

Antarctica – Expedition Cruise



Trip Summary

Experience the best of the Antarctic Peninsula on this 12-day exploration of our southern-most continent! Discover for yourself just how big an iceberg is up close, and then imagine how much bigger it is underwater (up to 10x more massive!) Watch overhead as an albatross with a wingspan of up to twelve feet glides across the skies. Learn the stories behind the first recorded voyage of Drake Passage captained by the Dutch navigator Willem Schouten in 1616. Kayak alongside endless chunks of ice, glimpsing the occasional curious seal popping its head in and out of the water. Visit a research center to learn more about the interesting findings of scientists studying the “frozen desert”. Explore Antarctica with the leaders in adventure travel!

Itinerary

Day 1: Ushuaia

In the afternoon, we embark in Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, the southernmost city in the world located at the Beagle Channel and sail through this scenic waterway for the rest of the evening • *Overnight M/v Plancius or M/v Ortelius (D)*

Days 2 & 3: Drake Passage / Antarctic Convergence

During these two days we sail across the Drake Passage, the body of water connecting the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans • When we cross the Antarctic Convergence, we arrive in the circum-Antarctic up welling zone • In this area we may see Wandering Albatrosses, Grey Headed Albatrosses, Black-browed Albatrosses, Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses, Cape Pigeons, Southern Fulmars, Wilson’s Storm Petrels, Blue Petrels and Antarctic Petrels • Near the South Shetland Islands, we spot our first icebergs • *Overnight M/v Plancius or M/v Ortelius (B, L, D)*

Days 4 – 9: Antarctica

We will sail directly to “High Antarctica”, passing the Melchior islands and the Schollaert Channel between Brabant and Anvers Island • The basecamp concept enable us to visit places where we hope to stay for longer than normal in order to conduct our activities • Several fantastic localities offer great opportunities for this and may include: Neumayer Channel, where we may position our ship for the multi activity basecamp • The protected waters around Wiencke Island may become our playground for all activities • In this alpine environment, there are great opportunities to scout the region on foot, per zodiac and during kayak trips • Walkers will find opportunities to use snowshoes on hikes near the shoreline, and the mountaineers will find their challenge by climbing hills and viewpoints further inland • All climbs and excursions can only be conducted in good weather conditions •

We hope to visit the old British research station, now working museum and post office at Port Lockroy on Goudier Island • Close to Port Lockroy we may also offer a landing on Jougla Point with Gentoo penguins and Blue-eyed shags • We look out for Leopard seals, Crabeater seals and whales

If the ice conditions and time allows us, we may sail through the spectacular Lemaire Channel to Booth Island, Pléneau and Petermann Island where we can find Adélie penguins and Blue-eyed shags (normally not possible before New Year) • In this area there are good chances to encounter Humpback whales and Minke whales • The opportunities for kayaking, glacier walks or mountaineering that is more ambitious are excellent in this area •



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Neko Harbour offers the opportunity to set foot on the Antarctic Continent in a magnificent landscape of a huge glacier and enjoy the landscape during zodiac cruises, walks, and kayak excursions • We may spend the night in Paradise Bay with a camp erected ashore in one of several places good for camping • The area in and around Errera Channel is spectacular with possible sites for our activities like Danco Island and Cuverville Island but also lesser known, but equally great sites such as Orne Island and Georges Point on Rongé Island •

On our last day of near shore activities, we pass the Melchior Islands towards the open sea around noon • Keep a keen lookout for Humpback whales in Dallmann Bay • Alternatively, we may aim for Half Moon Island, South Shetlands, which offers a great opportunity for our activities • We depart from Antarctica around noon • *Overnight M/v Plancius or M/v Ortelius (B, L, D)*

Days 10 & 11: Drake Passage

On our way north, we are again followed by a great selection of seabirds while crossing the Drake Passage • *Overnight M/v Plancius or M/v Ortelius (B, L, D)*

Day 12: Ushuaia

We arrive in the morning in Ushuaia and disembark • *No overnight (B)*

*** Programs may vary depending on local ice and weather conditions, the availability of landing sites and opportunities to see wildlife. The final itinerary will be determined by the Expedition Leader on board. Flexibility is paramount for expedition cruises.*

Our Partner – Oceanwide Expeditions

Austin Adventures is proudly offering this trip in conjunction with Oceanwide Expeditions. Oceanwide Expeditions is a Dutch vessel operator, organizing voyages that make it possible for passengers to enjoy the scenery and nature above and underwater in the world's most unique areas. The regions they visit during these wildlife expeditions contain hardly any infrastructure and are almost only reachable by boat. Oceanwide Expeditions operates, so to speak, on the borderline of land and water, where daily guided excursions in small groups are organized. Their expertise in designing and managing the wildlife voyages allows them to offer quality tours in areas that will fascinate and amaze you time after time. Oceanwide is passionate about polar expedition cruising and distinguishes itself from other operators not only by setting its emphasis on educational lectures by experienced guides throughout the voyage but also by delivering an active shore program. Expedition cruises are designed for those travelers who wish to discover destinations from the inside - taking the 'paths less traveled' to interact with and learn about nature and local cultures, rather than simply checking off touristic spots- and experiencing true wilderness settings in the world's most remote and pristine locations.

Antarctica – Expedition Cruise



Activities

Hiking: The possibilities to hike longer distances in the Antarctic are limited by mountains and glaciers. In general the longest hikes can last up to two hours. We aim at one or two hikes per day during morning and afternoon landings. The final decision on those hiking options will be met by the Expedition Leader on the day of the excursion. We recommend bringing a proper pair of ankle high hiking boots and gaiters.

Kayaking: Basic kayaking experience is required and physical fitness is essential. Parallel to all other activities we are planning on offering kayaking excursions during morning and/or afternoon landings.

Photo Workshop: For beginner and advanced photographers alike under the supervision of a photo expert on board. No previous experience required.

Snowshoeing: Easy and does not require any technical skills.

Mountaineering (optional): This is a technical and more strenuous activity for mountaineers who wish to walk beyond the shore radius in order to reach higher grounds and viewpoints. Mountaineers walk in rope parties under the leadership of a certified mountain guide mostly across glaciated environment. Mountaineering knowledge is preferable, but not required. Physical fitness is essential.

Discovery: Antarctica, Earth's southernmost continent is covered by ice that averages at least one mile thick. On average, this "land of ice" is the coldest, windiest, and driest continent all in one, *and* it's known to have the highest average elevation of all seven continents! Did you know that Antarctica, even with all of its ice, is considered a desert? This is because the continent receives very little precipitation (about 8 inches per year) at its coast, while inland sees even less than that! No *permanent* human residents reside on the continent but anywhere from 1,000 to 5,000 people live and work in research stations scattered across Antarctica year round. The Antarctic Peninsula (which you visit on this tour), sometimes called the Banana Belt, has a more mild climate than the rest of the continent and teems with exotic wildlife like Elephant Seals, Fur Seals, Blue Whales, Humpback Whales, Penguins, Albatross, and Pintail Ducks. One of the biggest icebergs ever recorded broke free from the Ross ice shelf in Antarctica in 2000 – it had a surface area of 4,250 miles above water (and was ten times bigger than that under the surface). Come explore this "frozen desert" with the leaders in adventure travel!

Your expedition leaders are experienced facilitators and regional experts. They will take the time to explain the details of each activity, answer any questions and demonstrate the use of all equipment.

Meals

All meals throughout the voyage aboard the ship including snacks, coffee and tea are included. Alcoholic beverages and related gratuities are not included in the trip price.



Antarctica – Expedition Cruise

Distinctive Accommodations

Depending on what date you choose, you will cruise on either the M/v Plancius or the M/v Ortelius. Both ships are considered ice-strengthened vessels ideal for polar expeditions in the Arctic and Antarctic.

Nights 1 – 11: M/v Plancius

M/v "Plancius" was built in 1976 as an oceanographic research vessel for the Royal Dutch Navy and was named "Hr. Ms. Tydeman". The ship sailed for the Dutch Navy until June 2004 and was eventually purchased by Oceanwide Expeditions. The vessel was completely rebuilt as a 116-passenger vessel in 2009 and complies with the latest SOLAS-regulations (Safety Of Life At Sea). M/v "Plancius" is classed by Lloyd's Register in London and flies the Dutch flag. The vessel offers a restaurant/lecture room on deck 3 and a spacious observation lounge (with bar) on deck 5 with large windows, offering full panorama view. M/v "Plancius" has large open deck spaces (with full walk-around possibilities on deck 4), giving excellent opportunities to enjoy the scenery and wildlife. Plancius was built for Ice conditions. To reach these ice-conditions she has a strengthened bow and stern.

Nights 1 – 11: M/v Ortelius

Ortelius was originally the *Marina Svetaeva*. Built in Gdynia, Poland in 1989, it served as a special-purpose vessel for the Russian Academy of Science. Later it was re-flagged and renamed after the Dutch/Flemish cartographer Abraham Ortelius (1527 – 1598), who in 1570 published the first modern world atlas: *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* or *Theater of the World*. At that time his atlas was the most expensive book ever printed. *Ortelius* is classed by Lloyd's Register in London and flies the Cyprus flag. The vessel has the highest ice-class notation (UL1, equivalent to 1A) and is therefore suitable to navigate in solid one-year sea ice as well as loose multi-year pack ice. *Ortelius* can accommodate up to 116 passengers and has an abundance of open-deck spaces. It is manned by 22 highly experienced nautical crew members, 19 hotel staff, eight expedition specialists (one expedition leader, one assistant, and six lecturer-guides), and one doctor.

Age & Nationality

Passengers on a typical voyage range from in their 30s to their 80s, with the majority usually between 45 — 65. Our expeditions attract independent travelers from around the globe who are characterized by a strong interest in exploring remote regions. The camaraderie that develops on board is an important part of the Oceanwide experience, and many passenger groups include several nationalities.

Antarctica – Expedition Cruise



Arrival and Departures

Embarkation is between 4:00 - 5:00 pm on day of departure. We recommend that all passengers arrive the night prior to departure in Ushuaia to avoid any delays from flights or lost luggage. Pre-night hotel is not included. Transfers from airport to hotel and from hotel to the pier are not included. Passengers are asked to make their own way to the port on day of embarkation. It is not allowed to board the ship before 4:00 pm as the crew is getting the ship ready for your arrival.

Disembarkation is between 8:30 - 9:00 am on the last day of the voyage. The transfer from the ship to the airport is included in the cruise rate. You can catch a flight out of Ushuaia any time after 12:00 Noon on that day.

Trip Price

From \$8,950

Trip Length

12 days / 11 nights

2019 Dates

Varied itineraries departing weekly throughout the year; call for availability

Host City

Ushuaia, Argentina
Airport Code: USH

Reservations & Availability

800.575.1540

*Learn about the global climate conditions
affecting Antarctica today*



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Trip Reservations

Reservations, Deposits and Balances Due

To make a reservation, contact Austin Adventures with your choice of trip and dates. A 25% nonrefundable deposit is required to confirm your reservation. **Some International and Custom programs may require additional deposits.** Full payment is required at the time of booking if your trip departs within 90 days. Choose one of the following contact methods:

Toll free: 800.575.1540

Phone: 406.655.4591

Online: austinadventures.com

Email: reservations@austinadventures.com

Mail: Austin Adventures, P.O. Box 81025, Billings, MT 59108

You may also book your AA adventure with your preferred travel professional.

We accept most major credit cards and personal checks (U.S. funds made payable to Austin Adventures). Please do not send cash.

Included in the Trip Price

- Voyage aboard the M/V Plancius or M/v Ortelius vessel & cabin with private facilities.
- All meals throughout the voyage aboard the ship including snacks, coffee, and tea.
- All shore excursions and activities throughout the voyage by Zodiac.
- Program of lectures by noted naturalists.
- Free use of rubber boots and snowshoes.
- Pre-scheduled group transfer from the vessel to the airport in Ushuaia (directly after disembarkation).
- Austin Adventures T-shirt & luggage tags.
- Pre-departure and packing information.
- All miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the program.

Not Included in the Trip Price

- Gratuities for stewards and other service personnel aboard the vessel.
- Transfer to the vessel.
- Government arrival and departure taxes, passport costs, and visa expenses.
- Alcoholic beverages and related gratuities.
- Meals as not designated in daily itinerary.
- Pre-and post-trip accommodations and associated expenses.
- Air and land transportation to/from host cities.
- All types of personal insurance (baggage cancellation and personal insurance is mandatory).
- Personal expenses (i.e. laundry, bar, beverage charges and telecommunication charges).

Pre-departure Information

After receiving your reservation and deposit, we'll send you a pre-trip planner with general information about the area you'll be visiting, a packing list, exercise guidelines, a guest information questionnaire and a liability release agreement for you to sign and return within 10 days.

The toughest part is going home.SM

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Private Custom Trips

Maybe your vacation schedule doesn't fit our list of trips and dates. Or perhaps you'd prefer a slightly different itinerary or level of luxury and activity. A Custom Adventure is the perfect answer. You pick the date and destination and brief us on the size of your group, what activities you want, your "must haves" and just how you like to relax and unwind. No detail is too small, no idea too outrageous. Our staff of experts will help create a tailor-made vacation that's just right for you and your group. In short, if you can dream it, we can make it happen.

Room Occupancy, Single Supplements, and Shared Room Assignments

All trip prices are based on double occupancy. Single rooms are available for an additional charge, referred to as a "single supplement." If you're traveling alone and wish to share a room, make the request at the time of booking. Austin Adventures will attempt to find a suitable roommate for you.

Minimum Age

The minimum age on our non-family designated adult and teen adventures is sixteen years old.

Cancellations and Refunds

The following cancellation policies and cancellation fees are in effect:

***As with deposits on some international and custom programs, refund schedule may vary, speak with your Adventure Consultant for details.

Cancellation 90 days or more before trip departure – Full trip payment refunded less 25% nonrefundable deposit

Cancellation 60-89 days before trip departure – Full trip payment less 25% per person is refunded

Cancellation 0-59 days before trip departure – No refund is given

Our Guarantee

Exceeding your expectations is our number one priority. In the unlikely event that you are dissatisfied with something during your trip, immediately notify your guide(s). If he or she is unable to resolve the issue, call our main office and give us the details of the problem, and a chance to correct it. We will do our best to find a resolution. If we are unable to do so during your trip, we will work with you upon your return home to arrive at a fair and equitable solution, including up to a full refund.