



## TOUR INFORMATION FOR THE TASMAN SEA: A CRUISE AROUND AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND 2021

*These notes are designed to help you prepare for your tour. Please read carefully.*

**ENTERING AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND:** United Kingdom citizens will need six months validity on their passport, an onward or return air ticket and, as of July 2019, have to register for an Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) with the New Zealand Department of Immigration, as well as registering as an e-Visitor (ETA) with the Australian Department of Immigration, in order to enter New Zealand and Australia.

For Australia: An e-Visitor is valid for a year and is designed for people who live outside Australia and want to visit Australia for tourism for up to 3 months. The Australian e-Visitor service is free of charge when you apply using the official site of the Australian Department of Immigration at <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/evisitor-651>. If you don't have access to the internet please call the Australian High Commission in London for advice (tel: 020 7379 4334), or Trailfinders Visa Service (tel: 020 7084 6506).

For New Zealand: The New Zealand ETA is valid for 2 years and can be used for multiple visits for the purposes of tourism. Each visit has a maximum stay of six months. The New Zealand e-Visitor is not free of charge, and the official website is the New Zealand Department of Immigration at <https://www.etanewzealand.com/application-form/>. If you don't have access to the internet please call the New Zealand High Commission in London for advice (Tel: 020 7930 8422).

Citizens of other nations should contact their nearest New Zealand and Australian Embassies for entry requirements

Note: Upon entry into Auckland, Biosecurity New Zealand is very strict. Please make sure all footwear, tripod legs etc are spotless - free from any dirt or foreign material. Specific information can be found here: <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/enter/personal>

It is always a good idea to take a photocopy of your passport and air ticket with you when travelling abroad. They can prove invaluable in helping you get replacements if your originals are lost or stolen. Obviously you should keep the photocopies in a separate bag to the originals.

**ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE:** Princess Cruises will not allow you to take one of their shuttles between the airport and harbour if your flight time for your arrival/departure is under the 6hr minimum before/after your embarkation/disembarkation. In this case you will be obliged to organize your transfer by yourself (by taxi for example), but we highly recommend considering at least 6 hours between your flight and embarkation/disembarkation.

**RESERVING YOUR CABIN WITH PRINCESS CRUISES:** Your berth on this cruise should be booked over the telephone with Princess Cruises to make sure your booking is added to our group number (see details below). All cabins will work equally well with the planned activities. Price depends largely on cabin class with cabin base prices beginning at about USD \$2200 (including Port Fees). *Note that payment to Princess is due 29 October 2020.*

Note: You should telephone the UK-based Princess Reservation Departments on 0843-373-0333 (UK). When you connect with a Princess reservations agent, begin by telling them the following (including our agent's name) before booking your cabin.

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It's best to book your cabin through the number above and not through a standard travel agency or website such as Kayak, Expedia, Travelocity, or over the Princess website

- a. I'm booking into a group.
- b. Our agent is Melissa Mesker
- c. Group Name: **WINGS BIRDING**
- d. Our group code is **TPN**
- e. Our cruise number or voyage code is **H105**
- f. Ship: Sapphire Princess

### For reference:

Cruise Dates: **27 January-9 February 2021**

Cruise Route: Australia & New Zealand. From Melbourne (Australia) to Melbourne (Australia)

Ship: Sapphire Princess

**Choosing a cabin on the Sapphire Princess (Open Bow):** The closest interior (non-view) cabins to the birding spot are on Deck 5, in the front of the ship, between the elevator and the laundry. If you are worried about the movement of the ship then more stable interior cabins are on Deck 5 near the Art Gallery, though these are also near the Casino and may be noisy. There are also interior cabins mid-ship on Deck 10.

If you prefer a more expensive cabin with an ocean view the closest cabins to the birding location are on Deck 8, in the bow of the ship. Cabins on deck 8 mid-ship are also close to the birding location and more stable than in the front.

### Additional information to have at hand before calling to make your booking:

- Your name(s) as they appear on your passports (first, middle and last)
- Your date(s) of birth
- Captain's Circle Member numbers (for past Princess Cruises passengers) for all persons who may have them
- Phone numbers, mailing addresses, and email addresses for all persons who do not have Captain's Circle member numbers
- Preferred bed configuration (queen vs. twin) for all staterooms – please note for cabins of 3 or more bed configuration may not allow a queen bed. Princess can provide specific bedding configuration details for each cabin as needed.
- Family stateroom configurations planned in advance (i.e., for families exceeding 4 persons; maximum stateroom occupancy is 4) or ask about Family Suite accommodations for up to 8 passengers.
- Dining selections (early, first, or late Traditional Dining, or Anytime dining) **Note: Select "Anytime" dining.**
- Any Special Requirements, including but not limited to: special dietary requests like food allergies and dietary restrictions (i.e., vegetarian, kosher, vegan, etc.), or medical considerations.
- Any birthdays, anniversaries or other special occasions that you would like celebrated while onboard

During the cruise we visit both New Zealand and Australia, so every participant on the trip needs to make sure they are allowed to travel to both countries.

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**SECOND ID:** When boarding the cruise ship, the Princess Cruise staff will keep your passport until the end of the cruise (and present it to the immigration service at each landing). That means that during the land excursions, you will travel with your cabin key replacing your ID on the ship. It is highly recommended you bring a second ID which has a photograph (i.e. Drivers' license) in case you need to prove your identity for any reason.

**ARRIVALS:** We strongly advise participants to arrive in Melbourne at least a day before the tour starts. This will allow you time to rest and to start to acclimate.

**TRANSFER BETWEEN AIRPORT AND HARBOUR:** If you participate in the pre-cruise extension around Melbourne, you will travel with the group and your leader to the ship and board together. If you don't participate in the extension, you will have to arrange your transfer from Melbourne airport to the harbour, and we highly recommend you to do that through Princess Cruises.

At the end of the cruise, the transfer to Melbourne airport is not included in the tour price. If you fly directly home after the cruise, we recommend you organise your transfer to the airport through Princess Cruises. It's cheaper and easier to do it this way.

If you participate in the Tasmania post-tour extension, a transfer to Hobart airport at the end of the extension is included in the package price.

**CURRENCY:** The currency of New Zealand is the New Zealand Dollar. Credit cards (Mastercard, American Express, Visa) are accepted by many businesses throughout New Zealand, with Visa the most widely accepted. Most gas stations, cafés, and restaurants accept credit cards, but cash is useful for smaller items such as snacks or drinks in some of our more remote destinations. Cash can easily be withdrawn at banks or ATMs. Most retail outlets do not accept overseas currency or travelers checks; most banks can change foreign currency and travellers checks, but the best rates are often those at exchange centers in airports.

In Australia the currency is the Australian dollar. ATMs (automatic cash dispensing machines) are the easiest and cheapest way of obtaining cash. All you will need is your bank card and PIN number. Payment by credit card is widely accepted in Australia, with Visa and MasterCard being preferred over American Express. Note that many vendors in Australia may not accept credit cards lacking a chip and pin (common everywhere except the US).

Our tour price includes all travel, hotel, and main meal costs, so you need to bring only enough money to cover items of a personal nature such as laundry, drinks, postcards, souvenirs, etc.

Note: Traveller's checks are not recommended as they are increasingly difficult to cash.

**ALTITUDE:** We'll spend most of our time at sea level and at altitudes below approximately 3,000 feet, so altitude sickness will not be a concern during the tour and extensions.

**CLIMATE:** Australia's climate in January generally involves daytime highs around 80-84°F, although in Tasmania it will likely be roughly 10 degrees cooler. Rain is generally unlikely in January, but occasionally the temperatures can soar to the low 90's during the day.

The weather in New Zealand can change rapidly, particularly at sites near the coast. Generally, we should experience mild to warm weather, but at times it can be cold, wet, and windy, especially on the pelagic trips. Summer (December to February) is generally warm (68-86°F); spring (September to November) is cooler but changeable (50-77°F). At any season, even mid-summer, the weather can be cool, especially in the South and Stewart Islands, and rain is possible at any time.

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**PACE OF THE TOUR:** The tour starts after meeting on the cruise ship in Melbourne harbour. The tour is divided into two different types of birding: the sailing days and the land excursions days. The location of the group for birding while on board the ship will depend on the weather conditions and time of the day. This will be explained by your leader during the first meeting. When sailing, the leader will indicate exactly where and when he will be birding, and you can join for him as long as you want: for just a couple of hours if you also want to enjoy some of the activities offered by the cruise line, or full day if you don't want to miss any seabirding action. Past participants have often employed the use of a small 3-legged folding stool to make the deck vigils more comfortable. Note that when we bird from the sides of the ship due to wind or other conditions there are often deck chairs, but at the bow we have to stand. There are many brands to choose from, but folk have had good success with the Walkstool 65.

Because of the high latitude there is plenty of daylight, and because of the nature of the birding being out at the crack of dawn is not a prerequisite. During the sailing days, one or both leaders are usually on deck birding from near dawn to 18:00 and you can join them when and as long as you want. There may of course be special areas during which we'll want to be on deck regardless of the time. The leaders will brief you on these well in advance.

For the land excursions, the whole group will meet half an hour before the official landing time to be able to leave the ship quickly as a group and have as much as possible on our land excursions. We usually leave just after breakfast and depart for a day of birding and/or travel with box lunches and a supply of snacks (fruit, cookies, etc.) and drinks to keep us going. Most of the walking is on level to gently sloping terrain, and there are no long hikes; we do a lot of birding from in or near the vehicle.

Note: on occasions weather (or other uncontrollable circumstances) may force the last-minute cancellation of a land excursion. In most of these cases a refund won't be available. This happens rarely but is worth mentioning.

**MELBOURNE EXTENSION:** The general pace of this extension will be easy to moderate. Most of our walks will last no more than a few hours, in easy to moderate conditions; some trails will be wet if there has been rain recently. Our days will often last from early morning (typically leaving the motel around 07:30 each morning) until late afternoon or early evening; our lunches will typically be picnics or in local cafes or bakeries.

**TASMANIA EXTENSION:** This extension will likewise be easy to moderate in intensity, with the longest walks being no more than a mile. Most birding will be done from country roadsides, or wide trails and there should be no steep or difficult hikes. As it will be summer we will have some early mornings so as to be in place shortly after dawn, with picnic or local café lunches.

**MELALEUCA EXTENSION:** This one-day extension is quite easy from a physicality standpoint. In the morning, we will head to the airport to board a scenic prop plane that will take us out to the field station at Melaleuca. Once there we will have a few hours to explore the immediate environs, walking on marked trails and old roadbeds. We'll board the plane in the late afternoon and return to Hobart for dinner.

**HEALTH: It is essential that you contact your own doctor to obtain the latest information on the regions you are visiting.** Please contact your doctor well in advance of your tour's departure as some medication must be initiated weeks before the period of possible exposure.

It is recommended that you are up-to-date on routine vaccinations including protection against Hepatitis A.

There are no major health risks in New Zealand or Australia. No immunisations are required for visitors unless they have visited other countries enroute.

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Tap water is safe to drink in New Zealand and Australia and can be used to fill water bottles for daytime use. Imodium or Pepto Bismol in tablet form can be recommended as the best treatment for diarrhoea.

**Insects:** Bring a strong repellent for protection against mosquitoes, sand flies and leeches. Many residents of New Zealand recommend citronella oil as a deterrent against sand flies, while any DEET-based repellent should suffice against mosquitoes. New Zealand has no snakes, and poisonous spiders are very rare and almost never encountered.

Since it may be impossible to obtain personal medications while on tour, please bring what you will need.

Princess Cruises emphasize keeping healthy while cruising and many Purell hand disinfectants are provided throughout the ship. Unfortunately, having 2,000+ customers onboard plus a crew of over 1,000 means it's always possible to catch something, and we recommend bringing cough and cold medications.

For further information on health advice refer to the Medical Advisory Services for Travellers Abroad website [www.masta-travel-health.com](http://www.masta-travel-health.com)

**SEASICKNESS:** Princess ships are extremely stable, and seasickness is very rarely an issue during these cruises. Even people very sensitive to seasickness are rarely sick on Princess cruises. If you know you get seasick, or if you haven't been on a pelagic for some time and suspect there is a chance of getting seasick, you should consider some sort of medication. It is best to avoid alcohol the night before a pelagic, and you should eat at least a light breakfast that morning, as it often seems better to have a little something in your stomach. Many medications suggest taking a dose the night before the trip. Ginger snaps or ginger ale often work, as ginger itself has anti-nausea properties. Coca Cola or other caffeinated drinks can help fight the drowsiness that often accompanies some seasickness remedies.

**ACCOMMODATION:** During the cruise, you can choose between several levels of accommodation aboard the ship: see <http://www.princess.com/learn/ships/np/staterooms/index.jsp> to learn more.

During the Melbourne pre-cruise, we use comfortable hotels and accommodation, all offering large rooms, wi-fi, tv, and the usual services provided by modern hotels.

The post-tour extension in Tasmania will utilize an array of hotels. From large and modern airport hotels to more rural but still well-appointed sites all our lodgings will be comfortable and will include ensuite bathrooms and wi-fi (note though that on one or possibly two nights as we venture further west into Australia the wi-fi may be of poor quality).

**ELECTRICITY:** On the ship, current is 220V AC. The outlets in your rooms are the flat pin variety. Most rooms have two outlets; the obvious one at the desk in the room but also a second behind the TV (which may or may not require unplugging the TV). If you have more than four items you'll need to charge, it's recommended to bring a plug-in that will give you more outlets. You may find the following website helpful: <http://www.power-plugs-sockets.com>.

**FOOD:** An impressive variety of food is served on board ship. Food is served 24 hours a day, and there is no obligation to eat all meals with the group. For lunch, the easiest option is usually to eat at one of the buffets or have a pizza or sandwich. The buffet option is available for dinner as well, though some participants may opt to have a more formal dining experience at one of the ship's restaurants. Each day the leader will let you know where and when the group will meet for the daily list round-up, and at which restaurant the group will take dinner.

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Note: **Be sure to select “Anytime dining”** when registering for your cabin booking with Princess Cruises.

The food on this tour is of a very good to excellent standard. Local dairy products and organic produce are known for their freshness and taste, while the humble fish-and-chip shop is the typical fast food outlet. Regional treats include Gingernuts and ANZAC biscuits, meat and veggie pies, and sticky date pudding or pavlova (“pav”) for dessert.

On most on-shore days during the cruise picnic lunches will consist of make-your-own sandwich fare.

Our tours are all-inclusive and no refunds can be issued for any tour meals participants choose to miss. While we will try to do all we can to accommodate the requirements of all participants, please note that we cannot guarantee all causes of food allergies can be avoided at every destination. Many restaurants offer set menus and are unable to accommodate all special requests within a group. Thus, participants with significant food allergies or special dietary needs should bring appropriate foods with them for those times when their needs can, regretfully, not be accommodated. Our tours are carefully scheduled to insure the best possible birding experience and although the leaders will do all they can to make sure the group eats at a reasonable time, sometimes early or late lunches and/or evening meals cannot be avoided. Any participants who need to eat at specific times may need to bring supplemental food with them.

**DRINKS ON BOARD:** Princess offers, at no extra charge, water, iced tea, or lemonade. *When on board, we do not cover the cost of any other drinks.* Therefore, any other drinks such as soft drinks, mineral water, or any kind of alcoholic beverage will be charged to you. Luggage is scanned every time we go on board, and only one bottle of wine, for the entire cruise, is accepted per passenger. If you bring more than one bottle (or another bottle at another landing) Princess will charge you a corkage fee.

**INTERNET:** Internet is available on the cruise ship but is quite expensive and often very slow. Internet will possibly be available on some land excursions if time permits, but birding is obviously the priority. If you use internet off ship, be sure to re-board with plenty of time to spare. The Princess often has a special offer price to access the internet for the duration of the cruise which must be purchased in advanced via their booking form.

**LAUNDRY SERVICE:** The cheapest way to do your laundry during the cruise is to use the laundry machines available on most decks. Cost for soap, laundry and drying is around USD \$7.50 for a full machine. Another (more expensive) option is to leave your laundry for the cruise staff to pick up and launder.

**DRESS:** Informal dress is acceptable everywhere, but a nicer outfit is useful if attending more formal dinners on your own or with the group at the end of the cruise.

**CLOTHING:** The following items are basic:

Sweater	Sun hat
Light-weight trousers	Warm jacket/fleece
Shirts for warm and cool weather	Gloves and warm hat
Lightweight, waterproof hiking boots/shoes	
Water-proof trousers (useful for windy conditions)	
Good waterproof jacket (preferably breathable Goretex or equivalent)	

As they weigh almost nothing and are easy to pack, we recommend silk thermal underwear and a “no-frills” nylon shell down vest. Basically, something that will cut out the wind.

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**MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS:** Please bring the following:

Notebook and pencil	Alarm clock
Rucksack/Day pack	Wrist watch
Portable chair (to sit during seawatching)	Sunglasses & Sunscreen (vital)
Head lamp or small flashlight with extra batteries	Insect repellent
Laundry soap (also sold on board ship)	Washcloth
Folding travel umbrella	Ear plugs (if you are a light sleeper)
Small thermos (to take some coffee/tea on deck)	Personal medication
Zip-loc bags of various sizes (to bring cookies from the restaurant to the deck)	
Water bottle or canteen (they serve filtered potable water on board so you can easily refill; but they charge for bottled water).	

**Optional:** A telescope and tripod will be very useful for seawatching; spare binoculars and spare spectacles (in case of loss or damage), field guide, swimwear, corkscrew.

**LEADER'S EQUIPMENT:** The leader will have a telescope, basic first aid kit, maps, copies of the more important field guides and references, and birdsong playback equipment.

**LUGGAGE:** Our Final Information document, which will be sent to you approximately three weeks before departure, will give details about baggage weight and size restrictions imposed by the airline used for this tour.

If possible, please bring your luggage in soft-sided bags or cases (rather than large hard 'Samsonite'-type suitcases) as these pack more easily into our vehicles during the tour. Please note that on many tours there are no porters to carry your luggage so please ensure that **no bag is so heavy that you are unable to lift and carry it yourself**. As a general rule, in addition to using your luggage labels, it is a good idea to fix identification to the *inside* of each piece of luggage.

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Scenery and memory shots will be plentiful and simple to obtain, but birds are difficult to photograph. Although there will be occasions when bird photography is possible, a birding tour is not normally the best means of pursuing this aim. Digiscoping is perfectly compatible with the tour, though you must bring your own telescope; the leader's scope will not be available for this purpose. If you are a serious photographer, please contact us for further information about photographic possibilities. Be certain to bring as many memory cards as you think you will use, as it may be difficult to find precisely what you need on short notice. Camera equipment should be packed in moisture- and dust-proof bags as a precaution.

**MAILING POSTCARDS:** It is possible to mail postcards onboard the ship.

**TRANSPORT:** Most of our land transportation will be in minibuses. A rotational system will be used so that all participants have opportunities to sit near the front of the bus.

**SMOKING:** Smoking or vaping is not allowed in the vehicle or when the group is gathered for meals, checklists etc. If you are sharing a room with a non-smoker, please do not smoke in the room. If you smoke in the field, we ask that you do so well away and downwind from the group if possible.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE:** Travel insurance is essential and we insist that you take out suitable cover as soon as your tour is booked. If you are bringing expensive optical equipment or other valuable items, please make sure they are also adequately insured on your home contents policy, as most travel insurance policies do not cover very expensive individual items. You may wish to consult your insurance broker regarding coverage. Please also ensure that your policy covers you in the event of a medical emergency, cancellation of a trip or severe delays. Medical costs abroad can often be extremely expensive.

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Please note that Sunbird is not liable for any medical or repatriation costs resulting from injury or illness during a tour or for covering any costs resulting from a flight delay such as extra hotel accommodation.

If you wish, insurance can be arranged by Helen Fisher, Bullerwell Independent Insurance Brokers, 13 Goldington Road, Bedford, MK40 3JY. Tel: 01234-866964. Please contact Helen for a quote and she will send the schedule directly to you.

**TOUR DELAYS:** On rare occasions a trip must be delayed due to severe weather, flight delays, or other reasons. If we are delayed, we will do our best to cancel the relevant forward bookings and apply the refunds to the extra costs at our current location. However, the uncovered costs of the delay, if any, are the responsibility of the participant. These extra costs are sometimes recoverable on travel insurance policies. Check with your provider.

**TIPPING:** All tour-based tips are included in the tour price. These include tips to local guides, drivers, hotel porters, and waiters and waitresses when we have group meals together in restaurants. You only need to pay tips for personal services such as room service or drinks from the bar.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

#### Field Guides

Menkhorst, P., Rogers, D., Clarke, R., Davies, J., Marsack, P. & K. Franklin. 2017. *The Australian Bird Guide*. Bloomsbury. A wonderful field guide, with superb plates and excellent text and maps! A bit heavy just for a few days in Australia but the **recommended guide for the trip**.

Howell, S. N. G., & K. Zufelt. 2019. *Oceanic Birds of the World: A Photo Guide*. Princeton. **Highly Recommended**

Onley, D. and P. Scofield. 2007. *Albatrosses, Petrels and Shearwaters of the World*. Helm Field Guide. A well done field guide for all tubenoses of the World.

Robertson, H., B. Heather, and D. Onley 2015. *Hand Guide to the Birds of New Zealand*. Oxford UP. A portable field guide condensed from the original work by the same authors listed above; includes just the colour plates, maps, and descriptions of all species occurring in New Zealand. **Recommended guide for the trip**.

#### Other Guides:

Braby, Michael F. *The Complete Field Guide to Butterflies of Australia*. 2004. CSIRO Publishing, Melbourne. ISBN 13: [9780643090279](https://www.csiro.au/9780643090279). An excellent new field guide to Australia's butterflies with full colour plates opposite text and maps. Recommended.

Cogger, Harold G. *Reptiles and Amphibians of Australia*. 2000. 6th edition. Reed New Holland, Sydney/Cornell University Press, New York. ISBN 187633433-9. A superb and comprehensive guide but too bulky for field use.

Cronin, Leonard. *Cronin's Key Guide to Australian Wildflowers*. 2008. Allen and Unwin. ISBN: 9781741751116

Dawson, J., and R. Luca, 2000. *Nature Guide to the New Zealand Forest*. Godwit/Random House. Excellent introduction to New Zealand's forest flora with a broad overview of forest birds and other fauna.

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Holliday, Ivan. *A Field Guide to Australian Trees*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition 2002. New Holland Publishers. ISBN 9781876334796.

Hutching, G. 1998. *The Natural World of New Zealand*. Penguin. An excellent reference covering mammals, birds, fish, invertebrates, insects, plants, and ecology.

Menkhorst, Peter and Frank Knight. *A Field Guide to the Mammals of Australia*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. 2011. Oxford University Press, Melbourne. ISBN 13: 9780195573954. A superb field guide. Recommended.

Shirihai, H. and B. Jarrett. 2006. *Whales, Dolphins, and Other Marine Mammals of the World*. Princeton University Press. A wonderful field guide and highly recommended if you are interested in sea mammals!

**FINAL INFORMATION:** Final information with instructions for meeting the group, motel addresses, etc, and your international air tickets for the tour will be sent to you about three weeks before departure. If you have any questions about any aspect of the tour, please contact us.