

Days 7-10 - South Georgia

We arrive in South Georgia, the most rugged and mountainous of the many islands in the Southern Ocean. The towering, snow-covered mountains and glaciers are truly magnificent to behold. We'll cruise the more protected eastern coast of the island, seeking out suitable landing spots as variable ice and weather conditions permit.

We'll hope to get ashore at Salisbury Plain where colourful king penguins crowd the beaches in numbers that are simply astonishing. Hundreds of thousands of adult birds and their young literally carpet the vast area. Another 75,000 pairs of king penguins nest at St Andrews Bay. 5 species of albatross, skuas and giant petrels wheel overhead and fur seals are found in good numbers along the shore or frolicking in the water.

At Grytviken, we'll visit an old whaling station as well as the grave of Sir Ernest Shackleton, one of the greatest Antarctic explorers of all time.

Days 11 & 12 - Sea and South Orkneys

Crossing the Scotia Sea to the southwest, we head for Antarctica. If time and conditions allow we'll stop at the South Orkney Islands that are linked to the Antarctic Peninsula by a massive range of sub-marine mountains. This area is usually surrounded by sea ice and often guarded by large icebergs. Conditions permitting, we may visit the Argentinian meteorological station located on Laurie Island in this remote and seldom-visited part of the world.

Days 13-17 - South Shetland Islands and the Antarctic Mainland

En route to the South Shetland Islands you may land at Elephant Island, depending on the ship's progress and the weather. It is from this island that Sir Ernest Shackleton set out for South Georgia in a small boat in 1916, undertaking one of the most remarkable sailing journeys of all time and returning 132 days later to rescue his men.

We'll spend several days cruising among the South Shetlands, an archipelago of around 20 islands, and the bays and channels of the Peninsula. You enjoy frequent shore excursions by inflatable Zodiac boat, exploring perhaps King George, Half Moon, Aicho or Livingston islands. You experience superb encounters with adelic, chinstrap and gentoo penguins, and several species of seal, as well as enjoying stunning scenery.

Weather permitting, you may enter the flooded caldera of Deception Island to explore the abandoned whaling station or perhaps enjoy a spectacular walk to some of the higher points of the crater rim.

At Paradise Harbour or Hope Bay on the Antarctic mainland, you will witness some of the most dramatic scenery the Antarctic has to offer. If the weather is kind you'll have the chance to set foot on the Antarctic continent.

Days 18 & 19 - Drake Passage

Leaving the Antarctic Peninsula you head back across the Antarctic Convergence and the Drake Passage. The crossing is completed with the rounding of Cape Horn.

Day 20 - Ushuaia

In the early morning you arrive back in Ushuaia where the cruise ends. You are transferred to your hotel or to the airport for your onward flight.

INCLUDED

- Transfer on day one from the meeting point to pier and departure transfer on last day of voyage from Ushuaia pier to airport or hotel
- Ship-board accommodation
- Highly experienced expedition leader, crew and lecturers
- All meals, afternoon teas most days
- Access to public viewing areas
- Shore excursions by Zodiac boat
- Onboard lectures, videos, slide and film shows
- Onboard medical officer
- Comprehensive pre-departure information

NOT INCLUDED

- All airfares
- Visa and passport fees, airport departure taxes
- Pre-cruise or post-cruise hotel accommodation
- Laundry, postage, telephone calls, drinks, medical expenses
- Travel insurance, emergency evacuation charges
- Gratuities to staff and crew

Notes:

These notes should be read in conjunction with our Antarctica - Destination Information Guide that is provided to you shortly after booking (or which can be requested prior to booking).

1. Itinerary. Please note that due to the exploratory nature of this expedition, weather, ice, wildlife or other conditions may require changes being made to the itinerary and/or cancellation of certain shore excursions. Every effort will be made to provide regular shore excursions, within the limits of safety and time constraints.

2. Budgeting. In addition to funds for onboard expenses, it is sometimes possible to purchase souvenirs such as books, t-shirts, stamps, postcards, wind-cheaters, caps and similar items at some of the research stations in the Antarctic Peninsula area. Mail can sometimes be posted from these stations as well. US\$ cash is suggested.

3. Clothes. Please read our Antarctic - Destination Information Guide carefully. Though you don't need to make expensive, specialist-clothing purchases for this trip, you will need clothes that adequately protect against cold, wet conditions. Sea spray is common onboard Zodiacs. It's recommended that you have warm, waterproof clothing available for use upon arrival in Ushuaia to protect against inclement weather.

4. On board. The waters of the Drake Passage can be some of the roughest seas in the world - at other times they are so smooth it is referred to as the 'Drake Lake'. Though our vessels, the Akademik Ioffe and the Akademik Sergey Vavilov, are among the most stable ships in their class it is impossible to remove all motion. Unless you are certain you are impervious to the problem, you should take precautions against seasickness. Your doctor can advise you as to the best methods for avoiding this uncomfortable condition.

5. Gratuities. We suggest you allow the equivalent of US\$10 a day for gratuities for the crew and expedition staff. This is usually collected just prior to the end of the cruise. The amount can be paid by Visa or MasterCard if you wish.

6. Sea kayaking. There are separate trip notes for the sea-kayaking option. Please note that this option must be booked prior to your departure from home: it cannot be booked on the ship. Some prior experience is required.

7. Safety is paramount on all our voyages. Due to new International Security Regulations, you will not be able to come to the ship on your own. You will have to arrive with the rest of the group and one of our representatives. Full details of embarkation/disembarkation procedures will be supplied with your final documentation. On board you will be asked to participate in the obligatory lifeboat drill. We will also conduct important briefings on landing procedures and Zodiac operations.