

SUB ANTARCTIC ISLANDS - SUBANTARCTIC DISCOVERY | DOUGLAS MAWSON




INTRODUCTION

On this in-depth tour of a very untamed area of the antipodes, discover the pristine beauty of the Australian and New Zealand Subantarctic Islands, which are classified as part of the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Observe the abundant native avian fauna thriving on Stewart and Ulva Islands, encompassing the recognizable brown kiwi (southern tokoeka) and amiable flightless weka. Festivize beneath the deep red blooms of the flowering rātā, also referred to as the “southern Christmas tree” with affection. Discover the awe-inspiring grandeur of Fiordland's profound Sounds, and take a Zodiac trip along the rugged Snares shoreline, which serves as a breeding habitat for the endangered Buller's albatross and the Snares crested penguin. As we go back north, we might stop at the ethereal Campbell Island, whose winding boardwalks take you past moors covered in flowers and to the nesting sites of southern royal albatrosses. Discover the enchanted rātā forests on the Auckland Islands, where you may also find endemic mollymawks and learn about the explorers, settlers, and sealers who came before us.

ITINERARY

TRIP CODE
ACAESD15
DEPARTURE
02/01/2026
DURATION
15 Days
LOCATIONS
Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand


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DAY 1: Arrival in Dunedin

Arrive in Dunedin, where you will be met by a representative of and transferred with your fellow expeditioners to your assigned pre-voyage hotel. If you are already in Dunedin, we ask you to make your way to your hotel. This afternoon, visit the hospitality desk in the lobby to collect your luggage tags. Please clearly label the tags with your name and ship cabin number. Our team will confirm details regarding your embarkation day, answer any questions and provide you with information on where to dine or purchase last minute items. That evening, enjoy light refreshments as you meet your fellow expeditioners at a Welcome Reception and Pre-Embarkation Briefing. Afterwards, enjoy your evening in New Zealand’s southernmost city. You may like to indulge in a meal at one of Dunedin’s fine restaurants, or perhaps enjoy a leisurely stroll along the picturesque Otago harbour.



DAY 2: Embarkation in Dunedin

This morning, enjoy breakfast and check-out. Please ensure your cabin luggage is fitted with cabin tags clearly labelled with your name and cabin number. By 11.00 am, take your cabin luggage to hotel reception, prior to, or at check-out. Your luggage will be stored and transferred directly to the port for clearance, to be placed in your cabin ahead of your arrival on board. Please keep any valuables or personal items with you throughout the day. Your morning is at leisure to explore Dunedin. Settle into your cabin, where each detail was designed with your comfort in mind. This luxurious vessel is yours to explore! As we throw the lines and set sail, join your expedition team on deck before tucking into a delicious dinner, and toast to the voyage ahead.



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DAY 3: Stewart Island (Rakiura)

Stewart Island (Rakiura) is the northernmost of the New Zealand subantarctic islands and a sanctuary for many rare and endemic species. We plan to visit the quaint fishing village of Oban, the southernmost settlement in New Zealand, where humans are outnumbered by brown kiwis (southern tokoeka). As you wander along the beach, keep an eye out for blue penguins (korora) and yellow-eyed penguins (hoiho) waddling along the rocky coast, and New Zealand white-capped albatross soaring overhead. In the afternoon land on Ulva Island to experience New Zealand as it may have been centuries ago, before humans arrived. A series of successful pest eradication programs have made the island a sanctuary for endangered and endemic birds, including some 18 natives. Meander through cool forests of ferns, mosses and ancient conifers, where birdsong abounds. Scan the understorey for the elusive endemic South Island Rifleman (Tītipounamu), Yellowhead (Mohoua) and South Island Saddleback (Tieke).



DAY 4: Fiordland (Te-Rua-o-te-moko)

Delight in the company of inquisitive cetaceans as you cruise the deep glacial sounds of Fiordland. Rug up and find a spot on deck as we wend our way through the many uninhabited islands scattered across the area. Bottlenose dolphins, playful fur seals and humpback whales are frequent visitors, and keen observers may be rewarded with a rare sighting of the Fiordland crested penguin (tawaki).



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DAY 5: Snares Islands (Tini Heke)

The cluster of craggy islands and islets that make up the Snares is the most untouched of the antipodean subantarctic groups. Despite their relative proximity to New Zealand’s South Island, the Snares have remained free from introduced land predators, making them an invaluable sanctuary for millions of shearwaters, petrels and other seabirds. Rug up, hop into a Zodiac and experience the bustling coastline of the Snares from sea level. Keep watch for endemic Snares crested penguins and Buller’s albatross (toroa) with their distinctive black and yellow beaks. You may spot sea lions dozing in grassy glades, or perhaps catch a glimpse of the tiny Snares Island tomtit flitting amongst tree daisies. Embrace the spirit of exploration as your expedition team designs your voyage from day to day, bringing decades of experience to selecting the ideal sites based on the prevailing weather, ice conditions and wildlife opportunities.



DAY 6: At Sea - Day 6 & 7

After several busy days of subantarctic exploration, relax and unwind your way, perhaps meeting newfound friends at the bar, treating yourself to a sauna, or editing some images in the comfort of your cabin. Join your expedition team in the lecture room to hear about the fascinating human history of Macquarie Island and learn how to identify the unique and charismatic creatures that call it home. Of course, the best place on board is out on deck, in the company of petrels and albatross soaring effortlessly with the wind.



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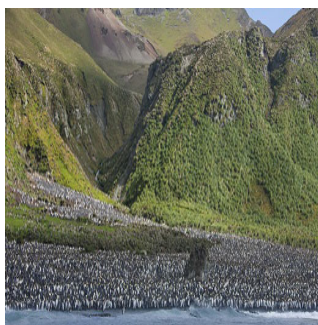
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DAY 8: Macquarie Island (Day 8 & 9)

As they sailed towards Antarctica, Mawson and his men encountered ‘an exquisite scene’. Macquarie Island (known affectionately as Macca) rises steeply from the Southern Ocean in a series of emerald summits: a beautifully fierce, elemental landscape teeming with life. Keep your binoculars handy because this subantarctic refuge is home to 3.5 million breeding seabirds, including no less than four species of penguin! Alongside boisterous colonies of tuxedoed kings, charming gentoos, robust rockhoppers and endemic royal penguins, you’ll find three types of fur seals and a large proportion of the world’s elephant seals. Layer up and head out on deck to experience the sound, sight (and smell!) as you approach one of the largest concentrations of life in the Southern Ocean. Remember to keep an eye out for Macca’s kelp forests—these remarkable underwater ecosystems are quite mesmerising as their fronds sway back and forth on the water’s surface. In addition to being a globally recognised and protected wildlife refuge, Macquarie Island played an important role in Antarctic history. It was here, in 1911, that five men disembarked Mawson’s Aurora and established a radio relay station which would transmit the first communication from Antarctica to the outside world.



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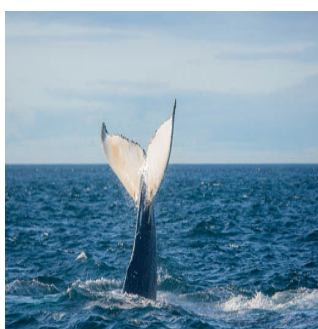
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DAY 10: At Sea

We leave the grandeur of Macquarie Island - and our southernmost destination - behind, but our voyage is far from over. There’s still plenty of time to enjoy the magic of the Southern Ocean and the seabirds that call it home. Grab a cuppa and duck into the lecture room to learn about the unique wildlife and historic sites ahead and meet your new travel mates in the bar to reminisce on your experiences so far. As you approach Campbell Island it’s worth heading out on deck to watch for the rare Campbell, Salvins and white-capped albatross, which may accompany us as we sail their home waters.



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DAY 11: New-Zealand's Subantarctic Islands

First visited by Māori navigators centuries ago, these islands are of great significance to Ngāi Tahu, the indigenous peoples of New Zealand’s South Island. Their natural beauty and astonishing biodiversity have now been recognised globally, but few have had the privilege to visit these far-flung shores, which are now yours to explore.



DAY 14: At Sea

As your journey draws to a close, take some time to reflect on the experiences of the past two weeks. You may like to review your photos, jot some notes in your journal or simply relax and soak up the ambiance on board as you farewell your travel mates . . . until next time! We hope you become ambassadors for the great Southern Ocean, advocating for its conservation and preservation, and share your experiences with your loved ones, so they might visit and become ambassadors themselves.



DAY 15: Disembarkation in Dunedin

After breakfast, farewell your expedition team and fellow passengers as we all continue our onward journeys, hopefully with a newfound sense of the immense power of nature. Note: At the conclusion of the voyage, we do not recommend booking flights departing prior to 12.00 pm on the day of disembarkation in case there are delays. *Cruise itinerary is subject to change depending on weather conditions, ice conditions and other factors.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation Hotel & Cabin on board ship

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Inclusions

- 1 Night hotel accommodation in Dunedin, pre-cruise Day 1
- Cabin accommodation on board Douglas Mawson
- All meals whilst on board ship and breakfast in the hotel
- Beer, house wine and soft drinks with dinner
- Captain’s Farewell reception including four-course dinner, house cocktails, house beer and wine, non-alcoholic beverages
- All scheduled landings & excursions
- Guiding and lectures by English-speaking expedition leader and team
- All port fees
- All landing fees
- Expedition jacket provided (yours to keep)
- A pair of expedition boots for use during voyage
- Wi-Fi (Please note we travel to remote regions and therefore the connection can be unreliable)

Inclusions

Exclusions

- Airfares to and from embarkation/disembarkation city
- Transfers – unless specified in the itinerary
- Visa fees (if applicable)
- Travel insurance
- Beverages (other than tea and coffee)
- All items of a personal nature, including but not limited to alcoholic beverages and soft drinks (outside of dinner service), laundry services, personal clothing, medical expenses or phone charges.
- Pre or post cruise travel expenses
- Optional activities & excursion surcharges
- Gratuities for ship’s crew - (A \$15 USD per person per day *gratuity for the crew is automatically added to your onboard account. It is at your discretion if you would like to remove the tip (or adjust the amount) when you settle your bill. It is not necessary to tip the expedition team members. This gratuity amount is included for suites as part of their ‘Suite Benefits’.*)

Difficulty Rating 2 (light adventure)

Single Surcharge Available upon request. Subject to availability, contact us for more details.

Notes

Prices are based on per person, twin share* (unless otherwise stated for triple/quad cabins)
 Prices are correct at time of publishing but are subject to change at any time.
 Itinerary is subject to change depending on government regulations, weather and ice conditions

* Landings at the Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand are by permit only as administered by the Government of New Zealand. No landings are permitted at The Snares.

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Price Dependent upon	Departure date, fuel surcharges, cabin category, currency fluctuations, seasonality and availability.
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SUSTAINABILITY

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