



Southern Explorer – Stewart Island, Bluff Oyster Festival & Catlin's Coast (15th – 24th May 2021)

PLEASE CONTACT US FOR A CUSTOMISED PRICE IF YOU ARE NOT DEPARTING FROM WANGANUI.

Day 1) (Sat 15th)

Wanganui / Home – Invercargill

Depart Wanganui racecourse at 7.30am and travel to Levin for some freshly baked morning tea. From here travel into Wellington airport in time to catch out 1pm flight to Dunedin. After we have collected our luggage, we board the coach and head south down SH1 to Invercargill. We arrive at our great accommodation in time for dinner before resting our head for the night.

➤ Accommodation: **Ascot Park Hotel** (0800 272 687)

Day 2) (Sun 16th)

Invercargill – Stewart Island

After a scrumptious breakfast we take the short drive down to Bluff to catch the ferry over to Stewart Island. The 1-hour journey across the Foveaux Strait is on board a purpose-built catamaran and the friendly and helpful crew on board will provide an informative commentary and point out many places of interest as well as any wildlife.

On arrival at Halfmoon Bay wharf we are met by the crew of **Affinity** who will be hosting us for our **Stewart Island Cruise**. Once onboard Affinity you will be shown to your cabins, then it is time to join Stewart Island Experience for a **Village and Bays Tour**. During this tour you will explore Oban and the surrounding bays in a minibus, guides will share their local knowledge of the history and environment of Stewart Island and you will gain an insight into New Zealand's southernmost community. During your tour, there is plenty of time available for photo stops and short walks. Highlights include Lee Bay, the gateway to Rakiura National Park, beautiful Horseshoe Bay and stunning views of Paterson Inlet from Observation Rock. When the tour is finished you will return to Affinity and lunch will be served.

After lunch it is back ashore to walk to Ackers Point (approximately 2-hours return) or you can choose to enjoy time to yourself around the township. We all meet back onboard Affinity for afternoon tea as we cruise to our overnight anchorage in Paterson Inlet.

Day 3) (Mon 17th)

Stewart Island Cruising

After breakfast, we will cruise to one of our secret spots and you will have the opportunity to fish for Stewart Island 'Blue Cod'. On completion of fishing we cruise back into the shore to walk from Horseshoe Bay to Port William where the vessel will be awaiting your return and with fresh fish on the menu for dinner. If you prefer to stay onboard to enjoy this peace of paradise you are more than welcome.

Day 4) (Tues 18th)

Stewart Island Cruising

Today we visit the outstanding **Ulva Island bird sanctuary** which is a highlight of Stewart Island for many people. Keep your eyes and ears open as you may well see and hear Saddlebacks, Tui, Bellbirds, Stewart Island Robins, Kiwis, Kakas and Keas.

Ulva Goodwillie, your guide, who is named after the Island, is a direct descendant of the first Maori peoples of Stewart Island. She is passionate and truly knowledgeable about this special place and would love to share it with you. She provides you with a unique experience, learning about native flora and fauna from a local Stewart Island perspective. We will drop the guide back at the main island then cruise to an overnight anchorage.

Day 5) (Wed 19th)

Stewart Island Cruising

Today we will cruise into Glory Cove and look at the salmon and mussel farms while explaining the processes these types of marine farms go through.

We will then cruise to Millers Beach in Paterson Inlet where you have the opportunity to go ashore for a short stroll to the old whaler's repair base, which was used by the Antarctic whalers. There are sign posted history boards here to show you this important part of whaling history.

We will take a short cruise to Kaipipi Bay where you have the chance to go ashore to walk through the native bush back to Golden Bay (this is a 4-hour walk) where Affinity will be awaiting your return.

Day 6) (Thur 20th)

Stewart Island Cruising

Today after breakfast we cruise to Port Adventure where you will go ashore to wander and explore the beautiful sandy beaches and inlets – you never know what treasures you may find washed up on the beach.

Day 7) (Fri 21st)

Stewart Island - Invercargill

As today is your last day onboard Affinity we reflect on the adventures we have shared as we leisurely cruise back to Halfmoon Bay stopping on the way for another nature walk. The vessel and crew bid you farewell at 1500 hours when you board the fast ferry back to the mainland where board our coach and head back to Invercargill.

➤ Accommodation: **Ascot Park Hotel (0800 272 687)**

Day 8) (Sat 22nd)

Bluff Oyster Festival

The salty seaside township of Bluff is home to this festive event and brought to you by the locals of Bluff with a uniquely Southland flavour. There is a large range of entertainment such as numerous street stalls, live music, the oyster opening and eating competitions.

Complementing the sumptuous Bluff Oyster is a variety of other seafoods available such as Crayfish, Paua, Scallops, Salmon, Blue Cod and Whitebait. There is also local fare that will tempt any taste buds like the sought after muttonbird, venison, lamb, beef and pork, all washed down with great southern ales and a selection of New Zealand wines.

To ensure you can make the most of this day you will be given a return bus ticket which will pick you up and drop you off is at our accommodation at various times throughout the day, so you can choose how long to spend in Bluff. We all meet back for dinner to swap stories of this great unique day in the deep south.

**PLEASE NOTE – due to the cancelation of this year's festival as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, ticket allocations for the 2021 festival have not been done at the time of printing this itinerary, therefore cannot be guaranteed. We have done everything possible to secure tickets and if it does not work out, we have a fantastic option B for today that will certainly involve oysters!*

Day 9) (Sun 23rd)

Invercargill - Catlin's Coast – Dunedin

Today is a real day of exploring as we travel the spectacular Catlin's coast. you will experience the world of native forests fringed by high cliffs, deserted sandy beaches, sparkling bays, cascading waterfalls, picturesque lighthouses and even a petrified forest. These environments are home to an array of fauna, from native birds, to seals, sea lions, dolphins, and penguins. The Catlins' natural landscapes are enthralling, and the wildlife is extraordinary, and we will be seeing the best of this hidden gem.

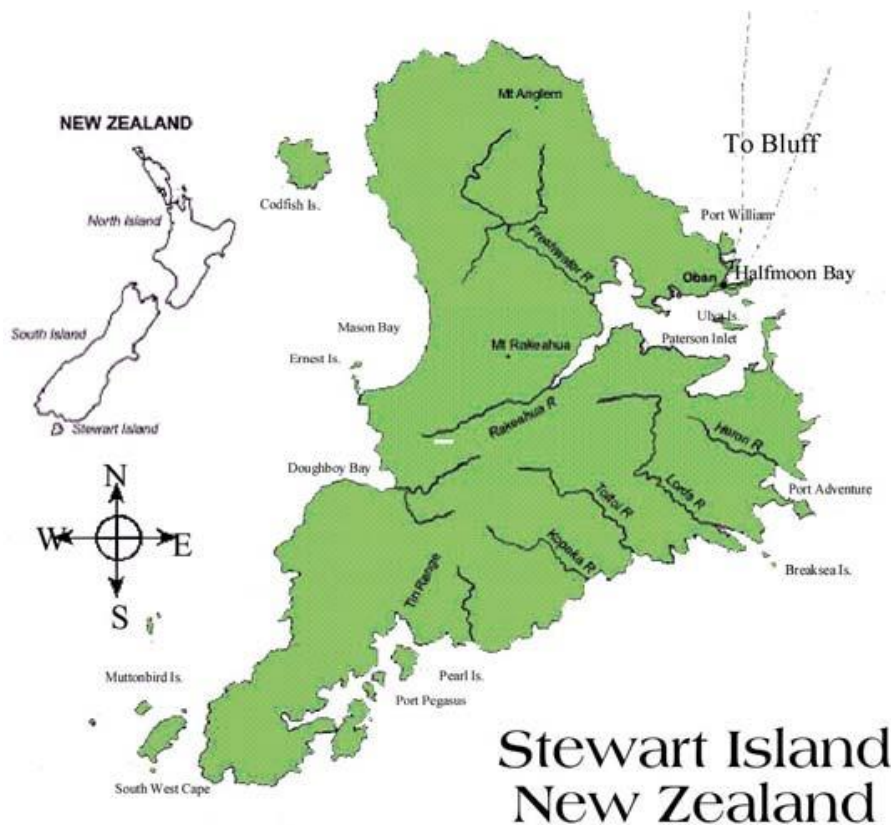
We arrive in our great central Dunedin hotel in time for our last dinner together and a toast to this amazing trip exploring the lower reaches of the beautiful south.

➤ Accommodation: **The Victoria Hotel** (0800 266 336)

Day 10) (Mon 24th)

Dunedin – Home

After a relaxing start to the day we board the coach and head out to the Dunedin airport to catch our 11am flight back to Wellington, where you will be transferred back to Wanganui.



Total cost: \$5775.00

Deposit: \$1000 Due November 30th

Final payment: Due March 15th

Covers:

- All coach travel as stated in itinerary.
- Return Wellington/Auckland – Dunedin flights.
- Quality Invercargill & Dunedin accommodation (twin share).
- 6 - day expedition of Stewart Island onboard the **Affinity** with all home-style meals – daily continental breakfast, lunch, dinner, morning and afternoon teas, and sunset nibbles.
- All linen – including duvets and towels.
- Great facilities, Knowledgeable & friendly crew.
- Stewart Island Experience - Village and Bays Tour.
- Blue Cod fishing.
- Guided walks through Ulva Island bird sanctuary.
- Bluff Oyster Festival entry
- All meals as stated in itinerary.
- Experienced Tour Guide.

Be in quick to secure your seats!

The Take It Easy Team

If after your booking has been confirmed and you wish to cancel, the following cancellation fees will apply:

- For cancellations after the 30th November 2020 – loss of deposit
- For cancellations after the 15th March – 75% of total fare
- For cancellations within 2 weeks of travel - 100% of total fare will apply
- We recommend you consider travel insurance in case anything unforeseen happens prior to departure.

Disclaimer

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