

20  
DAYS

Antarctic  
Quest  
via the  
Falkland  
Islands  
and  
South  
Georgia

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ACCORDING  
TO ITINERARY

# Antarctic Quest via the Falkland Islands and South Georgia

FALKLAND ISLANDS | COLONY OF APHENODYTES PATAGONICUS



If your goal is to set foot to Antarctica but also - having traveled to the extremes of the Southern Hemisphere - explore the historic Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) and remote South Georgia, this is the ideal small ship expedition. From Shackleton's lonely grave to spectacular Iceberg Alley to Zodiac landings at remote penguin rookeries and other areas rich with wildlife, come follow the early explorers on a remarkable Antarctic experience.

ANTARCTICA

## DAY 01 & 02

### USHUAIA, TIERRA DEL FUEGO, ARGENTINA

On arriving in Ushuaia, transfer to our conveniently located hotel and explore this pioneering port town on the edge of Beagle Channel. Next day, join your fellow travellers for a guided tour of Tierra del Fuego National Park, a haven for Ashy-headed Geese, Buff-necked Ibis, Fuegian red fox and other regional species. Savor a traditional Argentina asado barbecue lunch while learning more about local history and culture, then enjoy some free time to shop or relax before boarding our small expedition ship.

## DAY 03 TO 05

### NORTHWARD TO THE FALKLANDS (MALVINAS)

Join us on deck as we make our way out of the harbor and head toward the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas). In the days ahead there will be many presentations to deepen your understanding of the region –and plenty of opportunities to chat with the Expedition Team in the lounge. Our specific stops in the outer Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) will depend on local conditions. Typical sightings include Flightless Steamer Ducks, Magellanic Penguins and Gentoo Penguins on Carcass Island; Rockhopper Penguins as well as nesting Black-browed Albatross and Blue-eyed Shags on nearby New Island; plus Peale's and Commerson's dolphins, which frequently bow-ride and play alongside our Zodiacs as we explore the coastal waters. Walk over the tussock grass to enjoy tea and cake at a family "camp" (as Falklanders call their farms), and stroll among colorfully painted buildings in the historic capital Stanley, stopping for a pint at one of its British-style pubs.

## DAY 06 TO 11

### SHACKLETON'S SOUTH GEORGIA

Our shipboard historian offers absorbing presentations on the exploration of the Southern Ocean as we continue on toward South Georgia. Remembered as the endpoint of Sir Ernest Shackleton's heroic rescue trek following the sinking of the Endurance, the island of South Georgia is a diverse landscape of 2100m mountains, massive glaciers, grassy uplands and deep fjords. Your many wildlife viewing opportunities over the next few days include thousands of King Penguins at Salisbury Plain; Wandering Albatross and fur seals at Prion Island; and southern elephant seals, plus King, Macaroni and Gentoo Penguins along Gold Harbor and other untouched beaches along the coast. On our visit to the former whaling outpost of Grytviken, you can pay your respects at the simple grave of Shackleton, who died here after suffering a heart attack during the Quest expedition in 1922.

## DAY 12 TO 17

### SOUTH SHETLANDS AND THE PENINSULA

As we sail on southward, our naturalists continue their presentations and informal mealtime chats on the natural wonders you'll encounter in the coming days. Passing through the South Shetland island chain, just north of the Antarctic Peninsula, we hope to stop at Paulet or Elephant Island, home to a large Gentoo Penguin rookery. It was on Elephant Island that the crew of Shackleton's Endurance found refuge while he and five handpicked men carried on in

a small open lifeboat, crossing 1300 km of open sea in order to arrange the rescue of their comrades. On some departures we're able to sail right into the sunken volcanic caldera of Deception Island, where adventurous travelers can test the thermal waters at Pendulum Cove. Our approach to the Antarctic Peninsula, the most accessible part of the White Continent, brings breathtaking views of snowcapped mountains, cascading glaciers and massive, flat-topped tabular icebergs in crystal-blue seas. On our planned landings you can expect to see every manner of fascinating bird life, from enormous rookeries of Gentoo, Chinstrap and Adélie Penguins, to Blue-eyed Shags, Kelp Gulls, Cape Petrels, Snowy Shearwaters and Antarctic Terns. You may also sight Weddell, crabeater and leopard seals, along with orcas, and humpback and Minke whales. As you'll see from the detailed ice charts (which one of the ship's officers will be happy to explain if you're interested), there are challenges to navigating the Antarctic Sound through the area known as Iceberg Alley; we'll try to loop down for a visit to the large Adélie Penguin colony on Paulet Island. Your exploration of the continent proper typically begins at Paradise Bay or nearby Neko Harbor. Depending on the thickness of the pack ice and iceberg conditions, we venture into spectacular Neumayer and Lemaire Channels, sailing past towering rock faces and magnificent glaciers. We also try to visit one of the many Antarctic research stations in the region, including Port Lockroy, a former British wartime outpost and scientific base that now houses a museum (and what is probably the world's most remote post office, where you can mail a card home).

## DAY 18 & 20

### DRAKE PASSAGE AND USHUAIA

As our ship makes the return voyage across the Drake Passage, we're escorted much of the way by an impressive variety of seabirds, including magnificent Wandering Albatross, as well as Giant and Cape Petrels. You'll often spot whales and dolphins en route as well. Illuminating presentations and lively chats continue as the Expedition Team reviews the journey and invites your perspective on all we've seen and experienced. After docking in Ushuaia, enjoy breakfast on our last morning, then transfer to town or head directly to the airport for your flight home or on to other adventures.