

# Antarctica Complete

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

## 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.

## **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 5-10 Antarctic Peninsula and Antarctic Circle Crossing**

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. 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 participate in the activity whenever conditions allow, and of course 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 for uninterrupted views of Antarctica in all its splendour. Listen out for the creak and deep rumble of glaciers as they carve. Take a quiet moment to experience the wonder of the pristine paradise of the splendid white continent. On this voyage, under favourable conditions, we plan to cross the Antarctic Circle, an imaginary line located at latitude 66°33' south. This is certainly a special highlight for many expeditioners, and the moment will be celebrated with a toast on deck, conditions permitting. You have earned some boasting privileges, joining a small group of lucky adventurers who

have ventured to this part of the world. As we approach The Circle, you will notice subtle changes in the landscape and in the distribution of wildlife. The waters at this time of year are rich with krill and we hope to see plenty of whales, particularly humpbacks and minke. We also hope to enjoy the spectacle of penguins feeding their ravenous chicks.

## **Days 11-12 At Sea**

Attend informative lectures to learn about South Georgia as we sail across the Scotia Sea. You may want to relax in the sauna or stay active in the gym; the choice is yours on how you want to enjoy days at sea.

## **Day 13 At Sea / South Georgia**

Sea and weather conditions will determine our arrival time into South Georgia today. 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. On approach, jagged mountain peaks rise steeply, while seabirds are often spotted soaring around the ship. We will sail down the coast, taking in the spectacular glaciated scenery. This enchanting coastline is yours to explore! If time and weather conditions permit, en route we could pass close to Shag Rocks, a fascinating group of jagged rocky islets protruding from the sea, in the proximity of South Georgia.

## **Days 14-17 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 18-19 At Sea**

Between the Falklands~Malvinas and South Georgia, you will be enthralled by the ceaseless flight of the many seabirds that follow and circle the ship. Our onboard lecture program will continue with presentations from our team of experts. You can also enjoy the many facilities on the ship, borrow a book from our well-stocked library or perhaps stay active in the fitness centre.

## **Day 20 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 21 Falklands~Malvinas**

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## **Day 22 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 23 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.