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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest travel industry news, plus a front cover from **Emirates**, and full pages from:

- Ormina Tours
- Visit Britain
- Infinity Holidays



Black Friday Sale

Experience Hawai'i the way it's meant to be, with flights from Sydney to Honolulu sale.

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MH wants to lead pack

EXCLUSIVE

MALAYSIA Airlines wants to "become the preferred full-service carrier between Australasia, Asia and beyond", MH's CCO Dersenish Aresandiran revealed to **Travel Daily**.

The carrier returned to Brisbane on Fri, resuming its non-stop services between Kuala Lumpur and Queensland (**TD** 22 Apr).

"We hope to see significant growth in the region over the next few years, supported by



increased capacity, stronger partnerships and renewed brand visibility," he said.

"The resumption of Brisbane flights, the increased frequencies across key routes and the introduction of the A330neo aircraft will be key enablers of this growth and delivering on our long-term vision."

The route will operate five times a week between Brisbane and KL, offering connectivity to India through the airline's network of 10 major Indian cities.

Brisbane Airport CEO Gert-Jan de Graaff noted that India "is a rapidly expanding market for Queensland", representing a major opportunity for tourism growth in the state.

The route is expected to generate \$54 million a year for the local economy. *JHM*

Ormina goes Swiss

ORMINA Tours has partnered with Switzerland to launch a Grand Swiss Cities Tour.

See **page eight** for details.

Britain, but different

VIVA Holidays is inviting travellers to experience Britain differently - discover more information on **page nine**.

Score big with EK

EMIRATES is offering 10 top-selling agents the chance to enjoy an exclusive VIP sporting experience in 2026.

To enter, issue at least one adult return ticket between 27 Oct-29 Dec 2025 for travel from Australia to Dubai - details on **cover page**.



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TC unpacks "game-changing" AI move

TRAVELLERS Choice (TC) has announced the details of a new AI initiative that it believes will be "the most exciting project... it has ever embarked upon" (*TD* breaking news Sat).

The thrust of the new AI-driven solution will see members of the network able to search preferred products and generate complex itineraries in much faster time.

"Imagine a system that... only shopped from within our preferred product range, had in-built guardrails to prevent hallucinations, and produced amazing output in a fraction of the time," Managing Director Christian Hunter said.

"The efficiency will amplify member businesses massively and address one of - if not the biggest challenge members face today - a shortage of time."

The time-poor nature of Australian advisors is a well-documented scourge of the industry, with many brands launching their own policies to free up time so that advisors can do what they do best - sell.

Hunter laid out in simple terms how much Travellers Choice members stand to benefit from the AI system in development.

"If a consultant can turn a one-



hour task into a 40-minute task, they have won 20 minutes.

"If they can do that twice a day, that's the equivalent to 200 minutes a week, 800 minutes a month, 9,600 minutes - an additional 20 working days - every year per staff member."

While the time-saving element is clearly a major plank of the strategy, Hunter also pointed to other key agency benefits, such as fast-tracking the professional development of less experienced

consultants and mitigating "leakage" by building itineraries based on preferred product.

In a bold predictive statement, Hunter said its unique AI tools could eliminate the need for its members to leaf through brochures or surf websites during product searches.

Chatting with *Travel Daily* on the sidelines of the Travellers Choice conference in Melbourne over the weekend, Hunter said AI becoming more efficient than traditional brochures may be welcomed by advisors and suppliers alike.

"That debate has been around for a while and I think quite frankly a lot of suppliers would love to see brochures disappear - they're a huge cost.

"However, they remain a very important sales tool," he added.

The AI project is being rolled out in phases, with the complex itinerary builder to be completed in mid 2026. *AB*

ATCC recruits expert

THE Australian Travel Careers Council (ATCC) has appointed a new member to its advisor board to bolster its Travel Skills Taskforce review of the Certificate III in Travel.

Moir Scerri brings experience in travel operations, technology implementation, and workforce capability, with her resume boasting roles with Amadeus Australia, Moneydirect and TAFE NSW - all of which she worked on major digital transitions and service systems innovations.

ATCC CEO Rick Myatt said Scerri will also assist broader aspects of reinvigorating the travel talent pipeline, adding it was already "well underway with a strong industry support".

Infinite Black Friday

INFINITY Holidays has launched a Black Friday sale on 2026 rail journeys - head to the **back page** to see what is on offer.



FIORDLAND

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Holland America Line, aboard the *MS Noordam* as she cruises NZ's Fiordland National Park.

NOORDAM is halfway through a 14-night trans-Tasman itinerary, and we've joined the ship just as she starts exploring the spectacular far reaches of the South Island.

Our itinerary saw us enter Dusky Sound yesterday with scenic commentary along the way, followed by twilight cruising the glassy waters of Doubtful and Thomson Sound.

The beautiful views were complemented by a huge array of onboard activities as guests made the most of the sea day, including concerts, games, trivia and more.

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Agents do Morocco



TEN advisors had the chance to experience Morocco in Oct during a famil hosted by Envoyage and Intrepid.

From energetic Marrakech to the beautiful High Atlas Mountains, the agents enjoyed the rich diversity of Morocco, with highlights including watching the sun set overlooking ancient village Ait Ben Haddou and a walk through a Berber village, followed by a homecooked meal with a local family.

"Partnerships like this give our members the chance to experience a destination the way their clients would," said Envoyage Australia Product Leader, Lee Ann Hosking.

"Firsthand knowledge is a powerful tool for any travel entrepreneur, and Intrepid delivered an itinerary that brought Morocco to life through culture, community, and connection." *JHM*

Airbus impacts

AIRBUS fleets are returning to normal operations today, off the back of the business implementing software changes faster than originally expected, according to Reuters.

On Fri, the European plane maker ordered immediate repairs to 6,000 of its A320 jets, in what marked its biggest recall in 55 years (*TD* breaking news Sat).

The development affected more than half of Airbus' global fleet, including 34 Jetstar aircraft.

As a result, the Qantas offshoot was forced to cancel 90 flights on Sat and several more on Sun, with the carrier promising refunds or rebookings without extra charge.

According to industry sources, the sweeping warning exposed the fact that Airbus does not have full real-time awareness of which software version is used given reporting lags.

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Travel Daily



ATIA inflation warning

THE Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) has warned the Reserve Bank of Australia's proposed ban on credit card surcharges could drive up prices for all consumers (*TD* 02 Sep).

People who choose not to pay by credit card - which ATIA estimates to be more than 50% of travel customers - will be subsidising the benefits enjoyed by those who do, ATIA CEO Dean Long pointed out.

"If credit card surcharging is banned, the cost will have to be passed on to everyone not just people who pay by credit.

"This seems unfair and will be reflected in higher overall prices and this will stoke inflation.

Long added, "Given credit cards...are predominantly used by wealthier, older Australians, this is tantamount to Gen Zs and Millennials at the back of the plane in economy subsidising Baby Boomers in business and



first class".

Long also argued that the ban will expose travel businesses to unique risks, considering that international travel transactions average between \$6,400-\$10,000 and are often paid 70-100 days in advance.

The ATIA boss suggested that the RBA should, at the very least, restrict any ban to debit cards and maintain the surcharge on credit cards, given that the latter are estimated to make up 44% of transactions, while debit cards only make up the other 10%. *JM*

Pictured: Long speaking at the Travellers Choice conference in In Melbourne on Sat (photo credit: Melissa Hobbs).

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Travel Daily ON LOCATION



MELBOURNE

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Tourism Australia, which is hosting Australia Next in Melbourne.

DELEGATES from all over the world are gearing up to attend the opening function for Australia Next later today.

Tourism Australia's signature incentive showcase is designed to increase Australia's standing as an incentive destination, with business events bureaux from across the country pitching their cities as ideal for hosting future gatherings.

Business events visitors spend more than leisure or corporate.

A special welcome function will be held today at the W Melbourne sponsored by the Melbourne Convention Bureau.

Mortimer soaks up legacy

AURORA Expeditions has celebrated 35 years by reflecting on its journey from a pioneering Australian adventure operator to a global leader in expedition.

Speaking from the *Douglas Mawson* shakedown voyage over the weekend, founder Greg Mortimer said he was pleased with how the business has grown.

"I'm proud of...not what I've achieved, but what the business and the people have achieved," Mortimer (**pictured**) said.

In terms of sustainability, Mortimer emphasised the company's long-term approach to the issue.

"We're sowing the seeds successfully, it's a process... of deliberate application, step by step, improving our footprint in a serious way."

He also described the "transformative impact" that expedition cruising has had on Aurora's guests.



"Thousands of people could have their own perspectives changed by these experiences," Mortimer declared.

When asked about CLIA's net-zero by 2050 target, he said the cruise body's ambitions are "a biggie" for the sector, but that changes in habits were taking place across all areas.

"We are seeing an increase in momentum [on sustainability] in our daily lives."

"From what we are feeling and seeing within the Aurora business, we're optimistic," Mortimer concluded. *MV*



Window Seat

WHILE a recent software recall of A320s was a source of inconvenience for travellers around the globe (*TD* breaking news Sat), it was perhaps none more so than for passengers on flight NZ611.

According to reports across the Tasman, an Air NZ flight from Auckland to Queenstown was only minutes from landing when the plane turned around and returned to the North Island after learning of the urgent software recall.

"We were minutes away from landing before abruptly pulling up," passenger Danielle Higgs recalled.

"Initially the captain said he wasn't sure why they were told not to land, but later said it was due to the global update needed."

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Qantas charm offensive

WHILE Qantas has pedalled hard under new leader Vanessa Hudson to repair brand damage with the public, the carrier is now reportedly seeking to do the same with its employees.

According to a source in touch with *Mumbrella*, Qantas is quietly out to pitch on a new campaign that includes a significant internal component focused on staff.

When contacted for comment by *Mumbrella*, a spokesperson for the carrier confirmed that while a "specific project brief" was before several agencies, the central thrust of any new marketing push will be its new ultra-long-haul routes operating under Project Sunrise.

Despite this, multiple sources reiterated a new campaign will indeed place Qantas pilots, cabin crew, and the operational teams in the spotlight.

Qantas has been transparent about its need to "move on"

Royal's APAC change

ROYAL Caribbean has a new leader of destination for APAC after the departure of global destination development boss, Ana Karina Santini.

According to a US report, Santini's exit after close to 14 years with the cruise company has seen Vice President of Business and Commercial Development, Preston Carnahan, take charge of local responsibilities.

The role of destination development generally relates to the designing of shore and port experiences, researching the viability of new ports, tour operator relationships, quality control based on stakeholder feedback, and embarking/disembarking logistics.

Royal Caribbean lauded Santini's "leadership, vision and commitment throughout her long and impactful career with the company", adding her legacy will influence its destination strategy for years to come.



from the mistakes of the past in its recent AGM updates, which included financial penalties imposed following the unlawful sacking of ground handling staff during the pandemic.

Last year's marketing budget for the four brands of Qantas, Jetstar, Frequent Flyer and TripADeal was up 12.8% to \$220 million. AB

A CATO Christmas

AUSTRALIAN actor Gyton Grantley (pictured) will be guest speaker at Thursday's sold-out CATO Christmas Lunch at the Sheraton Grand Sydney.

Grantley is best known for his role on hit Australian drama *Underbelly* and will share his fascinating on-screen experiences with attendees, as well as stories from his European adventures with his family.

Meanwhile, CATO is continuing its partnership with the TIME program into 2026, offering graduates and mentees complimentary access to the CATO Touring Academy.

"Developing emerging talent is vital for the strength and sustainability of our industry, and the TIME Program consistently delivers exceptional future leaders," noted CATO Managing director Brett Jardine.



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Agents need authenticity

OPINION

Chris Fundell is the founder of Strativate Marketing, which provides fractional marketing services to the Australian travel industry.



IF 2025 has taught travel agents anything, it's this: authenticity isn't just trending, it's their built-in superpower.

This is not completely new, user-generated content has been with us for quite a while, but travellers have - in my opinion - now officially reached peak 'perfect'.

They're tired of influencers doing identical sunrise poses, and they're definitely suspicious of those AI-generated beach photos where the people look slightly unrealistic.

What people want more than ever is simple, real humans having real experiences in real places.

That's exactly where travel agents can shine, because, as we know, agents don't just book trips; they connect people to stories, culture, locals, food, mishaps and magic.

They curate travel experiences that algorithms can't fabricate, and in 2025, that is becoming marketing gold.

Here are some simple steps that have helped release this advantage.

Show your real travellers the good, the messy, the magical: the most effective agents this year have been swapping out glossy brochure shots for unfiltered content straight from their clients.

A 15-second phone video of someone tasting street food for the first time or jumping into a

river in Laos outperform staged 'hero shots' every time because they feel believable.

Spotlight the people who make a destination or experience unforgettable: travellers fall in love with people, not itineraries, so introduce your potential customers to the chefs, guides, hosts, artisans, storytellers and everyday locals who shape the experience.

When someone sees the face of the hiking guide they will meet in Patagonia, or the pasta-making nonna in Puglia, the trip suddenly stops feeling like a dream and starts feeling like a plan.

Own your role as the travel truth-teller in 2026.

Travellers are tired of exaggerated descriptions &

misleading online reviews.

Agents who openly share when a city is crowded, what the weather is really like, which "must-do" activities are actually overrated, which hidden gem is genuinely worth it - they are the ones

winning long-term trust.

The power of authenticity is so strong that even outside travel, brands like Youi Insurance have grown by leaning into real stories from real people - I am sure you all have seen their ads.

If authenticity can make insurance compelling, imagine what it can do for bucket-list adventures.

As travel gets more expensive and travellers become more selective, the equation is simple: Agents who market real experiences are the agents travellers trust, and most importantly, book with.

“
Travellers...
want real
humans
having real
experiences in
real places
”

Luxury cruising in focus at awards

THE seventh annual *Signature Luxury Travel & Cruise Awards* celebrated industry excellence last week, with winners from across the sector selected by a panel of 19 highly experienced cruise experts. The event, sponsored by Virtuoso, Monaco and Pommery, saw industry leaders gather in Sydney for a celebratory lunch where winners were awarded in a range of categories covering ocean, river and expedition cruising.

Travel Daily was there too, celebrating alongside brands including AmaWaterways, Albatros, Antarctica21, Aranui, Avalon, Aurora, Abercrombie & Kent, Azamara, Aqua Expeditions, Belmond, Captain's Choice, Coral Expeditions, Cunard, Crystal, Celebrity, Delfin, Disney, Emerald, Explora Journeys, Hapag-Lloyd, Hurtigruten, HX Expeditions, Latitude 33, Lindblad Expeditions, MSC Cruises, Norwegian, Oceania, Paul Gauguin, Ponant, Pandaw, Princess, Quark Expeditions, Royal Caribbean, Riverside Cruises, Regent Seven Seas Cruises, Scenic, Silversea, Sanctuary Retreats, Swan Hellenic, Seabourn, SeaDream, Star Clippers, Sea Cloud Cruises, The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection, True North, Tauck, Uniworld, UnCruise Adventures, Viking, Virgin Voyages and Windstar.

Signature editor Christian Barker was upbeat about the future trends for the luxury cruise sector, noting the increased number of hospitality brands like Four Seasons, Marriott and Orient-Express dipping their toes in the water.

"The world of luxury cruising is flourishing...this boom is reflected in the exemplary standard of vessels and service - and the fierce competition - across the industry," he said.



JAMES Sitters, Oceania Cruises; Lynne Clarke, MSC Cruises; Amber Wilson from HX Expeditions; and Explora's Gillian Sellar.



LISA Pile from Regent Seven Seas Cruises gives a friendly hello to Ponant's Deb Corbett and CLIA Australasia MD Joel Katz.



VIRTUOSO'S Greg Treasure with Viking's Jane Moggridge and Michelle Black.



JEFF Leckey from House of Travel with AmaWaterways chief Steve Richards.



SCENIC'S Katherine O'Neill took home a bottle of festive Pommery Champagne courtesy of the inimitable Patrick Behamou.



CHARIS Hildebrando, Silversea with Kathryn Lock of Royal Caribbean and Celebrity chief, Tim Jones.



AURORA Expeditions' Ben Piper celebrates a win.



LEANNE Fonagy from Norwegian Cruise Line.



SIGNATURE Media Editorial Director Christian Barker with lucky door prize winner Caroline Hitchen of CruiseHQ.



THE one and only Phil Hoffmann with one of the 19 judges, Megan Caterall of itravel.

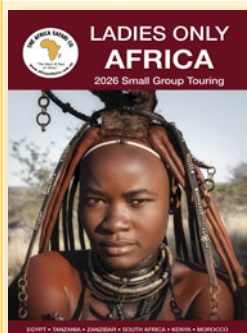
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Atlas Ocean Voyages - Wilds of the Arctic 2027

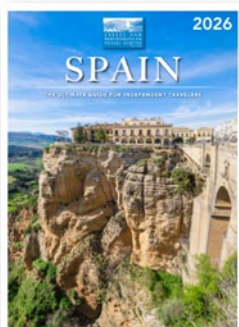
Atlas Ocean Voyages is showcasing its newly revealed Arctic season for 2027 in its latest brochure. The collection includes 14 voyages between May to Sep 2027, taking travellers to 27 fresh destinations. Advisors and their clients will discover wildlife encounters on offer for each month and included expedition experiences such as polar plunges and Zodiac safaris. The brochure details each itinerary, including the 11-night 'Arctic Circle Explorer', which departs Reykjavik, Iceland on 12 Jun 2027. Highlights include hiking the tundra, visiting the Dynjandi Waterfall, and spotting puffins, auk and guillemot on Drangey Island. View the brochure [HERE](#).



The Africa Safari Co - Ladies Only Africa 2026

Australian owned and operated, The Africa Safari Co has launched its new 2026 Ladies Only Africa Small Group Touring brochure. The collection is designed to cater to the unique needs and interests of women, combining socialising and security while on safari. The operator offers tours across Egypt, Tanzania, Zanzibar, South Africa, Kenya and Morocco, including a 10-day 'Ladies Only Egypt' itinerary, which departs 24 May 2026. Guests will enjoy a full day tour of the Great Pyramids

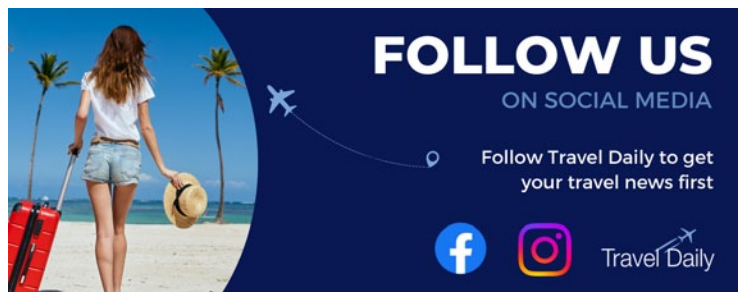
and Sphinx of Giza, including a camel ride and entry into the Egyptian Museum. The brochure can be downloaded [HERE](#).



Greece Med Travel - Spain 2026

Boutique Mediterranean travel specialist Greece & Mediterranean Travel Centre has released its new Spain 2026 brochure. From the beaches of Costa del Sol to the artistic soul of Barcelona and the charm of Andalusian villages, the collection captures the essence of the vibrant nation and invites travellers to experience it their way. Highlights include explorations of iconic cities like Madrid, Seville and Barcelona, and experiences centred on Spain's art, flamenco,

wine, and gastronomy. The brochure is available now for free download via the Greece Med Travel website, [HERE](#).



Moon meets Nova



MELBOURNE was the setting for an historic first for the Silversea brand over the weekend, with *Silver Nova* and *Silver Moon* making a spectacular arrival in port on the same day.

The special moment saw Ports Victoria, Visit Victoria and the City of Port Phillip, collaborate with Silversea on a portside activation at Station Pier, featuring street art and festive tunes.

In attendance to mark the moment on board was APAC Managing Director Adam Radwanski and Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Nicholas Reece.

While *Silver Nova* is no stranger to Australian shores - having made her debut last year - the Muse-class *Silver Moon* is undertaking her first local season

this summer, providing a range of sailings between Australia and New Zealand.

The ultra-luxury *Moon* has capacity for 596 passengers with a roughly 1:1.4 crew to guest ratio, personal butler service, and its signature S.A.L.T kitchen and restaurant - reflecting the unique culinary character of each destination the ship visits.

Meanwhile, *Silver Nova* returns after a successful debut season last year, representing the latest class from Silversea in its bid to better cater to a younger skew of luxury cruise customer.

She has departed Melbourne to undertake a 12-night voyage to Auckland, calling at Hobart, Dunedin, Lyttelton, Wellington, and Napier. **AB**

Travel Daily On Board: MS Noordam



Explorer's Lounge

Located on deck 2, the Explorer's Lounge aboard Holland America Line's *Noordam* is a delightful multi-purpose venue where guests can enjoy lectures and performances including classical music concerts - or simply relax with a glass of wine or a cocktail as they watch the world go by.

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Basel (2 nights)

A cultural hub on the Rhine, Basel comes alive with art; taste traditional Läckerli and stroll riverside paths, stopping at cafés and beer gardens favoured by locals.



Bern (2 nights)

Switzerland's medieval capital enchants with sandstone streets and riverside views; discover hidden gems like the Rosengarten, underground wine cellars, and bustling markets for authentic local flavours.



Geneva (3 nights)

A refined lakeside city of luxury and history; wander Old Town Passage for boutique chocolatiers, antique shops, and wine bars, or relax at Bains des Pâquis with fondue.

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BLACK FRIDAY PROMOTION

On 2026 Rail Journeys

Experience Infinity Holidays' 2026 premium rail program with Rocky Mountaineer and the new Canyon Spirit. Our campaign highlights the latest products, packages, deals, and tools to inspire clients and drive premium rail bookings.

Rocky Mountaineer: Journey Through the Clouds, 11 Days

Rocky Mountaineer Itinerary (Canada):

Vancouver (2 nights), Kamloops (1 night), Jasper (2 nights), Lake Louise (2 nights), Banff (2 nights) and Calgary (1 night).

Inclusions:

- 2 days onboard Rocky Mountaineer GoldLeaf Service
- 2 breakfasts and 3 lunches
- 10 nights hotel accommodation: Vancouver, Kamloops, Jasper, Lake Louise, Banff and Calgary
- Activities: National Parks Pass, Ice Explorer, Glacier Skywalk, Banff Gondola, PLUS more...

Black Friday Promo: Up to \$1,125 per couple in savings on select 2026 dates. **On Sale Until 4 December 2026**

From
\$10,599 pp twin share

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Rocky Mountaineer: Passage to the Peaks, 8 Days

Rocky Mountaineer Itinerary (Canada):

Calgary (1 night), Banff (2 nights), Kamloops (1 night), Jasper (2 nights) and Edmonton (1 night).

Inclusions:

- 2 days onboard Rocky Mountaineer SilverLeaf Service
- 2 breakfasts and 2 lunches
- 7 nights hotel accommodation: Calgary, Banff, Kamloops, Jasper and Edmonton
- Activities: National Parks Pass, Jasper SkyTram, Banff Gondola
- Coach Transfer Jasper to Edmonton

Black Friday Promo: Up to \$785 in savings per couple. **On Sale Until 4 December 2026**

From
\$6,949 pp twin share

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Terms and Conditions: The 2026 Black Friday Offers apply to new bookings only made between 20 Nov-4 Dec 2025 on select 2026 travel dates, excluding high-demand periods. Offers are per person, automatically applied, capacity-controlled, non-transferable, and cannot be deferred or applied retroactively. Not valid for Custom Groups or Group Tour Block bookings, and AUD/NZD pricing is indicative only. Further conditions apply, see infinityholidays.com for details.



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