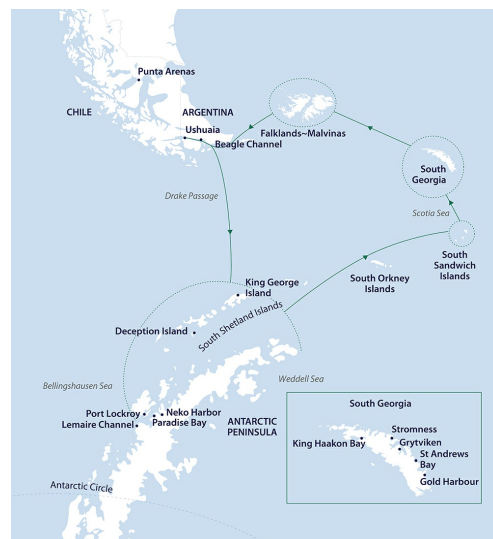


# South Georgia & Antarctic Odyssey featuring the South Sandwich Islands

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

## 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.

## **Days 3-4 Drake Passage Crossing**

As we commence the Drake Passage crossing, we make the most of our time getting comfortable with the motions of the sea. Our expedition team prepare you for our first landing with important wildlife guidelines and biosecurity procedures and start our lecture program to help you learn more about Antarctica's history, wildlife and environment. Our wildlife experiences begin as we enjoy watching and photographing the many seabirds, including majestic albatrosses and giant petrels following our vessel. On sea days, you can enjoy the facilities on board the vessel including the gym, sauna and jacuzzis or relax in one of the observation lounges. Nearing the South Shetland Islands and the tip of the Antarctic Peninsula on the afternoon of day four, the excitement is palpable with everyone converging on one of the observation decks watching for our first iceberg. The ocean takes on a whole new perspective once we are below the Antarctic Convergence and are surrounded by the surreal presence of floating ice sculptures. The memory of your first big iceberg sighting is likely to remain with you for a lifetime. Time and weather permitting, we may attempt our first landing in Antarctica by late afternoon.

## Days 5-8 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 that will stay with you 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. We generally make landings or Zodiac excursions twice a day. You will want to 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.

## Days 9-11 At Sea

As we sail towards the South Sandwich Islands, enjoy informative and entertaining lectures from our expedition team and learn about the wildlife, history and culture of the places that you will visit on the voyage. You may want to use the sauna and jacuzzis, stay active in the gym or borrow a book from our well-stocked library and relax in one of the many observation areas on board the vessel.

## Days 12-13 South Sandwich Islands

On Captain James Cook's second voyage of discovery (1772–1775), he circumnavigated the globe in high southern latitudes, without seeing land, casting doubt on the existence of the Antarctic continent, which at that time was still unknown. It was during this voyage Cook discovered the South Sandwich Islands and landed on South Georgia Island, describing them as, 'Lands doomed by Nature to perpetual frigidness: never to feel the warmth of the sun's rays; whose horrible and savage aspects I have not words to describe.' He named the South Sandwich Islands for Lord Sandwich, they are considered together with South Georgia, as a UK Dependent Territory (see above), and are uninhabited. Although Cook sighted a number of the islands, several more were not discovered until Bellingshausen visited in 1819. Located about 740 km (460 mi) southeast of South Georgia, the islands form a chain some 350 km (220 mi) long, comprising 11 large and several smaller islands with a total area of about 600 sq. km (230 sq. mi). Most are ice-capped, and the tallest peak, on Montagu Island, reaches 1,370 m (4,500 ft). The climate is cold, with frequent snow and strong winds. The islands are volcanic in origin and some remain active. The island of Zavodovski, for instance, appears in constant eruption and reeks of rotten eggs (the volcano itself is named Mt. Asphyxia), while the islands of Visokoi, Candlemas, Saunders, and Bellingshausen all show definite signs of activity. Bristol, Cook, and Thule islands are heavily glaciated and show no signs of warmth or activity. All the islands are steep sided above the water and fall away rapidly into deep water - more than 1,500 m (5,000 ft). In this wild environment, nature determines what we are able to do and see. If conditions allow, we hope to explore the dramatic coastline of some the islands on board the ship or by Zodiac. Little is known about these islands, although the British Antarctic Survey has undertaken some limited biological and geological work there, mainly in the 1960s. Vegetation is very sparse. But there's at least one extraordinary wildlife spectacle: Zavodovski Island supports a chinstrap penguin colony that numbers around one million penguins on its steep volcanic slopes. Those who have seen this massive penguin colony speak of it with awe.

## Day 14 At sea

Reflect over a few drinks on the adventures of your time spent in the South Sandwich Islands and hear tales of exploration and discovery from our team of onboard experts as we prepare for our exciting days ahead in

## **Days 15-18 South Georgia**

Your experienced expedition team will use their local knowledge to plan your voyage from day to day, choosing the best options based on the prevailing weather, sea state and wildlife opportunities. Remember to layer up before joining Zodiac excursions that may zip into craggy coves and along the rocky coastline in search of nesting penguins, seal haul-outs and bird cliffs. Remember to keep an eye out for South Georgia's kelp forests as well - these remarkable underwater ecosystems are quite mesmerising as their fronds sway back and forth on the water's surface. Our Zodiacs will also transport ashore, 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 pay our respects to Sir Ernest Shackleton, whose incredible voyage of survival is synonymous with this island. If you have chosen an optional activity, you will have the option to do that whenever conditions allow. In addition to Zodiac excursions 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 or make your way to the bridge (open at the Captain's discretion) to enjoy uninterrupted views of South Georgia's majestic coast.

## **Days 19-20 At Sea**

As we sail towards the Falklands~Malvinas, there is plenty to keep you occupied on board. Our expedition team will continue to share their wealth of knowledge about the wildlife, history and natural world as part of the onboard lecture series. You will have ample time to enjoy observing seabirds from the stern of the ship, keeping a close watch for whales and other marine wildlife, or simply enjoying the many facilities available to you on the ship.

## **Day 21 At Sea / Falklands~Malvinas**

Sea and weather conditions will determine our arrival time into the Falklands~Malvinas today. The Falklands~Malvinas comprises two large islands (East and West Falkland), with over 700 islands scattered off the coast. All but seven of these are uninhabited, with windswept coastlines, white sand beaches and crystal-clear water. These beautifully barren islands are true wildlife havens, sheltering an impressive diversity of birdlife, including the largest black-browed albatross colony on earth. The cold, nutrient-rich waters surrounding the islands make this a prime location for spotting marine life.

## **Day 22 Falklands~Malvinas**

There are many beautiful areas to explore across the Falklands~Malvinas, each offering a unique perspective on this magnificent archipelago. 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 winds, weather and wildlife opportunities. We generally make landings or Zodiac excursions twice a day. Even though we are north of the Antarctic Convergence it can be quite chilly here, so you will want to layer up before joining Zodiac cruises into rocky coves or along sea cliffs, keeping watch for seals, sea lions, dolphins and penguins. Zodiacs will also shuttle you from the ship to shore, where you may be able to visit albatross colonies, penguin rookeries and perhaps even have a traditional English 'tea and scones' at a local cottage. Conditions permitting, we hope to land in historic Stanley, the capital of the Falklands~Malvinas. This charming town has a distinctly British character, with terraced town houses, pioneer cottages and even an iconic red telephone box! Colourful buildings house cosy cafes, English pubs, souvenir shops, a post office and the fascinating Historic Dockyard Museum, with displays on the maritime history of the Falkland Islands, natural history and links to Antarctica.

## **Days 23 At Sea**

As we sail towards Ushuaia, you may choose to spend your precious time editing photos, enjoying the onboard facilities, or attend final lectures. Celebrate the end of an unforgettable voyage with newfound friends at a special Captain's farewell dinner. With lectures and film presentations to complete our Antarctic experience, there is still plenty of time to enjoy the magic of the Southern Ocean and the life that calls it home. There is time

for reflection and discussion about what we have seen and experienced. We hope you become ambassadors for the Antarctic region, telling your family, friends and colleagues about your journey to this magical place, advocating for its conservation and preservation so that they might one day visit the region to experience what you have been lucky to see and do here.

## **Day 24 Disembark 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.