

FROM DUMONT D'URVILLE TO MAWSON | LE COMMANDANT CHARCOT




INTRODUCTION

Curiosity, surpassing oneself, being open to the world. Humans have always looked toward what some would call the 'impossible elsewhere'. With Le Commandant Charcot, which is capable of sailing into the very heart of the ice, we can dream even bigger and glimpse new horizons. This polar odyssey at the boundaries of the world follows the path of the first to discover Antarctica and sharpens our senses to let us see all the riches of a long journey marked by the nuances of the ice. In the incredible comfort of an exceptional ship, you will take the time to observe the world around you, the landscapes and the fauna whose radiant beauty makes them seem surreal. Set off on an all-new half-circumnavigation of Antarctica from the New Zealand shores to Ushuaia, the city at the end of the world.

Following in the wake of courageous pioneers, explore the southern seas, including Ross Sea, which is the world's largest marine protected area, a kingdom of prodigious wildlife. As a privileged witness, keep a watchful eye and take the time to observe the Antarctic petrels, whales, orcas, seals and penguins that are to be found here. In the steps of Sir James Clark Ross, you will attempt to reach the South Magnetic Pole, that moving and mythical point if there ever was one.

The attraction exerted by the White Continent's infinite territories and their mythical names will soon intensify further. Adelie Land, Victoria Land, Marie Byrd Land. The first will plunge you into the heart of the French polar adventure where Paul-Émile Victor founded the Dumont d'Urville scientific station, in honour of the eponymous explorer. The second, claimed by the Australians, is forever linked to the name of the explorer Mawson, who defied the winds in Commonwealth Bay, which may exceed 240 km/h (150 mph). As for the third, it is one of the planet's rare Terra nullius – a territory claimed by no State – whose remoteness and climate have kept it well away from human conquests. Bordered by the Ross Sea to the west and the Amundsen Sea to the east, Marie Byrd Land will plunge you into a world where nature has raised its own cathedrals of ice. Wonder and contemplation will mark this extraordinary exploration, a journey synonymous with a return to the essential.

TRIP CODE
ACPOHAE
DEPARTURE
06/02/2024
DURATION
27 Days
LOCATIONS
Antarctica, Ross Sea and Antarctic Circle


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Your great crossing beyond the Antarctic Circle will continue in the Bellingshausen Sea where the Charcot and Peter I Islands roll out their icy masses. Le Commandant Charcot will attempt to approach their shores, deemed impassable, before your arrival in the Tierra del Fuego.

Please note: The navigation will be determined by weather and ice conditions. The sailing schedule and any landings, activities and wildlife encounters are subject to weather and ice conditions. These experiences are unique and vary with each departure. The Captain and the Expedition Leader will make every effort to ensure that your experience is as rich as possible, while respecting safety instructions and regulations imposed by the IAATO.


PLEASE NOTE: Pricing is subject to change and availability at the time of booking. [Contact us](#) for more information.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrive Lyttelton & Embark

On the eastern coast of New Zealand’s South Island, Lyttelton (or Te Whaka Raupo in the Maori language) served, thanks to its proximity with Ross Island, as the starting point for the British expeditions in the mythical age of the South Pole explorations. It takes its name from George Lyttelton (1709-1773), aristocrat and colonial governor of South Carolina. In this colourful port town full of history, you’ll be able to discover the Time Ball: constructed in 1876, it rang at 1.00 pm every day for 58 consecutive years to give Greenwich meridian time, enabling ship captains to set their chronometer and very precisely calculate their position.

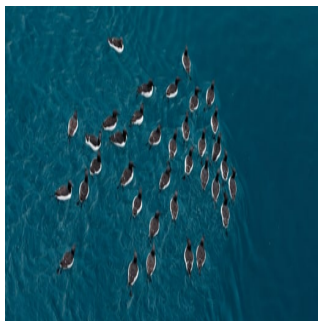


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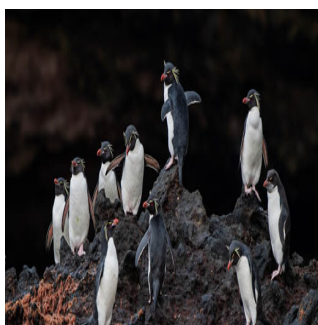
DAY 2: At Sea - Day 2 & 3

Spend exceptional moments sailing aboard Le Commandant Charcot, the world's first luxury polar exploration vessel and the first PC2-class polar cruise ship capable of sailing into the very heart of the ice, on seas and oceans which the frozen conditions render inaccessible to ordinary ships. Le Commandant Charcot is fitted with oceanographic and scientific equipment selected by a committee of experts. Take advantage of the on-board lectures and opportunities for discussion with these specialists to learn more about the poles. Participate in furthering scientific research with PONANT and let us discover together what these fascinating destinations have yet to reveal to us.



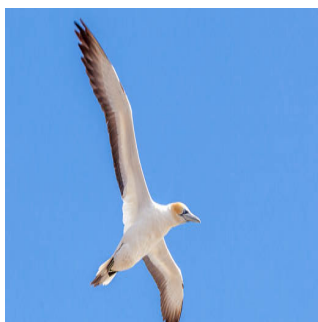
DAY 4: Macquarie Island

Long celebrated as one of the wonder spots of the world, Macquarie Island is an island of great beauty and outstanding natural diversity, a breeding place for more than 3.5 million seabirds, most of which are penguins. There are four species breeding on Macquarie Island: Royals, Kings, Gentoos and Rock Hoppers. There are also three types of fur seals and one seventh of the world's population of elephant seals breeding on the Island. In 1948 The Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions (ANARE) established its expedition headquarters on Macquarie Island. If time and weather permit, guests will have the opportunity to land ashore and view the prolific wildlife that resides here.



DAY 5: At Sea - Day 5 & 6

Spend exceptional moments sailing aboard Le Commandant Charcot, the world's first luxury polar exploration vessel and the first PC2-class polar cruise ship capable of sailing into the very heart of the ice, on seas and oceans which the frozen conditions render inaccessible to ordinary ships. Le Commandant Charcot is fitted with oceanographic and scientific equipment selected by a committee of experts. Take advantage of the on-board lectures and opportunities for discussion with these specialists to learn more about the poles. Participate in furthering scientific research with PONANT and let us discover together what these fascinating destinations have yet to reveal to us.



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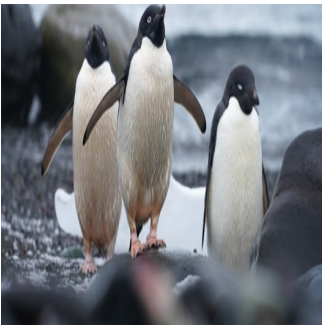
DAY 7: Adelie Land

Adelie Land covers around 400,000 km2 (around 250,000 square miles) of the White Continent between the 136th and 142nd meridians longitude East. These lands claimed by France in Antarctica are home, on Petrel Island, to Dumont-d'Urville station, which is named after the eponymous French explorer who investigated the region in 1840. Here, the few resident scientists share the Antarctic desert with Adelie penguins, seals and orcas, as well as emperor penguins during the winter. The extreme climate of this land at the edge of the world, characterised by its very low temperatures and its violent winds or blizzards, make it difficult to access its shores, which are protected by thick ice floe. Be among the rare people to discover this unique place where you will be captivated by the polar silence and the ice reflecting the rays of the sun as you experience the Southern Continent's powerful fragility.



DAY 8: Victoria Land - Day 8 & 9

Reach the inaccessible by exploring extreme Victoria Land. You will discover part of the history of the Australian polar expeditions: in Commonwealth Bay, slip into the shoes of the legendary Douglas Mawson, who created his main base in 1911 in Cape Denison, where there are still remnants of his wooden cabin. Welcome to the country of blizzards, these violent winds filled with snow flakes. Among the natural marvels of this territory, you will note the glacial tongue of the impressive Mertz Glacier whose wall of ice is cut with immense crevasses. The grandiose sight of absolute nature. Marking the border with Marie Byrd Land, the Transantarctic Mountains, extending the Andes, offer this Eden of ice some mountainous landscapes.



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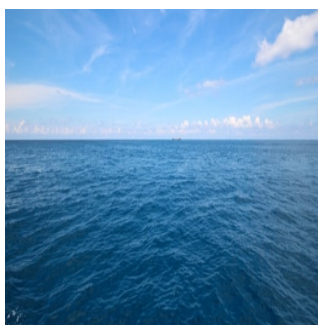
DAY 10: The Ross Sea- Day 10 to 13

'The last ocean' is what scientists from all around the world call this deep bay that runs along the edge of Antarctica between Marie Byrd Land and Victoria Land. Since 2016, the world's largest marine protected area has been keeping this last marine ecosystem intact. The theatre of the most impressive expeditions, it was discovered by James Clark Ross between 1839 and 1843. It was then that he discovered the enormous ice barrier formed by a gigantic ice shelf extending out to the open sea and from which titanic icebergs are calved. At a later stage, it was Ernest Shackleton and Robert Falcon Scott who explored the region and installed their base camp on Ross Island, at the foot of Mount Erebus. Weather and ice conditions permitting, perhaps you will be able to discover one of these two emblematic sites. Among the possible ports of call, Cape Adare, at the far north of the Borchgrevink Coast, is home to one of the world's largest Adelie penguin colonies. One third of the world's population of these penguins lives in the area where this barrier breaks into icebergs. The currents maintain polynyas there, vast areas of persistent open water surrounded by sea ice. These give the penguins access to food.



DAY 13: International Date Line

Your itinerary enables you to cross the International Date Line. This imaginary line across the Earth's surface approximately follows the 180th meridian in the Pacific Ocean. Because of the roundness of the Earth and the necessity of having reference time meridians, we have to change dates when we cross this line. So if your ship is travelling west, you will need to add a day to the expected date; conversely, if travelling east, you will take away a day. This paradox, already noted by Magellan's crews during his circumnavigation, serves as dramatic motivation in several novels, including Jules Verne's famous Around the World in Eighty Days.



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DAY 14: Marie Byrd Land - Day 14 to 19

Marie Byrd Land is one of the most remote territories of our planet's most inaccessible continent. It is a real privilege to just be able to contemplate its shores! Between the Ross Sea and its large shelf to the east and Bellingshausen Sea to the west, the frozen coastlines of these lands are bordered by the Amundsen Sea, partially covered by a thick ice floe. Stretching over more than a million km² (over 620,000 square miles) in Western Antarctica, its ground is also isolated from the rest of the continent by the Transantarctic Mountains. It is certainly this geographic remoteness and its harsh climate that have made it one of our planet's rare Terra nullius, a territory claimed by no State. In 1929, Marie Byrd Land got its name from Admiral Richard E. Byrd, in honour of his wife, following his expedition to the region. The exploration of its ice-sculpted landscapes will plunge you into the infinite Antarctic desert, where penguins, seals, whales and orcas are the only living souls. Depending on the time and weather conditions, your exploration of the region will take you towards a string of islands which, although little-known, remain fascinating: Siple Island and its eponymous mount, resulting from an old volcano and Clark Island.



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DAY 20: Amundsen Sea

The great Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen – famous as one of the first five men to reach the geographic South Pole – gave his name to this southern sea in 1929, following an expedition in its waters. Almost entirely frozen by a thick ice floe, Amundsen Sea stretches along Marie Byrd Land in Antarctica, between Bellingshausen Sea to the west and the Ross Sea to the east. The monumental icebergs are all that break the monotony of the infinite ice floe here: let yourself be immersed in a feeling of tranquillity before this vastness. These privileged moments sailing in the Amundsen Sea are opportunities to make the most of the original equipment and spaces on Le Commandant Charcot. Find yourself in this refined cocoon. Nourish yourself with the knowledge of the scientists and expert naturalists, who provide unique support during your polar cruise. Or simply contemplate the fascinating and captivating decor from the ship's exterior decks.



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DAY 21: Peter I Island

You will then head for the legendary Peter I Island. Located 450 km away from the Atlantic coast, it was discovered in 1821 by the Russian explorer Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen, who named it in honour of the Russian tsar Peter the Great. In 1909, Captain Charcot sighted it for the first time from aboard the Pourquoi Pas ?, but was unable to land there: “In the parting mists, one or two miles away, an enormous black mass shrouded in clouds appears suddenly before us: it is Peter I Island.” Surrounded by pack ice and with about 95% of its surface covered by ice, this volcanic island, whose highest peak reaches 1,640 metres, is protected by ice cliffs some 40 metres tall, making any approach difficult.



DAY 22: Bellingshausen Sea

Stretching from the west of the Antarctic Peninsula to the Amundsen Sea, the Bellingshausen Sea was named after the Russian admiral and explorer who has been attributed the first confirmed sighting of mainland Antarctica, in 1820. Among others, its waters surround two of the Antarctic’s largest islands: Alexander Island and Thurston Island. You will explore this sea amid ice floe, blocks of sea ice and majestic icebergs. The coastal areas along the Bellingshausen Sea are also renowned as the home of colonies of emperor penguins. Depending on the month of the southern summer, you will perhaps be lucky enough to observe isolated adults, adolescents seeking emancipation or recently independent new adults.



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DAY 23: Charcot Island

When he discovered this island surrounded by sea ice in 1910 from aboard the Pourquoi Pas ? as he mapped Alexander Island, Jean-Baptiste Charcot had not be able to get less than 40 miles away from it. Situated in a zone that experiences frequent low-pressure systems and regular cloud cover, the island remains in many ways an enigma. It is entirely covered in ice and sheer cliffs, with the exception of the rocky outcrops extending over a dozen kilometres in the far north-west. The ice in the narrowest part of Wilkins Sound has been cracking in recent times, thus officially detaching this island from its neighbour, Alexander Island, lying 50 km away. Very few people have landed on this largely untouched island, whose waters attract numerous seabirds, such as petrels, Antarctic terns and skuas.



DAY 24: Marguerite Bay

The icebergs are each more majestic than the next and scattered around the deep and intense blue waters of Marguerite Bay, one of the most beautiful regions in the Antarctic. It is delimited in the north by the mountainous Adelaide Island, in the south by George VI Sound and Alexander Island, and in the east by the Fallières Coast. Charcot named it after his wife during his second expedition to the Antarctic between 1908 and 1910. In 1909, in the southern summer when the skies are at their clearest, he led an important scientific mission to map and study this region. The bay is home to a number of cetaceans and you may get the chance to observe leopard seals or Adelie penguins.



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DAY 25: Drake Crossing - Day 25 & 26

If there is one place, one sea, one waterway dreaded by tourists, researchers and hardened seafarers alike, it is undoubtedly Drake Passage. Situated at the latitude of the infamous Furious Fifties winds, between Cape Horn and the South Shetland Islands, it is the shortest route to connect Antarctica to South America. Seasoned navigators will tell you that you must earn your visit to the White Continent! As the Antarctic convergence zone where cold currents rising up from the South Pole meet warmer equatorial water masses, Drake Passage harbours a very diverse marine fauna. Don't forget to look to the sky to catch a glimpse of elegant albatross and Cape petrels, playfully floating about in the wind around your ship.



DAY 27: Disembarkation in Ushuaia & Fly to Santiago

Capital of Argentina's Tierra del Fuego province, Ushuaia is considered the gateway to the White Continent and the South Pole. Nicknamed “El fin del mundo” by the Argentinian people, this city at the end of the world nestles in the shelter of mountains surrounded by fertile plains that the wildlife seem to have chosen as the ultimate sanctuary. With its exceptional site, where the Andes plunge straight into the sea, Ushuaia is one of the most fascinating places on earth, its very name evocative of journeys to the unlikely and the inaccessible... Upon disembarkation you will be transferred to the airport and fly to Santiago. Your services end here.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Cabin on board ship
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Inclusions	<p>Cabin accommodation on board vessel All meals on board Flights Santiago - Ushuaia and Dunedin - Auckland Transfer from Auckland airport upon flight arrival 1-night accommodation in a 5* hotel the night before embarkation Early check-in available from late morning Meals as mentioned in the programme and beverage package Guiding and lectures by experienced expedition crew All scheduled landings and excursions by zodiac Transfers as mentioned in the programme</p> <p>EXCLUSIONS International Flights Gratuities for staff and crew Travel insurance Visa and reciprocity fees (if applicable)</p>
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)
Single Surcharge	Available upon request, contact us for more details. Subject to availability
Notes	<p>A pre-voyage Christchurch package is available (including one night hotel accommodation and transfer to ship on embarkation day), please contact us for more details.</p> <p>Prices are based on per person, twin share* (unless otherwise stated for triple/quad cabins) Prices are correct at time of publishing but are subject to change at any time. Itinerary is subject to change depending on weather and ice conditions</p>
Price Dependent upon	Departure date, fuel surcharges, cabin category, currency fluctuations, seasonality and availability.

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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.

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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 whilst remaining 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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