



EXPEDITION TO THE GREAT SOUTH LAND - ANTARCTICA

13 DAYS WITH 4 DEPARTURE DATES FOR 2012

7th NOVEMBER, 18th NOVEMBER, 29th NOVEMBER or 10th DECEMBER

DETAILED ITINERARY

A true adventure to the world's most remote wilderness!

Our 13-day Antarctica expedition focuses on the South Shetland Islands and Antarctic Peninsula, home to some of the planet's most impressive wildlife and dramatic landscapes. Search for seabirds and whales against a backdrop of snow capped mountains and icebergs. Throughout our voyage, our team of lecturers and guides will share their knowledge of the region's remarkable natural history.

Antarctica: the frozen continent. An astonishing 98% of the Earth's southernmost continent, is engulfed in ice. On board our expedition ship you will see icebergs and glaciers calving into the sea and most of all, you will enjoy a pristine wilderness that has been explored by so few before you. Watch amazing aquatic wildlife including orcas, humpback and minke whales; chinstrap, gentoo, Adelie and king penguins; wandering albatross, snow petrels, weddell, crab-eater and elephant seals. Our voyage is a unique, exploratory adventure aboard a world-class icebreaker vessel that has the ability to take us to the most remote parts of this stunning, white-wash desert.

Stopping Locations - Ushuaia, South Shetland Islands and the Antarctic Peninsula



DAY 1

ARRIVE USHUAIA

Arrive into Ushuaia, the southernmost city in the world, at any time. Make your way to your hotel and enjoy the evening at leisure.

DAY 2

EMBARKATION OF THE EXPEDITION SHIP

Today we will embark on the expedition ship. Embarkation time is set for 4 pm. The morning is free to do any last minute shopping, an optional excursion to the Tierra Del Fuego National Park or a good hike up to the Marshall Glacier. The evening is spent on board the ship watching the sunset over the Beagle Channel.

DAY 3-4

THE DRAKE PASSAGE

Our adventure begins with a 400-mile crossing of the passage that bears the name of the 16th-century English explorer Sir Francis Drake. The MS Expedition is at home in this part of the Southern Ocean, known for the unimpeded fetch of the winds that encircle the Antarctic. At some point on the second day we cross the Antarctic Convergence, a meeting of cold polar water flowing north and warmer equatorial water moving in the opposite direction. This mixing pushes nutrient rich waters to the surface attracting a variety of seabirds, whales and other species.

As we make our way through the passage you have time to become acquainted with the ship and frequent the common areas that include the lounge, dining hall, library and lecture hall where we meet our guides, ship's crew and expedition staff.

As we sail across the passage, lecturers will be out with you on deck to help in the identification of an amazing variety of seabirds which follow in our wake (including albatrosses) . The boat's open bridge policy allows you to join our officers on the bridge and learn about navigation, watch for whales, and enjoy the view. A full program of lectures will be offered in order to learn the extraordinary human and natural history of the Antarctic region.

The first sightings of icebergs and snow-capped mountains indicate that we have reached the South Shetland Islands. With favourable conditions in the Drake Passage, our lecturers and naturalists will accompany you ashore as you experience your first encounter with the penguins and seals.



DAY 5-9

ANTARCTIC PENINSULA & SOUTH SHETLAND ISLANDS

Experience some of the most unique wildlife viewing and inspiring scenery in the world as you set foot on the Antarctic continent. Antarctica is a continent of superlatives. It is the coldest, windiest, driest, iciest and highest of all the major land masses in the world. It is the continent with the longest nights and the longest days and it is home to the world's greatest concentration of wildlife. It is also one of the last true wilderness areas left on earth – largely unchanged since the early explorers and whalers first landed on its inhospitable shores less than two centuries ago. The lowest temperature ever recorded anywhere on earth, -89.2°C, was recorded on July 21, 1983, at Vostok Station. Winds have been recorded at 200 mph in the interior of the continent and the average annual water precipitation in the interior is only about 50 mm. We will take two excursions per day (conditions permitting), and encounter Gentoo, Chinstrap and Adélie penguin rookeries, Weddell, Crabeater and Leopard seals and Orca, Humpback and Minke whales in the cold Antarctic waters. The Peninsula also has a remarkable human history. During the voyage we will learn about some of the most important and dramatic expeditions to this remote corner of the world.

Sailing through the narrow passage into the flooded caldera of Deception Island you will have the chance to swim in the hot springs of Pendulum Cove. King George Island, the largest of the South Shetland Islands, features colonies of nesting Adélie and Chinstrap Penguins, Kelp Gulls, Blue-eyed Cormorants, Antarctic Terns and Southern Giant Petrels.

We hope to navigate some of the world's most beautiful waterways (depending on the ice conditions) including the Gerlache Strait, the Neumayer Channel, and the Lemaire Channel. The latter are narrow passages between towering rock faces and spectacular glaciers. We plan to make at least two landings per day. Possible landing sites may include Paradise Bay which is perhaps the most aptly named place in the world. We will also attempt a landing on the continent proper.

DAY 10-12

DRAKE PASSAGE

We leave Antarctica and head north across the Drake Passage. You are welcome to join our lecturers and naturalists on deck as we search for seabirds and whales and enjoy some final lectures. Take the chance to relax and reflect on the fascinating adventures of the past week on the way back to Ushuaia.



DAY 13

DEPART USHUAIA

And so our adventure comes to a close. We'll say our goodbyes as we disembark in Ushuaia in the morning.

Please note: While it is our intention of adhere to the route described above , there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. On the first day of your tour, your expedition leader will give you an expedition overview.



INCLUDED WITH THIS TRIP

Accommodation aboard the MS EXpedition vessel - triple share cabin or twin share cabin (depending on price). Cabins are equipped with air-conditioning and heating, electric outlets with American-style plugs, all bedding

- Bi lingual crew
- Open Bridge
- Dining Room

Meals on board each day -

- Breakfast: Continental and American buffet
- Lunch: buffet style or seated served
- Afternoon Tea
- Dinner: three courses

Zodiac Excursions

Lecturers and Guides

Sustainability - Complies with the Protocol to the Antarctic Treaty on Environment Protection



Category 1 - private bathroom and porthole - Triple cabin



NOT INCLUDED WITH THIS TRIP

Flights, airport departure taxes, arrival and departure transfers, visa, insurance, pre and post tour accommodation, tips or gratuities and items of a personal nature.



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