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THE LOUISIADES, SOLOMONS & VANUATU - FROM CAIRNS TO PORT VILA CRUISE

Join us onboard Coral Adventurer, for our long-awaited return to the remarkable Melanesian Islands on this voyage through Papua New Guinea, the hidden Solomons and Vanuatu. Discover idyllic tropical island outposts such as the Laughlan Islands, Tetepare and Panasia Island. Visit sacred Skull Island in the spectacular Vonavona Lagoon and learn about slain warriors and headhunting traditions. Share ancient "kastom" such as the Rom Dancers of Ambrym and witness islanders living a traditional subsistence lifestyle, little changed for centuries. Focus on the fascinating anthropological history of the islands and how the Austronesian and Papuan people have inhabited the region through the centuries encountering early explorers and sea traders to the dramatic conflicts of World War II. Enjoy adventure-filled days surrounded by natural wonders as we explore the 'blue holes' of Espiritu Santo, view active volcanoes, snorkel and dive on vibrant reef systems and encounter unique wildlife.



ITINERARY

DAY 1: DEPART CAIRNS, AUSTRALIA

Arrive at Trinity Wharf (berth to be advised) at 7:30am, where there is time to settle into your stateroom before our 9:00am departure.

Take the time to become acquainted with all the facilities onboard Coral Adventurer. There will be morning tea available upon boarding before we cruise out to the Coral Sea towards Papua New Guinea. Your crew will gather you in the Bridge Deck lounge for a safety briefing, snorkelling briefings, and presentations by lecturers and expedition staff. As dusk falls, mingle with your fellow travellers, the Captain and crew for the Captain's Welcome Drinks.



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CORAL SEA

Today we spend a relaxing day traversing the Coral Sea with presentations by our expert Guest Lecturers. Explore our extensive onboard library and spend the day with a selection of games or simply gaze over the seas.

The Coral Sea has historical significance due to the Battle of the Coral Sea during World War II where Allied forces successfully halted the Japanese advance in the Pacific. It was a pivotal moment in naval warfare.

SAMARAI ISLAND, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Samarai Island is the former administrative capital of Milne Bay Province. Once a bustling trading port, Samarai boasts a storied past as the second-largest town in the Territory of Papua, thriving until the devastation of World War II. Guests will be welcomed with a Sing Sing, and there will be a chance to purchase handicrafts and pearls from locals or go for a snorkel at nearby Ebuma Island. As a National Historical Heritage Island, guests can stroll through remnants of its vibrant history, offering a poignant glimpse into a bygone era amidst its landscapes and shores.

TWO DAYS IN THE LOUISIADA ARCHIPELAGO – PANASIA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Visit Panapompom Island and learn about the lifestyle on these far-flung islands, before venturing into Deboyne Lagoon to snorkel over the World War II wreck of a Japanese 'Zero' fighter

plane. Learn about the local culture before snorkelling or diving at remote reefs.

Discover the rugged beauty of the Calvados Islands, a chain of atolls characterised by their limestone karsts. These "Jurassic-like" formations stand, guarding the secrets of the archipelago's ancient past. In the evenings, relax with beachside drinks on idyllic islands, explore sea caves, and unwind at Panasia Island, home to one of Papua New Guinea's most stunning beaches.

LAUGHLAN ISLANDS (BUDIDUNA), PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Laughlan Islanders specialise in canoe building and in this remote corner of the world we find seagoing canoes under construction. Interact with the friendly villagers of Budiduna who share their lifestyle of gardening, fishing, and Kula ring trading. Later, snorkel or dive on the outer reef, where we may see turtles, wrasse, and spinner dolphins in the warm, clear waters.

GIZO & NJARI REEF, SOLOMON ISLANDS

This morning our first Solomons landfall is the town of Gizo. Wander through Gizo's open-air markets, which showcase a bounty of tropical fruits and fresh fish, as well as crafts by the region's legendary wood and stone carvers. In the afternoon, we cruise past Kennedy Island before enjoying water activities at Njari Reef. Njari Reef is a merge point for oceanic currents and is said to have one of the highest fish counts in the world. Experience the remarkable snorkelling opportunities offering an unforgettable experience.



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VONAVONA LAGOON, SOLOMON ISLANDS

After clearing into the Solomon Islands, we head to Vonavona Lagoon, a large lagoon located in the New Georgia Islands of the Western Province. Teeming with colourful fish and hundreds of islets, the lagoon offers opportunities for snorkelling and scenic cruising. Guests will have a chance to visit Skull Island - a small island that is home to a shrine of some 50 male "trophy" skulls. The skulls found on this island span from 300 to 1,000 years old. Later in the day, enjoy guided jungle walks on Lola Island.

TETEPARE, SOLOMON ISLANDS

We visit Tetepare, a rugged and mysterious island abandoned 150 years ago, now protected by a unique conservation project run by the Tetepare Descendants Association. Tetepare has received international recognition for its conservation and archaeological significance. A vast array of plants and animals make their home on the island - it supports nesting populations of three species of turtle, the world's largest skink, hornbills, and tiny pygmy parrots. Stroll through the forest while you learn more about how the island's traditional landowners rejected logging offers and came together to save this island's biodiversity for themselves and their future generations.

Guided walks will be the highlight of your day, allowing you to witness the diversity of flora and fauna. You will also have an opportunity to see the turtle tagging process, and finish with snorkeling over the island's flourishing reefs.

MAROVO LAGOON, SOLOMON ISLANDS

Marovo Lagoon is the world's largest double barrier enclosed saltwater lagoon. Today, you will be welcomed to this natural wonder by the locals with traditional dancing. Learn about village life and observe the work of expert woodcarvers, who are justifiably famous for the intricate pieces they create from ebony with inlays of mother-of-pearl. Spend the afternoon exploring Marovo Lagoon's coral reef ecosystems, where the waters teem with tropical fish and boast exceptional diving and snorkelling sites.

FLORIDA GROUP, SOLOMON ISLANDS

The Nggela Islands, also called the Florida Islands, are nestled in the Central Province of the Solomon Islands. On August 7, the US 1st Battalion landed on Florida Island to support the attack on nearby Tulagi, which was once the capital of the Solomons before it was moved to Honiara after WWII. The Florida Islands became a secondary base for the US, Australian, and New Zealand forces throughout World War II in the Pacific. Visit Tulagi town to understand more about the history of Florida islands. There will be plenty of opportunities for snorkelling and diving, with time to view the MS World Discoverer shipwreck at Roderick Bay.

MAKIRA - STAR HARBOUR, SOLOMON ISLANDS

Formerly known as San Cristobal Island, this designation was bestowed by the Spanish explorer Alvaro de Mendaña in 1568.



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Dive into the history of Star Harbour which is at the southern end of Makira and is a sub-provincial headquarters for the Makira-Ulawa Province. Beginning with a colourful welcome in the morning, you will enjoy a cultural performance before exploring the village. Our expert guides will share the harbour's World War II history before we spend the afternoon snorkelling and birdwatching off Nafinua (frigate bird) Island.

NENDO, SOLOMON ISLANDS

Our last stop in the Solomon Islands, Nendo Island is the largest of the Santa Cruz Group. In 1595, Spanish explorer Alvaro de Mendaña became the first European to sight Nendo Island, naming it Santa Cruz. This island is the location of an unsuccessful colonisation attempt by the Spanish explorer. Here, you can view, and purchase quality artefacts created by the skilled craftsmen of the region. Later, head to Luowa village where you can enjoy a cultural performance by the locals and an opportunity to snorkel over the fringing reef.

LOH ISLAND - TORRES GROUP, VANUATU

This morning, we make our way to the Torres group, Vanuatu's northernmost islands. Learn about the volcanic origin of these scenic islands, comprised of four islets: Hiu, Tegua, Loh and Toga. Immerse yourself in the culture of the Ih-tem t on Loh Island, where vibrant ritual headdresses called tem t are utilised during special singing and dancing ceremonies to honor primordial spirits. There will also be an opportunity to dive and snorkel from the white sandy beaches.

ESPIRITU SANTO, VANUATU

Espiritu Santo, or simply 'Santo' to the locals, is the largest island in Vanuatu. In the aftermath of World War II, the island's southeastern point earned the name, 'Million Dollar Point' after American soldiers sunk the vehicles of their retired task force after being unable to sell them.

Santo and its surrounding islands are known for their world class beaches and 'blue holes' - natural swimming pools located deep within the jungle.

Here we will avoid the well-trodden locations, in favour of less touristed destinations with opportunities for snorkelling, diving and 'blue hole' swims.

AMBRYM, VANUATU

Home to majestic Benbow and Marum volcanoes, Ambrym is the fifth largest island in Vanuatu and home to one of the most active volcanoes in the New Hebrides Arc. Despite the volcanic activity, Ambrym is home to around 7,000 inhabitants, most of which live in the 'safe zone' corners of the island that is known as the 'black magic' centre of Vanuatu. Today, witness the Rom Dance, one of the most iconic traditional dances of Vanuatu. Discover the island's astonishing topography covered by jungle and hear the stories of villagers living in the shadow of a volcano.

DAY 17: PORT VILA, VANUATU



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Disembark at 8:00 am and enjoy complimentary transfers to Port Vila hotels and the airport.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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YOUR SHIP: CORAL ADVENTURER

YOUR SHIP: **Coral Adventurer**

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Launched in 2018 with her maiden voyage in 2019, Coral Adventurer has been designed and built to take you closer to unspoilt vistas in comfort, style and safety. A culmination of two years of design and three decades of passion for expedition cruising. **BIGGER IS NOT BETTER** At a time when cruise ships get larger and glitzier, we remain stubbornly compact and intimate. Our ships are designed to take you to unspoilt destinations not accessible to large ships. We want you to have the luxury of space, dine with whom you please, or find your quiet corner on deck. So Coral Adventurer has just 60 spacious cabins. This preserves the intimate atmosphere we are known for without sacrificing the stability and comfort of a true ocean going vessel. **BUILT FOR DISCOVERY** The Coral Adventurer features the trademark dual 'Xplorer' tenders cradled on a hydraulic platform slung off the back of the ship, enabling our guests to go ashore in comfort and ease. The shallow draft of the ship enables us to go closer to shore than larger ships. Together with a renowned expedition team, this new ship will offer the most advanced expedition capabilities of any small ship afloat. **BUILT FOR COMFORT** With active stabilisers dampening sea motion, mostly balcony cabins, and interiors designed with the colours and

textures of tropical Queensland, the Coral Adventurer is a comfortable ship. She features promenade decks, generous communal areas that accommodate all guests, a passenger elevator, and an open kitchen where you can observe our chefs whip up small batch cuisine from locally sourced ingredients. **BUILT FOR PERSONAL SERVICE** The Coral Adventurer will continue a proud tradition of Australian flagged vessels with friendly and professional Australian crew. The onboard atmosphere remains refreshingly informal and intimate. Take your seat at our bridge lounge, chat with the captain at your leisure or accompany our chefs on a market tour. Food and wine features Single seating dining area with communal 'wine table' finished with Australian stone; serving buffet breakfast and lunch, and multi-course table d'hote dinners. Showcase galley visible to guests for fresh small-batch cuisine featuring Australian produce. Multiple indoor and outdoor bars, including the Explorer bar on the sundeck for sunset drinks with 180 degree views. Curated wine cellar featuring modestly priced boutique wines for daily drinking and exceptional vintage Australian reds. Guest comfort All outside guest cabins with en-suite bathrooms; majority have private balcony. Active stabilisers to dampen sea motion. Gym equipped with elliptical trainers and treadmills. Passenger elevator. Wi-Fi available in all



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guest areas



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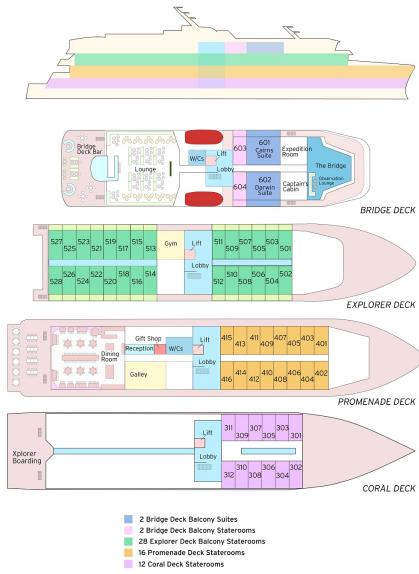
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