



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of travel news, including our **Sustainability page**, a product profile from **Garuda**, plus full pages from:

- Ponant
- Silversea

NSW is walking on Ayres

THE newly established NSW Tourism Association has unveiled a new board boasting several tourism heavy hitters, to be stewarded by former NSW Tourism Minister Stuart Ayres as Chair (**pictured**).



Former Chair and linchpin in establishing the fledgling tourism body last year (*TD* 26 Jul 2024), Lori Modde, has transitioned to the role of Vice Chair.

Former Australian Cruise Association executive Natalie Godward will remain as CEO, steering a new board of six prominent tourism leaders.

The new executive consist of:

- Ali Cassim, Head of Marketing and Digital for BridgeClimb Sydney;
- Cameron Arnold, CEO and founder of Regen Tourism;
- Ian Wood, Divisional Director Australia & New Zealand at Merlin Entertainments;
- John Hughes, CEO of Luna Park Sydney;
- Josh Dolgoy, Head of

Government Relations Oceania, Royal Caribbean;

- Ken Corbett, MD at Australian Attractions;
- Nick Lester, GM Sydney Harbour at Sealink Marine & Tourism.

Priorities for NSW Tourism in 2025 include increasing visitor numbers and spend, strengthening regional tourism, making NSW tourism experiences more sustainable, and pursuing greater collaboration with businesses across the sector.

The body also noted it is "critical" that the NSW Government remains committed to a well-resourced Destination NSW to compete with other Australian states and territories.

"There has never been a more important time for the tourism industry to have a strong and passionate voice in NSW...and I look forward to working with our dedicated management team and fellow directors in support of visitor economy businesses across our state," Ayres said. *AB*

Save up to \$8,000

SILVERSEA is offering travellers up to \$8,000 savings per suite as well as a suite upgrade for two weeks only.

The generous offer applies on a selection of more than 100 global voyages departing early 2025 through 2027.

For all the details, see **page 10**.

Front row to the Poles

PONANT is encouraging agents to give their clients a front row seat to the poles at discounted prices this year.

Travellers can save as much as \$6,599 per person on a luxury polar expedition - see **page nine**.



Career Opportunities

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Travel Daily
ON LOCATION

FOZ DO IGUAZU

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Intrepid, which is hosting us on the Iguazu Falls Short Break.

WE WILL today head to the Argentinian side of Iguazu Falls, waking early for the train to Devil's Throat Station.

Here our local guide will commence our adventure of the falls as we spend the day exploring the extensive boardwalk trail along the cascades and the surrounding jungle filled with wildlife, including native toucans.

The tour will also include the Paseo Superior trail, which offers breathtaking views of the falls' 275 individual waterfalls as the mist rises from the roaring waters below.

VA triples Reward Seats

VIRGIN Australia has tripled the number of Reward Seats available for Velocity members to book on its upcoming wet lease Qatar Airways flights departing Sydney, Brisbane, and Perth to Doha.

The bolstering of loyalty benefits on the upcoming flights will kick in from 12 Jun and run through to 10 Dec, applying to both economy & business seats.

Members can redeem a Reward Seat for a business class QR Qsuite from 89,500 points, plus taxes and charges one-way.

Economy class seats on the routes can be redeemed from 42,000 pts, plus taxes and fees.

"We know this is a big investment Virgin Australia is making to support its new flights for the European Summer," Velocity Frequent Flyer CEO Nick Rohrlach said.

"We also know this will drive greater member engagement with our program and for our

partners, which is the key to continued growth and success."

VA's decision to triple the number of Reward Seats on offer follows criticism of rival Qantas, which only last week was lambasted by disgruntled customers over a lack of options on key UK routes (*TD* 14 Jan).

MEANWHILE, Qantas has released one million discounted seats across 100 routes.

The promotion is valid for the next 72 hours, with domestic economy tix for loyalty members starting from 6,200 points. *AB*

\$50 off GC flights

WEBJET is offering \$50 off flights to the Gold Coast, thanks to a new partnership with Experience Gold Coast.

The deal is currently on offer and is valid until 22 Jan for travel between 28 Jan and 26 Jun, departing from NSW, Vic and SA.

Travel Daily
ON LOCATION

LONDON

Today's issue of *Travel Daily* is coming to you courtesy of VisitBritain at its annual Britain and Ireland Marketplace event.

BUYERS from more than a dozen of Australia's leading retail, wholesale and tour brands are this week meeting with DMCs and British suppliers to freshen up product offerings for Australian travellers.

Along with a few days of networking, deal-making and hand-shaking, the group will also enjoy some of London's classic and niche attractions.

Convening today, it's straight into business, with tours this afternoon at two leading urban resorts - The Atheneum and The Londoner at Leicester Square.

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Travel Daily

CI appoints GSA for Fiji

EXCLUSIVE

TAIWAN-BASED China Airlines has appointed Airline Rep Services - a division of CVFR Travel Group - to be the GSA for the carrier's pax business in Fiji.

This strategic partnership seeks to strengthen China Airlines' presence in the South Pacific region and enhance its service offerings to travellers in Fiji.

As the new GSA, Airline Rep Services is charged with managing all sales, marketing, and customer service operations for China Airlines in Fiji, which it said would give travellers in the country greater onward access to key markets in Asia, Europe, and North America.

"We are excited to partner with Airline Rep Services to expand our footprint in Fiji," China Airlines Vice President for Oceania, Eddie Yeh, said.

"Their in-depth market knowledge and industry



expertise make them the ideal representative to support our growth strategy and better serve our customers in this vibrant market," he added.

Airline Rep Services VP Gabrielle Vicari added the new deal presents Fijian travellers with exciting opportunities to connect to world-class services and wider international destinations.

The deal is also expected to drive tourism and business travel volumes between Fiji and key international destinations.

It has been a busy time for CVFR Group, which last week named Lenny Padowitz as the GM for ANZ and Fiji in its Consolidation Services division. *AB*

New Collette incentive

COLLETTE has announced a new travel agent incentive to kick off the new year.

Every booking made from 01 Jan to 30 Apr will bring travel partners closer to securing a spot on a small group tour, departing Chamonix in France in Oct.

The trip will travel through the Alps to the Dolomites, taking in destinations throughout France, Switzerland, Austria, and Italy.

The top two advisors selling Collette from each state/territory will earn a place on the fam, with wildcard opportunities also available - for more information, contact your local Collette BDM.

55 years in Australia

INDONESIA'S flag carrier Garuda Indonesia is today showcasing the wonders of its homeland, having recently celebrated 55 years of flying to Australia - head to **page 11** for more information.

Mint tipped to raise

MINT Payments is reportedly preparing for a \$20 million capital raising in the first half of 2025.

An article published yesterday in the *AFR* suggests the travel fintech company is preparing to blood additional investors by having existing equity holders sell down their stakes.

CEO Alex Teoh told *TD* that while he could not comment on specific market speculation, he confirmed the company has completed a new growth capital round that enables the business to accelerate its plans to best service the Australian and New Zealand travel industry.

Mint Payments made waves late last year, announcing the upcoming launch of Mint Protect, a new service offering chargeback protection for travel agents in Australia & NZ (*TD* 16 Dec 2024).

Mint said the new service will provide robust protection against risks associated with chargebacks, like fraud and supplier insolvency.

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Delta launches incentive

DELTA Air Lines is giving travel agents across Australia the chance to score a five-day trip to the United States this Apr, as part of its latest incentive.

Winners will enjoy return flights with Delta from Sydney to LA, where they will spend a fun-filled day at Universal Studios Hollywood, including a viewing of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*.

Next, the group will spend three nights in the heart of Coachella



Valley, soaking in the desert beauty and vibrant city life of Palm Springs.

The trip includes transfers and premium twin-share accommodations.

To enter, agents need to log every booking for adult and child return airfares issued on 006 stock flying Delta, departing Australia to the United States, Canada, and Mexico, up until 10 Feb.

Additionally, for a chance to be one of two wildcard winners, agents must sell just one adult or child return Delta airfare out of Australia to the US, Canada or Mexico before 10 Feb, and answer in 25 words or less why they choose to sell Delta.

Agents can find more information on the incentive by heading to **page two**. *JM*

EK ups Madagascar

EMIRATES has announced it will boost its Madagascar flights from four to six weekly services, beginning 02 Apr.

The move follows strong demand since the route's launch in Sep 2024 (**TD** 05 Sep 2024), with the current four weekly flights between Dubai and Antananarivo operating at nearly full capacity.

Intrepid MFWF trip

INTREPID Travel has launched a food tour hosted by Lyndey Milan (**pictured**) for the Melbourne Food & Wine Festival (MFWF).

Guests can embark on a six-day journey from 20-25 Mar, combining Melbourne's vibrant culinary culture with the landscapes of rural Victoria.

Highlights include MFWF's iconic World's Longest Lunch, a rare spirits & cheese-pairing event, a behind-the-scenes look at food photography, and a degustation aboard The Q Train.

Guests will stay at the boutique Melbourne Place and Holiday Inn & Suites Geelong, an IHG Hotel.



The Ghan Experience

JOURNEY Beyond's new The Ghan Experience activation will debut at Melbourne's Queensbridge Square today, inviting members of the public to transport themselves to the Red Centre on the famous rail service.

The activation, created in partnership with Tourism NT, will run from 21 to 27 Jan, aiming to capitalise on the crowds visiting Melbourne for the Australian Open - of which Journey Beyond is a key broadcast partner.

Riyadh Air delayed

SAUDI Arabia's planned second flag carrier Riyadh Air has been forced to push back its start date, following a shortage of aircraft from embattled manufacturing partner Boeing.

Riyadh was due to begin operations this quarter, however the airline is reportedly set to receive only four of the eight 787 Dreamliners it was expecting.

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Qantas takes off on training

QANTAS has opened its new Engineering Academy in Brisbane, which will train the next generation of aircraft engineers.

Developed by Qantas and Aviation Australia, the updated training program has been designed to increase the number of apprentices that can be trained in Australia each year.

The first tranche of 30 apprentices will undertake simulated practical tasks in a controlled environment that mirrors working in a hangar, alongside their theory and classroom training, as well as learn via on-the-job training under the supervision of experienced Qantas engineers.

Additionally, QantasLink will donate its last Boeing 717, now retired, to the academy, allowing apprentices to do part of their training on a jet aircraft.

“Qantas has a proud history of having some of the best



engineers in the world and investments like our new Engineering Academy in Brisbane will help ensure this history continues,” Qantas Domestic CEO Markus Svensson said.

“The academy will play a vital role in equipping the next generation of aircraft engineers with the practical skills and expertise needed to sustain and grow our industry.”

In total, the Qantas Group will have more than 250 engineering apprentices in training across Australia this year, up 45% on the previous year. *JM*

Travel mourns death

THE accommodation and hospitality industry is in mourning following the passing of Charlotte Howells, following a brief battle with cancer.

Howells (**pictured**) held roles in marketing, communications and PR in Australia with QT Hotels and Hyatt Regency Sydney before venturing to the UK for a role as Director of Brand Northern Europe with Anantara Hotels.

In line with her wishes, Howells will be buried in her native Wales, with details to be advised on a funeral or memorial service.



RSSC puts on a show

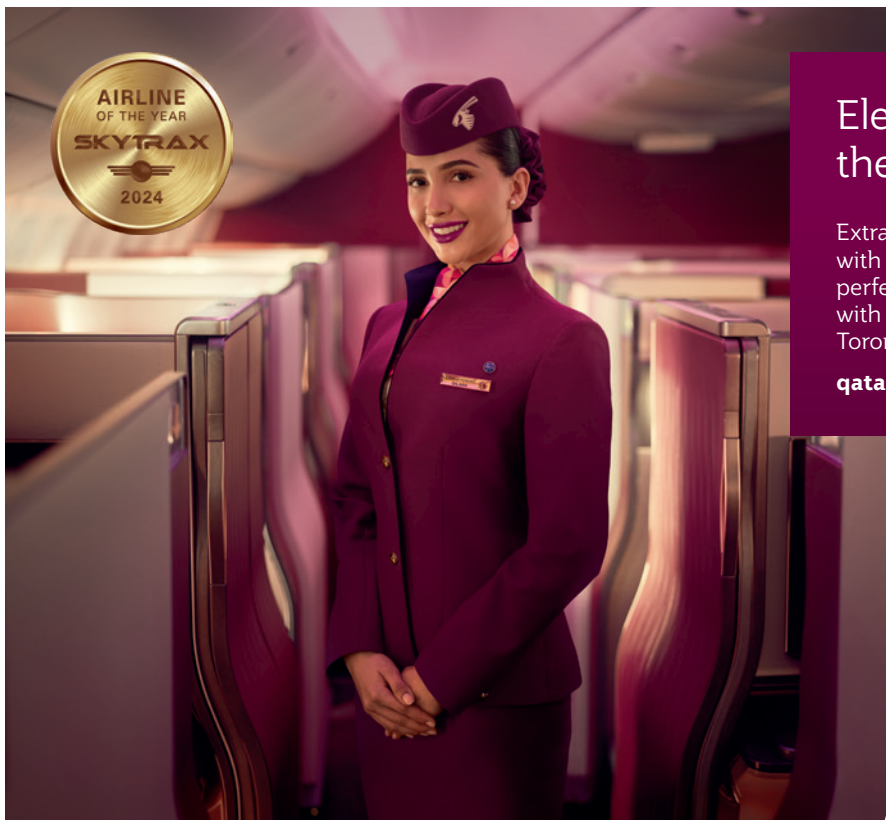
REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) will debut a new lineup of onboard entertainment offerings across its fleet throughout 2025.

Based on guest feedback, the new shows will blend music, dance and interactivity, ranging from homages to legendary female rock artists and British pop acts, to celebrations of Motown and 1940s big band.

The cruise line will also introduce a brand-new music trivia game show concept, allowing guests to engage as participants or enjoy as part of an interactive audience.

Highlights include the ‘Red, White, and British’ show, a lively tribute to the British Invasion featuring iconic music from artists like Elton John and the Rolling Stones, debuting on *Seven Seas Navigator* in Dec.

Guests can also step into ‘The Wild Cards’, a 1940s-inspired underground dance club featuring big band arrangements.



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GOING PLACES TOGETHER



Window Seat

PAKISTAN Int'l Airlines has faced backlash after a new campaign promoting the return of its flights to Paris.

The carrier posted a photo on X of a plane appearing to fly at the Eiffel Tower with the slogan 'Paris, we're coming today', leading many social media users to draw comparisons to 9/11.

One user asked, "is this an advertisement or a threat?"

While PIA did issue an apology, it said the public's reaction was "blown out of proportion", and so far has not removed the ad.



Singapore on trend

SINGAPORE Tourism Board (STB) Oceania has launched a gamified TikTok travel miniseries, featuring six of Australia's top content creators.

Produced in partnership with global social media and influencer marketing agency, Komodo, 'The Journey: Singapore' series will see the creators go head-to-head to win the title of 'The Destination's Most Viral Creator'.

As an added bonus, one of the winner's followers will receive a trip for two to Singapore.

The unique marketing initiative aims to "showcase the destination to new audiences through the lens of these content creators", according to Oliver Chong, Executive Director, International and Oceania, STB.



ATIA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



AS I sit down to write ATIA's first 2025 column for *Travel Daily*, my first reflection is on how good summer holidays are.

While not everyone takes a break,

there is no doubt that the nation slows for several weeks during Australia's summer shutdown.

In my case that meant taking time to recharge, watching the cricket, reading a few books, and spending some time with family.

As we came back for 2025, the ATIA team was straight back to it.

We're finalising our plans for the election year, we opened the ATIA accreditation renewal portal, and we're delivering on our new A30 membership services.

During the wall of noise that was Dec, you are forgiven if you missed that we provided members their first personalised Financial Benchmarking Report.

These provide valuable insights for our members, both into the current state of the travel industry and the performance of their own businesses in comparison to others in their segment.

They offer practical tools to guide

business strategy and growth for 2025 and beyond, and reflect ATIA's ongoing commitment to strengthen our collective impact as the peak body in the travel industry.

Finally, we have also been taking the fight to the big banks, the credit card companies and some govt backbenchers, who want to ban credit and debit card surcharging.

While I understand that marginal backbenchers see an easy target in an election year to ban surcharges, they have failed to see who is driving this additional cost.

The profits on each payment are made by financial institutions, not you as the business - see our full submission [HERE](#).

We last took up this battle in 2015, and were successful; in 2025 we'll aim for the same result.

As always, our potential to succeed in delivering for the industry is driven by listening to our members and other voices.

And so, to sign off, I'll take this opportunity to thank everyone in advance for another year of industry collaboration that helps us achieve our collective goals.

This year we will offer more ways to engage with your association, and we look forward to delivering for you.

Learn More! *Earn More!*

Antarctica 2026/2027

We are excited to invite you our trade partners to Aurora's new season virtual event, celebrating the launch of our 2026/2027 Antarctica season, with 27 departures across three purpose-built small ships.

Join our upcoming virtual events Wednesday 29 January at 10.30am and Thursday 30 January at 4.00pm AEDT.



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27

Expedition Departures

6

Special Edition Expeditions

8

Fly Voyages

13

Short Voyages (12 days or less)

1

New Expedition Itinerary (Taste of Antarctica)





KYOTO UNPACKS GREEN TOURISM INITIATIVES

EXCLUSIVE

WHILE Aussie travellers continue to flock to Japan, tourism representatives looking after Kyoto are keen to let the market know that sustainability is a core tenant of visitation.

The major city on the island of Honshu is one of the most reliant on tourism in the country, as spend from leisure and business travellers makes up roughly 10% of its total economy.

However, the Kyoto City Tourism Association said that while it can't necessarily stop travellers from visiting iconic landmarks, it has invested time and money into implemented strategies to manage the flow of tourism.

These include incentivising decentralised trips through the provision of online congestion



tools and live webcams, as well as marketing to travellers the benefits of visiting landmarks during the quieter morning and evening periods.

Another pillar of sustainability for Kyoto is to encourage tourists to book trips during the summer and winter seasons.

These initiatives complement additional luggage storage centres for tourists, and new transportation options.

Kyoto is also active in promoting responsible tourism, some of which encourages visitors to respect local culture and customs.

Local rep for Kyoto City Tourism through Tourism Garden, Alison Roberts-Brown, told **TD** there are many green projects taking place that many Aussie travellers may not know about.

"Kyoto City Tourism Association (DMO Kyoto) works in association with Kyoto City to resolve various

issues surrounding tourism," she said, adding that there are many layers of activities, including the Code of Conduct for Tourism in Kyoto (see [HERE](#)).

"Supporting the development of a range of transportation and travel products that encourage demand dispersion and sustainable tourism [are also running]...including the Hidden Gems Project, promoting six lesser-known areas of Kyoto City.

"I met with directors and owners of businesses in Kyoto last year, some have inherited businesses passed down through the generations, others are entrepreneurs, but all have the passion and drive to make their mark on improving tourism to Kyoto and making it sustainable," Roberts-Brown said. **AB**

Atlantas rewilds

ATLANTIS, The Palm is advancing its marine conservation project, releasing 20 Arabian carpetsharks and three honeycomb whiprays into the Persian Gulf at the Jebel Ali Wildlife Sanctuary.

The latest release brings its total to 58 sharks and 10 rays released since 2019, as part of the project.

The hotel's staff also helped lead a community beach clean-up following the release last week.

Red Cat pounces on Barrier Reef conservation projects

WHITSUNDAYS-BASED eco and adventure tourism operator Red Cat Adventures (RCA) is championing reef conservation with a number of pioneering environmental initiatives.

RCA has launched several conservation projects over the past three years, aimed at addressing the environmental challenges facing the Great Barrier Reef.

The company has been instrumental in the Boats 4 Coral Project, the Coral Nurture Program, and the Tourism Reef



Protection Initiative, which are focused on restoring coral ecosystems, fostering natural regeneration, and involving both

crew members and guests in vital reef-monitoring efforts.

"Our success is built on a foundation of customer-centric experiences and a deep commitment to environmental stewardship," General Manager Asher Telford said.

"These initiatives showcase our dedication to preserving the Whitsundays' natural beauty for future generations."

"Coral reef tourism is a significant economic driver, and environmental protection education opportunity." **MS**

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MONEY

WELCOME to Money, *TD's* Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

AU\$1 = US\$0.627

THE inauguration of US President-elect Donald Trump has helped deliver a boost to the Australian dollar, which has risen about a falling greenback; it remains to be seen whether the positive effect will last. *Wholesale rates this morning.*

US	\$0.627
UK	£0.509
NZ	\$1.105
Euro	€0.602
Japan	¥97.59
Thailand	฿21.42
China	¥4.576
South Africa	11.62
Canada	\$0.897
Crude oil	US\$76.60

Emirates adds vegan delights



EMIRATES has introduced an expanded range of vegan cuisine on board its planes as well as its lounges, including a vegan selection for children.

In time for 'Veganuary', an initiative highlighting the benefits of the vegan diet, a group of Emirates chefs gathered in the carrier's Flight Catering Concept Development Kitchen to workshop new dishes, and experiment with the latest innovative ingredients on the market.

At the workshop, chefs trialed a new solid egg substitute in a spicy shakshuka sauce and developed a pre-made vegan pastry sheet into savoury vegan cannelloni.

The carrier also recently introduced vegan meals for kids, including pizza, sweet and sour vegetable casserole, vegetable fajitas, vegan muffins, cauliflower bites with sweet sauce and desserts like strawberry crumble and vegan chocolate pudding.

The vegan options are available to order and pre-order on board, as well as in Emirates lounges, with customers able to request

vegan meals on all flights and across all classes of travel up to 24 hours before departure.

Emirates now offers a selection of 300 vegan dishes. *JM*

Spanish ski accident

AROUND 15 people were injured at a winter resort in Spain's Pyrenees mountains over the weekend after the collapse of a 15-metre-high chairlift.

According to local broadcaster TVE, a pulley at one end of the chairlift came loose and part of the structure supporting it collapsed, causing a cable to lose tension and several seats to fall.

A number of helicopters were deployed to rescue those trapped beneath the ski lift and transfer the injured to nearby hospitals.

Local emergency services said that 10 people needed to be treated in hospitals, with two young women remaining in intensive care, while a further 20 were discharged on the spot.

The cause of the incident is being investigated.

Vietnam hole in one

GOLF clubs across central Vietnam have reported significant spikes in visitation by Australians on the back of strong promotion in the local market.

Ba Na Hills said it has seen a 40% spike in travelling Australian players, while Montgomerie Links is reporting a 20% jump, with the biggest increases coming during the quieter summer period.

Founding member of the Vietnam Golf Coast collective, Laguna Golf Lang Co, said its dedicated golf roadshow in Sydney and Melbourne earlier this year is paying dividends.

The three courses are located on Vietnam's east coast between Da Nang and Hue.

MEET THE SPEAKERS



MARISSA PAPAS

Director,
Connected Travel

SESSION

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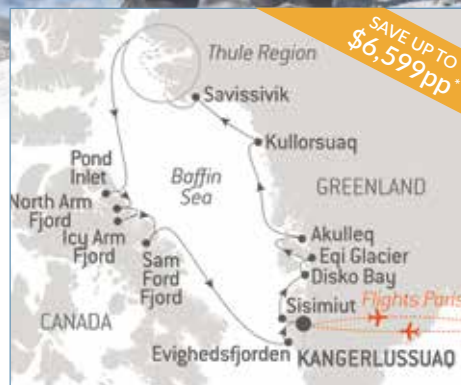
Ushuaia to Ushuaia
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18 nights on board *L'Austral* or *Le Boréal*



Includes 1 night in Buenos Aires,
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 SILVERSEA®
The background of the advertisement is a photograph of a Veranda Suite on the Silver Ray cruise ship. The suite is a spacious, modern cabin with a large bed in the foreground, a sofa, a desk with a chair, and a dining table with chairs. Large windows offer a view of the ocean. The lighting is warm and inviting.

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TERMS & CONDITIONS: Reasons to Sail + Suite Upgrade offer is valid on new individual bookings made between January 14, 2025, and January 31, 2025, on select voyages. The Suite Upgrade offer is already reflected as a price downgrade and is only available in select categories. Full World Cruise and full Grand Voyages are excluded. Offer available only on Door-to-Door and Port-to-Port fares (fare code: 03). Offer not available on Special Combination voyages, Grand Voyages, and World Cruises. This offer is subject to suite availability. Offer combinable with Event Certificates, National Account Amenities, Referral Savings, Onboard Savings, Combination Savings, promotional pre/post land programs, Kids Savings and Venetian Society Savings. Offer is combinable with groups. Cancel and re-books do not qualify. The promotion is capacity controlled and can be removed at any time without prior notice. Single supplements apply and vary by voyage. Other restrictions may apply see silversea.com for more details.



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generous baggage allowances. Business Class travellers enjoy up to 40kg of luggage, while Economy Class passengers can bring 30kg. For sports enthusiasts, an additional 23kg of baggage is available for sports equipment. Onboard, Garuda's dedicated cabin crew will treat you to a variety of exquisite meals and beverages, ensuring your comfort throughout the flight. From the moment you board, the airline's premium service sets the tone for an exceptional journey. Whether you're travelling for business or leisure, Garuda Indonesia promises a smooth, stylish experience where every detail is carefully crafted to make you feel at ease. Relax and enjoy the journey as Garuda Indonesia transforms your travel into a truly memorable experience.

GARUDA BENEFITS

Garuda Indonesia's Business Class passengers will enjoy exclusive services, including a lie-flat bed, a selection of premium beverages, and Indonesian and Western-inspired cuisines prepared by our Chef on Board. Additionally, a dedicated immigration lane at both Bali and Jakarta airports is reserved exclusively for Garuda Indonesia Business Class passengers.

