

Wild Antarctica featuring the Weddell Sea: In Partnership with New Scientist Discovery Tours

Punta Arenas, Chile, South America to Ushuaia, Argentina, South America
(ANW011S)

Day 1 Arrive Punta Arenas

Arrive in Punta Arenas, where you will be met by a representative of Aurora Expeditions and transferred to our hotel. We ask that you arrive no later than 2:00pm on this day. In addition to ensuring your arrival in time for our important pre-flight briefings, if weather conditions deem it necessary, we may depart for King George Island on Day 1 as opposed to Day 2. Please visit the Aurora Expeditions hospitality desk in the lobby between 2.00 pm – 6.00 pm to collect your luggage cabin tags. Our team will confirm details regarding your embarkation day, answer any questions and provide you with information about where to dine or purchase last minute items.

Overlooking the Straits of Magellan, the city sits astride one of the world's most historic trade routes. Today, Punta Arenas reflects a great blend of cultural backgrounds, from English sheep ranchers to Portuguese sailors. It remains a fascinating testament to Chile's rich history. Modern day Punta Arenas is home to many popular restaurants and bars, offering a mix of local and international fare (meals at your own expense today). At 7.00 pm this evening, meet your fellow expeditioners at a voyage briefing where we will reconfirm your transfer times for tomorrow, explain the procedures for your flight to King George Island and outline important IAATO regulations for visitors to Antarctica.



Day 2 Fly to King George Island, Embarkation

This morning we will be transferred to Punta Arenas airport for our charter flight to King George Island, Antarctica (weather permitting). The flight will take approximately one hour and forty-five minutes. On arrival into King George Island our expedition team is on hand to greet you and to prepare you for your Zodiac transfer to the vessel. You will have time to settle into your cabin before our important safety briefings. Note: King George Island is located at the northern part of the Antarctic Peninsula in the South Shetland Islands and is one of the most remote places on Earth. A clear sky with perfect visibility is required for safe take-off and landing. A contingency plan will be applied to your itinerary should your flights not proceed today. Your safety is our utmost priority. We apologise in advance for any delays caused due to this unpredictable situation. Please refer to our terms and conditions for a more detailed explanation.

Days 3-10 Weddell Sea & 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. Because we are so far south, we will experience approximately 18-24 hours of daylight and the days can be as busy as you wish. 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. Central to the story of where Sir Ernest Shackleton's ship, the *Endurance* became trapped in formidable sea ice, the Weddell Sea certainly is high on the list for many polar adventurers. A small set of islands standing off to the east of the Antarctic Peninsula collectively form the Antarctic Sound – the gateway to the Weddell Sea. With a well-deserved reputation as being an iceberg alley where large icebergs try to escape the Weddell Sea through Antarctic Sound, often making navigation difficult. However, the rewards can be great. Fossils are a reminder of a more temperate era – gastropods, large clams, and spiral-shaped ammonites, all turned to stone. We hope to experience memorable wildlife encounters as the Weddell boasts a large Adélie penguin colony just outside of Antarctic Sound, some of which breed on the rocky slopes of a small volcanic island, where a large colony of Antarctic blue-eyed shags jostle for space with nest-building Wilson's

storm petrels. On thrilling Zodiac excursions or slicing a path through the maze of sea ice in your kayak, keep watch for chinstrap and gentoo penguins in and out of the water, as well as humpback, minke and orca whales. Your camera is sure to get a solid workout during your time in the Weddell Sea. 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. Speaking of the oceans below, 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 watch whales travelling or feeding. This is a great time to enjoy the observation lounge for uninterrupted views of Antarctica in all its splendour. Keep an ear out for the creak and deep rumble of glaciers as they carve their way from summit to sea. Take a quiet moment to experience the wonder of this incredible white continent. Join the team in the lecture theatre for presentations covering a broad range of topics to suit every interest. These lectures will cover polar science, wildlife, marine biology, glaciology, paleontology, exploration, history, photography and research including specialist New Scientist talks. Regardless of the topic, they all have one thing in common: they all aim to engage, educate, entertain and turn you into an ambassador for the planet. Plus, both on board and in the Zodiacs, the expedition crew will give you introductions to and commentary on many of the Antarctic phenomena you are experiencing. You will have the opportunity to participate in the unique citizen science program offered throughout the voyage. It is designed to be a hands-on, immersive and transformative experience that helps you protect the beauty of our planet. Various sampling and data collection projects will be conducted on your voyage and a citizen science coordinator will be on hand to introduce and assist you. This expedition provides a unique platform to help collect high-quality data. With extended access to these remote regions and our expedition teams equipped with scientific backgrounds, we have the potential to participate and engage our passengers in citizen science projects to provide valuable data to the global scientific community. For a greater understanding, visit our world-class Citizen Science Centre. You will be rewarded for your thirst for knowledge with one of the best views on the ship.

Days 11-12 Drake Passage Crossing

Enjoy a final morning landing in the South Shetland Islands before we re-enter the Drake Passage for our return journey to South America. 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 Antarctica 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. As we approach the tip of South America, our Captain may sail close to legendary Cape Horn, weather and time permitting.

Day 13 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.