ANTARCTICA CRUISES FROM AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND - ROSS SEA ODYSSEY FROM HOBART | GREG MORTIMER



TRIP CODE
ACAERSGM
DEPARTURE
14/12/2026
DURATION
26 Days
LOCATIONS
Australia, New Zealand, Subantarctic Islands & Antarctica

INTRODUCTION

On an exploratory trip, discover one of the most isolated and historically significant regions of the Southern Ocean in comfort. Subantarctic islands, where Royal Albatrosses nest amidst moors covered with giant herbs and yellow-eyed penguins stroll through aged rÄtÄ woods, your adventure begins. See emperor and Adelie penguins porpoising along the ice edge, orcas patrolling for prey, and snow petrels flying against a backdrop of the huge Antarctic Ice Sheet as you cross the Antarctic Circle and cruise the pack.

As you go along the Victoria Land Coast and enter the Ross Sea, where the Antarctic Ice Sheet meets the longest floating ice shelf in the world, embrace the spirit of adventure. These are the historic waters where the valiant assaults on the South Geographic Pole were made by the explorers of the Heroic Age. Discover the tales of their adventures and make an attempt to set foot at a few of their incredibly pristine huts.

ITINERARY

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DAY 1: 26D Ross Sea Odyssey - Day 1

Arrive in Hobart, where you will be met by a representative of Aurora Expeditions and transferred with your fellow expeditioners to your assigned pre-voyage hotel. If you are already in Hobart, we ask you to make your way to your hotel. This afternoon, visit the Aurora Expeditions 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. Enjoy your evening in Australia's southernmost capital city. You may like to indulge in a sumptuous meal at one of Hobart's celebrated restaurants, or perhaps enjoy a leisurely stroll along the historic waterfront. Assigned accommodation: To be advised



DAY 2: Embarkation: Hobart

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 Hobart. Settle into your beautifully appointed cabin and discover the many public spaces designed with your comfort in mind. This luxurious vessel is yours to explore! As we throw the lines and set sail down the Derwent River, join your expedition team on deck to enjoy panoramic views of the Hobart foreshore, and the dramatic fluted columns of the Tasman Peninsula. From Storm Bay we set a southerly course, following in the wake of the vessel Aurora, which carried Sir Douglas Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition (AAE) 100 years ago.



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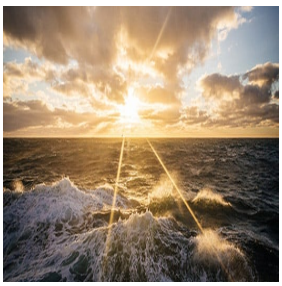
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DAY 3: At Sea - Days 3 - 5

On an expedition such as this, the journey is as significant as the destination. Sea days are a wonderful opportunity to relax, meet your fellow travellers and learn about the history, environment and local wildlife in this fascinating corner of the globe. As you acclimatise to life on board, your expedition team is available to answer any questions you may have and offer pro-tips on photography and birdwatching. With decades of collective experience in the region, they love to share their expertise and enthusiasm with fellow travellers. Specialists across a range of fields will offer entertaining talks and presentations on the local wildlife and history, which you won't want to miss! Once you've settled in, you may like to pamper yourself with a sauna, or work out at the onboard gym. For the bookworms, our well-equipped polar library is the perfect place to while away the hours at sea, and the bar is a vibrant social hub to get to know your fellow expeditioners. As you take in the vast expanse of the Southern Ocean, spare a thought for Mawson and his party, who made this transit aboard the Aurora, a wooden vessel no longer than an Olympic swimming pool! Mawson reported sightings of many whales and albatross in these waters, so spend some time out on deck with your binoculars - or grab a 'cuppa' and find a vantage point in one of our spacious observation lounges.



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DAY 6: Macquarie Island - Day 6 & 7

“Penguins were in thousands on the uprising cliffs, and from rookeries near and far came an incessant din . . . seabirds of many varieties gave warning of our near approach to their nests” Douglas Mawson, 1911. 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.



DAY 8: At Sea - Day 8-10

As Macquarie Island slips over the horizon, keep watch for wandering, grey-headed, black-browed and light-mantled albatross, which may follow the ship to bid you farewell as you continue south. Close observers may notice a subtle change in the character of the sea as you cross the Antarctic Convergence. Beyond this zone where the waters of the north and south mix, the sea surface temperature drops by about 4°C (39°F), signalling your entry into the Antarctic. This transition zone is known for its nutrient waters, so keep watch for porpoising penguins, flocks of fluttering Antarctic petrels, or perhaps the more solitary snow petrel. You’re not far from the Antarctic Circle, so your first iceberg can’t be far away! Sea days are a great opportunity for some R & R as you digest your subantarctic experiences and prepare for the next phase of your voyage. 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. And join your expedition team in the lecture room for presentations on the charismatic wildlife and extraordinary adventures that took place along the epic Antarctic coastline you are about to experience.



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DAY 11: Victoria Land Coast & Ross Sea - Days 11-17

It’s almost impossible to describe the feeling of arriving in this storied, ice-bound sector of Antarctica. The Ross Sea region is a globally significant wildlife sanctuary. Its nutrient-rich waters support an astonishing array of uniquely adapted Antarctic species, including Ross Sea orcas, Antarctic petrels and South Pacific Weddell seals. It is also home to Antarctica’s largest Adélie penguin colony, and many of the largest emperor penguin colonies. Since James Clark Ross discovered the region in 1841, countless expeditions have built base camps on scattered ice-free slivers of land, using them as staging posts for bold forays across the polar plateau. Many of them departed in a hurry, leaving artefacts, scientific equipment and sometimes entire huts behind. Today these sites are preserved as open-air museums and protected under the Antarctic Treaty System. Some places we may visit include: Ross Ice Shelf This is the floating edge of the largest ice shelf in Antarctica, which covers an area the size of France. Watch for elegant emperor penguins, sweet-faced Weddell seals hauled out on ice floes, and the unmistakable ‘pouf’ of an orca’s exhalation. Franklin Island This delightful ice-free outpost with a rookery of rambunctious Adélie penguins is well worth a visit. McMurdo Sound McMurdo Sound is the historic gateway to the South Pole and remains a busy working harbour today, serving as a logistics hub for the extensive scientific operations taking place at the McMurdo and Scott Research bases on Ross Island. If conditions allow, we aim to land at one (or more) of their beautifully preserved huts, many of which still stand, to dwell for a moment amongst the artefacts of a distant time. Cape Washington, Terra Nova Bay Bounded by soaring peaks and fed by immense glaciers, Terra Nova Bay supports an abundance of polar wildlife, including the rarely sighted Arnoux's Beaked Whale. Fast ice anchored to the bay’s northern shore in the shelter of Cape Washington is home to one of the largest known emperor penguin colonies. Cape Hallett The snow-capped Admiralty Mountains rise dramatically from the gravelly spit of Cape Hallett, where we hope to land. This is the site of a decommissioned scientific base and an abundance of Antarctic mosses, lichens and invertebrates, protected by the Antarctic Treaty System. Cape Hallett provided access to the glaciated coastal ranges beyond, where the six-man team completed the first ascent of Mt Minto (4,165 metres). Cape Adare Cape Adare lies 100 km (62 miles) north of Cape Hallet, at the western entrance to the Ross Sea. A rare ice-free refuge on this icebound coastline, it is home to Antarctica’s largest Adélie penguin colony.



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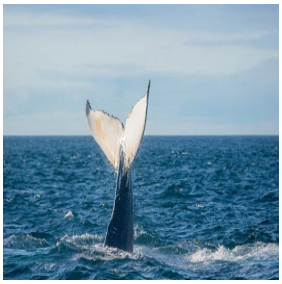
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DAY 18: At Sea - Days 18-21

We leave the grandeur of the ice to the seals and penguins and head northwards, but our voyage is far from over. In the days ahead there is plenty of time to enjoy the magic of the Southern Ocean and the life that calls it home. If the mood takes you, join your expedition team in the lecture room for presentations and polar film showings, or meet your new travel mates in the bar, library or observation deck to reminisce on your Antarctic experiences. These days at sea also offer time and space to reflect on the emotions and special moments you've lived over the past two weeks. You may like to review your photos, jot some notes in a journal, mark your passage on a map, and reflect on your journey so far. As you approach the rugged New Zealand subantarctic islands you have a rare opportunity to spot the endemic white-capped mollymawk (a type of albatross) in flight. The largest of the mollymawk family, over ninety percent of its population breeds on the Auckland Islands. Keep an eye out also for the playful New Zealand sea lion and southern right whale, which are known to frolic in these waters.



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DAY 22: New Zealand's Sub Antarctic Islands - Days 22-24

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. Auckland Islands (Maungahuka / Motu Maha) Born of fire, scoured by ancient glaciers and shaped by the fierce hand of the Southern Ocean, there is an exquisite ruggedness to this group of weather-worn islands. This apparent bleakness belies the extraordinary abundance of life that thrives here. Roughly half of the world's yellow-eyed penguins (hoiho), most of the world's white-capped mollymawks, and the entire population of Auckland Islands wandering albatross find shelter on these shores. Embrace the spirit of exploration as your expedition team designs your voyage from day to day, bringing decades of experience to selecting ideal sites based on the prevailing conditions and wildlife opportunities. Some places we may visit include: Sandy Bay Sandy Bay is home to a breeding colony of rare New Zealand (Hooker's) sea lions and an enchanting rātā forest where yellow-eyed penguins (hoiho) make their nests. Carnley Harbour, Erlangen Clearing Carnley Harbour offers superb Zodiac cruising through a landscape rich in human history. In 1864, five men became stranded here after their schooner, the Grafton, was wrecked, putting a sudden end to their sealing and tin prospecting ambitions. We hope to see the skeletal remnants of the Grafton, and the moss-covered remains of the Epigwaitt Hut, where they sheltered for 20 months. Victoria Passage Victoria Passage is a lively channel separating Auckland Island from the mountainous Adams Island to the south. We may Zodiac cruise these scenic waters, watching for sooty shearwaters, penguins and sea-lions frolicking in the pure waters. Campbell Island (Motu Ihupuku) Wind and weather permitting, we will Zodiac cruise sheltered harbours and coves in search of Campbell Island snipes and teals, yellow-eyed penguins (hoiho), and New Zealand (Hooker's) sea lions (whakahao). We hope to land at Beeman Cove, Perseverance Harbour, where an old meteorological station stands vigil on the windswept shoreline. Follow a boardwalk through tussock and upland tundra, then enter an otherworldly landscape where large-leaved megaherbs abound. Wonder at the Ross Lily, Campbell Island Daisy and Campbell Island carrot, whose brilliant flowers would look more at home in the tropics than these southern climes. Continue towards the nesting grounds of majestic southern royal albatross, whose wingspans can exceed three metres (10 feet). It is truly humbling to be in the presence of these great wanderers of the southern seas. Find a spot to quietly observe these marvellous birds as they go about their daily duties, undisturbed by their human visitors.



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DAY 25: At Sea

As your journey draws to a close, take some time to reflect on the experiences of the past few weeks. Perhaps take some time to organise your photos, jot some more 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 26: Disembark 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.



INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Hotel & Cabin onboard a ship

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Inclusions	**Inclusions** All airport transfers mentioned in the itinerary One night's hotel accommodation including breakfast, in Hobart on Day 1 Cabin accommodation on board Greg Mortimer 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) **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. Gratuities for the crew 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. Single occupancy cabins may be available with a surcharge. Subject to availability, contact us for more details.

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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 weather and ice conditions In rare and unforeseen situations, an operator may apply a fuel surcharge after your booking has been confirmed and paid. This is outside our control and uncommon, but transparency with our travelers is important to us.
Price Dependent upon	Departure date, fuel surcharges, cabin category, currency fluctuations, seasonality and availability.

SUSTAINABILITY

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