

Falklands Islands, South Georgia and Antarctica



02 FEB 2019 – 18 FEB 2019



16 NIGHTS / 17 DAYS



STARTS PUNTA ARENAS

THE CLASSIC VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY VISITING THREE UNIQUE LOCATIONS

This is our most far-reaching polar expedition and includes visits to three different locations. The sub-Antarctic Falkland Islands and the island of South Georgia are home to a proliferation of unique wildlife and birdlife. There are penguin rookeries with more than 100,000 nesting birds and the beaches are covered with fur seals and elephant seals. Seabirds, including many of the albatross species call these islands home, nesting and raising their young in this wild and remote environment. Both locations feature a fascinating history and stunning scenery.

To the south lies Antarctica – the frozen continent and our final destination on this outstanding voyage. Icebergs in all shapes and sizes fill the waters, and yet more unique wildlife can be found living in sizable colonies. The waters are full of life and we frequently encounter whales including humpback, minke and orca.

On this voyage, our days are spent exploring on shore in the company of expert guides – including naturalists, marine biologists, ornithologists and adventurers as well as our resident photography professional. Cruising in our inflatable Zodiac boats is another memorable activity. For the adventurers, we provide plenty of opportunities to explore on long hikes ashore, or by sea kayak. The clever use of time-saving flights on this departure means you maximize your time in the key locations. The perfect option for those short on time.



Expedition Highlights

- > Fantastic glaciated scenery of the Antarctic Peninsula and South Georgia
- > Outstanding wildlife observation on shore, zodiac cruising and from the ship
- > Visits to historic sites and science stations
- > Learn about the environment, wildlife, history and ecology from polar experts

ON THIS TRIP

-  Zodiac excursions
-  Onshore hiking options
-  Wildlife observation
-  Photographer in Residence
-  Sea kayaking available
-  Whale watching
-  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

DAY 1 / PUNTA ARENAS (CHILE) – FALKLAND ISLANDS (SATURDAY, 02 FEBRUARY 2019)

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 colored houses, pretty flower-filled gardens, a quaint cathedral and several local pubs. There is time to explore the town, before ship 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 for the adventure of a lifetime

DAY 2 / SEA LION ISLAND AND BLEAKER ISLAND

Overnight we have navigated down the eastern coast of the Falkland Islands. Approaching Sea Lion Island, we first note the very barren and windswept landscape, exposed to the prevailing weather that originates in the Drake Passage. We launch the zodiacs and go ashore to view the incredible diversity of wildlife found at this location. Three species of penguin including gentoo, magellanic and rockhopper, as well as southern elephant seals and South American sea lions are known to inhabit the area. King cormorants and striated caracaras are just some of the bird species we expect to see. Weather permitting, we may have time to visit neighboring Bleaker Island - another settlement on the exposed south-eastern coast of the Falklands - equally rich in wildlife.

DAYS 3-4 / AT SEA – TOWARDS SOUTH GEORGIA

We chart a southeasterly course bound for South Georgia. The seabirds once again join us in the Southern Ocean. Our educational presentations continue and are always popular. History is a key theme of this voyage and the epic story of Sir Ernest Shackleton and the *HMS Endurance* expedition is central to any trip to South Georgia. Perhaps you will pick up some valuable tips from our onboard photographic guide,

learning about image composition, the subtle polar light and all the basics of good camera craft. We will also learn about Polar conservation - a theme particularly close to the hearts of our guides and crew.

DAY 5-8 / EXPLORATION OF SOUTH GEORGIA

South Georgia has often been called the 'Serengeti of the Southern Ocean' – and as we approach the deep bays of this rugged, rocky outcrop, you will begin to see why. Launching the Zodiacs we begin our exploration of the island, in the vicinity of Elsehul Bay. Large numbers of fur seals and the much larger elephant seal will line the dark sand beaches. Living in the tussock grass, king penguins and their chicks may number up to 100,000 birds in some locations, including Salisbury Plain, St Andrews Bay and Gold Harbour. The island is also home to large numbers of nesting albatross as they fill the skies above, coming and going from the nest.

South Georgia is a thrilling location for history lovers and the rusting relics of the early whaling industry are all around us. We hope to observe several of the old stations at locations including Leith, Husvik and Stromness. A highlight is a visit to Grytviken – the largest of the whaling stations, situated at the head of Cumberland Bay. It is here we visit the gravesite of Sir Ernest Shackleton. For many, being in the presence of the great explorer will be a highlight of the trip. An excellent museum at Grytviken, maintained by the South Georgia Heritage Trust and the restored church built by the original Norwegian whalers provides a fascinating glimpse into the past.

DAYS 9-11 / AT SEA – TOWARDS ANTARCTICA

Weather and ice will dictate our crossing of the Scotia Sea from South Georgia to Antarctica. As with all of our itinerary planning, our Expedition Leader and Captain will make a decision based on the sea and ice conditions at the time. The South Orkney Island group represent the peaks of a submarine mountain range called the Scotia Arc, connecting South Georgia to the South Shetland Islands. Often shrouded in fog and surrounded



by ice much of the year, a chance to visit these islands doesn't come often. As we edge ever closer to the frozen continent, large icebergs announce our arrival in Antarctic waters. If conditions allow, we hope to see the dark cliffs of Elephant Island appear on the horizon. Shackleton and his men were encamped here for many months, having lost *HMS Endurance* in the thick sea ice, far to the south in the Weddell Sea in 1915. From the tiny beach at Point Wild, Shackleton and six companions set off on the rescue mission to South Georgia, aboard the tiny lifeboat, *James Caird*. To this day, the epic ocean crossing is considered one of the greatest in history. If conditions allow, we will attempt a landing at Point Wild on Elephant Island.

DAYS 12 - 16 / SOUTH SHETLAND ISLANDS AND ANTARCTICA PENINSULA

Around 60 miles off the coast of the Antarctic mainland we find the South Shetland Island chain. Possible landing sites could include King George Island, Half Moon Island or Yankee Harbour. Weather conditions permitting we sail the ship into the flooded volcanic caldera of Deception Island. There are some outstanding hikes at these locations and the old whaling station and aircraft hangar at Deception Island beg for further exploration.

After so much anticipation, we enter the icy waters of the Antarctic Peninsula in the vicinity of Mikkelson Harbour or Cierva Cove. Snow covered mountains soar from the dark waters. Along the shoreline in the bays and harbors of the Peninsula lives an incredible abundance of wildlife. Large rookeries are home to chinstrap, gentoo and Adelie penguins. Seals live on the ice floes, including the powerful leopard seal that we hope to encounter. Gulls, skuas and cormorants are also found nesting and feeding at many sites along the Antarctic Peninsula.

We explore by Zodiac boat and ashore where a range of exciting activities await. Locations we hope to visit include Wilhelmina Bay, Orne Harbour, Cuverville Island and the Errera Channel. Join the photographic guide taking pictures of stunning icebergs. Or enjoy a hike to the top of a snowy mountain saddle with one of our adventure guides. If the opportunity presents itself, visit a science base or an old historic hut. The sea kayakers may range up to several miles from the ship, for a truly memorable experience. As our voyage comes to an end we chart a course for King George Island. Tonight we celebrate our voyage with a special dinner attended by the Captain of the ship.

DAY 17 / KING GEORGE ISLAND (ANTARCTICA) – RETURN TO SOUTH AMERICA – OVERNIGHT PUNTA ARENAS (MONDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 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.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This itinerary includes a complimentary post-voyage hotel night in Punta Arenas for all guests returning from voyages that conclude at King George Island. 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 18 / PUNTA ARENAS – DEPART (TUESDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 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: There are five variations of this popular voyage in 2018/19. Several (such as this itinerary) include flights to locations including Stanley (Falkland Islands) or King George Island (Antarctica). Flying to these points allows us to run the same overall itinerary but in less time. Several itineraries operate in the reverse direction visiting Antarctica first, then South Georgia, followed by the Falkland Islands. One voyage starts and ends in Ushuaia (Argentina). 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.