

Small Ship Adventure Co.

Specialising in Small Ship Cruising Worldwide



AZORES

**With Spain, Gibraltar, Morocco, Canary Islands, and
Madeira**

Aboard the Clipper Odyssey

May 4 – 20, 2012

ITINERARY

Friday, May 4, 2011

Depart on your independent flight to Granada, Spain.

Saturday, May 5

Granada, Spain

Complimentary transfer to our hotel with the remainder of the day at leisure. Gather this evening for a welcome dinner and briefing.

Sunday, May 6

Granada / Malaga / Embark Clipper Odyssey

Today we visit the lovely Alhambra. Begun in 1338, this fantasy-land of lacy stonework, slender columnar arcades, beautifully-tiled chambers, porticos, and courtyards surrounding light-reflecting water basins, has beguiled visitors through the ages. This afternoon we drive to Malaga and board the Clipper Odyssey.

Monday, May 7

Gibraltar, United Kingdom

After breakfast we visit Europa Point for superb views of the Strait of Gibraltar. Walk through the labyrinthine St. Michael's cave and meet the resident troop of Barbary apes.

Tuesday, May 8

Casablanca, Morocco

We begin with an excursion to the colorful Central Market, followed by a stop at the Hassan II Mosque. This seaside building, the second largest religious structure in the world (after Mecca), is a stunning example of contemporary religious architecture.

***Tuesday & Wednesday, May 8 & 9

Optional Two-Day Excursion to Marrakech

Join us for a two-day optional overnight excursion to magical Marrakech. Explore sites such as the opulent 19th-century Bahia Palace, the medina—a World Heritage Site—the Koutoubia Mosque, the imperial Saadian tombs, and Djemaa El Fna Square. Or you may join an optional birding excursion in the Atlas Mountains.

Wednesday, May 9

Agadir / Taroudant

After an early lunch on board we drive inland from Agadir to Taroudant, often called “little Marrakech.” We walk the fortress ramparts, through the central plaza and the souks. The Berber Market offers a fascinating array of spices and vegetables, while the artisan souk displays silverwork, leather goods, and carpets.

Thursday, May 10

Lanzarote Island, Canary Islands

This afternoon choose a scenic drive north to the Mirador del Rio for superb views and continue to Jameos del Agua, a lava-tube cave transformed by famed local artist César Manrique into a delightful series of pools, gardens, and a natural amphitheater. Or, choose a tour to Timanfaya National Park, which showcases the island’s stunning volcanic landscape of craters, multicolored petrified lava streams, geysers, and smoking fumaroles. Here we can observe 177 species of rare plants, many of them unique to the Canaries. A third option is a birding tour with our expert on board ornithologists.

Friday, May 11

Tenerife Island

From the capital of Santa Cruz, a full-day exploration takes us to the Botanical Gardens and the attractive town of La Orotava. In Teide National Park we see twisted volcanic formations of basalt and obsidian surrounding El Teide, Spain’s highest peak. After lunch we take a hike to view the Roques de Garcia—bizarrely eroded rocks at the mountain’s base. Birders enjoy an excursion to spot many of the 200 species that populate the varied habitat. Or, choose a half-day excursion visiting the northern side of Tenerife, with its charming villages, dramatic viewpoints, and the university town of La Laguna. This World Heritage Site, designated for being the first, non-fortified Spanish colonial town, has superb examples of 16th – 18th-century architecture and a layout that became a model for many American colonial towns.

Saturday, May 12**La Gomera**

This mountainous island has little arable land; to grow their crops, generations of villagers have reshaped the landscape into a series of terraces, punctuated by palm groves. Take a scenic morning drive to Garajonay National Park to view the thick forests of protected laurel, with an opportunity for a hike.

Sunday, May 13**Madeira Island**

Enjoy brunch on board as we are greeted by the stunning volcanic contours of Madeira on the horizon. In the late morning we explore Funchal and its surroundings. A cable car takes us to the top of Monte, with its 18th-century church and splendid views. Then either descend by coach or by speedy toboggans, which slide through the island's characteristic levadas (old water canals). Back in Funchal, our local guide takes us to the town's historic sites; the main square, São Lourenço Palace, the 15th-century cathedral, and the open-air market—one of the most sumptuous in the Atlantic. Or, opt for a full day of birding.

Monday, May 14**Cruising the Atlantic Ocean**

Enjoy a relaxing day at sea and attend lectures about the history, geology, and culture of the Azores.

Tuesday, May 15**Santa Maria Island, Azores**

This morning we drive along the picturesque east coast, visiting villages, a church, and a museum. In the afternoon enjoy a choice of either an active hike between two charming villages, or a scenic tour to the village of Anjos—where Columbus landed after his first passage to the Americas.

Wednesday, May 16**Terceira Island**

Take a walking tour of photogenic Angra do Heroísmo—a World Heritage Site—with impressive 400-year-old fortifications that are unique examples of military architecture. After lunch on the ship, choose a cultural excursion to São Sebastião; Praia da Vitória, with its central plaza and historic district; and a wine museum. Or, hike up Monte Brasil with its scenic overlooks and botanical wonders, then visit the famed cave near Algar da Carvão.

Thursday, May 17**Graciosa Island**

This morning watch for the whales and dolphins that frequent these waters. After visiting the museum at Santa Cruz, we drive inland and pass through several picturesque villages. Stop at the village of Praia and the chapel of Senhora Da Ajuda for stunning views of verdant coastline. Or, join a local ornithologist for a birding tour by Zodiac.

Friday, May 18**Pico Island / Faial Island**

Pico is the second largest of the Azores Islands and a designated World Heritage Site for its vineyard culture. We depart for a beautiful morning drive through highlands of spring flowers and endemic vegetation. Visit the Whaling Industry Museum and stop at a Madalena vineyard where we sample local wines and cheeses. Lunch is on board as we cross the narrow strait that separates Pico from Faial Island. We dock in Horta for the afternoon, one of the most popular yachting harbors of the Atlantic.

Saturday, May 19**Ponta Delgada, São Miguel Island**

This morning we visit the highlights São Miguel—picture-perfect landscapes of lush green fields lined with basalt; the smoking fumaroles in the town of Furnas; and the crater lakes of Fogo and Furnas. After we view the Terra Nostra Botanical Gardens, enjoy lunch at a local hotel. Birders enjoy a tour in the area near Caloura. This afternoon there is free time to explore before our final overnight on board.

Sunday, May 20**Ponta Delgada / Disembark**

Disembark after breakfast and transfer to the airport for independent homeward flights.