

Itinerary



Day 1: Buenos Aires, Argentina (hotel night)

Welcome to Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina. The name of the city can be translated as "fair winds" but it is also referred to as the "Paris of South America". This is an exuberant brew of traditions, languages and different types of cultures.

Upon your arrival at the airport we provide a transfer to your hotel, which has been arranged by us and is included in the price of the voyage. For

the rest of the day you are free to explore this welcoming city.



Day 2: Embarkation in Buenos Aires

We provide a group transfer to the pier and welcome you aboard the deluxe expedition ship M/V Sea Spirit. Explore the ship and get comfortable in your home away from home for the extraordinary adventure to come. Savor the anticipation of your Antarctic dreams coming true as we slip our moorings and sail toward a true wilderness where wildlife abounds.



Day 3-5: South Atlantic Ocean

As we head south, ocean breezes become cooler and seabirds become more abundant. We keep a sharp eye out for cetaceans such as Commerson's dolphins and southern right whales in these productive southern seas. The ship's stabilizing fins provide comfort in the event of rough weather. Presentations by our expert naturalists and historians prepare you for our arrival in the Falkland Islands.



Day 6-7: Falkland Islands

Our exploration of the Falklands includes visiting the isolated outlying islands. These bleakly beautiful isles are havens for wildlife. Large colonies of seabirds, perched on windy bluffs overlooking azure seas, are easily accessible by hiking over lush meadows. At this time, black-browed albatross has returned to the islands and are just starting to lay their eggs amongst the tussocks while feisty rockhopper penguins leap up surf-battered cliffs to start building their nests nearby.

On sandy beaches below, gentoo penguins are also starting to lay their eggs while king penguin chicks of all ages look on. They are joined by female elephant seals suckling their newborn pups. Just offshore, you may see Peale's dolphins and even killer whales patrolling the coasts. A wide range of land birds, including the endemic Cobb's wren and inquisitive striated caracara, contribute to an abundance of wildlife that will leave nature lovers breathless.

On these days we intend to come alongside the wharf at Stanley, the historic capital of the Falkland Islands. Attractions within pleasant walking distance along the waterfront promenade include the Falkland Islands Museum, the governor's house, various war memorials, quality gift shops, and charming pubs. Christ Church Cathedral features an impressive whalebone arch and dramatic views of shipwrecks in the harbor.

We also plan to offer an excursion to Gypsy Cove, a national nature reserve where white sand beaches are frequented by numerous bird species, including the endemic Falklands flightless steamer duck. Here you can also see Magellanic penguins, who have just started to lay their eggs in burrows by the seashore.



Day 8-9: Southern Ocean

We sail east toward South Georgia, passing the remote, seabird-covered pinnacles known as Shag Rocks on the way. We also cross the Antarctic Convergence, the biological boundary of the Southern Ocean. Briefings, bio-security procedures and presentations by our lecture staff prepare you for our arrival in South Georgia.



Day 10-14: South Georgia Island

The next five days will be devoted to the exploration of the unique and spectacular wilderness of South Georgia, home to some of the greatest concentrations of wildlife on the planet. This isolated subantarctic island is said to host upwards of 100 million seabirds, including numerous species of albatross, penguins, prions, petrels, shags, skuas, gulls and terns. Among these is one of the largest flying birds in the world—the wandering albatross. Here you have the opportunity to see large downy chicks stretching

their wings after spending the long Antarctic winter on snowy nests overlooking the wild Southern Ocean. On South Georgia's legendary beaches, king penguins are gathered in huge colonies that stretch from sandy shorelines to the foothills of glaciated mountains. Also at this time, hundreds of thousands of macaroni penguins are coming ashore to start their breeding season. Rare birds such as the endemic South Georgia pipit and yellow-billed pintail round out the list of 78 bird species found across the territory. The successfully completed rat eradication program has made this wilderness even more pristine and rich with birdlife.

South Georgia is also home to staggering numbers of southern elephant seals and Antarctic fur seals. At this time, thousands of massive bull elephant seals are defending and occasionally fighting to maintain their harems of females, who have recently given birth. Meanwhile, male fur seals are just arriving to stake out their mating territories. Once hunted nearly to extinction, large whales are also returning to the bountiful seas surrounding South Georgia. With the whalers long gone, the historical whaling station of Grytviken is now home to the excellent South Georgia Museum. Here you will also find the grave of Sir Ernest Shackleton, heroic polar explorer and leader of the famous Endurance expedition.

In this rugged yet accessible environment, superb wildlife viewing is best complemented by active adventure. There are many opportunities for guided treks through this snowy wilderness, including the famous Shackleton Walk. For sea kayakers, the wildlife-rich waters of South Georgia offer the chance to paddle with hordes of seals and penguins in some of the world's most scenic waterways.

This is expedition cruising at its most authentic. Our precise route and exploration opportunities are dependent on weather in this wild and remote corner of the world. Our experienced captain and expedition leader will continually adjust plans to take maximum advantage of the conditions and circumstances at hand. You can be sure that we will take every safe opportunity to go ashore in this challenging environment.



Day 15-16: Scotia Sea

After our amazing time in South Georgia, we proceed southwest toward Antarctica. We keep a constant lookout for humpback and fin whales along the way. The majestic wandering albatross and other graceful subantarctic seabirds are common in these waters and can readily be viewed from panoramic open decks and balconies.



Day 17-21: South Shetland Islands and Antarctic Peninsula

During the next five days, we undertake an in-depth exploration of the islands near the Antarctic Peninsula. This region contains some of the world's most impressive scenery and the best wildlife viewing in Antarctica. Sheltered bays and channels sparkle with ice and reflect towering mountain peaks coated in permanent snow and immense glaciers. Icebergs of every size and description complete an image of incomparable beauty. Waters rich with krill are home to huge numbers of marine

mammals and seabirds. The whole area is alive with penguins foraging at sea and forming large rookeries at special places on land.

The South Shetland Islands are the northernmost islands in Antarctica and will be our primary area of exploration. This wildly beautiful island chain contains many landing sites with historical significance and abundant wildlife. Among them is Elephant Island, where men from Shackleton's Endurance expedition spent the winter of 1916. We continue west to King George Island, home to numerous Antarctic research bases of various nationalities, some with gift shops and post offices.

Weather and ice permitting, we also hope to visit the supremely picturesque Gerlache Strait area of the Antarctic Peninsula, a pristine wilderness of spectacular white landscapes, colossal icebergs, obliging marine mammals and bustling penguin colonies. Here we have a chance to land on the continent of Antarctica.

Throughout this area, we encounter gentoo, chinstrap and Adélie penguins, sometimes nesting side by side. At this time of the season, all three species are busy courting and mating. This is a good time to observe the importance of pebbles in penguin culture, as prized nesting material to be stolen from rivals and given to mates. Also at this time, very high concentrations of sea ice provide more opportunities for seals and penguins to congregate on ice floes, a situation that attracts killer whales. Photographers will appreciate the pristine appearance of fresh, undisturbed snow across the landscape in this early summer month.

Antarctica is a true wilderness with unpredictable weather and ever-changing ice conditions, which will

dictate our route and exploration opportunities. With more than 17 hours of daylight per day, we seize every chance to experience excellent wildlife viewing and amazing scenery via Zodiac cruises and shore excursions.



Day 22-23: Drake Passage

It is now time to head north across the Drake Passage toward South America, but the adventure is not quite over. Seabirds are our constant companions and there is always the possibility of whale encounters in these wild waters. This is also the time for festivities such as the Captain's Farewell Cocktail and the end-of-voyage slideshow. Finally, as we enter the calm Beagle Channel, we enjoy a night of smooth sailing toward Ushuaia.



Day 24: Disembarkation in Ushuaia, Argentina

After a final delicious breakfast on board, we bid you a fond farewell in Ushuaia, the southernmost city in the world. We provide a group transfer to the airport or to the city center if you wish to spend more time in Tierra del Fuego. As you look back on your wonderful experience in the Falklands, South Georgia and Antarctica, you may already be looking forward to your next polar adventure!