

Subantarctic Discovery

Starts and Ends in **Dunedin, New Zealand, Oceania (SUB)**

Day 1 Arrive Dunedin

Arrive in Dunedin, 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 Dunedin, 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. 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. Assigned accommodation: Scenic Hotel Dunedin City.



Day 2 Embarkation

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.

Day 3 Stewart Island (Rakiura)

“Have a care for this island. Sanctuaries such as these are imperative. There is no song of Bellbird or Tui on the moon.” Olga Sansom, 1970. Past Curator, Southland Museum and Stewart Islander

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 (Titipounamu), 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).

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.

Days 6-7 At Sea

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.

Days 8-9 Macquarie Island

"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 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.

Days 11-13 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 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.