

Australia's Iconic Kimberley

From **09/07/2023**
to **19/07/2023**

Ship: **LE SOLEAL**

From **Darwin**
to **Broome**



Set sail for the **wild and grandiose landscapes of Kimberley**, following this exceptional **PONANT** itinerary.

From Darwin to Broome, embark for an **11-day expedition cruise**.

In one of the most picturesque parts of the region, the **Hunter River**, you will see wild mangrove forests where **saltwater crocodiles** live along with many species of birds.

The highpoint of this cruise will undoubtedly be the discovery of the **King George River and the majestic Twin Falls**, the highest falls in Western Australia.

You will also visit Collier Bay, where you will be able to admire the Montgomery Reef, home to vast expanses of lagoons and immense coral reefs.

Your ship will take you along one of the most spectacular coasts in the entire region.

With their falls, abrupt gorges, savannah, calm waters and desolate mountain chains, the wild lands of Kimberley are the promise of **an exceptional adventure**.

This itinerary is given as an indication only. Based on tide times and weather conditions, the Captain and the Expedition Leader may need to switch the order of certain ports of call around to ensure guests have the best possible experience.



The information in this document is valid as of 25/01/2022

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YOUR STOPOVERS :

DARWIN

Embarkation 09/07/2023 from 15:00 to 16:00

Departure 09/07/2023 at 17:00

Darwin is located in Australia's Northern Territory which is also known as the "Top End". It is the **capital city** and the most populated town of the Northern Territory. Darwin is a beautiful tropical city, a **melting pot of people and cultures**, over 50 different cultures live and work side by side that prides itself in its unique and friendly laid-back lifestyle. Come discover the town's still recent history through its emblematic buildings such as the new **Parliament House** opened in 1994, a magnificent example of tropical architecture or **Admiralty House** declared heritage place, a tropical-style home elevated on stilts that has survived two cyclones and numerous air raids.

PULAU MEATIMARANG (TECHNICAL STOP)

Arrival 10/07/2023

Departure 10/07/2023

Enjoy a leisurely day at sea to take advantage of the luxurious onboard services or enjoy a cool drink by the pool. Enjoy time to reflect on your experiences or share photographs with fellow guests. Your expedition team will be offering an enrichment programme focusing on Australia, its history and flora and fauna. Perhaps take the opportunity to be out on deck sunbathing or sampling culinary specialties prepared by our Chef and Galley Team.

The Indonesian officials will perform the necessary clearance formalities. Our stopover at Pulau Meatimiarang is for technical clearance purposes only. There is no opportunity for guests to go ashore.

WYNDHAM

Arrival 11/07/2023

Departure 11/07/2023

Wyndham is the northernmost town in Western Australia and in many ways is the gateway to the **Kimberley**. It is surrounded by some of the most spectacular landforms, rivers and wetlands in the Kimberley.

KING GEORGE RIVER

Arrival 12/07/2023

Departure 12/07/2023

The journey up the **King George River** is nothing short of breathtaking. The 80-metre-high sides of the gorge display varying degrees of weathering of the ancient Warton sandstone. The colours and textures of the gorge change with the light as you travel further up the river creating a continual changing scenery that is simply stunning. The journey culminates at the **King George twin falls**; the highest single-drop falls in the whole of the Kimberley (80 m or 260 ft).

Fed by wet season run-off the level of water cascading over the falls varies from year to year. Your Expedition Team will escort you in either the Zodiacs® or ships tenders to the foot of the twin falls, and explain all about the stunning geological formations of the canyon.

VANSITTART BAY

Arrival 13/07/2023

Departure 13/07/2023

Jar Island contains ancient rock art galleries depicting the Gwion Gwion style unique to the Kimberley region. Mainly neglected by, or unknown to, the early European researchers of Aboriginal culture in the Kimberley in favour of the dominant and more dramatic Wandjina art, Gwion Gwion art has in recent years gained world prominence. It is generally thought that this art may extend back to over 30,000 years before our time and represents the first wave of seagoing colonisers of the Australian continent. As it is, these are **the oldest detailed depiction of human figures in the world**. Join your Expedition Team ashore for a short walk, past some fascinating rock formations, to the site of the Gwion Gwion art galleries.

SWIFT BAY

Arrival 14/07/2023

Departure 14/07/2023

The **Bonaparte Archipelago**, is a stunningly rugged maze of islands stretching almost 150 km along Western Australia's remote Kimberley coast. Its colour and scale conspire to take ones' breath away. Its distant location has meant it has remained an unspoilt and remarkably pristine location to explore and experience. Phillip Parker King named "**Swift's bay**" after Jonathon Swift (1667-1745) the author of Gulliver's travels. The 'T' shaped bay is composed of heavily fractured sandstone providing an abundance of rock shelters. On the walls of these shelters are examples of both Wandjina and Gwion Gwion style rock art. Join your expedition team ashore for a guided walk to a number of rock art galleries depicting these unique rock art styles.

HUNTER RIVER

Arrival 15/07/2023

Departure 15/07/2023

Arguably one of the most scenic parts of the Kimberley coast, Prince Frederick Harbour and the **Hunter River** are lined with ancient rainforest pockets, pristine **mangroves** and mosaic sandstone cliffs. They are considered to be some of the most pristine mangrove forests in the world, containing up to 18 different species, supporting a rich and diverse fauna. The **sandstone escarpment** at the river mouth, known as "Kampamantiya" **rises over 200 metres high** before giving way to extensive mud banks and mangrove forests home to numerous bird species and the iconic **saltwater crocodile**. Our expert Expedition Team will share their knowledge with you as you explore this pristine mangrove environment by Zodiac® keeping a constant lookout for wildlife. You will also have the opportunity to reach the Mitchell Falls by helicopter from Naturalist Island beach.

COLLIER BAY

Arrival 16/07/2023

Departure 17/07/2023

Lying to the east of the Buccaneer archipelago, the ancient landscapes of **Collier Bay** have been shaped by the **massive tidal movements** the region is renowned for, creating a photographer's paradise. With a tidal range exceeding 14 metres, recorded near Yule entrance at the southern end of the bay, they are among the largest in the world. This massive daily movement of water creates **unique phenomena that occur nowhere else in the world**. Nestled in the centre of the Bay is **Montgomery Reef**, the world's largest inshore reef system. As the tide falls a raging torrent of water cascades off the top of the reef, creating **turbulent 'rivers' and mini waterfalls**. At the Southern end of the Bay, **Talbot Bay** is home to the world's only '**Horizontal Falls**' described by Sir David Attenborough as "One of the greatest wonders of the natural world." Hidden in the many caves and grottos of this ancient landscape are a multitude of ancient **Rock Art galleries**. Here you can find spectacular examples of the Wandjina and **Gwion Gwion** styles.

As we are at the mercy of weather and tide conditions in this region, the activities mentioned above are only possible experiences and can't be guaranteed.

LACEPEDE ISLANDS

Arrival 18/07/2023

Departure 18/07/2023

The **Lacepede Islands** are Western Australia's most important breeding habitat for **Green Turtles** (*Chelonia mydas*), and have been named by BirdLife International as an **Important Bird Area (IBA)**. The breeding colony of Brown Boobies is possibly the largest in the world. Up to 20,000 Roseate Terns have also been recorded here. Other birds breeding on the islands include Masked Boobies, Australian Pelicans, Lesser Frigatebirds, Eastern Reef Egrets, Silver Gulls, Crested, Bridled and Lesser Crested Terns, Common Noddies, Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers. Join your expedition team for a guided Zodiac[®] tour to view the prolific wildlife. Due to the sensitive nature of the environment, landings are prohibited on the Lacepede Islands.

BROOME

Arrival 19/07/2023 early morning

Disembarkation 19/07/2023 at 07:00

Located in the northwest of the Kimberley region and in the far north of Western Australia, the town of **Broome** is reputed for its history and its glorious **pearling era**. The fascinating Chinatown district, which is the historic city centre, and the famous Japanese Cemetery, dates back to 1896, and has a past marked by the immigration of numerous Chinese and Japanese workers, attracted by the prosperous pearl industry at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. Broome is also famous for the "**Staircase to the Moon**", an optical illusion created by the Moon reflecting on the sand banks at low tide, like a staircase climbing up towards the sky, a unique spectacle provided by nature...