

JEWEL OF THE RUSSIAN FAR EAST: KAMCHATKA COAST



INTRODUCTION

Very few people have experienced the incredible eastern seaboard of Russia. Dominating the North Pacific, this rarely visited region is complete with rugged wilderness, hardy sea-life and Cold War history. An important 'frontier zone' during the Cold War, this region has since been largely abandoned and only recently accessible for expedition style travel. During the Winter the region is largely choked by ice, however, during the Spring and Summer the are booms with activity - particularly with an abundance of wildlife.

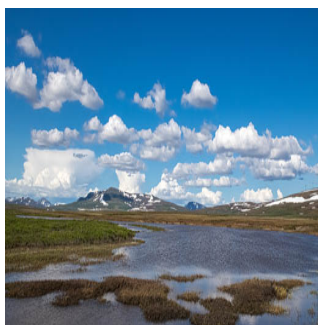
On your journey from Anadyr to Petroavlovsk-Kamchatskiy you will make numerous landings across rugged coastlines home to remote river mouths, fjords, bays and isolated islands. A journey for history enthusiasts and wildlife photographers alike you will undertake landings to remote towns built by gulag prisoners, and at solitary lakes renown for spotting of the famous Kamchatka brown bear and undertake eerie trips to visit the graves of famous polar explorer Commander Bering and his crew.

Come join us on this incredible expedition and discover the jewel that is the Russian Far East.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Charter flight from Nome

Your voyage will include a charter flight from Nome, Alaska. Those departing from Nome, Alaska, should arrive in Nome before midday and preferably the previous night. On arrival, you should check in with Bering Air at the Nome Airport who will have details of our charter flight. During this flight you will cross the International Date Line, arriving into Anadyr on Day 1 of the expedition. You will clear Russian Customs and Immigration.



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DAY 1: Arrival and Embarkation in Anadyr

All expedition members will arrive in Anadyr; depending on your time of arrival you may have the opportunity to explore Anadyr, the administrative centre of the Chukotka region, before getting to know your fellow voyagers and crew on board the ship. There will be introductory lectures, an introduction to the staff and ship and a series of compulsory briefings and drills.



DAY 2: Egvekinot

There is more to this small town on the shores of Kresta Bay than first meets the eye. It was built by Gulag prisoners in 1946 as a port to supply the Lul'tin mining complex some 200 kilometres inland, the prisoners also constructed the road to the mine. Today the Lul'tin mining complex is closed but the town and Port of Egvekinot is the terminus for a new road through to Pevek and its associated gold mines. The town has an excellent museum which we plan to visit. Egvekinot is only a few miles south of the Arctic Circle and today we will travel by Ural (a 6WD 'go anywhere' Russian truck) to the point where the Arctic Circle crosses the road to Lul'tin and then some distance beyond, so that you can see and experience the tundra habitat which dominates so much of Chukotka.



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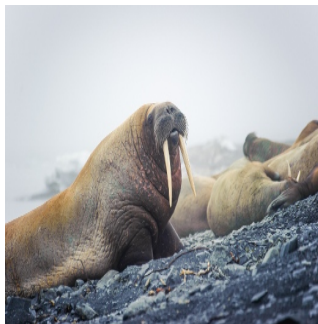
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DAY 3: Bukhta Gavrilla

This coastline is rich in marine mammals and one creature we will be looking for, in particular, is the walrus. As the animals regularly move between locations, finding them can be a matter of luck, although we have had success here in the past. In the afternoon we hope to visit a well-known walrus haul out lying between Meinypil'gyno and Cape Navarin. We also plan a landing in Bukhta Gavriila. The bukhta (or bay) was named after Commander Vitus Bering's ship, the St Gabriel, of the First Kamchatka Expedition. Behind the expansive beach there is a lagoon we can explore for waterfowl and waders. We may also visit the Chukotka's oldest, and the Arctic's southernmost, weather station which now sits abandoned. Cape Navarin marks the place where the land bridge to North America began when sea levels were much lower. Because of strong tides around the cape there is an abundance of food and it is not uncommon to see large numbers of seabirds and good numbers of Gray Whales congregating here.



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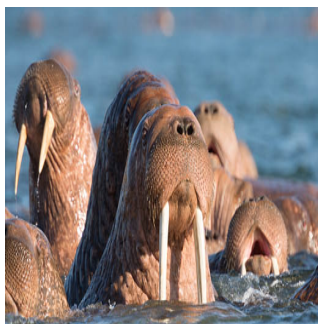
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DAY 4: Pika River

We start the day with a visit to the delta of Pika River – a well-known walrus haul out and one of the few places in the southern part of the range that still get thousands of animals coming to rest on the beach. During a Zodiac cruise along the river's cliffs we can expect to see the rowdy spectacle of thousands of nesting Black-legged Kittiwakes, and may also see Harlequin Ducks, Pelagic Cormorants, Common Guillemots and Glaucous Gulls. During previous visits we have encountered Gray Whales so we will be looking for these as well.



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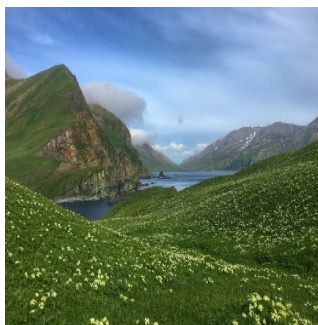
DAY 5: Bukhta Natalii

Along the Koryak Coast there are many beautiful fiords (bukhtas or bays) and none are more beautiful than Bukhta Natalii. This fiord has two smaller fiords that drain into it from the south – Bukhta Pavla and Bukhta Petra (named after St Peter and St Paul by Commander Vitus Bering). We plan to cruise to Bukhta Pavla and make a landing. This will be a great opportunity to explore the inland as we hike from one bay to be picked up by the ship in another. The magnificent mountain landscapes and tundra vegetation will surround us, along with the possibility of sighting Snow Sheep, as they were often seen in the area. There is a historic walrus haul out on Bogoslova Island which guards the entrance to these fiords.



DAY 6: Bukhta Lavrova and Tintikun Lagoon

Once a thriving settlement built on a fish factory and fur farm, the fiord system of Bukhta Lavrova was abandoned some decades ago after much of the southern Goven Peninsula was declared a state reserve. Now in ruins and reclaimed by nature, this wildlife-rich and rarely visited location is surrounded by jagged peaks and cliffs where waterfalls tumble down valleys and is home to Kamchatka Brown Bears, Steller's Sea Eagles and Larga Seals. During our morning Zodiac cruise we expect to enjoy numerous wildlife encounters as we head down to the wreck of a Soviet refrigerator ship, the Krechet (Gyrfalcon), which came to grief on the rocks just off the fish factory in 1978, and explore the remains of the farm and factory. This afternoon we plan to explore one of the region's most spectacular fiords Tintikun Lagoon. This fiord was blocked by a large terminal moraine during the last period of glaciation. A shallow river surrounded by jagged mountains, glaciers and forested slopes has breached the moraine, allowing access to one of the most picturesque locations found anywhere in the world. We take the Zodiacs onto the lagoon and intend to make several landings with Eurasian Nutcracker, Dusky Warbler, Siberian Rubythroat and Siberian Accentor amongst the possibilities. There is also a large population of brown bears and these should be feeding in, and around, the river mouth that drain into the head of the lagoon.



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DAY 7: Bukhta Glubokaya and Cape Primetnyi

With an early morning planned, we start the day with a landing on the remote, scenic shores of Bukhta Yuzhnaya Glubokaya near Novoolyutorka on Kamchatka Peninsula's eastern coast. Landing near the base of a stream that cascades down the mountains in a series of falls and torrents, we will walk through alpine meadows and, at lower elevations, stands of Alder trees as we look for wildlife. Our path upwards will follow the edge of the stream above the trees where panoramic views of the fiord below can be enjoyed. After lunch we will sail south to Cape Primetnyi, a reserve situated on Goven Peninsula and nicknamed 'Bear Gully' due to the number of brown bears we regularly see here. Zodiac cruising along the shores we will be looking for brown bears and, hopefully, observe some females with cubs. We will also look to visit a wrecked fishing boat now housing a breeding colony of Slaty-backed Gulls before taking a walk through the gully to sit on the hillside and admire the rolling landscape surrounded by Stone Pines and abundant birdlife.



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DAY 8: Verkhutova Island and at Sea

Verkhoturova Island has some huge seabird colonies which we plan to get close to by following a short, but steep trail to the clifftop. We should be able to enjoy some fantastic views of Tufted Puffins, Brunnich's Guillemots, Pelagic Cormorants and Black-legged Kittiwakes. Both Steller's Eider and Harlequin Duck occur here too, and we may also see some Steller Sea Lions, as they are often hauled out on offshore rocks.



DAY 9: At Sea and Commander Bay

Making our way to the Commander Islands, we take the opportunity to learn more about this archipelago and its fascinating history with a series of lectures. This afternoon we plan to anchor off Bering Island, named after Commander Bering who had the misfortune of discovering this land when his ship was wrecked here in 1741. Exploring Commander Bay, we will walk to the graves of Bering and some of his crew who lost their lives during the long cold winter on this remote land and visit the site where they sought shelter. The reports from those that survived led to a 'fur rush' and the settlement of the islands.



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DAY 10: Commander Islands - Day 10 to 11

The Commander Islands consist of two large islands (Bering and Medny) with two smaller islands Ariy Karmen and Toporkov. These islands are located at the western extremity of the Aleutian chain. We intend to explore the islands through a combination of landings and Zodiac cruises. Our first stop will be the village of Nikolskoye, where we will visit one of the only museums in the world to display a skeleton of the famed (but now extinct) Steller's Sea Cow. Birding around the village is also excellent and we should find Rock Sandpiper, Mongolian Plover, Glaucous-winged Gull and Pechora Pipit, with the possibilities on subsequent landings including Rock Ptarmigan, Buff-bellied Pipit and Grey-crowned Rosy Finch. After the village we plan to visit the fur seal rookery at North-West Cape and Zodiac cruise around the impressive bird colony at Ariy Kamen.



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DAY 12: Olga Bay, Zhupanova River

Olga Bay is a part of the very large Kronotskiy Reserve, which also includes the world-famous Valley of the Geysers. The habitat is quite different to what we will have been experiencing before with lush Kamchatka forests coming right down to the beach line. There is a possibility we will see brown bears and other forest fauna, as well as multiple bird species that live in this habitat. The seas around Olga Bay are frequented by large numbers of Gray Whales that are usually quite friendly to the visiting boats, if the conditions are right we will take a Zodiac whale-watching cruise. The rising volcanoes in the background here provide a beautiful setting to explore real Kamchatka wilderness. This afternoon we make our way along the Zhupanova River by Zodiac. This journey allows us to explore a river habitat which is common in Kamchatka. The Kamchatka Rivers (of which there are over 1,800) are important ecosystems that support a wide variety of wildlife. They are especially important for salmon spawning – one of Kamchatka’s valuable natural resources. Steller’s Sea Eagles are known to nest in the lower reaches of the river and we are likely to see many young birds as well as a few adults still hanging around their nesting sites. Other birds that breed here will have finished breeding at the time of our visit, but some of them should still be present; there will be waterfowl, gulls and terns, possibly including the Aleutian Tern. There is also the possibility of spotting brown bears, Red Foxes and Musk Rats.



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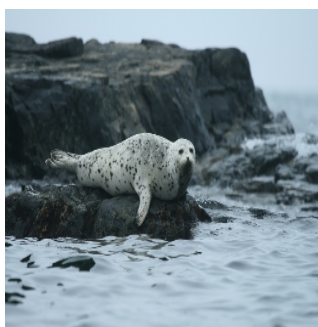
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DAY 13: Bukhta Russkaya, Kamchatka

If the weather is fine, fantastic views of the many snow-covered volcanoes that dominate the southern part of the peninsula will greet us as we sail up Bukhta Russkaya. Near the entrance of this isolated fiord, roughly 150 miles north of the southern tip of Kamchatka, there have been sightings of both the Long-billed Murrelet and the endangered Kittlitz's Murrelet. There is also an excellent chance of seeing Sea Otters, Larcha Seals, Steller Sea Lions and Orcas. We plan to make a landing at the head of the fiord where the birding can also be very rewarding with Lanceolated Warbler, Brambling, Common Rosefinch, Oriental Greenfinch and Rustic Bunting among the possibilities. However we will need to exercise care as brown bears are not uncommon in the area. This afternoon, if weather permits, we have arranged a helicopter to transfer you to the huge, freshwater volcanic basin that is Kuril Lake, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and reserve in the extreme south of Kamchatka. Home to a bounty of wildlife and one of the largest salmon spawning grounds in Kamchatka, the lake is also famous for the numbers of Brown Bears which bring their young to feed here. Exploring this wild-rich and remote outpost surrounded by the conical domes of lava islets under the guidance of the reserve's rangers promises to be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.



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DAY 14: Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy

During the night our vessel will enter Avacha Bay which is one of the greatest natural harbours in the world. On the shores of Avacha Bay is Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy, the capital and administrative centre of the Kamchatka Region. The town was founded in the 1700s by Commander Vitus Bering during the Second Kamchatka Expedition. All through the Cold War it was home to a significant part of Russia's Pacific Fleet which included a large submarine base. The city and region was 'closed' to all foreign visitors until 1992. After breakfast you will disembark and we will provide complimentary transfers to a downtown hotel and the airport. To allow time for disembarkation procedures, we do not recommend booking flights before 13:00hrs. Note: During our voyage, circumstances may make it necessary or desirable to deviate from the proposed itinerary. This can include poor weather and/or opportunities for making unplanned excursions. Your Expedition Leader will keep you fully informed.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation

Cabin on board ship

Inclusions

All accommodation on board vessel
All meals whilst on board
All shore excursions and activities by zodiac
Guiding and lectures by experienced expedition team
Free use of rubber boots and snowshoes
Comprehensive pre-departure material
Local payments (500USD per person)

EXCLUSIONS

International airfare
Pre and post land arrangements
Travel insurance
Visa and reciprocity fees (if applicable)
Excess baggage fees and items of a personal nature

Difficulty Rating

2 (light adventure)

Single Surcharge

Available upon request. Please contact us for more information.

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Notes

Please note this itinerary may be subject to change depending on weather and sea conditions.

Price Dependent upon

Departure date, seasonality and cabin availability.

SUSTAINABILITY

Being environmentally accountable is a crucial part of our organisation. Chimu is currently striving towards using less paper, taking several initiatives to do so and tracking our progress along the way. Our goal: A paperless organisation. For this reason, all information given to you will be sent electronically. We encourage those who choose to travel with us to support our aspirations and actions and ask that you reconsider printing out documentation. To view these documents, you can download them to your iPad or portable computer before and during your trip.

Chimu is passionate and dedicated to sustainability measures and understands the crucial part sustainability plays within the tourism industry.

We use local guides and office staff to both maximise local employment opportunities and minimise carbon footprint. Local guides also ensure you benefit from the intimate knowledge, passion and culture of the country you're visiting. Our guides are all highly qualified (most with university degrees) or equip with many years of experience and are paid above the standard wage. Whether it be our knowledgeable local guides, locally produced meals or the transport on tour, we do not use imported goods when local products are available. We aim to minimise our impact on the environment and give as much back as possible to the communities we work in.

While visiting the many national parks, heritage sites, museums and landmarks our travellers are encouraged to explore remain culturally aware and sensitive. We further encourage you to buy appropriate souvenirs and discourage the buying of anything wrongfully made or taken from the environment i.e. shells and endangered species products. Information on how you can be environmentally conscious, and travel responsibly will be made available in our Travellers Guides and provided during your travels by guides and staff.

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

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