

## CLASSIC PATAGONIA

These adventure cruises offer the ultimate introduction to the White Continent. Departing from and finishing in the port of Ushuaia, Argentina, they include many of the wildlife and scenic highlights of the Antarctic Peninsula and the South Shetland Islands. They are designed to include as much wildlife viewing as possible but also incorporate visits to scientific bases and allow plenty of time to enjoy the breathtaking scenery of icy waterways, glaciers, icebergs and rugged mountains.

The itinerary shown here is for the 12-day voyage - the 11-day voyage has one day less along the Antarctic Peninsula. However, no two voyages can ever be exactly the same and so this itinerary is for guidance only. The Captain and Expedition Leader continually assess daily weather conditions and wildlife opportunities to take full advantage of the almost continuous daylight and to maximize time ashore.

Although it is impossible to guarantee precisely what we will see because sightings and encounters inevitably vary from trip to trip, we are confident that no-one will be disappointed. Few people have ever set foot on Antarctica but those fortunate few treasure precious memories of a unique, unforgettable experience.

### **PROGRAM**

#### **Day 1: Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina**

- Flights and Hotel night is not included.

#### **Day 2 and 3: Ushuaia**

- A chance to wander around Ushuaia, nestled between the spectacular snow-capped mountains of the Andes and the Beagle Channel, or to explore the surrounding wilderness areas. Embarkation begins later in the afternoon and, after we have settled into our cabins, the ship sets sail along the scenic Beagle Channel-heading east towards the Drake Passage.

#### **Day 4 and 5: Passage & South Shetland Islands.**

- Our journey across the famous Drake Passage, named after the 16th-century English navigator Sir Francis Drake, is an experience in itself. Our ship is accompanied most of the way by albatrosses-including the magnificent Wandering Albatross-along with an impressive variety of other seabirds. We also cross the Antarctic Convergence, a biological barrier where cold polar waters sink beneath the warmer waters of the temperate zones.

When land is sighted for the first time in two days (usually late afternoon on Day 4) we know we have reached the South Shetland Islands. This impressive group of islands, lying to the north and roughly parallel to the Antarctic Peninsula, is a haven for wildlife. We visit vast penguin rookeries, land on beaches ruled by Antarctic fur seals and observe wallowing southern elephant seals.

We also hope to visit one of the many research bases in the archipelago and look for Antarctica's only two flowering plants which to the South Shetlands will be sailing through a narrow passage into the flooded caldera of Deception Island.

#### **Day 6 and 8: Antarctic Peninsula**

- The Antarctic Peninsula is the most readily accessible part of the White Continent and has some of the best wildlife and scenery. We have plenty of time to experience the

special magic of this awe-inspiring wilderness of snow, ice, waterways and mountains and can expect to see a wide variety of Antarctic wildlife, Enormous rookiers of Gentoo, Chinstrap and Adélie Penguins, Blue-eyed Shags, Kelp Gulls, Cape Petrels, Snowy Sheathbills and Antarctic Terns are just some of the many birds found here in abundance. We are also likely to see Weddell, crabeater and leopard seals, while osca, humpback whales and Minle whales are often encountered at close range.

The Peninsula also has remarkable history and, during the voyage, we will learn about of the most important and dramatic expeditions to this remote corner of the world. Keeping a lookout from the Bridge or the deck of the ship as we thread our way along the continent, we will certainly feel the same sense of excitement as many of those early explorers.

Sailin aroun the northern tip of the Antarctic Peninsula we hope to navigate the Antarctic Sound, or "Iceberg alley" as it is often called, where huge tabular icebergs drift north from the Antarctic continent. If we are lucky, and weather and ice conditions permit, we plan to land on Paulet Island to see its vaste Adélie Penguin rookery. We also plan to visit aptly-named Paradise Harbor, or nearby Neko Harbor, where glaciers fill the calm waters with an amazingg vista of iceberg; this is where we hope to set foot on the Antarctic Continet itself.

At Port Lockroy, as well as enjoying the thriving penguin colonies, we will visit a former British scientific station that has recently been renovated to serve as one of the most isolated and intriguing museums in the world. The station also acts as a post office and we will have a unique opportunity to send postcards home.

During the voyage we hope to navigate some of the most beautiful waterways in the world (if they are not choked with pack ice and icebergs); two in particular, the Neumayer and Lemaire Channels, are narrow passages between towering rock faces and spectacular glaciers tat are so impressive they are a highlight of the trip for many people. On some voyages we sail south of the Lemaire Channel to Petermann Island where Adélie and Gentoo Penguins, skuas and Blue-eyed Shags nest close to the landing site.

## Days 9 and 10: Drake Passage

- Today we leave Antarctica and head north across the Drake Passage. In the between bird watching and whale watching, and enjoying some final lectures by our expedition staff, this is a chance to relax and review the adventures of the past week before returning to Ushuaia.

## Day 11: Ushuaia

- We disembark after breakfast and transfer by bus to the Antarctic Unit office located at the entrance of the pier. Passenger departing the same day on the morning flight will continue by bus to the airport.

Please note: Read this itinerary as a guide only; our exact rout and program varies according to ice and weather conditions-and the wildlife we encounter. Flexibility is the key to the success of this expedition.

Visits to research stations depend on final permission.