

# OCEANIC DISCOVERER NEW ZEALAND EXPEDITION CRUISE

## HELPFUL HINTS

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### 1. PRACTICAL VOYAGE INFORMATION

Oceanic Discoverer is a luxury expedition cruise vessel designed by Coral Princess Cruises to provide maximum stability and guest comfort. Launched in Cairns in January 2005, Oceanic Discoverer carries a maximum of 72 guests and offers the relaxed atmosphere of a private yacht.

The following information has been prepared to answer your questions about life aboard ship and to help you enjoy your cruise.

#### Visas

A valid passport is required for all international passengers travelling to New Zealand to join our cruises. A Visa is not required for tourist stays up to 3 months for Australian Passport holders. New Zealand residents do not require a passport or visa for this itinerary. If you are not an Australian or New Zealand resident please check with your travel agent for visa requirements.

#### Luggage

Luggage is restricted only as per airline regulations. However, we do recommend that you keep your luggage to a minimum, as storage space aboard the ship is limited. Please ensure that your luggage is clearly labelled with your name. Standard size suitcases and soft bags can be stored under the beds.

When flying from your home to join your New Zealand cruise, please ensure the airline tags your luggage through to the correct destination and that you have all luggage receipts with your airline ticket. To help prevent misrouting, remove all previous airline baggage tags on your luggage before check-in.

If your luggage is lost en route, there will be no opportunity during this itinerary for it to be forwarded to you. Therefore for international passengers, we strongly recommend you check your luggage only as far as your airport of international arrival, pick up your luggage, and recheck it to your final destination. This will reduce the possibility of losing your luggage, and may require a slightly longer connection time.

#### Security

Under the requirements of the international safety code baggage and guests will need to be scanned and screened prior to boarding.

#### Bars

There are two fully stocked bars on board with an excellent selection of wines, beers and spirits. Bar hours are 9:00am to 12:00 midnight.

*As our vessel is a licensed premise, any alcohol you bring on board must be declared to the purser and may be held in bond until you disembark.*

#### Air Conditioning

The ship is air conditioned throughout.

#### Bridge

There is an "open bridge" policy on board. All passengers are welcome on the bridge at any time unless otherwise advised by one of the officers.

#### Chits/Shipboard Account

Upon embarkation, a shipboard account is automatically opened for your convenience. The

"chit" system is used. A "chit" will be signed and the amount debited to your shipboard account for bar, shop and other purchases. All charges are in Australian dollars and an account will be presented for settlement at the end of the voyage. Australian dollar Travellers Cheques, American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard, and VISA are accepted in payment of your account. You can request a "running total" at any time during the cruise

### **Climate and Clothing**

Casual attire is appropriate for the entire program. See Packing Hints for Specific suggestions.

The average daytime temperature during this cruise ranges between 16 Degrees Celsius (61 Degrees Fahrenheit) to 22 Degrees Celsius (71 Degrees Fahrenheit). Note that the wind chill factor will reduce these temperatures when exposed.

Some basic knowledge about the climate and range of activities planned for this trip will help you decide what to bring along. We would recommend that you carry a warm wind protection jacket in the event of cooler southerly breezes and/or a warm pullover and long pants. Because wet landings are common, pants you can roll-up, shorts, or a cotton skirt or dress are ideal at times. A bathing suit is good for beach visits and for swimming. As we regularly have "wet landings" where you may be required to walk on sharp rocks and stony beaches it is important you pack a pair of closed protective footwear such as "river walkers" or "aqua soles" which you are prepared to get wet each day. You should also bring a pair of walking shoes.

Come prepared for the sun. A t-shirt to slip over a swimsuit while swimming is a good idea. We recommend sunglasses, a wide-brimmed hat, and a sufficient supply of sunblock for protection against the sun and glare. Also include insect repellent and a canteen to carry water. Prepare yourself for possible rain showers by packing a lightweight rain jacket. Sun block and insect repellent are available on board and on the "Xplorer" during excursions.

You should also pack a pair of long lightweight close-weave pants, such as King Gee, for walking.

When making landings, place any gear to be brought ashore inside a waterproof backpack. Also commonly used are inflatable, waterproof yellow sport pouches available in camera stores. Silica gel is recommended for protecting equipment against

high humidity, and ziplock plastic bags are useful for protecting your camera gear. Binoculars are handy for close-up views of the wildlife.

The atmosphere on board Oceanic Discoverer is casual and relaxed.

### **Communications**

Oceanic Discoverer is equipped with a satellite communication system. Facilities are available for incoming/outgoing worldwide telephone and fax services. An Internet booth is also available. Please contact the Purser's Office for use. Expect all communications made through the satellite to be expensive. Due to the remote location, satellite communication can be difficult at times.

The following are Oceanic Discoverer telephone and fax numbers.

CDMA            0427 404 099  
Telephone      # 0011 8816 4141 0414  
Facsimile       # 0011 8727 6414 5990

When calling the ship, it may be necessary to try several times (and possibly at different times of the day) before the connection is made.

### **Cruise Staff**

The cruise staff are available throughout the day. Questions regarding daily activities should be directed to the Expedition Leader.

### **Currency**

The standard currency used aboard Oceanic Discoverer is Australian dollars. You will require New Zealand dollars for purchases whilst ashore. We suggest that you carry small denominations when ashore.

### **Daily Program**

A daily program, the 'New Zealand News' listing the day's activities on board and ashore will be published.

### **Dietary Needs**

Special dietary foods can be provided, but we must be notified in writing of specific requirements at least three weeks prior to sailing.

### **Dress**

The atmosphere on board is casual and there are no dress rules. There will be a Captain's Welcome and Farewell Cocktail Party. These, although slightly more dressy, are still informal.

## **Electricity**

Voltage on board Oceanic Discoverer is 220/250 Hz, 50 cycles A/C (standard Australian 3 pin plug). A slanted 2-pin adapter plug will work while on board, however with the 3rd pin missing, the item will not be grounded. For our international passengers a limited number of adapters are available on board but we recommend you bring your own for use on board and in the hotels before and after the voyage. Some hot rollers and video camera battery packs require heavy-duty converters rather than the normal travel type. Please check your equipment to be sure you bring what is necessary for your personal needs. Cabins and bathrooms on board the Oceanic Discoverer are equipped with both 110V and 220/240V outlets for electric shavers only.

## **Elevator**

There is no elevator or passenger lift aboard Oceanic Discoverer.

## **Excursion Boat**

In addition to our three Zodiacs, we will have on board a specially designed aluminium excursion vessel, the "Xplorer". This vessel has high horsepower engines and will accommodate all passengers at one time. The "Xplorer" will be used for landings and for extensive exploration of rivers, tributaries and islands. For your added convenience and comfort, the "Xplorer" is equipped with an awning and toilet.

## **Zodiacs**

We carry onboard three inflatable landing craft (Zodiacs). Designed for expedition work, these large and heavy-duty inflatables are extremely safe. Separate air compartments retain a large reserve of buoyancy even if the boats are damaged. The flat bottom design permits these crafts to land directly onto the beaches. Expect nonetheless to wade through shallow water to reach the shore.

## **Gift Shop**

A small gift shop offering a limited selection of toiletries and sundries is located in the Purser's Office on the Main Deck. However, we suggest you bring your own supply of personal toiletries. Oceanic Discoverer souvenirs including polo shirts, hats and caps, towels and postcards are also available.

## **Gratuities**

The subject of the traditional shipboard gratuities commonly raises questions. While they are a customary practice aboard ships, gratuities are a personal decision and the amount extended should be based on the quality and manner of the service you receive. Gratuities should be offered in cash or travellers cheques. Credit cards and personal cheques should not be used for this purpose. Any gratuity is to be made to the Purser for equal distribution to all crew.

## **Hairdryer**

Hairdryers are available in all cabins.

## **Laundry**

There is a limited laundry service on board Oceanic Discoverer. Drip-dry, wash and wear clothing is recommended.

## **Lecture Program/Films**

A series of lectures will be presented during the trip. These presentations are an integral part of the trip and are designed to lend greater depth and understanding to your experience.

The lecture series, films and slide-shows will be presented in the Cocktail Lounge on the Bridge Deck. In addition the Expedition Leader will conduct a "recap" of the day's activities, an overview of the next day's program and other interesting topics each evening prior to dinner.

## **Library**

There is a comprehensive resource library on board with an excellent supply of books including natural history books of the area, and some novels and paperbacks.

## **Lounges**

Oceanic Discoverer has a cocktail bar/lounge located on the Bridge Deck. In addition the aft areas of the Main, Promenade and Bridge Decks are shaded areas with comfortable seating.

## **Mail**

There will be opportunities for mail to be posted during the cruise.

## **Meals**

All meals during the cruise are included. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are usually served in the Dining Room located on the Main Deck. Dinner alternates between buffet and table d'hote style. Coffee and

tea is available 24 hours. Meal times may vary according to the day's activities. Standard hours are breakfast from 7:00 - 8:30am, lunch at 12:30pm and dinner at 7:30pm. Meal times will be advised in the 'New Zealand News'.

### **Medical Attention**

The crew are trained in "Remote Area First Aid". There is no physician on board. Severe medical problems will require evacuation at passenger's expense. Passengers should bring a sufficient supply of needed prescription medicines, as they will not be available on board. *Travel insurance is highly recommended for all international and remote cruise itineraries and must include medical, cancellation and remote area evacuation cover. Guests declining travel insurance will be required to sign an insurance waiver agreement form.*

Medical conditions should be declared on booking. Contact details of personal physicians and ongoing medical treatment details should be given to the Purser on boarding.

If you are susceptible to motion discomfort (seasickness), you may want to bring stronger preventatives than over-the-counter medications. We recommend that you consult with your personal physician for a suitable medication. In addition to the ship's Medical Locker as prescribed under the Navigation Act, the Captain is in contact with the Royal Flying Doctor Service and we have on board their recommended remote area medical kit.

### **Potable Water**

Drinking water is available in your cabin. Sufficient supplies of bottled water are available on board ship for use during your shore excursions and while on board.

### **Safety Rules on Board Ship**

While the ship is your temporary home, it is also a mobile one, and it is essential that you take certain safety precautions. Here are some basic rules:

- Always turn lights on before moving about in a dark cabin.
- Walk, never run, aboard ship, and be extra careful when walking on wet or damp decks.
- Wear shoes with slip resistant soles when walking on deck and be especially careful using stairways.

In rough weather note especially:

- Do not stroll about the ship unnecessarily.
- Hold on to handrails on stairways. Be very careful in the bathroom.
- Brace yourself by sitting in a straight-back chair. If the chair should move while you are at your meal, hold on to the table and do not attempt to save utensils or equipment.
- Doors should be latched open or kept closed during heavy seas. Use the handles and never hold a door by its frame as the ship's movement may cause the door to close on your hand.
- If there is unsecured luggage in your cabin, call your Cruise Attendant.
- Secure items in your bathroom and on your bureau, or place in drawers.

### **Smoking/Non Smoking**

Smoking is permitted on the outer decks only. There is a "no smoking" policy throughout the interior of the ship. There is a total smoking ban when travelling on the "Xplorer", glass bottom boat and zodiacs and while refuelling.

### **Statistics: Oceanic Discoverer**

Built: Cairns, Australia - launched 2005  
Construction: Steel  
Registry: Australian  
Length: 63 metres (207 Feet)  
Breadth: 13 metres (42.6 Feet)  
Draft: 3 metres (9.8 Feet)  
Speed: 14 Knots

### **Sun Deck**

Oceanic Discoverer has a large Sun Deck with comfortable sun lounges and spa pool.

### **Valuables**

Please try and leave any non-essential valuables at home. Coral Princess Cruises is not to be held responsible for the loss or theft of any jewellery, cash, etc. A safe is available at Reception.

### **Viewing Areas**

The Sun Deck, Fore Decks and Aft Decks are all ideal for watching the scenery and wildlife. In addition the Dining Room and Cocktail Bar with their full-length windows are also ideal viewing areas. The ship has an "open bridge" policy, and you are welcome to visit this area except during manoeuvres.

## **Wines and Spirits**

The ship carries an excellent selection of Australian & New Zealand wines to accompany your meals. Wines and spirits will be automatically billed to your shipboard account. Due to licensing laws duty free alcohol is not to be consumed on the ship.

## **2. GENERAL TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR BOTH AUSTRALIAN AND INTERNATIONAL PASSENGERS**

### **Luggage Allowance: Flights**

In addition to one carry-on bag, luggage restrictions apply specific to the airline, flight origin and fare type. Please check with your airline on its policy for luggage allowance. Limits range from 1 - 2 pieces per person not exceeding 20-32 kilograms (44-70lbs) per piece. While storage space is limited on the Oceanic Discoverer there is luggage storage under all beds.

Note: Most airlines strictly enforce their luggage regulations. Excess luggage charges can be substantial.

### **Clothing: Extended Flights**

For maximum comfort on extended flights, wear relaxed, loose-fitting clothes suited to long stretches of sitting. Drink generous amounts of non-alcoholic liquids during the flight to avoid dehydration caused by the dry cabin air. For those of you who can sleep en route, consider an inflatable neck-pillow, ear plugs and an eye-mask.

### **Currency**

All purchases on board must be made in Australian dollars (AUD).

There are Australian coins for 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, \$1 and \$2, and notes for \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100.

Credit cards are accepted at most hotels and restaurants and on board Oceanic Discoverer. Oceanic Discoverer will only accept Australian Travellers Cheques.

Purchase made on shore excursions will be in New Zealand dollars (NZD)

There are New Zealand coins for 10c, 20c, 50c, \$1 and \$2 and notes for \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100.

## **Health Requirements**

It is imperative that you consult your medical advisor prior to your journey. To fully enjoy this program, all participants should be in good general health, able to walk reasonable distances over sometimes uneven terrain, and stand during excursions. Should you have any physical limitations please notify us in advance of your departure. The ship does not have a physician on board.

It is also advisable to carry with you an up-to-date record of your allergies or chronic medical problems so that emergency treatment, if necessary, can be carried out without endangering your health. Your physician can prepare a summary record for you. You should also carry with you the telephone number for your physician's 24-hour answering service.

## **Hotels**

### **Hotel Check-In**

Since check-in in most hotels in New Zealand is early afternoon, it is not always possible to guarantee room occupancy immediately upon arrival in the morning. Your patience and understanding will be appreciated.

### **Hotel Check-Out**

At the conclusion of your stay, please check-out with the hotel's cashier in the usual manner, settling any incidental charges you incurred, and removing your valuables from the safe. Always allow sufficient time to accomplish this. In the case of an early morning departure, you may prefer to take care of these details the previous evening.

## **Itinerary Variations**

Crew and staff of Coral Princess Cruises will strive to make your trip as enjoyable and comfortable as possible. As with all travel to remote areas, changes may be necessary and, when they occur, can enhance an expedition. Your leaders are experts in expedition travel and because of their familiarity with the area, can be trusted to make the best alternate arrangements.

## **Money Matters**

Once aboard ship the currency used is Australian Dollars. Bankcard, VISA, MasterCard, Diners Club and American Express are the credit cards accepted aboard ship for settlement of shipboard accounts.

## Time

New Zealand time is GMT + 12 hours. Daylight Savings is in place between the first Sunday in October and the third Sunday in March. During Daylight Savings time is GMT + 13 hours.

**Start:** First Sunday in October

**End:** Third Sunday in March

## Tipping Guidelines

On shore in New Zealand you do not tip for normal service that includes restaurants and bars. You may tip for excellent service although this is not expected.

## Transfers

A complimentary coach transfer is offered from Queenstown to Milford Sound on the departure days of cruises that start in Milford Sound. A complimentary coach transfer is also offered from Milford Sound to Queenstown for the cruises that depart in Auckland and end in Milford Sound.

## Shore Excursions

In addition to the shore excursions that are included in the cruise itinerary, there are a number of activities that are offered at an additional cost. These activities include a choice of the following:

**Dunedin:** Stately Home Tour, Larnach Castle Guided Tour, Albatross Centre and Nature's Wonders Safari

**Napier:** Cape Kidnappers Overland Gannet Safari, City Highlights, Wine and Country Tour

**Akaroa:** French Farm Wine Tour, Akaroa Seal Colony Safari, Swimming with the Dolphins

**Gisborne:** Wine and Garden Tour

**Stewart Island:** Village and Bay Coach Tour

*Note: This selection of optional shore excursions is offered as a sample and may change at the discretion of Coral Princess Cruises.*

## 3. PACKING HINTS

We recommend that you pack simply and lightly. Clothing that you can layer will prepare you for all kinds of weather. More specific information regarding clothing and weather considerations is included in section 1 of this document. In packing your carry-on bag for the flight, we suggest you pack essential toiletries, medicines, and a change of clothing in the event you reach your destination without some or all of your luggage.

New Zealand weather conditions can change throughout the day and temperatures are affected by the southerly winds. Short sleeved shirts and light trousers are recommended together with a jacket or pullover that offers protection from wind and rain showers.

The following clothing list is designed to assist you in preparing for your expedition:

- slacks
- shorts, loose & comfortable
- shirt/blouse, short & long sleeved
- cotton shirt, long-sleeved for beach cover-up
- rain jacket/wind jacket
- sweater, sweatshirt, jacket, or light wrap
- socks, underwear, etc.
- pyjamas
- sunhat with brim
- bathing suit
- walking shoes, rubber soled
- rubber sandals called "river walkers" or "aqua soles"-thick-soled mesh socks for wet landings/beach
- sandals or thongs for on board use

For slightly more dressy occasions (Captain's Welcome / Farewell Cocktail Party):

- pants or skirt
- 1 dress shirt/blouse
- 1 good pair of shoes

Be sure to pack a kit with an ample supply of basic health and first aid needs including:

- any prescription drugs and vitamins you use
- antacids, decongestants, throat lozenges, and other medications that you use for common ailments
- Pepto Bismol or similar medications
- aspirin or other analgesic
- bandaids, antiseptic, and tropical antibiotic
- motion sickness preventatives
- insect repellent (tropical strength) and insect-bite relief products
- sunscreen and sunburn relief products, chapstick and protective lotions for lips and face
- personal toiletries or hygiene products

The following items may come in handy; experienced travellers pack them routinely:

- binoculars (essential for bird watching)
- folding umbrella

- small flashlight
- travel alarm clock
- backpack (preferably waterproof) suitable for carrying your photographic equipment and other items for shore excursions
- extra prescription glasses or contact lenses
- sunglasses
- plastic bags of various sizes, including "zip lock" type
- camera, camera bag, and all the photographic equipment you will need (see "Photography")
- plenty of film and batteries
- disposable underwater camera (can be purchased on board)
- pocket-sized notebook
- plastic water bottle or canteen
- reading and writing materials
- toiletries

You may also include, tissue packs (tissues are supplied in cabins), pre-moistened towelettes, a deck of cards, rubber bands, safety pins and washcloths.

If you wear prescription glasses, take an extra pair and a prescription for the lenses. Contact lens wearers should also bring glasses since wind and salt can irritate the eyes. It is also useful to carry a copy of your eyeglass prescription in the event of a loss; however, replacement may prove impossible because of the destinations and pace of the itinerary. You should bring an adequate supply of any prescription drugs you use. Packing them in your carry-on luggage is always recommended.

Important: Keep all travel documents such as passport, airline ticket, and travel vouchers with you during your flights.

#### 4. PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS

Be prepared for excellent photographic opportunities. On excursions with fellow participants, remember basic etiquette of photography. Allow others to get a clear shot before walking into their view; do not crowd around an object but instead form a semicircle to leave an unspoiled background.

##### **Batteries**

Replace all batteries in video cameras, automatic still cameras and digital cameras that have

electronically operated lens openings. For automatic cameras that use batteries as a power source, do not forget to take a good supply of extra batteries.

##### **Camera**

If possible, bring two cameras (or camera bodies) of the same make in case one malfunctions.

Most of today's 35mm SLR (SLR = single lens reflex, a.k.a.: interchangeable lenses) cameras have automatic settings making them as easy to use as the 35mm "point & shoot" cameras. Please remember to bring along the instruction manuals if you are using a new camera or are unfamiliar with your camera. It is a good idea to shoot a roll of film just prior to leaving home to make sure your camera is operating properly.

Many of the camera manufacturers offer 35mm SLR cameras with auto focus and an integrated flash. You will need a flash unit in dark shadowy areas to use as fill-in light, otherwise your photo may not show all the detail that you remember. If your camera does not have an integrated flash, there may be a dedicated flash unit available for it (a flash unit built specifically for that particular camera with an automatic setting). The camera salesperson should be able to help you in this area and give you some tips on using the flash.

If you do not wish to go with the SLR for your trip, there are many range finder (point & shoot) cameras available in the market today. This camera is auto-everything. It has a 38-110 auto focus zoom lens, integrated flash, auto film load, ASA setting, and so on.

Digital cameras offer an opportunity to capture a large number of images that can be easily edited throughout the voyage. Digital cameras come in a wide range of models that are easy to use and fully automated. Images are stored on memory cards that can hold hundreds of images. We would recommend that you carry an extra memory card to increase the capacity for images. Many photographic outlets provide a service to print images to photos should you prefer a photo format. Alternatively the images can be transferred to your computer or a CD and viewed as a slide show or individually.

## Film

You will want to bring back many photographic memories of your expedition. Bring lots of film, as you will almost certainly use more than you originally planned.

X-ray security devices at some overseas airports may damage film. Many airlines and government agencies use magnetic detection equipment, which has no effect on films. The best protection is to hand carry film in a lead film bag and ask for a hand inspection. Where possible, avoid sending the film through the x-ray machine. Having all film together and readily accessible speeds a hand inspection.

The film speed that you will most likely need are 100 ASA for brightly lit areas with few shadows and high in contrast, and 400 ASA for low light situations and action shots. Some film can be shot at speeds other than their designated ASA, but please remember to mark the exposed canister with the ASA used so that it can be processed at the proper speed. Whether you choose print or slide film is completely up to you.

If you plan on making your trip a photographic expedition, we suggest that you use film speeds less than 100 as these will produce far superior enlargements (greater than 8 x 10 in size). You will need a tripod, monopod, or something to steady the camera with slower films.

Most manufacturers have cameras with these attributes. Again, if you are purchasing a system of any kind for the first time, please utilise the assistance of a qualified salesperson.

Many travellers are pleased with the landscapes captured by the extra wide angle of disposable panoramic cameras. Available in camerashops or drug stores, these cameras are relatively inexpensive, and produce snapshot quality photographs. These are available for purchase on board Oceanic Discoverer.

Plastic bags to protect your camera from rain, salt spray, and dust may also be useful. Silica gel is recommended for protecting equipment against high humidity.

## Filters

Always consider a UV or Skylight filters for your camera! The most important reason is to protect the front lens element from dirt, fingerprints and damage. These filters do not alter the amount of light reading the film plane; therefore it is not

necessary to adjust the f-stops on the lens to compensate. These filters will reduce the amount of blue or "haze" you see through the viewfinder.

The polarizing filter will reduce the amount of reflective light reading the film thereby reducing the glare seen through the viewfinder. A polarizer is a necessity for shooting around water in bright sunlight.

Make sure that you know which type of exposure meter your camera has. For example, if you own a Canon F-1 or T-90, you will need a circular polarizer because of the beam-splitting meter. Check with your camera manual to see if you need a standard or circular polarizer. The polarizer does require an f-stop adjustment on the lens (unless your camera has through-the-lens-metering) before you take the picture. Set the exposure and shutter speed without the polarizer attached, open up the f-stop approximately 1.5 stops re-attach the filter and shoot. For best results, always bracket!

## Lenses

You may want to consider buying a zoom lens if you do not already own one. Bring lens hoods for your zoom lenses, as zooms are susceptible to lens flare when aimed directly into any light source. Zoom lenses are reasonable in price, so we suggest two: a 28-70mm and a 75-300mm (or something of similar focal length). Bring plenty of lens cleaner and tissue.

## Video Shooting

Video batteries can be recharged onboard ship. As voltage on board is 220 volts, please be sure to bring a converter and adapter plugs if you are carrying American standard 110 volt equipment.

**For further information please feel free to contact us:**

Email: [info@relaxingjourneys.co.nz](mailto:info@relaxingjourneys.co.nz)

Website: [www.relaxingjourneys.co.nz](http://www.relaxingjourneys.co.nz)