

Antarctic Peninsula - Remote Weddell Sea Explorer | Ortelius

Trip Code

ACOWRWSE

Departure



Introduction

This adventurous expedition explores one of the least-visited areas on Earth, Antarctica's amazing Weddell Sea. After visiting some of the same sites legendary explorer Ernest Shackleton's charted in South Georgia, we'll enjoy the Weddell's exotic wildlife and colossal tabular icebergs.

Your Weddell Sea expedition starts in South Georgia after leaving Ushuaia, where we'll be on the trail of famed polar explorer Ernest Shackleton and his ship *Endurance*, experiencing the Weddell Sea's amazing wildlife and tabular icebergs before returning via Elephant Island.

The continental borders of the Weddell Sea are formed by huge floating sheets of ice. These ice shelves produce the massive tabular icebergs that are so abundant in the Weddell Sea. Incredibly, scientists have declared the waters of the Weddell Sea to be the clearest water of any sea on Earth, creating unbelievable photography opportunities.

The east side of the Weddell, with its epic tabular icebergs, is particularly great for photos, especially since the chance of landings can be limited due to these ice formations. Zodiac cruises and possible ice landings are wonderful alternatives, if conditions allow.

The Weddell Sea is home to a large number of orcas, humpbacks, and minke whales as well as leopard, Weddell, and crabeater seals. Several penguin species can be seen there too.

On the ship, our structured educational program will complement other activities. You will have the chance to learn all about the area's wildlife, landscape, history, political status, and more. We actively participate in citizen science projects, and you can also participate in such projects.

***Helicopter transfers:**

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07/02/2027

Duration

28 Days

Our plan is to make helicopter landings when possible, though we cannot guarantee a specific amount of helicopter time in advance. Helicopters provide a great advantage in reaching certain landing sites that are otherwise almost inaccessible, but local conditions (weather, ice, and other forces of nature) determine the final itinerary. These conditions may change rapidly, impacting our ability to use helicopters. Please understand and accept this. Safety is our greatest concern, and no compromises can be made.

The vessel is equipped with three helicopters. One helicopter always needs to be supported by a second functioning helicopter. No guarantees can be given, and in no event will claims be accepted.

Itinerary

DAY 1: Depart Ushuaia to South Georgia -

Days 1 to 3

Your voyage begins where the world drops off. Ushuaia, Argentina, reputed to be the southernmost city on the planet, is located on the far southern tip of South America. Starting in the afternoon, you embark from this small resort town on Tierra del Fuego, nicknamed "The End of the World," and sail the mountain-fringed Beagle Channel for the remainder of the evening. Enroute to South Georgia, you now cross the Antarctic Convergence. The temperature cools considerably within the space of a few hours, and nutritious water rises to the surface of the sea due to colliding water columns. This phenomenon attracts a multitude of seabirds near the ship, including several species of albatross, shearwaters, petrels, prions, and skuas.



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Departure

07/02/2027 South Georgia - Days 4 to 6

Duration

28 Days the South Georgia Maritime Zone,

Locations the largest protected waters in the

Antarctic, South Georgia Rocks, The Sea

in impressive rocks lay 240km (150 miles)

west of South Georgia and are home to

several thousand South Georgia shags. The

area around the rocks is known for its

abundance of larger marine mammals,

which feed on this comparatively shallow

area of the South Georgia Ridge. After

reaching South Georgia, you will have the

chance to visit some of the following sites:

Prion Island - This location is closed during

the early part of the wandering albatross

breeding season (November 20 - January 7).

From January on, the breeding adults have

found their partners and are sitting on eggs

or nursing their chicks. Enjoy witnessing

the gentle nature of these animals, which

possess the largest wingspan of any birds in

the world. Fortuna Bay - A beautiful

outwash plain from Fortuna Glacier is home

to a large number of king penguins and

seals. Here you may also have the chance to

follow the final leg of Shackleton's route to

the abandoned whaling village of

Stromness. This path cuts across the

mountain pass beyond Shackleton's

Waterfall, and as the terrain is partly

swampy, be prepared to cross a few small

streams. Salisbury Plain, St. Andrews Bay,

Gold Harbour - These sites not only house

the three largest king penguin colonies in

South Georgia, they're also three of the

world's largest breeding beaches for

Antarctic fur seals. Literarily millions breed

on South Georgia during December and

January. By February the young fur seals

are curious and playful and fill the surf with

life and fun and large elephant seals come

to the beaches to moult. Grytviken - In this

abandoned whaling station, king penguins

walk the streets and elephant seals lie

around like they own the place - because

they basically do. Here you might be able to

see the South Georgia Museum as well as

Shackleton's grave. In the afternoon of day

6 and depending on the conditions, we will

start sailing southwards in the direction of

the South Sandwich Islands.



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Duration: At Sea - Days 7 & 8

28 Days

Like Shackleton in December 1914 on the
Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia Expedition Weddell Sea

known as the Endurance Expedition, we
leave South Georgia and aim for the South
Sandwich Islands and the Weddell Sea.

There may be sea ice on this route, and at
the edge of the ice some south polar skuas
and snow petrels could join the other
seabirds trailing the vessel south.



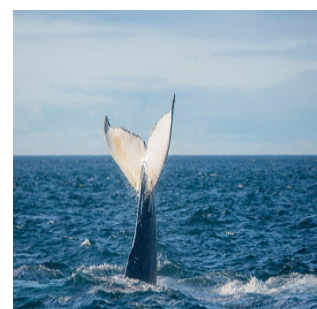
DAY 9: South Sandwich Islands

While we are unable to land here, we may
be able to make a Zodiac cruise among the
amazing scenery of this active volcanic
area. Passing between Thule and Cook
Islands will be one of the trip's many
highlights and will make an everlasting
impression. There is a good chance we'll
encounter humpback and minke whales in
this area. On and around the islands, we
also have the chance to spot brown skuas,
chinstrap or Adélie penguins, and several
species of albatross: grey-headed, black-
browed, and wandering.



DAY 10: At Sea - Days 10 to 12

We next sail toward the Antarctic continent
in the direction of Queen Maud Land and
Neuschwabenland (New Swabia) on the
northeast side of the Weddell Sea.



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Departure

07/01/2027 Neuschwabenland/New Swabia -

Duration 14

Days 28

Locations Destination in Antarctica is New Swabia, located between 60°E and 10°W in the Weddell Sea.

History Maud Land. This area was explored by Germany during the third German Antarctic Expedition of 1938 - 1939, led by Alfred Ritscher. The purpose was to find an area in Antarctica for a German whaling station and scout a possible location for a naval base. In an attempt to claim the region, Nazi flags were placed on the sea ice along the coast locations. Survey flights also airdropped aluminium arrows with swastikas.



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Departure

07/01/2027 Deep inside the Weddell Sea - Days

Duration

28 Days

Schedule Deep into the Weddell Sea, chances
Antarctica, South Georgia and Weddell Sea

Weddell seals. If we are lucky, we might even see emperor penguins. Humpback, orca, and minke whales are also present in this area, along with various birdlife. Ice conditions in the Weddell Sea vary seasonally. We will encounter a vast nautical wilderness of sea, and while heading to high latitudes (far south) will enjoy the raw beauty and power that makes Antarctica so special. It will become apparent why it took so long to discover the Great White Continent and how tough it must have been for Shackleton's expedition.

We'll make a circular route toward the Brunt Ice Shelf and along the Luitpold Coast, discovered and named during the second German Antarctic expedition (1911 - 1912) of Wilhelm Filchner. If conditions allow, we will have opportunities for a Zodiac cruise and possibly an ice floe landing. We now head west toward the Filchner-Ronne Ice Shelf before changing course north, following the coast along the eastern side of the Antarctic Peninsula and Larsen Ice Shelf. This brings us close to the spot where Shackleton's vessel Endurance was trapped in pack ice during his Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition (1914-17), drifting toward the Antarctic Peninsula before ultimately sinking. In an exciting conclusion to this story, the wreck was discovered on March 5, 2022, the 100th anniversary of Shackleton's burial, after 107 years below the Weddell Sea waves. While we can't get close to the discovery site due to pack ice, we will be in the area where the ship was trapped and abandoned. There are colonies of 6,500 emperor penguins nearby, so we hope to see one or more in this area.

As we reach the northern section of the Antarctic Peninsula, we enter the area of Erebus and Terror Gulf. Far-wandering emperor penguins often perch on Snow Hill Island's numerous ice floes, possibly offering you another opportunity to spot these emblematic creatures. If conditions allow, we may attempt a landing on James Ross Island.



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Departure

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Duration

28 Days Brown Bluff & Kinnes Cove

Locations

Antarctica, South Georgia and Weddell Sea

Most scenic locations in the northern Antarctic Continent, with a large Adélie penguin rookery, gentoo penguins, and nesting snow petrels also to be found. Sheer canyon walls, fallen boulders, and beautiful volcanic creations capped with ice make Brown Bluff a truly unforgettable location. Across the Antarctic Sound is Kinnes Cove, where you can see the nearby Madder Cliffs with their subtle red coloration as well as possible gentoo penguins.



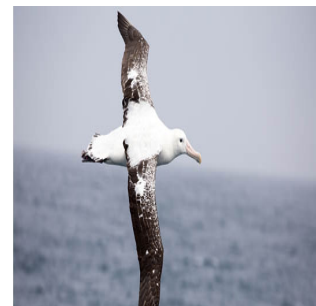
DAY 25: Elephant Island

This is the starting point from which Shackleton left to find help for his stranded crew. Using only a small lifeboat, the James Caird, he and five of his men sailed to South Georgia, then walked 36 hours to Stromness. It's hard not to marvel at how they accomplished that herculean feat. Twenty-two members of his Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, also known as the Endurance Expedition, were stranded on Elephant Island after their vessel Endurance sank in the Weddell Sea. It took four and a half months to complete the legendary rescue. Conditions on Elephant Island are severe. The coastline is mostly made up of vertical rock and ice cliffs highly exposed to the elements. If possible, you will take the Zodiacs to Point Wild, where the marooned members of Shackleton's expedition miraculously managed to survive.



DAY 26: At Sea - Days 26 & 27

Your return voyage is far from lonely. While crossing the Drake, you might see some of the same wildlife encountered at the start of your voyage: albatrosses, petrels, maybe even a minke whale spouting up sea spray.



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Departure
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Duration

28 Days Disembark in Ushuaia

Locations

Every day in South Georgia and Weddell Sea

must eventually come to an end. It's now time to disembark in Ushuaia, but with memories that will accompany you wherever your next adventure lies.



Inclusions & Details

Accommodation

Cabin on board a ship

INCLUSIONS

Cabin Accommodation on board MV Ortelius

All meals throughout the voyage aboard the ship including snacks, coffee and tea

All shore excursions and activities throughout the voyage by Zodiac

Program of lectures by noted naturalists and leadership by experienced expedition staff

Free use of rubber boots and snowshoes

Group departure transfers in Ushuaia (directly after disembarkation)

All miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the programme

Comprehensive pre-departure material

Helicopter transfers if weather and conditions permit

Access to 1.5 GB of free internet connectivity per person, which resets every 24 hours.

Supplementary vouchers available to purchase on onboard. Subject to satellite coverage

Inclusions

EXCLUSIONS

Airfares to/from disembarkation city

Visa & passport fees (if applicable)

Travel insurance

Beverages (other than tea & coffee)

Meals ashore

Personal expenses such as laundry & bar

Gratuities for the crew (guidelines will be provided)

Pre and post land arrangements

Government arrival or departure taxes (if applicable)

Additional optional activities

Difficulty Rating

2 (light adventure)

Single Surcharge

Available upon request. Please contact us for more details. No single supplement will apply if willing to share in selected cabins.

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Duration

28 Days

Locations

Antarctica, South Georgia and Weddell Sea



Notes

Prices are based on per person, and may be based on quad/triple/twin share.

Prices are correct at time of publishing but are subject to change at any time.

Itinerary is subject to change depending on weather and ice conditions.

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Our plan is to make helicopter landings when possible, though we cannot guarantee a specific amount of helicopter time in advance. Helicopters provide a great advantage in reaching certain landing sites that are otherwise almost inaccessible, but local conditions (weather, ice, and other forces of nature) determine the final itinerary. These conditions may change rapidly, impacting our ability to use helicopters. Please understand and accept this. Safety is our greatest concern, and no compromises can be made.

The vessel is equipped with three helicopters. One helicopter always needs to be supported by a second functioning helicopter. No guarantees can be given, and in no event will claims be accepted.

All itineraries are for guidance only. Programs may vary depending on ice, weather, and wildlife conditions. Landings are subject to site availabilities, permissions, and environmental concerns per IAATO regulations. Official sailing plans and landing slots are scheduled with IAATO prior to the start of the season, but the expedition leader determines the final plan. Flexibility is paramount for expedition cruises. The average cruising speed for our vessel is 10.5 knots.

Price Dependent upon

Departure Date, Fuel Surcharges, Cabin Category, Currency Fluctuations, Seasonality & Availability.

Sustainability