

ANTARCTICA: 2018/19

TRIP NOTES



Quest for the Antarctic Circle



29 DEC 2018 – 08 JAN 2019



10 NIGHTS / 11 DAYS



STARTS PUNTA ARENAS

CROSS THE CIRCLE AND ENJOY MORE TIME EXPLORING THE ANTARCTIC PENINSULA

This unique expedition provides a modern twist on a much loved classic. Utilizing our decades of experience, this innovative itinerary allows us to reach our objective of the Antarctic Circle in just 11 days. From Punta Arenas in Chile we fly to the embarkation point of Stanley in the Falkland Islands. Crossing south to Antarctica we witness the magnificent pelagic seabirds of the southern ocean, including the Wandering albatross. This ocean habitat is a fascinating ecosystem in its own right. Navigating our way towards the Circle, we enjoy seven days of off-ship exploration along the Antarctic Peninsula, visiting a large number of landing sites and cruising among the ice floes in our Zodiac boats.

We hope to reach the Antarctic Circle in the vicinity of Detaille Island. Over the course of the voyage, we plan to visit several classic locations such as Petermann Island, and the iceberg 'graveyard' at Pleneau Island. We transit the Lemaire Channel if ice conditions permit and make continental landings at Paradise Harbour or nearby Neko Harbour. Each day we explore on shore by foot, observing wildlife colonies, visiting historic huts and science bases, photographing icebergs and soaking up the incredible landscapes. We complete our voyage with visits to several locations in the South Shetland Islands, including Deception Island. From King George Island we fly back to South America in just two hours. For a relatively short voyage, this trip packs a serious punch and offers fantastic diversity of scenery, wildlife, historic and scientific interest.



Expedition Highlights

- > Fantastic glaciated scenery of the Antarctic Peninsula and Circle region
- > 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

Your journey starts and ends in Punta Arenas, Chile. You will need to arrive in Punta Arenas at least one day prior to the scheduled departure date. This gives you a buffer in the event of any unexpected travel delays between home and voyage embarkation and departure. From Punta Arenas we fly to Stanley (Falkland Islands) where we board the expedition ship and commence our journey.

At the conclusion of the voyage, we fly from King George Island (Antarctica) back to South America via a special charter flight. Upon arrival 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

DAYS 1 / PUNTA ARENAS (CHILE) TO STANLEY (FALKLAND ISLANDS) (SATURDAY, 29 DECEMBER 2018)

Our journey commences this morning in the southern Chilean city of Punta Arenas. We meet at a central location before transferring to the airport for our scheduled flight to Stanley in the Falkland Islands. (This flight is included in the price of your voyage). After a short 90-minute journey we are met on arrival and transferred to the pier. Stanley is currently home to just over 2,000 residents and is reminiscent of a rural town in coastal Britain. It is charming with brightly coloured houses, pretty flower-filled gardens, a quaint cathedral and several local pubs. The waterfront memorial, built to commemorate the lives of the servicemen lost during the Falklands War in the early 1980's, is a sobering reminder of recent history. There is time to explore the town, before we make our way to the ship for embarkation. After settling in to 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 / AT SEA – TOWARDS ANTARCTICA

We chart a southerly course for Antarctica. This stretch of the South Atlantic is rich in its bio-diversity and showcases an abundance of wildlife. We will be joined by hundreds of seabirds including the wandering albatross. Giant petrels and smaller Cape petrels are also constant companions as we make our way south. Photographing these magnificent birds 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 research vessel. Throughout the day our onboard experts educate us with a series of presentations about the environment, the wildlife and history and the locations we hope to visit in the coming days.

If we enjoy good sailing conditions crossing to Antarctica, we may include a visit to the very historic location of Elephant Island – a place central to the Shackleton story. Shore landings at Point Wild are notoriously tricky due to surging swell onto the rocky beach. Nevertheless this is a thrilling place to visit.

DAYS 4-5 / KING GEORGE ISLAND AND THE ANTARCTIC PENINSULA

This morning we are in position at King George Island – the largest in the South Shetlands group. There are two landing sites here and a visit depends on the prevailing weather conditions. Penguin Island and nearby Turret Point offer good opportunities for shore landings to view Adelie, chinstrap and gentoo penguins. Southern giant petrels, kelp gulls and Antarctic terns are also known to nest here. This afternoon we continue our journey south, navigating into the broad expanse of the Bransfield Strait – making our way ever closer to the Antarctic coastline. This is an important migration corridor for wildlife and we keep a lookout for whales in the waters surrounding the ship. Large icebergs will be present from this point onwards and make for striking photographs in the evening light. By morning, the towering mountain peaks of the Antarctic continent loom into view and we should make landfall around Wilhelmina Bay. This is truly an 'A-list' location and a place we frequently encounter sizeable pods of humpback whales. We navigate under the towering cliffs of Spigot Peak and into the Errera Channel hoping for a shore landing at Cuverville Island – home to a rookery of Gentoo penguins. It's a fantastic location for a zodiac cruise or a paddle in the sea kayaks.

DAYS 6-8 / TOWARDS THE ANTARCTIC CIRCLE

We encourage you to spend time on the outer decks soaking up the scenery as we navigate further south. We pass through the ice strewn waters making our way towards our ultimate objective, the Antarctic Circle. Given favorable ice conditions, our first goal will be to sail south of the Antarctic Circle and into Crystal Sound. A favored landing site here is Detaille Island, home to an abandoned British science hut from the 1950's.

This vicinity marks our turnaround point and from now on, we return in a northerly direction exploring the dramatic coastline of the Antarctic Peninsula. We hope to visit a working scientific base to learn something of the important climate-related research happening here. A hike over the snowy saddle of nearby Winter Island allows us to stretch our legs and explore a historic British Antarctic Survey hut – Wordie House.



If the conditions are right, we aim to offer our overnight camping program to all adventurers somewhere in this vicinity. We have all the gear onboard and an experienced team to make this a night to remember!

Petermann Island is home to an Adelie penguin rookery. Adelies - the smallest of the Antarctic penguins nest here and share the location with Gentoo penguins and Imperial cormorants. The view to the north of Mount Shackleton and Mount Scott is impressive. These towering granite sentinels mark the southern entrance to the nearby Lemaire Channel. Pleneau Island offers more opportunities for shore landings. Just off shore, massive icebergs run a round in the shallows. Constant wind and wave action sculpt these gargantuan chunks of ice into fantastic shapes, revealing more shades of blue than you can possibly imagine. For many, a zodiac cruise here may well be a highlight of the voyage.

DAYS 9-10 / ANTARCTIC PENINSULA AND SOUTH SHETLAND ISLANDS

We aim to transit the Lemaire Channel on our way north towards Paradise Harbour. This may be the first opportunity to step foot on the continent of Antarctica itself. Nearby Neko Harbour offers another continental landing. Both locations offer terrific hiking opportunities up to panoramic view points. For the sea kayakers, the paddling opportunities here are endless. Expect to be in full sensory overload by this time of the voyage.

By morning we arrive in 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 place and history is all around us as we explore the old whaling station, with the rusted old boilers and dilapidated wooden huts. At the far end of the beach is an old aircraft hangar. This is where Australian, Sir Hubert Wilkins made the very first flight in Antarctica in 1928. There is also an outstanding hike here, high up onto the rim of the crater.

On a sunny day, cruising along the coast of Livingston Island is a memorable experience. There are several other landing sites in the vicinity including Half Moon Island, or the broad pebbly beach at Yankee Harbour, where we sometimes encounter Weddell seals sunning themselves. This is another great spot for a hike or a zodiac cruise. It's a fitting place to reflect on a wonderful expedition. Charting a course for King George Island in the early evening light, we enjoy a special dinner attended by the Captain of the ship.

DAY 11 / KING GEORGE ISLAND (ANTARCTICA) – RETURN TO SOUTH AMERICA – OVERNIGHT PUNTA ARENAS (TUESDAY, 08 JANUARY 2019)

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 (WEDNESDAY, 09 JANUARY 2019)

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 'QUEST FOR THE ANTARCTIC CIRCLE': There are two additional departures of the 'Quest for the Antarctic Circle' itinerary in January and February 2019. Two extended Antarctica Circle 'Deep South' voyages are also available. 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.