EXPLORING AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND
OCTOBER 17- NOVEMBER 7, 2015

Travel from Australia’s spectacular Great Barrier Reef, the storied Outback and Ayers Rock to sophisticated Sydney; from New Zealand’s towering Mt. Cook and breathtaking Milford Sound to high-spirited Queenstown and nautical Auckland. This 22-day journey begins in Cairns. Ride the historic railway to the mountain village of Kuranda for time to explore then descend via the gondolas of Skyrail. Board a boat for a day-long excursion to the Great Barrier Reef where you can swim, snorkel, or view the reef from a semi-submersible vessel. Embark on an Aboriginal “dreamtime” tour and learn about the ancient culture of the Walpiri tribespeople. Watch the sun set over the fabled Ayers Rock. Travel to Sydney where you tour the highlights of the city, board a catamaran for a lunch cruise around Sydney Harbor, and enjoy ample leisure time. Tour the Koala Sanctuary Park, where koalas roam free. Fly to New Zealand and explore Mt. Cook National Park over a two-night stay. Take a cruise through the breathtaking fjords of Milford Sound. Visit geothermal Rotorua and experience the Maori culture at a traditional hangi dinner and performance. Celebrate your journey’s end in Auckland with city touring and a farewell dinner at your hotel.

STUDY LEADER: To be announced

GROUP SIZE: 12-24 guests

PRICING: Based on per person double occupancy
(The following costs are tentative costs. Final pricing will be provided in October 2014)

- From $10,678 per person, double occupancy
  ($9,695 per person air and land inclusive from Boston plus $983 airline taxes and departure fees)

- $8,995 per person Land Only

- $2,295  Single Supplement


**SCHEDULE BY DAY**

*B=Breakfast, *L=Lunch, *D=Dinner, *R=Reception

**SATURDAY & SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17 & 18**

DEPART U.S. FOR CAIRNS, AUSTRALIA

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 19**

ARRIVE CAIRNS

This afternoon arrive in Cairns, gateway to Australia’s Far North and the Great Barrier Reef. Transfer to the hotel tonight and enjoy a briefing and welcome dinner.

*Overnight: Pullman Reef Hotel Casino / (D)*

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20**

CAIRNS/KURANDA

After an orientation tour of Cairns, board an historic century-old railway for the thrilling 1½ hour journey through 15 tunnels and dense tropical rainforest, over 40 bridges, past spectacular waterfalls, and over steep ravines to the picturesque mountain village of Kuranda. Afterward, wander through Kuranda's shops and markets showcasing Aboriginal handicrafts. Then you will descend via the gondolas of Skyrail, at 4.7 miles – the world’s longest gondola cableway. Gliding just feet above the rainforest canopy, enjoy the spectacular 360-degree views.

Return to the hotel later in the afternoon. Dinner tonight is also on your own.

*Overnight: Pullman Reef Hotel Casino / (B)*

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22**

CAIRNS/ALICE SPRINGS

This morning enjoy a flight to Alice Springs, the capital of Australia’s Outback situated in the country’s exact center. Upon arrival, visit several highlights of “The Alice,” including the ANZAC (Australia and New Zealand Army Corps) Hill Monument for soldiers who fought in both World Wars; the Royal Flying Doctors Service, which covers an area greater than the size of Western Europe; and School of the Air, which provides schooling to widely scattered Outback children. Tonight enjoy a traditional “bush” dinner and relax around a campfire as an entertainer performs Aussie ballads and points out constellations of the southern sky.

*Overnight: DoubleTree by Hilton / (B, D)*

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23**

ALICE SPRINGS

Today embark on an Aboriginal “dreamtime” tour and learn about the ancient culture in a natural bush setting and meet Walpiri tribespeople in their camp. Next, explore the Outback, including Simpsons Gap, a prominent waterhole and Aboriginal spiritual site; and

The Great Barrier Reef is a true wonder of nature, with thousands of species of fish and coral, some at depths of just 10 to 15 feet below the surface. As you sail to Michaelmas Cay, swim, snorkel, and view the reef from an air-conditioned, semi-submersible vessel. The Cay is a protected seabird sanctuary playing host to more than 20,000 migratory seabirds; it ranks as one of the most important nesting sites in the Southern Hemisphere, here you may join in an optional guided birding tour.

Please remember that the Great Barrier Reef is a delicate living organism, protected by law. Visitors are asked to avoid touching the coral; not to pick up or touch any reef creatures (for your protection as well as the reef’s); and to keep the water clean. Lunch today is aboard ship; dinner tonight is on your own.

*Overnight: Pullman Reef Hotel Casino / (B, L)*

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21**

GREAT BARRIER REEF

This morning board a boat for a day-long excursion to the Great Barrier Reef. This collection of more than 2,800 coral reefs is a Natural World Heritage Area that runs along the coast of Queensland for more than 1,250 miles – making it the longest living reef in the world.

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Standley Chasm, a natural gap in the sandstone slopes that rise 242 feet on either side. Here at the landmark honoring the first schoolteacher in Alice Springs, enjoy a picnic lunch and see the sheer rock walls aglow in reflected sunlight. Be sure to wear comfortable shoes, you'll be walking on a dirt trail for about 20 minutes until you reach the chasm. Return to the hotel late this afternoon, the remainder of the day and evening is at leisure. Dinner tonight is on your own.

*Overnight: DoubleTree by Hilton / (B, L)*

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24**
**ALICE SPRINGS/AYERS ROCK (ULURU)**

Depart this morning by motorcoach for Ayers Rock (known as Uluru in the native Aboriginal tradition), reaching your hotel early this afternoon. After you relax and have lunch on your own, prepare to set out for Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site that is the traditional land of the Anangu Aboriginal peoples. The park is also home to the unusual Olgas rock formations, where you'll take a walking tour, and Uluru (Ayers Rock). Later today, watch the sun set over this fabled sandstone monolith that rises to a height of 1,114 feet above the flat plain. Return to the hotel and enjoy dinner.

*Overnight: Sails in the Desert / (B, D)*

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25**
**AYERS ROCK (ULURU)/SYDNEY**

This morning tour the base of fabled Uluru before visiting the museum. Around mid-day you will fly to Sydney, arriving late afternoon. Here, take a brief orientation walk of the Circular Quay and Rocks area surrounding the hotel, then you're free for dinner on your own in this most cosmopolitan of cities.

*Overnight: Sir Stamford at Circular Quay / (B)*

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 26**
**SYDNEY**

Today tour Sydney, capital of New South Wales and Australia's oldest English-inhabited city. Enjoy the lush Botanical Gardens, stop for great views from Mrs. Macquarie's Chair, then drive through Darling Harbour, the city's commercial center. Next, head to the exclusive suburbs of Double, Rose, and Watson's bays for more stunning views, this time of the Pacific Ocean. Further, continue on to famed Bondi Beach and return to Circular Quay where you'll board a catamaran for a sail around Sydney Harbour, enjoy a buffet lunch along with commentary about the magnificent natural waterway.

After disembarking, return to the hotel mid-afternoon and take the opportunity to attend a presentation on opals, if you wish (Australia produces roughly 97% of the world’s opals). Dinner tonight is on your own. Sydney has a wonderful selection of restaurants featuring cuisine of all types, from seafood to steak houses; Italian to Indian – and virtually every ethnicity in between.

*Overnight: Sir Stamford at Circular Quay / (B, L)*

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27**
**SYDNEY**

Today visit Koala Sanctuary Park, where koalas roam free in the 10-acre grounds of rainforest, eucalyptus groves, and native gardens – along with kangaroo, dingo, wallaby, and a variety of native birds. From here, head out for a drive along Sydney’s Northern Beaches, a string of 18 stunning playgrounds surrounded by a national park. Then, stop in the fashionable beachfront suburb of Manly for free time and lunch on your own before returning to Sydney. You will return to the hotel mid-afternoon and the remainder of the day is at your leisure. Lunch and dinner today are on your own.

*Overnight: Sir Stamford at Circular Quay / (B)*
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28
SYDNEY

On this morning’s excursion, tour Sydney’s iconic Opera House, the country’s premier performing arts venue and home to Opera Australia, Sydney Theater Company, and Sydney Symphony Orchestra, among other groups. The remainder of the day is free for independent exploration and lunch on your own. You may wish to visit the Taronga Zoo, accessible by boat from the Circular Quay; tour the Sydney Aquarium, one of the world’s best; or stroll along Macquarie Street, one of Sydney’s most elegant thoroughfares. Tonight enjoy dinner in the popular Rocks district at the Waterfront Restaurant, with excellent seafood and beautiful harbor views.

Overnight: Sir Stamford at Circular Quay / (B, D)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29
SYDNEY/CHRISTCHURCH/MOUNT COOK NATIONAL PARK/ NEW ZEALAND

Today fly to Christchurch, New Zealand and board a coach for the drive to Mount Cook. Your hotel is located inside the stunning Mount Cook National Park in the Southern Alps, you’ll make it here just in time for dinner.

Overnight: The Hermitage / (B, D)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30
MOUNT COOK

New Zealand’s great alpine preserve of turquoise lakes and snow-topped mountains (and a UNESCO World Heritage park), Mount Cook National Park boasts 19 peaks reaching over 9,842 feet. Mt. Cook itself (Aoraki in native Maori), stands as New Zealand’s highest peak at 12,316 feet. The Southern Alps, which run the length of the country’s South Island, boast more than 158 named peaks, with 140 of them measuring more than 6,500 feet.

This morning’s tour of Mount Cook Village and environs includes a visit to the Sir Edmund Hillary Alpine Centre, which showcases the region and its people, and where you’ll watch a 3D planetarium movie about the region. Both educational and entertaining, the center also comprises the Hillary Gallery commemorating Sir Edmund’s achievements, including the first ascent of Mount Cook’s difficult South face—where he trained for his monumental summiting of Mount Everest. After you have lunch on your own in the village, return to the hotel which located in the heart of the national park. The afternoon is at leisure for independent exploration in this breathtaking swath of nature. You may choose to venture out on one of several hiking trails; shop for locally made crafts; or simply relax and enjoy the stunning alpine scenery. Or, take an optional scenic flight over the majestic Southern Alps (weather permitting and at additional cost). This evening you will dine at the hotel.

Overnight: The Hermitage / (B, D)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31
MOUNT COOK/QUEENSTOWN

This morning continue on to Queenstown, stopping along the way in historic Arrowtown for lunch on your own before a visit to the famed Kawarau Bridge Bungy, the world’s first bungy operation open to the public. Mid-afternoon you’ll reach Queenstown, New Zealand’s “adventure capital” blessed with a supremely scenic location nestled between the jagged Remarkables mountains and glacial Lake Wakatipu. Tonight enjoy dinner at the hotel.

Overnight: Hotel St. Moritz Queenstown / (B, D)

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1
QUEENSTOWN/MILFORD SOUND

Early today leave Queenstown by motorcoach and embark on a full-day excursion through stunning alpine scenery to Fjordland National Park and Milford Sound, described by Rudyard Kipling as the “eighth wonder of the world.” It is, quite simply, glorious. Formed by giant glaciers that receded long ago, glassine Milford Sound boasts vertical cliffs that rise thousands of feet from the sea. Milford Sound is also massive: it measures 10 miles long and 1½ miles wide at its broadest point. Admire this
spectacle of nature on a 2½-hour nature cruise past cascading waterfalls, rainforest, sheer rock walls, and such landmarks as 5,560-foot Mitre Peak, which dominates the pristine waterway.

Enjoy lunch on board, later take the opportunity to return to Queenstown on an optional scenic flight (weather permitting and at additional cost). Those not wishing to take the scenic flight will return to Queenstown by motorcoach early this evening. Dinner tonight is on your own in Queenstown.

Please note that while this will be a long day - Milford Sound is a four-hour coach ride each way from Queenstown - the beauty of the scenery both along the way and at Milford Sound itself make it well worth the journey.

Overnight: Hotel St. Moritz Queenstown / (B, L)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2
QUEENSTOWN

This morning is free to enjoy Queenstown as you wish. From bungy-jumping, river rafting, and kayaking to wineries, art galleries, and arts trails, activities abound. Your tour director will be happy to help you plan your time; lunch is on your own. Late this afternoon take a boat across Lake Wakatipu to Walter Peak High Country Farm for a barbecue dinner and to watch the well-trained sheep dogs and see a sheep-shearing demonstration

Overnight: Hotel St. Moritz Queenstown / (B, D)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3
QUEENSTOWN/ROTORUA

Depart this morning for the flight to Rotorua, spiritual home of New Zealand’s native Maori people and also home to dramatic geysers, bubbling mud pools, and thermal hot springs. You’ll reach Rotorua in time for lunch on your own then embark on a tour featuring the government gardens and the acclaimed Rotorua Museum of Art & History. Located in the historic Bath House, the museum showcases the region’s cultural and geological heritage. Dinner tonight is on your own; the hotel is centrally located and dining options abound.

Overnight: Regent of Rotorua / (B)

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4
ROTORUA

This morning and early afternoon are free for independent exploration. You’ll find a host of activities available from bathing in the thermal hot springs to river rafting. Late this afternoon, visit the Te Puia Thermal Reserve and Maori Cultural Center for a traditional hangi dinner and performance. A time-honored Maori cooking technique, hangi involves covering food in an earthen pit filled with hot rocks, allowing it to steam and cook in its own juices.

Overnight: Regent of Rotorua / (B, D)

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5
ROTORUA/AUCKLAND

On your way to Auckland this morning, stop at Ruakuri Caves and enjoy a guided subterranean experience of elaborate limestone formations, hidden waterfalls, underground rivers, glowworms, and sacred Maori sites. The tour begins with a spiral descent from ground level via an incredible drum entrance and walkway then continues through the underground grotto for one mile. Then, resume the journey to Auckland, arriving mid-afternoon in the “City of Sails.” Boasting 62 miles of coastline and a beautiful natural setting on an isthmus between the Tasman Sea and the Pacific, Auckland is New Zealand’s largest city. Upon arrival, late this afternoon, the remainder of the day at leisure. Dinner tonight is on our own in this multicultural city known especially for its world class Pacific Rim cuisine and wines.

Overnight: Pullman Auckland / (B)

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6
AUCKLAND

Our half-day panoramic tour of this city set atop 48 volcanic hills features Auckland Harbour and the America’s Cup Village. Built in 1959, the harbor’s iconic bridge spans three quarters of a mile and stands 15 stories above the water. "Clip-on" lanes doubled the bridge's
capacity in 1969 and currently an average of 166,000 commuters cross it (or bungy jump from it) daily. Visit the War Memorial Museum, established in 1852 as New Zealand’s first museum, with its prized Maori and Pacific Islander collections. Tonight, celebrate your journey at a farewell dinner.

Overnight: *Pullman Auckland / (B, D)*

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7**  
**DEPART FOR U.S.**

Early this morning, transfer to the Auckland airport for the flight to Los Angeles (via Sydney or Brisbane), and connect with your return flights home.

*(B)*

**“AUCKLAND – ON YOUR OWN”**  
**OPTIONAL POST-TOUR EXTENSION**

**SATURDAY & SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7 & 8**  
**AUCKLAND**

No need to transfer anywhere: you’re right at home for the next two nights at the Pullman Auckland, your base for exploring Auckland to your heart’s delight. Options abound in this vibrant city with a Polynesian influence and plentiful outdoor activities. You may wish to visit the Auckland Museum, which preserves the cultural and social history of Auckland; the Naval Museum housing medals, ships, and other historical naval artifacts; or the Maritime Museum with numerous exhibits devoted to New Zealand boating and yachting.

Overnight: *Pullman Auckland / (B)*

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9**  
**RETURN TO U.S.**

Early this morning, transfer to the Auckland airport for the flight to Los Angeles (via Sydney or Brisbane), and connect with your return flights home.

*(B)*