

Nicolas Baudin

Born: 17th February 1754, St Pierre de Re, France.

Died: 16th September 1803 (Aged 49)



Nicolas Thomas Baudin was born on the 17th of February in 1754 at St Pierre de Re, France. He joined the navy in 1774 as a cadet where he remained until he was promoted in 1786 to the rank of sub-lieutenant.

In 1798 an expedition to Terres Australes was approved by Napoléon Bonaparte. Nicolas Baudin, a naval officer with experience, was named the commander. He prepared to travel to explore the lands and collect specimens and document the plants and animals.

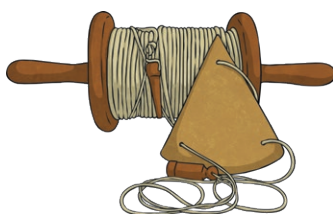
The ships, the *Naturaliste* and the *Geographe* were stocked well and space was left for carrying live animals and plants back to France. They made room for the scientists on board the ship by reducing the amount of weaponry on board the gun deck. They even built an additional deck above the upper deck on each ship.

They departed France on the 19th of October, 1800 with Nicholas Baudin on the *Geographe*. They had a crew of 259 men as well as 22 scientists on board.

Six months it took for the expedition to reach Mauritius, an extended period of time due to poor conditions, illness and battles between the crew. At Mauritius the crew departed for Van Diemen's Land less 46 sailors and 10 scientists than they arrived with. Due to Baudin's strict ruling and his clashing with the officers and scientists they decided they could not continue on the voyage with him.

On the 25th of April they left Mauritius and anchored in Geographe Bay on the 30th of May where they used their time to study the animals and plant life.

The ships separated here and the *Geographe* travelled alone to Timor, mapping the route along the way, with the aim of gaining new crew while there. He arrived on the 21st of August 1801.



Nicolas Baudin

A month later the *Naturaliste* arrived in Timor. They had used their time apart to explore the coast of Van Diemen's Land, right up to Shark Bay, more thoroughly.

On the 13th of November 1801, they both departed Timor with the aim of mapping more of the southern coast, the main purpose of the expedition.

For a month they surveyed around D'Entrecasteaux Channel and then headed to Banks Strait.

In April 1802, Matthew Flinders was sailing along the south coast of Australia making maps of the location, when they spotted a ship sailing towards them in the other direction. They prepared for battle. They had known there were French explorers in the waters but were unsure of what to expect.



The *Geographe* was sailing west after mapping the eastern coast of Australia and collecting specimens. The *Naturaliste* had been separated again. The *Geographe* showed their white flag and invited discussion between the captains.

Matthew Flinders and Nicholas Baudin discussed their findings and shared information before separating and going their own way once again. Hoping to both complete and publish their maps before the other.

The location of this encounter is now known as Encounter Bay.

After the encounter, Baudin decided to set sail for Sydney for medical attention for his crew. It took him over a month to arrive, setting anchor on the 20th of June. By this time he was left with only four crew for work.



The *Naturaliste* had used this time to explore Port Dalrymple, Westernport and set anchor in Sydney on the 24th of April where they prepared the ship for the journey back to France. When they left to travel home they were forced to turn back due to bad weather, so they sailed to Port Jackson, where they met Baudin and the *Geographe* there.

When the weather improved, the *Naturaliste* again set sail to travel to France with all the results of their journey. Baudin then purchased a new ship, the *Casuarina* and named Louis de Freycinet in charge.

Nicolas Baudin

On the 18th of November they began their surveying again. Separating to explore different areas.

Freycinet re-mapped much of the work carried out by Flinders between Cape Northumberland to Kangaroo Islands, doing so in great detail before again meeting back together in King George Sound.

From here they travelled along the west coast of Van Diemen's Land to Timor before heading back to Mauritius.

On the 16th of September, 1803 Baudin passed away, leaving Freycinet in charge. Freycinet left Mauritius and arrived back in France on the 25th of March, 1804 with a huge collection of specimens which were divided between the Paris Museum and Empress Josephine, the wife of Napoleon Bonaparte.

In France, Freycinet was employed to chart the findings and complete the history of Baudin's expedition.

His work was published in 1812. Matthew Flinders had been arrested and jailed in Mauritius, causing a delay in the release of his findings, meaning they were not released until three years later.

