

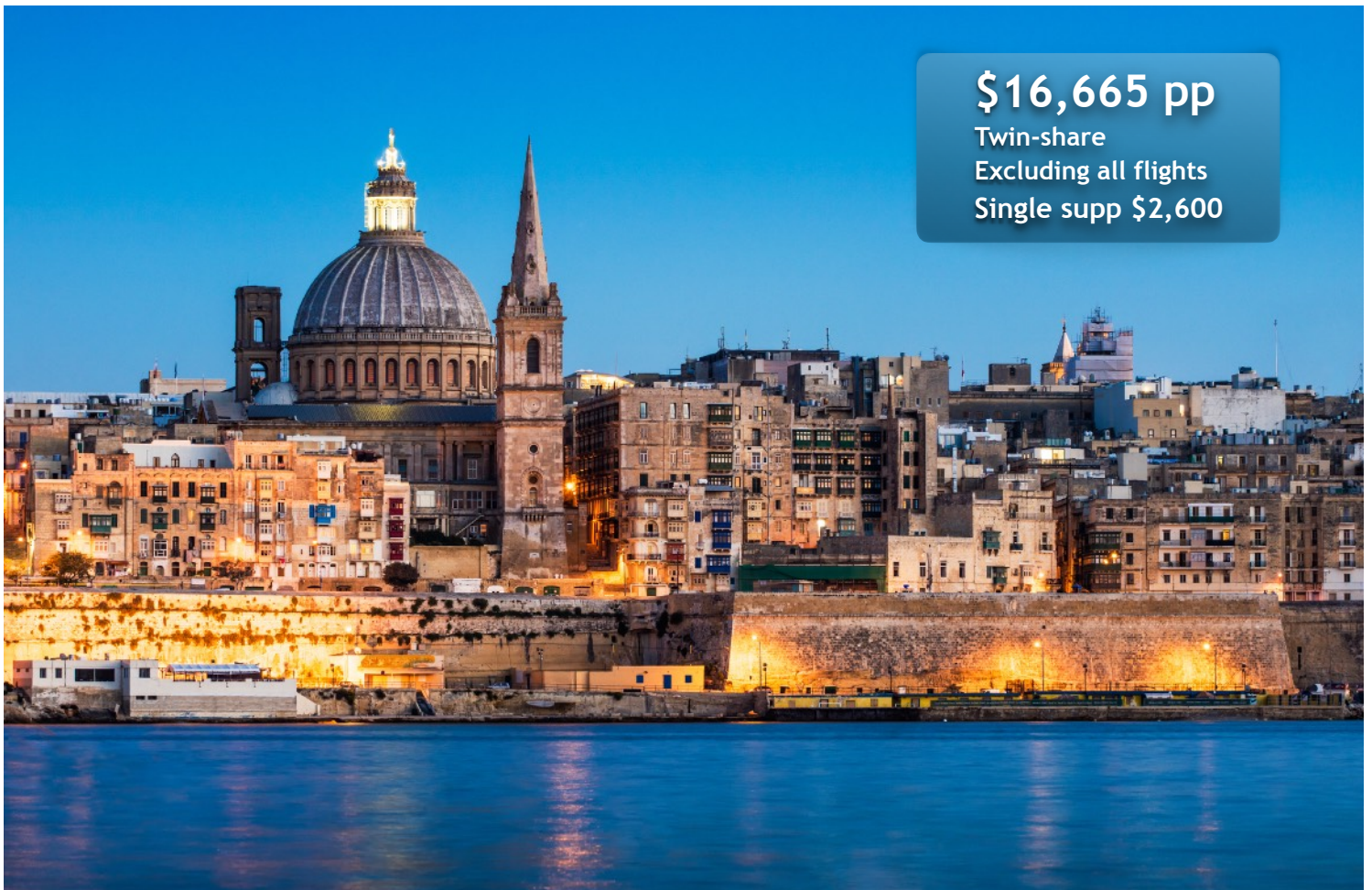
Corsica, Sardinia and Malta

Departs
2nd September 2024

Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different





\$16,665 pp

Twin-share

Excluding all flights

Single supp \$2,600

CORSICA, SARDINIA AND MALTA

Three Mediterranean Islands, and all very different. Sardinia is part of Italy but with its own unique culture and influences. The laid back French governed Corsica is much like regional France 50 years ago. Then there is wonderful Malta, an independent nation which was once a British colony, and packed with history.

The Island of Corsica is one of France's 18 regional territories. It lies directly north of Sardinia and can be easily reached by ferry. Its capital Ajaccio is the birth place of Napoleon Bonaparte and his ancestral home is today used as a museum. Like other Mediterranean islands, Corsica was visited, conquered and highly influenced by many people of the ancient world. The Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Phoenicians, Genovese and Northern Africans all left their mark. France invaded and occupied in the mid 1700s. Today it relies heavily on agriculture and tourism. It is far less developed than many islands in the Mediterranean. Visitors come for the weather, the food and the glorious scenery.

Sardinia is the second largest island in the Mediterranean, presenting a rather rugged mountainous landscape, balanced by placid bays. In rural parts, stone-walled Neolithic fortresses call Nuraghes can still be seen in the fields. Sardinian towns and cities, especially those along the coast, have a rich tradition of shellfish and seafood while inland towns and cities are known for game and farm produce, most notably capers, olives and Pecorino sardo. The sea around this large Mediterranean Island is among the most beautiful and transparent in all the world. You will love the sights, the people, the food and the culture of this very special destination.

If year-round sunshine and 7,000 years-worth of living history is your thing, the ex-British colony of Malta should be on your bucket list. This independent nation is comprised of three small islands – Malta, Gozo and Comino (which is uninhabited). It is a traveller's dream because everything the island has to offer is within a small radius. You can enjoy the grand architecture, stunning fortified harbour, traditional hilltop towns, amazing history, fishing villages, and an upbeat lively capital city, all against the languid backdrop of the magnificent Mediterranean.

Come join us on this wonderful Mediterranean experience!



**Day 1, Monday 2nd September
DEPARTURE**

Depart Australia for your flight to Nice. Please get in touch with us for further information about flights. *Meals in flight*



**Day 2, Tuesday 3rd September
ARRIVE NICE, FRANCE**

We'll be picked up from the airport and transferred to our accommodation on arrival in Nice. The afternoon will be at

leisure, allowing you to freshen up and/or stroll the Old Port area near the hotel before our group welcome dinner early in the evening at a local restaurant. Overnight in Nice. *D*

**Day 3, Wednesday 4th September
NICE and to BASTIA**

Today is a free day to explore this gem of a city, noting that today is unguided and un-hosted. Stroll the beachfront promenade, visit the panoramic belvedere, the Cours Selaya markets, or the captivating Old Town. Have an early dinner in Nice, then meet back at the hotel for our transfer to the airport for an evening flight to Bastia in Corsica. On arrival, we'll meet our Corsican

guide and driver and transfer to our hotel in the city's heart for a three-night stay. *B*

**Day 4, Thursday 5th September
BASTIA**

Today, we'll take a walking tour of charming Bastia. Our day includes the city's impressive citadel (it involves some uphill sections, but the old city's views and sights are well worth it), the bustling marina, and the picturesque historic quarter. We'll return to our hotel in the afternoon to freshen up and conclude our day with dinner at Bastia's busy and attractive Place Saint Nicolas. *B/D*



**Day 5, Friday 6th September
CAP CORSE**

Today, we'll enjoy a full day in and around the Cap Corse, a finger of land at the top of Corsica. Explore from east to west with its rocky terrain, crystal clear waters and quaint villages. We'll stop at Erbalunga (a charming village with a 16th-century Genoese tower), Macinaggio, Pino and Nonza, with its black pebble beach. Lunch will be at your leisure before returning to Bastia in the late afternoon via the Col of Teghime. Dinner is in the port of Bastia. *B/D*



Day 6, Saturday 7th September BASTIA – CALVI

Depart for Saint Michel, the famous Chapel of Murato. We'll enjoy a walking tour to explore the local village's old quarters with its bakers' ovens and washhouses. Lunch is at a family inn, and then we'll drive on to the lovely city of Calvi for a two-night stay. **B/L**



Day 7, Sunday 8th September CALVI AND SURROUNDS

After breakfast, we'll enjoy a guided tour of Calvi's impressive citadel before further exploring the old, picturesque villages of

San Antonino and Pigna on the way to the small harbour town of Ile Rousse. Time and weather permitting, we'll return via Santa Serra against an iconic Mediterranean sunset. Dinner is at a restaurant near our hotel in Calvi.

B/D



Day 8, Monday 9th September TO AJACCIO via CORTÉ

Today, we'll drive to the beautiful mountain village of Corté, with its citadel perched atop the rocky mountain crags. Board "Le Petit Train" for a novel way to reach this historic site, where we'll visit the Museum of Corsica before enjoying lunch at a family-run restaurant. We'll continue on a scenic drive through the Vizzavona forest, enjoying picturesque views of the Sanguinary Islands as we arrive in Ajaccio, where we will stay for the next two nights. Enjoy dinner at your leisure in this historic port city. **B/L**



Day 9, Tuesday 10th September PORTO

Today is a scenic day of travel, showcasing Corsica's beautiful nature. We'll travel first to the lovely seaside town of Porto. Weather

permitting, we'll take a boat trip to explore the Scandola Nature Reserve, a stunning World Heritage-listed rock formations and wildlife. We'll enjoy lunch at on the heights of Porto, before returning to Ajaccio. Our trip passes through the Spelunca Gorge, a spectacular gorge of red rocky cliffs set against a backdrop of deep blue sea. We'll return to Ajaccio in the early evening. Dinner is at your leisure. **B/L**



Day 10, Wednesday 11th September AJACCIO – SARTENE – BONIFACIO

This morning we'll explore the beautiful imperial city of Ajaccio. The birthplace of Napoleon, this bustling city is brimming with history, from the tangled streets of the city's old town to the market place, citadel and cathedral. It is also home to fantastic modern art and culture such as the Fesch museum of modern art. After our city tour, we'll take a short drive out of town for a special lunch at

a family-run auberge. In the afternoon, we'll visit Sartene, known as the "soul of Corsica" for its well-preserved medieval buildings. We'll continue to the stunning city of Bonifacio. This ancient fortress town sits atop limestone cliffs carved by centuries of endless waves and will make for some great photos. We'll spend the next three nights here. **B/L**



Day 11, Thursday 12th September BONIFACIO

Be ready for some stunning scenery today, taking the road to Bavella, a true highlight of the Corsican mountains. We'll pass

through small villages and watch as the landscape changes from dramatic rock formations to forests of giant Laricio pines. The most beautiful panorama is at the pass of Col de Bavella (1,218m elevation) inside the regional reserve. We'll have lunch in this scenic area before returning to Bonifacio through the Ospedale Forrest. Dinner and the evening is at your leisure. **B/L**



Day 12, Friday 13th September BONIFACIO

This morning, we'll take the local mini-train up the steep ascent to the high town and enjoy a guided tour explaining the citadel's interesting history. There's free time to explore the winding laneways, local shops, and craft outlets. After lunch at your leisure, return to sea level for a boat excursion (subject to weather conditions) to discover the caves of Bonifacio. The rest of the afternoon is free, before dinner at the port. **B/D**



Day 13, Saturday 14th September TO ARZACHENA, SARDINIA

This morning, we'll take a one-hour ferry to Santa Teresa at the northern tip of Sardinia. We'll meet our Sardinian guide and driver, then board another ferry to La Maddalena Island, where there will be free time for lunch. Once a fishing village, La Maddalena attracted the attention of several famous leaders who understood its strategic position between Sardinia and mainland Italy. Now, the town centres around the animated



cafes and buildings of Piazza Garibaldi, named after Giuseppe Garibaldi, the father of Italian independence. We'll visit the museum before returning to the main island for an archaeological tour of the "Giant's Tomb" at Coddu Vecchiu. This necropolis dates back to the Neolithic age (1600 BC) and is the biggest in Sardinia. We'll arrive at our hotel in Arzachena late in the afternoon for dinner and a two-night stay. **B/D**



Day 14, Sunday 15th September
AGGIUS

Today we'll travel to Aggius to visit both its interesting museums. The MEOC Museum explores Sardinian traditions and culture from 1600 to the present. Aggius was the epicentre of banditry in Gallura for about three centuries, and the Museum of Banditry documents this interesting slice of local history. After lunch, we'll explore Tempio Pausania, the "city of stone." This picturesque old town of granite buildings and paving is famous for its granite and cork production. We'll return to Arzachena in the late afternoon, and dinner is at our hotel. *B/D*



Day 15, Monday 16th September
ARZACHENA – ORGOSOLO – OLIENA

Today we'll travel to Orgosolo, in the heart of the Barbagia del Supramonte mountain area. Its hinterland is strewn with the traces of the ancient dwellers of Sardinia, domus de janas, tombs of the giants and nuraghes. After a stroll through the narrow streets and alleys of the village, we'll enjoy lunch with the local shepherds, who will share the "Cantu a Tenore" with us (a style of polyphonic folk singing characteristic of the Barbagia Area.) After lunch, we'll explore the beautiful Barbagia Region Panoramas en route to Oliena. Our hotel tonight is a special one featuring the works of major Sardinian artists. Your afternoon is free to explore the hotel grounds, terraces, nooks and crannies – it's more like a museum than a hotel, and the food is fabulous! Dinner is at the hotel tonight. *B/L/D*



Day 16, Tuesday 17th September
OLIENA – BOSA – ALGHERO

After breakfast, we'll travel to Bosa, arguably one of Sicily's most beautiful towns. Lunch is at your leisure, and

sitting in the main square with a bowl of pasta is hard to beat! After lunch, we'll take a walking tour of the village with its pastel houses stacked up the hillside and fishing boats bobbing in the river. We'll continue through one of the most scenic roads on the island to our next destination – Alghero, where we will spend the next two nights. We'll arrive late afternoon and relax before dinner at the hotel. *B/D*



Day 17, Wednesday 18th September
CASTELSARDO

After breakfast, we'll drive to the ancient town of Castelsardo for a walking tour. Overlooking this picturesque city sits Castello dei Doria; the 11th Century castle that gives the town its name. It is wonderfully preserved and houses the famous Museo dell' Intreccio (entrance not included). The nearby Maria's Basilica is famous for the so-called Cristo Nero (Black Christ), carved from wood. In the afternoon, we'll drive back to Alghero for a walking tour of this beautiful town. With its fortified walls and towers that surround the old town built under Catalan rule, it is known as the "little Barcelona". Its medieval main square, Piazza Civica, showcases the famous Duke of Abis palace and the 16th-century S.

Maria Cathedral. We'll enjoy dinner at a local restaurant tonight. *B/D*



Day 18, Thursday 19th September
ALGHERO – CAGLIARI

A long but rewarding day today! We'll begin our journey South, with our first stop at Bonorva to visit the huge Necropolis of Sant'Andrea Prius, one of the largest in the Mediterranean. We'll continue to lunch at a local farm where the owner will share his knowledge about the farm and his traditional home-grown food.



After lunch, we'll travel to Torralba to visit the magnificent Nuraghe Santu Antine. Dating back to 1600 BC, this ritual fortress is

composed of a central tower surrounded by a fortified court and three side towers disposed as a perfect triangle. We'll walk through the beautifully preserved corridors inside the fortress to truly appreciate this ancient building. Finally, we'll arrive in Cagliari in the early evening, where we will spend the next four nights. Dinner at the hotel. *B/L/D*



Day 19, Friday 20th September
CAGLIARI

Today, we'll discover the scenic coastline of the Sulcis Region, from Fontanamare to Porto Flavia. As we drive this amazing road, the mountain's rocky face has an amazing purple colour contrasting with the surrounding greenery. The cliff-face port of Porto Flavia is a masterpiece of mining engineering. Now abandoned, the fascinating site was dug into the cliffs 50m above sea level. The southward coast from Buggerru is panoramic and full of little paradises like the beach of Cala Domestica, dominated by a Spanish tower, and the mining village of Nebida, suspended between the sea and the mountains beyond. There will be free time for lunch (own cost), and plenty of stops for panoramic photos on the way back to Cagliari. Dinner is at a local restaurant, about a 500m walk from our hotel. *B/D*



Day 20, Saturday 21st September
CAGLIARI

This morning we'll enjoy a walking tour of the beautiful Cagliari Medieval district, overlooking the Golfo degli Angeli. Founded by Phoenician traders, the city has



preserved soaring towers and sections of the city walls that once encircled its medieval Castello district. It's also home to one of the Mediterranean's largest and most important Phoenician necropolises. We'll walk through Saint Augustine, Piazza Matteotti and Via Roma. We'll visit the 17th-century cathedral, known for its ornate Baroque interior, grand towers and magnificent bastions. This part of the town is known as

'Castello', a once impregnable fortress that offers excellent panoramic views over Cagliari. You will be free to stroll the township in the afternoon. Visit the delis, cafes and shops at your leisure before meeting for dinner at a local restaurant in the evening. **B/D**

 **Day 21, Sunday 22nd September**
CAGLIARI AND NORA

After breakfast, we'll visit the ruins of the ancient town of Nora. Founded by the Phoenicians, then ruled by Punics and Romans, Nora is at the end of a beautiful promontory southwest of Cagliari. The Romans made the town wealthy and beautiful, adding a theatre, several thermal baths and a stunning mosaic. We'll walk the Roman roads and discover the site's Roman architecture, monuments, and religious areas. Lunch is at your leisure, and your afternoon is free to explore the nearby village of Pula before returning to Cagliari for our final Sardinian dinner at a local restaurant. **B/D**



 **Day 22, Monday 23rd September**
CAGLIARI TO MALTA

This morning, we will visit the wetlands of Molentargius, a short drive from the city centre. Molentargius is

considered one of the most important wetlands in Europe and is home to many endangered species. However, it is probably most famous for its colony of pink flamingos. After exploring the park, we'll visit nearby Poetto Beach, where you'll have free time to have lunch in one of the small restaurants by the beach. We'll return to our hotel in the afternoon to freshen up and grab a quick snack before transferring to the airport. In the evening, we'll fly to Valetta, where we will spend the next five nights. **B**



 **Day 23, Tuesday 24th September**
VALLETTA

Today, we'll explore the historic sites surrounding Valletta. Stroll the cobblestoned streets and enjoy the beautiful

architecture of the Silent City of Mdina before visiting the Mdina Glass factory. We'll see the stunning Mosta Dome, famous for its beauty and fascinating history, and then the ancient Hagar Qim temples. The temple of Hagar Qim, excavated for the first time in 1839, dates to c. 3600 - 3200 BC. It stands on a hilltop overlooking the sea and the islet of Filfla. Weather permitting, we'll take a short boat ride to experience the beautiful light reflections and cave systems of the Blue Grotto. Dinner is at the hotel. **B/D**

 **Day 24, Wednesday 25th September**
VALLETTA

Malta's capital, Valletta, is a fortified city on a hilly peninsula between two stunning natural harbours. When UNESCO named Valletta a World Heritage site, it described it as 'one of the most concentrated historic areas in the world', with 20 monuments within an area of 55 ha. This morning, we'll explore its key sites on foot, including the Upper Baraka Garden and St John's Cathedral. To best appreciate the famous harbour, we'll travel on a "fregatina"; the traditional fishing boat of Malta, to the medieval city of Birgu. We'll return in the late afternoon to freshen up, before enjoying dinner at a local restaurant. **B/D**

 **Day 25, Thursday 26th September**
GOZO

Today, we'll take a short ferry ride to Malta's second-largest island, Gozo. Arriving at the quaint seaside town of Xlendi is the perfect coffee stop before we continue to the Basilica of Ta'Pinu. We'll continue to the island's capital city, Victoria, and the Ggantija Temples, one of the world's oldest known free-standing structures. Enjoy a fabulous seafood lunch at a local seaside village where the feast is so good. Dinner is not included tonight, as most will want to give it a miss! After returning to Valetta, you will be free this evening. **B/L**



 **Day 26, Friday 27th September**
VALLETTA – MARSAXLOKK

This morning, we'll visit the nearby town of Sliema. Dotted with charming cafes and a quirky mix of old and new shops, Sliema is a vibrant town that oozes local charm. We'll have free time to stroll the waterfront promenade before heading to Marsaxlokk, a pretty bay-side fishing village, for lunch (own cost). Dotted with charming fishing boats, it's a fabulous spot to wander with your camera. In the afternoon, we'll return to Valetta, where you have an afternoon free to relax and enjoy Mediterranean life at its best. We'll meet for a farewell dinner at a local restaurant in the evening. **B/D**



Day 27 Saturday 28th September
DEPARTURE

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight home or your next destination. **B**

Sunday 29th September
ARRIVE HOME



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required: eg. A trek over 'mostly flat' terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required: eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. **An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section.** Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.