



## In the realm of the great explorers

**30 days - Invercargill to Invercargill**



### *January 2016*

The Ross Sea region of Antarctica is one of the most remote places on Planet Earth and one of the most fascinating places in the continent's human history. With shipping restricted by impenetrable pack ice to just two brief months each austral summer, few people have ever visited this strange and beautiful territory, with opportunities for non-scientific personnel limited to a handful of tourist expedition ships. Heritage Expeditions offers such a voyage on its own fully equipped and ice-strengthened ship, crewed by some of the most experienced officers and sailors in the world and staffed by some of the most passionate and knowledgeable Guides. This is a unique opportunity to experience nature on a scale so grand there are no words to describe it.

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### *Day 1 — Invercargill*

Arrive at Invercargill, New Zealand's southern most city and rich in Scottish history. Grab your last-minute luxuries before meeting your fellow expeditioners for an informal get-together over dinner.

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### *Day 2 — Port of Bluff*

Enjoy a visit to the museum to view the Subantarctic display before transferring to the Port of Bluff, where you will board Akademik Shokalskiy. Settle into your cabin and join your expedition team and the captain for a welcome on board.

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### *Day 3 — The Snares Islands*

Staggeringly, The Snares Islands are home to more nesting seabirds than all of the British Isles put together. Zodiac cruising the coast we learn how the islands got their name and in the sheltered bays we should see the endemic Snares Crested Penguin, the Cape Petrel and Buller's Albatross nesting on the imposing cliffs.

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### *Day 4 - 5 — Auckland Islands*

Characterised by towering cliffs and rugged sea stacks, these islands have borne witness to many a shipwreck in days gone by. We spend the day ashore on Enderby Island which is perhaps the most beautiful of all the Subantarctic Islands. Here we find parakeets flitting above carpets of red, white and yellow wild flowers and on the beaches beyond, the rare Hooker's or New Zealand Sea Lion. We land in Carnley Harbour and if conditions are suitable climb to a Shy Albatross colony, otherwise we explore sites within the harbour.

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### *Day 6 — At Sea*

Take the chance to learn more about the biology and history of these islands and the tempestuous Southern Ocean through informal lectures with our experts. This particular stretch of ocean is very productive and we can expect many seabirds, including five or six kinds of albatross and numerous species of petrel.

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### *Day 7 to 8 — Macquarie Island*

This remote, rocky outpost which endures roaring westerly winds, supports one of the highest concentrations of wildlife in the Southern Hemisphere. Four species of penguin, King, Royal, Rockhopper and Gentoo breed here. You will never forget your first experience in a ceaselessly

active 'penguin city', where the dapper inhabitants show no fear of their strange visitors. We will also meet with the Park Rangers, visit the Australian Antarctic Base and observe the hundreds of Southern Elephant Seals along the beaches.

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### *Day 9 - 12 — At Sea*

Soaring albatross and petrels circle the vessel as we steam south through the Southern Ocean. Lectures now concentrate on the Ross Sea region and beyond the bow of the ship; drifting icebergs of extraordinary shapes begin to appear. Manoeuvring in close for your first ice photographs we pass the Antarctic Circle and into the continent's realm of 24-hour daylight.

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### *Day 13 - 23 — Antarctica's Ross Sea Region*

With unpredictable ice and weather conditions, a day-by-day itinerary is not possible but we assess the conditions daily and take every opportunity to make landings and launch the Zodiacs. You can anticipate wildlife viewing, visits to scientific bases and historic sites, as well as the spectacular white and blue scenery.

We hope to visit the following areas:

Cape Adare: A large flat spit of land, teeming with the staggering sight of Antarctica's largest Adelie Penguin rookery: a tumult of chattering, feeding chicks; territorial disputes; petty pilfering and courtship displays. Curious penguins often come very close, offering superb photographic opportunities. Among the shifting mass of penguins we will find Carsten Borchgrevink's Hut, the oldest in Antarctica, an overwintering shelter for the first expedition to the Antarctic continent in 1899.

Cape Hallett: The enormous Admiralty Range heralds our arrival; wild and extraordinary, the mountains rear up from the sea to over 4,000m, bounded by colossal glaciers. We land at an abandoned base site, now home to large numbers of Adelie Penguins and Weddell Seals.

Franklin Island: Desolately beautiful and rugged, this is home to a large Adelie Penguin population and other nesting seabirds. We attempt a landing and explore the coastline.

Possession Islands: Rarely-visited, small and rugged, these rocks support tens of thousands of penguins. Observe the birds' busy and humorous activity, with the Admiralty Mountains forming a superb backdrop across the water.

Ross Ice Shelf: The world's largest body of floating ice and a natural barrier, at times creating hazardous weather, with sheets of snow blown at gale force by winds off the polar ice cap. Just 800 miles from the South Pole, this daunting spectacle prevented many early explorers from venturing further south. We cruise along its dizzying 30m high ice cliffs, perhaps lucky enough to see icebergs 'calving'.

Ross Island: Mount Erebus/Cape Bird/Shackleton's Hut/Scott's Hut(s) and visits to a scientific field station (Scott and McMurdo Stations are high on our wish list but ice, weather and station operational requirements often make them inaccessible). Ross Island was and is the 'hub of activity' in the Ross Sea, dominated by Mt Erebus, a monstrous active volcano named after the ancient Greek God of Darkness. The carefully preserved huts of the 'Heroic Era' help make the history come alive. If we can reach the bases we get a modern perspective on Antarctic Research.

Terra Nova Bay: An Italian research station where the scientists are always hospitable and enjoy showing us around their lonely but beautiful home. They share with us their scientific research and also, perhaps, the best 'cafe espresso' in Antarctica!

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### *Day 24 - 27 — At Sea*

Taking time to rest and enjoy shipboard life in the bar or library after the excitement and long daylight hours of the Antarctic, we have time for lectures on our final destination and for some pelagic bird spotting.

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### *Day 28 — Campbell Island - Perseverance Harbour*

We drop anchor in Perseverance Harbour, an occasional refuge for Southern Right Whales who come here to calve. Walk to the nesting site of the Southern Royal Albatross and see the strange and beautiful megaherbs growing on the hills. These huge wild flowers that have adapted to the harsh conditions have unusual colourings and weirdly-shaped leaves. We also seek out other wildlife such as Campbell Island Shags, Light-mantled Sooty Albatross and sea lions.

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### *Day 29 — At Sea*

Relax and reflect on a remarkable journey as you join our experts for a recap of highlights and enjoy a farewell dinner tonight.

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### *Day 30 — Invercargill*

We disembark in the Port of Bluff and this adventure ends as we disperse to begin others. After fond farewells we transfer you to central city hotels or to the airport.

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