



Vanuatu Discovery - SOUTH PACIFIC 2009

Pearls of the Pacific

Tall Ship adventures in the South Seas

V291 - Vanuatu Discovery Santo to Pt Vila via Central Vanuatu islands



Formerly named The New Hebrides by Captain Cook, Vanuatu, which gained independence in 1980, is one of the most culturally diverse groups in the South Pacific. Ritual and custom, ancestor worship and local cults, dancing and drumming and colourful ceremony are part of everyday village life here. Melanesian ritual and creative custom varies greatly from one island to another and one of the most exciting aspects of this cruise is the contact and exchange with the open and friendly islanders.

This voyage will commence at Espiritu Santo, a short internal air flight north from Pt Vila. We will head east and then south from Luganville, the main town on Espiritu Santo and work our way through the island chain to Pt Vila on Efate.



Tacking across the south east trade winds means we shall sail down the west side of Maewo, Penetcost and Ambrym, following much the same track as Cook's Resolution did when he charted the islands on his second Pacific voyage in 1774.

We have found so many 'favourite places' in Vanuatu during our voyaging here that choosing a route can be difficult... We could call at Ambae, on which Mitchener based his 'Bali Hai', or stay a day or two with the canoe builders of Maewo and see their custom dancing.



The local chief here has always welcomed the ship and her crew and the display of traditional custom dancing and singing is very impressive .

The next island south is Pentecost, home of the original 'bungee jumpers', but the Land

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Voyage starts	Santo, Vanuatu Sunday 13 Sept 2009
Voyage Ends	Port Vila , Vanuatu Thursday 24 Sept 2009
Duration	11 nights
Type	Islands Cruising
Berth fee	UK £ 1250



A Søren Larsen voyage is a holiday adventure where your enjoyment is of paramount importance. Participation in the ship and the voyage is central to the experience and you will be signed on ship as Voyage Crew as part of the ship's crew for your trip. However the level of involvement is up to you and no previous experience is necessary. The ship requires authentic seamanship to sail her but participating Voyage Crew are treated in a friendly and informal way and Søren Larsen's level of comfort and facilities reflect this.

See **Previous Voyage Logs** and first hand reports and pictures of these destinations [here](#)



See Videos from this voyage from last season.

Diving festival occurs in April so we may continue south.

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Beyond lies Ambrym where we can do an all day jungle trek to witness custom Rom dance of hillside village, then relax at the hot springs beach and 'lava river' there. At Malakula we visit the isolated communities of the east coast, or call at the small communities of the Mescalyné islands.

At anchor at Epi, if we're lucky, we may swim with the tame dugong there. The serene anchorage at Pt Havana makes a great overnight stop at Efate. How many of these fascinating islands we can see will depend on time and sailing conditions but this will be a very special trip. Much about these islands look as they would have done two or three hundred years ago, even the vegetation has an untamed and wilder look than much of the rest of the South Pacific, with jungle covering steep hillsides almost to the shore line.

A duty watch system will still operate while we are under way but this will be less exacting than on an uninterrupted ocean passage. Once we drop anchor the deck watch is undertaken by the permanent crew and you, the Voyage Crew, are free to explore ashore.



Most nights will be at anchor as sailing distances between the islands are perhaps only 20-40 miles. We will usually weigh anchor early each morning and aim to arrive at our next anchorage by early afternoon although there will be the chance for a couple of overnight sails between the islands. When at an anchorage we use Soren's 17 ft inflatable boat for runs to the beach to explore ashore. The ship has masks and snorkels for all those who want to swim from the ship.



Our final destination, Pt Vila is the capital of the islands and in complete contrast to the rest of the islands is a large modern town with every tourist facility, a good range of shops and restaurants and well organised luxury resorts.

Vanuatu is a Malaria Risk Area so insect repellent is vital and it is recommended that pills be taken before/after your voyage - but check with your own doctor for the requirements this area.



Villages - we will be visiting some fairly remote places, and we are fortunate to be able see the life in their village communities. People live in traditionally built bamboo and thatch houses, cook by heated stone ovens and are without electricity. They are extremely welcoming of visitors even though our lifestyles are literally worlds apart.



There is no problem about photography but we should be sensitive when using cameras or video. Where there is a modern school we've found that paper and writing supplies are extremely useful and the ship brings school books for them each year. If you have room when packing for a couple of clothes items that you wouldn't mind leaving behind, these are always very gratefully received in the villages.

If a local cruising permit is levied on the ship by Vanuatu officials then this will be shared and charged individually. (Maximum \$40-50 per person. Last year the authorities did not charge the ship.)



On arriving onboard you will be shown your berths, introduced to the crew, and signed on Ship's Articles as Voyage Crew members. Much of the first morning will be spent introducing you to the ship and explaining the various routines, safety procedures and equipment and how the watch system works.



Our sailing between anchorages in the island groups may involve some motoring but also some quite intense sail handling. However this allows those who would rather relish the amazing scenery to stand back and let the keener sailors get involved in handling the ship under sail. Everyone is involved in the duty watch system as Voyage Crew which will operate while we are under way and you may have your turn at the helm, on bow lookout or helping trim sail or tack ship. Going aloft is a unique experience but is not compulsory and everyone can decide when or if they'd like to. People of all ages join us and many have never sailed before - previous experience is certainly not necessary.

There are 13 permanent crew who maintain and sail the ship who are there to assist and help you enjoy your time aboard.

PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

A complete list of clothing and personal gear is contained in the Soren Larsen's Voyage Handbook, available only after a booking has been accepted. Here we make a few specific recommendations with regard to your voyage.

Luggage:

One main piece of luggage, which should be a soft kit bag. A hard suitcase is NOT suitable as space is strictly limited.

Accommodation:

The ship has 7 x 2 berth cabins and 2 x 4 berth cabins and generally they are allocated on a first come/first served basis, or occasionally on a needs basis. Cabins are comfortable but compact and are intended as somewhere to keep your gear and sleep and the ship's layout is designed for having larger social areas in the main saloon. Being a traditional timber ship she does not have air conditioning and when operating in tropical latitudes it of course gets quite warm below. Some like to bring a sleeping roll mat for sleeping out on deck.

Clothing:

The ship has Musto wet weather jackets and trousers



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Seasonal Climate

Central Vanuatu islands 26 to 28 deg C. during the day, slightly cooler at nights, although in tropical latitudes you should expect it to be still warm and humid.

Equipment: High factor sunblock and sunglasses are recommended protection from sun on water; sea sickness tablets (Stugeron recommended); a large and small towel; earplugs, a torch and spare batteries; extra camera film; binoculars may be handy. A lightweight rain jacket would be good insurance as when it rains in the tropics, it really pours. On tropical journeys bringing insect repellent, ideally containing Deet, is vital for taking ashore. A personal waterbottle is also highly recommended.

Meal Plan

Local Food and Drink: Three meals a day are included in the voyage price while on board the Soren Larsen. Soft drinks and alcoholic drinks are available on board and are paid for separately at the end of the trip.

Personal Expenses

You'll need some extra money to cover drinks and souvenirs not included in voyage price, and some local currency for sightseeing and spending money at islands visited etc. Credit cards are accepted on board.

Health - Useful websites are wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/regionOceania.aspx
www.who.int/ith/map_pacific.html

Freedom and Flexibility

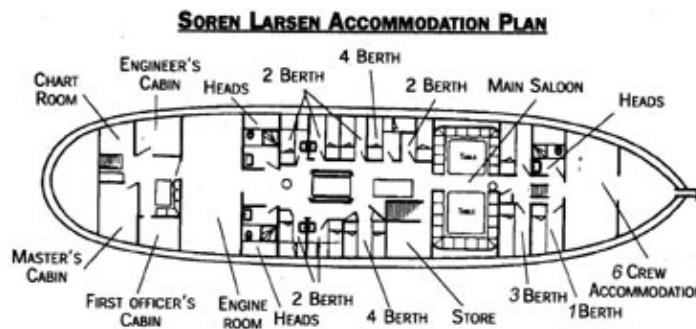
Voyages are planned to allow us some flexibility en route as to where we stop and anchor, how long we stay at each place and where we choose to go. We feel this is the key to the sailing authenticity and the genuine adventure of the ship's voyaging. Itineraries may change due to weather conditions, readiness of the vessel or any other reason and so are without guarantee. If winds are unfavourable we may make

for your use. For any extended sea passage it is wise to invest in a quality wet weather jacket of our own. It would also be sensible to have warm clothes for night watches. Cotton tops, t-shirts and shorts get worn on sunny days.

Footwear:

In these tropical latitudes most go barefoot on deck. Bring a pair of trainers or velcro strapped sandals (reef walkers) for excursions ashore.

use of the ship's engine to maintain the schedule. All decisions regarding our route and itinerary will be made by the ship's Master.



About the Søren Larsen

Now famous for providing sail training adventure voyages and as the star of the BBC's classic series "The Onedin Line", the Soren Larsen was originally one of the last cargo carrying sailing ships trading throughout Scandinavia, northern Europe and Britain. Built of oak by the Danish ship building company of 'Soren Larsen & Sons' in Nykobing Mors in northern Denmark, she carried timber, grain and general cargo from 1949 to 1972. Purchased in 1978 by Tony Davies and his family, she was taken to Colchester on the east coast of England and lovingly restored and rerigged as the graceful 19th century brigantine she is today. Captain Davies specialised in period film work and so the Soren Larsen began her working life again in early 1979 starring in "The Onedin Line". Other projects followed including "The French Lieutenant's Woman" and "Shackleton". In 1982 she was invited to pioneer sailing for the disabled for the Jubilee Sailing Trust in Southampton before being chosen, in 1987, to be Flagship of the First Fleet Re-enactment Voyage to celebrate Australia's Bicentennial. She led a fleet of squareriggers on an ambitious 22,000 mile voyage from Portsmouth via Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town, arriving to a tumultuous welcome in Sydney in 1988.



She came to Auckland in 1989 to represent Britain in the 150th Celebrations and was made so welcome that she adopted New Zealand as her base from which to cruise the idyllic South Pacific Islands, taking many first time sailors on adventure holidays to Tahiti, Tonga, Fiji and Vanuatu. In 1991 she made a passage back to Europe along the Clipper Route across the Southern Ocean and in December 1991 she became the first British tallship to round Cape Horn since 1936 and is now one of the very few authentic square riggers still operating in the 21st century.

After a major refit in the UK at Gloucester, Soren Larsen returned home to Auckland. She established herself as 'Flagship of the City of Sails' and has won Tourism Awards for Adventure and Experience categories. This illustrious ship celebrated the Millennium with a spectacular round the world voyage, the 2000-2001 Global Odyssey, visiting 25 countries and sailing 30,000 nautical miles. This 2008 project sets out to visit the further corners of the Polynesian Triangle and visit the very best of the untouched tropical South Pacific.



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