

# The Essential Kimberley - with National Geographic

From **6/8/2021**  
to **18/8/2021**

Ship: **LE LAPEROUSE**

From **Darwin**  
to **Darwin**



## In partnership with National Geographic Expeditions.

From Darwin, embark aboard *Le Lapérouse* for an **13-day expedition cruise**, in the heart of **wild and grandiose landscapes of the Kimberley**, one of the last unspoiled regions on the planet.

Along the most spectacular coastlines in the entire region, the rivers are gateways towards incredible fauna and scenery. The discovery of the King George River and the majestic Twin Falls, the highest single drop waterfall in Western Australia will undoubtedly be the highpoint of this cruise. As you approach the banks of the **Hunter River**, one of the most picturesque parts of the region, you will see wild mangrove forests where saltwater crocodiles live along with many species of birds.

In the hollow of the many bays dissecting the coast, secret **coves** and **caves** are home to ancient galleries of cave art, exceptional vestiges of the first people to settle on these sacred lands.

In the **Lacepede Islands** nature reserve, an important breeding site for green turtles, you'll be able to observe colonies of sea birds: brown boobies, Roseate terns, Australian pelicans, etc.

You will also visit **Collier Bay**, where you will be able to admire a spectacular example of the impact of the tides cascading in mini-waterfalls as the entire Montgomery reef appears to rise from the turquoise-blue waters of the bay.

During your stopover in **Careening Bay**, you'll discover moving evidence left behind by the first explorers who ventured along the rugged coastline at the beginning of the 19th century.

With their falls, abrupt gorges, savannah and calm waters, the wild lands of the Kimberley are the promise of an **exceptional adventure**.

*We are privileged guests in these extreme lands where we are at the mercy of weather and tide conditions. Landings on certain sites and the observation of certain wildlife cannot be guaranteed. They vary from day to day, making each PONANT cruise a unique experience. The Captain and the Expedition Leader will make every effort to ensure that your experience is as rich as possible, whilst*

*complying with the necessary safety rules and precautions.*



The information in this document is valid as of 17/2/2021

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## YOUR STOPOVERS :

### DARWIN

Embarkation 6/8/2021 from 16h00 to 17h00

Departure 6/8/2021 at 18h00

**Darwin** is located in Australia's Northern Territory which is also known as the "Top End". It is the **capital city** and the most populated town of the Northern Territory. Darwin is a beautiful tropical city, 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. Come discover the town's still recent history through its emblematic buildings such as the new **Parliament House** opened in 1994, a magnificent example of tropical architecture or **Admiralty House** declared heritage place, a tropical-style home elevated on stilts that has survived two cyclones and numerous air raids.

### PULAU MEATIMIARANG (TECHNICAL STOP)

Arrival 7/8/2021

Departure 7/8/2021

Enjoy a leisurely day at sea to take advantage of the luxurious onboard services or enjoy a cool drink by the pool. Enjoy time to reflect on your experiences or share photographs with fellow guests. Your expedition team will be offering an enrichment programme focusing on Australia, its history and flora and fauna. Perhaps take the opportunity to be out on deck sunbathing or sampling culinary specialties prepared by our Chef and Galley Team.

*The Indonesian officials will perform the necessary clearance formalities. Our stopover at Pulau Meatimiarang is for technical clearance purposes only. There is no opportunity for guests to go ashore.*

### WYNDHAM

Arrival 8/8/2021

Departure 8/8/2021

**Wyndham** is the northernmost town in Western Australia and in many ways is the gateway to the **Kimberley**. It is surrounded by some of the most spectacular landforms, rivers and wetlands in the Kimberley.

### KING GEORGE RIVER

Arrival 9/8/2021

Departure 9/8/2021

The journey up the **King George River** is nothing short of breathtaking. The 80-metre-high sides of the gorge display

varying degrees of weathering of the ancient Warton sandstone. The colours and textures of the gorge change with the light as you travel further up the river creating a continual changing scenery that is simply stunning. The journey culminates at the **King George twin falls**; the highest single-drop falls in the whole of the Kimberley (80 m or 260 ft). Fed by wet season run-off the level of water cascading over the falls varies from year to year. Your Expedition Team will escort you in either the Zodiacs® or ships tenders to the foot of the twin falls, and explain all about the stunning geological formations of the canyon.

## VANSITTART BAY

Arrival 10/8/2021

Departure 10/8/2021

**Jar Island** contains ancient rock art galleries depicting the Gwion Gwion style unique to the Kimberley region. Mainly neglected by, or unknown to, the early European researchers of Aboriginal culture in the Kimberley in favour of the dominant and more dramatic Wandjina art, Gwion Gwion art has in recent years gained world prominence. It is generally thought that this art may extend back to over 30,000 years before our time and represents the first wave of seagoing colonisers of the Australian continent. As it is, these are **the oldest detailed depiction of human figures in the world**. Join your Expedition Team ashore for a short walk, past some fascinating rock formations, to the site of the Gwion Gwion art galleries.

## HUNTER RIVER

Arrival 11/8/2021

Departure 11/8/2021

Arguably one of the most scenic parts of the Kimberley coast, Prince Frederick Harbour and the **Hunter River** are lined with ancient rainforest pockets, pristine **mangroves** and mosaic sandstone cliffs. They are considered to be some of the most pristine mangrove forests in the world, containing up to 18 different species, supporting a rich and diverse fauna. The **sandstone escarpment** at the river mouth, known as “Kampamantiya” **rises over 200 metres high** before giving way to extensive mud banks and mangrove forests home to numerous bird species and the iconic **saltwater crocodile**. Our expert Expedition Team will share their knowledge with you as you explore this pristine mangrove environment by Zodiac® keeping a constant lookout for wildlife. You will also have the opportunity to reach the Mitchell Falls by helicopter from Naturalist Island beach.

## COLLIER BAY

Arrival 12/8/2021

Departure 12/8/2021

Lying to the east of the Buccaneer archipelago, the ancient landscapes of **Collier Bay** have been shaped by the **massive tidal movements** the region is renowned for, creating a photographer's paradise. With a tidal range exceeding 14 metres, recorded near Yule entrance at the southern end of the bay, they are among the largest in the world. This massive daily movement of water creates **unique phenomena that occur nowhere else in the world**. Nestled in the centre of the Bay is **Montgomery Reef**, the world's largest inshore reef system. As the tide falls a raging torrent of water cascades off the top of the reef, creating **turbulent 'rivers' and mini waterfalls**. At the Southern end of the Bay, **Talbot Bay** is home to the world's only **'Horizontal Falls'** described by Sir David Attenborough as “One of the greatest wonders of the natural world.” Hidden in the many caves and grottos of this ancient landscape are a multitude of

ancient **Rock Art galleries**. Here you can find spectacular examples of the Wandjina and Gwion Gwion styles.

*As we are at the mercy of weather and tide conditions in this region, the activities mentioned above are only possible experiences and can't be guaranteed.*

## LACEPEDE ISLANDS

Arrival 13/8/2021

Departure 13/8/2021

The **Lacepede Islands** are Western Australia's most important breeding habitat for **Green Turtles** (*Chelonia mydas*), and have been named by BirdLife International as an **Important Bird Area (IBA)**. The breeding colony of Brown Boobies is possibly the largest in the world. Up to 20,000 Roseate Terns have also been recorded here. Other birds breeding on the islands include Masked Boobies, Australian Pelicans, Lesser Frigatebirds, Eastern Reef Egrets, Silver Gulls, Crested, Bridled and Lesser Crested Terns, Common Noddies, Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers. Join your expedition team for a guided Zodiac<sup>®</sup> tour to view the prolific wildlife. Due to the sensitive nature of the environment, landings are prohibited on the Lacepede Islands.

## COLLIER BAY

Arrival 14/8/2021

Departure 14/8/2021

Lying to the east of the Buccaneer archipelago, the ancient landscapes of **Collier Bay** have been shaped by the **massive tidal movements** the region is renowned for, creating a photographer's paradise. With a tidal range exceeding 14 metres, recorded near Yule entrance at the southern end of the bay, they are among the largest in the world. This massive daily movement of water creates **unique phenomena that occur nowhere else in the world**. Nestled in the centre of the Bay is **Montgomery Reef**, the world's largest inshore reef system. As the tide falls a raging torrent of water cascades off the top of the reef, creating **turbulent 'rivers' and mini waterfalls**. At the Southern end of the Bay, **Talbot Bay** is home to the world's only **'Horizontal Falls'** described by Sir David Attenborough as "One of the greatest wonders of the natural world." Hidden in the many caves and grottos of this ancient landscape are a multitude of ancient **Rock Art galleries**. Here you can find spectacular examples of the Wandjina and Gwion Gwion styles.

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## CAREENING BAY

Arrival 15/8/2021

Departure 15/8/2021

**Careening Bay** was named by Lieutenant Phillip Parker King after his ship, *HMC Mermaid*, was careened there during his third voyage of discovery in 1820. King surveyed the western coast to complete the map initiated by Flinders 20 years earlier. The *Mermaid* had been leaking badly and King needed to find a shallow sandy bay where he could careen his boat to undertake repairs. At a high tide, on a warm September afternoon, he ran the Mermaid onto the sands. For ten days the Mermaid crew worked hard before refloating the vessel. The ship's carpenter carved the name of the vessel and the year into a conspicuous boob tree. The famous boob tree is now 3 metres wide and National Heritage listed. A reminder of a by gone era of exploration!

## SWIFT BAY

Arrival 16/8/2021

Departure 16/8/2021

The **Bonaparte Archipelago**, is a stunningly rugged maze of islands stretching almost 150 km along Western Australia's remote Kimberley coast. Its colour and scale conspire to take ones' breath away. Its distant location has meant it has remained an unspoilt and remarkably pristine location to explore and experience. Phillip Parker King named "**Swift's bay**" after Jonathon Swift (1667-1745) the author of Gulliver's travels. The 'T' shaped bay is composed of heavily fractured sandstone providing an abundance of rock shelters. On the walls of these shelters are examples of both Wandjina and Gwion Gwion style rock art. Join your expedition team ashore for a guided walk to a number of rock art galleries depicting these unique rock art styles.

## AT SEA

Arrival 17/8/2021

Departure 17/8/2021

During your day at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This day without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

## DARWIN

Arrival 18/8/2021 early morning

Disembarkation 18/8/2021 at 06h30

**Darwin** is located in Australia's Northern Territory which is also known as the "Top End". It is the **capital city** and the most populated town of the Northern Territory. Darwin is a beautiful tropical city, 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. Come discover the town's still recent history through its emblematic buildings such as the new **Parliament House** opened in 1994, a magnificent example of tropical architecture or **Admiralty House** declared heritage place, a tropical-style home elevated on stilts that has survived two cyclones and numerous air raids.