

ANTARCTICA: 2018/19

TRIP NOTES



Christmas in Antarctica



17 DEC 2018 – 27 DEC 2018



10 NIGHTS / 11 DAYS



STARTS USHUAIA

EXPERIENCE THE ULTIMATE 'WHITE CHRISTMAS' – EXPLORING ANTARCTICA!

December provides maximum hours of daylight as we experience Antarctica during the Summer solstice. Over the course of ten nights, we visit many of the classic locations along the Antarctic Peninsula providing a great variety of exciting activities both on and off the ship. Traditionally, this departure has been very popular with families as it falls over the holiday season.

A special feature of this voyage is the two additional days of exploration in Antarctica compared to voyages of similar duration. We achieve this by flying back from King George Island (Antarctica) to South America at the end of the voyage, saving two days on the return sea crossing. Those two days 'saved' are spent exploring in Antarctica. This equals more time on shore, more time in the Zodiacs and more time spent in the company of our expert guides.

Our full range of activities will be offered on this voyage – walks on shore, visits to wildlife colonies, zodiac cruising amongst icebergs, visits to historic sites and possibly even a working science station. For the more adventurous, sea kayaking is a wonderful way to discover Antarctica – and if weather conditions permit – why not spend the night, camping on shore? This trip provides the great opportunity to maximize your time down 'on the ice'!



Expedition Highlights

- > More time spent exploring Antarctica and almost 24 hours of daylight
- > Outstanding wildlife observation on shore, zodiac cruising and from the ship
- > Visits to historic sites and science stations
- > Learn about the environment, wildlife and ecology of Antarctica from polar experts

ON THIS TRIP

-  Zodiac excursions
-  Onshore hiking options
-  Wildlife observation
-  Photographer in Residence
-  Sea kayaking available
-  Whale watching
-  Camping on shore
-  Educational presentations
-  Active Cruising & Wellness

IMPORTANT VOYAGE LOGISTICS

This trip commences in Ushuaia, Argentina. We recommend arriving in Ushuaia at least one day prior to the scheduled voyage departure. This gives you a buffer in the event of any unexpected travel delays between home and voyage embarkation and departure.

At the conclusion of the voyage, we fly from King George Island (Antarctica) back to Punta Arenas (Chile) via a special charter flight. Upon arrival in Punta Arenas, a transfer is provided from the airport to downtown Punta Arenas. This itinerary includes an additional hotel night in Punta Arenas at the conclusion of your voyage. We advise making your onward travel plans for the following day.

Full joining instructions will be provided in your final travel documentation. If you have questions before this time, please ask us.



YOUR DAY-BY-DAY EXPEDITION ITINERARY

DAY 1 / USHUAIA (ARGENTINA) (MONDAY, 17 DECEMBER 2018)

Our journey to Antarctica commences this afternoon in Ushuaia, Argentina. We gather at our central meeting point and transfer to the pier and embark our expedition ship. After settling into our cabins and exploring the ship, we meet our expedition team and fellow passengers. Excitement is in the air as we enjoy a welcome cocktail, dinner and cast off, bound for Antarctica and the adventure of a lifetime.

DAYS 2 – 3 / DRAKE PASSAGE - AT SEA TOWARDS ANTARCTICA

Sailing south towards Antarctica we will be joined by hundreds of seabirds including the wandering albatross. Giant petrels and smaller Cape petrels are also constant companions as we transit the Drake Passage. Photographing these magnificent birds from the deck of the ship takes patience and skill and our photography expert will be on hand to show you the best techniques. Join the ship's Captain on the bridge and learn about the operations of our modern expedition vessel. Throughout the day our onboard experts educate us with a series of presentations about the environment, wildlife and history and the locations we hope to visit in the coming days.

DAYS 4 – 9 / EXPLORATION OF THE GERLACHE STRAIT AND ANTARCTIC PENINSULA

We awaken today and the magnificent snowy peaks of continental Antarctica are laid out before us. Even our experienced expedition staff, some with more than 100 journeys south, will take a moment to pause and reflect on this incredible sight. Take a deep breath – you have arrived. This is Antarctica.

The waterways of the Antarctic Peninsula are home to deep bays, pristine coves and inlets and numerous small islands. The Gerlache coastline features heavily glaciated mountains permanently covered in ice and snow. Rocky outcrops, known as 'nunataks' are home to gentoo, Adelie and chinstrap penguin rookeries and the waters are rich in marine life. We frequently encounter seals, including the powerful leopard seal, usually found hauled out on an ice floe. Curious humpback whales

and the smaller minke whales are present much of the time as they feed on the vast schools of krill. Sightings of orca are not uncommon.

Our activity program is in full swing and we encourage all guests to choose how their adventure unfolds. Every day we plan an exciting range of activities, including guided hikes on shore (both short and long), visits to wildlife colonies with our expert naturalist guides, as well as Zodiac cruising. The historic huts and science stations located along the peninsula provide a fascinating glimpse into the past and the present. Zodiac cruising among the ice, searching for seals and whales is a memorable activity.

Meanwhile, our sea kayakers may range several miles from the ship experiencing Antarctica from an entirely different perspective. Our resident photography guide will be on hand to help you with your camera handling and image composition. Maybe what you really want to do is sit on a rock, simply watching the penguins come and go from the water. Make yourself comfortable and enjoy the show.

Planned excursions along the Peninsula may include Cierva Cove or Mikklesen Harbour, Danco Island, the Melchior Islands and Fournier Bay - or a cruise through the Errera Channel to visit the gentoo penguin rookeries at Cuverville Island. Wilhelmina Bay is another favourite location and one where we frequently encounter playful humpback whales. Nearby Paradise Harbour is a particular highlight and offers an excellent hiking route to a viewpoint providing expansive views. Andvord Bay and Neko Harbour provide yet another continental landing opportunity.

It is somewhere along this stretch of coastline that we plan a night on shore, camping in Antarctica. We have all the right gear and equipment and an expert team to make it happen - all you need is an adventurous spirit! Camping always depends on the weather and we can never guarantee it on any voyage. If the weather is good and site characteristics suit our requirements, rest assured, we will always go for it. Camping is included and you can decide to participate while onboard. There is no need to pre-book.



DAY 10 / SOUTH SHETLAND ISLANDS, ANTARCTICA

After several busy days of exploration along the Antarctic Peninsula, we head for the South Shetland Islands. The adventure is not over and if the weather conditions allow, we sail the ship into the flooded volcanic caldera at Deception Island. This is a very dramatic location. History is all around us as we explore the old whaling station and airport hangar. There are several superb hikes and an opportunity for a swim - the 'Polar Plunge!' We head north-east, cruising along the pristine coast of Livingston Island, which on a sunny day is always a memorable experience. There are several other landing sites in this vicinity including Half Moon Island, and the broad pebbly beach at Yankee Harbour, where we often encounter Weddell seals sunning themselves. Tonight we enjoy a special dinner attended by the ship's Captain, cruising towards King George Island.

DAY 11 / KING GEORGE ISLAND (ANTARCTICA) – RETURN TO SOUTH AMERICA – OVERNIGHT PUNTA ARENAS (THURSDAY, 27 DECEMBER 2018)

This morning we say goodbye to our expedition team and transfer ashore by Zodiac. We walk from the shore landing site past the Chilean research station and up towards the airstrip where we board our special charter flight. This flight takes a little over two hours and is included in the price of your voyage. Upon arrival into Punta Arenas a transfer from the airport into town is provided.

POST VOYAGE HOTEL INCLUDED: This itinerary includes a complimentary hotel night in Punta Arenas for all guests returning from King George Island at the end of the voyage. This evening is at your leisure. Punta Arenas is home to some cozy restaurants, cafes and bars – including the historic 'Shackleton Bar' at the Hotel Jose Nogueira – a fitting location to reflect on your journey to Antarctica.

DAY 12 / PUNTA ARENAS – DEPART (FRIDAY, 28 DECEMBER, 2018)

After breakfast and check-out, make your own way to the airport for your onward journey. (We recommend you book flights after midday). Otherwise, why not continue your exploration of Patagonia? Just a few hours north, lies the celebrated Torres del Paine National Park – home to towering peaks, glaciers and spectacular wilderness - a paradise for hikers and nature lovers.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS FOR 'CHRISTMAS IN ANTARCTICA':
A similar itinerary is offered in early December 2018 (see 'Antarctica – In-Depth'). Voyages of similar duration include our 10-night 'Quest for the Antarctic Circle' or the classic 10-night 'Antarctic Peninsula Adventure' voyages. See the website for details.

ABOUT OUR ITINERARY: Polar exploration can be unpredictable. Specific sites visited will depend on prevailing weather and ice conditions at the time of sailing. The above itinerary should be read as a 'guide only' and may change. The ship's Captain in conjunction with the Expedition Leader continually review the sailing plan throughout the voyage, making adjustments to the itinerary along the way to take advantage of optimal weather and ice conditions or to maximize our encounters with wildlife. Decades of experience spent exploring these waterways mean we have a large number of outstanding landing sites and zodiac cruising locations to consider, even when the weather conditions may not be ideal or when heavy ice may hinder our planned route. A flexible approach is something we encourage you to bring to the ship.