

ANTARCTICA - BEYOND THE POLAR CIRCLE TO WILKINS ICE SHELF (AURORA AUSTRALIS) | ORTELIUS



INTRODUCTION


This voyage explores a number of historically significant Antarctic areas, such as the very rarely visited Bellingshausen Sea, Marguerite Bay, and Alexander Island. We focus on places discovered by Adrien De Gerlache on his Belgian Antarctic Expedition (1897 - 1899) and Jean-Baptiste Charcot on his French Antarctic Expedition (1904 - 1907).

Spring 2025 marks the best chance to see the rare aurora australis, also known as the southern lights. Unlike the northern lights, the southern lights travel over no cities or villages and are only rarely seen from land. The sun's 11-year cycle of activity peaks around 2025, making for more active auroras that are best seen around the equinoxes. We will maximize our chances of seeing the elusive and enchanting southern auroras by traveling below the Antarctic Circle when there is little moonlight in the sky. We will also have the chance to see many Southern Hemisphere stars and celestial objects, including the Southern Cross and Magellanic Clouds.

Dr. Tyler Nordgren will lead our night sky viewing activity on deck when the weather and auroras are favorable, speaking about the southern sky and its auroras. Nordgren is a professor of astronomy and physics at the University of Redlands as well as a former member of the Board for the International Dark Sky Association.

Dr. Julie Rathbun will continue this trip's theme of polar and astronomical exploration, leading discussions about how Antarctica is used as a site to study Europa, one of Jupiter's moons. A senior scientist with the Planetary Science Institute, she is part of NASA's Europa Clipper spacecraft mission, which launches in October 2024 to investigate the liquid ocean beneath Europa's icy surface.

**Rates are subject to currency fluctuation and availability at the time of booking. Please contact us for the latest pricing and availability.*

TRIP CODE
ACOWOWIS
DEPARTURE
21/03/2025
DURATION
16 Days
LOCATIONS
Antarctica & Antarctic Circle


ITINERARY

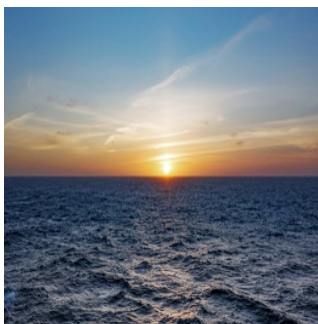
DAY 1: Embarkation in Ushuaia

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.



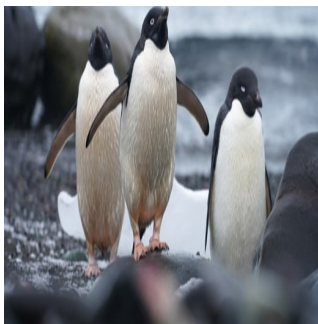
DAY 2: Drake Passage - Day 2 & 3

Over the next two days on the Drake Passage, you enjoy some of the same experiences encountered by the great polar explorers who first charted these regions: cool salt breezes, rolling seas, maybe even a fin whale spouting up sea spray. After passing the Antarctic Convergence - Antarctica’s natural boundary, formed when north-flowing cold waters collide with warmer sub-Antarctic seas - you are in the circum-Antarctic upwelling zone. Not only does the marine life change, the avian life changes too. 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 are a few of the birds you might see.



DAY 4: Pendleton Strait

You arrive at the Antarctic Peninsula near the Antarctic Circle in the afternoon. If sea ice allows it, you can then continue through Pendleton Strait and attempt a landing at the rarely visited southern tip of Renaud Island. Here you have the opportunity to see the first Adélie penguins of the trip as well as enjoy spectacular views of the icebergs in this surreal, snow-swept environment. In the afternoon we sail to the Fish Islands and encounter one of the southernmost Adélie penguin and blue-eyed shag colonies in the Antarctic Peninsula. Spending the night in the area of Crystal Sound the scenery will leave you staying up until the small hours, there is a chance to see Orca, Humpback and Minke Whale in this area.



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DAY 5: Detaille Island and The Gullet

Detaille Island - You may make a landing at an abandoned British research station here, taking in the island's lofty position and imposing glaciers scenery. We then sail through The Gullet, one of the most impressive narrow channels in Antarctica, with towering mountains either side, birds following the ship and playful penguins and seals frolicking in the water as we sail through this very special part of the journey. If ice conditions allow we will also carry out a landing or cruise in the afternoon.



DAY 6: Porquoi Pas and Horseshoe Islands

Discovered and charted by the famous explorer Charcot, Pourquoi Pas offers pleasant landing on a rocky beach with a backdrop of the Moider Glacier- a gentle walk from the landing site gives an impressive view over it. Antarctic Fur Seals enjoy relaxing on the small plain behind the beach and add a nice addition to the wildlife that we encounter on this voyage. After lunch we head towards Horseshoe island- so called because of its distinctive shape- an abandoned research station provides an insight into the early days of scientific research and original artefacts remain on show to appreciate how different the way of life was in those pioneering days. The hut is set among some of the most beautiful scenery in Antarctica with views over the mountains and snow of Porquois Pas Island as well as the islands own mountain range. A photographic landing in many senses- two old wooden boats remain at the landing site as if waiting for their final launch to work in the icy waters around the islands.



DAY 7: George IV and Wilkins Ice Shelf - Day 7 to 10

Provided ice and weather conditions allow we will head towards Antarctica's ice shelves (the George IV and Wilkins), we hope to show you the scale of these vast cliffs and expanses of ice that will dwarf us and our ship. A range of Antarctic wildlife from Humpback whales, Fur seals and Adelie penguins and maybe if we are lucky we may see one or more Ross' seal.



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DAY 11: Jenny and Leonie Islands

Jenny Island will give another aspect to your Antarctic experience, here you will be able to see raised beaches, hanging glaciers and moss carpets. The island is popular with wildlife too with terns, skuas, Elephant Seals, Leopard Seals and Adelie penguins all being regular visitors. A landing at Leonie Island will take your breath away, there is the possibility to undertake a hike to the peak of the island offering a dramatic panorama of Marguerite Bay and Adelaide Island.



DAY 12: Lagoon and Mikkelsen Islands

Lagoon island is the most northern island of the Leonie Islands group, also discovered and charted by Jean-Baptiste Charcot. This low laying island will provide a stark contrast to the previous days with its gently sloped beaches and flat areas to explore. The wildlife here will varies depending on snow cover. If there is little snow the ground is almost desert-like in appearance. The Mikkelsen Islands offer a spectacular Zodiac cruise where we hope to encounter up to five Antarctic seal species. We may also see some beautiful birdlife, such as giant petrels and Adélie penguins.



DAY 13: Drake Passage - Day 13 to 15


Your return voyage is far from lonely. While crossing the Drake, you're again greeted by the vast array of seabirds remembered from the passage south. But they seem a little more familiar to you now, and you to them.



DAY 16: Disembarkation in Ushuaia

Every adventure, no matter how grand, 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.




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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Cabin on board a ship
Inclusions	<p>INCLUSIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 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 <p>EXCLUSIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
Notes	<p>Prices are based on per person, and may be based on quad/triple/twin share.</p> <p>Prices are correct at time of publishing but are subject to change at any time.</p> <p>Itinerary is subject to change depending on weather and ice conditions.</p>
Price Dependent upon	Departure Date, Fuel Surcharges, Cabin Category, Currency Fluctuations, Seasonality & Availability.

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SUSTAINABILITY

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