

ANTARCTICA - SOUTH GEORGIA AND ANTARCTIC ODYSSEY



INTRODUCTION

EARLY BIRDS ON SALE - Book and save up to 15% OFF* Antarctica 2020-21 voyages

Summer comes to South Georgiaâs remote, untamed landscape like a freight train. Famed for its abandoned whaling stations and Shackletonâs heroic journey, South Georgia is home to millions of fur seals and penguins, wallows of elephant seals, and nesting albatross. We arrive at the breeding cycle peak, as chicks become juveniles, parents shuttle fish and seal pups thrill with mock charges. Retracing Shackletonâs boat voyage, we visit Elephant Island before continuing south along the Antarctic Peninsula. Days remain long and filled with humpback and minke whales, penguins and leopard seals, historic sites and scientific stations.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrive Ushuaia

Arrive in Ushuaia, where you will be met by a representative of Aurora Expeditions and transferred to your downtown hotel (preferred flights only).



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ACAUAO22
DEPARTURE
10/03/2021
DURATION
22 Days
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DAY 2: Embark ship in Ushuaia

This morning, enjoy a leisurely breakfast at the hotel before exploring Ushuaia on a half-day city tour. Ushuaia, capital city of the province of Tierra del Fuego, is located on the shores of the Beagle Channel and it is surrounded by the Martial Range, which offers a unique landscape as a result of the combination of mountains, sea, glaciers and forest. The city tour will visit The Mission, Brown and Solier neighbourhoods, where you can see old houses belonging to the first families in Tierra del Fuego, such as the Beban, the Pastoriza, and the Ramos. Head 11 kilometres (6.8 miles) out of town to Martial Glacier. The ride in the chair lift to the trails leading up to the glacier provides wonderful regional views and of Ushuaia town, the Beagle Channel and its islands. Afterwards, continue to the End of the World Museum with exhibitions explaining the history of Tierra del Fuego. Transfer to the pier where our expedition team will warmly welcome you on board the Greg Mortimer at approximately 4.00 pm (final embarkation time will be provided in your final documentation). As the Greg Mortimer pulls away from port, we'll gather on the deck to commence our adventure with spectacular views over Ushuaia and Tierra del Fuego. You'll have time to settle into your cabin before our important briefings.



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DAY 3: Drake Passage

As we commence the Drake Passage crossing, we make the most of our time getting comfortable with the motions of the sea. Our expedition team prepare you for our first landing with important wildlife guidelines and biosecurity procedures, and start our lecture program to help you learn more about Antarctica's history, wildlife and environment. Our wildlife experiences begin as we enjoy watching and photographing the many seabirds, including majestic albatrosses and giant petrels following in our wake. They rise and fall skilfully, using air currents created by the ship to gain momentum.



DAY 4: Drake Passage & South Shetlands

Nearing the tip of the South Shetland Islands on day four, the excitement is palpable with everyone converging on the bridge watching for our first iceberg. The ocean takes on a whole new perspective once we are below the Antarctic Convergence and are surrounded by the surreal presence of floating ice sculptures. The memory of your first big iceberg sighting is likely to remain with you for a lifetime. Weather permitting, we may attempt our first landing in Antarctica by late afternoon.



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DAY 5: Antarctic Peninsula - Day 5 to 7

Over the next few days a host of choices are open to us, and depending on ice and weather conditions, the western side of the Antarctic Peninsula is ours to explore. Our experienced expedition team, who have made countless journeys to this area, will use their expertise to design our voyage from day to day. This allows us to make best use of the prevailing weather, ice conditions and wildlife opportunities. Because we are so far south, we will experience approximately 18-20 hours of daylight and the days can be as busy as you wish. We will generally try for two landings or Zodiac excursions each day; cruising along spectacular ice cliffs; following whales that are feeding near the surface; and landing on the continent and its off-shore islands to visit penguin rookeries, seal haul outs, historic huts, and a few of our other favourite spots along the peninsula. There will be plenty of time for sleep when you get home! There are many exciting places we can choose to visit and our itinerary is deliberately flexible to allow us to pick the best spots on the day based on ice and weather conditions. A sample of some of the types of places where we may cruise through, land, hike, photograph or view spectacular wildlife include: Beautiful protected bays around the Antarctic Peninsula surrounded by magnificent peaks and spectacular glaciers, areas that are havens for whales as we keep our eyes open for humpbacks, orcas, minke, and crabeater seals, as we explore bays in Zodiacs. Wildlife-rich islands where glaciers and mountains dominate the vista and we can see large chinstrap penguin colonies tucked in between basaltic turrets coloured by yellow and orange lichens, and where often fur seals and elephant seals are hauled out on the pebble beaches. Harbours home to gentoo penguins, and that regularly host Weddell seals. The scenery is dramatic towering peaks and calving glaciers surround the harbour. The thundering crack of the glaciers as they calve is sure to stop you in your tracks. Lemaire Channel - If ice conditions allow, standing on the observation deck of the Greg Mortimer quietly as the ship sails along the narrow Lemaire Channel could certainly be one of the highlights of our voyage. Cliffs tower 700 metres / 2,296 feet straight out of the ocean on either side of the ship. The water can sometimes be so still that perfect reflections are mirrored on the surface and it is clear to see why this Channel is often called "Kodak Alley". Gigantic icebergs may clog the channel, creating navigational challenges for our Captain and crew; occasionally they may even obstruct our passage.



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DAY 8: Elephant Island

Today, if weather permits, we set course for Elephant Island, a half-submerged mountain cloaked with an ice sheet at the outer limits of the South Shetlands. We'll learn the story of Shackleton and hear how his ship, the Endurance, was crushed in pack ice in the Weddell Sea, before him and his men climbed into three open boats, spending 16 months at sea, before finally making landfall on this tiny toe of rock and ice in the vastness of the Southern Ocean on 14 April, 1916. We plan to sail past Cape Valentine to see the beach where the men first put ashore over 100 years ago. Weather permitting; we hope to follow the coastline six miles west to Point Wild, where the men eventually set up camp under two of their upturned open boats and some old tents. If weather permits, we'll attempt to make a landing on historic Point Wild, Elephant Island.



DAY 9: Scotia Sea - Day 9 & 10

En route for South Georgia we'll head across the Scotia Sea, following the route that Shackleton and five of his men took in order to find help for the rest of their crew. On 24 April, 1916, they piled into the James Caird, the most seaworthy of their open boats, to attempt this perilous journey to South Georgia, some 1290 km (802 miles) distant. Shackleton hoped to reach South Georgia in two weeks. There he would enlist the help of the whalers to return to Elephant Island and rescue the men who had been left behind. As excitement builds for South Georgia, catch up with fellow expeditioners in the bar, keep watch for wildlife alongside our naturalist from the open bridge, or learn more of the Shackleton story from our historian.



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DAY 11: South Georgia - Day 11 to 15

Over the next few days, marvel at South Georgia's incredible scenes such as enormous and bustling king penguin colonies, fur seals jostling for space on the beach, jaw-dropping mountain landscapes and learn of Shackleton's epic rescue journey. On Zodiac-cruises, discover bays filled with raucous and playful fur seals, and land on pebble beaches to meet curious penguins. Challenge yourself on hikes and enjoy dazzling pristine landscapes seen by few. South Georgia is a place where you can truly feel like you've really escaped from your normal daily life. South Georgia is one of the world's most amazing natural environments. Just a speck in the vastness of the South Atlantic Ocean, and lying wholly within the Antarctic Convergence, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands are a life-sustaining haven to some of the world's largest congregations of wildlife. The surrounding sea is one of the most productive areas on Earth and supports the life of millions of seals, whales, penguins and other seabirds. A mountain range forms the spine of this long, narrow island.

Between the mountains, shattered glaciers carve their way through tussock grass to the deeply indented coastline - a landscape that is synonymous with the epic expedition of survival by Shackleton, Worsley, and Crean. Abandoned rusting whaling stations and remnants of explorers reflect a time of long ago, while summer workers conduct scientific and regeneration projects. As we explore South Georgia, we will have the opportunity to reflect on Shackleton's epic journey. If conditions permit, we plan to follow in Shackleton, Worsley, and Crean's footsteps and complete the final leg of their walk from Fortuna Bay to Stromness. A sample of some of the places where we may land in South Georgia include: Grytviken - originally a Norwegian sealing and whaling station, it was finally closed in 1965. Sir Ernest Shackleton's body was laid to rest at Grytviken. St Andrews Bay - the long black sandy beach fronts a broad valley that stretches well back from the sea. This valley shelters the largest king penguin colony on South Georgia. Godthul - imagine indented bays lined with bleached whale bones, teeming with fur seals and penguins just 'hanging about'. A careful descent leads us to a magnificent Macaroni penguin rookery. Salisbury Plains - Salisbury Plain has one of the largest king penguin colonies on South Georgia. With about 100,000 pairs, the shore and beach can be completely crammed with penguins. Along the beach you will also find fur and elephant seals in the mix. Fortuna Bay & Stromness - Fortuna Bay is surrounded by high mountains with glaciers pushing down from the high country to terminate in the open valley that is home to a small king penguin colony. This is where Shackleton, Worsley, and Crean descended from the treacherous glaciers of the interior on their way to Stromness whaling station.



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DAY 16: At Sea - Day 16 to 18

Between South Georgia and the Falklands~Malvinas, you will be entranced by the ceaseless flight of the many seabirds that follow our wake, skilfully using the air currents created by the ship to gain momentum. On this leg, we are usually travelling into the prevailing weather so it is difficult to estimate our arrival time in the Falklands~Malvinas. Our lecture program will continue and highlight all of the amazing sights we have witnessed over the past few days. We'll have ample time to enjoy the rest of our time observing the sea birds, whale watching from the bridge, or simply relaxing in the bar with a book. If time and weather conditions permit, we could pass close to Shag Rocks, a fascinating group of jagged rocky islets protruding from the sea, in the proximity of South Georgia.



DAY 19: Falklands - Malvinas

Located 477 kilometres/296 miles east of southern Argentina, the Falklands~Malvinas are a unique mix of wildlife hotspot and inhabited outpost. An archipelago of over 700 islands, but consisting of two main islands, East and West, only seven of the islands are inhabited. The cold nutrient-rich waters surrounding the islands makes them a prime location for marine life including seabirds and seals. Our time in the Falkland~Malvinas includes a short walk in historic Stanley town, and Sea Lion Island located in East Falkland's south, where you can get insight into the unique experience of Sea Lion Island Nature Reserve. You will discover how the raw beauty and solitude of the island makes it a haven for wildlife and visitors alike. In 2009, Sea Lion Island was officially declared a National Nature Reserve, with no introduced predators living on the island. Tussac grass covers much of the island providing an ideal habitat for elephant seals and sea lions that can be found on many of the island's spectacular beaches. A plethora of birds such as thrushes, finches, tussac birds and Megallenic penguins also inhabit the tussac. Pods of orcas, Peale's dolphins and leopard seals are regularly seen in the waters around the island. The island's southern giant petrels, with a wingspan of two metres, act as a welcoming party to ships as they approach Sea Lion Island. Rockhopper, gentoo and Magellanic penguins come to Sea Lion Island to breed. Macaroni, king penguins and Striated and Crested Caracaras are also common seen on the island.



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DAY 20: At Sea

You may choose to spend the sea days returning to Ushuaia editing your photos, enjoying the onboard facilities, or listening to an informative lecture.



DAY 21: Disembark Puerto Williams, fly to Punta Arenas

During the early morning, we slip into dock in Puerto Williams. Farewell your expedition team and transfer to the airport for your flight to Punta Arenas. Transfer to your hotel for your overnight stay.



DAY 22: Punta Arenas

Bid new friends goodbye as we all continue our onward journeys, hopefully with a newfound sense of the immense power of nature.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Standard
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Inclusions	<p>On-board accommodation during voyage including daily cabin service</p> <p>All meals, snacks, tea and coffee during voyage</p> <p>Beer, house wine and soft drinks with dinner</p> <p>Captain’s Welcome and Farewell reception including four-course dinner, house cocktails, house beer and wine, non-alcoholic beverages</p> <p>All shore excursions and Zodiac cruises</p> <p>Educational lectures and guiding services from expedition team</p> <p>Access to our onboard doctor and basic medical services</p> <p>A 3-in-1 waterproof polar expedition jacket</p> <p>Complimentary use of muck boots during the voyage</p> <p>Comprehensive pre-departure information</p> <p>A printed photo book produced with photos from your voyage</p> <p>Port surcharges, permits and landing fees</p> <p>Exclusions</p> <p>International or domestic flights to or within South America, unless specified</p> <p>Transfers not mentioned in the itinerary</p> <p>Airport arrival or departure taxes</p> <p>Passport, visa, reciprocity and vaccination charges</p> <p>Travel insurance or emergency evacuation charges</p> <p>Hotels and meals not included in itinerary</p> <p>Optional excursions not included in the itinerary</p> <p>Optional activity surcharges</p> <p>All items of a personal nature including but not limited to: alcoholic beverages and soft drinks (outside of dinner service), laundry services, personal clothing, medical expenses, gratuities, Wi-Fi, email or phone charges</p>
Difficulty Rating	2 (Light adventure)
Single Surcharge	Available upon request
Notes	Contact us for more details
Price Dependent upon	Season and availability

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SUSTAINABILITY

As a member of IAATO we follow guidelines appointed by the Antarctic Treaty System to go above and beyond in support of minimizing negative impacts on this pristine landscape. We also encourage clients to look to book pre-and post- accommodation with us, where local businesses will be supported. Our clients also receive restaurant recommendations which support locally owned restaurants

We carefully select all ships we work with and choose smaller sized vessels to create less impact. We use a highly regulated, licensed vessel which is well equipped to operate in the Antarctic’s delicate ecosystem. We view the voyage to the Antarctic as an expedition,

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not a sightseeing trip. Smaller boats such as ours can navigate narrow waterways and are far less polluting than the larger ships in Antarctic waters. By carrying less passengers, we have far less waste. The waste is carried back to the home port to allow for environmentally conscious waste management and disposal.

For more information on our sustainability policies, including how we are striving towards being a paperless organisation, click [HERE](#)

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