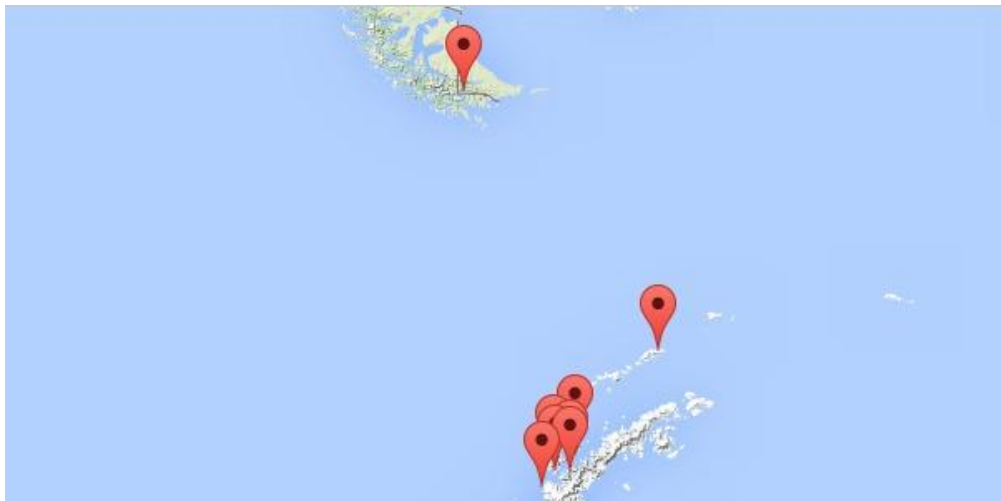




In the realm of the great explorers

10 days - Ushuaia to Ushuaia



December 2014

Antarctica with South Shetland Islands. Explore Antarctica and top this off with a visit to the South Shetland Islands.

Day 1 — Departure from Ushuaia

In the afternoon, we embark in Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, the southernmost city in the world located at the Beagle Channel and sail through this scenic waterway for the rest of the evening.

Day 2 and 3 — At Sea

During these two days we sail across the Drake Passage. When we cross the Antarctic Convergence, we arrive in the circum-Antarctic upwelling zone. In this area we may see Wandering Albatrosses, Grey Headed Albatrosses, Black-browed Albatrosses, Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses, Cape Pigeons, Southern Fulmars, Wilson's Storm Petrels, Blue Petrels and Antarctic Petrels. Near the South Shetland Islands, we spot our first icebergs.

Day 4 to 8 — Antarctica

We will sail directly to "High Antarctica", passing the Melchior islands and the Schollaert Channel between Brabant and Anvers Island. On Cuverville Island, a small precipitous island, nestled between the mountains of the Antarctic Peninsula and Danco Island, we will find a large colony of Gentoo Penguins and breeding pairs of Brown Skuas. If we land on Danco Island we can observe Chinstrap Penguins and possibly Weddell and Crabeater Seals. In Neko Harbour we will have the opportunity to set foot on the Antarctic Continent in a magnificent landscape of huge glaciers calving at sea level. We enjoy the landscape surrounded by alpine peaks during zodiac cruises. In Paradise Bay again with its myriad icebergs and deep cut fjords, we have the opportunity to set foot on the Antarctic Continent again. We shall have the opportunity for zodiac cruising between the icebergs in the inner parts of the fjords. In this area we have good chances to see Humpback Whales and Minke Whales.



We sail through the spectacular Lemaire Channel to Pleneau and Petermann Island where we can find Adelie Penguins and Blue-eyed Shags. In this area there are good chances to encounter Humpback Whales, Minke Whales and Fin Whales. A visit to one of the scientific stations in Antarctica will give you an insight about the life of modern Antarcticans working on the White Continent. Further south we may visit the Ukrainian Vernadsky Station, where we will receive a warm welcome from the station crew. Sailing north through Neumayer Channel, we hope to get permission to visit the British research station and post office Port Lockroy on Goudier Island. Close to Port Lockroy we may also offer a landing on Jougla Point with Gentoo Penguins and Imperial Shags.

On our way North through the Gerlache Strait we finally arrive at the South Shetland Islands. We will sail to Deception Island. Our ship braves its entrance into the crater through the spectacular Neptune's Bellow into the ring of Deception Island. We hope for a good long walk and kayak trip which will depend on site availability and weather conditions.

Deception is a subducted crater, which opens into the sea, creating a natural harbor 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.



We leave from here and sail to Half Moon Island, where we will find a variety of Chinstrap Penguins. Seals often haul out on the beach. These volcanic islands of the South Shetlands are windswept and often shrouded in mist and fog, but do offer subtle pleasures. There is a nice variety of flora (mosses, lichens and flowering grasses) and fauna, such as Gentoo Penguins, Chinstrap Penguins and Southern Giant Petrels.

Our voyage continues through a narrow Strait to the open sea with direction Ushuaia.

Day 9 and 10 — At Sea

On our way north we are again followed by a great selection of seabirds while crossing the Drake Passage.

Day 11 —Arrival in Ushuaia

We arrive in the morning in Ushuaia and disembark.

PLEASE NOTE: All itineraries are for guidance only. Programs may vary depending on local ice and weather conditions, the availability of landing sites and opportunities to see wildlife. The final itinerary will be determined by the Expedition Leader on board. Flexibility is paramount for expedition cruises.