

WHALE SHARKS OF QATAR BY SEA

EXPEDITION CRUISE PACKAGE



Frequently Asked Questions

Life Onboard

- **What should I pack?**
Clothes that can be layered and definitely some waterproof gear for when you're out on the zodiacs.
- **Is there a dress code on board the ships?**
We advise our passengers to wear casual and elegant outfits at their convenience, and more formal attire for the Captain's Dinner.
- **What clothes do I need to bring on an expedition cruise?**
On an expedition cruise, be sure to bring practical clothes as well as comfortable shoes suitable for travelling in Zodiacs and disembarking on beaches or mud flats. On tropical expeditions be sure to bring a hat, sunglasses and long sleeved/legged clothing.
- **I have special dietary requirements, can the ship cater for me?**
Yes, let us know what you require and once onboard, the Chef and Maitre'D will speak to you further about your needs
- **Is there Wi-Fi onboard?**
Yes satellite Wi-Fi is available free of charge. There are also two computers in the library which have free Wi-Fi.
- **I'm travelling with a friend can we have separate beds?**
Absolutely, all suites can be configured into double or twin rooms.
- **Can I exchange currency on board?**
No, there is no Currency Exchange Bureau onboard our ships. We advise you exchange your currency in advance of your cruise through your bank or at an international airport.
- **How are my on-board expenses handled?**
An account will be opened for you when you first board the ship for any expenses you make while on board: for example, at the boutique, premium drinks at the bar, using the laundry service, or for excursions.

We invite you to leave an imprint of your credit card at reception. The bill, along with the receipt of your card payment, will be left in your cabin the day before disembarkation. As the on-board accounts are closed on the day before disembarkation, any further payment after 10 pm on this day will have to be made in cash. This also applies to those who have reserved two or more consecutive cruises.
- **What is the on-board currency?**
The currency on board is the Euro, but the US Dollar is also accepted.

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- **What methods of payment are accepted on board?**

Credit cards (Visa, EuroCard/Master Card and American Express), cash and personal cheques (in EUR and USD only) are accepted.

- **What leisure activities are there on board?**

On board our fleet, you will find games consoles (Wii™ and PS4) and a choice of books and board games. The library (except on Le Ponant) is also equipped with Wi-Fi connected computers. On the lower deck there is an image and photography area. The cabins of all of our ships are equipped with Video on Demand.

- **Can I practice a sport activity on board?**

In order to maintain your fitness, and following the program of stopovers in your itinerary, mild fitness sessions will be offered to you during your cruise. If navigation and weather permit, guests can take a dip in the swimming pool.

- **What languages are spoken on board?**

The crew are bilingual in French and English. All signage and announcements made are in French and English. On certain cruises, crew members also speak other languages.

- **May I bring one or more children on board?**

Children under 12 years of age are not allowed. Children must be fully independent during all the outside activities organized and during disembarkation in rubber boats, be sufficiently tall to sit on the inflatable sides of the boats, and old enough to understand, and immediately respond to the orders given by the persons in charge.

As a result, children's participation in any activity in an inflatable boat shall be subject to the agreement of the Captain and of the Expedition Head, depending on the sea conditions, and the difficulty of disembarking at each location visited. The ships do not carry parkas in children's sizes. Parents must arrange to bring a suitable parka for children.

Boarding the ship

- **Where can I find the times of the ports of call of my cruise?**

The times of arrival and departure for each port will be indicated on the day prior in the newsletter you will receive each evening. Please note that the ship is unable to wait for latecomers. We thank you in advance for your understanding and for respecting the designated times.

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- **What documents are necessary for boarding?**

All passengers must have valid proof of identity and the necessary visas for the destination countries, according to their nationality. Upon your arrival on board, the form of identification you used to complete the Information Sheet will be taken from you. It will be kept until the end of the cruise to be presented by the ship officials to the customs authorities at each port. If you need it during a port of call, it will be available for you at reception, provided that you return it once back on board.

Cabins

- **How can I access my cabin?**

One (or more) key cards will be distributed to you per cabin. This will allow you to open your cabin or to lock it when you leave. On all the ships, you just have to close your door for it to lock behind you. Therefore, be sure not to leave your key card inside when you leave your cabin.

- **Is there air-conditioning in my cabin?**

There is air-conditioning in every cabin. It can be individually adjusted. Your Cabin Officer will be there if you need help setting the desired temperature.

- **Is there a television in my cabin?**

Yes there is a flat screen television with multimedia options and video on demand in each cabin.

- **Is there a safe in my cabin?**

There is an individual safe in each cabin, where you can leave your valuables. For high value items, we advise you to use the main safe. This can be accessed at reception.

- **Is there a fridge in my cabin?**

Yes, all suites are equipped with a mini fridge.

- **What type of plug sockets are in the cabins?**

North American 120V two-flat-pinned sockets and European (220V)

- **What amenities are available for use in my cabin?**

Beginning with your arrival in your staterooms, PONANT offers a bathrobe, slippers, towels & HERMES toiletries.

- **Do all cabins and suites have a private balcony or a terrace with sea views?**

All cabins and suites have a private balcony or a terrace with views out over the sea.

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Whale Sharks

- **Am I guaranteed to see the whale sharks?**

While we have taken every consideration into account to give you the best opportunity to see the whale sharks at a time when the climate should be more comfortable, we cannot guarantee that you will see them.

- **Can I swim with the whale sharks?**

No, swimming with the whale sharks will not be possible. Throughout the expedition we are respecting the environment to the highest possible degree. This is feeding ground for whale sharks, and during this period it is their home. We want to keep any disturbance to an absolute minimum. Zodiacs will be in operation under the guidance of Qatar Whale Shark Research. PONANT has a wealth of experience operating in the Antarctic and proudly boasts some of the highest standards of environmental and ecological protocols in the world.

Tours and Excursions

- **Can I book an additional excursion while in Qatar?**

Yes, you can book additional excursions subject to availability.

- **Do you offer multilingual tour guides?**

Our tours and excursions are operated in English unless otherwise specified. Other languages are available on request for a supplement. Please contact us for your requests.

- **Do I need insurance for tours and excursions?**

It is the customer's responsibility to ensure that they are adequately insured.

- **Can I carry my luggage during excursions/tours?**

Personal items such as a handbags or a small backpack are allowed however, carrying of luggage/ suitcases during a tour is not allowed.

Transfers

- **Can transfers be changed to a different location?**

The package includes transfers to and from the airport, hotel and port. Any transfers to different locations need to be booked separately.

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Visa

- **What is the visa validity for online tourist visa?**
60 days with single entry. More information can be found [here](#).
- **How much is online tourist visa?**
Information of Tourist Visa fees can be found [here](#).

Restaurants

- **How do meals work?**
Breakfast is a buffet that can be eaten at the restaurant or requested in your cabin. Lunch is also a buffet, and a French-style à la carte dinner will be served in the evening. Room service is available 24/7.
- **Can I have a snack outside of meal times?**
Yes, outside the opening hours of the restaurant, tea and small pastries will be on offer. More details will be given in the newsletter provided each evening in your cabin.
- **What is the Open Bar?**
From embarkation and throughout the cruise, unlimited complimentary drinks* are served. We call this the Open Bar. This also applies to drinks from the minibar and those served by room service.
*Excluding premium alcoholic drinks presented on the menu.
- **What menu is offered on board?**
Our chefs and their brigade interpret and share with our passengers their passion for the French culinary heritage, enriched with the products and traditions of the countries visited. Our menus are constantly renewed according to the destination and the route chosen.
- **Do dinners vary?**
Our chefs and their teams offer a varied menu every day. The breakfasts and lunches are served buffet-style and feature a wide range of sweet and savoury dishes, as well as bread baked daily by our on-board French baker.

Frequently Asked Questions

Health and Accessibility

- **Are vaccines necessary to go on a cruise?**

When you visit certain destinations, vaccines can be recommended. Once you have made your reservation, we will send you all the important information so that you can begin your cruise with peace of mind. It is worthwhile contacting your medical advisors before you travel as they will have access to the latest information. If you would like to know more about a destination, the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can give you some invaluable advice.

- **Is there a doctor on board?**

There is a doctor on board available to the passengers on all our ships. The schedules of consultation are listed each day in the log book (emergency consultation 24/7).

- **Do I have to pay for medical consultations on board?**

There is a charge for medical consultations undertaken by the doctor or nurse on board. The price can vary according to the time and place of the consultation (hospital or cabin). Any medication must also be paid for by the passenger. If using medications on a regular basis make sure to bring adequate supplies for the duration of your cruise.

- **Should I inform you prior to departure if I have any special medical treatment?**

If you have any special treatment, we ask you to inform the reservation service when you register for the cruise, to note it on the information sheet before departure, then inform the on-board crew at the moment of departure and always keep your medication with you for the duration of the cruise.

- **Are pregnant women able to join the cruise?**

As the Ship does not have any facilities for giving birth onboard, women who are over six months' pregnant shall not be allowed to board. In any event, pregnant women travelling onboard the Ship are advised to see a doctor before boarding in order to ensure that their state of health is appropriate for the cruise that they are planning.

- **I suffer from seasickness, can I still come on the cruise?**

Our ships have stabilizers equipped with dynamic fins which adapt to the movements of the ship. This system allows the ship to anticipate and compensate for the pitching and tossing of the sea to achieve greater stability. Passengers suffering from seasickness will see their symptoms alleviated and are pleasantly surprised to not feel uncomfortable during their journey. However it is wise to bring travel motion medication with you for peace of mind.

- **Are the PONANT ships adapted to suit those with reduced mobility?**

The ship was designed for people with reduced mobility in mind:

- Specially designed cabins.
- Access ramps allowing easy movement in communal areas.
- Posters, signage and cabin numbers are translated into Braille.