

Antarctica

ANTARCTIC PENINSULA, FALKLAND ISLANDS & SOUTH GEORGIA

Why join this Voyage?

- One of the world's greatest voyages combining the history and variety of The Falklands, the extraordinary density of wildlife of South Georgia, finishing with Antarctica itself as the 'jewel in the crown'
- Privileged opportunity of seeing a wide range of wildlife, including a number of different species of whales, seals and penguins. Highlights include the king penguins on South Georgia and nesting albatross
- 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

For those who can afford the time, this extended voyage of the Southern Ocean is the ultimate trip in terms of sheer variety and 'wow' factor, annually receiving rave reviews from all past travellers.

The Falkland Islands are home to an astonishing diversity of wildlife with a strong historical element. South Georgia by contrast is very different, with towering 7000ft mountains, the extraordinary king and gentoo penguin colonies numbering into the millions and the acrobatics of the wandering albatross to marvel at. The history of the great explorers from the 'heroic era' reverberates through this trip as you depart South Georgia, the final resting place of Shackleton and head for Antarctica itself, the magical white continent and a wonderful end to this extraordinary trip.

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.

Day 3 Buenos Aires/ Ushuaia

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



Day 4 Ushuaia/ Southern Ocean

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 towards the Falkland Islands.

Day 5 At Sea

As you cruise these wildlife-rich waters, the expedition staff introduces the various species of birds and marine life that you will encounter on our voyage. Wandering, Black-browed and Sooty Albatross, shearwaters, Giant and Cape Petrels and numerous other seabirds accompany us.



Day 6 & 7 Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)

You will spend these days in the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas), renowned for their amazing wildlife. On Carcass Island highlights include Flightless Steamer Ducks, Magellanic and Gentoo Penguins and a colony of the rare Black-crowned Night Herons. Peale's and Commerson's Dolphins are often seen along the coast. Nearby New Island boasts fantastic Rockhopper Penguin rookeries, along with Black-browed Albatross and Blue-eyed Shags. You will also explore Stanley, the charming capital of the Falklands (Malvinas).



Day 8 & 9 Southern Ocean

Continuing east, marine mammals and seabirds lure you to the decks as you cross the Antarctic Convergence, a biological barrier where cold polar waters sink beneath the warmer waters of the more temperate zones.

Day 10 to 13 South Georgia

Sharing many of the biological characteristics of Antarctica, South Georgia has awe-inspiring scenery with towering, 7,000-foot mountains and mighty glaciers, but also low-lying, grassy areas, deep fjords and beaches. First sighted by Captain James Cook in 1775, the island attracts an astounding concentration of wildlife and is viewed by many as one of the most inspiring places on earth. Thousands of King Penguins greet you at Salisbury Plain where rugged snow-covered mountains and glaciers provide a backdrop for this marvellous scene.



Wandering Albatrosses nest at Prion Island, where luxurious tussock grass provides a habitat for a variety of seabirds - and camouflage for thousands of breeding fur seals. Huge elephant seals and a substantial number of King and Gentoo Penguins crowd the beaches along the coast at places such as Gold Harbour while Light-mantled and Sooty Albatrosses nest in the cliffs behind.

Permissions, weather and sea conditions will determine specific landing sites. The island also played a significant role in the story of Shackleton's epic journey after the sinking of his ship, the 'Endurance'.

It was here, in the whaling station of Stromness that he finally arrived, after a harrowing voyage in a small boat from Elephant Island across the Scotia Sea and over the never-before-climbed mountain range of South Georgia. We visit his grave at Grytviken, a once-active whaling station.





Day 14 & 15 Scotia Sea

Two days at sea to relax as well as to review your adventures in South Georgia. The first icebergs appear on the horizon as you head south to the Antarctic Peninsula.

Day 16 to 19 South Shetland Islands & Antarctic Peninsula

Approaching the rugged South Shetland Islands, your first landfall could be Elephant Island where Shackleton's men found refuge during the epic 'Endurance' expedition. Places such as King George Island or Livingston Island support huge numbers of nesting penguins while seabirds nest in the cliffs and elephant seals wallow along the shores. Deception Island is still considered an active volcano and sailing through the narrow passage into its huge, flooded caldera is a thrilling experience.



The Antarctic Peninsula is the most easily accessible part of the White Continent but it also has some of the most awe-inspiring scenery and a rich variety of wildlife. This itinerary offers ample time for exploring this wilderness region that few people have ever visited. Sailing around the northern tip of the Antarctic Peninsula, you aim to navigate the Antarctic Sound, often referred to as "iceberg alley". Huge tabular icebergs drift north from the Antarctic continent. Pending weather and ice conditions it may be possible to land on Paulet Island. This crater island is carpeted with nesting Adélie Penguins that surround the remains of a primitive hut where Captain Larsen and his men of the 'Nordenskjöld' expedition sought refuge in 1903.



Cruising Palmer Archipelago several thousand Gentoo Penguins wait for you under the dramatic cliffs of Cuverville and Rongé Islands. Sheathbills, Antarctic Terns, skuas and Blue-eyed Shags nest in this area. Navigating the Neumayer Channel, we enjoy extraordinary vistas of Anvers Island. Plans also include a landing at Port Lockroy where bleached whale bones commemorate its time as a favourite anchorage of the whalers. Sail into Paradise Harbour on the Danco Coast where a series of huge glaciers flow into quiet waters.



Your Zodiacs take you along rugged cliffs with nesting Cape Petrels, Blue-eyed Shags and Kelp Gulls. Keep watch for humpback whales and groups of crabeater seals on the ice and land at Almirante Brown, an Argentine research station located on the continent. Lemaire Channel is another narrow passage between towering rock faces and stunning glaciers. This channel is one of the highlights of a visit to the Antarctic Peninsula but it can be choked with icebergs and pack ice. The boat will also attempt to land at Petermann Island where Adélie and Gentoo Penguins, skuas and Blue-eyed Shags nest close to the landing site.

Day 20 & 21 Drake Passage

Leave Antarctica and head north across the Drake Passage to Ushuaia.

Day 22 Ushuaia/ Buenos Aires

After breakfast you disembark, with the morning to look around Ushuaia catching the early afternoon flight back to Buenos Aires. Final evening in Buenos Aires.



Day 23 Buenos Aires/ London

Depart Buenos Aires on the overnight flight back to the UK

Day 24 London

Arrive back into UK

Please note this is a guide itinerary and there are variations between the vessels we offer; all itineraries are subject to prevailing weather and ice conditions.

Some departures fly one way either to or from the Falklands which reduces the overall trip length and requires flights via Santiago. The actual time spent exploring the Falkland's, South Georgia and the Peninsula remains the same.

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 from the basic through to luxury. 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, and the public areas include a cosy lounge/ bar/ library, dining and presentation room.

Ships: *Polar Pioneer*, *Ocean Nova*, *Akademik Shokalskiy*,



Medium Expeditionary 85 - 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 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 & Ioffe offer the best option for passengers who are concerned about sea sickness.

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



Adventure Activities

The following *optional* adventure activities are available on some 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 carries a supplementary cost on select departures.

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.



TREKKING (additional supplement)

On some voyages there is the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of Shackleton with a trek across the South Georgia.

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

Expedition Dates for 2012/ 13 Season

There is a choice of frequent departures departing throughout the Antarctic season from November - March from which to choose. The majority are 20 days in length, some options include a one way flight which reduces the number of voyage days, however the actual time spent in the Antarctic will remain the same

Akademik Ioffe

20th November - 8th December
31st January - 18th February

Akademik Sergey Vavilov

20th November - 8th December
28th December - 15th January
6th - 24th February

Sea Spirit

11th - 30th December

Plancius

3rd - 22nd November
2nd - 20th January
20th January - 7th February

Ocean Nova

22nd October - 11th November

Clipper Adventurer

7th - 26th November
3rd - 22nd January

Polar Pioneer

12th - 30th November
10th - 26th January **
26th January - 11th February **

Akademik Shokalskiy

10th - 26th November **
27th December - 12th January **
12th - 28th January **

** Include one way flight to or from Stanley

Guide Prices 2012/13 Season

Boats/ Cabins (£ per person)	Boat Size	Triple	Twin shared	Twin semi- shared	Twin Private	Superior	Deluxe / Mini Suite	Suite
<u>Polar Pioneer</u>	54	£7,425	£8,595	N/a	£10,145	£10,500	N/a	£11,275
<u>Shokalskiy</u>	54	£7,425	£8,595	N/a	£10,145	£10,500	N/a	£11,275
<u>Ocean Nova</u>	68	£6,725	N/a	N/a	£9,660	N/a	N/a	N/a
<u>Sergey Vavilov</u>	92	£7,300	N/A	£8,175	£9,200	£9,625	£10,150	£11,550
<u>Akademik Ioffe</u>	96	£7,300	N/A	£8,175	£9,200	£9,625	£10,150	£11,550
<u>Plancius</u>	114	(Quad) £7,595	N/a	N/a	£9,025	£11,050	N/a	N/a
<u>Sea Spirit</u>	112	£8,200	N/a	N/a	£12,370	£14,370	£17,430	£19,120
<u>Clipper Adventurer</u>	122	£6,250	N/a	N/a	£7,930	£9,930	£10,310	£11,870

Includes

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

Excludes

- International and domestic flights
- Hotel accommodation in Argentina (or Chile)
- Travel insurance & vaccinations
- Visas & gratuities
- Items of a personal nature, including laundry & drinks
- Any additional Fuel Surcharge, if not included

Notes

Please note that these prices are a **guide only** based on shoulder season and are subject to exchange rate fluctuations and fuel surcharges. The difference between shoulder and high season can be significant, please call for full details and options.

Please note this is not a comprehensive list of all 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 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 (or Santiago for the fly cruise options) 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