

Antarctica

CLASSIC ANTARCTICA & SOUTH SHETLANDS

Why join this Voyage?

- A fantastic adventure encompassing the highlights of the Antarctica Peninsula, the most accessible part of the White Continent, which offers the best of Antarctica's dramatic landscape and wildlife in microcosm
- Wonderful wildlife opportunities - guaranteed sightings of penguins, whales and seals, as well as impressive birdlife on The Drake Passage. Optional camping & kayaking available on specific departures
- Voyage aboard smaller ice strengthened ships (54 - 122 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 immense continent is still virtually unexplored, a fabulous and pristine wildlife haven set in awe inspiring scenery of mountains, snow and glaciers of sculptured and twisted ice.

For those travellers looking for an excellent introduction to Antarctica, incorporating the highlights of the Antarctic Peninsula with the widest choice of boat and departure dates from which to choose, this classic 12-day trip is the best option to consider. For the adventurous, there are *optional* adventure activities available on specific departures, including camping on the white continent itself and kayaking. For convenience some voyages are offered with a one-way flight to or from Punta Arenas and the South Shetland Islands

Itinerary



Day 1 London Heathrow/ Buenos Aires

Depart London Heathrow for Buenos Aires, flying overnight.

Day 2 Buenos Aires

Arrival in Buenos Aires early morning. Met by one of our local representatives and transferred to your hotel. Rest of the day at leisure to explore independently.

Day 3 Buenos Aires/ Ushuaia

Fly down to Ushuaia on Tierra del Fuego. Afternoon to explore independently. Overnight in Ushuaia.



Day 4 Ushuaia/ Drake Passage

Morning at leisure before embarking on your expeditionary boat 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

Wandering Albatross, Storm Petrels and other seabirds accompany the ship as you sail south across this famous passage named after Sir Francis Drake. Continue towards the Antarctic Convergence, a biological barrier where cold polar waters sink beneath the warmer waters of the more temperate zones.



Arriving in the South Shetland Islands, places such as King George and Livingston Island support huge numbers of nesting penguins, while seabirds nest on the cliffs and elephant seals wallow along the shores. Deception Island is still considered an active volcano and sailing through the narrow passage (Neptune's Bellows) into its huge flooded caldera is a thrilling experience.



Days 8 to 11 Antarctic Peninsula

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 the most interesting points along the north-western part of the peninsula.



Besides the magnificent scenery of mountains, snow and ice, you can expect to see a wide variety of the native wildlife, particularly Gentoo, Chinstrap and Adélie Penguins, which occur in rookeries ranging from a few pairs to thousands. Other birds to look out for are Blue-eyed Shags, Kelp Gulls, Cape Petrels, Skuas, Snowy Sheathbills and Antarctic Terns.

Marine mammals that you are likely to see include weddell, crabeater and leopard seals, while orcas, humpback and minke whales may be spotted at close range.

This area is also of substantial historical interest and has been extensively explored by several expeditions during the 19th century.



You will certainly feel the same sense of excitement as the early explorers as you keep a lookout from the Bridge or other vantage points while your vessel threads her way through this dramatic and pristine region. Sailing around the northern tip of the Antarctic Peninsula, we hope to navigate the Antarctic Sound, often referred to as 'iceberg alley'. Huge tabular icebergs drift north from the Antarctic continent and into the Sound. All voyages in this region are very much dependent on weather, ice conditions and the wildlife encountered. Each day we make several landings or cruises by zodiac, these voyages are all about getting off the main vessel and exploring as much as possible. The following are a few of the places you can hope to visit:



Deception Island is a sub ducted crater, which opens into the sea, creating a natural harbour for the ship. Here we find hot springs, an abandoned whaling station, thousands of Cape Pigeons and many Dominican Gulls, Brown and South



Polar Skuas and Antarctic Terns. Wilson's Storm Petrels and Black-bellied Storm Petrels nest in the ruins of the whaling station in Whalers Bay.

Half Moon Island, with its colony of Chinstrap Penguins, Seals also often haul out on the beach. **Paulet Island**, a crater island carpeted with nesting Adélie Penguins.

In **Neko Harbour** and **Paradise Bay** with its myriad icebergs and deep cut fjords, you have the opportunity to set foot on the Antarctic Continent at **Almirante Brown**, an Argentine research station. While zodiac cruising between the icebergs in the inner parts of the fjords, you have good chances to see Humpback Whales and Minke Whales.



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.

The **Ukrainian Vernadsky Station**, where you will receive a warm welcome from the station crew is also renowned for having the best bar in Antarctica.



Cuverville Island, is a small precipitous island, nestled between the mountains of the Antarctic Peninsula and Danco Island. It contains a large colony of nearly 5,000 pairs of Gentoo Penguins and breeding pairs of Brown Skuas.

Melchior Islands offer beautiful landscape and zodiac cruising among the icebergs, where you may encounter Leopard Seals, Crabeater Seals and whales.



Many visitors find the Antarctic scenery as rewarding as the wildlife, and you will be enchanted by such beautiful waterways as the **Neumayer** and **Lemaire Channels**, narrow passages between towering rock faces and spectacular glaciers. These channels are one of the highlights of a visit to the Peninsula.

The natural cycle of life ensures that every expedition is different. And that every expedition itinerary is full of surprises

Days 12 and 13 Drake Passage

Depart Antarctica and head north back across the Drake Passage.



Day 14 Ushuaia/ Buenos Aires

After breakfast, disembark with the morning at leisure in Ushuaia before catching the early afternoon flight back to Buenos Aires. Overnight in Buenos Aires.

Day 15 Buenos Aires/ Heathrow

Depart Buenos Aires for Heathrow, flying overnight.



Day 16 London

Arrive back into the UK

Please Note: Voyages with a one-way flight will allow for a full 11 day voyage within a 14 day itinerary. The only reduction will be in the two days crossing of the Drakes passage.

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 58-85 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: *Polar Pioneer*, *Akademik Shokalskiy*, *Antarctic Dream*, *Ocean Nova*, *Ushuaia*



Medium Expeditionary 86-122 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 two daily landings while in Antarctica. During the crossing of the Drake Passage there is a choice of lectures and informal presentations on the region, covering its wildlife, environment and its history.

With these slightly larger ships there is generally 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*, *Clipper Adventurer*, *Plancius*, *Sea Spirit*



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 some boats.

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 specific departures.



Expedition Dates for 2012/ 13 Season

There is a **wide choice of frequent departures** departing throughout the Antarctic season from November - end March from which to choose. The majority are 11 or 12 days in length, unless otherwise indicated:

Antarctic Dream

6th - 16th November
 16th - 26th November
 26th November - 6th December
 7th - 14th December *C/F*
 14th - 21st December *F/C*
 22nd - 29th December *C/F*
 29th December - 5th January *F/C*
 6th - 13th January *C/F*
 13th - 20th January *F/C*
 21st - 28th January *C/F*
 28th January - 4th February *F/C*
 5th - 15th February
 15th - 25th February
 25th February - 6 March
 7th - 17th March

Ocean Nova

11th - 2th November (10 days)
 20th - 29th November (10 days)

Akademik Shokalskiy

26th November - 3rd December *F/C*
 3rd - 11th December *C/F*
 11th - 19th December *F/C*
 19th - 27th December *C/F*

C/F - Cruise south, fly north

F/C - Fly south, cruise north

Clipper Adventurer

25th November - 6th December
 5th - 16th December
 15th - 26th December
 21st - 31st January *C/F*
 6th - 13th February *FC*
 11th - 18th February *FC*
 16th - 24th February *F/C*
 23rd February - 6th March

Ushuaia

11th - 20th November (10 days)
 20th - 30th December
 30th December - 9th January
 9th - 18th January (10 days)
 18th - 28th January
 6th - 16th March
 16th - 25th March (10 days)
 25th March - 3rd April (10 days)

Sergey Vavilov

8th - 18th December
 18th - 28th December
 27th January - 6th February
 6th - 16th March
 16th - 26th March

FC - includes flight to and from

Punta Arenas - South Shetlands

Plancius

22nd November - 3rd December *BC*
 3rd - 13th December
 13th - 22nd December
 22nd December - 2nd January
 7th - 17th February
 17th - 26th February
 26th February - 9th March *BC*
 20th - 29th March

Sea Spirit

11th - 22nd November
 21st November - 2nd December (10 ds)
 1st - 12th December
 29th December - 9th January
 8th - 17th January (10 days)
 29th January - 9th February
 20th February - 3rd March
 2nd - 11th March (10 days)

Akademik Ioffe

8th - 18th December

Polar Pioneer

30th November - 11th December
 11th - 22nd December
 22nd - 31st December *F/C*

BC - includes camping kayaking snowshoeing in cost

Voyage Only Guide Prices for 2012/ 13

Prices per person based on two sharing and on shoulder season rates

Boats/ Cabins	Boat size	Triple	Twin Shared	Twin Semi-shared	Twin Private	Superior	Mini Suite	Suite
Polar Pioneer	54	£4,775	£5,625	N/A	£6,350	N/A	£7,025	£7,775
Akademik Shokalskiy	54	£4,225	£5,125	N/A	£5,895	N/A	£6,525	£7,175
Ocean Nova	68	£3,525	N/A	N/A	£4,375	£4,725	£4,925	N/A
Antarctic Dream	84	N/A	N/A	N/A	£4,525	£5,435	£6,275	£7,450
Ushuaia	84	N/A	N/A	£2,995	£4,815	£5,095	£5,350	N/A
Sergey Vavilov	92	£4,000	N/A	£5,550	£5,900	£6,100	£6,395	£6,995
Akademik Ioffe	96	£3,975	N/A	£5,415	£5,815	£6,075	£6,325	£6,975
Plancius	114	(Quad) £4,425	N/A	N/A	£5,225	£6,475	N/A	N/A
Sea Spirit	112	£4,560	N/A	N/A	£5,250	£5,930	£7,120	£7,810
Clipper Adventurer	122	£3,430	N/A	N/A	£4,370	£5,620	£5,870	£6,620

Includes

- Antarctic cruise on full board basis
- Services of experienced expeditionary staff
- All guided excursions & lectures while on board ship
- Complimentary wet weather gear provided on some vessels (please ask for full details.)
- Comprehensive pre voyage information pack
- Post expedition log

Excludes

- International and domestic flights (fly cruise options include flights to / from Punta Arenas as detailed)
- Hotel accommodation in Argentina (or Chile)
- Travel insurance, Visas (if required) & vaccinations
- Items of a personal nature, including tips & drinks
- Any additional Fuel Surcharge, if levied by the operators

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. This is not a comprehensive list of all of the cabin types available.

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.

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.

*All cabins on board the *Ocean Nova*, *Antarctic Dream*, *Plancius* & *Clipper Adventurer* have their own private en suite bathroom, including the Quad & Triple cabins.

Want to discuss this trip?

Please contact our Polar specialists **Sue** or **Alex** for more details on **01285 880981**



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 hope to go in search of Grizzly 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 of Steppes Voyages
alex@steppestravel.co.uk