



## Shackleton's Crossing in South Georgia

Since March 2001, Aurora Expeditions have offered the chance for a small band of adventurous souls to attempt to repeat the epic 1916 crossing of Sir Ernest Shackleton, Frank Worsley and Tom Crean, and trek for up to three days across South Georgia from King Haakon Bay to Stromness. South Georgia offers a spectacular yet extreme mountain environment, which must be approached with great caution.

Although the crossing does not involve any actual technical climbing, there is a steep ground crossing from the Tridents down to the Crean Glacier, as well as potential risks with crevasses.

For the more experienced hiker or climber our South Georgia Alpine Crossing offers a once-in-a-lifetime experience and the chance to delve deep into some of the world's most rugged and remote terrain.

### Required Experience

Participants are required to have a suitable level of alpine climbing and trekking experience to undertake this activity. Most of the journey is on glaciers and requires travelling with ropes, so knowledge of glacier travel techniques is required. Further required experience includes:

Competent in the use of an ice axe and crampons including;

- Cramponing on moderately steep hard snow and ice
- Self arrest with an ice axe
- Experience with travelling in crevassed terrain using a rope for personal safety.
- Snow camping experience in tents or snow shelters.
- Ability to carry a 15 to 20 kg pack for up to 3 days, for up to 10 hours a day.
- Significant outdoor experience in extreme weather conditions such as high alpine, Himalayan or general mountain terrain.



- Your own personal equipment such as backpack, gaiters, crampons, ice axe and, most importantly, mountaineering boots
- A high level of fitness and, above all, a good sense of humour and an understanding that there is a good chance that the crossing could be thwarted by weather.

Please contact us if you have any queries regarding your current skill level or your suitability for the crossing. We can often suggest appropriate courses or other ways to acquire or refresh any skills you may need.

Please note: Aurora Expeditions and our guides reserves the right to deny any person the opportunity to attempt the crossing if, in the guide's opinion, they have insufficient experience or fitness, or are inadequately equipped or prepared for the crossing.

### Group Dynamics

The composition of the crossing team includes people with varying levels of experience and fitness. Expect to share an adventure with like-minded people with varying levels of alpine trekking experience – some may be more experienced than yourself, some less. Having an open mind and flexible attitude will make the experience more enjoyable for all crossers.

### Fitness Requirements

The alpine crossing is a physically demanding undertaking and therefore requires a high level of fitness and endurance. Days will be long and challenging, battling wild weather conditions and difficult terrain. Each crosser will also be required to carry a pack weighing between 15 to 20 kgs. If

you have any queries regarding your suitability regarding experience or fitness then please don't hesitate to contact us. One of our climbing guides will be more than happy to talk through the experience with you and review your fitness level and experience.

### Age Limit

Crossers should be aged 16 or over.

### Group Size

Group size is limited to 8 crossers, plus guides.

### Crossing Length and Time

The crossing distance can vary from 35 to 50 kilometres (21.7–31 miles) depending on the route we take, and involves crossing large, heavily crevassed glaciers and alpine passes. In good weather, the crossing could take only two days, but we allow three days and an additional contingency day in case of bad weather.

### Our Guides

Our guides have many years of climbing experience in our destinations and hold relevant mountain instruction and safety certifications. The guide will lead the group adhering to strict safety practices as well as explaining facts about the wildlife and other highlights as we come across them. We have two guides for 4-8 crossers



## What to Bring

Good quality equipment is essential for climbing safety. Aurora Expeditions supply limited equipment and you will be required to bring some of your own climbing equipment, which must be in good condition. Our climbing guides will inspect all personal equipment prior to the first outing to ensure it is up to standard. If any of your personal items are deemed unsafe or unsatisfactory for the climbing conditions our guides reserve the right to refuse the use of your equipment. Aurora Expeditions supply all ropes, snowstakes, ice screws, survival equipment and camping equipment including tents, stoves and fuel.

## Climbing Equipment

- Helmet : A UIAA rated climbing helmet
- Climbing harness: A sit style climbing harness
- Carabiners: At least one locking style carabiner
- Ice axe and crampons (We do have a limited supply of these onboard)
- Water bottle: Two litre capacity in one or two bottles
- Rucksack: Comfortable, light weight and approx. 70 litres capacity
- Waterproof pack liner: I.e. Sea To Summit ultrasil pack liner
- Waist prussik: From your belly button to your nose
- Leg prussik: From your belly button to the ground
- Sleeping bag: Preferably Dacron, rated to minus 15°C (limited supply available on board)
- Sleeping mat: Inflatable or foam
- Head Torch.

**Please note:** As well as your personal items you will also be expected to carry a share of the communal climbing and camping equipment.

## Required Footwear and Clothing

Our experience has taught us that the key to a successful crossing of South Georgia (apart from high fitness levels and good weather) is to travel as lightly as possible. With this in mind our guides are strict about keeping the weight down – there's no need for that extra pair of underwear! Our guide will run through what to pack during our preparations on the ship. However, we've included the following list of handy items you will need during the crossing:

- Leather or synthetic climbing boots that have a  $\frac{3}{4}$  shank and are crampon compatible. Hiking boots are unsuitable. Ensure your boots fit correctly and are well worn in before your voyage. If you are unsure of boots suitability then please contact us.
- Warm, good quality trekking socks (x2 pairs)
- Water proof jacket and pants: designed for alpine environments, made from quality breathable material, such as Gore-Tex, is required. Light weight nylon gear and some ski clothing is not suitable.
- Thermal synthetic or wool long johns and top
- Spare thermal top for emergencies
- Medium-to heavy-weight polar fleece jacket
- Medium weight polar fleece trousers
- Light-weight polar fleece or duvet vest (preferably Dacron rather than down)



- Gaiters that are compatible with your boot and are designed for use in snow
- Gloves: waterproof shell with removable inners (x 2 pairs)
- Sunglasses with a high UV rating and wrap around the face
- Snow goggles should also be carried as a spare and for poor weather
- A neck gaiter
- A peaked cap or similar
- Woollen beanie and lightweight balaclava or polar fleece hat
- A silk or cotton scarf to protect your face from the sun
- 30+ sunscreen and lip balm
- Personal First aid Kit containing blister kit and personal medications
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Hand sanitizer
- Camera: with a secure waterproof case

### Wind, Ice and Weather

The weather in South Georgia can change very quickly and a variety of weather conditions are usually encountered during our crossing. Strong to gale force winds, rain, snow and even

sunshine have all been experienced in the one crossing. From previous attempts we know that the weather can often thwart our efforts and there is a high probability that crossers may have to turn back to King Haakon Bay or descend to Possession Bay if the wind is too strong on the alpine passes. We may also have to stop short in Fortuna Bay if we run out of time, or if the weather does not allow us to cross to Stromness. If the weather does change severely during the crossing we may be forced to retreat and head back to the ship or to the shoreline. The ship's captain, expedition leader and crossing guide will all maintain close contact to ensure a safe alpine crossing experience.

### Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance, including emergency evacuation coverage, is mandatory on all Aurora Expeditions voyages. You will need to ensure that your insurance policy covers you for your Alpine Crossing activity. An additional policy or premium may be required to ensure you have adequate coverage. Please contact Aurora Expeditions if you need assistance with your insurance policy.

### Activity Surcharge

The South Georgia Alpine Crossing is available for an additional surcharge and includes your guide, permits, pre-crossing outings (where possible) and some equipment.

For more information please contact your travel agent, or Aurora Expeditions on:

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