



Voyages of a lifetime
by Tall Ship

Award-Winning Service - the customers' verdict

Published in June 2014, Which?, probably the country's most respected not-for-profit consumer organisation, voted Riviera Travel in the top three Holiday Companies in the UK, improving on our 2013 score of the top eight, awarding us their coveted 'Recommended Provider' status. Late in 2013, we improved our ranking in the 'Guardian and Observer' Travel Awards, achieving second place in the 'Best Large Tour Operator' category and in the 'Telegraph Travel Awards' we were voted their second 'Favourite Escorted Tour Operator' and second 'Favourite River Cruise Operator'.

These are Britain's most prestigious such awards, are voted for by the travelling public alone, indicating superb service and quality consistency. We beat nationally recognised companies in these incredibly respected Awards and of course were deeply honoured and humbled to be recognised in this way.

For all those of you who kindly voted for us, thank you, it really does mean so much. However, superb as these awards are, we have no intention of resting on our laurels and will always do our best to exceed your ever-rising expectations.



Just imagine this: gentle waves rhythmically lapping against a wind-driven hull, the smell of the salty spray on the freshening breeze, the huge taut sails majestically towering above, reflecting the dazzling sun which glints on the clear azure waters before you; a pod of young dolphins playfully dance in the curling bow wave and the backdrop to some of the most outstandingly beautiful coastlines in the world. Nothing beats the romance of being at sea on a true 'Tall Ship' so we invite you to join us aboard the magnificent sister ships, the SPV Royal Clipper, the SPV Star Clipper and the SPV Star Flyer - where ultimate relaxation and true pampering in utmost luxury await you! Within the setting of these evocative and stylish Tall Ships is a world for those who seek a genuine sailing experience and wish to re-discover a maritime tradition, without sacrificing hard-earned creature comforts. These ships glide effortlessly through the waves, just like their predecessors did a century and a half ago, but unlike then, nowadays the sails are unfurled by computer, hammocks have been replaced by sumptuously appointed cabins and 'hard tack' by exquisite cuisine!

These beautiful, traditionally built ships are living proof that craftsmanship is far from dead with both making extensive use of rich hardwoods, polished brass and wrought iron fittings, marble, deep pile carpets and tasteful furnishings which all together have created ships of outstanding harmony, beauty and luxury. They are a long way from being typical cruise ships and are of a sufficiently intimate size to sail close to the shore where the views are stunning, plus visiting small, fascinating ports: so not only do you have a wonderful seafaring experience, you are simultaneously able to learn much more about the areas you are sailing through.

Ships are nothing without their crew and as you would expect on these prestigious crafts, from the Stewards to the Captain - all are commensurate professionals. Indeed the Captain of the Royal Clipper once told us he gets to know every one of his passengers during a voyage, and absolutely loves questions - he cares that much.

You will love the informality of life on board too and you will be amazed that even within the confines of the ship you can always find places to be alone if you wish, perhaps catch up on some reading or as the sun sets, just lean over the teak rail, drink in hand, reflect how good life can be and how lucky you are.





Royal Clipper dining room



Royal Clipper category 2 cabin

The Royal Clipper

The inspiration for the luxurious Royal Clipper was the 1904-built Preussen and this is now the largest, and only, five-masted sailing ship conceived since that time. With her 42 sails fully deployed she is truly an awesome sight! With state-of-the-art navigation systems, all the comforts you could wish for and 106 crew attending just 223 guests, service levels on board are truly impeccable.

The 1,760 square metres of open deck and three swimming pools create a wonderfully spacious outdoor environment and the open-air bar is the ideal place to chat with your like-minded travelling companions, discussing how the ancient Romans lived in Pompeii, why Dubrovnik is called the 'Pearl of the Adriatic' and if the Amalfi coast really is Europe's most beautiful. As the sun slips gently below the horizon in an explosion of reds and oranges, unwind, sip an aperitif and acknowledge that life really doesn't get much better than this!

The ship is constructed to the highest standards and comprises three accommodation decks: Commodore, Clipper and Main deck - all air-conditioned throughout and topped by an extensive Sun Deck. In an imaginative design, a three-deck atrium allows natural light to penetrate into the elegantly furnished dining-room which tastefully reflects the first-class nautical heritage of yesteryear. Also leading on to the atrium is the piano bar, again tastefully furnished with beautiful carpets and comfortable armchairs, wonderful to relax in after dinner with a digestif. If you feel like pampering yourself you can visit the spa for a variety of treatments, or to keep in trim there is a gym too, featuring rather unusual under-sea portholes. On the Sun Deck you can relax, catch up on some reading, take a dip in one of the three small pools or for the

more adventurous, why not lie in the netting around the bowsprit and be mesmerised by the bow slicing through the waves below you. Admire the constantly changing views as the Captain expertly uses the wind to steer our passage past the stunning archipelagos into timeless ports of call on our fascinating journey of discovery - and what a journey this is!

Dining on board

The outstanding cuisine on board really is an exceptional experience with a highly professional team of chefs, genuinely surpassing your expectations.

For early risers, complimentary tea, coffee and fruit juices are available in the bar. Breakfast is a 5-star sumptuous international buffet with all the dishes, hot, cold and fresh tropical fruits you'd possibly imagine, plus an omelette station with bread and pastries freshly baked on-board daily. Tea and coffee are available throughout the day and lunch consists of a truly superb buffet, so you can eat as little or as much as you wish. There are so many choices and the desserts are legendary. Highlight of the day though, is your delicious dinner, with a choice of superbly created dishes both local and from all over the world. The setting is perfect too; tasteful wood furniture, crisp table linen with fine tableware, crowned by excellent and yet unobtrusive service. This is much more akin to on-shore fine dining than cruise ship catering, whilst the open seating policy promotes the relaxed ambience we seek to achieve.

SAMPLE MENU

Starters

Smoked trout with cucumber jelly

Or

Wild mushroom risotto served with sautéed chicken liver

SOUP

Tuscan bean soup with olive oil

SORBET

Lemon sorbet

Main courses

Grilled swordfish fillet flavoured with olive oil

Or

Grilled fillet of pork with Calvados cream sauce & rösti potatoes

Or

Beef Stroganoff

Or

Vegetable medley with garlic croutons

SALAD

Celery & carrot salad

Desserts

Peach salad & green tea mousse

Or

Warm chocolate cake with cherry sauce

Or

Caramel ice cream

CHEESE PLATTER

A selection of international cheeses served with fresh fruit & biscuits



The Royal Clipper

A Mediterranean Odyssey

ROME – SORRENTO – CAPRI – TAORMINA
OLYMPIA – CORFU – KOTOR
DUBROVNIK – HVAR – ROVINJ – VENICE

Sail away on board a true 'Tall Ship'
14 days from only £2,999

- » Flight to Rome and return flight from Venice
- » Superbly appointed cabins, beautifully crafted using teak and marble on the world's only authentic five-masted sailing ship
- » Exquisite fine dining prepared by inspired chefs
- » Stay in hand-picked hotels in Rome and Venice, with hotel upgrade option available
- » Guided tour of Rome, home to the ancient world's mightiest empire, the Vatican and some of the world's best shopping
- » Visit to gorgeous Sorrento and guided tour of thought-provoking Pompeii – a city frozen in time
- » Visit the stunning island of Capri
- » Sail past the Aeolian Islands and Stromboli, the most consistently active volcano in Europe
- » Absorb the history of the ancient Greek Amphitheatre in Sicily's Taormina – one of the most attractive hill-top villages in Italy
- » See the amazing remains of ancient Olympia, birthplace of the Olympic Games
- » Tour Corfu's atmospheric old town – unchanged for centuries
- » Visit Kotor, a nostalgic journey to the Mediterranean as it was thirty years ago in Montenegro's most dramatic setting
- » Tour of Dubrovnik, glistening Pearl of the Adriatic
- » Explore the beautiful verdant isle of Hvar and the extraordinary Dalmatian coast
- » Visit to Rovinj, one of the most picturesque ports on the Adriatic
- » Guided tour of romantic Venice, probably the most unique city in the world
- » Escorted by an experienced Tour Manager

DAY 1 You should arrive at the airport to take your flight to Rome where we stay one night with breakfast. Your hotel is the four-star Villa Pamphili with breakfast.

DAY 2 Rome was, is and always will be, one of the world's most compelling cities with probably more to see here than in any other capital on earth. Boasting an uninterrupted recorded history for upwards of 2,500 years, nowhere else seems to have managed to combine, and with such finesse, a heritage of classical antiquities and medieval buildings from Renaissance palaces to intricate baroque piazzas. The grandeur of the Colosseum, scene of some of the most cruel acts ever committed, the Appian Way where Spartacus was crucified, the magnificence of St. Peter's, the grandeur of the Vatican, the sheer brilliance of the Sistine Chapel, the Trevi Fountain and flamboyant Baroque buildings are all here – and the list is endless. But Rome is much more than monuments alone, incredible though they are! A city is nothing without people and Rome's citizens have been amongst the most colourful in history with probably nowhere having been visited by so many of the world's famous for so long: Julius Caesar, Cleopatra, Nero, Atilla the Hun, St Peter, the Medici, Michelangelo, Napoleon, Byron, Garibaldi and Pope Jean-Paul II - all captivated by its magnificence.

There is a host of other things to experience too. Take a coffee in the famous Caffè Greco, once the haunt of Keats, Byron and Wagner. You could shop along the Via Condotti for some of the finest clothes you will find anywhere – fashion straight from the catwalk. Perhaps the most satisfying activity though, is simply to wander where your feet take you and explore this wonderful city at your leisure stopping off where you wish. Rome will not fail to captivate you.

This afternoon the adventure begins. We drive to the port of Civitavecchia to board the SPV Royal Clipper and the crew, ready to welcome you, ensure you settle in and familiarise yourself with the ship, your first-class floating hotel. As we sit down for the first of our delectable dinners, the ship gently slips her mooring and heads off into the Tyrrhenian Sea – bon voyage!

DAY 3 The first morning on board is always a thrill: the unique sound of the hull powerfully cutting through the clear waters below is quite electrifying.

Today we anchor below the multi-hued villas and houses of Sorrento, which came to fame during the late 18th century when it became part of the 'Grand Tour' for Europe's aristocracy. Today it's everything you imagine an Italian town to be: cobbled streets and quaint squares, bright flowers decorating every pastel-coloured, crumbling building, the stylish young astride their 'vespas' and the wondrous aroma of fresh coffee drifting from the pavement cafés which grace almost every street corner.

Or you can visit nearby Pompeii where we have an included guided tour of this amazing site. The story is well known, but this is more than a series of ruins; the state of preservation is remarkable and even if you are not so interested in the history, you cannot fail to be moved by the scale of the city, the construction of which puts many of our modern structures to shame. Much of our knowledge of the life of the ordinary Roman, their habits, social structure, class systems and domestic arrangements comes from the excavations at Pompeii. Some of the baths are virtually complete as are various murals and mosaics, with some buildings displaying graffiti describing political events of the period, romantic entanglements and some just plain gossip! You can even see the traffic-calming measures and how the one-way system operated and appreciate the high standard of living of the Roman elite. You will be moved by the simultaneously fascinating yet eerie, pained expressions of the victims of Vesuvius, preserved as a monument for all time.





We continue our tour with a visit to the perpetrator of this cataclysmic act, Vesuvius itself. Bizarrely enough, the foot of the volcano is now populated and the lower slopes produce some of the finest wine in the area! The coach will take you most of the way up, giving panoramic views of the whole bay and the almost lunar landscape caused by the last eruption.

DAY 4 This morning feast your eyes on the legendary coast of Capri! Cited by most guidebooks as Europe's most beautiful, a claim, once seen, it is difficult to refute. High ochre-coloured cliffs, topped with thick forest plunge dramatically into the calm blue Mediterranean, with sea birds soaring on the many thermals and the air full of the scent of pine forests and wild flowers.

Capri has long been sought after: three Roman Emperors were attracted here; both D.H. Lawrence and George Bernard Shaw sought inspiration, whilst Graham Greene and Gracie Fields made it their home. It is easy to see why it is so adored: as we approach the island, you can see fishing boats at anchor rising and falling with the waves and pretty shops lining the quaint quayside. The picturesque main town is perched high above and you may wish to visit the 'Blue Grotto' whilst you are here, a large cavern reachable only by boat, and which by a freak of nature is bathed in an incandescent blue light.

Early evening we return to the Royal Clipper and as we enjoy another magnificent sunset we set sail southwards towards Sicily, passing the volcanic Aeolian Islands and the occasionally glowing crater of Stromboli during the night.

DAY 5 This morning you awake on the eastern shore of Sicily sailing towards the bay of Taormina. This is one of the smartest and most exclusive small towns in Italy and you would find it difficult to find a more agreeable spot in which to spend the day! Retaining much of its medieval charm, wonderfully situated on a high balcony, facing Etna and overlooking the sea, it is renowned for its beautiful gardens and peaceful atmosphere. Today, its short main street is lined by smart designer boutiques and exclusive jewellers with tiny side streets, some of which are so narrow you can touch both sides at once, leading to intimate piazzas lined with atmospheric family-run restaurants. As you would expect in a country so famous for its cuisine, speciality food shops selling fresh pasta, olives, Sicilian wine and the local Marsala abound. Splashes of vibrant colour from the smart window boxes and stylish locals deep in animated conversation complete the picture.

Our included tour of Taormina takes in its greatest claim to fame: its amazing theatre, a legacy of the ancient Greeks. Wonderfully preserved and still in use today, it has a panoramic view of Etna, Europe's highest volcano, as its awesome natural backdrop!

DAY 6 As the wind fills the sails today we head east across the Adriatic past the southernmost point of Italy towards the coastline of the Peloponnese in Greece. We are at sea today, so what is it to be? Top up your tan on the sun deck or have a dip in one of the pools. You are most welcome to visit the bridge too, but for the most outstanding view of all why not ascend up to the 'crow's nest' (with

harness!) or perhaps just catch up on some reading. Let your mind wander and reflect on who, in the same manner, has crossed these seas before you: Julius Caesar, Cleopatra, the Crusaders, the Venetians, Napoleon and countless others.

DAY 7 This morning we arrive in Katakolon, a small port on the western coast of the Peloponnese and the gateway to one of the world's greatest ancient sites: Olympia. The ancient Olympic Games were as major an occasion then as they are today – though hopefully cheaper to stage! Taking place every four years, the ancient stadium had a staggering capacity of 45,000, a huge number and a clear indication of the event's importance. All military conflicts ceased for the duration and huge rewards were conferred on the winners, whilst penalties for cheating included fines, bans and public embarrassment - how little has changed! The Olympiad continued for about 1,000 years and this morning we experience a fascinating tour of the site, also visiting the excellent museum housing numerous extraordinary finds, which include superb bronze artefacts displaying exquisite workmanship.

DAY 8 This morning we arrive in the enchanting island of Corfu, at the mouth of the Adriatic. Between Italy and mainland Greece, with just a narrow channel of sea separating it from Albania, this is Greece's emerald isle, cloaked in olive, pine and cypress trees and well renowned for the beauty of its spectacular coastline.

The island has a chequered past: colonised by the ancient Corinthians, then the Romans and the Byzantines, it fell to the Venetians, was captured by the French, and finally the British, before joining modern Greece in 1864. All have influenced picturesque Corfu Town, one of the most attractive and best-preserved medieval towns in Europe which owes much of its charm to the disparate architectural elements it contains: its two massive Venetian fortresses and the grand palaces and public buildings from the French and British eras.





We have a choice of two included tours. Our Achilleion & Corfu Town trip visits the splendid palace built by the Empress Elizabeth of Austria, also used by the Greek royal family. We return to Corfu Town, for a walking tour amongst the maze of charming narrow lanes, ending with some free time around the 'Spianada', the town's main square, lined with cafés where you can relax with some traditional meze.

Our second option is a drive towards the famous bays of Paleokastritsa, known as the Amalfi coast of

Greece. As you cross the countryside, you'll see how little things have changed: in the villages black-robed women carrying firewood still ride along side-saddle on their mules! We visit the Byzantine Monastery of the Virgin – still inhabited by a community of monks – and its small museum, housing a unique collection of Byzantine icons. From the gardens you can admire breathtaking views over the beautiful bays of Paleokastritsa below, with their crystal-clear waters and rocky promontories. Opposite is the 13th century fort of Angelokastro, perched high on a rocky pillar, rising a thousand feet from the sea. We return to the Old Town of Corfu for a walking tour and some free time.

The Royal Clipper sets sail from Corfu in the late afternoon.

DAY 9 By morning you will have crossed into outstandingly beautiful Montenegro with its sapphire-blue coastline. Prepare to be truly amazed by the views! We sail into a huge inland sea, almost a lake, with the topography rather reminiscent of Switzerland. Reflections of the surrounding mountains dance on the water whilst sleepy, timeless fishing villages hug the shoreline. At lunchtime we anchor and

visit Kotor, nestling below a mountainside in probably Montenegro's most dramatic setting. Walled, with a labyrinth of cobbled streets surrounding its Orthodox Cathedral that radiate to quiet intimate squares, it is a delight to explore. Its bustling market really is from yesteryear, selling homemade cheese, cured hams, honey and Mediterranean vegetables of every colour, shape and size in a refreshingly chaotic manner! You can try some of the local wine too, which despite its lack of international exposure, is rather good – and exceptional value. We weigh anchor late evening and continue our northward voyage.

DAY 10 As you wake this morning you will again be treated to the continuing delight of the Dalmatian coast before we gently round the headland when the unique city of Dubrovnik, Pearl of the Adriatic, makes its astonishing debut.

An independent city-state for much of its history, Dubrovnik has evolved differently to the rest of Croatia. The city threw off its Venetian masters in medieval times and founded a commercial empire trading with the eastern Mediterranean, France, Spain and later the Ottoman Empire. As so often happened, the city began to reflect its resultant wealth and today this wonderfully baroque city proudly nestles behind its huge imposing ramparts in a situation of outstanding natural beauty. The main avenue, lined by unspoilt intimate cafés, is completely paved with marble, which dazzles in the sunlight and gives credence to its description as the 'Pearl of the Adriatic'.



Throughout the city you will find a wonderful array of monasteries, beautifully decorated churches and civic buildings dating from the 14th century, reflecting Dubrovnik's outstanding artistic heritage. We have an included guided walking tour seeing all this and more, after which you are free to explore at your leisure before rejoining the Royal Clipper for dinner. We set sail tonight heading north to the undeniably beautiful island of Hvar.

DAY 11 Part of the Roman Empire, Croatia was then ruled in medieval times by the Venetians. Subsequently, it became part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and finally Italian. Latterly it was incorporated into Yugoslavia before eventually becoming independent. Totally unspoilt, Croatia today is how the Mediterranean was perhaps a generation ago: the towns still very traditional with little unsightly development spoiling the wonderful natural coastline.

A stunning island in the Dalmatian archipelago, Hvar is one of the most enchanting spots in the entire Mediterranean. We disembark into this delightful and bewitching little town where wandering is a joy! Compact and cosy, even the streets have no names. Should you wish to explore the island itself, there is a jeep safari that you can purchase locally which visits the legacies left by the Romans and Greeks and abandoned medieval villages.

As we enjoy another assault on the taste buds during dinner we continue our southward journey sailing along one of the most beautiful stretches of water in the world - the amazing Dalmatian coast. This archipelago has to be seen to be believed: a series of islands, some small, some large, some with tiny medieval fishing villages clinging to the seashore, all covered by a green carpet of lush Mediterranean forest that exudes its typical pine scent in the warm night air. This evening nothing will beat the exhilaration of a 'sundowner' on deck, as the sun sets in the west and the stars twinkle above in the clear night sky.

DAY 12 Today as the morning unfurls we approach the dramatic Istrian peninsula.

We disembark at the pretty fishing port of Rovinj where a maze of Italianate waterside buildings perches above the crystal blue of the Adriatic. The most satisfying activity here is to simply lose oneself in the web of medieval alleyways and lanes spreading out from the waterfront. From the splendid baroque church enjoy the views across the 22 small islands that form a natural park, or stroll along the steps of Grisja Street lined with art galleries, before resting for a quiet drink in one of the charming harbour-side cafés.

This afternoon the Royal Clipper sets sail on the final leg of our odyssey, towards Venice. This is the final opportunity to relax on board so take a dip in the pool and watch the sun setting for the final time in a blaze of colour before enjoying your last dinner on board this spectacular ship.

DAY 13 This morning we disembark at Venice and there is still plenty to enjoy: we have an included tour of the city before checking into our hotel, the four-star Plaza in Mestre, staying one night with breakfast.

Venice is quite unique in the truest sense of the word and this morning's included tour will reveal the city's most famous sights including the glorious Doge's Palace, St. Mark's with its magnificently decorated Basilica and grandiose square, the legendary Bridge of Sighs, the Rialto plus a host of other fascinating gems. After this you will have some free time to explore as you wish, perhaps starting with a peaceful gondola ride on Venice's backwaters, or a trip on the iconic vaporetto water bus along the Grand Canal which teems with vessels of all sorts, just as it has for centuries. For art lovers, the Accademia houses a world-class collection of incredible masterpieces, whilst the markets near the Rialto are as traditional as you can get and the view from the Campanile bell tower is unrivalled possibly anywhere in the world. Away from the bustle though, is another equally fascinating Venice - endless quiet corners waiting to be discovered, washing stretched high across narrow canals between picturesque yet crumbling buildings, curious little shops dotted here and there and locals putting the world to rights in tiny tucked-away bars.

DAY 14 Today at the appropriate time you will be taken to the airport for your flight home. Whilst the holiday may be over, reminiscences of the sights you have seen, experiences you have had and people you have met on this unique and special voyage of discovery will remain with you for a very long time to come.



The Star Clipper

An Aegean Odyssey

ATHENS - MONEMVASIA - SANTORINI
PATMOS - CHIOS - PERGAMON
TROY - ISTANBUL

Sail away on board a true 'Tall Ship'
10 days from only £2,499

- » Scheduled flight to Athens and return flight from Istanbul
- » A fascinating voyage of discovery visiting Athens and Istanbul – combining some of the world's most beautiful islands with little-known gems and the great classical sites of Pergamon and Troy
- » Stay in excellent four-star hotels in Athens and Istanbul, with five-star option available
- » Guided tours of the Acropolis, the Athenian Agora and the acclaimed new Acropolis museum
- » Included shore excursions in every port of call
- » Visit the amazingly preserved walled town of Monemvasia, the 'Gibraltar of the East' and a medieval marvel
- » Sail into the vast caldera of Santorini, the fabled site of Atlantis and one of the world's most breathtaking anchorages
- » Explore Patmos, stunningly beautiful and beloved of the 'jet-set'
- » Visit Chios, one of the most fertile and richest islands in Greece, known in ancient times for its superb wine
- » Sail along the Turkish coast and discover the great ancient city of Pergamon, famed as a centre of learning and medicine, with the steepest amphitheatre in the world
- » Enjoy an included guided tour of ancient Troy or the battlefields of Gallipoli
- » Guided tour of Istanbul, visiting the Hagia Sophia, the Blue Mosque, the Topkapi Palace and Grand Bazaar
- » Escorted by an experienced Tour Manager

The Star Clipper

A wonderful reconstruction of a 19th century four-masted Barquentine, the SPV Star Clipper is beautifully built to emphasise the traditional lines of this age-old design which plied the world's sea lanes for several hundred years. Combine this with the best a modern cruise ship has to offer: superb cabins using the best of soft furnishings and fabrics; luxurious lounges with deep pile carpets, leather and dark hardwoods; the finest cuisine; a highly skilled and caring crew - and you have the Star Clipper! It is the smaller sister ship to the Royal Clipper and when its 3,600 square metres of sail unfurl you are immediately overwhelmed by a remarkable sensation of being completely in tune with Mother Nature – a rarity in the modern world. With just 162 passengers and 74 crew on board, the atmosphere is very intimate – more like a private yacht than a cruise ship. Life is wonderfully informal and low-key, whilst the small scale of the ship and the open restaurant seating promotes a relaxed and extremely sociable ambience.

Everyone loves the experience of being on deck – the ropes, stays, winches, the polished mahogany and gleaming brass of the ship's bell are all a living testament to its maritime heritage. On the Star Clipper guests are encouraged (should you so wish!) to help raise the mainsail and just like the Royal Clipper, the bridge is always open for a visit. Being smaller and lighter, the Star Clipper is also more responsive to the wind and sea: you feel the surge of the breeze, breathing life into the canvas above and sense the deck gently tilt as your sleek white ship slices through the waves.

There are two small swimming pools, plenty of deck space and the open-air Tropical Bar is the ship's social hub. The library with its leather armchairs is the perfect place to immerse yourself in a good book or you can relax in the tasteful lounge and piano bar discussing with your fellow passengers how stunning the Aegean coastline is, how remarkably unstressed life appears to be for the Greek islanders or how Istanbul has been so amazingly cosmopolitan for thousands of years. You can climb the mast (in a safety harness!), lie in the bow netting or participate in the free water sports available at each port of call (subject to port authority approval). Evening entertainment is simple and 'home-made' by the crew and officers - there's no formality here! You will love it.

So you can enjoy our Aegean Odyssey cruise to the absolute full, we have included a shore excursion at each port of call, visiting the most fascinating places of interest, in addition to walking tours of Athens and Istanbul – in fact, there are more than enough enthralling and extraordinary places to explore to fill two holidays! But perhaps the memory that may stay with you the longest is the simplest: the balmy summer nights on deck, with just the silent stars and fluttering sails above you, surrounded by the shimmering, moonlit Aegean Sea.

DAY 1 You should arrive at the airport to take your flight to Athens where we stay one night at the modern four-star Metropolitan Hotel with breakfast.

DAY 2 This morning you have a walking tour of Athens, visiting the Acropolis, so fittingly one of the great wonders of the ancient world. Ascending the hill you soon experience the grandeur of the Parthenon – its blindingly white marble columns with their perfect symmetry and balance completely dominate the skyline.



We also visit the new Acropolis Museum with its amazing glass floor displaying ancient houses and streets below. After a stroll through the Agora, the political, social and commercial heart of the ancient city, we explore the picturesque old district of Plaka. Dating from the end of the 18th century when Athens had shrunk to little more than a village below the Acropolis, it's utterly charming, crammed with neo-classical mansions, balconies overflowing with geranium pots and twisting cobbled lanes lined with homely tavernas. After some free time for a relaxed lunch and some shopping in the nearby flea-market, you are at leisure for the rest of the day. Later, we leave for Piraeus harbour where the SPV Star Clipper awaits! After time to settle in, we enjoy our first dinner on board, as our ship slips its moorings and heads out through the city's twinkling lights towards our first port of call, Monemvasia in the Peloponnese.

DAY 3 Take an early stroll on deck before breakfast on your first day and savour the fresh sea breeze as the sails silently propel your ship through the azure Aegean.

Known as the 'Gibraltar of the East', Monemvasia's vast rocky bulk juts out of the mountainous coastline of the Peloponnese, linked to the mainland by a narrow causeway - a superb defensive position. It reached its zenith during the medieval period, supporting a population of 40,000, when it was known for its superb wine (Richard III's brother drowned in a vat of it!). It was a valuable prize and was besieged and attacked numerous times. During WW II a large number of New Zealanders were successfully evacuated to Crete from here.

Monemvasia has been sympathetically restored and is considered a wonderful time-capsule of a medieval Greek town. We have plenty of time to wander through the maze of narrow pedestrian streets and relax in one of the tavernas. The more energetic may try the steep path up to the ruins of the Upper Town - on a

clear day you may catch a glimpse of the mountains of Crete!

This evening, as the sun sets behind us we sail eastwards, the Star Clipper cutting through the clear waters, bound for the Greek Islands, probably the world's most beautiful archipelago.

DAY 4 Stand on deck this morning for one of the finest experiences Greece has to offer, sailing into the vast caldera of Santorini. Mere words struggle to describe the extraordinary magnitude of the panorama before us: multi-hued 1,000-foot cliffs rise above the dark-blue sea, their rim crowned by the blindingly white cubist architecture so typical of the Greek islands. If the views from below are amazing, the spectacular vista from the top is simply breathtaking! Back in the Bronze Age, most of the island was blown apart by one of the biggest volcanic explosions in history, destroying the sophisticated Minoan civilization in Crete, just 60 miles away. A small crater still bubbles away on an island in the middle of the bay and you can easily spot the pumice stones floating in the water. The main town of Fira perched high above the harbour is nowadays easily reached by cable car. Our included trip visits the highest point on the island, as well as some of the most interesting of the island's small villages. We end our tour with free time in the stunning cliff-top village of Oia before we drive back to Fira. This evening, the ship does not set sail until later so that you can enjoy the extraordinary colours of the setting sun across this amazing and unique landscape.



DAY 5 Today we anchor in Patmos - one of the smaller islands of the Dodecanese; however, what it lacks in size it makes up for in beauty and history. It's been called the 'Jerusalem of the Aegean' for it was here that St. John the Theologian wrote the Book of Revelation, the last book of the New Testament. Our included tour departs the pretty port of Skala for the Grotto of the Apocalypse, where St. John lived for two years. This small cave is now a beautiful little chapel and is still an active place of worship. Towering above the main town of Chora is the imposing 11th century fortified monastery of St. John: an architectural masterpiece, with eight chapels, courtyards, terraces and galleries with stunning 12th century frescoes. The Monastery's





museum has manuscripts from the 5th century, jewelled chalices, crowns, crucifixes, and vestments, along with an early work of El Greco. We also visit the three hundred year old mansion of the Simandiris family. This exceptional example of island architecture houses a fine collection of antiques, with gilded mirrors, silverware, paintings, chandeliers and exquisite furnishings. The rest of the day is free to wander around the meandering streets of whitewashed houses before setting sail in the late afternoon.

DAY 6 Chios is one of the richest and largest islands in the Aegean, yet it remains little-known. The island has

produced some of the most successful Greek shipping entrepreneurs, who still control around 50% of the Greek merchant marine. Its southern half has been known since ancient times for its cultivation of the mastic plant – a precursor to today’s chewing gum and highly prized. Our included tour will pass through the Kambos area with its grand rambling mansions and citrus groves and we’ll also visit Pyrgi, a village unique in Greece, as all the houses are intricately decorated in a geometric ‘sgraffito’ style. Our next stop will be the village of Mesta with its labyrinthine vaulted streets – an amazingly well-preserved living medieval village. This evening we leave Greece as we sit down for dinner amid the wood and polished brass splendour of our luxurious nautical home.

DAY 7 This morning brings our first glimpse of Turkey’s stunning Aegean coastline as the Star Clipper glides into the small port of Dikili. From here our included guided tour explores the fascinating ancient Hellenistic city of Pergamon. Perched on a high rocky outcrop with stunning views, the city was famed for its library, which rivalled Alexandria’s. Knowledge then, as now, was power and so concerned were the Egyptians about this competition, they cut off supplies of papyrus, thus prompting the invention of

parchment. We’ll see the remains of the Temple of Trajan, the altar of Zeus and the steepest ancient amphitheatre in the world. Pergamon was also renowned as a healing centre so we visit the Asclepion sanctuary where the sick came to be cured by having their dreams analysed! We return to our ship in the afternoon to continue our journey along the scenic coastline to our next port of call, Canakkale and Troy.

DAY 8 Today we anchor at Canakkale, the main port along the Asian side of the famous Dardanelles Strait and from where we drive inland for an included guided tour of Troy. Who can forget the famous ‘Wooden Horse’ story, when Queen Helen of Sparta eloped with Prince Paris and her enraged husband followed - classic stuff! Today, Troy is a complex archaeological site covering nine separate cities and remains a romantic and alluring place to anyone who has read about the heroic struggles in Homer’s Iliad. On the other side of the strait lies the Gallipoli peninsula, the scene of one of the most tragic campaigns of the First World War. Over 35,000 Australian, British and New Zealanders perished here, their deaths commemorated in the many cemeteries dotted along this now peaceful and rural area. For anyone not wishing to tour Troy, we can arrange a visit (subject to minimum numbers) to the Lone Pine memorial and Anzac Cove, where the Australians landed by mistake and had to scale steep cliffs and ravines under constant bombardment. In the afternoon we set sail on the final leg of our journey through the Sea of Marmara, to the great city of Istanbul.



DAY 9 Istanbul is a revelation: an exotic city of huge contrasts and a centre of shifting civilisations for 2,500 years. Chosen by Emperor Constantine as the eastern capital of the Roman Empire, it then became the capital of the Ottoman Empire and probably nowhere in the world can you find such an array of diverse monuments and fascinating places to see. We visit the Blue Mosque, symbol of the city - you cannot fail to be impressed by its grace and harmony, but its real attraction is the interior lined with 20,000 blue Iznik tiles and Arabesque inscriptions. Its beauty is hardly surprising when you consider that many of the same craftsmen who built it also worked on the Taj Mahal!



We continue to the breathtaking Hagia Sophia, conceived as a mirror of the heavens, arguably the greatest church ever built and quite simply one of the world's greatest architectural achievements. Built in the 6th century it was the largest enclosed space in the world for 1,400 years! The artistic highlights are the amazing Byzantine mosaics with their vibrant golds, reds and yellows. And, just as you leave, you see a beautifully crafted massive bronze door dating from 300BC - the sheer skill of these ancient artisans

will never cease to astound you.

For thousands of years Istanbul was at the centre of overland trade routes and its Grand Bazaar became home to merchants from throughout the known world. Its 4,000 shops sell all sorts of goods: mainly gold, silver, leatherwear, ceramics and carpets and in the maze of tiny shops surrounding this unique institution you can still find tiny, industrious workshops.



We end our tour at the Topkapi Palace, the glittering imperial residence of the Sultans for a thousand years. Today, it is a spectacular museum, but in its heyday it was a city within a city, home to over 4,000 elite guards, eunuchs, courtiers and, of course, the ladies of the Harem. There is a superb display of arms from throughout history: crossbows, firearms inlaid with ivory and beautifully crafted armour from as far afield as Japan. The Treasury is breathtaking too, with an amazing array of jewellery including the world's fifth largest diamond, emeralds, jewel-encrusted thrones and the famous Topkapi dagger - all displaying outstanding craftsmanship.

After our tour we check into our hotel for the night, the four-star Crown Plaza Old City on bed and breakfast. Alternatively, you may upgrade to the five-star Ciragan Palace Kempinski Hotel with rooms overlooking the Bosphorus.

DAY 10 Today at the appropriate time you will be taken to the airport for your flight home.



The Star Flyer

A Cuban Discovery

HAVANA - PINAR DEL RIO/VINALES VALLEY

CIENFUEGOS - DAY AT SEA - TRINIDAD

CAYMAN BRAC & GRAND CAYMAN

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- » Visit Ernest Hemingway's house, now a museum
- » Enjoy a guided tour of the UNESCO World Heritage city of Trinidad
- » Anchor in the crystal-clear waters of Cayman Brac
- » Snorkel above the wreck of a Cold War-era Soviet frigate
- » Swim with stingrays in Grand Cayman
 - » Enjoy some of the Caribbean's finest white-sand beaches at Cayo Largo & Cayo Rico
 - » Visit Santa Clara, site of Che Guevara's greatest victory and site of his mausoleum
 - » Escorted by our experienced tour manager



The Star Flyer

The SPV Star Flyer is the sister ship to the SPV Star Clipper, with all facilities, cabins and services, as described on page 8, identical on both ships.

Cuba is the Caribbean's largest island, the western hemisphere's only communist country and due to its unique history, attracts world attention on a level completely out of all proportion to its size. It's incredible to think that once, not so long ago; the world teetered on the edge of nuclear Armageddon triggered from this island. Walking around Havana today gives you an amazing spine-tingling sense of being in a time-war – it's full of classic 1950's-era American Buicks, Oldsmobile's, Fords and Pontiacs – incredibly having survived over half a century of continuous use! On the same streets you'll also see numerous Soviet-era Ladas – bizarre, but where else can you see such a juxtaposition of the 20th century's superpowers as reflected in their cars?

Discovered by Columbus in 1492, Cuba was a Spanish colony for most of its history. However, its vastly profitable sugar cane plantations attracted the attention of numerous and envious powers of the day, the French, Dutch plus the English under Sir Francis Drake. In fact, Havana was briefly occupied by the British in 1762, but we soon returned it to Spain in exchange for Florida. Cuba gained a kind of independence in 1898, but was notoriously under heavy and sometimes dubious American influence until Fidel Castro took over in 1958.

Cuba is scenically extraordinary beautiful and is punctuated by astonishingly well preserved Spanish colonial cities, but what would Cuba be without its lively people and its incredibly pulsating Salsa music! On every street corner you'll hear the infectious rhythms and syncopations of Salsa and many bars, restaurants and hotels will have their own live bands for you to dance to. Cubans themselves are an eclectic mix of Africans and Spanish, all seemingly perfectly integrated into a unique and vibrant culture busting with artistic creativity.

Despite its economic difficulties or perhaps in spite of them, Cuba is one of the world's most alluring, intriguing and exciting destinations. Infrastructure is good and in particular restaurants are changing with the quality of service and cuisine improving markedly through the recent opening of many privately owned establishments, the so-called Paladares, serving unique Cuban food.

Having been denied 'western' influence for so long, inevitably Cuba in the future will change even more, so come with us now experiencing this unique country and its people – we guarantee you'll yearn for more!



DAY 1 You should arrive at the airport to take your direct flight to Havana staying three nights at the modern five-star, Spanish-managed Melia Cohiba Hotel with breakfast.

This luxury property has all the facilities you would expect, including a large open-air pool, a selection of excellent restaurants, shopping arcade, a nightclub with a nightly Cuban show and even a cigar lounge. All rooms are air-conditioned with bath/shower, TV, hairdryer, internet connection & safe (both at extra charge).

DAY 2 Today we explore amazing Havana, one of the world's most haunting cities and one of the few places in the world which can genuinely be called unique. Seemingly in a time-war you'll see numerous 19th century neo-classical buildings, some beautifully restored, but sadly many still in various states of disrepair. The main square in front of the Cathedral is a buzz of activity, and as we walk through the Old City, we'll visit the Plaza des Armas, the Palacio de los Capitanes Generales and many more fascinating sights. We then travel to nearby Cojimar where Hemingway's house is located (the internal part of the house is a museum and entry is not allowed). After some free time for lunch, we'll also have a chance to drive through town in classic 1950's American cars – possibly the best Cuban experience! With the relaxation of the rules on private ownership and enterprise, numerous excellent restaurants have sprung up within the large mansions and are a great way to experience



some Caribbean cooking – with succulent lobsters particularly good value. Many central streets are now pedestrianised and you'll have time to explore this unique city at your leisure.

DAY 3 We leave Havana heading westwards towards the province of Pinar del Rio. Passing vast sugar cane fields en route, we arrive at a lookout point with lush, forest-shrouded limestone cliffs and pinnacles spectacularly stretching out below us. Descending into the Vinales Valley we visit Cuba's largest work of art – an entire painted cliffside depicting mankind's evolution. After our included lunch, we explore the most famous cave in the region, which has its own river and waterfall. This is where Cuba's finest tobacco grows, with its cigars: the Montecristos, Bolivars and Cohibas prized throughout the world. We visit a typical local working farmstead to see how this valuable crop is cultivated, dried and prepared, returning to Havana late afternoon.

DAY 4 This morning we'll visit the impressive Museum of the Revolution which charts the island's tumultuous yet fascinating recent history - told from a viewpoint we are not used to! After an included lunch we depart for Cienfuegos, originally settled by French refugees from Louisiana, where the stunningly beautiful SPV Star Flyer awaits! Excitement mounts as we board, settle in and then enjoy our first exquisite dinner in the most delightful surroundings. Slipping our moorings, we head across the Bahia de Jagua, through the narrow channel leading into the open sea.

DAY 5 Our first full day is spent at sea, relaxing as the warm Caribbean air fills the sails promoting the ship's gentle motion with the creaking of ropes and rigging above awakening your senses and calming the mind! Depending

on weather conditions, we should call at a beach for some swimming and snorkelling in the crystal clear waters. This afternoon we sail eastwards along Cuba's southern coast, towards our first destination, Trinidad.

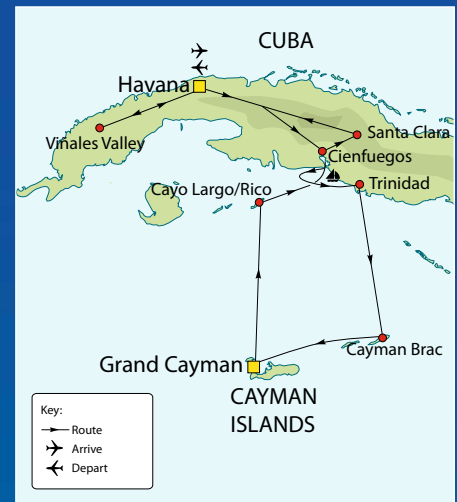
DAY 6 Today you have a choice of activities. We have anchored just offshore from Playa Ancon's long sandy beach where you can relax or perhaps use the ship's kayaks and sailing dinghies. Alternatively, you can visit nearby Trinidad a UNESCO World Heritage site and a perfect relic of Spanish colonial times with hardly a trace of modernity anywhere. With its perfect five main squares, wonderfully preserved streets and 18th century churches it's staggering to believe you are in the Americas. Our tour of this unique city includes the elegant Plaza Mayor, the cathedral and one of the sumptuous grand mansions once home to one of the city's ruling families, now a museum full of fascinating antiques. The pedestrianised cobbled streets and the bright, colourful houses are perfect for some amazingly picturesque photographs! This evening the Star Flyer sails south through the warm waters of the Caribbean towards the British Overseas Territory of the Cayman Islands.

DAY 7 Anchoring off the north shore of Cayman Brac, we have several options today: weather permitting, we should be able to snorkel right above one of the most spectacular wrecks in the Caribbean – the MV Capt Keith Tibbetts a 330-foot Russian frigate, previously in the Cuban navy during the Cold War, that was scuttled by Jacques Cousteau's son as a diving attraction in 1996 and is clearly visible from the surface. Alternatively, there is an optional tour of the island, plus a short transfer (at nominal cost) to one of the attractive south coast beaches.

DAY 8 Today we moor in Georgetown harbour, capital of the Cayman Islands. After some free time in the morning to check out the local duty free shopping, our included excursion today stops at Government House, the Governor's official residence, before continuing to a Turtle Farm then through 'Hell' – named after the area's unusual sharp black rock formations, before taking a snorkel boat to the shallow sandbar of Stingray City. Here you can easily stand on the sandy bottom – then dozens of stingrays, large and small, gather round - a wonderful experience to be so close to these unique and captivating creatures of the deep!

DAY 9 The Star Flyer anchors off Cayo Largo, in the Archipelago de los Canarreos. Approximately 130kms off Cuba this low-lying island is famed for its incredible white sand beaches – so fine and deep, you almost sink into them! Today is all about relaxing and swimming off arguably one of the Caribbean's finest beaches. There are plenty of palm-thatched umbrellas, plus a bar, buffet restaurant and watersports available. This afternoon we set sail for an evening's sailing around the beautiful islands and as the sun gently sets into the mirror-like seas in an explosion of colour you will really feel a long way from home. Tonight prepare for the Captain's dinner!





DAY 10 Cayo Rico is a real desert island paradise – with just one palm-thatched beach restaurant, there is no other habitation on the island and it's a great opportunity to really unwind and swim in the shallow waters or perhaps do a bit of beachcombing. The sea around the island is an incredible azure blue seemingly merging with the warm Caribbean skies above – quite stunning! The ship's crew prepare Star Clippers' famed beach BBQs for lunch today, then this evening we set sail northwards on our final night on this absolutely stunning vessel.

DAY 11 Time to say goodbye to our lovely floating home – until next time! Driving across mainland Cuba we visit Santa Clara, a colonial city where in 1958 forces led by Che Guevara captured the town plus an armoured train laden with munitions in the Cuban Revolution's last decisive battle. We'll see the train itself plus Che's impressive mausoleum. Our Havana hotel tonight is again the five-star Melia Cohiba on bed and breakfast basis.

DAY 12 This morning is at leisure until our late afternoon flight direct to London Gatwick.

DAY 13 We arrive home with some wonderful memories of Cuba, its music, people, the warm Caribbean Sea and, of course, the Star Flyer, one of the world's most stunningly beautiful ships.



A PASSION FOR TRAVEL A PASSION FOR PEOPLE

