

Antarctica

FLY & CRUISE TO ANTARCTICA

Why join this Voyage?

- Access Antarctica in just over 1.5 hours by plane from the toe of Chile, avoiding +2 days by ship across the infamous Drake Passage - ideal for those either short of time or poor sailors!
- Visits all the key points of interest on the Antarctic Peninsula in as little as a 10 day door-to-door trip from the UK - the shortest Antarctic expedition available
- In Antarctica, travel aboard a small ice-strengthened expeditionary vessel (max 68), which offers excellent guides, ease of access to all areas of interest and a very personal overall experience



Trip Summary

This is a totally unique concept offering travellers the safe and fast option of flying to Antarctica from the toe of Chile. Travel by a specially designed plane, in under 2 hours, rather than the conventional approach by ship taking 2 days across the idiosyncratic waters of the Drake Passage.

Fly to King George Island in the South Shetland islands where your small expeditionary boat awaits you. Once aboard the boat, your exploration of the Antarctica peninsula will follow a similar programme to conventional cruises from Ushuaia and will cover all the main areas of interest. This trip will appeal particularly to travellers either short on time, who would like to spend the days saved by flying exploring the mainland, or those who aren't the most confident of sailors!

Itinerary



Day 1 London Heathrow/ Santiago

Depart London for Santiago in Chile, flying overnight

Day 2 Santiago/ Punta Arenas

Arrive into Santiago and connect to the LAN flight down to Punta Arenas in Chilean Patagonia. On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel in the centre of town. Pre-expedition dinner in the evening to meet your expeditionary crew and travelling companions.

****Option** to add an extra night or two's stay, if you wish, in Santiago or on a vineyard in the nearby Maipo Valley outside the city



Day 3 Punta Arenas/ South Shetlands (Antarctica)

Morning transfer to the airport to board your charter flight to King George Island in the South Shetland Islands where your ship is waiting for you. Estimated flying time between 1.5 - 2 hours.

The plane you will be flying in is a BAe 146 high-wing plane with short runway requirements, making it perfect for this type of operation.



Upon arrival in Antarctica you will be transferred from the plane to visit the Chilean Base Frei and then onwards to your boat, the *Ocean Nova*, by zodiac, for the beginning of your Antarctica voyage. Afternoon visit to Hannah Point on Livingston Island, home to Gentoo Penguins, with the possibility of also seeing the Macaroni Penguin, Southern Elephant and Antarctic Fur Seal.

Day 4 Antarctic Peninsula

Morning visit to Aitcho Island and its Gentoo Penguin colonies and then onto Deception Island in the afternoon. This beautiful island was formed by volcanic activity that resulted in a sea-flooded crater, still active today. Your ship will carefully navigate through the narrow gateway, called Neptune's Bellow.



Visit the ruins of the Norwegian Whaling Station and BAS (British Antarctica Survey) shelter, evacuated in 1967 after a volcanic eruption. Guided tour to Neptune's Bellows, a nesting site of the Cape Petrel. If the weather is suitable there will be a dip in hot volcanic waters at Pendulum Cove's hot geothermal springs.

Days 5 Antarctic Peninsula

Morning visit to Port Lockroy on Wiencke Island, located among beautiful narrow channels and steep snow-capped mountains. Port Lockroy provides a sheltered port that was first used by whalers nearly 100 years ago, where you can still see the decayed remains of whale skeletons. During World War II the British set up a base here to establish a firm presence in Antarctic. Research activities such as surveying, geology, and meteorology continued at the base until 1962, when it was abandoned. Whales and other animals are frequently seen around the island, including Gentoo Penguins, King Cormorants, Minke and Humpback Whales.



In the afternoon you visit beautiful Paradise Bay, a perfect spot to explore with our Zodiacs, if the weather allows it. The stillness of the water creates a perfect mirror-like reflection of the surrounding mountains and blue glaciers, an image only broken by the floating icebergs and the Zodiacs.



Day 6 Antarctic Peninsula

Early cruise through the Lemaire Channel. As the ship approaches it is hard to believe the steep cliffs become so narrow that there is a passage through which the ship can sail. Once we enter the channel, weather permitting, you will view one of the most scenic areas in Antarctic, nicknamed the 'Kodak Gap'. Look out for humpback whales that frequent this area.

Possible landing at Petermann Island, the southernmost spot in the trip, a snow covered and domed island that rises to a rocky summit, more than 650 ft. above



sea level. Adelie and Gentoo penguins, Blue-eyed Shags and South Polar Skuas are confirmed breeders in this area. In the afternoon explore Cuverville island, a small rocky island, which is a nesting place of the Gentoo Penguin.

Day 7 Antarctic Peninsula

Morning landing at Half Moon Island, a small island in between Greenwich and Livingstone Islands which often boasts a large Antarctic Penguin colony. Visit to the Arctowski Polish Academy of Science Antarctic Base where you will be warmly welcomed by the scientific personnel.



Day 8 Antarctic Peninsula/ Punta Arenas

Return to the Eduardo Frei Chilean Air Force Antarctica Base on King George Island for the flight back to Punta Arenas. Depending upon the weather it is anticipated that you are likely to get back to Punta Arenas sometime in the afternoon. Overnight in Punta Arenas.

Day 9 Punta Arenas/ Santiago/ Madrid

Depart Punta Arenas on the LAN flight back to Santiago to connect with the overnight flight back to the UK, via Madrid



Day 10 Madrid/ Heathrow

Arrive back into 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. This 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, without notice, potentially resulting in delays that may shorten your cruise. Please bear this in mind at all times. A large part of the astonishing mystique of Antarctica lies in the very fact that it is fascinating and never the same from one instant to the next.



Alternative Itineraries

For some dates, itineraries will follow a slightly different route, either into the Weddell Sea region or a slightly longer route hoping to take in the Antarctic Circle, see dates section for departure details.

Heroic Age Days 3-6

While cruising between the South Shetland Islands and the northern tip of the Antarctic Peninsula, sail along ice-filled fjords and between spectacular icebergs, in the company of sea birds, penguins, seals and whales. The journey will include visits to some of the most renowned spots in the history of Antarctic explorations such as: Paulet Island, Hope Bay, Brown Bluff and Gourdin Island amongst others. Our target will be the crossing of the famous Antarctic Sound towards the Weddell Sea sailing through huge tabular icebergs.

Antarctic Circle Days 3-8

The journey southwards will include visits to some of the most magnificent spots in the white continent, such as: Cierva Cove, Port Lockroy, Petermann Island, Paradise Bay, Lemaire Channel, Prospect and Fish Islands amongst others. Depending on weather and ice conditions, on our way southwards we will attempt to cross the Polar Circle at latitude 66° 33' South and enjoy a champagne to celebrate this extraordinary occasion.

At the beginning and end of each season there is an option to cruise one way and fly the other or vice versa, please ask for specific details on these two voyages.

The Boat



Ocean Nova

The Ocean Nova is a modern ship built in 1992, at the Orskov Shipyard in Frederikshavn in Denmark. She was built to navigate the ice-choked waters off Western Greenland. The 73-metre vessel, offering comfortable travel for 68 passengers, is modern and airy with crisp Scandinavian styling combining the intimacy of a small ship with the stability and spaciousness of a larger vessel.

The Ocean Nova offers 37 outside cabins, all featuring private facilities, located on the main, upper and bridge decks. Cabins are offered as triples with two lower berths and an upper berth, twins with two lower berths or dedicated single cabins, one of the very few polar ships to offer this. In 2006 she was refurbished and upgraded, adding a glass enclosed forward observation lounge, the perfect spot to look for wildlife and wonder at the scenery. There is a spacious dining room on the upper deck as well as a lounge and bar on the bridge deck. There is also a library with a selection of polar themed books and an exercise room.

Wellington boots are available on loan for the duration of your voyage. Ship to shore communications are available via satellite.

The Plane

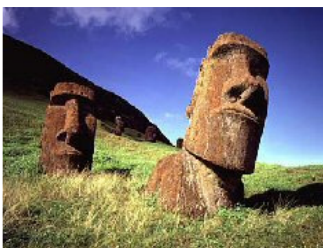


BAe 146

The plane, a BAe 146, was manufactured in the UK and is specially chartered for each of our departures. It is a 70 passenger high wing aircraft with very short runway requirements making it particularly well-suited for this kind of destination. It is operated by *Aerovias DAP*, who are a reputable operator, highly experienced in Antarctic operations with more than 20 years of experience of flying in Patagonia & Antarctica.

The estimated flying time from Punta Arenas to Frei Base on King George island in the South Shetlands, is just under two hours.

Chile Extension Ideas



For those travellers wishing to take the opportunity to explore Chile, either pre or post Antarctica, we would be delighted to help. Here are some extension ideas to consider:

- Trekking in Chile's renowned Torres Del Paine National Park
- Vineyards of the Central Valley
- The Atacama Desert, the world's driest desert, for stark desertscapes
- Easter Island and its enigmatic *moais* and unique culture

Please don't hesitate to contact Alex who's travelled extensively through much of South America to explore your extension ideas

Expedition Dates for 2012/ 13

2nd - 8th December
7th - 13th December **HA**
12th - 18th December
17th - 23rd December **HA**
22nd - 28th December

27th December - 2nd January
1st - 9th January **AC**
17th - 23rd January
22nd - 28th January **HA**
27th January - 2nd February

1st - 7th February
6th - 12th February **HA**
11th - 17th February
16th - 24th February **AC**

HA - Heroic Age

AC - Antarctic Circle

Guide Prices for 2012/13 Departures

Cabin Type

(from guide price quoted per person)

	Classic 6 day cruise & Heroic Age	8 day Antarctic Circle cruise
Triple Cabin	£6,475	£7,795
Twin Cabin	£7,200	£8,595
Single Cabin	£9,900	£11,895

Includes

- Fly & Cruise programme based on full board
- All drinks, lectures and guide services on board
- All guided zodiac and shore-based excursions
- Airport-hotel arrival transfer in Punta Arenas
- Accommodation in Punta Arenas pre & post voyage

Excludes

- All international and domestic flights
- Additional accommodation, excursions and services in Santiago
- Travel insurance, visas & vaccinations
- Items of a personal nature, including laundry & gratuities
- Addition fuel surcharge, if levied by the operator

Notes

Please note that these prices are a **guide only** and are subject to exchange rate fluctuations and fuel surcharges.

Flight Inclusive Packages:

We can offer a fully inclusive package from the UK to include international and internal flights with transfers and accommodation in Santiago as per the suggested itinerary above, from £1,000 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 on 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 life-long passion for wildlife I love to get up close either by kayak or on foot and learn the local bushcraft skills. My travels have taken me to all seven continents. Most recently travelling to the Russian Far East along the Chukotka coast and up to Wrangel & Herald Islands, where I was lucky enough to encounter 105 bears. I have also voyaged to Spitsbergen, Antarctica, the Canadian High Arctic and Baja California’s Sea of Cortez on expedition vessels, along with sailing the Amazon Basin and paddling down the Yukon. I hope to go whale and bear watching in Alaska next.

Sue is Country Director for Steppes Voyages Sueg@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