Circumnavigation of New Zealand

An in-depth exploration of New Zealand aboard the MS Caledonian Sky

4th to 28th January 2016

Noble Caledonia
If you are going to travel half way around the world, you need a good reason and what better reason could you have than the desire to visit one of the most beautiful places on earth? New Zealand’s scenery, people and their lifestyle all have enormous appeal which is why it is always high on travellers’ wish lists.

With vast open spaces filled with stunning rugged landscapes and a temperate climate, New Zealand is a land of rare natural beauty and breathtaking contrasts. There are steep-sided glacial fjords, geysers and boiling mud, coastal rainforests, snow-capped mountains, rolling green pasture lands, often spectacular geothermal and volcanic activity, enchanting sandy bays and coves, fast-flowing rivers and a variety of birdlife. By contrast, in the cities, towns and villages you will experience that unique combination of New World and British heritage. See some of the most splendid gardens in the Southern Hemisphere, visit world famous vineyards, encounter fascinating wildlife and meet the warm people.

Due to this diversity New Zealand deserves more than a fleeting visit. We believe our itinerary offers the best of all worlds and has been devised on the basis that most travellers from the UK will only tour New Zealand once. Therefore the trip should be as comprehensive and as full of contrasts as possible. Certainly, this itinerary qualifies on all these important demands. We will circumnavigate the islands of New Zealand, drop anchor in the remote bays, navigate channels, fjords and rivers and call into harbours both large and small. With the added advantage of our Zodiac landing craft we will be able to land in otherwise inaccessible places making the most of New Zealand’s extraordinary natural attractions.

Our View

“After many years of operating cruises in New Zealand it was becoming difficult to include all the highlights into a regular two week voyage and we have therefore devised this longer itinerary which circumnavigates the country. New Zealand is a fantastic destination to visit but the usual method of touring generally involves long road journeys and countless hotel rooms. Our vision was to create a comprehensive tour, reducing the time spent packing and unpacking but still visiting the major sights of the country and with plenty of time to relax. Our itinerary combines expedition stops visiting Stewart Island, Fjordland, Golden Bay and historic Ship Cove with more traditional visits to Rotorua, Napier and Wellington. We will see an abundance of wildlife as we cruise along the coast, you have the option to experience a scenic train journey through the mountains and countryside, see traditional Maori culture and visit important historical buildings. One of the many advantages of having the MS Caledonian Sky as our base is that we can drop anchor in Golden Bay, Jackson Bay and Ship Cove, destinations which the larger ships have to bypass.”

Use of Zodiac landing craft

This cruise is not classified as an expedition cruise, however Zodiac landing crafts will be used on some days to explore coastlines and to transport passengers ashore. Some of the more remote destinations we have included are only accessible by Zodiacs such as Stewart Island, White Island and Jackson Bay where sea conditions can be challenging. Zodiacs will also be used for our three days of exploration in Fjordland.
The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Hong Kong. Fly by scheduled flight.

Day 2 Hong Kong. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the Grand Harbour Kowloon hotel (or similar) for an overnight night stay.

Day 3 Hong Kong. This morning is free to relax before an afternoon Hong Kong tour including Victoria Peak and Stanley Market. We will then transfer to the airport in the early evening for our scheduled flight to Auckland.

Day 4 Auckland. Arrive this morning and transfer to the Crowne Plaza Hotel (or similar) for an overnight stay. The remainder of the day is free for individual exploration. Enjoy a welcome dinner tonight.

Day 5 Auckland. A morning tour will include the city's highlights. After lunch in a local restaurant we will continue to Auckland Museum, which houses the world’s largest collection of Polynesian artefacts before being transferred to the MS Caledonian Sky which is moored in the city. Sail this evening.

Day 6 Tauranga for Rotorua. This morning we will drive to the famous thermal springs at Rotorua. We will visit Wai-O-Tapu, which means Sacred Waters in Maori, an active geothermal area with colourful hot springs, steaming ground and boiling mud pools. We also visit a local Maori Marae where we will enjoy a traditional Maori welcome and lunch.

Day 7 White Island. Arrive this morning at White Island. Weather permitting, there will be an excursion to explore the active volcano on White Island, identifiable by the plume of steam continually spouting from its crater. We will use the Zodiaks to reach the island and then spend approximately three hours on a guided walk to the crater. Return to the vessel for lunch and an afternoon at sea.

Day 8 Napier. Arrive this morning in Napier and join a tour of the beautiful city which will include its charming Art Deco buildings. Totally rebuilt after the 1931 Hawkes Bay earthquake, it has enormous style. Nowhere else can you see such a variety of buildings in the styles of the 1930s - Stripped Classical, Spanish Mission, and above all Art Deco, the style of the 20th century. Walk along Marine Parade, see the Botanical Gardens before visiting a local vineyard for a guided tour and to sample the local wines. This afternoon is free for independent exploration of the town or alternatively join the excursion to the gannetry at Cape Kidnappers where you are able to get amazingly close to the birds. The 13 hectare reserve includes the Saddle and Black Reef gannet colonies.

Day 9 Wellington. Enjoy a relaxing morning at sea. We have the afternoon in the nation's capital. An excursion will include the Parliament buildings, Old St Paul’s Cathedral, a lovely all-wood structure which was erected in 1866, the superb Botanic Gardens and an introductory tour of Te Papa, National Museum of New Zealand.

Day 10 Ship Cove, Marlborough Sounds. This morning we will use our small ship to explore Ship Cove where Captain James Cook spent much of his time in New Zealand. We will have the option to take a morning hike along the Queen Charlotte Track, walking amongst the ferns, with the viewpoints offering fantastic vistas over the archipelago. We will also look out for playful dolphins and a variety of seabirds. Return to the ship for lunch and an afternoon cruising along the east coast of the South Island.

Day 11 Christchurch. Today enjoy a morning tour of this most English of cities. The tour will include an overview of the city showing how it is recovering from the devastating earthquake of February 2011. We will view the Southern Alps from the Port Hills and a tour of the Canterbury Museum with its acclaimed Antarctic collection. Also enjoy morning tea at a private home and garden. Alternatively, join an optional full day tour on the Tranz Alpine train to Arthur’s Pass in the heart of the Southern Alps, one of the world’s most famous train journeys.

Day 12 Akaroa. Akaroa meaning, ‘Long Harbour’, in Maori, was founded by French whaler Captain Jean Langlois on his ship Cachalot in 1838. He returned in 1840 with 60 settlers on the Comte Paul’s voyage. This morning we will use the Zodiacs to go ashore for a choice of walks with our local guides. We will explore the dense vegetation, the amazing birdlife including red crowned parakeets, black oyster catchers, scotty shearwaters, tuia, bellbirds, kakas and fearless wekas. This afternoon we land at Oamaru to wander in the little village with its craft shop and museum. We will also drive along some of the 15 miles of sealed road to some of the beauty spots.

Days 15-17 Fjordland. We have three days to explore the incredible wilderness of fjords in the south west corner of the South Island using our Zodiaks. This area combines history, as Captain Cook landed here on HMS Resolution in 1773, majestic scenery and rich wildlife. It is only accessible by sea, making it the most remote region of New Zealand. Our schedule may include Resolution Bay, Dusky Sound, Astronomers Point, Deep Cove and Milford Sound but final itinerary decisions will be made by the Captain and Expedition Leader based on weather conditions.

Day 18 Jackson Bay. This gently curving 24 kilometre bay provides the only natural deepwater wharf on the west coast. Today we enjoy a river safari on the Waiau River, learn a little of the local greenstone (jade) industry and have the opportunity to join a guided walk. This afternoon we continue cruising the west coast and will hopefully be treated to views of Aoraki Mount Cook on land while keeping a look out for dolphins.

Day 19 Golden Bay. Enjoy a relaxing morning at sea as we continue sailing north. We will arrive into Golden Bay in the late afternoon and have time to use our Zodiaks to land at the small town to stretch our legs and tour the local highlights. Golden Bay is nestled into the South Island’s north-west corner and is New Zealand’s most diverse and appealing holiday destination with golden beaches, alpine valleys and tranquil fishing rivers. We moor overnight in the secluded bay.

Day 20 Abel Tasman National Park & Nelson. There will be a choice of options today. Either choose to disembark after breakfast to visit Abel Tasman which is New Zealand’s smallest national park, protecting over 23 000 hectares of the most easily accessible coastline in the country. This marine reserve offers some marvellously scenic coastal walks and excellent wildlife opportunities including seal colonies and numerous aquatic birds including penguins. The tour will end in Nelson where you will re-embark the ship. Alternatively enjoy a morning at sea sailing to Nelson and arriving at lunchtime. Join the tour of the area’s highlights including Nelson.
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city with its riverside walkway. After dinner on board we will arrange a tasting of local Nelson wines accompanied by musicians.

Day 21 New Plymouth. After a morning at sea we arrive in New Plymouth at lunchtime. We have the afternoon in this pretty city sandwiched between the sea and Mt Taranaki. A tour will visit the highlights of the town including the lookout point, Te Rewa Rewa bridge and Pukekura Park one of the premier botanical gardens in New Zealand. We will have a chance to explore the diverse landscape of formal gardens, bushwalks and lakes as well as the fernery and display houses. Alternatively drive to Mt Taranaki and join one of the walking trails ranging in difficulty for all levels of fitness. You will be joined by our naturalists who will keep you informed on the flora seen en route.

Day 22 Northland. Today we will explore this remote area of New Zealand as we cruise over the North coast of the country. We will take the opportunity to use our Zodiacs to land on a remote beach which is only accessible by sea and explore. The final decision will be made by the Expedition Leader onboard.

Day 23 Bay of Islands. Arrive this afternoon in the finest maritime park in New Zealand with its 144 islands, secluded bays and an abundance of marine life. Discovered by Captain Cook in 1769, it is the cradle of European civilisation in New Zealand and has important historical significance for both Maori and Europeans. On an afternoon tour we will visit the Waitangi Treaty House where in 1840 the treaty was signed between Maori and the British Crown. We then continue to the Puketi Kauri Forest an ancient native forest of 15,000 hectares with hundreds of species of indigenous plants and trees.

Day 24 Auckland to London. Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport for your scheduled indirect flight to London.

Day 25 London. Arrive this morning.

PRICES PER PERSON
Based on double occupancy

LAUNCH OFFER – BOOK EARLY AND SAVE £400 PER PERSON OFF THE BROCHURE PRICE FOR A NON BALCONY SUITE AND £800 PER PERSON FOR A BALCONY SUITE

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Price Includes: Economy class scheduled flights, overnight hotel accommodation in Hong Kong and Auckland on a bed and breakfast basis, city tour in Hong Kong and Auckland, welcome dinner in Auckland, 19 nights aboard the MS Caledonian Sky on a full board basis including wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner onboard, shore excursions, onboard team, gratuities onboard the vessel and whilst on shore excursions, port taxes, airport taxes.

Not Included: Travel Insurance, optional excursions, visas.

Cruise only option: For guests who would like to arrange their own flights we are offering a discount of £1240 per person for non use of all of our flights and the arrangements in Hong Kong. Those taking this option will join the Noble Caledonia arrangements in Auckland on Day 4 of the itinerary.

NB. Ports and itinerary subject to change. Please note that flight schedules have not been released at the time of going to print (February 2014) and therefore the itinerary is subject to change on their release.
MS Caledonian Sky

Formerly known as the Hebridean Spirit, the MS Caledonian Sky began her life with Noble Caledonia in May 2012. Accommodating a maximum of 114 passengers in 57 spacious outside suites, she is more akin to a country hotel than the big cruise ships of today. The vessel is the ideal partner to our MS Island Sky, both were built in the same yard and at similar times and share the same excellent attributes that make them two of the finest small ships in the world and we are very proud to have them as our flagships.

Your Cabin/Suite
Onboard the MS Caledonian Sky there are 57 exceptionally spacious and well-designed suites, 23 of which have private balconies located on the Promenade or Bridge Decks. Each suite exudes great character and grandeur with wood panelling and brass features found throughout. The large suites all measure between 20 and 23 square metres and the balconies range in size from 4.2 to 5.6 square metres. Suites are arranged over four decks and all have outside facing views. All suites feature a sitting room area complete with coffee table, armchairs and flat screen televisions (DVD players and DVDs can be borrowed from reception for use in your suite). The beds in each cabin offer exceptionally comfortable mattresses and pillows and can be configured as large double beds or twins.

Each suite affords considerable comfort with an en-suite bathroom featuring a country style wash basin, a hot towel rack, shaver outlet and vanity unit with sink and walk-in shower and/or corner bath tub. Towelling dressing gowns and slippers are also provided for your comfort. Further facilities in the suites include walk-in or spacious wardrobes, dressing table with large mirror and stool or desk, minifridge, cabin to cabin telephone, programmable electronic safe, hairdryer, assorted Molton Brown toiletries, individually controlled air-conditioning and heating, bottled water replenished daily, as well as extra blankets and pillows.

Your Space
The spacious and finely decorated public rooms include a large lounge featuring comfortable seating and classic winged armchairs to enhance the modern country-style furnishings throughout. Daily briefings given by the Cruise Director or Expedition Leader and talks from Guest Speakers and Expedition staff take place in the main lounge which is fitted with the highest standard of presentation equipment including multiple screens. Also featured in the Lounge is an elegant bar where the onboard pianist plays periodically throughout the day. The bar also features a 24-hour tea and coffee station.

In addition to the main lounge on the Caledonian Deck, there is the Lounge on the Panorama Deck which features a bar, library and two computers and further spacious seating arrangements, ideal for watching the world go by as you cruise to your next destination. The travel library is the perfect place to relax with a good book.

The main dining room which can seat all guests at one sitting is located on the Castle Deck. Outside there is a rear Lido Deck located on the Bridge Deck which is complete with deck tables and chairs where meals are served in warm weather under shade.

Further to this on the Panorama Deck towards the front of the vessel there is a further observation deck, complete with bar service and comfortable cushioned deck furniture for sun bathing, relaxing with a book or catching up with fellow travellers. On the Promenade Deck there is also a small gymnasium featuring a treadmill, bicycle and cross trainer, and a hairdressers with appointments made on request.

Your Dining
With only one sitting and a maximum of just over 100 passengers, the cuisine onboard is of a consistent superior quality. Where possible and when it meets their high standards, our accomplished chefs will obtain local produce in markets or buy the catch of the day from a passing fishing
boat. Afternoon tea and pre-dinner canapes take place every day in either the comfort of the lounge or out on the Lido Deck when the weather is favourable.

In keeping with the informal atmosphere onboard, when dining you are able to choose your seating arrangements at your leisure. Whether that be joining a table of four to six other like-minded passengers outside on the Lido Deck in the evening’s sunshine or whether you prefer to enjoy meals in the à la carte restaurant. For those travelling alone, our onboard friendly restaurant staff will take care to ensure you are seated with other like-minded travellers. In the main elegant dining room, breakfast is served buffet-style, with certain items cooked to order on request. Lunch and dinner are an à la carte five course affair, with the menu reflecting the daily catch or local delicacies. To enhance your dining experience even further a selection of wines are included with both meals.

**Life Onboard**

The atmosphere onboard is warm and convivial and more akin to a private yacht or country hotel in which you can learn more about the wonders of nature, culture and ancient civilisations in the company of like-minded people. A little music in the lounge or bar after dinner, Guest Speakers and informative port briefings from our Expedition Leader and of course good food, all contribute to make any voyage aboard this wonderful vessel a memorable and joyful experience. After a day ashore you will return to the comfort and peace of an exceedingly comfortable ship.

The daily programme onboard is in the capable hands of our Cruise Director or Expedition Leader or Cruise Director and staff who coordinate with the Captain and Officers to make the most of each day. Briefings and talks will be provided throughout the voyage together with a ‘Daily Programme’ that is distributed every evening to your suite outlining the next day’s activities. Dress onboard is casual and relaxed and there will be no ‘black tie’ evenings.

**For your Comfort, Safety & Security**

The MS Caledonian Sky is equipped with the latest safety, navigation and communications equipment along with roll stabilizers to minimise the ship’s motion. During your voyage you will have the opportunity to visit the Captain and Officers on the Bridge to check the vessel’s progress by charts and learn more about your journey. Onboard you will also find a clinic and doctor and a lift that serves all decks. Smoking onboard is restricted to deck 4 aft.