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FROM

\$18,650pp

From Darwin all the way to Perth, this cruise travels along the craggy coastline of Western Australia. Beginning with a day at sea, sail to the warm welcomes of Indonesia's Matakus Island. Next, take in the raw, unfiltered beauty of the Kimberley, from the stripes of the Bungle Bungle Mountain Range to the humpback whales of the Buccaneer Archipelago. An expedition to the Dampier Archipelago, the breath-taking Ningaloo Reef in Exmouth and the "Galapagos of the South" Abrolhos complete your trip.

** Itinerary also operates in reverse from Fremantle to Darwin, departing 26 August 2023. Please ask for details. **

Package Inclusions

- 17 night luxury expedition cruise from Darwin to Fremantle
- Private executive transfers from your home to airport return
- Special air credit
- Transfers between airport, hotel and ship
- 1 night pre and 1 night post cruise accommodation
- Guided zodiac land and sea tours and shoreside activities led by the Expeditions Team
- Enrichment lectures by a highly qualified Expeditions Team
- Butler service in every suite
- Unlimited Free Wifi
- Beverages in-suite and throughout the ship including champagne, select wines and spirits
- Onboard entertainment
- Onboard gratuities

Cruise Highlights

DARWIN

"Australia's capital of the north is a uniquely tropical city, and a historically isolated outpost of this vast, diverse country. Reaching up towards the equator, a full 2,000 miles from Sydney and Melbourne, the city was named in honour of Charles Darwin by the British settlers who established a frontier outpost here. With a unique history, beautiful islands nearby, and a palette of sizzling Pacific flavours, colourful Darwin is an enchanting and exotic Australian destination. Crocodiles patrol the jungled waterways and tropical rainforests around Australia's gateway to the Top End. Explore via airboat to look down on the veiny waterways of the mist-laced Kakadu National Park. The sounds of chattering birdlife and the gentle splash of fountains and waterfalls will fill your ears in George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens. Soak it all in, before kicking back and relaxing with a picnic and a crackling barbecue. The sunshine and famous tropical pink sunsets mean many visitors naturally gravitate to the city's soft sands to relax at spots like pretty Mindil Beach, as evening approaches. The adjoining market is filled with souvenirs and crafts stands and is the perfect great place to enjoy some fiery Asian flavours. Stroll the stalls, grab some food, and crack open an ice-frosted beer as the sunset show begins. It may be remote, but Darwin found itself on the front line during the Pacific War, as the Japanese air force unloaded their bombs onto the city in 1942. This relaxed unassuming city has a deeply resilient backbone, however, and you can explore the museums to learn more of the war's impact on Darwin, as well as the devastating effects of one of Australia's worst natural disasters, Cyclone Tracy in 1973."

MATAKUS ISLAND

The eastern part of Indonesia is a true paradise on Earth. Home to countless beautiful, unexplored destinations that have not enjoyed the tourism boom that many other parts of the country have. Matakus Island is one such destination. This makes it a perfect place for those who have a sense of adventure and truly want to explore off the beaten path. Matakus is a small island and part of the Tanimbar archipelago. At just over two miles in length and less than a mile across, it is one of the smaller islands but, despite its small size, its proximity to the regional capital city of Saumlaki just to the north ensures that the island is inhabited (current population 100). The tourism infrastructure is practically inexistent, so don't expect to be souvenir shopping here – ordering a lunch of delicious freshly caught and grilled fish from one of the local fishermen that line the shore is about the maximum! The island is surrounded by fine, white-sand beaches and is a marine paradise, with fields of staghorn coral and schools of cardinalfish visible in its crystal clear waters. Grab your underwater cameras and snorkels and dive in! Wildlife is not limited to below the water however. Birds including the Tanimbar starling, Moluccan masked owl, Fawn-breasted thrush and Blue-streaked lorry all call the island home.

WYNDHAM

Wyndham is a small settlement with the spirit of a Kimberley outback township. It was established in 1886 with the Halls Creek gold rush and sits on the Cambridge Gulf where several rivers converge. Today Wyndham has a population of roughly 900 people and operates largely as a port exporting cattle, servicing the mining industry and hosting a few small ships. For these vessels Wyndham is a gateway to the breathtaking Bungle Bungle mountain range and the nearby Ord River. The Bungle Bungle Mountains in Purnululu National Park are now a World Heritage Site. In excess of 350 million years have shaped geological formations of giant orange and black striped domes rising out of the ground into a landscape unlike any other. Known to the local Aboriginal people for thousands of

years, the Bungles were only discovered by the outside world in the mid-1980s. Conversely, cruising the peaceful and tree-lined Ord River is a chance to look for freshwater crocodiles, fruit bats, short-eared rock wallabies and a variety of birds, including Mangrove Herons and Mangrove Gerygones. Please note: All destinations on voyages in the Kimberley region, and the order in which they are visited, are subject to tidal variations and weather conditions.

KING GEORGE RIVER

The King George Falls is one of the Kimberley's most magnificent natural wonders. At 80 meters (260 feet), the thundering spectacle of twin cascades are among the highest in Australia. The river weaves through an amazing landscape of near vertical red rock formations and a parade of wildlife — carnivorous saltwater crocodiles and amazing birdlife, including giant raptors and the Brahminy Kite.

HUNTER RIVER REGION

The Hunter River is home to an immense mangrove system surrounded by soaring red sandstone cliffs. Narrow mangrove channels shelter numerous bird species, mudskippers, fiddler crabs and the infamous saltwater crocodile; the most aggressive crocodile species known to man. Naturalist Island at the mouth of the river has a stunning stretch of sandy beach that makes a perfect landing site for small helicopters that can pick up visitors wishing to explore some of the Kimberley's vast interior. The highlight inland is the famous Mitchell Falls where four tiers of waterfalls plunge into deep pools that flow out into the mighty Mitchell River. The headwaters of the falls are cool and a dip in the fresh water is a welcome reprieve from the heat of the heartland.

BUCCANEER ARCHIPELAGO

Set off the coast of Western Australia, the Buccaneer Archipelago is one of the Kimberley's finest secrets. The Archipelago, 50 k2 (19 sq mi), is made up of around 800 islands and protect the mainland from the huge 12 metre tides and astonishing speed of the Yampi (or, in traditional Aborigine, "Yampee") Sound. The speed and power of the water many not make for pleasant bathing, but do however result in fantastic natural phenomena. One fine example is the horizontal reversible waterfall in Talbot Bay. The tidal pull is responsible for the "reversible" nature of the falls, however, this also hides narrow gaps between the islands, making for treacherous sailing conditions. Isolated graves of sailors and divers are testimony to the danger. William Dampier sighted the Archipelago in 1688 but it would not be until 1821 that the Archipelago would become known as Buccaneer (a term coined by Captain Phillip Parker King) "in commemoration of William Dampier's visit to this part of the coast". Commander John Lort Stokes also noted the area in his 1838 record. Enterprising individuals were initially attracted to the Buccaneer Archipelago in the 1800s due to the superior pearling as well as the rich iron ore deposits. Pearling conducted by luggers in the 1880s was concentrated in Cygnet Bay, Cascade Bay, Cone Bay and Strickland Bay. More recently, mining operators established open-cut mines on Koolan Island on the east side of the Sound. Some of the richest iron ore in the world is extracted here to this day.

DAMPIER ARCHIPELAGO

Rust coloured rocks contrasting with pale Spinifex grass, white beaches and aquamarine seas create a scenic kaleidoscope in the Dampier Archipelago. Forty-two islands lie around the similarly coloured Burrup Peninsula. The archipelago is named after William Dampier, the English pirate turned explorer, who was the first European visitor in 1699. But the occupation of the area is ancient. The archipelago and peninsula are known as Murujuga by the Aboriginal people. The area contains the greatest concentration of rock engravings in the world. Clearly recognisable are animals and people, while mythical beings and geometric patterns require more interpretation. Engravings are in excellent condition and date back 20,000 years, a hard time span to comprehend. The Dampier Marine Park protects the archipelago's coral reefs, sponge gardens and seagrass meadows. A five-metre tidal range adds rocky shores and sand flats to this list of habitats. A high biodiversity of corals and fish are matched by 1200 molluscs. Four turtle species live in these waters including Flatback and Hawksbill Turtles. Snorkelling here reveals a rich sample of this treasure trove of life. Flora and fauna on the arid rocky islands require good adaptations. Reptiles and the shy Rothschild's Rock Wallaby escape the midday sun in rocky overhangs. Much of the birdlife, like Ospreys and Sea-eagles, rely on the sea for food. Look for their huge stick nests on seaside rocks. Some nests are decades old, an easier time span to grasp.

MONTEBELLO ISLANDS

Montebello is Italian for 'beautiful mountain'. What a misnomer! The islands are low, flat and arid. They were named by French Explorer Nicolas Baudin in 1801 after a battle in Italy. The war-like name may suit, as the British used the islands for three nuclear bomb tests in the 1950s. Today visitors must avoid two radioactive islands. Other islands are okay to explore. Two endangered mammals—the Mala (Rufous Hare-Wallaby) and the Djoongari (Shark Bay Mouse)— thrive here. They were almost wiped out by introduced cats and foxes on the mainland and were brought to this island ark for safety. The 170 islands are 120 kilometres (75 miles) off mainland Australia. Aboriginal people visited until eight thousand years ago, when rising sea levels after the last ice age made them too far offshore to reach. The next visitors were in 1622 when survivors of the wrecked British ship Tryall reached the arid islands. Porcupine Grass or Spinifex grows on rocky areas while wattle shrubs favour sand. The islands are an important seabird breeding colony. Look for Roseate and Greater Crested Terns. Sooty Oystercatchers forage on the rocks while Beach Stone-curlews roam beaches. Coral reefs and lagoons surround the islands in the Montebello Marine Park. One hundred and fifty species of hard coral, 450 species of fish and 170 species of echinoderms (sea stars, sea urchins and sea cucumbers) keep snorkellers happy. Green, Hawksbill and Flatback Turtles nest on beaches and provide highlights when seen in the water.

EXMOUTH

Ningaloo coral reef is a fringing reef that abuts the mainland shoreline south of the town of Exmouth. At 300 km (185 miles) long, it is the longest and most pristine fringing reef in the world. The coral even extends into the intertidal zone. Much of the limestone coast is in the arid Cape Range National Park. This is where the desert meets the coral, and both are included in the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area. An arid climate means little rain and soil runs off from the land, leaving the sea turquoise clear and making snorkelling a dream. Within Cape Range National Park, you will appreciate wave-cut limestone escarpments and rugged gorges like Yardie Creek. Cape Range has a diversity of eco-systems including eucalypt woodlands, acacia scrublands and spinifex grasslands. Australia is a land of lizards and here skinks, dragons, monitors and geckos are in their element. Euros (Hill Kangaroos) are common although they, and their smaller cousins the Black-flanked Rock-wallabies, hide in the shade on hot days. It is a busy calendar at Exmouth. During January/February thousands of sea turtles come ashore to nest. In March to July Whale Sharks gather offshore. From June to October migrating Humpback Whales heading south pass close to shore. June to August is the peak time for a colourful

variety of wildflowers like the green Bird Flower, crimson Sturts Desert Pea and purple Yardie Morning Glory which is found nowhere else. There is always something to see where the wet and dry paradises meet.

DIRK HARTOG ISLAND

It was 400 years ago when Dutch explorer Dirk Hartog on the Eendracht landed on this large island off the westernmost point of the Australian Mainland. At first glance little has changed at this lonely remote landscape of rock and sand clothed in low arid vegetation. But introduced animals over the years have caused the disappearance of native fauna. An ambitious program of pest eradication and native animal reintroduction titled 'Return to 1616' is restoring the island to its original biological state. It is close to succeeding. Shark Bay on the eastern shores of the Dirk Hartog Island is a magnificent marine ecosystem with the largest and most varied seagrass bed in the world. It supports healthy herds of dugongs with estimates of 10,000 animals present. Look at the sea for rounded grey shapes, snorting nostrils and slowly lifting tails that reveal dugongs. Shark Bay also supports many Loggerhead and Green Turtles, pods of Indo-pacific Bottlenose Dolphins and plenty of stingrays and eagle rays. As the name suggests, sharks are a feature, maintaining a healthy ecosystem. Dirk Hartog Island is large and remote enough to have its own bird. The Dirk Hartog Fairy-wren, also called Black and White Fairy-wren is a small bird with a tall upright tail, which bobs about in groups amongst the shrubs. Several other rare small birds live in the arid vegetation. More visible are flying birds of prey with Spotted Harriers, Brown Falcons and Brown Goshawks. Dirk Hartog would still recognise his Island of 1616.

ABROLHOS ISLANDS

Human drama and nature rival each other to be the most fascinating drawcards of the Houtman Abrolhos or Abrolhos Islands. In 1629 the Dutch ship Batavia was wrecked, with most crew and passengers reaching dry inhospitable Beacon Island. Thus, began a horror story of mutiny, betrayal, rape, murder of children and survival. On one island, soldiers built a stone stockade which is the first European structure in Australia. Eventually the remaining survivors were rescued, and the murderers were hung on one island or marooned on the mainland (Australia's first European settlers). A century later, desperate survivors of another wrecked Dutch ship Zeewijk lived (or died) for ten months on the islands. Life in the sea is an unusual mix. The warm southward-flowing Leeuwin Current meets cool southern waters at Abrolhos creating homes for both tropical and temperate marine life. A diverse coral reef grows beside cool water algae. Two thirds of the 400 fish species are tropical, while cool water-favouring Australian Sea-lions and Western Rock Lobsters (Australia's most valuable fishery) are close to their northern limit. Seabirds, like the cooler climate Pacific Gulls, mix with tropical species like Bridled and Roseate Terns. The only colony of the Australian Lesser Noddy breeds here, along with two million Wedge-tailed Shearwaters. On land, amongst the Nitre shrubs and Saltbushes, are Abrolhos Painted Quails and Dwarf Bearded Dragons and shy Tamar Wallabies. Their ancestors survived the hungry castaways.

FREMANTLE

Coming in at number seven on Lonely Planet's list of best places to live, Fremantle has finally begun to shake off the shadow of neighbouring big brother Perth. With just 20 kilometres separating the two cities, Perth, with its happy hippie vibe has long been the big pull for visitors to the region. But Fremantle's colourful past and bright future gives Perth as good as it gets. The coastal city has undergone a complete revamp since the America's Cup thrust Fremantle into the spotlight in 1987. Over AUS\$ 1,3 billion has been poured into revamping the city, and the fruits of the city's labour are ripe for picking. Investment in the arts has brought Fremantle to the fore of thriving urban culture, while generous grants for small businesses has led to groovy live-music rooms, hipster bars, boutique hotels, left-field bookshops, craft-beer breweries, Indian Ocean seafood shacks amid the buskers and beaches. If that doesn't not sound like your glass of beer, we guarantee a stroll along the wooden riverside walkway will change your mind. The city also enjoys another, rather different status. Fremantle was one of Australia's penal cities, vestiges of which can still be found in Fremantle Prison. Almost 10,000 convicts were condemned to life imprisonment here between 1850 and 1868, but the prison remained in use until 1991. Today, the memorable sandstone building is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and at just 15 minutes from port is well worth a visit. Just don't forget your get out of jail free card.

Departure Dates & Pricing

Cruise departs Darwin on 09 August 2023.

Pricing starts at A\$18,650 per person share twin. All pricing is subject to availability and to change at any time. Please ask us for best available pricing at time of booking.

Cruise Category

- Luxury Expedition

Onboard Features

- 24 Hr Room Service
- All meals
- Boutique &/or Salon
- Drinks All Day
- Gratuities
- Pool &/or Spa
- Shore Excursions

trip itinerary

Day 1

Darwin, Australia

Day 2
At Sea
Day 3
Matakus Island, Indonesia
Day 4
At Sea
Day 5
Wyndham, Australia
Day 6
King George River Region, Australia
Day 7
Hunter River Region, Australia
Day 8-9
Buccaneer Archipelago
Day 10
Lacepedes Islands, Australia
Day 11
At Sea
Day 12
Dampier Archipelago, Australia
Day 13
Montebello Islands, Australia
Day 14
Exmouth, Australia
Day 15
At Sea
Day 16
Dirk Hartog Island, Australia
Day 17
Abrolhos Islands, Australia
Day 18
Perth (Fremantle), Australia
The Vessel

Technical Details

- Crew 117
- Capacity 132
- Length 108M

Cruise Category

- Luxury Expeditions
- Modern Style

Silver Explorer

Silversea's purpose-built luxury Silver Explorer expedition cruise ship has been designed specifically for navigating waters in some of the world's most remote destinations, including both of earth's polar regions. A strengthened hull with a Lloyd's Register ice-class notation (1A) for passenger vessels enables the Silver Explorer Expedition Cruise Ship to safely push through ice floes with ease. Images courtesy of Silversea.

Vessel Features

- **24 Hr Room Service**
- **Medical Services**

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