

# Spirit of Antarctica: In Partnership with New Scientist Discovery Tours

Starts and Ends in **Ushuaia, Argentina, South America** (ANP178D)

## Day 1 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. Assigned accommodation: To be advised



## 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 5-9 Antarctic Peninsula

It is 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. The expedition team will help you experience a range of activities centred around daytime exploration via Zodiac boat safaris (investigating coves, glaciers and wildlife), guided hikes (exploring pristine beaches and stunning wildernesses) and photography (helping you improve your skills with a camera). 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! The polar plunge can take place at any time during the voyage, so listen out for the announcement from the expedition team and get ready for the most exhilarating dip of your life! 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 or make your way to the bridge (open at the captain's discretion) for uninterrupted views of Antarctica in all its splendour. Listen out for the creak and deep rumble of glaciers as they carve into sea. Take a quiet moment to experience the wonder of the pristine paradise of the splendid 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, ornithology, 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. Your expedition can be as active or as leisurely as you want it, and no activity or talk is mandatory.

## **Days 10-11 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 12 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.