Tour Code
AU2

ADVENTURESABROAD

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

'Lands of the Southern Cross'

31 days

Created on: 28 Mar, 2024

Day 1 Arrival in Melbourne

Today we arrive in Melbourne, Victoria.

Melbourne flourished in the 1850s when the city emerged as a result of the huge gold rush in the Victorian hills. Melbourne is culturally very diverse and has several times been named the world's "most liveable city."

Overnight in Melbourne.

Included Meal(s): Dinner, if required.

Day 2 Melbourne: City Tour

Melbourne boasts broad and leafy streets, plenty of parks and gardens, and an air of distinction. It is the stateliest of all Australian cities. It is also a fairly recent creation, for it was only in 1835 that a Tasmanian farmer named John Batman arrived to establish a settlement here. He made a deal with local Aborigines, trading blankets, knives and tomahawks for 500,000 acres of land, and a township began to grow. A gold rush in the 1850s resulted in rapid expansion and, by 1861, Melbourne's population (then 125,000) had already overtaken Sydney's. Sydney moved ahead again in 1911 and has stayed ahead, but Melbourne has never been far behind.

Today our tour includes a number of highlights, including Fitzroy Gardens, originally laid out in the shape of the Union Jack. The prime attraction is Cook's Cottage, the family home of James Cook, the English navigator who explored the southern hemisphere in three great voyages. It was purchased in 1933, shipped over from Yorkshire and presented as a gift to the state of Victoria for its 1934 centenary. We will also see the Shrine of Remembrance, St Kilda Road, Victoria Market, Melbourne University, Parliament House, Lake Albert, and pay a visit to St Patrick's Cathedral.

Overnight in Melbourne.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 Melbourne: the Great Ocean Road

Today we drive along the Great Ocean Road. This is one of Australia's most splendid scenic drives. The road was built between 1819 and 1932. The idea was to construct a world class tourist road like the one on California's Pacific coast.

The road became a memorial to those killed in World War I. The stretch of coast to Peterborough is often referred to as the 'Shipwreck coast', due to the number of victims to the rough ocean. We make a stop at a famous viewpoint to see the dramatic rock formations called the Twelve Apostles. These formations, rising 65 m (213 feet) out of the ocean, are the remnants of a retreating coastline.

Overnight in Melbourne.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 4 Melbourne - Fly to Canberra: City Tour

This morning we fly from Melbourne to Canberra, Australian Capital Territory. On arrival we visit the National Capital Exhibition, which displays the development of Australia's capital city; followed, appropriately, by a guided tour of the distinctly designed Parliament House.

We also stop at the Australian War Memorial, the national memorial to the members of its armed forces and supporting organisations who

have died or participated in wars involving the Commonwealth of Australia. The memorial includes an extensive national military museum. The Australian War Memorial was opened in 1941, and is widely regarded as one of the most significant memorials of its type in the world. Here we touch on ANZAC history and its valuable insight into Australia's development, national idendity, and psyche.

We also drive through the embassy district, where many of the embassies reflect the architectural style of their native countries. Canberra is a uniquely Australian city which, right from its beginning, had had a very strong North American connection. The idea for a purpose-built capital came soon after the various Australian states agreed to form a federation in 1901. The creation of a new city was seen as a means of ending the rivalry between Sydney and Melbourne, and a way of giving the fledgling nation its own identity. An international design competition was conducted and, in 1913, the competition was won by a young landscape architect from Chicago named Walter Burley Griffin, who submitted his design in conjunction with his wife Marion Mahoney Griffin. Since then, Canberra has grown to become one of Australia's most distinctive cities.

Overnight in Canberra.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5 Canberra - Fly to Cairns - Mossman Gorge

Today we fly from Canberra to Cairns, Queensland.

Queensland is huge -- at about 1 745 000 sq km (667,000 square miles) the second largest state (Western Australia is the biggest) and more than twice the size of Texas. Taking the Cape York Peninsula and the Gulf of Carpentaria into account, it has an enormous coastline over 7500 km (4,590 miles).

Queensland started out as part of New South Wales, used as a penal colony starting in 1824. An influx of free settlers, many who entered illegally, changed its face from prison to agricultural centre. In 1842 it was officially opened to free settlement and, by 1859, the population was large enough to justify its status as a separate colony. The settlers made their way with sheep, cattle, wheat, an abundance of natural resources and cash crops --including bananas, which gave rise to the rather derisive name the rest of Australia sometimes uses for Queensland natives: "Banana benders".

This afternoon we travel to Mossman Gorge and the Mossman Gorge Centre, an indigenous eco-tourism development that serves visitors to the Mossman Gorge World Heritage site. Mossman Gorge will provide one of Australia’s most iconic Aboriginal experiences in Tropical North Queensland and is the perfect option for visitors looking for a genuine, authentic engagement with Indigenous Australia.

Our visit to the gorge includes a "Dreamtime Gorge Walk Experience," the starts with a traditional ‘smoking’ ceremony that cleanses and wards off bad spirits. The walk then meanders through stunning rainforest and takes in traditional huts or humpies. Our interpretive indigenous guide demonstrates traditional plant use, identify bush food sources and provide an enchanting narrative of the rainforest and their special relationship with this unique tropical environment. Our guide demonstrates traditions like making bush soaps and ochre painting. At the end of the tour enjoy traditional bush tea and damper.

Overnight in Cairns.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 Cairns: Reef Cruise

Today we have a full-day cruise out to the Great Barrier Reef.

The Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest coral reef system, composed of roughly 3,000 individual reefs and 900 islands that stretch for 2600 kilometres (1,616 mi) and cover an area of approximately 344 400 sq km. The Great Barrier Reef can be seen from outer space and is sometimes referred to as the single largest organism in the world. In reality, it is made up of many millions of tiny organisms, known as coral polyps. The Great Barrier Reef supports a wide diversity of life and was selected as a World Heritage Site in 1981.

Generally, the vessels offering reefs trips are large and comfortable with plenty of deck space and interior seating. A buffet lunch is served (included) and a wide range of beverages are available for purchase. Snorkeling equipment is available and included.

Overnight in Cairns (dinner on your own this evening).

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 7 Cairns: Kuranda Scenic Railway & Skyrail Experience

This morning we travel by the Kuranda Scenic Railway through the dense tropical rainforest, passing Barron Falls and Barron Gorge, to Kuranda, a picturesque village set in lush tropical rainforest on the edge of the Atherton Tablelands. Market stalls display works of local artisans.

After some free time in Kuranda, we'll enjoy the Skyrail experience, a gondola ride spanning 7.5km over pristine rainforest, allowing us to explore the wonders of an ancient tropical rainforest and learn about one of the most botanically fascinating and diverse areas on earth. Gliding just metres above the rainforest canopy in comfortable six-person gondola cabins, the Skyrail journey immerses you in an intimate rainforest experience where you'll see, hear, smell and become part of the tropical rainforest environment.

Our day also includes entrance to the Pamagirri Aboriginal Experience at Rainforestation Nature Park, where we can explore the rich history of the world's oldest living culture, dating back over 40,000 years. We will attend an Aboriginal dance show in a rainforest amphitheatre, then experience the 30-minute Dreamtime Walk with our Indigenous guide. We'll also enjoy an included lunch as part of our visit (dinner on your own this evening).

Return to Cairns.

Overnight in Cairns.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 8 Cairns: Fly to Darwin

This morning we will transfer to the airport for our flight to Darwin at the "top end" of Australia and a city unlike any other.* Darwin is Australia's most northern capital city and its isolation from the other states has encouraged the evolution of a unique lifestyle. It is both old style Australia and distinctly Asian in feel and the genuine multicultural mix is reflected in the food, open-air markets and a people of immense character and hospitality. Here you will find a living Aboriginal history and art heritage, the elusive 'Dundees' and their crocodiliac partners lurking in the farms and wildlife parks. The perennially warm, tropical climate has bred an energetic outdoor lifestyle and a friendly, easy-going attitude to match.

Overnight in Darwin.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 9 Darwin - Kakadu National Park

Today we travel by road to Kakadu National Park along the Stuart and Arnhem Highways. We continue to Nourlangie Rock, an ancient Aboriginal living shelter. The area surrounding Nourlangie has great diversity: creeks, billabongs, sandy alluvial plains, forest and sandstone escarpment. Rich in food sources -- fish, waterfowl, wallabies, flying foxes and yams -- groups of Aboriginals made this area one where they would make camp and utilise the natural resources. Paintings of animals, insects and people that were done years ago, now help us to record human occupation in the region. Signs and displays will give detailed explanations of the art and area. We also have time to visit the Warradjan Aboriginal Cultural Centre to better understand the park's culture and history.

After a break for lunch, we head to Cooinda for our Yellow Waters Billabong Cruise. Yellow Water is part of the South Alligator River floodplain. You will have the opportunity to see the varied birdlife Kakadu's World Heritage wetlands, and perhaps a croc or two.

Overnight in Kakadu.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 10 Kakadu Touring - Darwin

This morning you have the option of a one hour scenic flight over Twin and Jim Jim Falls (optional: your Tour Leader can pre-book). On our way out of Kakadu, we'll stop at Ubirr, which features several breathtaking Aboriginal art sites and a walk that leads up to a stunning lookout over the Nadab floodplain. Much of the art here features fish, turtles, goanna, and other important food animals. At the main gallery, a painting of a thylacine (the Tasmanian tiger, which became extinct on the mainland more than two thousand years ago) is a rare treat, and gives an idea to the age of some of the art.

We also stop at the Wetlands Visitors Centre, which has great views over the wetlands.

Overnight in Darwin.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 11 Darwin: City Tour - Fly to Alice Springs

This morning we will be collected from the hotel for a city tour of Darwin. Highlights include Parliament House, Stokes Hill Wharf area, Mooring Basin, Botanic Gardens and East Point Reserve. Flight time-permitting, we continue to the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, focusing on the aspects of the Northern Territory environment, history, ethnic diversity maritime and natural history.

After our tour we'll head to the airport to connect with our flight to Alice Springs.

Alice Springs lies at almost the exact geographical centre of Australia. Many Aboriginals work as stockmen on the vast stations in this area, and reminders of their rich heritage are everywhere. Wild camels roam throughout the region, and the dry red earth and deep blue sky create a surreal atmosphere. Neville Shute wrote a famous novel, "A Town Like Alice" in 1950; that book and the movie based on it put Alice Springs on the international map for the first time, but it was many more years before it began attracting tourists in telegraph station here after his wife, Alice, and the town which later grew up nearby took the same name.

* NOTE: Due to ever-changing air schedules into/out of the Red Centre, the order of our sightseeing activities in Ayers Rock and Alice Springs may vary from this itinerary. If there are any changes for your trip, your Tour Leader will advise upon arrival.

Overnight in Alice Springs.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 12 Alice Springs Sightseeing

Our day tour of Alice Springs includes the panoramic ANZAC Hill, the Old Telegraph Station, and the Royal Flying Doctor Service HQ. "The Alice" began in 1872 as an overland telegraph station linking the north and south. Today it combines the vigour of the frontier-like environment with the convenience of modern facilities.

We also visit Alice Springs School of the Air, which has been bridging education gaps caused by remote locations and providing schooling to children at cattle stations, roadhouses, Aboriginal communities, and national parks with daily lessons via satellite broadband to children aged 4 to 13 years since 1951. The school broadcast area covers 1.3 million square kilometres including most of the Northern Territory, the northern area of South Australia, and eastern area of Western Australia.

A must see for every visitor is the Alice Springs Desert Park. In the space of just a few hours, you can discover many of the secrets of the Central Australian deserts. Hundreds of species of plants and animals found across Central Australian deserts can be seen. Our visit involves an easy walking trail through three desert habitats. Witness free-flying birds of prey in the nature theatre, see rare and endangered animals in the spectacular nocturnal house, hear the insights into the interlinking world of plants, animals and people from our local guides and enjoy a cinematic journey through four-and-a-half billion years of desert evolution during the 20 minute cinematic journey of "The Changing Heart".

Overnight in Alice Springs.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 13 Alice Springs - Uluru (Ayers Rock)

Today we travel over the Macdonnell Ranges and cross the vast desert to Uluru (Ayer's Rock), in the centre of the continent.

Uluru is an incredibly impressive monolith 5 km (3 miles) in length and over 300 m (1,000 feet) high! Uluru is a remnant of ancient mountains which long ago weathered away, leaving the sandstone monolith standing alone in the desert. In 1989 scientists found evidence that Uluru, the Macdonnell Ranges, and a cluster of huge rock domes named Kata Tjuta (the Olgas) were part of a single plateau. Although British explorers trekked through the Red Centre as long ago as 1844, none of them visited Uluru until 1873, when it was named Ayers Rock after a colonial administrator of the day, Sir Henry Ayers.

We visit Uluru for a short walk at the base before travelling to the sunset viewing area.

Overnight near Ayers Rock.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 14 Uluru - Fly to Sydney

Today we have an early morning excursion to see the sunrise light up the Olgas/Kata Tjuta. We then fly from Ayers Rock to Sydney.

Sydney is regarded as one of the world's greatest coastal cities. The odd thing is that when the British explorer Captain James Cook sailed up the east coast of Australia in 1770 he missed the site altogether. He saw the Sydney Heads, of course, but did not guess that a vast harbour lay behind them. So when a British fleet arrived to establish a colony in Australia in 1788 it went first to nearby Botany Bay. Within days, however, Sydney Harbour was discovered and the settlement moved there.

Overnight in Sydney.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 15 Sydney: City Tour

Today we tour Sydney and include a cruise on Port Jackson, Sydney's harbour (with lunch as our included meal).

We pass the world-famous Sydney Harbour Bridge, various sandy white beaches, and the exclusive homes that line Sydney's harbour on our way to the Pacific gateway. The Harbour Bridge -- affectionately known as "the Coathanger" -- spans one of the most narrow inlets of the harbour and is one of the largest arch bridges in the world. Our tour also takes us to Bondi Beach, Paddington, Oxford Street, and King's Cross.

At some point in our Sydney visit, we'll have a guided tour of the famous Opera House. This is one of the world's most recognisable landmarks and this is your chance to truly get up-close. Run your hands over the world-famous shell tiles, take a seat in the elegant custom-made white birch timber chairs and marvel at the vaulted ceilings. We visit areas off-limits to the public and capture photographs from rare vantage points. Explore theatres and foyers where more than 1600 concerts, operas, dramas, and ballets take place each year.

Overnight in Sydney.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 16 Sydney: The Blue Mountains

This morning we drive by coach westward to the Blue Mountains, named for the blue haze created by the eucalyptus oil in the air above the mountain gum forests. En route we stop at Featherdale Wildlife Centre for a chance to observe some Australian critters that are otherwise difficult to spot in the wild.

The Blue Mountains National Park includes almost 600,000 acres of sandstone plateau, forested river valleys, and deep gorges. We'll visit the Wentworth Falls Reserve for a short walk and spectacular views of the valley, followed by a drive along Cliff Drive to the Echo Point Visitor Information Center where we will see colourful parrots, lorikeets and rosellas, which gather at the center's panaramic windows. There is a nice view here of The Three Sisters formation, in legend members of the Katoomba tribe who were unlucky in love.

Return to Sydney.

Overnight in Sydney.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 17 Sydney, Australia - Fly to Auckland, New Zealand

Today we fly to Auckland, New Zealand.

Located in the northern part of New Zealand, the cosmopolitan city of Auckland is the largest metropolitan area in the country. The geographical location of Auckland is such that it lies between the Hauraki Gulf of the Pacific Ocean to the east, the low Hunua Ranges to the southeast, the Manukau Harbour to the southwest, and the Waitakere Ranges and smaller ranges to the west and northwest. The region is also the site of Auckland Volcanic Field, comprising of around 50 volcanoes. This is perhaps the most vibrant and bustling city in New Zealand. Auckland is also the biggest Polynesian city in the world, a cultural influence reflected in many different aspects of city life.

PLEASE NOTE: The linking flight between Australia & New Zealand is not included in the tour price. If you book your international air with Adventures Abroad, we will include this segment in your ticket. If you book your own flights, we can include this flight for approximately $800-1000 per person.

Overnight in Auckland.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 18 Auckland: City Tour

This morning we begin our tour of Auckland.

Travelling via Auckland's 'Golden Mile' (Queen Street), our tour takes us through the university grounds past many of Auckland's historical buildings. We continue to the Central Business District, the Mission Bay area, Tamaki Drive, and the Harbour Bridge before our visit to the Auckland Museum. Three expansive levels tell the story of New Zealand's history, from emergence as a nation through the loss and suffering of war, to their uniquely ancient natural history and priceless Maori and Pacific treasures.

Overnight in Auckland.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 19 Auckland - Waitomo Caves - Rotorua

This morning as we depart from Auckland we will travel to the crest of Mt Eden and enjoy a spectacular panoramic view of the city. This dormant volcano, complete with crater, allows us to clearly view Auckland's setting between two harbours.

We leave the 'City of Sails' and travel south through the rich farmland of the Waikato region before arriving at the world-famous Waitomo Caves. Here we will experience a guided tour of the underground limestone caverns and glowworm caves. After this unique experience we continue on to Rotorua, an area of abundant geothermal activity. Rotorua is in the middle of what is called the Taupo Volcanic Zone, which

runs from northeast to southwest across the North Island. The area has long been a popular spa area and the locals make use of the hot steam that rises to the surface for heating their homes, cooking, and building their own private hot pools.

This afternoon we will visit the Te Puia Thermal Reserve and Maori Arts and Crafts Center. Here we will discover boiling pools of mud and geysers that spout up to 30m (100 feet).

Overnight in Rotorua.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 20 Rotorua - Wellington

Today we follow the 'Thermal Explorer Highway' to the heart of the North Island. This highway takes us through some of the most stunning scenery in New Zealand, along a path well-known for its geological wonders -- from huge limestone caves, to bubbling geothermal areas and volcanic plateaus.

We will view the Wairakei Steam Valley where the thermal energy is harnessed in the world's second largest geothermal power plant. We will see spectacular Huka Falls, located on the rushing Waikato River. We will also visit Lake Taupo, the water-filled crater of an ancient volcano. Surrounded by stunning volcanoes, bush clad mountains and a spectacular landscape; this is the largest freshwater lake in New Zealand and the Southern Hemisphere.

We then continue to travel south to Wellington. Our journey south takes us on the spectacular desert road along the edge of the World Heritage Site at Tongariro National Park. Established in 1887, Tongariro was the first national park in New Zealand and the fourth in the world. This is also a dual World Heritage area, a status that recognizes the park's important Maori cultural and spiritual associations as well as its outstanding volcanic features.

Overnight in Wellington.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 21 Wellington: City Tour - Cook Strait Crossing - Blenheim

Called the world's 'coolest little capital' Wellington is known for its vibrant arts scene, world class café and restaurant culture, and active outdoor lifestyle. Set around an attractive waterfront, you'll be hard pressed to find a city in the world that's easier to get around. A creative, cosmopolitan city, Wellington combines the sophistication of a capital with the warmth and personality of a village.

This morning we enjoy a city sightseeing tour, including Te Papa, New Zealand's fantastic 'National Museum'. Here we will have a guided tour of the highlights from New Zealand's natural environment, art, and history.

We'll then take the 3.5-hour ferry journey across Cook Strait to the South Island. This journey is considered be one of the most beautiful ferry rides in the world. Named after James Cook, the Cook Strait connects the Tasman Sea on the west with the South Pacific Ocean on the east.

Upon our arrival in Picton we will continue our journey and travel through vineyards and wineries to Blenheim. Framed by mountains, this is one of the sunniest towns in New
Zealand.

Overnight in Blenheim.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 22 Blenheim - Kaikoura - Christchurch

Today we will enjoy a spectacular scenic journey between the mountains and the sea as we travel through the Marlborough region. This

geographic region has a growing international reputation for it's white wine production. We'll visit a winery en route to the thriving seaside settlement of Kaikoura, an area offering unique whale and dolphin watching experiences. Several different species of whale can be seen off Kaikoura at different times of the year, but almost always the huge Sperm Whales. There is also a large and readily bserved colony of Southern Fur Seals at the eastern edge of the town that we will visit.

We continue between the Pacific Ocean and rugged Kaikoura Ranges to Christchurch, the 'Garden City'. Christchurch promises an eclectic mix of historic elegance and contemporary culture. The city is the focal point of what is called the Canterbury Region, which is that portion of the South Island that generally lies east of the Southern Al. The city's population is a manageable 300,000 or so, and dates from around 1850. It began as a Church of England settlement (hence the name) and was supposed to be a haven for landed gentry and "good Christian souls of lesser caste."

Overnight in Christchurch.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 23 Christchurch - TranzAlpine Train - Franz Josef

This morning we will board the award-winning TranzAlpine Train, one of the world's most scenic rail journeys. Our route will take us across the vast patchwork farmlands of the Canterbury Plains and we will enjoy stunning scenery as we journey through spectacular gorges, river valleys and across the country's greatest mountain range, the magnificent Southern Alps.

After approximately 2.5 hours we will disembark at Arthurs Pass and continue to Hokitika by coach, a journey along the west coast and bringing us to the World Heritage-listed area of South West New Zealand (Te Wahipounamu). Shaped by millions of years of glacial movement, the fiords and coasts of South West New Zealand are outstandingly beautiful.

Hokitika was a gold rush town in the 1860s, and the countryside around Hokitika is dotted with historic sites related to its mining past. Today Hokitika is known for its arts and crafts produced by local artisans. After a break for lunch, we continue to Franz Josef. The magnificent Franz Josef Glacier is widely regarded as the gem of New Zealand's West Coast Glaciers.

PLEASE NOTE: In the unlikely event that we are unable to take this trip by train, we will travel by bus along The Great Alpine Highway. While the Tranz Alpine Train will always be our first choice of transport, travelling by road is equally as scenic).

Overnight at Franz Josef (or nearby Fox Glacier).

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 24 Franz Josef - Haast River Valley - Queenstown

Today we will view some truly magnificent scenery as we travel along the rugged west coast to Haast. Here we will experience a unique river safari, capturing breathtaking views of the massive glacier formed Haast River Valley, flanked by towering peaks, cascading waterfalls and dense temperate rainforest. The one hour trip through the mighty Haast River Valley allows us to journey into the heart of Te Wahipounamu -- the South West World Heritage Area and experience a close-up encounter with this untouched landscape and its remarkable natural features.

We then rejoin our coach and continue to Queenstown.

Overnight in Queenstown.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 25 Queenstown: At Leisure

Today is a nicely-timed free day. Surrounded by majestic mountains and nestled on the shores of crystal clear Lake Wakatipu, Queenstown is New Zealand's premier four-season lake and alpine resort. Queenstown has a compact and sophisticated downtown area tucked into a

picturesque bay on the shores of Lake Wakatipu. Dwarfed by the surrounding mountains, there are amazing views from everywhere.

You may choose just to relax, wander the streets, and soak up the atmosphere of the region. Or you may wish to join one of the optional excursions available (booked locally), such as a lake cruise, wine tour, jet boating, or a local garden tour. Your Tour Leader can help you plan your day.

Overnight in Queenstown.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 26 Queenstown - Doubtful Sound Cruise - Te Anau

We will depart Queenstown this morning and head toward beautiful Lake Manapouri. We cruise across the lake and then travel by road over Wilmot Pass, stopping along the way to experience some of Fiordland's densest rainforest and to view the colourful alpine moss gardens.

In Doubtful Sound, we will board the spacious, purpose-built catamaran 'Patea Explorer' for a cruise through this pristine fiord. During the cruise knowledgeable and friendly nature guides will share with you their passion for the region through their commentary. They will answer questions, point out landmarks and provide you with information about the varied wildlife you may encounter like dolphins, fur seals and the rare Fiordland crested penguin.

After our cruise we disembark and transfer to our hotel located in the charming lakeside town of Te Anau.

Overnight in Te Anau.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 27 Te Anau - Dunedin

Our journey continues across the South Island to the East Coast and the city of Dunedin, renowned as the 'Edinburgh of the South'.

Overnight in Dunedin.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 28 Dunedin & Otago Peninsula Excursion

Today we will journey to the nearby Otago Peninsula. The Otago Peninsula, together with its 20 km long Otago Harbour, is the home of an abundance of magnificent and world famous wildlife. The Otago Peninsula is predominantly of volcanic origin, steep and, on the Pacific Ocean side, very rugged. The harbour side is relatively warm, sunny and sheltered.

Our scenic drive will take us past lush green pastures, small bays and inlets, sandy beaches, rugged hills, and volcanic landforms. During our time in the vicinity of Dunedin we will visit Larnach Castle and the Penguin Place, a private conservation reserve dedicated to helping the endangered Yellow Eyed Penguin survive.

We'll also visit the Royal Albatross Centre for a guided tour. This is a modern, purpose-built indoor glassed viewing area. We'll enjoy a 60-minute guided wildlife tour telling the story of the Northern Royal Albatross, followed by a short movie by Natural History NZ then a visit to potential viewing areas on Taiaroa Head. Witness the fascinating social and family life of the breeding colony, devoted parents guarding their chicks; adolescents posturing and displaying as only juveniles can, courtship proceedings, nest building and interplay. Nowhere else in the world can you enjoy the privilege of viewing these majestic seabirds in their natural environment.

Overnight in Dunedin.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 29 Dunedin - Aoraki/Mount Cook

Today we journey north along the coast to view the unique Moeraki Beach boulders before turning inland and traveling towards New Zealand's highlands and the UNESCO World Heritage listed Mt. Cook National Park. Along the way we'll stop at Oamaru, famous for its impressive streetscapes with many buildings constructed of local limestone.

Mount Cook Village is at the base of Aoraki/Mount Cook, probably the most spectacular national park in the country and one that rivals most scenery you'll see in the European Alps. The park, 680 sq km (270 square miles), contains more than 20 peaks over 3000 m (10,000 feet), including Aoraki/Mount Cook, the tallest mountain in Australasia; indeed the Maori word Aoraki means 'the Cloud Piercer.' It also features the world's longest temperate-zone glacier, the Tasman.

After a few hours for some exploration -- possibly a leisurely walk to a glacier -- we continue to our hotel.

Overnight in the vicinity of Aoraki/Mount Cook.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 30 Aoraki/Mount Cook - Christchurch

This morning we enjoy (weather-permitting) a scenic flight-of-a-lifetime -- the "Grand Traverse" -- a spectacular scenic flight-seeing experience allowing you to explore the Mount Cook and Westland National Parks. This 'flight-seeing' experience encompasses two World Heritage National Parks and 200 sq km of New Zealand's most memorable and spectacular scenery: Beautiful turquoise glacial lakes, golden tussock lands and braided river systems of the Mackenzie basin; remote High Country sheep stations, glacial valleys and landforms; the Aoraki Mount Cook National Park -- a magical world of permanent ice and snow.

The fixed wing aircraft ensures that every passenger has a window seat and all aircraft have wings-above to ensure optimum viewing below. Pilots provide a full and informative commentary.

We continue with a visit to Lake Tekapo, and then we leave the 'High Country' and cross the Rakaia River towards Christchurch.

Overnight in Christchurch.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 31 Departure

Departure from Christchurch.

BON VOYAGE!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast