

Whales of Tonga

PHOTOAdventures offers you a unique opportunity – to enter the world of the humpback whale.

Each winter, spectacular southern humpback whales return to the Kingdom of Tonga's sparkling, clear waters.

These 15-metre, 40-tonne giants of the ocean come back to the Pacific's coral islands to mate and give birth, after a long migration from their summer feeding grounds in Antarctica's icy seas.

Come and join them in the calm lagoons of Tonga's Vava'u group of islands. Be there – in the water – in one of just a handful of places in the world that offer such whale encounters, under strictly managed conditions.

Snorkelling close to these gentle leviathans is an inspirational, even life-changing, experience. And you can help secure the future for humpback whales, as you assist an expert in whale behaviour with her vital research.

PHOTOAdventures offers 10-day expeditions aboard the charming and comfortable 39-metre island cruiser, *MV Oleanda*, hosted by Australian wildlife photographer Darren Jew, and researcher Ruth Searle of the University of Wales, Swansea.



As well as being expertly guided to photograph and observe the whales above and below the surface, your journey might rediscover something else you've not experienced in a while – time and space for yourself.

Your PHOTOAdventures Whales of Tonga expedition will introduce you to Va'vau's local people and customs, take you snorkelling through coral gardens, bring you together with new friends, or leave you free to just comb unspoiled tropical beaches. This tour offers more opportunities to be in the water with the whales than any other on the market, so places on this PHOTOAdventures expedition are strictly limited to eight people.

Oleanda, your floating base camp, will anchor each night in a different lagoon or near a different village within the whale sanctuary. Specially equipped and expertly operated whale-watch boats will come alongside each morning to take you on your day's adventure. Whale encounters can't be guaranteed every day, but every day will be unforgettable, exploring uninhabited islands and cays, and being rewarded with priceless photographs for your efforts.

The whales migrate to Tonga's waters to create life anew. If you too, think it's time to migrate to paradise, contact PHOTOAdventures now.



PHOTOAdventures, PO Box 105 Sandgate QLD 4017 Australia

Tel: +61 7 3269 2059 Fax: +61 7 3269 3895

e-mail: info@darrenjew.com visit: www.darrenjew.com

This tour is operated in conjunction with WhaleSwim Adventures and the *MV Oleanda*.



What you'll need

You must be confident in the water and competent with mask, fins and snorkel in waters where you may not be able to see the bottom. While sheltered, shallow waters will be sought, the expedition may follow the whales into open water, possibly exposing swimmers to choppy water and surface currents. You might also need a little patience, as we cannot guarantee that whales will be seen every day, but on such days you can still be assured of opportunities to go snorkelling in coral gardens that rival, or even surpass, those of the Great Barrier Reef. Photographic equipment can be as simple as a waterproof disposable camera, or as sophisticated as a specialised underwater camera. We can advise you if you are planning to purchase equipment for the expedition.

How you'll get there

Your PHOTOAdventures Whales of Tonga expedition begins with commercial jet flights to Auckland, and on to Nuku'alofa, Tonga's capital and international airport. From Nuku'alofa, it is a short commuter plane flight with Royal Tongan Airlines to the Vava'u group of islands, where you will be met by wildlife photographer Darren Jew, and whale expert Ruth Searle. You can make your own arrangements to get to Vava'u, or we can put you in touch with selected travel agents who can do this for you.

Where you'll stay

Your time in Vava'u will be spent aboard the 39-metre MV *Oleanda*, a graceful and comfortable island cruiser. All cabins are air-conditioned with en suite shower and toilet. There is a bar and restaurant, and a large sundeck for relaxing, whale-watching and getting to know your fellow expeditioners over a cocktail or two. The PHOTOAdventures party of eight will join another group of 12 aboard ship, but will operate independently for whale encounters.



What you'll eat and drink

Oleanda offers a Western-style menu in its dining saloon, specialising in fresh reef fish,

lobsters and local delicacies, prepared and served by Tongan chefs. A well-stocked bar offers a wide range of beverages including fine wines. Your time ashore will include a traditional Tongan feast and kava ceremony.

How you'll see and swim with the whales



After breakfast each morning, a whale-watching boat will collect the PhotoAdventures' tour party from *Oleanda* and head out for a day's encounters with the humpbacks in the coral lagoons. At all times in the water, the group will be supervised by expert staff, and Darren and Ruth will be on hand to help you get the most from your photographic and research opportunities both in and out of the water. You will be returned to *Oleanda*, anchored in a new location for the coming evening's relaxation.

Your whale encounters will take place under guidelines modelled on internationally recognised standards, designed to ensure both non-harassment of the whales and safety for whale-watchers.

How you'll get some great photographs

Darren will be available throughout the expedition, helping you to take great photographs, both above and below the water. It won't matter what level of equipment you use – from sophisticated to the most basic waterproof disposable.



How you help the research program

Ruth is investigating humpback behaviour for her doctorate in cetacean studies. As her field assistant, you'll have daily opportunities to learn about humpback whales by observing and recording:

- > the size and composition of the pods
- > distances within and between pods
- > population density
- > pod locations (using GPS)
- > surface behaviour
- > subsurface interactions

Expeditioners will also assist by collecting skin samples from the water for DNA analysis, and by photographing individual whales' uniquely shaped and patterned tail flukes. The haunting songs of the humpbacks will also be recorded, to be compared to previous years' songs and to those of other humpback populations. Ruth will also conduct both formal and informal information sessions about her work to ensure you get the most from your encounters.

What you should expect of Vava'u

The pace of life in Tonga is leisurely so treat yourself to 10 days on "Island time", without television, mobile phones or clocks. Tongan people are very friendly and enthusiastically share their strong community spirit with visitors. You can spend time ashore every day, before breakfast and in the afternoon after the whale-watch expeditions.



Vava'u is everything you expect a tropical paradise to be – rich, green vegetation, stunning blue seas surrounding turquoise lagoons, and white sandy beaches lined with coconut palms. You will leave with memories of brilliant sunsets reflected in the calm lagoon waters, the Islanders' wonderful singing voices, and the happy chaos of the Saturday market.

Contact us for all this, plus one of the rarest privileges on Earth – to swim with whales.

2002 dates

Whales of Tonga Tour dates ex-Vava'u –
16 – 26 August 2002
31 August – 10 September 2002

Prices from AUD\$3,695 ex-Vava'u.

See booking form for Terms and Conditions.

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www.darrenjew.com

This tour operated in conjunction with
WhaleSwim Adventures.

Bookings

The 2002 'Whales of Tonga PHOTOAdventures' are operated by WhaleSwim Adventures.

All bookings and payments are made to WhaleSwim Adventures. 31 Crescent Rd East, Palm Beach, Waiheke Island, Auckland, New Zealand. Tel/Fax: +64 9 372 7073 Mobile: 021 182 1497. tours@whaleswim.com

Fax this completed form to WhaleSwim Adventures on +64 9 372 7073 to reserve your place. As these tours fill very quickly, all bookings require the full deposit of AUD\$1,500 (equivalent in other currencies) within 14 days of booking, to guarantee your place.

Full payment must be received for Tour # 1012BP by 1 June 2002; or for Tour # 1012CP by 20 June 2002 - full payment confirms your place, otherwise 'wait-listed' persons will be substituted and your deposit forfeited.

After receiving full payment, WhaleSwim Adventures will supply you with a detailed preparation package with particulars concerning airline information, transfers, what to bring, where to meet the tour, and numerous other details to assist you in making your adventure a smooth, comfortable and fun experience.

Only sign and fax this form after reading the attached Terms and Conditions relating to this tour.

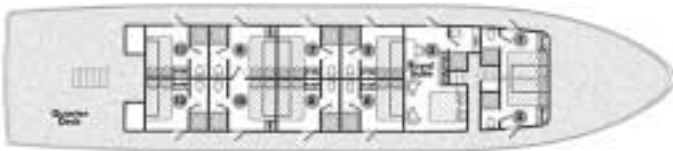
Select a tour date ex-Vava'u:

Tour #1012BP: **16 – 26 August 2002** Tour #1012CP: **31 August – 10 September 2002**

Select a tour cost (A or B Deck):

A Deck: AUD\$3,895

B Deck: AUD\$3,695



Number of persons traveling together _____

Deposit: AUD\$1500 per person

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State/Province _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Country _____

Phone (W) _____ Phone (H) _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____ Web address URL _____

Method of Payment (Deposit AUD\$1500) _____ Date of Payment _____

Anything else you would like to tell us? _____

I, the undersigned, have read and understand the Terms and Conditions relating to this tour.

Signature _____ Date _____

INCLUDED in the tour price

10 nights accommodation (double/twin share*) on MV *Oleanda*.

All meals including a traditional Tongan feast and dance night; An 'Island' dinner; gourmet dinner at Blue Lagoon Resort.

7-full day boat trips with the whales – with picnic lunch.

Presentation on humpback whale behaviour, guidelines and education for in-the-water encounters, whale spotting etc.

Guidance in the water.

Maximum of 8 participants on the whale-watch boat.

Photography guidance provided by PHOTOAdventures.

Research activities.

Activities on leisure days.

Airport transfers in Vava'u.

*Single Supplement AUD\$600

NOT included in the tour price

International airfares to and from Vava'u.

Travel insurance.

Snorkelling equipment.

Drinks on board the boat.

Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages.

Airport departure tax of 20 Pa'anga. (Pa'anga is local currency: 1 Pa'anga = approximately AUD\$1)

Scuba dives.

Scuba equipment.

Underwater cameras are available for hire on daily basis. Please enquire prior to departure.

Verbal, faxed or written reservations will be held for 14 days. An AUD \$1,500 (equivalent in other currencies) non-refundable deposit per person is required within 14 days to confirm your reservation. Full payment must be received – for Tour # 1012BP by 1 June 2002; for Tour #1012CP by 20 June 2002 – to confirm your place, otherwise 'wait-list' persons will be substituted and your deposit forfeited. Re-scheduling and substitution of guests is permitted with approval of WhaleSwim Adventures.

Travel insurance – which includes trip cancellation and accident – is strongly advised and is available at extra cost (Available from WhaleSwim for Australians). All rates and conditions are subject to change. If payments are not received at the designated times, WhaleSwim Adventures, reserves the right to sell those spaces in question with forfeiture of all monies to date. The booking is binding and all payments are non-refundable. Prices may change due to currency fluctuation, schedule changes or circumstances beyond the control of WhaleSwim Adventures. The weather is beyond the control of WhaleSwim Adventures – refunds or discounts are not considered.

Aquatic Abilities

Minimum requirement: Ability to swim, snorkel with fins and be confident in the water.

PLEASE NOTE: The level of your fitness, swimming and snorkelling skills will determine the standard of your encounters with the whales in the water. Therefore, we would recommend that you improve your skills and level of fitness before the tour to ensure fulfilling encounters. If you do not have these skills you are very welcome to join the expeditions each day for wonderful boat-based whalewatching experiences.

Very important to consider... Tongan lifestyle is in a slow "time-zone" – if you are expecting fast service, telephones in your room, television and everything to be available and always be 'on time' – you may want to consider another whaleswim adventure destination! This wonderful whaleswim in Tonga is an opportunity to relax, go-with-the-flow and have a laid-back, cruise-y holiday with the humpback whales! Please contact us for further information – we are always very happy to assist you.

Payment options...

International Bank transfers

Bank: Credit Union Australia

410 Queen St

Brisbane QLD 4000 Australia

BSB: file://au804050

Account Name WhaleSwim Adventures Account #30283742

Swift Address: //AU804050

Memo: Member #: 5188760

Fax copy of receipt to International: + 64 9 372 7073

Account to Account transfer within Australia into:

Bank: National Australia Bank

308 - 222 Queen St

Brisbane QLD 4000 Australia

BSB: 084 004

Account No. 606781665

Reference.: WhaleSwim Adventures CUA302 837 42

Fax copy of Deposit receipt to: +64 9 372 7073

Any enquiries regarding bookings should be directed to the **WhaleSwim Head Office:**

Rae Gill

31 Crescent Rd East

Palm Beach, Waiheke Island

Auckland, New Zealand

Tel/Fax: (64) 09 372 7073

Mobile: 021 182 1497

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