

Small Ship Adventure Co.

Specialising in Small Ship Cruising Worldwide



SPLENDORS OF INDIA

With Sri Lanka & the Maldives

Aboard the *Clipper Odyssey*

November 20 – December 4, 2012

ITINERARY

Tuesday, November 20, 2012

Mumbai (Bombay), India

Arrive in Mumbai and transfer to the exquisite Taj Mahal Palace Hotel for a morning at leisure. This afternoon enjoy an orientation tour of this bustling city. In the former British fort area, we see elegant colonial buildings such as the Gothic Victoria Terminus railway station, and the Prince of Wales Museum. We drive along famed Marine Drive, passing Chowpatty Beach, to Malabar Hill with its superb views, parks, and Hanging Gardens. Return to our hotel for dinner and overnight.

Wednesday, November 21

Mumbai / Embark Clipper Odyssey

This morning we board local boats at the doorstep of the Gateway of India triumphal arch monument for a ride across the bay to visit Elephanta Island. This World Heritage Site has caves with elaborately carved depictions of the Hindu god, Shiva, in various manifestations as destroyer, creator, and preserver. Views of Mumbai's skyline from the bay are superb. This afternoon we board the Clipper Odyssey, our home for the next 13 nights.

Thursday & Friday, November 22 & 23**Marmagao (Goa)**

Marmagao's Portuguese heritage commenced with the establishment of a trading colony in 1510, led by explorer and later viceroy, Vasco da Gama. The successful spice-trading colony endured for centuries, and today its colonial remnants lend a European charm—cobblestoned lanes, whitewashed Catholic churches, and balconied, tile-roofed homes. We explore the distinctive churches, museum, and convent of Old Goa. Visit a traditional Goan home for a cooking demonstration and enjoy a lunch of delectable local cuisine. We also enjoy time at leisure to wander through the old Portuguese district of Fontainhas in the small capital of Panjim.

Saturday, November 24**Mangalore**

This morning drive through the countryside surrounding Mangalore, a pleasant landscape of rolling hills dotted with tea, coffee, and cashew nut plantations. We visit Karkala's monolithic Gomasteshwara Statue, dedicated to a Jain saint. We then visit a cashew processing plant followed by a lunch of local specialties at a rural pineapple farm.

Sunday & Monday, November 25 & 26**Kochi (Cochin)**

Our leisurely two-day exploration of Kochi reveals this delightful community's *mélange* of international influences: Portuguese houses, the Dutch Palace (Mattancherry), the Anglican St. Francis Church, and the cantilevered Chinese fishing nets that grace the beaches. To better explore this maze of islands and waterways, we board local houseboats for a cruise through Kochi's backwaters where we may spot locals doing laundry or fish farming. We also enjoy an evening performance of Kathakali classical dance on board our ship.

Tuesday, November 27**Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum)**

Located near India's southern tip, Thiruvananthapuram, the capital of Kerala is a pedestrian-friendly town spread out over seven hills. Today we visit the village of Pongumoodu and its surrounding rubber plantations where we witness the various stages of rubber processing. We also attend a Kalari Payattu demonstration, Kerala's ancient form of martial arts.

Wednesday, November 28**Colombo, Sri Lanka / Kandy**

Today we disembark in the bustling city of Colombo for an excursion into the highlands of Sri Lanka, passing through lush, rolling countryside dotted with tea plantations. In Kandy we explore the stunning Temple of the Tooth which houses the tooth of Buddha. This World Heritage Site was originally part of the Royal Palace complex of the Kandyan Kingdom and is one of the holiest places of worship and pilgrimage for Buddhists around the world. We will also visit the Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage and, time permitting, the Botanical Gardens.

Thursday, November 29**Galle**

Galle's historic district is one of the best preserved examples of a European-built fortified city in South Asia, reflecting both colonial and South Asian architectural styles. After breakfast on board, we enjoy a tour of this charming city visiting the Martin Wickramasinghe Folk Art Museum and Galle Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, built by the Dutch in the 16th century. As we drive along the coast, keep an eye out for the iconic fishermen of Koggala, who perch precariously on stilts in the surf. Return to the Clipper Odyssey for lunch as we set sail for the Maldives.

Friday, November 30**At Sea**

Spend a relaxing day at sea as our lecturers introduce us to the heritage and natural wonders of the magical Maldives.

Saturday – Monday, December 1 – 3**Uligamu, Maldives / Utheemu Island / Baa Atoll / Olhahali Island**

We arrive at Uligamu, the northernmost island of the Maldives, in the early morning. Superb snorkeling and diving are hallmarks of the area and the underwater topography of the region is fascinating—a dramatic landscape of thilas, pinnacles and submerged coral structures enveloped in brilliant corals and sea fans, and kandus, deep channels that run between atoll and coral-terraced reef. Over the next three days, we discover the special, lesser-visited places in the atolls north of Male.

Following is a sampling of the sites we plan to visit, with daily weather and tide conditions dictating the actual itinerary.

Step ashore on Utheemu, the most famous of the northern Maldives, a cultural treasure trove and the birthplace of a 16th-century sultan who fought to drive out the occupying Portuguese. The Baa Atoll, made up of about 50 islands, offers rich biodiversity including large mangroves and unique ring-shaped reef forms known as faru. Recently designated as a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, large numbers of manta rays, hawksbill turtles, and frigatebirds can be found here. Serene Olhahali Island is covered in lush vegetation and boasts broad white sand beaches and one of the finest wide lagoons in the region.

Tuesday, December 4**Male / Disembark**

Disembark this morning for a sightseeing tour of Male. Check in to day rooms at our hotel and enjoy lunch. The remainder of the day and evening are at your leisure. After dinner at our hotel, transfer to the airport for your independent overnight flight.