



Windstar Announces Sailings Down Under in 2020 & 2021: Australia & New Zealand Cruises



What's Newsworthy: First-ever Australia- and New Zealand-intensive itineraries for the small ship cruise line; sailings on board newly reimagined Star Breeze; award-winning Signature Expeditions program expands to the region

Seattle, WA, July 9, 2019 — Boutique cruise line [Windstar Cruises](#) is pointing its compass “Down Under” to Australia and New Zealand for the 2020/2021 winter/spring season. The series of sailings will take place on what will be the newly renovated *Star Breeze*, an elegant, all-suite ship with balcony and ocean views, carrying just 312 guests. Windstar’s team of travel experts scouted and hand-picked the perfect ports for first-ever immersive itineraries to Australia and New Zealand.

“In our concerted and ongoing effort to be the small ship leader in destination delivery, I’m thrilled to introduce a completely different sailing region that further expands Windstar’s global footprint. Australia and New Zealand cruises will allow us to present these destinations in the most authentic way possible,” says Windstar President John Delaney. “We’ve had a tremendous focus on adding new destinations in recent years, with an 85 percent increase in new ports of call. Announcing cruises to an entirely new continent on small ship voyages, as only Windstar does them, is a major move for the company and exciting news for our guests who are seeking out new places to explore.”

The Australia and New Zealand cruises will be the second region where Windstar launches their award-winning [Signature Expeditions](#). The program delivers intimate, expedition-style adventures and active enrichment, with kayaks and Zodiacs launched right from the ship in remote bays and hidden harbors. The rugged coastlines of the region will provide the perfect back-drop for the adventurous *Signature Expeditions*, which are currently available on Windstar’s Alaska itineraries. A team of onboard expedition leaders sail on the cruise from beginning to end, providing in-depth insight and sharing an

academic understanding of the destination while guiding optional shore excursions. For example, in Tasmania, expedition leaders will show guests the beauty of Freycinet National Park, one of the island's most spectacular locations, on a guided hike to scenic Wineglass Bay.

With this debut, vast and diverse Australia will be more accessible than ever thanks to sailings like a Cairns to Melbourne itinerary, with stops in some of the country's most iconic destinations including the Great Barrier Reef. "Our cruises in Australia will deliver both the wild and sophisticated sides, exploring remote reaches like Middle Percy Island, as well as offering an overnight in cosmopolitan Sydney with time to see the famous sites there including the UNESCO Opera House, the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and Bondi Beach," says Melissa Witsoe, Product Manager. Witsoe and team scouted many of the new ports personally to hand-craft customized excursions and curated experiences. "Cairns to Melbourne is really rare as an itinerary — it's a unique offering in the cruise world, and one of the ways Windstar will approach sailing in this region differently."

Windstar's long-awaited return to New Zealand cruising will be met with much fanfare, thanks to itineraries like a round trip Auckland sailing. "It's incredibly comprehensive taking in both North and South Islands, all the major cities and quaint port towns," says Witsoe. Guests will enjoy overnights in Wellington and Christchurch, plus scenic fjord cruising and visits to smaller places like Art Deco-inspired Napier, a jumping-off spot for the much-lauded wine-producing region of Hawke's Bay. Other shore excursion highlights include the chance to experience an authentic Hāngi meal and Maori show of traditional song and dance in Rotorua in the Hells Gate region, while in Dunedin, a wildlife cruise includes a farm visit with local Kiwi characters who are at the forefront of local conservation efforts.

For guests seeking the best of both worlds, *Star Breeze* will offer two cruises visiting a mix of both countries with sightings of kiwis, koalas, and kangaroos in store when sailing between Auckland and Sydney. This cruise takes in classic locations like Melbourne with an overnight, and small ports like Phillip Island with its hidden harbor, where Windstar guests can witness the region's rare penguins in their natural habitat. A postcard-worthy excursion includes a high-speed Catamaran cruise to Whitehaven Beach in Whitsunday Islands National Park for lazy hours on a beach considered by many to be one of the world's most beautiful.

Another major draw for these six new itineraries sailing throughout Australia and New Zealand is getting the chance to sail on the transformed 312-passenger *Star Breeze*. This all-suite ship will soon undergo a comprehensive renovation as part of Windstar's [\\$250 Million Dollar Star Plus Initiative](#), a transformation of all three Star Class ships. In addition to a gorgeous new pool and surrounding deck area, *Star Breeze* will debut two new dining venues for a total of five, offer a redesigned world-class spa and fitness center, and 50 new suites featuring attractive new floor plans, and a 3-bedroom/3.5-bathroom Grand Owner's Suite, ideal for family travel.

Australia and New Zealand are known for remarkable food and wine, and as guests of the *Official Cruise Line of the James Beard Foundation*, Windstar cruisers will enjoy the finest cuisine in the region. Expect dishes from James Beard-affiliated chefs, immersive and delicious shore excursions, and fresh dining using products from local farmers, fishermen, vintners, and more.

Bookings are now open for Windstar's Australia and New Zealand sailings in 2020 and 2021 with a total of nine departure dates available. Six new cruises Down Under set sail aboard *Star Breeze* and run from November 2020 through February 2021 beginning at \$4,599 per guest, double occupancy.

Additionally, the 148-passenger *Wind Spirit* is offering the rare opportunity to experience the South Pacific trade winds on one of the world's most iconic sailing ships. Currently based year-round in Tahiti, *Wind Spirit* is expanding its South Pacific reach in winter/spring 2020 and will also visit Australia.

Reservations are open for *Wind Spirit's* two seven-day ocean crossings with plenty of time to enjoy the open seas from [New Caledonia to Australia](#) and a 16-day voyage from [Australia to Indonesia](#), featuring visits to Cairns, Port Douglas, Thursday Island, Yirrkala, and Darwin along Australia's northern coast. Cruises are available as soon as February 2020 on *Wind Spirit* starting at \$1,299 per guest for the *Coral Sea Crossing*.

To learn more about authentic small ship cruising with Windstar, named to the 2019 *Condé Nast Traveler's* Gold List, contact a travel advisor or Windstar Cruises at 1-800-258-7245, or visit www.windstarcruises.com.

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Editor's note: for open download of images visit: <https://windstarcruises.webdamdb.com/bp/#/assets>.

Itinerary Addendum

Windstar's Australia and New Zealand winter/spring season in 2020/2021 aboard the 312-passenger Star Breeze includes six new 11- to 15-day itineraries with authentic local experiences in each port:

[***Hidden Indonesia & Great Barrier Reef Exploration***](#) beckons beach lovers to beautiful Bali and allows guests to experience the best of expedition cruising on a 12- or 13-day journey that meanders from Benoa, (Bali), Indonesia to Cairns, Australia, and includes small ports that few ships can reach, like Thursday Island and Lizard Island.

[***Deep Dive Down Under: The Great Barrier Reef & Beyond***](#), offered in both 2020 and 2021 this diver's choice sailing features a rare, 11-day sailing from Cairns to Melbourne, Australia (or reverse) that gives guests the opportunity to snorkel in the Great Barrier Reef, snuggle koalas in Mooloolaba, taste award-winning wines in the Yarra Valley, and watch the sunset over the Opera House in Sydney.

[***Penguin Parades to Pinot Noir: the Wild Side of Australia & Tasmania***](#) includes 13 days sailing from Melbourne to Sydney, Australia, seeing remarkable rock formations, historic convict camps, and beautiful white-sand beaches, as well as touring the Barossa Valley wine region. Guests get to interact with Tasmania's incredible wildlife, from penguins to wombats, with three port calls to the infamous island, including Port Arthur, a 19th century penal settlement; Wineglass Bay for swimming and snorkeling; and an overnight in eclectic and picturesque Hobart, gateway to Mount Wellington, the UNESCO Tasmanian wilderness, and Antarctica.

[***Walkabout With Tassies, Aussies & Kiwis***](#) presents the best of Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand on a 15-day journey from Sydney to Auckland. This classic cruise includes memorable moments such as Phillip Island, where hundreds of penguins come ashore at sunset after a day's fishing and waddle to their sand dune burrows (seen from a viewing platform), as well as an immersive stop at the filming location for *The Lord of the Rings*.

[Comprehensive New Zealand](#) is a 15-day round trip from Auckland that goes to both the North and South Island, including an overnight in Wellington. There are opportunities to sample wines from the Marlborough region, visit the Cardboard Cathedral in Christchurch, and go diving on Stewart Island.

[Kiwis, Koalas & Kangaroos](#) spends 14 days sailing from Auckland, New Zealand to Sydney, Australia showcasing a combination of native and contemporary cultures, rugged natural beauty, pristine beaches, local wildlife encounters, and some of the Southern Hemisphere's top wine and seafood. Highlights include overnights in Sydney and Melbourne, and cruising Fiordland National Park.

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Media Contact:

Mary Schimmelman

PR@windstarcruises.com

About Windstar Cruises

Windstar Cruises operates a six-ship fleet of masted sailing ships and all-suite motor ships cruising throughout Europe, the Caribbean, Costa Rica and the Panama Canal, Asia, Alaska and British Columbia, Canada and New England, Tahiti and the South Pacific, Mexico and U.S. Coastal, and newly launched Australia and New Zealand cruises. Windstar's fleet is the market leader in small ship cruising with a total of 1,242 passenger berths calling on off-the-beaten-path and popular ports in nearly 80 countries. The boutique line carries less than 350 guests on each sailing and takes travelers on cruises that are 180 degrees from ordinary. Windstar is known for immersive experiences and destination authenticity, port-intensive itineraries, exceptional award-winning service, and an innovative culinary program with culinary-themed cruise as the Official Cruise Line of the James Beard Foundation. Windstar Cruises is a part of Xanterra Travel Collection, an award-winning, globally diversified travel company offering once in a lifetime experiences in some of the most beautiful and iconic places on earth.

