



## Why visit St Helena in 2015 - a secret island unchanged since Napoleon's day

9 December 2014

Next year heralds a significant year for the unspoilt South Atlantic island of St Helena, providing the last opportunity to travel to the remote UK Overseas Territory by Royal Mail Ship before the airport opens. October 2015 also marks the bicentenary of the arrival of the Island's most famous inhabitant, Napoleon Bonaparte.

### ***Don't miss the boat – last chance to sail on the RMS St Helena***

One of the world's last working Royal Mail Ships, RMS St Helena is a 155-berth passenger liner and cargo ship currently offering the only way of travelling to the tropical island, which is set to see its long-awaited airport open in February 2016.

As much a part of the St Helena experience as staying on the far-flung island, the voyage provides a chance to step back into an earlier era of travel. Passengers can indulge in traditional ocean-going pastimes including informative talks, quizzes, deck quoits and cricket as well as meet local 'Saints' returning to the Island and immerse themselves in the local community prior to arrival.

Special scheduled departures planned for 2015 include a Stargazing Tour leaving from Cape Town on 4 May 2015 in the company of professional stargazer, dark skies consultant, and author of the book "Stargazing for Dummies", Steve Owens. Pairing St Helena – one time home to the observatory of Edmond "comet" Halley – with a visit to South Africa's national observatory for the first time, the tour will transport stargazers to astronomy heaven.

The 19-day tour costs from £2,695 per person including accommodation in a shared two berth cabin on A deck with private facilities and full board while on board the RMS St Helena, in a twin/double room on St Helena on a bed and breakfast basis, all tours on St Helena with evening meals where mentioned. The Western Cape pre-tour departs on 30th April and costs from £915 per person, based on sharing a twin room, all accommodation and meals as mentioned in the itinerary, entry fees and guiding fees. International flights are extra. For more information and to book visit <http://rms-st-helena.com/tours/stargazing-tour/>

### ***Napoleon's bicentenary***

Following his defeat at the Battle of Waterloo in June 1815, Napoleon was transported to the island of St Helena, arriving on 15 October 1815.

Visitors following in the famous Frenchman's footsteps can make a pilgrimage to Longwood House, where Napoleon lived until his death in May 1821, now recognised as one of the most iconic Napoleonic museums in the world. A major restoration has been undertaken to

coincide with the bicentenary celebrations, with renovations including the rebuilding of the General's Quarters, where Napoleon's entourage stayed during his exile.

The exterior of the General's Quarters is to appear as seen at the time of Napoleon's death, while by contrast the interior will be modern and serve as a multi-functional event space. The new General's Quarters will also include two accommodation apartments.

Highlights of the Island's October celebrations will include turning St Helena French for a week, an open air movie theatre showing Napoleonic films, a French v British kite competition and a period ball in the Castle. There will also be classical music recitals of famous works with a connection to Napoleon, a food festival and the official opening of the General's Quarters at Longwood House. On board the RMS St Helena, passengers will be treated to presentations on Napoleonic battle strategies and music recitals.

Bespoke luxury tour operator, Halcyon Collections, offers a 23-night Last Great Adventure from £3,995 per person sharing including:

- Return airfare from London to Cape Town in Economy
- Accommodation in Cape Town at the Town House for 1 night before and 2 nights after the tour, including breakfast
- Passage on board the RMS St Helena from Cape Town-St Helena-Cape Town in a T2H Cabin with large window and private en-suite facilities, including meals
- All transfers from/to Cape Town International airport, port and hotels
- 8 nights' bed & breakfast at St Helena at Farm Lodge Country House
- On-island tours including a guided walking tour of Jamestown and the Distillery, exploring the diversity of the island by 4x4, guided Napoleonic tour including Longwood House, fishing, diving and dolphin watching
- Farewell 3-course dinner at 2onMain Restaurant

For more information and to book email: [reservations@halcyon-collections.com](mailto:reservations@halcyon-collections.com) and visit [www.halcyon-collections.com](http://www.halcyon-collections.com)

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For more information on St Helena visit [www.sthelenatourism.com](http://www.sthelenatourism.com)

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

1. St Helena is an Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom, with its own legislature and a high degree of internal self-government.
2. It is an island of 47 square miles (122 sq.km) situated 1,200 miles off the west coast of Africa.
3. Currently the only access to the Island is by sea, via the ship *RMS St Helena*, plus a number of cruise ships and yachts.
4. The number of tourists is currently around 2,000 a year but the opening of an airport could quadruple that number in the next ten years without undermining the essential way of life and natural attractions of St Helena.

5. On the 3rd November 2011 the International Development Secretary announced the official go ahead for the airport and appointed South African company, Basil Read (Pty), to design and construct the airport. The airport is scheduled to be operational in 2016.