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Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea

FROM

**\$9,245pp**

Package #422

This PONANT 12-day Expedition cruise aboard Le Soléal will take you to discover the wonders of Papua New Guinea. Departing from Honiara, embark for an extraordinary adventure to discover very rich local cultures and exceptional underwater life.

Le Soléal will set sail for Papua New Guinea, a fascinating land that is home to no fewer than 700 ethnic groups within a highly diverse yet mainly unexplored, ecosystem. You will visit the Autonomous region of Bougainville, a unique group of islands that are ecologically and geographically part of the Solomon Islands archipelago but not politically part of the nation of Solomon Islands.

Located on the island of New Britain, the port town of Rabaul is famous for its spectacular volcanic setting. From there, you will set off to observe Mount Tavurvur, the region's most active volcano.

Your call at Tufi, will undoubtedly be one of the highlights of your voyage. You will fall under the charm of this picturesque region, dubbed the 'Scandinavia of the Tropics' with its deep fiords through volcanic activity. In this unique setting the local Papuan tribes will share their customs, beliefs and artwork with you.

After a last call in Samarai Island, your trip aboard Le Soléal will end in Cairns.

## Package Inclusions

- Economy class airfare from Brisbane to Honiara (selected by PONANT)
- Transfer from airport to pier for embarkation
- 11 night luxury cruise from Honiara to Cairns with PONANT
- All meals onboard the cruise
- Wide selection of drinks (mineral water, soft drinks, wine, beer, Henri Abelé BRUT champagne, spirits, coffee, tea) is served on request and at any time of the day. Certain premium alcoholic beverages on the menu are not included in the Open Bar.
- Zodiac expeditions with experienced expedition guides
- Pre-paid port taxes

### **PLUS! Ultimate Cruising Guests also receive:**

- Chauffeur driven luxury car transfers from your home to your nearest airport (within 35km)

## Cruise Highlights

### **Honiara, Guadalcanal Island**

Honiara is the capital city of The Solomon Islands, administered as a provincial town on the north western coast of Guadalcanal Island. Honiara comes from the local Ghari Language "naho-ni-ara" meaning 'facing the ara', the place where the southeast winds meet the land. During your stop, discover this city, its beautiful landscape, and the significant role it played in World War II. Particularly The Battle of Henderson Field, the last of the three major land offensives conducted by the Japanese in 1942. Alternatively, you can discover a traditional village, its culture and way of life.

### **Bougainville**

The Autonomous Region of Bougainville, formerly known as the North Solomons Province, has been known for its picture-perfect beaches and bays since French explorer Louis-Antoine de Bougainville first sighted the island and gave it its name in 1768. The region played a significant role in the Pacific theatre of war during WWII. With 685 km of coastline and 240,000ha of coral reefs teeming with life there are many destinations awaiting discovery.

### **Rabaul, Bismarck Archipelago**

Set at the eastern end of the island of New Britain, the tropical port town of Rabaul has always been famous for its spectacular setting. Nestled beside Simpson Harbour, the township is surrounded by six volcanoes, one of which, Mt Tavurvur, is still active today. The most recent major volcanic eruption was in September 1994 when Tavurvur and Vulcan covered much of Rabaul and surrounding villages with volcanic ash. This eruption saw the growth of the nearby coastal town of Kokopo which has now become the administrative and tourism centre for Rabaul. Join your expedition team for a tour by local transport to see Mt Tavurvur, the Volcano Observatory and various significant sites from World War II.

### **Madang**

Madang Township was once known as the "prettiest town in the South Pacific". Its peninsula setting is a show-place of parks, waterways, luxuriant shade trees and sparkling tropical islands. The diverse geographical nature of Madang province is reflected in

the 170 different languages that are spoken. This diversity is showcased in the Madang festival with its colourful displays of “sing sings” performed by numerous cultural groups from across the Madang Province. Today, you will also be treated to a number of cultural performances showcasing the local customs, costume and dance of the coastal, midland and highland communities.

### **Tami Islands**

The Tami Islands (Kalal, Wanam & Idjan) are a small group of uplifted coral atolls, with two main villages on the two larger islands and many smaller reefs and cays. In the centre is a beautiful, crystal clear blue lagoon with abundant marine life and stunning coral formations. The islands, located in Morobe Province not far from the town of Finschhafen are seldom-visited. Tami Islanders are renowned artisans and are most famous for their intricately decorated bowls.

### **Tufi**

Often described as the “Scandinavia of the tropics”. The spectacular Tufi “fiords” plunge over 90 metres deep and rise over 150 metres vertically above the water making for a spectacular backdrop. The traditional way of life plays an important role amongst the villagers with many living in isolated areas along the coast of Cape Nelson and on the slopes of Mount Trafalgar. The area is known for its production of tapa cloth, made from the bark of the paper mulberry tree and skilfully decorated. Guests will travel into the ancient mangrove forests of the Fiords to witness one of the most colourful traditional performances in all of Papua New Guinea. There is also the opportunity to swim and snorkel in the clear waters of Kamo Beach.

### **Samarai Island**

The Samarai islands are located in the China Strait off the south-eastern tip of New Guinea. In its colonial heyday it was said to be one of the most beautiful places in the Pacific. The island was declared a National Historical Heritage Island by the government of Papua New Guinea in 2006. Just 3km west of Samarai, Kwato Island was once an educational centre and home to a thriving boat building industry. Following the old tree-lined road to the top of the island reveals a stonewalled church that was built in 1937 and remains a testimony to the missionaries of a bygone era. Join your expedition team for a guided walk on Samarai and Kwato Islands. You also will enjoy swimming and snorkelling on nearby Deka Deka island. )

## **Departure Dates & Pricing**

Cruise departs Honiara 21 October 2022.

Pricing starts at NZ\$9,759 per person share twin. All prices are in New Zealand Dollars and are subject to availability and to change at any time. Please ask us for best available pricing at time of booking.

Please also ask us about PONANT's Book with Serenity Offer!

### **Cruise Category**

- Luxury Expedition
- Modern

### **Onboard Features**

- 24 Hr Room Service
- All meals
- Boutique &/or Salon
- Drinks All Day
- On-Board Lecturer
- Pool &/or Spa
- Shore Excursions
- Speciality Restaurants

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### **trip itinerary**

Day 1  
Brisbane  
Overnight hotel

Day 2  
Honiara, Guadalcanal Island  
Fly Brisbane to Honiara

Day 3

At Sea

Day 4-5

Bougainville

Day 6

Rabaul, Bismark Archipelago

Day 7

At Sea

Day 8

Madang, Papua New Guinea

Day 9  
Tami Islands  
Day 10  
Tufi  
Dobu Island  
Day 11  
Samarai Island  
Day 12  
At Sea  
Day 13  
Arrive Cairns Disembark Le Laperouse  
□ The Vessel  
□

## Technical Details

- Tonnage 10944
- Built Date 2013
- Crew 140
- Capacity 264
- Length 142M

## Cruise Category

- Boutique Style
- Luxurious

### Le Soleal

The contemporary décor, fluid lines and modern colour scheme combine natural wood with shades of grey and white. A refined ambiance enhanced by quality workmanship is synonymous with French elegance and a chic seaside spirit.

### Vessel Features

- **24 Hr Room Service**
- **All meals**
- **Medical Services**
- **Pool &/or Spa**

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