



## NEW GUINEA ODYSSEY

### RAIL & SAIL

#### DEPARTING

Wednesday, 17 September 2025 aboard Le Soleal  
21 Days / 20 Nights

Pair a legendary journey through the red-hearted centre of Australia on The Ghan with a voyage that takes you on a captivating odyssey into remote and culturally rich regions of Papua New Guinea aboard PONANT's Le Soleal. Departing from Darwin, this cruise travels through some of the most pristine and lesser-visited areas of the South Pacific. The rail and sail journey offers a remarkable blend of natural beauty, with outback scenes, lush rainforests, vibrant coral reefs, and breathtaking coastal landscapes. From the outback town of Alice Springs, across Papua New Guinea to Cairns, this is an adventure that will be cherished for a lifetime.

#### INCLUSIONS

- 2 nights' aboard The Ghan, Adelaide to Darwin, including all meals, beverages and Off Train Experiences in Marla, Alice Springs, and Katherine
- Transfer from Darwin Rail Terminal to Darwin hotel
- 2 nights' accommodation in Darwin including breakfast daily
- Transfer from Darwin hotel to cruise terminal
- 16-night New Guinea Odyssey expedition cruise aboard PONANT's Le Soleal, including prepaid gratuities
- 20 breakfasts, 18 lunches, 18 dinners

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Witness spectacular outback landscapes as you travel on The Ghan
- Visit the impressive natural wonder of Nitmiluk Gorge
- Discover the mysteries of Papua New Guinea, the land of a thousand cultures
- Journey on an outrigger canoe into the ancient Fiords of Cape Nelson
- Visit the remote Tami Islands
- Discover traditional ceremonies of the Asaro Mudmen of Madang region
- See the Malukus, the paradisiacal Spice Islands
- Explore the spectacular karst islands of the Coral Triangle

#### DAY 1 – WEDNESDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2025, BOARD THE GHAN IN ADELAIDE

Board The Ghan in Adelaide for an iconic showcase journey of inland Australia. As the train leaves the city heading for the Flinders Ranges and beyond, the dramatic changes in landscape will ignite your imagination over the next two days. (L,D)

OVERNIGHT: 2 nights The Ghan

#### DAY 2 – THURSDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2025, THE GHAN AND ALICE SPRINGS

After your first night enjoying the fine dining and relaxed comfort of this iconic train, you'll wake to an unforgettable outback sunrise at Marla – a remote outpost 160 kilometres from the Northern Territory border that marks the start of the Oodnadatta Track. Enjoy the magnificent outback scenery as you make your way onwards to Alice Springs, where you have a selection of Off Train Experiences to choose from. There's an experience to suit everyone, including an off-road mountain bike adventure, the Alice Explorer tour, a cultural experience at Standley Chasm, meeting the wildlife at the Desert Park or taking in the astounding beauty of Simpson's Gap. Alternatively, take it all in from the air, with an optional upgrade helicopter flight (B,L,D)

#### DAY 3 – FRIDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2025, THE GHAN, KATHERINE AND DARWIN

When the landscape transforms into rocky gorges and fast-flowing canyon streams, prepare to experience one of the Top End's most impressive natural wonders on a boat cruise along Nitmiluk Gorge. Alternatively, the Katherine Outback Experience lets you into the lives of those who call the outback home. There is also a helicopter flight upgrade available, for those wishing to see Nitmiluk from an aerial perspective. Continue to Darwin, where you will be transferred to your overnight accommodation. After checking in, you may wish to explore the Waterfront Precinct, with its many restaurants and bars. (B,L)

OVERNIGHT: 2 nights Adina Apartment Hotel Darwin Waterfront



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### **DAY 4 – SATURDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2025, DARWIN**

Enjoy the tropical weather of Darwin. Take a walk along Stokes Hill Wharf to visit the Royal Flying Doctor Service or why not join a sunset dinner cruise aboard Charles Darwin. (B)

### **DAY 5 – SUNDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2025, BOARD LE SOLEAL IN DARWIN**

This morning is yours to explore Darwin at your leisure. In the afternoon, you will be transferred from your accommodation to the Port of Darwin to board Le Soleal for your New Guinea Odyssey cruising. Settle into your elegant cabin, make yourself comfortable, enjoy dinner and perhaps have a nightcap at the Blue Eye, a multisensorial underwater lounge. (B,D)

**OVERNIGHT:** 16 nights Le Soleal

### **DAY 6 – MONDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2025, LE SOLEAL AT SEA**

During your journey at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. This leg of the journey without a port of call is an opportunity to enjoy the lectures or shows on board, do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. (B,L,D)

### **DAY 7 – TUESDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2025, BANDA NEIRA, MALUKU ISLANDS**

From age-old traditional cultures and ancient vestiges to coral reefs and lush green jungle, the attractions of the remote Banda archipelago are 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 10 small islands that today, are 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. It is without doubt the most historically significant and interesting of all the “Spice Islands”. (B,L,D)

### **DAY 8 – WEDNESDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2025, TRITON BAY, WEST PAPUA**

Triton Bay is one of three regions in Indonesia’s West Papua province that make up the Bird’s Head Seascape (the other two are Raja Ampat and Cenderawasih Bay), which is now considered by marine biologists to be the epicentre of the Coral Triangle. It contains more fish and coral species than anywhere else on the planet. Its unparalleled marine biodiversity and endemism, habitat richness, and the relatively intact nature of its ecosystems are unique. Join your expedition team for a zodiac voyage through the spectacular rainforest-capped karst islands. Later in the day, take the opportunity to explore the richness of the underwater realm. (B,L,D)

### **DAY 9 – THURSDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2025, 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, authentic and very wild area boasts exceptional biodiversity. Here, you will be able to admire the superb Kitikiti Waterfall, where you can enjoy a swim or snorkel surrounded by lush nature, both on land and under water. (B,L,D)

### **DAY 10 – FRIDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2025, LE SOLEAL AT SEA**

On your day at sea, visit the ship’s upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves leading to the horizon and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. This marks an enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest, and entertainment. (B,L,D)

### **DAY 11 – SATURDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2025, CENDERAWASIH BAY**

Cenderawasih Bay is located at the western end of New Guinea Island, south-east 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. (B,L,D)

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### **DAY 12 – SUNDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2025, CENDERAWASIH BAY**

Cenderawasih Bay is part of the Bird's Head seascape, the centre of marine biodiversity at the heart of the Coral Triangle. Do not miss the opportunity to discover the multi-coloured reefs and extraordinary marine fauna. Depending on the conditions, you may also be able to swim with whale sharks. (B,L,D)

### **DAY 13 – MONDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER 2025, LE SOLEAL AT SEA**

Enjoy a leisurely day at sea and take advantage of the on-board services or sip a cool drink by the pool. Your expedition team will offer an enrichment programme focusing on history, flora, and fauna. Enjoy some down time on the deck sunbathing, or sample culinary specialties prepared by the Chef and Galley Team. (B,L,D)

### **DAY 14 – TUESDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2025, 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, you will travel to the traditional village of Asai on Lake Sentani. Here, you will enjoy a cultural performance and witness life in a traditional Papuan village. (B,L,D)

### **DAY 15 – WEDNESDAY, 01 OCTOBER 2025, 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 the surrounding villages. Here, the crocodile is worshipped 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 where ceremonies to please the spirits are performed. You will be welcomed ashore with a ceremony and cultural performance. There will be an opportunity to walk around the village of Kopar to experience traditional life. (B,L,D)

### **DAY 16 – THURSDAY, 02 OCTOBER 2025, 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 showcased in the Madang festival, with its colourful displays of "sing sings" performed by numerous cultural groups. Today, you will be treated to a number of cultural performances showcasing the local customs, costume, and dance of the coastal, midland, and highland communities. (B,L,D)

### **DAY 17 – FRIDAY, 03 OCTOBER 2025, 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, are seldom visited. Tami Islanders are renowned artisans, recognised for their intricately decorated bowls. (B,L,D)

### **DAY 18 – SATURDAY, 04 OCTOBER 2025, 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 among 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. You 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. (B,L,D)



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### **DAY 19 – SUNDAY, 05 OCTOBER 2025, ALOTAU**

Alotau became the provincial capital of Milne Bay in 1969 and today has a population of approximately 16,000. It serves as our port of entry into Papua New Guinea. Missionaries, miners, pearlers, 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. (B,L,D)

### **DAY 20 – MONDAY, 06 OCTOBER 2025, LE SOLEAL AT SEA**

Enjoy the many services and activities available to you on your last sea day. Be sure to visit the boutique or the PONANT photographers to make any last-minute purchases or perhaps indulge in a visit to the spa. Do as much or as little as you please. (B,L,D)

### **DAY 21 – TUESDAY, 07 OCTOBER 2025, DISEMBARK LE SOLEAL IN CAIRNS**

Washed by the Coral Sea, the harbour 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. Early this morning, Le Soleal will dock in the Port of Cairns, where you will disembark and your adventure will come to an end. (B)