

FALKLAND ISLANDS - FALKLANDS, SOUTH GEORGIA & ANTARCTICA | OCEAN ALBATROS



INTRODUCTION

Explore the amazing South Georgia and the intriguing Falkland Islands on this incredible 18-day voyage before continuing on to the South Shetlands Islands and the Antarctic peninsula. Everything that makes the Southern Ocean stand out!

Heading east towards the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), we will leave Ushuaia, the southernmost city in Argentina. The Falklands, a British Overseas Territory, provide a distinctive fusion of southern wildness and British civilisation (think red phone boxes and tea), with penguins playing with sheep on historic battlegrounds. After leaving the Falklands, we travel to South Georgia. It's no secret that South Georgia, a swathe of craggy mountains covered in glaciers that pierces the gloomy sky, leaves an impression on everyone who visits. There are thousands of King Penguins, Antarctic fur seals, and elephant seals along the coast. You have to see the enormous penguin colonies, seas teeming with seals, and skies full of albatrosses to believe it. We will travel farther south through the Antarctic Peninsula's inlets and bays before crossing the well-known Gerlache Strait, which is home to towering peaks and glistening ice cliffs that rise straight out of the freezing ocean. This exquisitely gorgeous extraterrestrial terrain is characterised by icebergs, glaciers, mountains, and untamed snowfields. We usually try to get to places that highlight the finest of Antarctica, and we keep an eye out for wildlife—feathery companions and breathtaking views and landscapes are a given!

ITINERARY

TRIP CODE
ACABFG
DEPARTURE
19/11/2024
DURATION
18 Days
LOCATIONS

Falkland Islands, South Georgia & Antarctic Peninsula



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DAY 1: Arrive in Ushuaia & Embarkation

Arrive in Ushuaia, Argentina - the world's southernmost city. Explore this vibrant Patagonian city, or stretch your legs in the surrounding forests. Alternatively, consider a day trip off the beaten path into the raw nature of Tierra del Fuego. The island of Tierra del Fuego is a hiker's paradise with rugged snow-capped mountains, glaciers, flower-filled meadows and rich boggy wetlands. In the afternoon, we board our vessel, waiting to welcome us in port. After our mandatory safety drill, our expedition begins as we navigate through the calm waters of the famous Beagle Channel (named for Charles Darwin's ship). This steep-sided strait divides southern Tierra del Fuego between Chile and Argentina, and has been the jumping-off point for thousands of expeditions into the unknown. Watch out for whales and dolphins as we sail off the edge of the map into the tempestuous Drake Passage.



DAY 2: At Sea - Towards Falkland Islands

Following the ocean currents of the South Atlantic, we head towards the rarely-visited Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas). While the indigenous Yaghan people of Tierra del Fuego may have visited the islands, the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) had no indigenous population when Europeans arrived in the early 16th Century. The islands' sovereignty has been contested ever since, with historical Spanish, French, British and Argentine claims; the islands were established politically as a British colony in 1840. Tensions resulted in a conflict over the islands between Britain and Argentina in 1982. The conflict left a lasting impact on the islands - while it spurred much-needed development assistance from the United Kingdom, the conflict also left much of the islands heavily mined. Since the conflict however, the islands have flourished, selling lucrative fishing rights to their rich waters. The de-mining operation was completed in 2020, celebrated by a football match on the last patch of de-mined ground between the islands' Governor and the Zimbabwean de-mining team who have made the Falklands their home. The waters between South Georgia and the Falklands are some of the richest in the world, with huge whale, seal and penguin populations feeding where cold Antarctic waters meet the warmer waters of the South Atlantic, so keep binoculars at the ready as we sail across the Antarctic convergence (especially around Shag Rocks). Otherwise, join your Expedition Team lecturers to hear about these islands' fascinating history, biology and unique 'Kelper' (as the locals call themselves) culture.



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DAY 3: Falkland Islands - Day 3 & 4

On our first day in the Falklands we will venture to some of the outer islands in the West Falklands - 'Camp', as the locals call the area outside Stanley. The outer islands of the Falklands are much wilder and more remote than the mainland, and host the majority of the islands' wildlife. Islands such as West Point, Carcass and Saunders are well known for their spectacular wildlife. Southern Rockhopper Penguins, Black-Browed Albatross and King Cormorants commonly nest together in vast cliffside colonies; penguins nurture their eggs and chicks in clefts between large cylindrical nests where cormorants and albatross nest. Be sure to look out above to see the bast albatross coming in to land (often less than gracefully). The islands are home to a vast number of other bird species such as the endearingly cheeky Striated Caracara (watch all unattended possessions!), and in the water a number of species new to us such as commerson's dolphins and South American sealions can be seen playing. During the following morning we will cast anchor in the sheltered natural harbor of Port Stanley in the early afternoon. Utilizing our Zodiacs, we will land in the centre of this small city. Stanley is the only settlement on the islands of any size, with a population of around two thousand people. Behind the colourful buildings in neat rows, look closer and you will notice a very distinctly British feel to Stanley - Victorian houses which could be on any swanky London terrace line the harbourfront; red telephone and post boxes stand by the jetty; whitewashed pubs serve fish and chips alongside foaming pints of ale. The Falkland Islanders are proud of their unique homeland and capital, and Stanley is a great place to explore and soak up the local vibe. Highlights in the city include Christchurch Cathedral, the southernmost Anglican cathedral on Earth, as well as excellent shops selling local products (watch out for high quality woollen good in particular!), cafes and pubs offering a warm welcome, and several excellent museums; visitors are spoiled for choice! A short drive or a pleasant walk from the city are several stunning beaches; formerly heavily mined, these are now open, and locals and foreigners alike often visit to see the abundant penguins and spectacular gold-white sands.



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DAY 5: At Sea - Towards South Georgia - Day 5 & 6

From the Falklands, we set out eastwards again, following the furious seas towards South Georgia. Here we enter the Furious Fifties, the stretch of powerful waters marking the entry to Antarctic waters - watch the mercury drop as we sail east; now we are truly in the Antarctic. Your crossing will benefit from our vessels' powerful engines, and the stability provided by the specially-designed X-Bow - making the journey in just two days! In order to protect the extremely delicate and rich ecosystem of South Georgia, our dedicated Expedition Team will assist you to biosecure your clothing and equipment, while continuing with their in-depth lecture program, now focussing on the fascinating history, biology and wildlife of South Georgia. Be sure to wrap up warm and join your Expedition Team out on deck - this section of the South Atlantic is one of the most biologically productive on Earth, and is a haven for vast quantities of wildlife - from whales and albatross to penguins and seals. Watch the waves carefully - in this region, sub-Antarctic species (such as fur seals) mingle with true polar species (such as Adelie Penguins), creating a fascinating ecological mix.



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DAY 7: South Georgia Island - Day 7 to 9

A strip of jagged mountains pierce the brooding clouds of the Southern Ocean. Icebound peaks loom over storm-washed beaches, while glaciers peek from the head of deep fjords. First believed to have been landed on by legendary explorer Captain James Cook, even to modern explorers, South Georgia presents a forbidding aura. But peer closer, and you will see greenery among the ice; movement on the beaches; wings in the skies above. While it seems hard to believe today, South Georgia was once one of the most degraded environments on Earth. Hearing of the rich pickings, sealers flocked to the island after Cook, slaughtering wantonly. Once the seals had been almost exterminated, visiting ships sought larger prey, and South Georgia became the world's largest whaling destination, with several settlements built to carry out this industrialised slaughter. Whalers from Norway introduced reindeer as game, which soon destroyed the islands native vegetation, while brown rats (accidentally introduced by Europeans and their boats) feasted upon seabirds and their eggs - a horror against which these naive birds had no defence. Thankfully, extensive conservation (including a painstaking eradication of reindeer and rats) has restored this magnificent island to its former glory - and glory it truly is. Beaches throng with hundreds of thousands of King Penguins, arguably some of Earth's most elegant animals. They must vie for space with the abundant Antarctic fur seals, all desperately defending territories and competing furiously for mates - and they themselves must avoid the southern elephant seals, Earth's largest seals (weighing up to a staggering four tonnes). Tiny South Georgia Pippits and Pintail Ducks (once almost extinct) are now abundant, and petrels, albatross and shags nest on the steep hillsides and wheel in the air above. In the sea, leopard seals stalk for their next penguin meal, fur seal pups play in the shallows, and offshore, a huge variety of whale species gorge on krill. Nowhere else on Earth can boast such a diversity of wildlife, or in such quantities; South Georgia truly has to be experienced to be believed. As in Antarctica, our exact itinerary will be dictated by weather and sea conditions, but especially by the wind and swell - nevertheless, our experienced Expedition Team and Captain will work their hardest to maximise opportunities to explore. Options include visiting the vast penguin colonies of Salisbury Plain and St Andrew's Bay, seeing the former whaling stations of Lieth and Stromness, drinking in the scenery and seal colonies of Gold Harbour, or exploring this island's fascinating exploration heritage at Grytviken (where legendary explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton is buried). South Georgia is one of those locations which grabs hold of the senses and never lets go; even long after departure, the jewel of the South Atlantic will captivate visitors for years to come.



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DAY 10: At Sea - Crossing Drake Passage - Day 10 & 11

Now comes the time to cross the famed Drake Passage - the body of water separating Patagonia and the Antarctic Peninsula. The Drake Passage is known for rollicking conditions and strong westerly winds - the Furious Fifties and the Screaming Sixties. While this passage may be challenging, you can rest comfortably aboard our expedition vessels, which are purpose-built with stabilizers, powerful engines and manned by a highly-qualified crew. The most spirited sailors consider Drake Passage a lifetime achievement - and you will complete the crossing twice! Our days in the Drake Passage will be put to good use preparing for our arrival in Antarctica - your Expedition Leader will brief you comprehensively on how to stay safe and minimise your impact on this precious wilderness, as well as briefing you thoroughly on our plans for our time spent exploring, including hints and tips for wildlife watching. Our dedicated Expedition Team will again assist you to biosecure your clothing and equipment, as well as sharing tailored lectures on Antarctic exploration history, wildlife, geology, glaciology and more!



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DAY 12: Antarctica & South Shetland Islands - Day 12 to 15

Over the next days, we will enjoy a safe and exciting Antarctic experience explorers of yesteryear could only dream of. Our Antarctic adventure begins in the South Shetland Islands, a chain of rugged rocks marking the northernmost point of Antarctica. It is also one of the richest in terms of wildlife, with large Gentoo and Chinstrap Penguin colonies, and an abundance of large seabirds such as predatory Giant Petrels. Landing sites which may be visited in the South Shetland Islands include the black steaming sands and rusting ruins of Deception Island (an active volcanic crater), the bustling penguin colonies of Aitcho and Half Moon Islands, or the old sealers' anchorage of Yankee Harbour. The following days will be spent exploring further south on the Antarctic Peninsula in the Gerlache Strait region. This region is typically icy, so our exact route will be subject to careful planning by the Expedition Leader and Captain, and explained to our guests through regular evening briefings. However we will aim to visit a range of sites which showcase the best of this staggeringly beautiful region. Consisting of the 'spine' of the Antarctic Peninsula and a large number of glaciated and mountainous islands, the Gerlache Strait is what comes to mind when most people think of Antarctica. Marvel at the massive icebergs and vast glaciers on a Zodiac cruise in Paradise Bay. Be moved by penguins tenderly caring for their precious eggs, and fiercely defending their nests on Cuverville Island. Watch cataracts of ice tumble into clear blue ocean on a hike over the active glaciers of Neko Harbour. Experience the Antarctica of old at historic huts such as Damoy Point, lovingly restored and open to all. Feel the spray of water from the blow of a humpback whale on a Zodiac safari in Wilhelmina Bay. Wonder at awe-inspiring scenery on a ship cruise through the Lemaire Channel. Wherever we go on the Antarctic Peninsula, endemic wildlife, tantalising history and breathtaking natural beauty abound. On Antarctica, all human activity is subject to the whims of Mother Nature. While we will make every possible effort to maximise opportunities for exploration off the vessel, the safety of our guests and crew is our top priority. We therefore ask all our guests to join the expedition spirit and be flexible - harsh weather offers the opportunity to expand your knowledge of Antarctica with lectures from our expert Expedition Team, or to enjoy the superlative comfort of our vessels, be it wine-tasting, relaxing in the hot tubs, or recharging with a relaxing massage in our Polar Spa.



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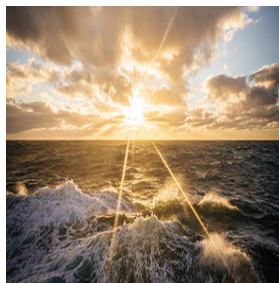
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DAY 16: At Sea - To Ushuaia - Day 16 & 17

We eventually depart Antarctica, and spend two days at sea on our way northwards back across the infamous Drake Passage towards the more welcoming shores of the Beagle Channel and Ushuaia, Argentina. During our time at sea, a variety of activities will be arranged on board to provide our guests with the chance to reflect on their voyage. Relax with an expertly crafted cocktail in the Nordic Bar in the company of new friends, soak up the knowledge and passion of our Expedition Team during lectures in the Shackleton Lounge, or simply enjoy the flight of the albatross which accompany us northwards. During your last evening onboard, join the Captain and Officers for the Farewell Cocktail Party, followed by a presentation of photos and video by our onboard photographer - the ideal opportunity to re-live your Antarctic adventure.



DAY 18: Disembarkation in Ushuaia

On the morning of the final day of our voyage, we will arrive back at the pier of Ushuaia, Argentina. Trees, grass and a busy city may seem strange to you after the white wilderness of Antarctica! After a hearty breakfast, it is time to bid a fond farewell to the Crew and Albatros Expedition Team, and descend the gangway back to dry land with memories of the voyage of a lifetime.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation

Cabin on board a ship

INCLUSIONS

Stateroom accommodation on board during your voyage
 Embarkation shuttle transfer to the vessel from Ushuaia city centre
 Shuttle transfer after disembarkation from the ship to Ushuaia city centre or airport
 All Zodiac excursions, as per itinerary, guided by our Expedition Team
 Expedition parka
 Rubber boots loan scheme
 Briefings and lectures by our Expedition Leader and Team
 English-speaking Expedition Team
 Full board on the ship - breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks
 Complimentary house wine, beer and soda at dinner (selected labels and brands, served at our a-la-carte dinners)
 Free tea and coffee available 24 hours
 Taxes and landing fees
 Special photo workshops
 Welcome and Farewell Cocktail Parties
 Digital visual journal link distributed after the voyage, including voyage log, gallery, species list and more!

Inclusions

EXCLUSIONS

International or internal flights flights
 Extra excursions and optional activities not mentioned in the itinerary
 Single room supplement and stateroom upgrades
 Meals not on board the ship
 Beverages (other than coffee and tea)
 Tips for the crew (we recommend USD 16 per person per day)
 Personal expenses (e.g. Albatros Polar Spa services, Albatros Ocean Boutique purchases)
 Mandatory waterproof pants for Zodiac landings and excursions
 Laundry, bar, and other personal charges, unless specified
 Travel and medical insurance (compulsory)
 Pre or post cruise travel expenses
 Visa (if applicable) and passport fees
 Fuel surcharge may be applied to all bookings
 Anything not mentioned under 'Inclusions'

Difficulty Rating

2 (light adventure)

Single Surcharge

Available on request. No single supplement if willing to share (select cabins only). Contact us for more details.

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Notes	<p>Prices are based on per person, and may be based off quad/triple/ or twin share cabins* (please contact us for more details)</p> <p>Prices are correct at time of publishing but are subject to change at any time.</p> <p>Itinerary is subject to change depending on weather and ice conditions.</p>
Price Dependent upon	<p>Departure Date, Fuel Surcharges, Cabin Category, Currency Fluctuations, Seasonality & Availability.</p>

SUSTAINABILITY

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