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SOLAR ECLIPSE IN INDONESIA

On March 4th 2016, board Le Soléal to observe a phenomenon few travellers get the chance to see: a total solar eclipse. On the 9th March the Moon will mask the Sun completely, leaving only a soft halo of light unhidden. It would usually be difficult to witness this exceptional event, as most of the eclipse will only be visible from a small part of Indonesia. Experience this magical moment, on Le Soléal's exterior decks as the ship cruises towards Manado. The shadow of the Moon will gradually cover the Sun to steal its limelight, and eventually the darkest of nights will fall, in the middle of the day. But rest assured: though this surreal night might feel like the end of the world, it will only last a few minutes as the fiery orb claims back its rightful place after vanquishing the Moon.

Day 1: Embark in Darwin, Australia

Darwin is the largest city in the sparsely populated Northern Territory, with a population of 136,245. It is the smallest and most northerly of the Australian capital cities, and acts as the Top End's regional centre. Darwin was originally a pioneer outpost.

Day 2: At Sea

At Sea

Day 3: Banda Neira, Indonesia

Like a pearl necklace set against a coral backdrop, the 10 small Banda Islands are dotted between Asia and the Pacific Ocean. From the age-old traditions of authentic cultures to ancient vestiges, traditional arts and crafts and, above all, powerful volcanoes, coral reefs and lush green jungle... The attractions of this remote archipelago seem endless. Better known as the legendary "Spice Islands" of the Ancient World, these small volcanic landmasses are covered with imposing aromatic conifers that produce nutmeg and mace, two precious spices. During your cruise, visit Banda Neira, the islands' capital. Located on the main island of Palau Neira, this picturesque town proudly invites visitors to admire its rich and moving history, reflected in its architecture - a mix of forts, old cannons and beautiful colonial homes. Do not miss the visit to its little museum, which traces the history of these islands, as well as Fort Belgica, where you'll find an exceptional view over the volcano that dominates the archipelago. Banda Neira was the global centre for Nutmeg trade for more than 4 centuries, as the Banda Islands were the only source for both Nutmeg and Mace

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until the mid-19th Century. The original Bandanese inhabitants were massacred by the colonial governors of the Dutch East India Company during the period of their brutal control of the spice trade. It is an island steeped in history where one can view the ruins of both Dutch and Portuguese forts, as well as the home of Christopher Cole, the British captain who liberated the Bandanese from their oppressive Dutch dictators. Walking down the streets is like stepping back in time to when every colonial power of significance was fighting for control of this small island that today has become almost forgotten. It is without doubt the most historically significant and interesting of all the "Spice Islands." Right next door to Banda Neira is the near perfect conical volcano of Banda Api, quietly steaming away. At the base of the 1988 lava flow is an emerging coral reef. As you snorkel over the crystal clear landscape you will be amazed to think that the entire reef is only 26 years old.

Day 4: At Sea
At Sea

Day 5: Ternate/Tidore, Indonesia

Ternate, along with its neighbouring island, Tidore, is visually dramatic. The entire island is a stratovolcano (Mt. Gamalama) rising straight out of the sea. The islands were once the world's only producers of cloves. It was this monopoly that allowed the sultanates to become the wealthiest and most powerful within the Malay Archipelago. Prior to European arrival in the early 1600s, Ternate was the dominant political and economic power over the majority of the "Spice Islands" of Maluku. Today, Ternate City is the largest town in the province of North Maluku, with a population of just under 200,000. There are still plenty of historical relics of the islands turbulent past. It was on Ternate that the eminent naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace wrote his

paper on Natural selection and famously sent it to Charles Darwin in 1858. This led to the presentation and publication of what became known as the Darwin – Wallace theory of natural selection.

Day 6: At Sea
At Sea

Day 7: Bunaken Marine Park, Indonesia

Bunaken Marine Park was established in 1991 and was among the first of Indonesia's growing system of marine parks. It covers a total area of 890.65 km², 97% of which is marine habitat. The remaining 3% of the park is terrestrial, including the five islands of Bunaken, Manado Tua, Mantehage, Nain and Siladen. The southern part of the Park covers part of the Tanjung Kelapa coast. A rich coral ecosystem covers most of Bunaken National Park, comprising fringing and barrier reef systems. At least 390 species of hard coral have been recorded in the waters of the Park. There are seven times more genera of coral than in Hawaiian waters, and more than 70% of all the known fish species of the Indo-Western Pacific. The area is densely populated, with 22 villages inside the park comprising about 35,000 people. Most locals work as fishermen or farmers cultivating coconut, sweet potato, banana or seaweed for export, while a small number are employed in tourism as dive guides, boat operators and cottage staff.

Day 8: Batu Putih, Indonesia

The first conservation area at Mount Tongkoko was established in 1919. The Duasaudara area was added in 1978 and the Batu Angus and Batuputih areas in 1981. Together they comprise a total area of 8,718 hectares officially known as the Tangkoko Batu Angus Nature Reserve. Tangkoko Batu Angus

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Nature Reserve protects at least 127 mammal, 233 bird and 104 reptile and amphibian species. Of these 79 mammals, 103 bird and 29 reptile and amphibian species are endemic to the island of Sulawesi. Threatened mammals include the Celebes crested macaque, of which about 5,500 remain on the island, spectral tarsier, Sulawesi bear cuscus and Sulawesi dwarf cuscus. Birds include the knobbed hornbill, Sulawesi hornbill and maleo.

Day 9: Pasir Putih / Mongito Islands, Indonesia

The Saronde islands are located in the northern Gulf of Kwandang, part of the North Gorontalo regency. These small uninhabited are surrounded by clear waters and beautiful coral reef systems. Due to the remote nature of this destination there is very little information available.

Day 10: At Sea

At sea

Day 11: Sandakan, Malaysia

Discover the Orang-Utan Rehabilitation Centre. Located in the North-West of Borneo, the protected reserve of Kabili Sepilok covers some 43 ha. The Orang-Utan is the only Asian representative of the great apes and this primate, whose Malaysian name means “man of the forest” is easily recognizable by its long arms and its flamboyant orange fur. Aside from mothers and their young, Orang-Utans are a solitary species that spend most of their life swinging from the tops of tall trees. Here, orphaned animals or those born in captivity are taught to live independently so that they can be returned to their natural habitat, which are always very moving moments. This reserve offers you the opportunity to admire these adorable creatures in their natural environment.

Day 12: Sandakan

The historical city of Sandakan is the second largest city in Sabah after the capital, Kota Kinabalu. It is located on the north east coast of the island of Borneo and is the administrative centre of the Sandakan Division. It was the former capital of British North Borneo and has an estimated population of 157,330. Sandakan is the gateway for eco-tourism destinations in Sabah such as the Sepilok Orang Utan Sanctuary, Labuk Bay proboscis reserve, The Kinabatangan River and the Gomantong Caves. It is also the notorious site of a World War II Japanese airfield which was built by the forced labour of Javanese civilians and Allied prisoners of war. In 1945, the surviving prisoners were sent on the Sandakan Death Marches—with only 6 surviving.

Day 13: Disembark in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia

Kota Kinabalu was formerly known as Jesselton and is the capital of the Malaysian state of Sabah, on the island of Borneo. The city is located along the northwest coast of Borneo facing the South China Sea. The Tunku Abdul Rahman National Park lies on its west and Mount Kinabalu, which gave the city its name, is located towards the east.

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Le Soleal

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Luxury Small Ship A sleek silhouette, a welcoming intimate atmosphere, and the same philosophy that has made her sister ships, L'Austral, Lyrial and Le Boreal, such a success. This magnificent yacht of only 132 staterooms and suites, all with balconies, has contemporary decor inspired by the luxury yachting world, with fluid lines and a modern colour scheme combining natural wood with shades of grey and white. White Corian counters in the lobby contrast with the warmth of leather to recall a boat's hull, while the central sculpture of enamelled pieces takes its inspiration from the sea. In the lounge bar, the carpet picks up a tennis stripe theme symbolising a certain idea of cruising, one synonymous with French elegance and a chic seaside spirit. Wheelchairs 3 specially adapted wheelchair cabins (Deck 3 = Superior cabin no. 307, no balcony, Deck 4 = Prestige Cabin no. 407 - with balcony and Deck 5 = Prestige Cabin no 509, with balcony) and lifts to all decks/areas. Read about our recent Ponant cruise to Antarctica Please click the following links to read more about Ponant and the other Ponant cruise ships.



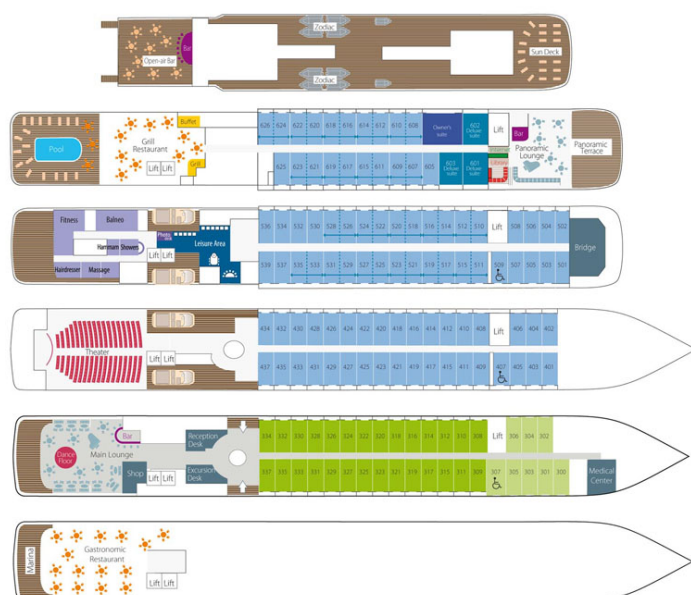
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