



## Holiday Antarctica

### 12 days Ushuaia to Ushuaia

#### Expedition Highlights:

- Celebrate the season amid Antarctic splendour
- Marvel at spectacular iceberg sculptures and calving glaciers
- Set foot on the continent of Antarctica
- Encounter rockhopper, gentoo, Magellanic, chinstrap and Adelie penguins
- Spot seals – Antarctic fur seal, Weddell seal, leopard seal and crabeater seal
- Watch for dolphins, and whales
- Identify seabirds — snowy sheathbill, Antarctic cormorant, kelp gull, Antarctic tern, cape petrels, wandering albatrosses, southern fulmars, blue eyed shags, southern giant petrels, skuas, black-browed albatrosses, Wilson's storm-petrels, sooty shearwaters

#### Day 1 — Ushuaia, Argentina

Departing from Buenos Aires, fly to Ushuaia and transfer to the port. Embark *Silver Explorer* and bid farewell to Tierra del Fuego, the 'Land at the End of the World'. Meet some of your fellow explorers as you become acquainted with the luxurious amenities found onboard. This evening, after settling in and setting sail, you will be introduced to your Expedition Team.

#### Day 2 — At Sea

The Expedition Team presents talks that will prepare us for the exciting adventures ahead. Tonight, we invite you to attend a special Welcome Aboard cocktail party hosted by the Captain, who will introduce his senior officers and various members of *Silver Explorer's* crew.

#### Day 3 — Stanley, Falkland Islands

Stanley is the capital of the remote Falkland Islands, and has a distinct British ambience. Stroll through the charming streets of this colourful little town, lined with quaint cottages and a variety of traditional pubs. Visit the 19th-century Anglican cathedral and wander through the small local museum. Some lingering reminders of the 1986 Falklands War between Britain and Argentina may still be seen though the island has settled back to its quiet business of raising sheep.

#### Day 4 — West Point Island, Falkland Islands

##### New Island, Falkland Islands

In the morning, watch for Peale's dolphins and the distinctive black and white markings of the Commerson's dolphin as *Silver Explorer* approaches West Point Island. Upon arrival, photographic opportunities are everywhere as you walk across rolling moorland and admire colonies of black-browed albatrosses that nest side-by-side with feisty rockhopper penguins. Learn about the island's unique vegetation including the rare Felton plant. The hospitable island owners are always happy to answer your questions and share their stories.

New Island is a wildlife and nature reserve, and an environmental conservation group protects its many birds and animals. Once ashore, we will hike into the rocky cliffs to a rookery where rockhopper penguins and blue-eyed shags share the same nesting area. We will observe black-browed albatross going about their daily routines and may even spot upland geese. Our onboard historian will tell us about 'Barnard's barn' – a stone structure once belonging to an early settler, as well as the wreck of the Protector III – an old minesweeper used for seal hunting, now grounded just off the shore.

### **Days 5–6 — Drake Passage**

The Drake Passage has a notorious reputation for its turbulent seas due to the Antarctic Convergence, a natural boundary where cold polar water flows northward and warmer equatorial water moves southward. When they meet, nutrients are pushed to the surface, often attracting a multitude of seabirds and whales. Spend some time on deck watching the horizon and the variety of seabirds that glide in the air currents of our ship's wake such as the black-browed albatross, sooty shearwaters and white-chinned petrels. Have your camera ready to capture the magical colour of a midnight sunset.

As we set sail on our initial transit, familiarise yourself with the elegant *Silver Explorer* and the friendly Expedition Team members. Attend wildlife, geography and history discussions hosted by our expert naturalists and guest lecturers that will prepare you for the exciting adventures that lie ahead. When available, visit the Bridge to observe the navigation skills of our onboard officers and Captain.

### **Days 7–10 — Antarctic Peninsula**

While sailing to Antarctica, every turn can reveal a new and breathtaking adventure. As the pack ice becomes thicker, it's apparent to everyone that we are moving closer into Antarctica's vast white wilderness. Remote and otherworldly, Antarctica is irresistible for its spectacular iceberg sculptures and calving glaciers, and for the possibility of up-close encounters with marine mammals. Watch for seals sunbathing on slow-moving ice floes and for humpback, Minke, and orca whales to surface from below the frigid waters. Each day we will attempt Zodiac departures, and, if conditions permit, we will cruise amidst colourful icebergs or step ashore to visit a variety of penguin rookeries and perhaps scientific research stations on complimentary excursions led by our team of natural history experts.

A flexible itinerary allows us to take advantage of favourable sea and weather conditions. In the true spirit of expedition cruising, each day the Expedition Leader and Captain will determine our best course depending on weather, ice conditions and wildlife we may encounter. Here are some of the places we may visit:

**Aitcho Islands, South Shetland Islands** (just off the Antarctic Peninsula at the entrance to the English Strait)

- As you step off the Zodiac to explore the island, it's very likely the local penguins will greet you! Penguin species here include gentoos and chinstraps. Other annual seabirds include the Southern giant petrels.
- While heading back to the ship, you may have company as a leopard seal or southern elephant seal follows alongside your group's Zodiac.

**Brown Bluff, Tabarin Peninsula** (a 2,200-foot bluff on the Antarctic continent)

- Brown Bluff is an ice-capped, 745-metre-high, flat-topped mountain with a prominent cliff of reddish-brown volcanic rock.

- Adelie and gentoo penguins, kelp gulls, and pintado petrels use this as a breeding area.
- Birds such as the all-white snow petrel and skuas may be seen from a distance.
- As you explore the area, a Weddell seal may be seen basking in the sunlight.
- Wait long enough and you might see the Adelie penguins standing along the rocks, finally making their way into the surf.

#### **Cuerville Island, Errera Channel**

- Large, bare rock areas provide nesting sites for gentoo penguins.
- Snow petrels and pintado petrels also may be seen whilst Wilson's storm petrels nest in the higher scree of the island.
- During Zodiac tours, hauled-out Weddell and Antarctic fur seals may be seen.



#### **Paradise Bay (on the Antarctic peninsula)**

- The bay is well named for its spectacular scenery of mountains, glaciers and icebergs.
- From the ship, observe Argentina's Base Brown, one of many Antarctic research stations.
- Here, you will actually set foot on the continent of Antarctica.
- View the wildlife from sea level while cruising in your Zodiac with one of our experienced Expedition Team members. There's a good chance you'll come across a crabeater seal relaxing on a nearby ice floe, or if you're very lucky, your Zodiac driver may locate a pod of Minke whales.

#### **Paulet Island**

- As you arrive, the sight of Adelie penguins covering the entire island may well amaze you. The island is home to 80-90 thousand Adelies that come here to breed.
- On a nearby hill, view a massive colony of blue-eyed shags.
- Kelp gulls and snowy sheathbills are amongst the birds that breed on Paulet Island, and Wilson's storm petrels are regularly seen.
- Listen as your Expedition Team guide tells of Otto Nordenskjold and his party that over-wintered on the island in 1912. Remnants of their hut still remain.
- If time permits, take a Zodiac cruise to view impossibly blue icebergs, Crater Lake and the Adelie penguins making themselves at home on the ice floes.

#### **Port Foster, Whalers Bay (Deception Island)**

- Deception Island is home to a collapsed volcano and an excellent example of a caldera where it is believed that the volcano's summit collapsed with one section sinking far enough to allow the sea to flood the interior. We plan to sail inside this breached wall through a narrow entrance called Neptune's Bellows.
- Our resident geologist will take the opportunity to explain the unique volcanic features of the area

while our historian will introduce you to the whaling history of Deception Island.

- Still visible on the island are the boilers used to make whale oil in the early 1900s.

### **Days 11–12 — Drake Passage Return**

Navigating our return through the Drake Passage, we will watch for seabirds and wildlife we may have missed on the first trip. Take this opportunity to attend additional presentations offered by the Expedition Team lecturers and to swap photos with new friends as we travel towards Ushuaia.

### **Day 13 — Ushuaia, Argentina**

After breakfast, disembark *Silver Explorer* and transfer to Ushuaia International Airport for your return flight to Buenos Aires.

*Expedition highlights and wildlife listed here are possible experiences only and cannot be guaranteed. Your Expedition Leader and Captain will work together to ensure opportunities for adventure and exploration are the best possible, taking into account the prevailing weather, wildlife activity and ice conditions. Expedition Team members scheduled for this voyage are subject to change or cancellation.*