

Polar Circle Quest

12 days | Starts/Ends: Ushuaia



Setting sail from Ushuaia, embark on an expedition to the Antarctic Peninsula and Polar Circle. Pass through the Beagle Channel and cross the Drake Passage before arriving in the South Shetland Islands. Here enjoy two daily shore excursions before venturing further south across the Polar Circle to visit Detaille Island – a goal for many explorers.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- The Polar Circle - Continuing further south, cross the Polar Circle, also known as the Antarctic Circle, where you'll visit Detaille Island – a common goal for explorers
- Ushuaia – The starting point of your expedition cruise to Antarctica, this busy Argentine port city is the southernmost city in the world and a stunning place to spend a night at the start and end of your cruise to the Antarctic Peninsula
- Beagle Channel – Set sail along the famous Beagle Channel and scenic Mackinlay Pass from Ushuaia as you begin your Antarctic adventure, passing by spectacular snow-capped peaks

and colonies of penguins and fur seals gathered on rocky outcrops

- Drake Passage – A historically challenging channel of water which marks the location of the Antarctic Convergence, where the warmer waters of the north meet the cold polar waters of the south resulting in incredible biodiversity of marine life
- The South Shetland Islands – A crucial stop on any Antarctic expedition, this spectacular archipelago is made up of islands, islets and rock outcrops, each with their own population of penguins and seals with plenty of opportunity to spot marine life offshore too
- Antarctic Peninsula – The northernmost point of the continent and a spectacular location for a shore landing with jagged mountain peaks, glaciers and an abundance of wildlife

What's Included

- 11 nights onboard the Ushuaia in a standard twin cabin (upgrades available on request)
- 11 breakfasts, 10 lunches and 11 dinners
- Two shore excursions per day to the Antarctic Peninsula and South Shetland Islands by zodiac (ice conditions permitting)
- Program of lectures by expert naturalists
- Experienced expedition staff

- All service taxes and port charges

What's Not Included

- International flights and visas
- Government arrival and departure taxes
- Drinks on board the Ushuaia
- Tips for the expedition staff and naturalists
- Pre and post tour accommodation, plus any airport or port transfers

ITINERARY

Day 1: Your expedition begins



Today marks the start of your expedition cruise to the Antarctic Peninsula. In the afternoon you'll embark the Ushuaia, the polar vessel which will be taking you on your journey south. Once on board you'll have the opportunity to meet the expedition and lecture staff before settling into your cabin. Make your way up to the open-air deck in time

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for departure, so you can enjoy the views as you sail along the famous Beagle Channel and picturesque Mackinlay Pass. **Overnight - The Ushuaia (D)**

Days 2-3 : Crossing the Drake Passage



Over the next two days we cruise over a challenging channel of water that was previously navigated by renowned explorer Sir Francis Drake in 1578 and now bears his name. While Drake Passage may be mainly known for its often tumultuous waters, it also marks the Antarctic Convergence, where the cold polar waters of the south sink beneath the warmer waters of the north. This natural occurrence causes a great upwelling of nutrients from the sea floor, resulting in an incredible diversity of sea creatures, from algae to krill.

From the four open-air decks you can try and spot the sea birds that follow in the vessel's wake, with the help of the expedition lecturers who will be at hand to aid you identify the different species. The Ushuaia benefits from an open bridge policy which means you can also join the officers on the bridge to learn about navigation. The bridge is also a much better vantage point for trying to spot whales! For those that want to learn more about what is in store when you reach Antarctica there will be a host of lectures and programs on offer.

As we draw closer to the South Shetland Islands you'll begin to see icebergs and snow-capped mountains appearing on the horizon. First discovered by Captain William Smith in 1819, this group of twenty islands will be the first stopping point on your journey. Should the journey through the Drake Passage be smooth, on day 3 you'll have your first

shore excursion with the opportunity to see penguins and seals up close. **Overnight - The Ushuaia (B:2, L:2, D:2)**

Days 4-9 : Exploring the Antarctic Peninsula, South Shetland Islands and Polar Circle



A stunning archipelago home to an incredible abundance of wildlife, the South Shetland Islands is a crucial stop on every expedition to the Antarctic Peninsula. Spanning 540 kilometres from northeast to southwest, this polar archipelago is made up of four distinct groupings of islands with some 150 additional islets, skerries and rock outcrops.

Perhaps the best known of the South Shetland Islands is Deception Island with its flooded caldera of an active volcano. The largest is King George Island which is home to several scientific bases dedicated to studying the island's population of Adélie and Chinstrap Penguins, Kelp Gulls, Blue-eyed Cormorants, Antarctic Terns and Southern Giant Petrels. Another island worth visiting is Livingston Island, where you can spot more species of penguin as well as elephant seals.

The following days will be spent navigating the Gerlache Strait, the Neumayer Channel, and the narrow passages of the spectacular Lemaire Channel. Each day you'll have the opportunity to partake in two shore landings, which may include the aptly named Paradise Bay, the continent proper, the Melchior Island group, Cuverville Island, Portal Point, Neko Harbour and, if ice conditions permit, Petermann Island – home to the southernmost colony of Gentoo Penguins. There will also be a visit to Port Lockroy, the British Antarctic Museum or the Post office at Goudier Island.

Continuing further south the Ushuaia will endeavour to cross the Polar Circle. En route you may have the chance to visit the Vernadsky Research Base where Ukraine carries out research on meteorology, the ozone and biology amongst other subjects; the former British base of Faraday where the ozone hole was first spotted and the rugged archipelago of Yalour Islands. Should the Ushuaia be able to cross the Polar Circle, there will also be a stop on Detaille Island – a common goal for explorers. **Overnight - The Ushuaia (B:6, L:6, D:6)**

Days 10-11 : Crossing the Drake Passage northbound



Departing the Antarctic Peninsula, the Ushuaia begins its journey northbound back across the Drake Passage. Be sure to take advantage of this final opportunity to spot seabirds and whales from the open-air deck, and join in on some final lectures. **Overnight - The Ushuaia (B:2, L:2, D:2)**

Day 12 : End of your Antarctic expedition

Your vessel arrives into the port of Ushuaia early in the morning. After breakfast and bidding farewell to your expedition lecturers and naturalists, your Antarctic adventure comes to an end. The ship arrives at 7 am and disembarkation is normally at 8.00/ 8.30 am. We strongly recommend not to book flights departing before noon time.(B)

PRICES / DATES INFO

Prices shown are per person based on twin occupancy sharing the lowest category of cabins. The 'Single supplement' applies for single travellers

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who would like their own cabin and needs to be added to the 'Twin/Double' price. If you are happy to be paired up with another single traveller of the same sex on your tour, this can be arranged, thus avoiding the single person supplement. Our Antarctic Expeditions are specialist voyages and places are limited, please contact us via email or telephone to check availability and to make a reservation. These trips cannot be booked online.

PRICES / DATES 2021

Date	Twin Share	Single
27 Jan	USD 11,045	USD 19,745

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