



# A TYPICAL DAY IN ANTARCTICA

There is really no such thing as a typical day in Antarctica. Individual landing locations are different every time due to weather, ice, currents or light conditions. The time in the season will affect many of these items as will it affect what is happening with the wildlife. In addition, every ship has different configurations, rules and structures. For example some ships may serve all buffet meals on board while others may serve a la carte meals. One ship may have you keep your expedition boots and jackets in the mudroom, another in your cabin. The below example is for a two landing day, but please be aware that every day is different – if the weather is poor then there may be no landings and sometimes as many as four landings have been achieved in a single day.

**5:00am** The ship has travelled overnight and you're now over 200 km from where you watched last night's sunset (presuming you're in an area and time of the season where the sun does set). You're momentarily woken by the sound of the ship's anchor as it clangs down to the icy depths below. The captain has anchored in a relatively sheltered bay. As you drift back to sleep you notice the ship is now relatively still compared with the rhythmic rocking you experienced overnight while the ship was travelling through open water. Some passengers stir and head to the lounge for an early coffee or pre-breakfast muffin while others wander to the open decks to set eyes on the morning's new location for the first time.

**7:00am - 8:00am** A buffet breakfast is served and you

steady yourself against the ship's motion at the buffet table as you consider if you should take a healthy fruit salad, a full cooked breakfast or both. After filling your plate you select a table next to some of your fellow passengers – meal times are a great time to meet some of your travelling companions. As you start chatting away with the people at your table the waiting staff bring you some coffee and offer you some warm toast. Once you've had your breakfast you return to your cabin and get ready for your first landing.

**8:00am - 11:30am** Leaving your cabin, you walk down to the mud room where you get dressed in your expedition gear, put on your boots and then join the queue for a zodiac. The line moves quickly as the zodiacs shuttle everyone back and forth. You finally come to the gangway, take a few steps and the expedition team help you board the zodiac and you take your seat. Once seated you feel the sharp bite of the cold wind on your face as the zodiac accelerates towards shore. On approach a couple of penguins breach next to the zodiac, as if to provide an escort for your arrival. As you come ashore there are gentoo and chinstrap penguins littered around the beach. The penguins move around industriously on their penguin highways. Elephant and fur seals laze about in small groups, occasionally looking up to observe the new visitors on their beach. From the shore you take a short ten minute walk up to a nearby hill, where you get a stunning panoramic view of the bay and all its wildlife. An hour and a half goes by before you even know it and you climb back into your zodiac and return to the ship.



**11:30am - 1:30pm** Returning to your cabin you keep on your expedition trousers although you swap your hard outer shell jacket for a simple fleece. Lunch is called and the expedition crew have decided to prepare a BBQ lunch on the back deck and you head down there as you're surprisingly hungry after your morning of exploring. As you cut into some Patagonian lamb you hear the anchor raise and the ship begins to move again. You order a wine and sit back and relax as the ship moves along slowly in the ice wilderness to your next landing site.

**1:30pm - 3:30pm** After lunch you put your expedition jacket back on as you prepare to undertake another landing. This time you have arrived at an Argentinean research base. You take the zodiacs and on this occasion you have a dry landing at a small pier. Some team members from the base welcome you ashore and offer to give you a tour of the base. Your host shows you through the base's living areas and you get a feel for the life of a scientist at this base. They also show you some of the research projects that they are currently working on and explain the ramifications of their research. Finally you return to the ship once more.

**3:30pm - 7:00pm** Back on board the ship the expedition crew announce that there will be no more landings for the day so you head to your cabin and change out of your expedition gear. Some people head to the library to read or sit on the deck with a drink and some snacks as the ship begins to move again. One of the expedition team presents

a lecture on Antarctic history in the lecture room for those that are interested.

Around 6:00pm the ship comes into the Lemaire Channel, a narrow channel with dramatic cliff faces on either side. Everyone heads out to the outer decks and as the ship moves on whales are witnessed breaching on the one side of the ship. On the other side of the ship a leopard seal glances up from an ice floe as the ship passes by. As the ship progresses the sun drops in the sky and brilliant pink and orange hues light up the sky at the end of the channel. You look around as everyone gasps with wonder, the snaps of cameras crescendo as the ship passes through the end of the channel and the multi-coloured sky opens up in an iceberg littered bay. Everyone reluctantly leaves the open decks as the sun disappears and the temperature drops.

**7:00pm - 8:30pm** After leaving the Lemaire Channel dinner is called and you sit down for an a la carte dinner. The ship sets course for its new location the next day. While waiting for your meals you trade images on your camera with your fellow passengers and talk about everything that you've seen during the day. You choose a chocolate mud cake dessert which is delicious. After dinner some people go to an evening lecture on penguins whilst others watch a movie on TV, head to the expedition lounge bar for some drinks or retire to the library to read a book.