

Antarctica

CROSSING THE ANTARCTIC CIRCLE

Why join this Voyage?

- This expedition offers the most actual time spent in Antarctica itself of all the different trips to the Antarctic Peninsula. Be one of only a small handful of people each year to cross the Antarctic Circle
- Wonderful wildlife opportunities - guaranteed sightings of penguins, whales and seals, as well impressive birdlife on The Drake Passage. Optional camping & kayaking excursions available on specific departures
- Voyage aboard smaller ice strengthened ships (54 - 114 passengers), renowned for their excellent guides, informal atmosphere, expeditionary feel, ease of logistics and access to areas larger ships can't venture



Trip Summary

This trip is a particular favourite of ours as it combines in a single expedition the distinct advantages of offering polar travellers the longest time to explore the Antarctic Peninsula with the rare chance to cross the intangible Antarctic Circle. The extra time affords more options for zodiac cruises and landings along with lesser visited research stations.

Travelling further south down the western side of the Antarctic Peninsula where few boats have the time to venture on shorter itineraries, this is the perfect trip for those looking to maximise their time on the White Continent and travel where few others venture.

Itinerary



Day 1 Depart UK

Depart London Heathrow for Buenos Aires, flying overnight.

Day 2 Buenos Aires

Early morning arrival into Buenos Aires where you will be met and transferred to your hotel with the rest of the day at leisure. Buenos Aires is a stunning city, renowned not only as the birthplace of tango, but also for its excellent restaurants.



Day 3 Buenos Aires/ Ushuaia

Fly down to Ushuaia on Tierra del Fuego, the southernmost city in the world. Afternoon to explore the historic and bustling town and harbour independently.

Day 4 Ushuaia/ Drake Passage

You will have the morning free to explore before embarking your ship in the afternoon. Plan to be on deck as you set sail on the scenic Beagle Channel heading east towards the Drake Passage and Antarctica.



Days 5 to 7 Drake Passage & South Shetland Islands

Journey across the famous Drake Passage, named after the 16th-century English navigator Sir Francis Drake. As the ship sails, our naturalists and historians offer presentations on the marvels ahead. If weather allows, you can spend time on deck spotting for albatrosses - including the magnificent Wandering Albatross - and other seabirds.

The South Shetland Islands, which lie to the north of the Antarctic Peninsula, are usually sighted in the late afternoon on Day 4. Here you visit vast penguin rookeries, land on beaches ruled by Antarctic fur seals, and observe wallowing southern elephant seals. You may also visit one of the many research bases in the archipelago and look for Antarctica's only two flowering plants, which thrive here during the short southern summer. Often the ship sails through Neptune Bellows, a narrow passage leading into the sunken caldera of Deception Island. Here, if the tide allows, you may dip your toes in the steaming waters of Pendulum Cove.



Days 8 to 14 Antarctic Peninsula to 66° 33' 44" South

The Antarctic Peninsula is the most easily accessible part of The White Continent, but it also has some of the most intimate and awe-inspiring scenery, as well as a rich variety of wildlife. This voyage offers travellers ample opportunity to experience all of the most interesting points along the north-western part of the peninsula, as well as venturing further south down the western side of the peninsula crossing the Antarctic circle itself, which very few travellers to this area ever reach.



Our exploration of the Antarctic continent may begin with a visit to the aptly named Paradise Bay, or to nearby Neko Harbour. Glaciers fill the calm waters with an amazing vista of icebergs as you set foot on the Antarctic continent itself.

During the voyage, expect to see enormous rookeries of Gentoo, Chinstrap and Adélie Penguins. You may also encounter Weddell, crab-eater and leopard seals, as well as orcas, humpback, and Minke whales.



If pack ice and icebergs allow, the ship navigates some of the most beautiful waterways in the world. Two in particular, the Neumayer and Lemaire Channels, are impressive narrow passages between towering rock faces and spectacular glaciers. Sailing south of the Lemaire Channel we may visit Petermann Island, where Adélie and Gentoo Penguins, skuas and Blue-eyed Shags nest close to the landing site.



We plan to visit aptly named Paradise Harbor where glaciers fill the calm waters with a vista of sculptured icebergs. Here you may set foot on the White Continent itself at Almirante Brown, an Argentine research station. At Port Lockroy you will find thriving colonies of penguins and shags and a former British scientific station that has recently been renovated and serves as a fascinating museum as well as the only post office in Antarctica. Cuverville Island and Rongé Island with their dramatic location are home to a large colony of nearly 5,000 pairs of Gentoo Penguins and other breeding birds.



The quest for the Antarctic Circle continues as the expedition pushes farther south. You will be in the vicinity of historic Stonington Island, which served briefly as a base for the Byrd's Little America Expedition in 1940. The site also served as the base for Finn Ronne's 1947-48 Antarctic Research Expedition that mapped a great portion of the continent by air. We will mark our arrival at the southernmost location with a celebration on board.

Days 15 & 16 Drake Passage

You bid farewell to Antarctica as you set sail north across the Drake Passage.



Day 17 Ushuaia/ Buenos Aires

After breakfast disembark with the morning at leisure in Ushuaia before catching the early afternoon flight back to Buenos Aires for your final evening.

Day 18 Buenos Aires/ London

Depart Buenos Aires for Heathrow, flying overnight.

Day 19 London

Arrive back in the UK



Important: Please be aware that all expeditions carried out in the Antarctic territory are absolutely subject to weather conditions. Antarctic weather is highly unpredictable, with swift changes occurring from one minute to another and bears directly on travel in the Continent, despite the advantages of modern technology and advanced forecasting systems. As such, with your safety in mind, please be aware that schedules may have to be suddenly altered and without notice, potentially resulting in delays that may shorten your cruise.

Adventure Activities



The following *optional* adventure activities are available on specific departures:

CAMPING ON THE ANTARTIC CONTINENT (additional supplement) **

Join the select few who have camped overnight on the Antarctica continent itself. All equipment is provided for campers, for a single night ashore.

** This adventure option is included in the cost aboard the Marina Svetaeva.

SEA KAYAKING (additional supplement)

Exploring the Peninsula by kayak is an unforgettable experience: plying inlets and waterways, you encounter penguins at water level and glide past massive icebergs. The kayaks are ideal, being stable, tough and surprisingly comfortable. Instructors and a safety zodiac will accompany you at all times. Early booking recommended.

Climbing and **Diving** are also available on some departures.



The Boats



As your base and home for the duration of your Antarctic expedition, the decision on which boat to choose is a critical one. We have a wide choice of boats available all offering expeditionary style voyaging but with varying degrees of comfort. To help work out which boat best suits you, we've categorised the individual boats in terms of size, see below.

All these smaller ships are ideal for this type of polar expedition, offering an authentic, highly personalised experience for those people with an aversion to crowds, ably backed up by an exceptional expeditionary team and comfortable, homely accommodation.



Small Expeditionary 54-85 passengers

These are the smallest type of vessel available for Antarctic travel. Their compact and sturdy design, homely and authentic feel, and the ease of logistics in choosing to travel in such a small group have ensured them a loyal following. These are all ice-strengthened vessels and have been converted to expeditionary cruising vessels. Each ship offers a choice of cabin types from triples to suites some with en-suite facilities and some shared. All have public areas that include a cosy lounge, bar, library, dining and presentation room.

Ships: *Akademik Shokalskiy*, *Ushuaia*,



Medium Expeditionary 86-112 passengers

This slightly larger category of ship, although still small comparatively, offers the distinct advantage to the more cautious sailor through their greater stability, particularly in rougher seas. Despite the larger passenger numbers, the onboard expeditionary feel is still very much retained, with an average of up to two daily landings when in Antarctica. During the crossing of the Drake Passage there is a choice of lectures and informal presentations on the region, its wildlife and its history.

With these slightly larger ships there is a wider range of cabin types from which to choose. The *Vavilov* and *Ioffe* are sister ships renowned for their stability they are ideal for passengers who are not so sure of their sea legs

Ships: *Akademik Sergey Vavilov*, *Akademik Ioffe*, *Plancius*, *Sea Spirit*



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This adventure option is included in the cost aboard some boats.

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Exploring the Peninsula by kayak is an unforgettable experience: plying inlets and waterways, you encounter penguins at water level and glide past massive icebergs. The kayaks are ideal, being stable, tough and surprisingly comfortable. Instructors and a safety zodiac will accompany you at all times. Early booking recommended.

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Expedition Dates for 2012/13

Sergey Vavilov
15th - 27th January

Akademik Shokalskiy
28th January - 7th February
7th - 17th February

Sea Spirit
16th - 30th January

Akademik Ioffe
18th February - 3rd March

Plancius
9th - 20th March

Ushuaia
23rd February - 6th March

Voyage Only Guide Prices for 2012/13

Boats/ Cabins (£ per person)	Boat Size	Triple/ Quad	Twin shared	Twin semi- shared	Twin Private	Superior	Deluxe/ Mini Suite	Suite
Akademik Shokalskiy	54	£4,295	£5,195	N/A	£,5995	N/A	£6,675	£7,325
Ushuaia	84	N/A	N/A	£4,174	£6,550	£6,925	£7,250	N/A
Sergey Vavilov	92	£6,025	N/A	£7,750	£8,150	£8,695	£8,950	£10,095
Akademik Ioffe	96	£5,575	N/A	£7,195	£7,495	£7,895	£8,225	£9,095
Plancius	114	(quad) £4,900	N/A	N/A	£5,825	£6,475	£7,175	N/A
Sea Spirit	112	£8,000	N/A	N/A	£8,930	£9,930	£12,120	£13,470

Includes

- Antarctic cruise based on full board
- Services of experienced expeditionary staff
- All guided excursions, landings & lectures
- Comprehensive pre voyage expedition notes
- Post voyage expedition log

Excludes

- International and domestic flights
- Hotel accommodation in Argentina
- Travel insurance Visas, Gratuities & vaccinations
- Items of a personal nature, including laundry & drinks
- Additional Fuel Surcharge if levied by the operator

Notes: The above prices are a **guide price only**, are subject to exchange rate fluctuations and fuel surcharges, based on shoulder season rates, prices increase during the peak Antarctic season, particularly Christmas to end of February

Single Supplement: For those solo travellers preferring their own cabin, typically a multiplier of 1.7 on the cost of a single berth is used to calculate the single supplement on those ships without dedicated single cabins.

Flight inclusive packages:

We offer a fully inclusive package from the UK to include international and internal flights with transfers and accommodation in Buenos Aires and Ushuaia as per the suggested itinerary above, from £1,500 per person depending on choice of airline and hotels. The advantage of booking the whole trip through Steppes Travel is you will then benefit from full ATOL cover.

Want to discuss this trip?



Please call **Sue** or **Alex** on **01285 880981** for more details or to check boat availability

Having spent the best part of 5 years on my “gap year” working in travel seemed the natural progression. I am most at home travelling to remote wilderness areas of the globe, with a passion for wildlife I love to get up close either by kayak or on foot. My travels have taken me to all seven continents. Most recently to Antarctica, Spitsbergen, Russia and the Canadian Arctic, the Amazon, Baja California and the Yukon. I go in search of bears in Alaska next.

Sue is Country Director for Steppes Voyages sue@steppestravel.co.uk



Fostered by a childhood in the West Indies, the travel bug bit Alex early. Propelled by his enthusiasm for diverse cultures and hot food, he's travelled to over 50 countries across 7 continents, including both poles. Some of his most memorable recent experiences include dog sledding in The Arctic, kayaking in Alaska, snorkelling with whale sharks off Mexico and piranha fishing in The Amazon.

Alex is General Manager for Steppes Voyages Alex@steppestravel.co.uk