



# The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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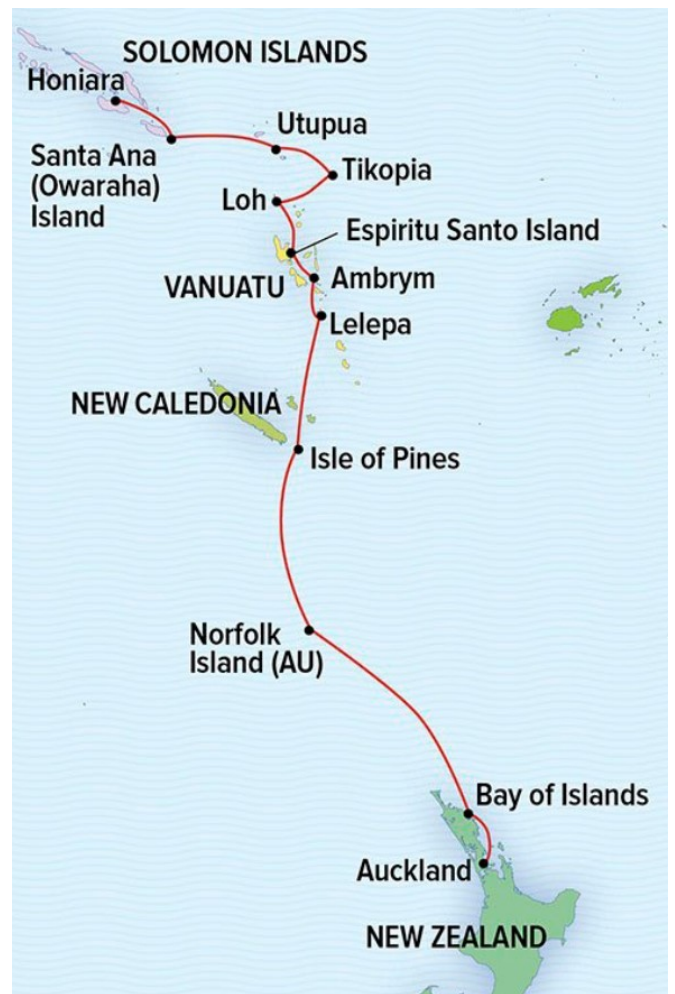


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## UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS: NEW ZEALAND TO MELANESIA

Following in the wake of Captain Cook, we will journey from New Zealand's North Island to the Solomon Sea. Delve into a fascinating history of intrepid explorers, convicts, and traders, and learn about the rich cultures of the Maori and the Melanesians. Examine traditional carved houses and ancient caves and meet villagers on some of the most remote islands of the South Pacific. Along the way, don your snorkel and fins to discover incredible coral reefs and lagoons.



### ITINERARY

DAY 1: Auckland, New Zealand

Arrive in Auckland, New Zealand, where we check into our hotel. Join us for a welcome briefing this evening to meet your fellow



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travelers.

### DAY 2: Auckland / Embark

Have breakfast at the hotel before joining a tour of this vibrant city center. We'll stop for lunch midday before embarking National Geographic Orion in the late afternoon. (B,L,D)

### DAY 3: Bay of Islands

The Bay of Islands is an area encompassing more than 140 subtropical islands, boasting an abundance of wildlife and fascinating history. Visit the Waitangi Treaty Grounds, a place of immeasurable cultural, spiritual, and historical significance, and learn of the historical events for which these grounds are remembered. (B,L,D)

### DAY 4: At Sea

Take advantage of a full day at sea to settle into the relaxed pace of life on board. Watch for marine life from the deck, study our route on the navigational charts, and attend talks by our experts. (B,L,D)

### DAY 5: Norfolk Island, Australia

Explore Norfolk Island, discovered by Captain Cook in 1774. Covered in dense forests of pines, it was initially valued as a ready source of shipbuilding lumber. Later, it became a British penal colony and then a settlement for Pitcairn Islanders, who themselves were descendants of the mutineers from the famous Bounty. Explore the ruins of the prison and enjoy walking around the main settlement at Burnt Pine. Later, take a long nature hike in Norfolk National Park to look for the endemic tree ferns and land birds. As we depart, look for large groups of seabirds alongside the dramatic island scenery. (B,L,D)

### DAY 6: At Sea

Relax on deck as we make our passage to Melanesia or attend talks by our expert expedition and photo teams. (B,L,D)

### DAY 7: Isle of Pines, New Caledonia

Swim or snorkel in the beautiful Oro Natural Pool or walk through a beautiful rainforest to the site of Queen Hortense's Cave, filled with limestone features and a variety of tropical vegetation. Alternatively, take a hike to the summit of N'Ga Peak to see incredible views over the island and the surrounding sea or join our naturalists for a birding walk through the dense canopy of the forest. (B,L,D)

### DAY 8: Port Vila / Lelepa, Vanuatu

Clear into Vanuatu at Port Vila. Later, go ashore at Lelepa to visit Vanuatu's first and only UNESCO World Heritage site, the final residence and burial site of 17th-century Chief Roi Mata. Here, we'll be welcomed with traditional songs and dance, and enter the impressive Fels Cave. (B,L,D)

### DAY 9: Ambrym

Ambrym is known for its active volcanoes, blacksand beaches, and mystery and magic. Arrive ashore to witness the striking Rom dance, traditionally a secret event. Involving incredible masks and elaborate outfits that represent spirits, this is a cultural experience specific only to this island. (B,L,D)

### DAY 10: Espiritu Santo

Captain James Cook named the islands of Vanuatu the "New Hebrides" because they reminded him of the rugged isles off Scotland's coast. On the main island of Espiritu Santo, experience one of the best wreck dives in the world: the S.S. President Coolidge, a luxury cruise liner used as a troop carrier



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during World War II, or enjoy a serene canoe paddle to the Riri Blue Hole, a jewel-blue freshwater source surrounded by jungle. (B,L,D)

#### DAY 11: Loh Island, Torres Group

Arrive to the small village of Loh Island by Zodiac, meandering along a beautiful mangrove lagoon. Meet the lovely villagers and experience some of the local kastom dances. Hike across the island to a cave and look for wildlife along the way. If conditions permit, snorkel in along the beautiful fringing reef of the island. (B,L,D)

#### DAY 12: Tikopia, Solomon Islands

Tikopia is an unusual island. Just under 2 miles square, it is the caldera of an extinct volcano and boasts dramatic scenery. Officially a part of the Solomon Islands of Melanesia, it was settled by Polynesian people, whose descendants still reside there today. Made up of several villages led by different chiefs, the island retains many of its traditional practices. We will visit one of the villages to meet the local people and learn about the unique culture of the island. Afterward, take a hike along the ridgeline of the caldera to see an aerial view of the island and its lagoon. (B,L,D)

#### DAY 13: Utupua

Located in the Santa Cruz Island group, Utupua is a high volcanic island surrounded by a lagoon and a fringing coral reef. Zodiac to the village of Nimbau for a welcome song and dance performance. Take a walk through the village with the locals and see a display of their fantastic fishing canoes. Take a Zodiac ride along the shores, lined with dense mangroves and boasting a variety of wildlife. (B,L,D)

#### DAY 14: Owaraha Island

On the tiny isle of Owaraha (formerly known as Santa Ana), we're greeted with a traditional dance performed by villagers in elaborate costumes, body paint, and masks. Walk across the small island to Nafinotoga to see Spirit Houses containing the skulls and bones of ancient chiefs of the Snake Clan and the Turtle Clan. (B,L,D)

#### DAY 15: Honiara / Disembark / Brisbane, Australia

Our expedition concludes in Honiara, a former U.S. supply depot and a strategic WWII battleground. Tour around the outskirts of the city to see sites well known from the Battle of Guadalcanal in 1942-43. See the shores of Red Beach and the vital airbase at Henderson Field. Visit the hills above Honiara, where some of the fiercest battles took place. Then transfer to the airport for our flight to Brisbane, where we will overnight at a local hotel. (B,L)

#### DAY 16: Depart Brisbane

Depart this morning for your flight home. (B)

#### Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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### YOUR SHIP: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ORION

<b>YOUR SHIP:</b>	<b>National Geographic Orion</b>
<b>VESSEL TYPE:</b>	<b>Luxury Expedition</b>
<b>LENGTH:</b>	<b>103 metres</b>
<b>PASSENGER CAPACITY:</b>	<b>102 (in 53 cabins)</b>
<b>BUILT/REFURBISHED:</b>	<b>2003 / Refurbished 2014</b>

Engineered for maximum comfort and safety, *Orion* is equipped with the latest technology including large retractable stabilizers, sonar, radar, and an ice-strengthened hull. A shallow draft plus bow and stern thrusters provide the convenience of being able to maneuver close to shore. 14 Zodiacs ensure quick disembarkation and offer the ideal transport for up-close exploration. *National Geographic Orion* meets strict specifications for environmental protection and the on board waste management systems meet the stringent Antarctic operational standards enabling us to travel to the most pristine environments. A host of advanced design features and technology ensures sustainable marine environmental practices. *National Geographic Orion* accommodates 102 guests in 53 cabins, including several with balconies. She is spacious and modern, with a variety of public rooms that offer panoramic views of the passing landscape. Friendly and informal, *Orion* fosters a welcoming atmosphere where like-minded guests share in exceptional experiences and enrichment. Her public rooms include a dramatic window-lined main lounge, as well as an observation lounge and library perched at the very top of the ship, with plentiful observation decks. The spacious lounge is

the heart of our expedition community, and is suited for spirited cocktail hours, informative presentations and our nightly tradition of Recap. In addition, a dedicated theater provides a unique setting for specialist presentations or films and slideshows. Both the main dining room and outside buffet easily accommodate all guests at once for open seating dining. On selected nights, weather permitting, our dining room menu is also available on the outside deck. While *Orion* interiors are elegant, life aboard is always casual, with no need for formal clothing. And you'll find shipboard services like laundry, in-room cabled internet, and public-area wifi make packing and traveling more



convenient.



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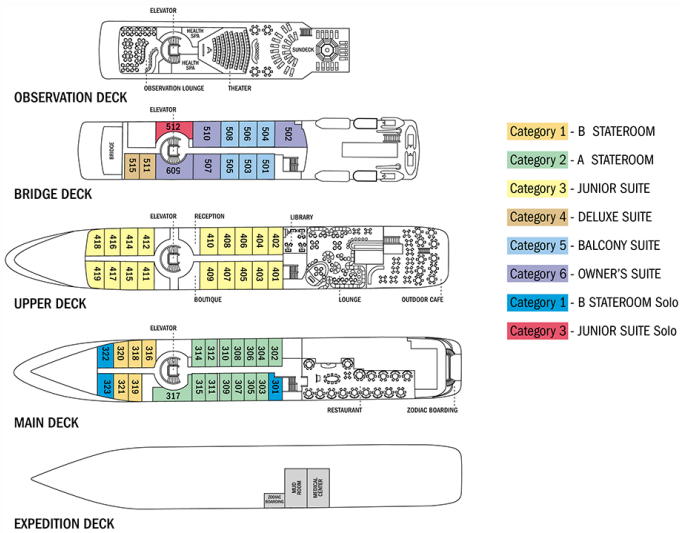
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## INSIDE YOUR SHIP





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## PRICING

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