

# Kimberley Coast

2013



Horizontal Waterfalls | Bigge Island | Yampi Sound | Prince Regent River

# Discover the exotic Kimberley

Dissected by tidal rivers, the ancient geology of this timeless land features startling red rock gorges, prehistoric rock art, tumbling waterfalls and an incredible variety of plant and animal life. Our unique **Kimberley Coast** voyages focus on the most spectacular sites between Broome and Darwin

(or in reverse), stopping only once at each site and allowing time to work around powerful tides to optimise landing opportunities. In a land dominated by tide and weather, the routes and itineraries shown are merely indicative. Flexibility is the key to a successful adventure.

## Bigge Island

- Wandjina figures and “first-contact” art by the Wunambal people.
- Explore wild landscape on Bonaparte Archipelago’s largest island.

## Prince Frederick Harbour

- Pockets of emerald rainforests, mangroves and soaring red cliffs.
- Cruise the Hunter River’s aqua blue waterways.
- Enjoy prolific birdlife.

## King Cascade

- Discovered in 1820 by Phillip Parker King.
- This cheerful waterfall refreshes those who draw near.
- Saltwater crocodiles often seen in pool below falls.

## Raft Point

- Wandjina rock art depicts fantastic myths.
- Rich birdlife and boab trees.
- Tremendous views to Steep Island and beyond.

## Montgomery Reef

- Powerful outgoing tides form hundreds of noisy waterfalls exposing vast lagoons and sandstone islets.
- Cruise deep channels of marine wonderland.
- Watch for dolphins, dugongs and turtles.

## Horizontal Waterfalls

- Navigate white-water and standing waves in Zodiacs.
- Cruise between soaring cliffs.
- Massive tides power world’s natural wonder.

## Lacepede Islands

- Stunning blue sky and sea merge at the white-sand fringe.
- Breeding grounds for green turtles, lesser frigatebirds, brown boobies and crested terns.
- Fluffy chicks and fishing parents often seen.

## King George Falls

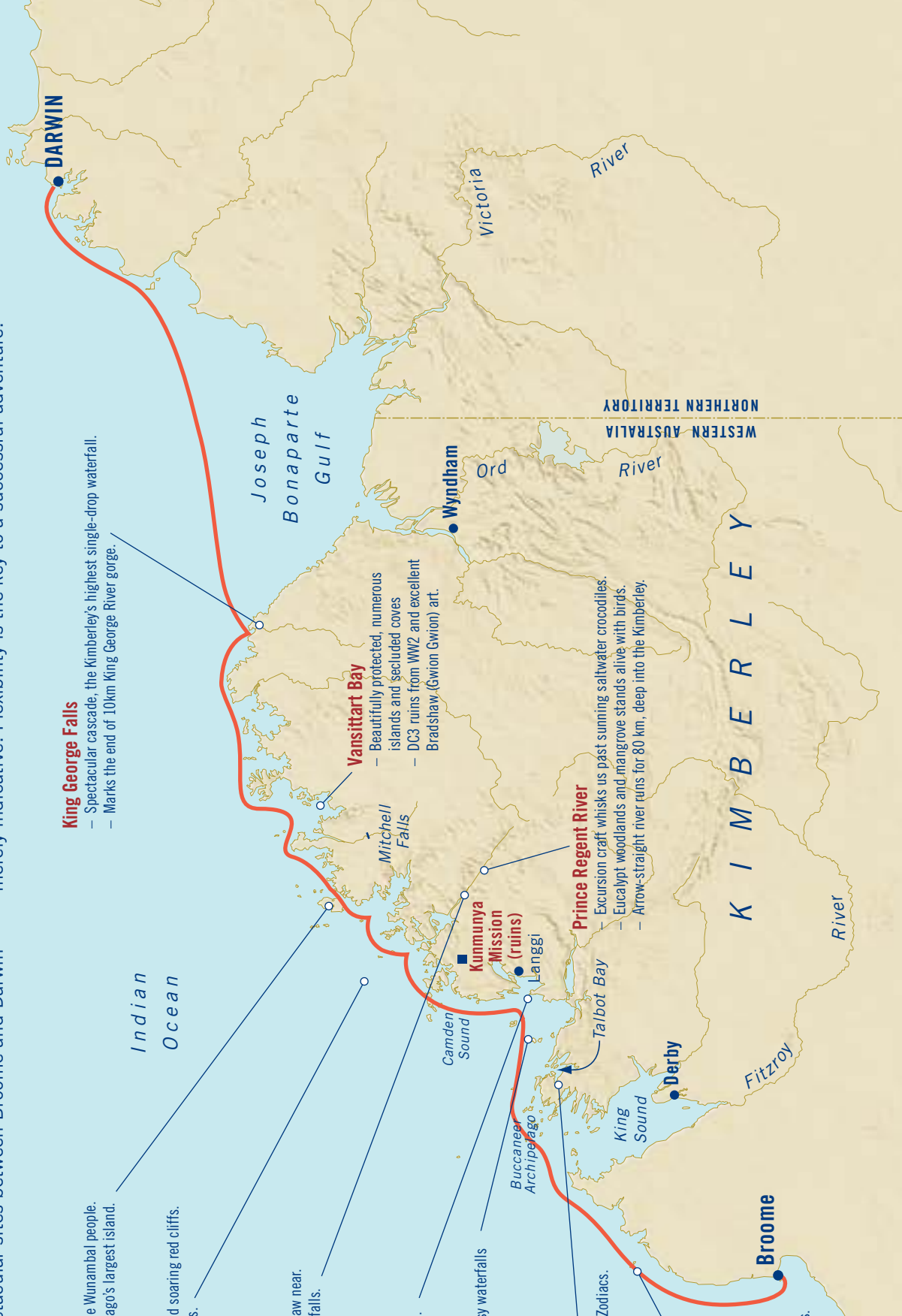
- Spectacular cascade, the Kimberley’s highest single-drop waterfall.
- Marks the end of 10km King George River gorge.

## Vansittart Bay

- Beautifully protected, numerous islands and secluded coves
- DC3 ruins from WW2 and excellent Bradshaw (Gwion Gwion) art.

## Prince Regent River

- Excursion craft whisks us past sunning saltwater crocodiles.
- Eucalypt woodlands and mangrove stands alive with birds.
- Arrow-straight river runs for 80 km, deep into the Kimberley.





*Dear Expeditioners,*

In 1987, when Dick Smith chose my wife, Susan, and me to be Australian Geographic's first "year in the wilderness" couple, we had no idea how profoundly the experience would affect us. While we had both spent plenty of time hiking, camping and exploring in some fairly remote areas, neither of us had dreamed of spending a year in a place like the Kimberley.

We chose a site near the abandoned ruins of the Kunmunya Mission as the spot to build our home. However it wasn't until Dick's helicopter had receded into the distance and we were left alone in the vast expanse of the Kimberley bush that the enormity of our undertaking dawned on us.

During the year, we built a house and made time to explore our surroundings, both inland and part way along the coast. When Dick and Pip came to retrieve us, we felt a profound sadness, because we had formed a spiritual connection with the land.

Imagine my delight when Aurora Expeditions first invited me to become Expedition Leader on their Kimberley coast voyages! It's hard to believe this will be my fifteenth season, yet each time I feel as though I'm embarking on a grand new adventure.

Breathtakingly blue skies arch over towering, ochre-coloured gorges where ancient rock walls shelter wallabies, lizards and a startling array of birds. The refreshingly cold water is crystal clear, fringed with the dripping leaves of paperbark trees. Tantalising as it may be, this is just one of a dozen or more spectacular environments we visit – from the fabulous, bird-covered Lacepede Islands to the enigmatic rocks of Langgi. Throw in some of the world's most amazing, prehistoric rock art and the odd estuarine croc, and you begin to appreciate what's in store.

To find out more, join me as I return to my spiritual home!

*Mike Cusack*

**This page:** Home alone.  
*Coral Princess*, our floating base camp,  
nestles in close to Winyalkan Island.  
Photo Mael Ressos.

**Cover:** Invigorating King George Falls plunge  
some 80 metres from the ancient Kimberley  
escarpment. Photo Andrew Halsall.

Visit [www.auroraexpeditions.com.au](http://www.auroraexpeditions.com.au) today and  
start planning your Kimberley adventure!





# Aurora Expeditions' Kimberley Coast



Step aboard the recently refurbished *Coral Princess* and join us on a wonderful voyage along the remote, exotic Kimberley Coast. Australia's wildest frontier is twice the size of Victoria, with an incredible 2500 offshore islands that offer excellent opportunities for exploration and relaxation. Humpback whale calves are born and nurtured in the warm, tropical, sheltered waters, which also attract myriad fish, dolphins, dugongs, sharks and even crocodiles. The islands are alive with pelicans, boobies, terns, egrets, frigatebirds, oystercatchers and many more – an absolute delight for birdwatchers and photographers. At Aurora Expeditions we treat our destinations with the love and respect they deserve. On the Kimberley coast, powerful tides dictate our schedule. Share your adventure with like-minded souls in a relaxed, casual atmosphere while making the most of every opportunity for adventure and discovery.

**Left:** The Kimberley's warm waters attract a plethora of marine life, like this friendly shark, photographed near the Horizontal Falls. Photo Mael Ressos.

*"I was delighted by the amount of time we spent off the boat and it really gave me so many more options to explore the very remote country. The expertise and enthusiasm of the Aurora team was truly fantastic"* — PAMELA ROBERTS 2011

## Why travel with us?

**Small ships are best.** Our vessel is small enough to go where larger ones can't. With a maximum of 44 passengers, we delight in the camaraderie of small group adventures. Fewer people generally means more landings, more time ashore and more intimate and personal experiences.

**Our staff put you first.** We believe our highly experienced and enthusiastic expedition staff are the best in the business. They share our passion for the Kimberley – your security, wellbeing, and understanding of this precious wilderness are their priorities.

**Flexibility and freedom.** Our itineraries are designed to allow for change if we discover a new landing site or an unexpected wildlife display. We encourage you to enjoy the Kimberley in your own way, within the bounds of safety.

**Providing educationally rich experiences** helps you understand the significance of the natural and historical elements of the places we visit. Our goal is to create lifelong ambassadors for the protection and preservation of all our destinations.

**We celebrate the spirit of adventure!** Hike to Kunmunya, swim in a deliciously refreshing rock pool, Zodiac through the Horizontal



**Above:** The *Explorer*, purpose-built to provide easy access from ship to shore, transports us in comfort and style along mighty Kimberley rivers, into tranquil bays and to offshore islands. Photo Darren Jew.

Waterfall's frothing white water – we pioneered extra optional activities in this glorious, natural playground.

**We have fun.** We love what we do and believe that everyone on board, from passengers and expedition staff to our ship's crew, shares the same goal – the best Kimberley experience!





VOYAGE 1: 11 DAYS ● 27 May – 6 June 2013 | VOYAGE 3: 11 DAYS ● 17 – 27 June 2013

# Broome to Darwin

## Day 1

**Broome's** wonderful beaches, pearling industry and intriguing history offer plenty of activity before boarding *Coral Princess* for a late afternoon departure.

## Day 2

We steam pass Dampier Peninsula in the morning, aiming for the **Lacepede Islands**, where huge numbers of frigates, boobies and other birds nest. Green and flatback turtles also frequent the area.

## Days 3-4

**Buccaneer Archipelago's** 800 iron-rich islands stretch across azure waters, a photographers dream. **Crocodile Creek** beckons us to cool off in crystal clear water holes while the **Horizontal Waterfalls** lure adventurous souls for an exhilarating Zodiac ride. Pearl farms bedeck **Talbot Bay** and **Montgomery Reef** showcases pelagic marine creatures, including manta rays and reef sharks.

## Days 5-6

With luck we may sight humpback whales and their calves as we pass through **Camden Sound Whale Sanctuary**. Hardy souls have a

chance to accompany Mike Cusack on a trek into the ruins of **Kunmunya Mission**, where Mike and his wife Susan spent a year as Australian Geographic's "Wilderness Couple". A boating excursion along **Prince Regent River** delivers us to superb **King Cascade**.

## Day 7

Mangrove stands, towering red cliffs and powerful tidal currents characterise **Prince Regent Nature Reserve**, where more than half the Kimberley's bird and mammal species thrive. We may spotlight for saltwater crocodiles. Further north, a massive boab tree in **Careening Bay** bears witness to Phillip Parker King's 1820 visit, with *HMC Mermaid* blazed into its trunk.

## Day 8

Monjons (small rock wallabies) and nesting ospreys abound on **Bigge Island**, one of the most significant cultural sites on our voyage. Immerse yourself in the captivating **Wandjina and Bradshaw** (Gwion Gwion) figures while our rock art specialist interprets their meaning.

## Day 9

The inlets, islands and protected waters of

**Vansittart Bay** offer wonderful opportunities to search for Gwion Gwion figures or WWII relics. We board our small excursion vessel 'Explorer' to navigate our way along **King George River**. Travelling deep into the red-rock gorge we reach the imposing 80-metre cascade of **King George Falls**, the tallest waterfall in Western Australia.

## Day 10

Our last leg takes us across **Joseph Bonaparte Gulf**, first sighted by Abel Tasman in 1644, and named by French explorer Nicholas Baudin in 1803. The Gulf is an inlet of the Timor Sea with shallow waters. Time permitting, we may explore the serpentine creek system below Cox Peninsula.

## Day 11

On arrival in **Darwin**, we farewell shipboard friends and make our way to hotels or the airport with a complimentary transfer.

**Above:** Time out. A sheltered beach on Naturalist Island provides a delightful spot for a beach barbeque beneath clear Kimberley skies, and rendezvous point for those visiting Mitchell Falls by helicopter. Photo Mael Ressos.

**Opposite:** Tranquil Bay, near King George Falls, bears witness to the mighty geological forces that helped to shape the Kimberley escarpment. Photo Andrew Halsall.





VOYAGE 2: 11 DAYS ● 7 – 17 June 2013

# Darwin to Broome

## Day 1

Excitement builds as we depart the harbour of Australia's northern most city **Darwin**, we set our course across Joseph Bonaparte Gulf in the late afternoon.

## Day 2

The first leg of our expedition takes us across **Joseph Bonaparte Gulf** heading towards the Kimberley Coast; first sighted by Abel Tasman in 1644, and named by French explorer Nicholas Baudin in 1803. The Gulf is a shallow inlet of the Timor Sea. Weather and time permitting, we may explore the serpentine creek system below Cox Peninsula.

## Day 3

Today we are greeted by the dramatic red hues of the Kimberley Coast. We board our small excursion vessel 'Explorer' to navigate our way up **King George River**. Travelling deep into the red-rock gorge we reach the imposing 80-metre cascade of **King George Falls**, the tallest waterfall in Western Australia. The inlets, islands and protected waters of **Vansittart Bay** offer wonderful opportunities to search for ancient Gwion Gwion figures and World War II relics.

## Day 4

**Bigge Island**, one of the most significant cultural sites on our voyage, allows us to take a step back in time. Immerse yourself in the captivating **Wandjina and Bradshaw** (Gwion Gwion) **figures** while our rock art specialist interprets their meaning. Monjons (small rock wallabies) and nesting ospreys abound.

## Day 5

Moving south to **Careening Bay**, we learn of the significance of a massive boab tree with HMC Mermaid blazed into its trunk, bearing witness to Phillip Parker King's 1820 visit. Mangrove stands, towering red cliffs and powerful tidal currents characterise **Prince Regent Nature Reserve**, where much of the Kimberley's bird and mammal species thrive.

## Day 6-7

A boating excursion along **Prince Regent River** delivers us to superb **King Cascade**. With luck we may sight humpback whales as we pass through **Camden Sound Whale Sanctuary**. Hardy souls have a chance to accompany Mike Cusack on a trek into the ruins of **Kunmunya Mission**, where Mike and Susan spent a year as Australian Geographic's "Wilderness Couple".

## Days 8-9

**Talbot Bay** and **Montgomery Reef** showcase pearl farms and pelagic marine creatures, including turtles, manta rays and reef sharks. Buccaneer Archipelago's 800 iron-rich islands stretch across azure waters – a photographers dream. **Crocodile Creek** beckons us to cool off in crystal clear water holes while the spectacular **Horizontal Waterfalls** lure adventurous souls for an exhilarating Zodiac ride.

## Day 10

We head to **Lacepede Islands**, home to vast numbers of nesting frigates, boobies and other seabirds. Our naturalist points out protected species including green and flatback turtles that also nest on these remote islands. In the late afternoon, we sail past the Dampier Peninsula, heading towards **Broome**, enjoying farewell drinks with our new found friends.

## Day 11

The wonderful beaches of **Broome** welcome us in the early morning. We farewell shipboard friends and make our way to the airport or hotels by complimentary transfer.





# Your Kimberley Guides



The Kimberley Coast's massive tides and fickle weather create a most challenging environment. Thankfully, our staff's depth of experience enables them to predict when we can go ashore. Safety always comes first, followed closely by exhilarating adventure!

In 1987 Dick Smith chose **Mike and Susan Cusack** as Australian Geographic's first "Wilderness Couple". During their year at Kunmunya, the couple overcame many hardships and challenges, including bushfires, drought and dehydration. Expedition leader Mike shows his undiminished passion for the Kimberley as he shares his knowledge and favourite places.

Naturalist **Chris Done** has lived in the Kimberley since 1979 and was on our first Kimberley voyage in 1998. He is an expert on Kimberley eucalypts with a very good understanding of the area's ecology, land management issues, geology, Aboriginal culture/art and history.

**Dr Garry Darby**, author, lecturer and art historian, specialises in Aboriginal art. A curator of Aboriginal art exhibitions, he also teaches at Sydney and Macquarie universities, and enjoys interpreting art in Arnhem Land, Central Australia and the Kimberley, which he does in a most informative and entertaining way.

**Top:** Your friendly guides, from left: Garry Darby, Chris Done and Mike Cusack. Photo Joanna Schuetz.

**Right:** Meet the Aboriginal Artists and watch them create their wonderful artwork. Photo courtesy Wandjina Tours.

**Below:** Wandjina Tours director, Donny Woolagoodja shares his knowledge of his country with visitors. Photo courtesy Wandjina Tours.

**NEW**

## Cultural and fishing tours

Our Kimberley voyages offer two exciting new activities. Organised by Wandjina Tours, part of a cultural tourism initiative and run by renowned artist and respected Worrara elder Donny Woolagoodja, you will be greeted on the beach by the traditional owners of this area. They will welcome you to country with a traditional smoking ceremony and share with you the cultural history of Wijingarra bard bard. You will wander up to the Artist's in Residence shelter where you sit and talk with the Aboriginal artists over a cup of tea and damper. Watch them create their art, talk to them about Wandjina culture and the importance of

their art in their everyday lives. Here you have the opportunity to purchase world class Aboriginal art, on country, direct from the artist.

As an optional activity, a maximum of six keen anglers have the chance to spend half a day enjoying a wonderful, new barramundi fishing option. Explore the most promising inlets under the guidance of Peter Tucker, one of the Kimberley's best anglers. This option incurs an additional cost and may be reserved on a first come, first served basis. Please contact Aurora Expeditions for more details. (Note: these tours are subject to weather conditions and tides.)



*"The whole trip was excellent... It was just wonderful – everything!"*

ELIZABETH COMPSTON 2011

# Getting to know our *Coral Princess*

Beautifully refurbished in 2011, *Coral Princess* is a 35-metre luxury catamaran, designed to operate with comfort and stability in the remote waters of Australia's north. The ship is fully air-conditioned with on board accommodation for 44 guests. Each cabin has a private bathroom with toilet, shower and washbasin and a choice between single and double beds.

There is a small convivial bar area, an open dining room and a lecture/lounge room. *Coral Princess* is well equipped for shore excursions with Zodiacs and a purpose-built landing craft, the *Explorer*.

## CABINS

Cabins are located on Decks C and D and average 10sqm in size. Cabins are comfortably appointed with twin single beds, air-conditioning, private en suite and portholes or picture windows.

## STATEROOMS

Staterooms are located on Deck B and Deck C. Deck B also features the dining room and '*Explorer*' departure point for excursions. Staterooms average 13sqm in size and provide a choice of fixed twin or double bed, desk and chair, air-conditioning, ensuite, ample storage space, and picture windows.

## DELUXE STATEROOMS

The most spacious of all the accommodation aboard *Coral Princess*, Deluxe Staterooms are approximately 17sqm in size and offer a choice of fixed twin or double beds. Located on Decks B and A, these rooms feature all the facilities of a Stateroom, along with a comfortable settee.

## OPTIONAL TOURS

During the cruise we will rendezvous with a helicopter for an optional flight to Mitchell Falls. The cost is approximately \$450\* per person and flights can be booked on board.

\* The cost is \$450 per person at time of brochure print

## FLIGHTS AND HOTELS

Please contact us if you would like us to arrange accommodation before and/or after your voyage and for the best available airfares. Please note that flights to Darwin and Broome are limited and often sell out early.

Cabin (Twin Share)	A\$7,190
Stateroom	A\$8,465
Deluxe Stateroom	A\$8,890



Prices are for the cruise, per person, twin share. Prices quoted in A\$. Single occupancy is 1.7 times the twin share price. Prices include 10% GST.

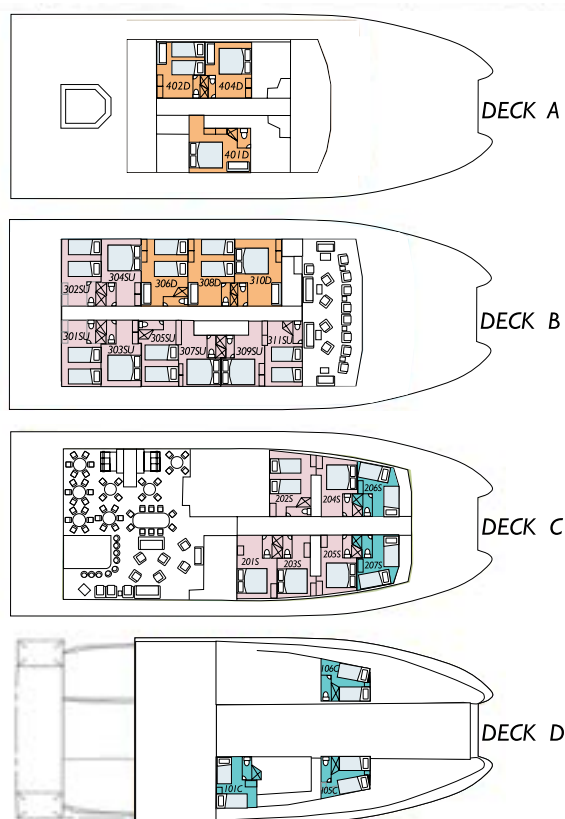
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PHOTOS COURTESY CORAL PRINCESS



Recently refurbished dining room (left) and Stateroom, on board *Coral Princess*

## CORAL PRINCESS DECKPLAN



6 Deluxe Staterooms
  13 Staterooms
  5 Cabins