

HOW TO MAKE STRESS WORK FOR YOU

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NOTEBOOK



CRUISE OUT OF BOUNDS

An emerging crop of **EXPEDITION CRUISES** has nothing to do with shuffleboard, umbrella drinks, or Kathie Lee Gifford, and everything to do with going deep into remote wilds. by BONNIE TSUI

FOLLOW A GLACIER'S PATH

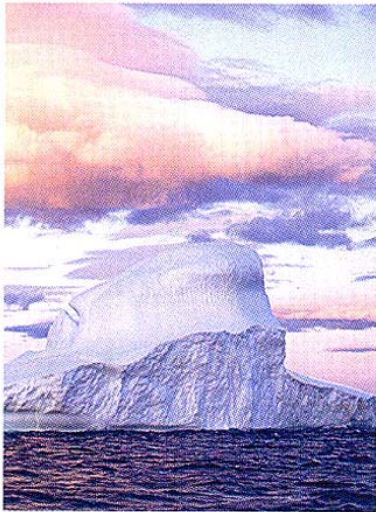
SOUTH ISLAND, NEW ZEALAND



Orion Expedition Cruises' first foray to New Zealand's South Island in 2008, the company's first trip to the country, begins among the glacier-carved valleys of Milford Sound and hits vast tracts of pristine wilderness and deep waterways in Fiordland National Park, all parts of a World Heritage Site.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS: Huge distances and permit restrictions, in place to protect the fragile ecosystems, keep many of the region's islands off the beaten track, but a small cruise vessel (106 passengers plus 75 crew members) and inflatable boats allow for close-up meetings with seals and kiwis. **BEST OF BOTH WORLDS:** "The ship is like a mega-yacht," says Orion's Daryl Hudson. "Big enough and purpose-built to handle serious expeditions to the Antarctic, which is a demanding destination, but small enough to get into far-off places

with shallow waters." The ship's menu, designed by well-known Sydney chef Serge Dansereau, focuses on contemporary Australian dishes often prepared with seafood or lamb, and local produce and wines. **PARTY-READY:** After a day of exploring the rarely visited Snares Islands, sub-Antarctic rocky isles, and a protected wildlife area home to more than 100 species of birds including albatross, Antarctic terns, and Snares crested penguins, the crew hosts barbecues on the top deck (11-day trip from \$6,500; orioncruises.com.au).



CALL OF THE ARCTIC

NORTHERN LABRADOR, CANADA

❄️ This year small expedition ships have begun cruising up the forbidding coastline of the Torngat Mountains, one of Canada's newest national parks, in Labrador. One of the only ways to explore the towering peaks, icebergs, and thriving polar and black bear populations in the 3,700-square-mile region is by boat. **BARE-BONES EXPLORING:** In August expedition guide Ed English launched a new kayaking and hiking tour here from park headquarters in Nain. Days are spent sailing up sheltered bays, tracking bears in the forest, and paddling the area's many fjords. While comfortable, this trip is not for the high-maintenance set; eight guests live on a 55-foot fishing vessel with cabins, privacy curtains, and one washroom. **LOCAL CULTURE:** English says of his maiden trip, "The best part was being with the Inuit for the full trip and really living their lifestyle as much as possible, not just having a short visit with them." **ADDED PERK:** A flightseeing circuit near either the Torngat Mountains or near the Mealy Mountains, Labrador's proposed second national park (*eight-day trip from \$3,890; linkumtours.com*).

AMAZONIAN BEAUTY

IQUITOS, PERU

🌴 The Peruvian Amazon's luxury expedition ship, the M/V Aqua, makes its maiden voyage in January from Iquitos to some of the hardest-to-reach and most pristine parts of the river basin. **SHIP CHIC:** Featuring the work of Peruvian interior designer Jordi Puig, known for the way he manipulates light and ventilation as well as his use of rustic materials, the sleek 130-foot boat has 12 guest suites (each at least

230 square feet and with panoramic windows), two lounges, a dining room, a full bar, and an observation deck. **EAT LOCAL:** Lima celebrity chef Pedro Miguel Schiaffino's menu features fusion dishes such as fried yucca and crayfish ceviche, and South American wines. **BOATSIDE SAFARI:** Nature guides take guests into the flooded forests of Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve, at the headwaters of the Amazon, which are rich with threatened and endangered species, including the three-toed sloth, black caiman, and giant river otter (*three-, four-, and seven-day itineraries from \$1,950; aquaexpeditions.com*).



A BACKCOUNTRY TREK THROUGH TIME

OUTER HEBRIDES, SCOTLAND

👟 The Outer Hebrides are Scotland's Wild West, and eco-specialist Natural Habitat Adventures brings these legendarily rugged isles within reach in its new trip. **OLD-SCHOOL ADVENTURE:** The 10-day expedition aboard the Grigoriy Mikheev launches from the fishing port of Oban and takes you to the isles of St. Kilda, whose 1,400-foot volcanic cliffs are nesting grounds for one of Europe's largest

seabird colonies, and the caves and Iron Age archaeological ruins of the Shetland Islands. **RETROFIT RIDE:** A refurbished research vessel, the ship can handle rough waters and reach places larger ships can't. An expansive bridge and open decks are ideal for observing orcas, dolphins, and otters; onshore you'll hike in the Orkneys to a tomb predating Egyptian pyramids (*10-day trip from \$5,395; nathab.com*).

AMAZON COURTESY AQUA EXPEDITIONS; CANADA, VIA MOUNTAIN/JOHN EASTOFT/INDEPENDENT PICTURES; SCOTLAND: STEWART MITCHELSON