

SKEPTIC

ANCIENT CITIES OF IBERIA & NORTH AFRICA: A Voyage from Lisbon to Sicily

August 9 - 22, 2025



Aboard the New Expedition Cruise Ship *DIANA*

SKEPTIC

Dear Friends,

The history of the southern and western shores of the Mediterranean can be told from many perspectives. To an ancient historian, it is the story of early Phoenician expansion westward, followed by Roman conquests, and ending with the Punic Wars and the destruction of Carthage in the 2nd century BC. For a medievalist, the story begins with the stunningly rapid spread of Islam across North Africa and onto the Iberian Peninsula in the 6th-8th centuries and ends with the Spanish reconquest of Granada in 1492.

During this voyage, we will touch on chapters of each of these stories, as we call in ports along North Africa and in Spain and Portugal. In Tunisia, we visit the ruins of Carthage and marvel at the stunning Roman mosaics in the Bardo Museum. Tipasa's ancient temples and ruins are our first call in Algeria, followed by the UNESCO-designated Roman ruins at Djémila. Further west along the North African coast, we encounter Pantelleria, Italy notable for its beautiful wild scenery that includes volcanic formations, hot springs, and a rocky coastline.

Joining us will be a team of expert lecturers and guides who will contribute their expertise and knowledge throughout the voyage.

Our vessel for this extraordinary journey, the Swan Hellenic *Diana*, is a state-of-the-art, new-generation expedition cruise ship, launched in early 2023. Accommodating only 192 guests in beautifully appointed staterooms and balcony suites, *Diana* features several lounges, a restaurant, outdoor café, spa, library and beauty salon, and is equipped with the latest safety and environmentally-friendly technology.

We welcome Skeptics Society travelers aboard *Diana* to discover some of the remarkably rich stories of the *Ancient Cities of Iberia & North Africa: A Voyage from Lisbon to Sicily*.

Warm regards,



Dr. Michael Shermer
Executive Director
The Skeptics Society

P.S. 8% of your cruise fee will be a tax-deductible donation to The Skeptics Society – a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization.

Cover photo: The 1st-century AD Roman city of Djemila, or Cuicul, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, in Algeria's interior.

CRUISE WITH A TEAM OF EXPERT LECTURERS & GUIDES

Our activities in the ancient cities of Iberia and North Africa are planned and conducted by a team of expedition leaders and naturalists who are among the most experienced in the field, with several years of leading small-ship cruise expeditions to this incredible region of the world. Members of the team comprise a truly astonishing assortment of expertise and intellect. Onboard and ashore, through talks and presentations they will create a comprehensive understanding of the history, culture, geology, and natural life of this region. The experience we will provide is not just one of awe-inspiring sightseeing, but a complete learning adventure.



Jerónimos Monastery, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Lisbon, Portugal



THE NEW 192-GUEST EXPEDITION CRUISE SHIP *DIANA*



Oceanview Stateroom



Balcony Suite



Swan Restaurant



Swimming Pool



Observation Lounge

Built in Finland, and launched in April 2023, Swan Hellenic's *Diana* is a new generation expedition cruise ship. Although at 12,100 tons the ship is large enough to accommodate more than 350 passengers, *Diana* will accommodate a maximum of 192 guests in 96 spacious staterooms and balcony suites. The low guest density results in one of the most generous indoor and outdoor space-to-guest ratios among cruise ships.

Featuring the latest advances in technology and engineering, *Diana* is among the world's first environmentally responsible ships. Equipped with hybrid engines and a unique water filtration system, *Diana* leaves a minimal footprint. For cruising in Polar regions, the ship meets the stringent requirements of the new Polar Code with its high PC5 Category A ice strengthened hull and other advanced features. A computer-controlled Dynamic Positioning System allows the ship to maintain position without anchoring. Operated by a complement of 135 experienced European officers and international crew members, *Diana* will

carry a fleet of Zodiacs, versatile landing boats, and kayaks. Powerful stabilizers provide a smooth ride.

Diana's interior spaces exude sophisticated elegance, with most rooms opening to panoramic views of the sea. All staterooms and suites face outside and are equipped with private facilities, climate control, TV, Wi-Fi and USB connections and other amenities. Of the ship's 96 staterooms, 76 have balconies. Public areas include a spacious observation lounge equipped with state-of-the-art facilities for lectures and presentations; a club lounge; a restaurant that accommodates all guests at one seating; an outdoor café/bar that surrounds the heated swimming pool; a wellness area with gym, spa, and sauna with an adjoining outdoor jacuzzi; library; beauty salon; and an infirmary that is attended by a full-time doctor and nurse. The ship also features expansive open-deck areas. Two elevators connect all decks. Attentive service is provided on a 24-hour basis. The outstanding cuisine is complemented by fine wines at lunch and dinner.

ITINERARY



Saturday, August 9, 2025

DEPART THE US

Sunday, August 10

LISBON, Portugal

Arrive in Lisbon. Transfer to the *Avenida Palace Hotel*. In the evening, meet fellow travelers for a welcome dinner. (D)

Monday, August 11

LISBON/EMBARKATION

Following breakfast at the hotel, tour Lisbon's highlights including the Belém Quarter and the Jerónimos Monastery, a UNESCO World Heritage monument that is a superb example of Portuguese Manueline style. Also visit historic Belém Tower, the point from which many Portuguese explorers, including Vasco da Gama, set sail. Following the tour, transfer to the port to embark on *Diana*, where a light lunch will be served. Sail in the evening. (B,L,D)

Tuesday, August 12

LAGOS

Your gateway to the Algarve, the seaside town of Lagos served as an outpost and trading center for Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, and Romans. Its heyday, however, was in the 15th and 16th centuries, when Lagos played a major role in the Portuguese exploration of Africa, South America, and South and East Asia. A walking tour of the old town, including the Municipal Museum, the extravagant Church of Santo Antonio, and the 16th-century walls. After lunch aboard, take an excursion to Sagres and Cabo de São Vicente, where, in the 15th century, Prince Henry the Navigator established his famed school of navigation. Magellan, Vasco da Gama and other explorers studied at the school. (B,L,D)

Wednesday, August 13

TANGIER, Morocco/TÉTOUAN

Founded by the Phoenicians in the seventh century BC, Tangier was

ruled by Arabs in the early 8th century, when it and nearby Tétouan were used as bases for the invasion of southern Spain. Explore Tangier, a classic Moroccan town of narrow lanes and stepped passages, dominated by a kasbah. Then travel to Tétouan, which was rebuilt in the 15th century by Andalusian refugees who had been expelled during the Spanish reconquest. Although it is a small medina, Tétouan is among the most authentic, having been largely untouched by later outside influences. (B,L,D)

Thursday, August 14

SEVILLE, Spain

Occupied by the Romans, conquered by Islamic invaders, and ruled by a succession of Catholic monarchs, Seville is one of Europe's most important and affluent maritime cities. After docking in the city along the banks of the Guadalquivir River, explore the Alcazar, the oldest royal palace still in use in Europe and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Travel to the historic Barrio Santa Cruz, a neighborhood of labyrinthine streets and alleys dating to the Middle Ages, when it was the old Jewish Quarter. Enjoy some time at leisure, as the ship remains docked overnight. (B,L,D)

Friday, August 15

SEVILLE

This morning, tour Seville's large and fanciful Gothic Cathedral—the largest Gothic cathedral in the world and the burial site of Christopher Columbus. See the Cathedral's main points of interest, including the Capilla Mayor and La Giralda—the intricately detailed bell tower that is the city's most well-known symbol. Also visit Maria Luisa Park, once a private garden attached to the Palace of San Telmo, now Seville's largest public green space. (B,L,D)

Saturday, August 16

AT SEA

Today you may attend briefings from the expert expedition staff, simply relax and enjoy cruising the open sea, or perhaps treat yourself to some of *Diana's* many amenities. (B,L,D)

Sunday, August 17

ALGIERS/TIPASA, Algeria

Located about 40 miles west of Algiers, Tipasa's ancient temples and ruins overlook the Mediterranean to dramatic effect. Visit the Villa of Frescoes, a Roman mansion; the 2nd-century Judicial Basilica; a 4th-century Christian Basilica and the site's museum. Return to the ship for lunch, and in the afternoon explore Algiers, including the Casbah and the National Museum of Antiquities and Islamic Art. (B,L,D)

Monday, August 18

BÉJAÏA/DJÉMILA

From the port of Béjaïa, a drive into the hills of the interior brings us to Djémila, which the UNESCO World Heritage Convention describes as "one of the world's most beautiful Roman ruins." The site includes a Triumphal Arch to Emperor Caracalla, built in AD 216; Grand Baths; a market; and the Old Forum, featuring stunning friezes and a 3rd-century altar. Also visit the local museum, exhibiting a superb



Sidi Bou Said, Tunisia

collection of mosaics and other artifacts. (B,L,D)

NOTE: The drive from Béjaïa to Djémila takes almost 4 hours. For those travelers who would rather avoid this drive, a shorter tour of Béjaïa will be available.

Tuesday, August 19

ANNABA/HIPPO REGIUS

Annaba is home to the ancient site of Hippo Regius, once ruled by Phoenicians, Romans, Vandals, and Byzantines, among others. Explore Hippo's Roman Forum, the largest and oldest in North Africa, and visit the Baths dedicated to Septimius Severus. At the nearby modern Basilica of St. Augustine, we will enjoy the hilltop view over the ruins and the rest of the city before visiting the basilica proper, which is dedicated to the author of the *Confessions* and *The City of God*, Bishop of Hippo, in the early 5th century. (B,L,D)

Wednesday, August 20

TUNIS, Tunisia

From Tunis, travel to storied Carthage, a Phoenician stronghold from the 9th century BC. The site includes several Phoenician remains, including Tophet, the sanctuary of the gods Tanit and Baal, as well as many monuments from the Roman period. Returning to Tunis, we explore the Bardo Museum, world-renowned for its spectacular

collection of Roman mosaics. After lunch aboard, explore Sidi Bou Said, a charming town of cobbled streets, characteristic blue and white houses, shops and cafes, set on a promontory overlooking the Mediterranean. (B,L,D)

Thursday, August 21

PANTELLERIA, Italy

Situated between Tunisia and Sicily, and inhabited since the Neolithic period, the island of Pantelleria is notable for its beautiful wild scenery that includes volcanic formations, hot springs, and a rocky coastline. The small main port town is dominated by the Castello Barbacane, an imposing castle that was first built by the Arabs. Explore the island, including its picturesque villages, with their traditional stone houses, its extinct volcanoes that dominate the island's center, and Lake Venere, an inland crater-lake that is fed by hot water. (B,L,D)

Friday, August 22

PALERMO, Sicily

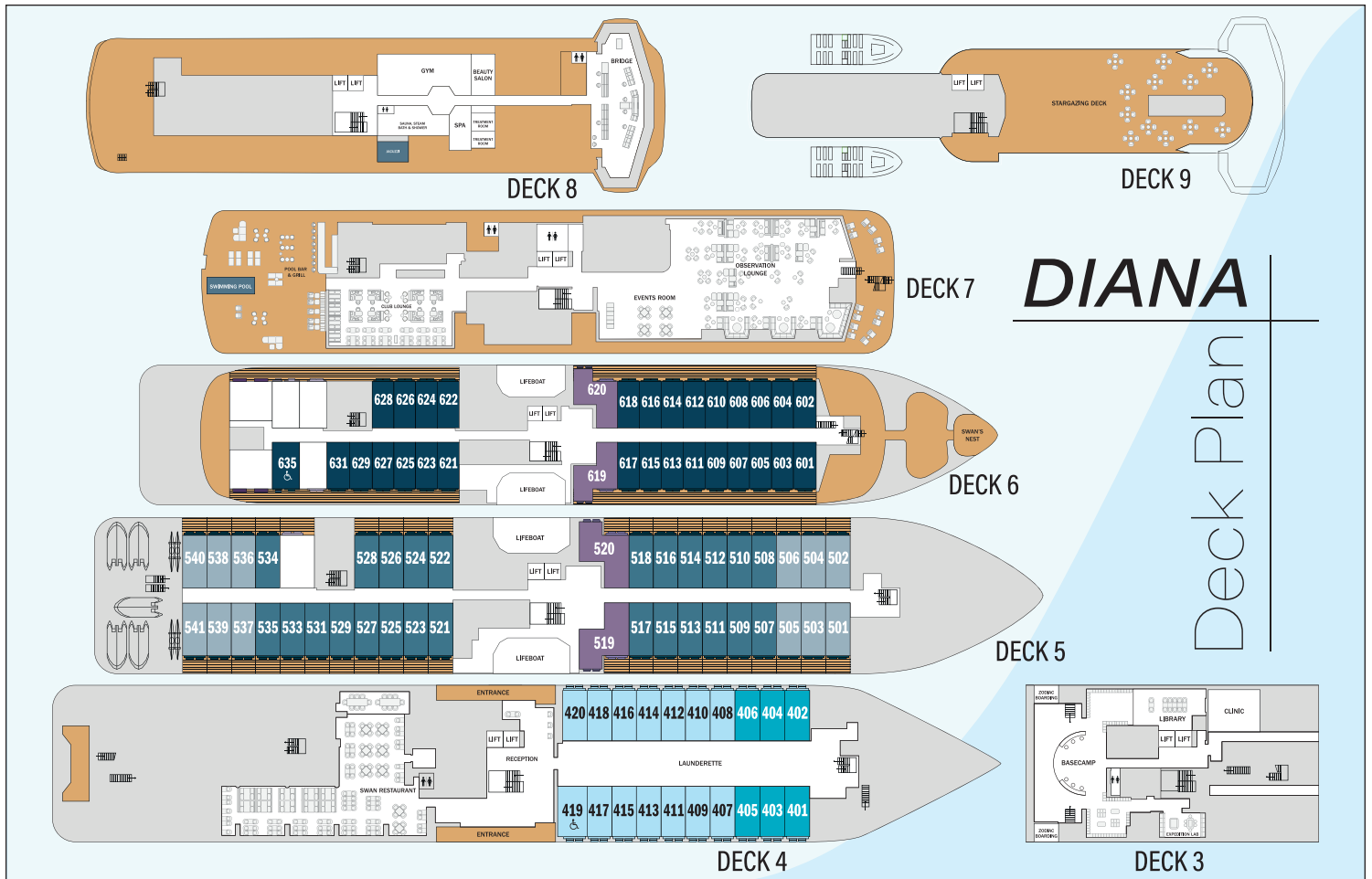
After breakfast aboard, disembark and transfer to the airport for flights homeward. (B)



Pantelleria, Italy



The Royal Alcazar of Seville, Spain



All accommodations aboard *Diana* are spacious staterooms and balcony suites. They are elegantly decorated, face outside, affording sea views, and include a queen-size bed that can be arranged as two twin beds, a spacious bathroom, mini-refrigerator, safe, ample closet space, climate control, telephone, TV, Wi-Fi, and USB connections, as well as other amenities.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	RATES PER PERSON / DOUBLE OCCUPANCY
E	Oceanview staterooms with two large oval windows. 206 sq. ft. Deck 4. Staterooms 401-406.	\$ 9,980
D	Oceanview staterooms with two large oval windows. 206 sq. ft. Deck 4. Staterooms 407-420.	\$ 10,490
C	Suites with balcony & living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 5. Suites 501-506, 536-541.	\$ 11,990
B	Suites with balcony & living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 5. Suites 507-518, 521-529, 531-535.	\$ 12,390
A	Suites with balcony and living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 6. Suites 601-618, 621-635.	\$ 12,890
AA	Suites with large balcony, separate bedroom & living room. 474 sq. ft. Decks 5 & 6. Suites 519, 520, 619 & 620.	\$ 16,490

FOR SOLO TRAVELERS | A limited number of cabins are available for single occupants in Category D at 120% of the per-person, double occupancy rate, and in Categories C, B, and A at 150% of the per-person, double occupancy rate.

LOYALTY REWARD PROGRAM

Travel on this cruise program and enjoy savings of **\$400 to \$900** per person on your next voyage with **THE SKEPTICS SOCIETY and THALASSA JOURNEYS** aboard a Swan Hellenic ship. Savings are determined by the stateroom category booked and is applicable when you reserve your trip within 30 days of the completion date of **ANCIENT CITIES OF IBERIA & NORTH AFRICA**

This saving cannot be combined with other offers and is subject to change.

PROGRAM INCLUSIONS

The rates are all-inclusive. There are no hidden costs and no additional charges such as shore excursions or embarkation and port charges. Other than the international airfare and expenses of a personal nature, all else is included. Specifically, the rates include:

- One night at the *Avenida Palace Hotel* (or similar) in Lisbon.
- Welcome dinner in Lisbon.
- Cruise aboard the *Diana*, as described in the itinerary.
- Group airport/hotel/pier transfers at designated times, and handling of luggage on arrival and departure dates.
- Lectures by members of the onboard team of experts.
- Complete program of tours and excursions as mentioned in the itinerary including lunch on full day tours with professional English-speaking guides.
- All meals aboard the ship, with a selection of wines, beer and soft drinks during lunch and dinner.
- Welcome and farewell cocktail receptions aboard the ship hosted by the captain.
- Open bar with select alcoholic beverages.
- Coffee, including espresso and cappuccino, tea and soft drinks throughout the day and night.
- 24-hour room service.
- Gratuities to the ship's crew, guides, porters and drivers.
- Basic Wi-Fi aboard the ship.
- The services of an experienced Thalassa Journeys Trip Director.
- All local taxes and service charges, including port and embarkation taxes.
- Complete pre-departure material.

NOT INCLUDED: International airfare; travel insurance; expenses of a personal nature; any items not mentioned in the itinerary or the above inclusions.



Tétouan Medina, Morocco



Ancient Carthage, Tunisia

GENERAL INFORMATION

SKEP 25D-0809

PAYMENT SCHEDULE: A deposit of \$1,500 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure. Payment can be made by personal check or charged to a credit card.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: All cancellations are subject to a \$300 per person administrative fee. Cancellations received 71-90 days prior to departure will be assessed a penalty equal to 50% of the total program cost per person. Cancellations received within 70 days of departure are subject to 100% cancellation penalties. Requests for cancellations must be made in writing. No refunds will be made for any part of this program in which you choose not to participate.

INSURANCE: We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance, which is available for coverage of expenses in conjunction with cancellation due to illness or accident. Baggage insurance is also recommended. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement.

ITINERARY: The itinerary, accommodations and arrangements are subject to change at the discretion of Thalassa Journeys.

RESPONSIBILITY: Please read carefully the following terms and conditions, which constitute the sole, legally enforceable agreements between the traveler and Thalassa Journeys. Thalassa Journeys acts solely as agents for the traveler with respect to all transportation, hotel and other tour arrangements. In that capacity, we exercise all reasonable care possible to ensure the traveler's safety and satisfaction, but, we neither assume nor bear any responsibility or liability for any injury, death, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity arising in connection with the services of any ship, airplane, train, automobile, motor coach, carriage or other conveyance, or the actions of any third-party, involved in carrying the traveler or in affecting these tours. We are not responsible for damages, additional expenses, or any other losses due to cancellation, delay or other changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, civil disturbances, acts or threats of terrorism, travel warnings or bans, termination or suspension of war risks or other carrier insurance, quarantine, acts of God or other causes beyond our control. All such losses must be borne by the traveler, and tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. In the event of cancellation, delay or rescheduling mandated by any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall have the option of accepting in lieu of the original tour such rescheduled tour or other substituted tour(s) as may be offered by us, or else, receiving a refund of as much of such advance tour expenditures as we are able to recover on the traveler's behalf from carriers, third-party tour vendors, etc., but, we shall not have any obligation or liability to the traveler beyond the foregoing. We reserve the right to make alterations to the tour's itinerary and to substitute hotels, transportation methods, or lecturers if this is required. We reserve the right to cancel, delay, or reschedule any tour prior to departure, and, so long as this is not due to any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall be entitled to a full refund of all monies paid to that point if he/she so desires. No refund shall be made for any unused portion of any tour. By forwarding their deposit(s), the traveler certifies that he/she and/or their dependents, minors or others covered thereby do not have any mental, physical or other condition of disability that could create a hazard for them or other travelers. We reserve the right to decline to accept or to decline to retain any person as a member of any tour should such person's health, condition or actions adversely affect or threaten the welfare or safety of other travelers or impede the tour. Baggage or valuables brought on the tour shall be transported, handled or stored at the traveler's risk entirely, and, we shall bear no liability or responsibility for any damage or other loss thereto. Resolution of any disputes arising hereunder shall be affected exclusively in the state or federal courts presiding in Florida, pursuant to applicable Florida law.

RATES: Tour costs are based upon current airfares, tariffs, and currency values. While we do everything possible to maintain the listed prices, they are subject to change.

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ANCIENT CITIES OF IBERIA & NORTH AFRICA: A Voyage from Lisbon to Sicily



Tangier market, Morocco

FOR RESERVATIONS AND INFORMATION

PLEASE CALL

THALASSA JOURNEYS AT

866-633-3611

or email

reservations@thalassajourneys.com