

# 8 of the best... warm-water expeditions

Open your clients' eyes to the wealth of cruise adventures to enjoy beyond the polar regions, writes **Jane Archer**



## AUSTRALIAN ADVENTURE

Stretching across the top of Western Australia, the Kimberley region is three times as big as England yet home to barely 40,000 people – and it's one of the most exciting places on the expedition cruise map. Whether it's helicopter rides over its rust-red landscapes or hikes to see ancient Aboriginal rock art, every day is different. Then there are Zodiac cruises to watch the Montgomery Reef emerge from the sea, to see the spectacular Horizontal Falls and to spot fierce saltwater crocodiles. Cruises operate between Broome and Darwin during Australia's winter (our summer), when temperatures average 30C. **Book it:** Seabourn's 10-day Kimberley Expedition: Waterfalls & Wanjinas cruise on the 264-passenger Seabourn Pursuit starts at £10,699 in July 2027, excluding flights. [seabourn.com](http://seabourn.com)

PICTURES: Shutterstock/Mar on Carne, Andres Mas as mopouno.fr



## ANIMAL MAGIC

Expedition line HX usually hangs out in cold-water destinations, but even it has been swayed by the delights of the Galápagos, the island chain 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador where temperatures stay warm year-round and wildlife reigns supreme. Round-trip cruises from Baltra Island on the 90-passenger Santa Cruz II include bird-spotting trips on Zodiacs, hikes ashore and snorkelling time, giving passengers a front-row seat to see wildlife that has no fear of humans, including giant tortoises, marine iguanas, flightless cormorants, blue-footed booby birds and playful sea lions.

**Book it:** From £5,831 for a nine-day In Darwin's Footsteps (eastern route) cruise in December, excluding flights. [travelhx.com](http://travelhx.com)

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## ISLAND FLING

Dragons, beaches, exotic birds and spectacular waterfalls await as Ponant explores Indonesian islands most people have probably never heard of on this one-off expedition from Bali to Darwin on 264-passenger *Le Soleal*. It's an amazing voyage of discovery, with the expedition team taking passengers to learn the art of rice-pounding, watch a buffalo race held in their honour and visit a part of West Papua said to be home to more fish and coral species than anywhere else on the planet. On Komodo Island, local guides armed with sticks take hikes in search of huge lizards, dubbed 'dragons', with scarily big teeth.

**Book it:** The 14-day Tropical Indonesia Odyssey cruise starts at £8,470 in June 2027, excluding flights. [uk.ponant.com](http://uk.ponant.com)

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## AMAZING AMAZON

The Amazon is so big that ocean-going ships can sail as far as Manaus, some 1,000 miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean. It's a great experience, but for true 'wow' moments, clients need to go farther inland on a river cruise. Hop on Aqua Expeditions' round-trip sailings from Iquitos and every day is a new wildlife adventure with monkeys, sloths, piranhas and exotic birds (think macaws, toucans and the spiky-crested hoatzin) playing starring roles. The ship's naturalists also guide hikes through the jungle and lead kayaking trips, all the while keeping an eye out for the river's shy, pink dolphins and poison dart frogs.

**Book it:** From about £8,329 for the seven-night Aqua Nera Expedition Cruise, departing December 12, excluding flights. [aquaexpeditions.com](http://aquaexpeditions.com)

## CLOSE TO HOME

While this voyage around Scotland on Silversea's 274-passenger *Silver Wind* won't be as chilly as going to the poles, it's a perfect way for clients to get a taste of expedition cruising without the expense of flying to the ends of the Earth. It also showcases wildlife havens such as the Farne Islands, Lindisfarne, the Shiant Islands and Lunga – home to puffins, kittiwakes, guillemots and seals – and includes a couple of days exploring the Faroe Islands. As in the poles, an expedition team will host lectures when the ship is at sea, while on port days, they will guide Zodiac cruises or tours and hikes ashore.

**Book it:** From £7,700 for an 11-day Edinburgh (Leigh) to Dublin cruise in May 2027, excluding flights.

[silversea.com](http://silversea.com)

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## TRAVEL TO TASMANIA

"Embrace the unexpected", Coral Expeditions tells would-be adventurers considering a Tasmania cruise. What can be anticipated, though, is that the line will be circumnavigating the Australian state from Hobart three times in 2027 on the 72-passenger *Coral Discoverer* – but tides, wildlife and local customs can have a bearing on the actual itinerary. Even if it goes slightly off-plan, guests will visit numerous national parks; see kangaroos, wallabies, wombats and fur seals; walk on a volcanic plug; kayak on the ocean; and learn about the state's convict past at the former penal colony of Port Arthur.

**Book it:** From about £6,944 for a 14-night Circumnavigation of Tasmania cruise in February 2027, excluding flights. Also sold via tour operators including If Only, Gold Medal and Audley Travel. [coralexpeditions.com](http://coralexpeditions.com)



PICTURES: Eric Duran Gozquez, Michael S Nolan

## VENTURE INTO VIETNAM

Pandaw's Red River cruise ventures deep into northern Vietnam on a voyage from picturesque Halong Bay to Viet Tri or vice-versa – a journey no other line offers. The cruise actually follows four waterways – the Kinh Thay, Red, Lo and Da rivers – where often the only way ashore is via a makeshift gangway propped up between the 32-passenger *Angkor Pandaw* and the riverbank. As well as water-puppet shows, visits to markets and boat trips through limestone caves, the cruise includes a full day in Hanoi, with a visit to the prison dubbed the 'Hanoi Hilton', where US airmen taken prisoner during the Vietnam War were interned.

**Book it:** From £4,084 for a 10-night Halong Bay & Red River cruise in January 2027, excluding flights, sold in the UK via Fred Holidays.  
[fredholidays.co.uk](http://fredholidays.co.uk)



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## MEXICAN WAVES

Passengers exploring Mexico's Baja California region with National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions are promised a whale of a time – literally – because the line is there between January and March, when grey whales arrive after a long journey from the Arctic to give birth. They'll not only get close-ups of mothers with their calves during the eight-day adventure, which operates round-trip from Loreto on the 100-passenger *National Geographic Venture*, but also go on boat safaris in search of dolphins, snorkel with sea lions and hike through a desert that runs down to the sea.

**Book it:** The eight-day Among the Great Whales cruise starts at £5,169 in January 2027, excluding flights.  
[uk.expeditions.com](http://uk.expeditions.com)

