



Rafael Verdera
SAILING SINCE 1841

CETACEAN SIGHTING

Velero Rafael Verdera

www.rafaelverdera.com

Trip summary

What does it include?

- Sailing and accommodation aboard the oldest active historic sailing ship in the Spanish fleet.
- Professional crew.
- Whale, turtle, and seabird watching in the Gulf of Lion and the Balearic coast.
- Participation in seafaring life: hoisting sails, steering, watchkeeping, fishing, and cooking.
- Onboard menu included: local products, lunch, and drinks.
- Travel insurance.
- Safety equipment and introductory briefing

From €2,100 per person (depending on the season)
Special discounts for groups and families

No included

- Transportation to the port of departure.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Recommended personal items (clothing, sunscreen, medication).





Whale watching excursion

WHERE: On Rafael Verdera: the oldest active sailing ship in Spain (1841).

- Wooden schooner, 23 m long, 12 passengers.
- Authentic sailing experience.

THE TRIP:

- Departure: Preferably, Port of Palamós
- Duration: 7 days
- Route: To the waters of the western Mediterranean / Gulf of Lion (conditions apply).
- Objective: Whale and marine wildlife watching.

SIGHTINGS:

- Common, striped, and bottlenose dolphins.
- Pilot whales.
- Fin whales.
- Possible encounters with sperm whales and other species.
- Accompanied by seabirds (shearwaters, gulls, gannets).



Pilot whales

- **Long-finned Pilot Whale** (*Globicephala melas*)
 - Appearance: Robust body, globose head without a distinct beak.
 - Size: Up to 6–7 meters.
 - Sociability: Highly gregarious, often seen in groups of dozens.
 - Behavior: Approaches boats, swims together in a coordinated manner.
- **Risso's dolphin** (*Grampus griseus*)
 - Appearance: Skin marked with characteristic white scars, rounded head.
 - Size: 3–4 meters.
 - Less abundant, but common in deep waters of the western Mediterranean.

¿DID YOU KNOW THAT..?

Long-finned pilot whales are so close-knit that they rarely leave their group. If one member falls ill, the entire group can accompany them to the end.



Stripped dolphin

Stenella coeruleoalba

- **Identification:** Slender body with a very distinctive pattern: a dark line from the eye to the caudal fin and light lateral stripes that give it the name "striped".
- **Size:** Between 2 and 2.5 meters; weight up to 150 kg.
- **Behavior:** Very sociable and active, they usually swim in large groups and sometimes leap from the bow of boats.
- **Habitat:** They prefer open, deep waters of the Mediterranean.
- **Diet:** Small fish and squid.
- **Sightings:** This is one of the most common species on observation trips in the Gulf of Lion and along the Balearic coast.

¿DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

They can reach speeds of up to 60 km/h and often ride the waves off the bow of boats, like true marine acrobats!



DID YOU KNOW THAT...?
Their coloration allows them to camouflage themselves by blending in with the sun's rays in the water.

Common dolphin

Delphinus delphis

- **Identification:** Streamlined body with an hourglass-shaped pattern on the sides (yellow and light gray). Elongated, slender snout.
- **Size:** 2–2.5 meters long, weight up to 130 kg.
- **Behavior:** Very sociable and active. They often swim in large groups, jumping and playing in the waves off the bow of boats.
- **Habitat:** Open waters and also coastal areas of the Mediterranean.
- **Diet:** Small fish, cephalopods.
- **Conservation:** In the Mediterranean, they are considered endangered due to declining populations, although they are still common in some areas.
- **Sightings:** One of the most charismatic and easy-to-see species on birdwatching excursions.



¿DID YOU KNOW THAT...?
Bottlenose dolphins are highly sociable animals that can form groups of up to 100 individuals.

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Bottlenose dolphin

Tursiops truncatus

- **Identification:** Robust size, grayish coloration with a lighter or white belly, a sickle-shaped dorsal fin, and a short, thick snout (the "bottlenose").
- **Size:** 2-4 m long.
- **Behavior:** Usually lives in small groups and likes to approach boats.
- **Habitat:** Coastal and benthic (bottom-associated) dolphin, although it can also be found in open waters.
- **Diet:** Small fish and cephalopods.
- **Conservation:** Vulnerable species.
- **Sightings:** It is one of the most observed species in the western Mediterranean, especially in coastal areas.



Fin whale

Balaenoptera physalus

- **Identification:** Second largest animal on the planet, surpassed only by the blue whale. It has an elongated, slender body, with a dark gray back and whitish belly.
- **Size:** Up to 24 meters long and weighing 70 tons.
- **Behavior:** Usually seen alone or in small groups. It is recognized by its high, vertical blow (up to 6 meters).
- **Habitat:** Deep waters of the western Mediterranean, especially in the Gulf of Lions and the Cetacean Corridor migrating to the Balearic Islands.
- **Diet:** Small fish, crustaceans, and krill, which it filters with its baleen.
- **Conservation:** Protected species, vulnerable to ship collisions and noise pollution.
- **Sightings:** In spring and summer, following the plankton-rich currents.

¿DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

It's the second largest animal on the planet, but it feeds on tiny prey like krill and small fish, which it filters with its baleen.

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DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

The sperm whale is the deepest-diving mammal on the planet: it can descend to over 2,000 meters and remain submerged for up to 90 minutes?

Sperm whale

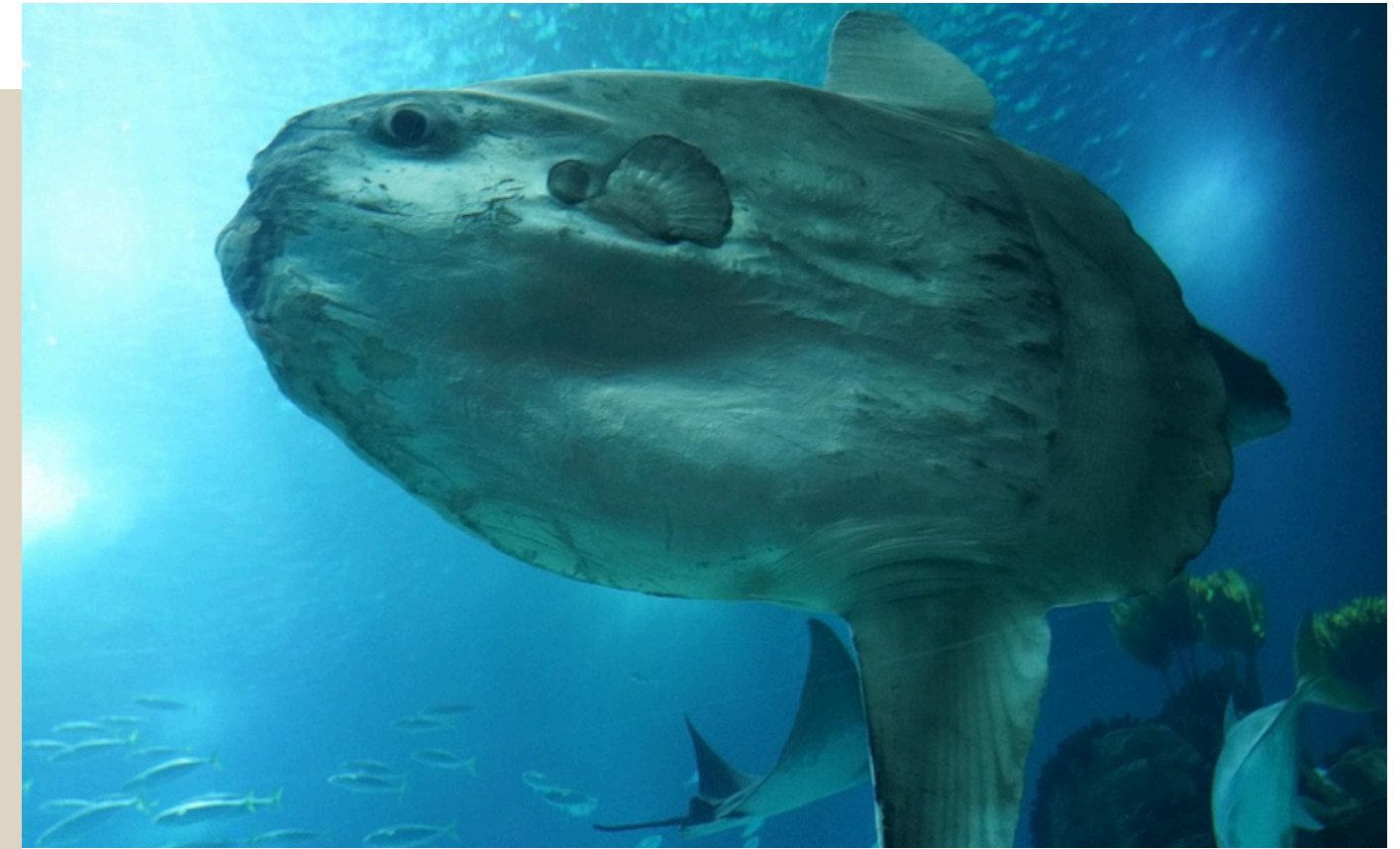
(Physeter macrocephalus)

- **Identification:** Recognizable by its enormous square head (which takes up almost a third of its body) and wrinkled skin.
- **Size:** Up to 18 meters long and weighing more than 50 tons. Males are much larger than females.
- **Behavior:** Known for its deep dives (more than 1,000 meters) in search of food. Between dives, it usually rests on the surface.
- **Diet:** Large predators of giant squid and deep-sea fish.
- **Sightings:** Found in the Gulf of Lions and deep waters of the western Mediterranean. Its forward- and left-angled blow is characteristic.

Beaked whales



Sunfish



Tuna



Turtles



**Other
observable
fauna**

Route and navigation mode

- Sailing from Palamós to the northwestern Mediterranean: the Gulf of Lion, Liguria, Corsica, and the northern Balearic Sea. Disembark at Palamós or Mallorca
- Land stops are rare but carefully chosen, such as in the Hyères Islands or the west coast of Corsica.
- The skipper sets the course based on the wind, sea, and sailing conditions.
- Calm days are ideal for whale watching.
- There are no passengers on the Rafael Verdera; everyone is part of the crew. You can help hoist sails, steer the helm, stand watch at night, or even help in the galley.



Characteristics

The Gulf of Lions is one of the Mediterranean's hotspots for whale watching: deep waters, abundant marine life, and the unique opportunity to see everything from playful dolphins to the majestic fin whale.

Why this destiny?

An area rich in marine life: thanks to the winds and currents, the Gulf of Lions has an upwelling system that brings nutrients up from the seabed, attracting fish, squid, and, consequently, large cetaceans.



Accommodation

Authentic sailor style

- Accommodation on a historic wooden ship, preserved with nautical charm.
- Beds and linens included: bunk beds and bunk mattresses.
- Basic amenities: sailor's toilets and showers; fresh water is a scarce commodity on the high seas.

Limited capacity

Maximum capacity for 12 people, ensuring a family-friendly and intimate atmosphere.

Shared cabin

- Shared atmosphere: Living together on board is part of the experience. Meals, conversations, and relaxation are enjoyed together.
- Each traveller has their own assigned space to leave their belongings.
- Air conditioning included

The Rafael Verdera isn't a hotel; it's a ship steeped in history. Sleeping on board means living like a true sailor: in shared cabins, surrounded by the lapping of the sea, and, if you wish, under an unforgettable starry sky.



Thank you 

Book your adventure and feel
the freedom of sailing with
cetaceans



Rafael Verdera
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Contact us



+34 669032960



www.rafaelverdera.com



info@rafaelverdera.com