of southern Portugal.

Here, we'll wander along the waterfront, where colourful boats bob in the harbour and fishermen mend their nets in the sun. As we explore the cobbled streets, we'll pass bougainvillea-covered houses and get a feel for the village's easy-going rhythm. The coastline of this region is a characterised by jagged cliffs and hidden coves, shaped over millennia by wind, water, and shifting earth. Along this rugged edge lies the Caminho dos Promontorios, or Path of the Headlands -- a scenic clifftop trail that traces a series of promontories alternating with recessed beaches and secluded inlets. On this guided walk, we explore

around 1.5 kilometres (one mile) of the trail, delving into the region's geology, gaining an insight into what makes this stretch of shoreline so uniquely captivating.

Day 13 Disembark Lisbon (Port: Lisbon)

Lisbon, set along the broad waters of the River Tagus, became the launch point for Portugal's Golden Age of Exploration. From this historic harbour, famed navigators like Vasco da Gama and Magellan sailed to chart new worlds, opening vital trade routes and bringing immense wealth to their homeland. That prosperity left its mark on the city through grand baroque buildings, ornate churches, and tiled pavements. But Lisbon's story is also one of resilience. In 1755 a powerful earthquake, followed by tsunamis and fire, destroyed most of the city. What rose from the ruins is the Lisbon we see today, with graceful boulevards, elegant facades, and a vibrant waterfront that still echoes its maritime past.

We bid the Sylvia Earle farewell. Our locally guided tour visits Belem, where the city's seafaring legacy is on full display. We'll view the Monastery of Jeronimos, the striking Monument to the Discoveries, which honours Prince Henry the Navigator and his explorers, and the iconic Torre de Belem, a fortress that once guarded the entrance to the city for returning ships. Enjoy some free time in Lisbon's charming city centre, perfect for wandering cobbled streets, travelling on one of its quirky trams, sampling local flavours, or simply soaking in the riverside views, before we transfer to our hotel for a final night in Portugal.

Accommodation: Lisbon Hotel (or similar)

Meals: Breakfast onboard

Day 14 Depart Lisbon

After breakfast, check-out of your hotel and transfer to the airport for your onward flight.

Meals: Breakfast

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

YOUR SHIP: DOUGLAS MAWSON

YOUR SHIP: **Douglas Mawson**

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Douglas Mawson was launched in 2025. Named after the legendary Australian geologist and explorer, this new small ship embodies Mawson's pioneering spirit and is designed for global discovery. Featuring the revolutionary Ulstein X-BOW® and purpose-built with enhanced sustainability features, it takes a maximum 154 adventurers to the world's wildest places in smooth, quiet comfort. It boasts our most extensive range of cabins yet, including a range of single cabins. The Douglas Mawson features a host of amenities to help you connect with like-minded travellers and elevate your time onboard this floating base camp for adventure. After a long day of exploring, head to the back deck to swim in the heated outdoor swimming pool, find a sun bed to read on, or soak in one of two Jacuzzis. Work up a sweat in the gym before unwinding in the sauna, resolve to learn something new in the Citizen Science Centre, then enjoy a delicious meal with new and old friends in one of two restaurants. Or, with multiple observation areas throughout the ship, simply relax in comfort while you keep watch for wildlife or incredible landscapes unfold before you. While enjoying the luxurious amenities onboard, you can rest assured that the aim is to get you off the ship to explore the natural environment as much as possible to enjoy some unique activities remains unchanged. Newest Ulstein X-BOW ® The Douglas Mawson features the newest streamlined Ulstein X-BOW®, designed for global discovery. The revolutionary design cuts through the swell, offering unrivalled stability on ocean crossings and helping to reduce fuel consumption. It's just one of the many sustainability features that helps make travel more responsible. Heated Pool, Jacuzzis & Sauna In between landings, enjoy access to the onboard gym or unwind in the sauna. Or head to the back deck to swim in the heated outdoor pool, enjoy a drink at the pool bar, or soak in one of two Jacuzzis, watching the world go by. Leading Technology The Douglas Mawson is at the cutting edge of nautical technology, fitted with industry-leading technology including world-class return-to-port equipment. The ship also features a medical clinic designed for use in remote areas. Built for Adventure The Douglas Mawson features Zodiac access points and an activities platform, making boarding the Zodiacs as quick, efficient and safe as possible, minimising wait times and getting you closer to the action for longer. In our mudroom you will have access to lockers to store gear & boots and rapid drying areas for clothing. More Cabin Choices The Douglas Mawson features 11 different types of cabins, including a range of spacious single berth cabins - all adorned with elegant Nordic interior design features. Multiple Observation Areas As you explore the ship you will find indoor lounge areas with floor-to ceiling windows, and multiple open decks with expansive 270-360 degree views. The Glass Atrium Lounge inside the bow is a fantastic place to sit and watch for wildlife - with a drink in hand. There is no shortage of

spaces to take in the majesty of the incredible world outside! Lecture Theatre On all expeditions you will meet naturalists and local specialists, who offer presentations on their area of expertise to enhance your appreciation of the destination you are exploring. Join the team in the lecture theatre for presentations covering a broad range of topics to suit every interest, from history and culture to biology and climate change. Regardless of the topic, they all have one thing in common: they all aim to engage, educate, entertain and turn you into an ambassador for the planet. Citizen Science Center & Lounge Learn more about the world and the unique destinations Aurora visits by visiting the onboard naturalist and Expedition Team in the world-class Citizen Science Center. You will be rewarded for your thirst for knowledge with one of the best views on the ship. Library With floor-to-ceiling windows, the library is a peaceful sanctuary where you can find non-fiction books to read up on the day's destinations, use a public laptop to organise your photos or play board games with newfound friends. Choose from our range of informative non-fiction titles, wildlife guidebooks, travel journals, novels and a selection of children's books and board games. Wildlife guides, books and binoculars can also be found on the observation lounge on Deck 7. Mudroom No need to take your wet expedition gear back to your cabin to dry. Keep your cabin warm and cosy by leaving your outer jackets and pants in the mudroom. The mudroom is your launchpad for all shore excursions and activities. Here, you will have access to a locker when you can hang your gear up to dry, and store your boots between excursions. Swimming Pool & Jacuzzis There are two Jacuzzis on the top outside deck which offer amazing views of the world outside, a heated outdoor pool surrounded by sun beds you can relax on after a long day of exploring, and a pool bar. Gym & Sauna During your voyage, enjoy complimentary access to the gym or visit our sauna, which we highly recommend after the Polar Plunge! Restaurants One of the most important parts of any expedition is the food! Whatever adventures the day holds, you will be fuelled-up with hearty meals and delicious morning/afternoon teas cooked by our onboard chefs. Meals are a great time to soak up the expedition camaraderie in our open seating dining area. Share stories with your fellow travellers and ask our expedition team questions that may have come up during the day. Tea, coffee and snacks are available 24 hours a day, and our chefs offer different menu options and courses for each meal. Enjoy the range of house wine, beers and soft drinks included with dinner after a long day in the wild. We also invite you to join your captain and expedition team for informal Captain's Farewell drinks, with complimentary beverages and cocktail appetisers, followed by a 3 course meal. Bars & Lounges Communal meeting areas have always played a major role in fostering the warm camaraderie on board our ships. They are the heart of the expedition, where people meet to share tales from the day, swap photos, keep an eye out for wildlife and watch the sun go down. The bars and lounges on board are refined yet inviting places to gather, with floor-to-ceiling windows offering stunning views, and of course friendly bartenders to shoot the

breeze with.

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