

# HARVARD

ALUMNI TRAVELS



## MYSTERIES OF INDONESIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA DARWIN TO CAIRNS ON *LE SOLÉAL*

SEP 18–OCT 7, 2025

### PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Embark *Le Soléal* for a 17-day tropical expedition cruise from Darwin, Australia to the sublime natural landscapes of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea and then back to Cairns.

## SCHEDULE BY DAY

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

### TUE, SEP 18–WED, SEP 19 INDEPENDENT FLIGHTS TO DARWIN

The program begins on Thursday, September 20 in Darwin, Australia. Most flight options from both the US East and West coasts will require two calendar days to travel to Darwin. Consequently, guests should plan to depart on **September 18** to ensure arrival on September 20.

### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 ARRIVE DARWIN / PRE-NIGHT

Arrive in Darwin, where you will be met and transferred to a hotel for one night.

Gather this evening with your Harvard Study leader and fellow alumni and friends for a welcome cocktail reception.

Overnight: Hotel (R)

### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 DARWIN / EMBARK

Located in Australia's Northern Territory, Darwin is the capital city and the most populated town of Australia's "Top End". A beautiful tropical city, Darwin is 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.

During a half-day city tour, visit sites such as the Parliament House, a magnificent example of tropical architecture, and Admiralty House, a tropical-style home elevated on stilts that has survived two cyclones and numerous air raids.

Overnight on *Le Soléal* (B, L, D)

### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 AT SEA

Today is devoted to relaxing, attending lectures, and sampling the many amenities available aboard *Le Soléal*, as you begin your circumnavigation of the island.

Overnight on *Le Soléal* (B, L, D)

### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 KEI ISLANDS, MALUKU ISLANDS

The Kei Islands are blessed with kilometers of stunning—and virtually empty—white-sand beaches and a deeply hospitable population. Local history holds that ancestors of contemporary Kei islanders came from Bali, part of the expanding Hindu Majapahit kingdom from the western archipelago.

Today, enjoy a day of swimming and snorkeling on one of these idyllic, uninhabited tropical islands.

Overnight on *Le Soléal* (B, L, D)

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24**  
**BANDA NEIRA, MALUKU ISLANDS**

From age-old traditional cultures and ancient vestiges of coral reefs and lush green jungle, the attractions of the remote Banda archipelago seem endless.

Better known as the legendary “Spice Islands” of the Ancient World, these small volcanic landmasses were the fabled prize of colonial powers for more than four centuries. Every colonial power of significance fought for control of these ten small islands that today have become largely forgotten.

Walking the streets of Banda Neira is a surreal experience as your eyes are drawn to the eclectic mix of Portuguese, Dutch, and British architecture—the remnants of a rich and tumultuous history.

Overnight on *Le Soléal* (B, L, D)

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25**  
**KITIKITI WATERFALL, MOMMON**

North of Triton Bay, in the Indonesian province of West Papua, lie the Bomberai Peninsula and Sebakor Bay.

A paradise for divers, this protected, and very wild area boasts exceptional biodiversity. Here, admire the superb Kitikiti Waterfall where you may enjoy a swim or snorkel surrounded by lush nature, both on land and underwater.

Overnight on *Le Soléal* (B, L, D)

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26**  
**AT SEA**

Today is again devoted to relaxing, attending lectures, and sampling the many amenities available aboard *Le Soléal*.

Overnight on *Le Soléal* (B, L, D)

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27–**  
**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28**  
**CENDERAWASIH BAY**

Cenderawasih Bay is located at the western end of New Guinea Island, southeast of the Bird's Head Peninsula. Covering more than 1.4 million hectares, the bay is home to an abundant array of uninhabited islands, pristine coral reefs and the world's largest fish, the Whale Shark.

Over the years the whale sharks have learnt the habits of local fishermen who catch baitfish at night in nets lowered from fishing vessels known as “Bagans”. The Whale Sharks are now regular visitors feeding on the baitfish that spill from the nets at the surface.

Cenderawasih Bay is part of the Bird's Head seascape, the center of marine biodiversity at the heart of the coral triangle.

Do not miss the chance to discover these multicolored reefs and extraordinary marine fauna. Depending on the conditions, you may also have the opportunity to snorkel and swim with Whale Sharks.

Overnight on *Le Soléal* (B, L, D)

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29**  
**AT SEA**

Overnight on *Le Soléal* (B, L, D)

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30**  
**JAYAPURA, PAPUA**

Jayapura City is the provincial capital of Papua province, Indonesia. It is a modern industrial city contrasting markedly with the surrounding hinterland where Papuan tribes live a subsistence lifestyle. The vast majority of Jayapurans are transmigrants from western Indonesia who control most of the industry and economics of the region. Leaving the city behind, guest will travel to the traditional village of Asai on Lake Sentani.

Here you can enjoy a cultural performance and witness life in a traditional Papuan village. Asai is famous for its production of Tapa cloth.

Overnight on *Le Soléal* (B, L, D)

## **MONDAY, OCTOBER 1**

### **KOPAR**

The people of the Sepik region speak more than 250 languages and are knitted together in systems of trade and cultural interaction. Kopar village's location at the mouth of the Sepik River makes it an important trading point for surrounding villages.

Here, the crocodile is worshiped as the water spirit. As is custom in all Sepik societies, the men's house is the place where important decisions regarding the village are made, where boys are initiated and become men and ceremonies to please the spirits are performed.

Guests will be welcomed ashore with a ceremony and cultural performance, including the famous "dragon dance." There will be an opportunity to walk around the village of Kopar to experience traditional life in the lower Sepik.

Overnight on *Le Soléal* (B, L, D)

## **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2**

### **MADANG**

Madang Township was once known as the "prettiest town in the South Pacific". Its peninsula setting is a showplace 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 demonstrated in the Madang festival with its colorful 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, costumes, and dances of the coastal, midland, and highland communities.

Overnight on *Le Soléal* (B, L, D)

## **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3**

### **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 center 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.

Overnight on *Le Soléal* (B, L, D)

## **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4**

### **TUFI**

Often described as the "Scandinavia of the tropics", the spectacular Tufi "fiords" plunge over 90 meters deep and rise over 150 meters 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 skillfully decorated.

Travel into the ancient mangrove forests of the Fiords to witness one of the most colorful traditional performances in all of Papua New Guinea.

There is also the opportunity to swim and snorkel in the clear waters of Kamo Beach.

Overnight on *Le Soléal* (B, L, D)

## **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5**

### **ALOTAU**

Alotau became the provincial capital of Milne Bay in 1969 and today has a population of approximately 16,000. It serves as your port of entry into Papua New Guinea.

Missionaries, miners, pearlers, and Japanese and American warships have all contributed to the History of Milne Bay.

Perhaps the most significant history surrounds the Battle of Milne Bay. It was here that the invading Japanese army suffered their first land defeat in the Pacific War in 1942. A memorial park at the battle site commemorates the event.

The local people are warm and welcoming resulting in one of the most relaxed, secure, and easy-going towns in Papua New Guinea.

Join your expedition team for a tour taking in the town markets and WWII memorials.

Overnight on *Le Soléal* (B, L, D)

## **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6 AT SEA**

Overnight on *Le Soléal* (B, L, D)

## **SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7 CAIRNS / DISEMBARK / DEPART**

Washed by the Coral Sea, the harbor town of Cairns is located on Australia's north-east coast. The seafront esplanade is a popular place for locals and visitors to walk, swim and picnic under the shade of swaying palm trees. The hills surrounding Cairns form the gateway to the Queensland Rainforests, proclaimed a UNESCO World Heritage site for their fauna and flora from the Gondwana era.

After disembarking, transfer to the airport for flights home.

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