

# Mawson's Antarctica

**Hobart, Australia, Oceania to Dunedin, New Zealand, Oceania (MAW)**

## Day 1 Arrive Hobart

Arrive in Hobart, where you will be met by a representative of Aurora Expeditions and transferred with your fellow expeditioners to your assigned pre-voyage hotel. If you are already in Hobart, we ask you to make your way to your hotel. This afternoon, visit the Aurora Expeditions hospitality desk in the lobby to collect your luggage tags. Please clearly label the tags with your name and ship cabin number. Our team will confirm details regarding your embarkation day, answer any questions and provide you with information on where to dine or purchase last minute items. That evening, enjoy light refreshments as you meet your fellow expeditioners at a Welcome Reception and Pre-Embarkation Briefing. Afterwards, enjoy your evening in Australia's southernmost capital city. You may like to indulge in a sumptuous meal at one of Hobart's celebrated restaurants, or perhaps enjoy a leisurely stroll along the historic waterfront. Assigned accommodation: The Tasman Hobart.



## Day 2 Embarkation

This morning, enjoy breakfast and check-out. Please ensure your cabin luggage is fitted with cabin tags clearly labelled with your name and cabin number. By 11.00 am, take your cabin luggage to hotel reception, prior to, or at check-out. Your luggage will be stored and transferred directly to the port for clearance, to be placed in your cabin ahead of your arrival on board. Please keep any valuables or personal items with you throughout the day. Your morning is at leisure to explore Hobart. Settle into your beautifully appointed cabin and discover the many public spaces designed with your

comfort in mind. This luxurious vessel is yours to explore! As we throw the lines and set sail down the Derwent River, join your expedition team on deck to enjoy panoramic views of the Hobart foreshore, and the dramatic fluted columns of the Tasman Peninsula. From Storm Bay we set a southerly course, following in the wake of the vessel Aurora, which carried Sir Douglas Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition (AAE) 100 years ago.

## Days 3-5 At Sea

On an expedition such as this, the journey is as significant as the destination. Sea days are a wonderful opportunity to relax, meet your fellow travellers and learn about the history, environment and local wildlife in this fascinating corner of the globe. As you acclimatise to life on board, your expedition team is available to answer any questions you may have and offer pro-tips on photography and birdwatching. With decades of collective experience in the region, they love to share their expertise and enthusiasm with fellow travellers. Specialists across a range of fields will offer entertaining talks and presentations on the local wildlife and history, which you won't want to miss! Once you've settled in, you may like to pamper yourself with a sauna, or work out at the onboard gym. For the bookworms, our well-equipped polar library is the perfect place to while away the hours at sea, and the bar is a vibrant social hub to get to know your fellow expeditioners. As you take in the vast expanse of the Southern Ocean, spare a thought for Mawson and his party, who made this transit aboard the Aurora, a wooden vessel no longer than an Olympic swimming pool! Mawson reported sightings of many whales and albatross in these waters, so spend some time out on deck with your binoculars - or grab a 'cuppa' and find a vantage point in one of our spacious observation lounges.

## Days 6-7 Macquarie Island

"Penguins were in thousands on the uprising cliffs, and from rookeries near and far came an incessant din . . . seabirds of many varieties gave warning of our near approach to their nests" Douglas Mawson, 1911. As they sailed towards Antarctica, Mawson and his men encountered 'an exquisite scene'. Macquarie Island (known affectionately as Macca) rises steeply from the Southern Ocean in a series of emerald summits: a beautifully fierce, elemental landscape teeming with life. Keep your binoculars handy because this subantarctic refuge is home to 3.5 million

breeding seabirds, including no less than four species of penguin! Alongside boisterous colonies of tuxedoed kings, charming gentoos, robust rockhoppers and endemic royal penguins, you'll find three types of fur seals and a large proportion of the world's elephant seals. Layer up and head out on deck to experience the sound, sight (and smell!) as you approach one of the largest concentrations of life in the Southern Ocean. Remember to keep an eye out for Macca's kelp forests—these remarkable underwater ecosystems are quite mesmerising as their fronds sway back and forth on the water's surface. In addition to being a globally recognised and protected wildlife refuge, Macquarie Island played an important role in Antarctic history. It was here, in 1911, that five men disembarked Mawson's Aurora and established a radio relay station which would transmit the first communication from Antarctica to the outside world.

## Days 8-10 At Sea

As Macquarie Island slips over the horizon, keep watch for wandering, grey-headed, black-browed and light-mantled albatross, which may follow the ship to bid you farewell as you continue south. Close observers may notice a subtle change in the character of the sea as you cross the Antarctic Convergence. Beyond this zone where the waters of the north and south mix, the sea surface temperature drops by about 4°C (39°F), signalling your entry into the Antarctic. Mawson reported spotting 'innumerable' birds in these waters, so keep watch for porpoising penguins, flocks of fluttering Antarctic petrels, or perhaps the more solitary snow petrel. You're not far from the Antarctic Circle, so your first iceberg can't be far away! Sea days are a great opportunity for some R & R as you digest your subantarctic experiences and prepare for the next phase of your voyage. Relax and unwind your way, perhaps meeting newfound friends at the bar, treating yourself to a sauna, or editing some images in the comfort of your cabin. As we continue along the path taken by the Aurora in 1911, join your expedition team in the lecture room for presentations about Antarctic ice, wildlife, and of course the remarkable story of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition. Led by Australian geologist and explorer Sir Douglas Mawson, the expedition successfully charted vast swathes of previously explored Antarctic coastline, and over 6000 kilometres of the interior. Despite its tremendous contribution to the advancement of Antarctic science, the expedition is perhaps best known for its nail-biting tales of triumph and tragedy. Hear the story of the extraordinary sledge journey undertaken by Mawson, Ninnis and Mertz, and rediscover why this remains one of the most incredible polar survival stories of all time.

## Days 11-13 East Antarctic Coast

'The tranquility of the water heightened the superb effects of this glacial world. Majestic tabular bergs, lofty spires, radiant turrets . . . illumined by pale green light within whose fairy labyrinths the water washed'. Douglas Mawson

When Captain John King Davis skillfully steered the Aurora through heavy pack ice in 1912, the Australasian Antarctic Expedition became the first to chart this stretch of coastline. As you sail into these waters over a century later, you are entering one of the most inaccessible and seldom-visited parts of Antarctica. Find a spot on deck as the Captain navigates carefully through glittering fields of frozen ocean, or rug up for a Zodiac cruise through the pack, keeping watch for elegant emperor penguins, sweet-faced Weddell seals resting on ice, and the unmistakable 'pouf' of an orca's exhalation. Embrace the spirit of exploration as your expedition team designs your voyage from day to day, bringing decades of experience to selecting the ideal sites based on the prevailing weather, ice conditions and wildlife opportunities.

## Days 14-15 Commonwealth Bay

"Seals and penguins on magic gondolas were the silent denizens of this dreamy Venice. In the soft glamour of the midsummer midnight sun, we were possessed by a rapturous wonder—the rare thrill of unreality." Douglas Mawson

For many expeditioners, approaching Commonwealth Bay evokes a profound sense of awe and humility. This is where Mawson and his men established their Main Base, on the shores of a 'beautiful, miniature harbour' at the foot of the Antarctic Ice Sheet. Imagine their dismay when they realised that their ice-free oasis lay directly in the path of fierce katabatic winds, which rushed like rapids off the Polar Plateau! Despite its unfortunate position, Main Base housed eighteen expedition members for up to two years in this bay Mawson dubbed the 'Home of the Blizzard'. Katabatic winds and ice permitting, we will make landfall on the storied shores of Cape Denison, where several of the huts of Mawson's Main Base still stand. The Magnetograph House and the Main Hut, where the men lived and worked, remain largely intact despite over a century of exposure to the elements. Bleached pine cladding bears witness to the passage of time, and ice drifts partially fill the huts, the past literally frozen in time. Scientific instruments and scattered personal items provide an intimate glance into the austere daily lives of Mawson and his men. In addition to being the site of Mawson's huts, Cape Denison provides a rare ice-free refuge for Antarctic wildlife, including nesting Adélie penguins,

snow petrels and Wilson's storm petrels. Weddell, elephant and leopard seals regularly haul out to rest on the rocky shores. You may like to wander along pebbly beaches, or perhaps ramble up a snow-covered ridge to a vantage point over this spectacularly monochrome landscape. Before leaving East Antarctica our Captain will attempt to manoeuvre us into position over the South Magnetic Pole. Spare a thought for Mawson who, accompanied by fellow Australian geologist T.W Edgeworth David and Scottish doctor Alistair Mackay, undertook a gruelling three month march to become the first to stand in the vicinity of the South Magnetic Pole in January 1909. Conveniently for us, the Pole has since migrated out to sea, so we can celebrate its attainment with a glass of bubbly in the comfort of the ship's bar!

## **Days 16-19 At Sea**

We leave the grandeur of the ice to the seals and penguins and head northwards, but our voyage is far from over. In the days ahead there is plenty of time to enjoy the magic of the Southern Ocean and the life that calls it home. If the mood takes you, join your expedition team in the lecture room for presentations and polar film showings, or meet your new travel mates in the bar, library or observation deck to reminisce on your Antarctic experiences. These days at sea also offer time and space to reflect on the emotions and special moments you've lived over the past two weeks. You may like to review your photos, jot some notes in a journal, mark your passage on a map, and reflect on your journey so far. As you approach the rugged New Zealand subantarctic islands you have a rare opportunity to spot the endemic white-capped mollymawk (a type of albatross) in flight. The largest of the mollymawk family, over ninety percent of its population breeds on the Auckland Islands. Keep an eye out also for the playful New Zealand sea lion and southern right whale, which are known to frolic in these waters.

## **Days 20-22 New Zealand's Subantarctic Islands**

Scattered across the Southern Ocean 465 kilometers (300 miles) south of New Zealand, these islands have been visited by Polynesian and Māori navigators for centuries, and are of great cultural and spiritual significance to Ngāi Tahu, the indigenous peoples of New Zealand's South Island. Here you have the opportunity to witness a finely tuned subantarctic ecosystem populated by unique endemic species such as the yellow-eyed penguin

(hoiho) and Campbell mollymawk.

## **Day 23 At Sea**

As your journey draws to a close, take some time to reflect on the experiences of the past few weeks. Perhaps take some time to organise your photos, jot some more notes in your journal or simply relax and soak up the ambiance on board as you farewell your travel mates . . . until next time! We hope you become ambassadors for Antarctica and tell your family, friends and colleagues about your journey to this magical place, advocating for its conservation and preservation so that they might one day visit the region to experience what you have been lucky to see and do here.

## **Day 24 Disembark Dunedin**

After breakfast, farewell your expedition team and fellow passengers as we all continue our onward journeys, hopefully with a newfound sense of the immense power of nature. Note: At the conclusion of the voyage, we do not recommend booking flights departing prior to 12.00 pm on the day of disembarkation in case there are delays.