Contact us
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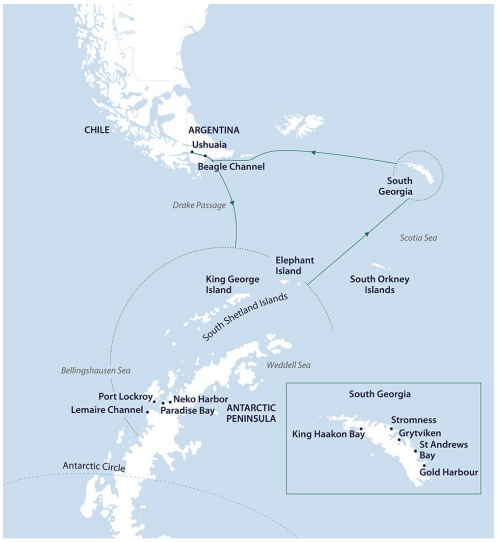
In Shackleton's Footsteps

Starts and Ends in **Ushuaia, Argentina, South America** (ASH)

Day 1 Arrive Ushuaia



Arrive in Ushuaia, where you will be met by a representative of Aurora Expeditions and transferred with your fellow expeditioners to your assigned pre-voyage hotel. If you are already in Ushuaia, we ask you to make your way to your hotel. Check-in is from 3.00 pm. This afternoon, visit the Aurora Expeditions hospitality desk in the hotel lobby, between 3.00 pm and 7.00 pm, to collect your luggage tags, and confirm if you wish to join our Lake Escondido pre-embarkation tour tomorrow. Our team will confirm details regarding your embarkation day, answer any questions and provide you with information on where to dine or purchase last minute items. Expeditioners arriving after 7.00 pm will find a welcome pack waiting for them at check-in. We ask you to visit our hospitality desk tomorrow between 8.00 am – 10.00 am. The remainder of your time is at leisure. All meals today are at your own expense.

Day 2 Embarkation

This morning, enjoy breakfast and check-out. Please ensure your cabin luggage is fitted with cabin tags clearly labelled with your name and cabin number. Take your cabin luggage to hotel reception, prior to, or at check-out. Your luggage will be stored and transferred directly to the port for clearance, to be placed in your cabin ahead of your arrival on board. Please keep any valuables or personal items with you throughout the day. Those wishing to join our Lake Escondido tour today, please meet in the hotel lobby at 8.45 am. This tour offers us an unforgettable panoramic drive through big valleys of glacial origin, evergreen and

deciduous forests, waterfalls and rivers, in the vastness of the Andes Mountain Range. We will leave Ushuaia city to the northeast of Tierra del Fuego, driving through peat bog valleys to reach Garibaldi Pass, only accessible by a winding road that will take us to a panoramic point. From here we will have amazing panoramic views of Lake Escondido and, if weather conditions allow, of Fagnano Lake. We will start our descent towards the northeast to reach Fagnano Lake's shore where we will visit a local ranch. After appreciating the landscape, you will have the chance to enjoy the typical Fuegian Lamb barbecue. Enjoy some free time there before returning to Ushuaia for ship embarkation. Alternatively, enjoy your day at leisure and meet at your hotel lobby or from the meeting point at the parking lot near the pier (details will be given by our ground staff at the hotel), to be transferred to the pier for embarkation. Once onboard, you'll have time to settle into your cabin before our important mandatory briefings. As the ship pulls away from port, we'll gather on the deck to commence our adventure with spectacular views over Ushuaia and Tierra del Fuego. This evening get to know your fellow expeditioners and friendly expedition team and crew at a welcome dinner to celebrate the start of a thrilling adventure to Antarctica.

Day 3-4 Drake Passage crossing

Settle into your stateroom and make yourself comfortable! The onboard gym, wellbeing centre and well-equipped library are yours to discover, and your expedition team will offer a series of presentations on Antarctica's history, wildlife and environment to help enrich your experience. You will also be invited to collect your Muck Boots and attend important briefings on biosecurity, wildlife-watching guidelines and Zodiac safety, in preparation for your first landing in Antarctica. On day four the excitement is palpable as you near the South Shetland Islands and the tip of the Antarctic Peninsula, with everyone converging on the observation decks to spot their first iceberg. Now that you're south of the Antarctic Convergence the ocean takes on a whole new character, as you're surrounded by porpoising penguins and dramatic icebergs. The memory of your first iceberg sighting is likely to remain with you for a lifetime. Time and weather permitting, we may attempt our first Antarctic landing in the late afternoon.

Days 5-7 Antarctic Peninsula

It's almost impossible to describe the feeling of arriving in Antarctica.

Spotting your first iceberg and taking a deep breath of some of the most fresh, crisp air on earth is an experience to cherish forever. Once we arrive, the western side of the Antarctic Peninsula and the South Shetland Islands are ours to explore, and we have a host of choices available to us. Your experienced expedition team, who have made countless journeys to this area, will use their expertise to design your voyage from day to day, choosing the best options based on the prevailing weather, ice conditions and wildlife opportunities. While on the Peninsula, we generally make landings or Zodiac excursions twice a day. Make sure you rug up before joining Zodiac cruises along spectacular ice cliffs or among grounded icebergs, keeping watch for whales, seals and porpoising penguins. Zodiacs will also transport you from the ship to land, where you can visit penguin rookeries, discover historic huts and explore some of our favourite spots along the peninsula. While ashore we aim to stretch our legs, wandering along pebbly beaches or perhaps up snow-covered ridgelines to vantage points with mountains towering overhead and ice-speckled oceans below. If you have chosen an optional activity, you will have the option to do that whenever conditions allow, and of course keen polar plungers will have the chance to fully immerse themselves in polar waters - conditions permitting! In addition to Zodiac cruises and shore excursions, we may ship cruise some of the narrow, dramatic straits separating offshore islands from the mainland, or linger in scenic bays to marvel at sculptural icebergs and photograph spectacular scenery. This is a great time to enjoy the observation lounge or make your way to the bridge (open at the captain's discretion) for uninterrupted views of Antarctica in all its splendour. Keep an ear out for the creak and deep rumble of glaciers as they carve into the sea. Take a quiet moment to experience the wonder of this incredible white continent.

Day 8 Weddell Sea

The famed Weddell Sea is central to the story of Sir Ernest Shackleton's Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, which we are here to retrace. In the summer of 1914 Shackleton and his crew of 27 men sailed into the Weddell Sea to attempt the first overland crossing of Antarctica. As they approached their starting point, their ship the Endurance became trapped in sea ice, sinking any hopes they may have had of completing their objective. Little did they know, this was the beginning of a completely unexpected and remarkable journey. The incredible series of events that followed have made Shackleton's voyage one of the most celebrated in polar history. Remote and inaccessible, entry into the Weddell Sea is highly prized among polar adventurers. Your passage begins at the northernmost

extreme of the Antarctic Peninsula, in the beautifully barren Antarctic Sound. In this seldom-visited part of the Peninsula volcanic peaks tower above penguin colonies, and wave-sculpted icebergs parade through the deep channels leading to the Weddell Sea. Continuing further east, embrace the expedition spirit as you forge your way as far as possible into the Weddell Sea. The Weddell Sea is renowned for its breathtaking tabular icebergs and expansive sea ice, which attracts an abundance of wildlife, including crabeater seals, Weddell seals and an array of seabirds. Take some time out on deck to observe the flight of storm petrels, prions and Antarctic cormorants drawn here by the rich blooms of Antarctic krill that flourish in the shelter of this ice-covered sea. As you travel, take a moment to reflect on the truly historic seas you're sailing. It wasn't so far from here that the wreck of the Endurance was discovered, mostly intact, on March 5, 2022. Researchers aboard the polar research vessel S.A. Agulhas II were astonished to find the well-preserved vessel only 6.4km (4 miles) south of the position calculated by Captain Worsley in 1915, when he last laid eyes on his ship.

Day 9 Elephant Island

Today we set a course for Elephant Island, the lonely outpost where 22 of Shackleton's men survived several winter months under the shelter of two upturned boats. In the morning, join your expedition team in the lecture room to hear the awe-inspiring story of Shackleton and his men, who spent 9 months stuck in Weddell Sea pack ice and 6 months camping on drifting sea ice before making a desperate escape from the sea ice in three open boats. They spent almost a week battling the wind, currents, swell and treacherous ice to finally make landfall on Elephant Island, a striking, ice-covered extremity of the South Shetland Islands, after 497 days at sea. We plan to sail past Cape Valentine to see the beach where the men first put ashore over 100 years ago, then follow the coastline west to the exposed promontory of Point Wild. This is where Shackleton's 22 men survived several bitter winter months under their upturned boats, hoping for rescue. Weather permitting, we will take a Zodiac cruise or make a landing at historic Point Wild.

Days 10-11 Scotia Sea

After an exciting program of excursions and activities in Antarctica, relax and enjoy the slower pace of sea days as you sail towards South Georgia. As

you make your way across the Scotia Sea you're following the route taken by Shackleton and five of his men when they sailed from Elephant Island in search of rescue. In their open wooden boat, the James Caird, they spent 17 days sailing into the unknown across this perilous patch of ocean. This boat journey, which concluded with their safe arrival in King Haakon Bay on the west coast of South Georgia, remains one of the greatest stories of maritime navigation and survival in polar history. As you sail the onboard lecture program continues, with a series of entertaining presentations on South Georgia's wildlife, geology and history in the lecture room. Or you might prefer to simply unwind: take a long lunch, catch up on your gym sessions, or curl up with a book from our polar library. The Scotia Sea is known for its abundant wildlife including fin, humpback and blue whales. Keep watch for these gentle giants and elusive orca, which patrol these waters. Venture out on deck with your camera to capture cape petrels and prions wheeling, and albatross soaring gracefully amidst the swell. Of course, thoughts of Shackleton and his voyage are never far away. "Nearly always there were gales. So small was our boat and so great were the seas that often our sail flapped idly in the calm between the crests of two waves. Then we would climb the next slope and catch the full fury of the gale where the wool-like whiteness of the breaking water surged around us." - Ernest Shackleton

Days 12-16 South Georgia

As you near the rugged island of South Georgia, spare a thought for Captain James Cook, who arrived here in 1775 and believed it to be the northern tip of a great southern continent! In fact, it is a small island only 176 km (110 mi) long, but with a 3,000 m (9,842 ft) snow-capped mountain range, some of the world's largest congregations of wildlife and a truly fascinating human history, South Georgia is an island of incredible riches. As you approach, jagged mountain peaks rise steeply, while seabirds are often spotted soaring around the ship. You will sail along the coast, taking in the spectacular glaciated scenery and enjoying a little shelter from the prevailing westerly winds. This enchanting coastline is yours to explore! Zodiac cruise around craggy coves and along the rocky coastline in search of penguins, seal haul-outs and bird cliffs. Remember to keep an eye out for South Georgia's kelp forests—these remarkable underwater ecosystems are quite mesmerising as their fronds sway back and forth on the water's surface. Zodiacs will also shuttle you from ship to shore, where you can visit some of the largest king penguin colonies on Earth, take a guided walk among fur seals and elephant seals (making sure you listen to your guides and keep your distance!) and wander along

pebbled streams and grassy glacial outwash plains. We also hope to visit the remnants of South Georgia's thriving whaling stations and visit the final resting place of Sir Ernest Shackleton, whose incredible voyage of survival is synonymous with this island. In addition to Zodiac cruises and shore excursions, we may ship-cruise through fjords with towering cliffs of ancient stone, or into deeply indented bays towards dramatic glacier fronts. This is a great time to find a comfy spot in the observation lounge to enjoy uninterrupted views of South Georgia's majestic coast. For some intrepid Shackleton fans, the optional hike from Fortuna Bay to Stromness will be a highlight. This route follows the final stage of Shackleton, Worsely and Crean's improbable traverse of South Georgia, from their landing place in King Haakon Bay on the east coast to Stromness in the west, where they finally found safety after 24 harrowing months at sea. From Fortuna Bay the trail rises to a spectacular alpine plateau, before angling steeply down towards the abandoned Stromness whaling station. Conditions permitting, we aim to repeat this final section of their traverse. "Bright moonlight showed us that the interior was tremendously broken," Shackleton wrote. "High peaks, impassable cliffs, steep snow- slopes, and sharply descending glaciers could be seen in all directions."

Day 17-19 At Sea

As we sail from South Georgia, you will be enthralled by the ceaseless flight of the many seabirds that follow the vessel, skilfully using the air currents created by the ship to gain momentum. If time and weather conditions permit, we could pass close to Shag Rocks, a fascinating group of jagged rocky islets protruding from the sea, in the proximity of South Georgia. As we sail on towards Ushuaia you may choose to spend your final precious moments at sea soaking up the views on deck, enjoying the onboard facilities, or attending final lectures. There is plenty of time to enjoy the magic of the Southern Ocean, have a drink with newfound friends and reflect on the voyage you've shared. On the final night, celebrate your unforgettable voyage with newfound friends at a special Captain's farewell dinner. We hope you will become ambassadors for the Antarctic region, telling your family, friends and colleagues about your journey to this magical place, and advocating for its conservation so that they might one day visit the region to experience what you have been lucky to see and do here.

Day 20 Disembark in Ushuaia

During the early morning, we cruise up the Beagle Channel, before quietly slipping into dock in Ushuaia, where we will be free to disembark around 8.00 am. Farewell your expedition team and fellow passengers as we all continue our onward journeys, hopefully with a newfound sense of the immense power of nature. Upon disembarkation, for those continuing their travels in the region, transportation to the hotel will be arranged exclusively for guests who have booked their accommodations through Aurora or for those staying in downtown areas near the port. Expeditioners departing on flights prior to 12:30 pm will be directly transferred to Ushuaia Airport, those with flights after 12:30 pm will have the opportunity to explore Ushuaia before an afternoon airport transfer, and the transfer procedures and details will be communicated onboard before disembarkation. Note: At the conclusion of the voyage, we do not recommend booking flights departing Ushuaia prior to 12.00 pm on the day of disembarkation in case there are delays.