



The Small Cruise
Ship Collection

www.small-cruise-ships.com



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rites and Relics: FROM THE SOLOMON ISLANDS TO FIJI

Explore through the heart of Melanesia to the western edge of Polynesia, from the Solomon Islands to Fiji. Receive warm welcomes in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu; you'll be greeted with traditional dances as you land by Zodiac on remote and verdant shores, while a warm smile and Bula! greet you on arrival in Fiji. Search for endemic bird species, snorkel and dive stunning reefs and wrecks, and soak up the tranquil beauty of palm-fringed beaches.

Arrive in Brisbane, Australia, where we check in to our hotel. Join us for a welcome briefing this evening to meet your fellow travelers.

DAY 2: Brisbane / Fly to Honiara, Solomon Islands / Embark

Have breakfast at the hotel before transferring to the airport for a flight to 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, embark National Geographic Orion in the late afternoon. (B,L,D)

DAY 3: 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 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: Espiritu Santo, Vanuatu

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Brisbane, Australia

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

DAY 6: Ambrym

Ambrym is known for its active volcanoes, black sand 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 7: Lelepa, Vanuatu

Ride Zodiacs to 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 8: Tanna

On Tanna Island, visit the friendly community in Port Resolution in the shadow of Mt. Yasur. Experience some of the local traditions and dances, as well as locally made handicrafts. Sample the strong, local kava made for special celebrations. (B,L,D)

DAY 9: At Sea

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

DAY 10: Beqa, Fiji

More than 300 islands make up the remote volcanic archipelago of Fiji and we will be exploring here for three days. After entering the large lagoon of Beqa, come ashore at the lovely Lawaki Beach Resort, a rustic and beautiful place to spend the day. Take a boat ride and hike through across the island to a local village. Taste local fruits and snorkel off the beach in the beautiful Beqa Lagoon. Beqa is considered the traditional “home” of the Fijian firewalker. Witness this dramatic ceremony and the incredible strength and discipline required to perform it. (B,L,D)

DAY 11: Taveuni

Taveuni, Fiji’s third largest island, is known as “The Garden Island” for its rich vegetation—which includes several species found nowhere else in the world. Head inland to discover the waterfalls of Bouma National Heritage Park and search for species such as orange fruit doves, endemic silktails, fantails, and parrots. Visit the village of Waitabu to meet the local people, taste locally harvested fruits and prepared baked goods, and to see a dance performance by some of the local, talented children. (B,L,D)

DAY 12: Kadavu

Join the ship’s naturalists for a beautiful scenic hike to see some of the incredible vistas and the rich variety of bird life. Explore the lovely village of Dravuni, or snorkel and dive in the refreshing Fijian water, rich in marine life. Enjoy a quiet exploration of the lagoon by stand-up paddleboard or kayak. (B,L,D)

DAY 13: Lautoka, Viti Levu / Disembark / Return to U.S.

Disembark in Lautoka this morning. Take a tour of western Viti Levu Island then transfer to the international airport at Nadi for



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flights home or choose to extend your stay and check in to our hotel. (B,L)

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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YOUR SHIP: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ORION

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

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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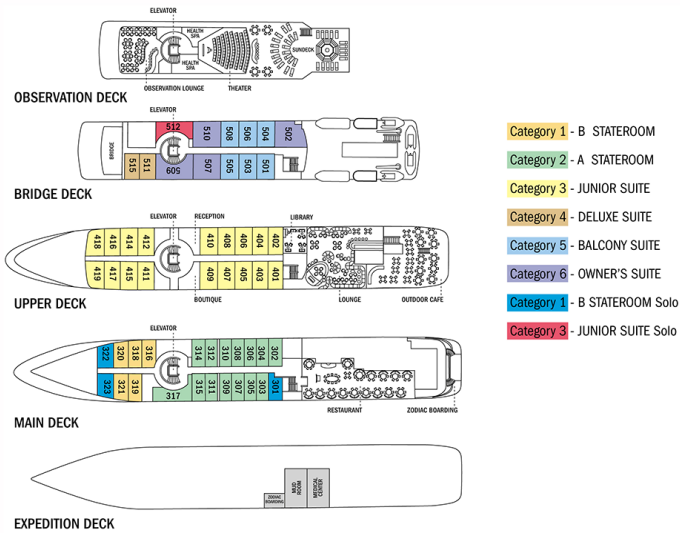
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INSIDE YOUR SHIP





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PRICING



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