



Antarctic Peninsula

Land of Penguins & Icebergs

29 Nov - 09 Dec 2020

11 days

Embarkation: Ushuaia (Argentina)

Disembarkation: Ushuaia (Argentina)

M/v Sea Spirit

Activities:



Itinerary



Day 1: Arrival in Ushuaia, Argentina (hotel night)

Welcome to Ushuaia, the world's southernmost city and starting point of our Antarctic expedition! Upon your arrival at the airport, you will be greeted by our staff and transferred to a quality hotel, which has been arranged by us and is included in the price of the itinerary. For the rest of the day, you are free to explore this vibrant port city and adventure hub.

For an introduction to local history and wildlife, the interesting Museo del Fin del Mundo is worth a visit. If you have time to spare, a variety of nature activities can be arranged to suit all interests and fitness levels, from hiking in nearby Tierra del Fuego National Park to wildlife viewing in the Beagle Channel. For dinner, Ushuaia offers a wide range of restaurants featuring Patagonian lamb and delectable Fuegian seafood.



Day 2: Welcome Aboard!

After breakfast at your hotel, the morning is yours to enjoy Ushuaia. Explore the delightful waterfront and savor views of the snowcapped Martial Range, the southernmost peaks of the Andes. Take advantage of shopping for souvenirs or some last-minute necessities such as cold-weather gear. Just remember, you will soon receive your very own parka to keep and waterproof boots to borrow on board the ship. For lunch, the many cafés, parrillas and gelato shops on Avenida San Martín will be sure to satisfy any appetite.

In the afternoon, you will be transferred to the pier where we will warmly welcome you aboard the luxury expedition vessel M/V Sea Spirit. Get settled in your spacious suite and explore the ship that will be your comfortable home during the extraordinary adventure to come. After getting underway, a full schedule of events kicks off with informative briefings and introductions from your expedition staff. After the first of many delicious dinners on board, step out onto the open decks to admire the scenery and gorgeous evening light as we pass through the Beagle Channel.



Day 3-4: Across the Drake Passage

After passing the islands of Tierra del Fuego, we turn south to begin our crossing of the Drake Passage. We watch for humpback and fin whales along the way. The majestic wandering albatross and other graceful subantarctic seabirds are common in these waters and can readily be viewed from panoramic open decks and balconies. We also cross the Antarctic Convergence, the biological boundary of the Southern Ocean. The ship's stabilizing fins provide comfort in the event of rough seas. Briefings, bio-security procedures and presentations by our lecture staff prepare you for our arrival in Antarctica. We hope to arrive in the South Shetland Islands on the evening of our second day at sea.



Day 5-8: South Shetland Islands and Antarctic Peninsula

During the next four days, we explore the highlights of the South Shetland Islands and the Antarctic Peninsula. This region contains some of the world's most impressive scenery and the best wildlife viewing in Antarctica. Sheltered bays and channels sparkle with ice and reflect towering mountain peaks coated in permanent snow and immense glaciers. Icebergs of every size and description complete an image of incomparable beauty. Waters rich with krill are home to huge numbers of marine mammals and seabirds. The whole area is alive with penguins foraging at sea and forming large

rookeries at special places on land. Here we also find Antarctic research bases of various nationalities, some with gift shops and post offices.

The South Shetland Islands are the northernmost islands in Antarctica and will likely be our first area of exploration. This wildly beautiful island chain contains many landing sites with historical significance and abundant wildlife. We will also explore the supremely picturesque Gerlache Strait area of the Antarctic Peninsula, a pristine wilderness of spectacular white landscapes, colossal icebergs, obliging marine mammals and bustling penguin colonies. We hope to show you the famous Lemaire Channel, also known as "Kodak Gap" because of the photogenic way the narrow channel reflects the image of sheer snowy mountains.



Throughout the islands and on the mainland, we find nesting colonies of gentoo, chinstrap and Adélie penguins, sometimes side by side. At this time, penguin pairs are taking turns incubating their eggs. This is a good time to observe the importance of pebbles in penguin culture, as prized nesting material to be stolen from rivals and given to mates. Also at this time, a high concentration of sea ice provides opportunities for seals and penguins to congregate on ice floes, a situation that attracts killer whales. Minke whales have started to arrive and leopard seals can be spotted patrolling the coast near penguin colonies. Photographers will appreciate the pristine appearance of undisturbed snow

across the landscape in this early summer month.

In this rugged yet accessible environment, superb wildlife viewing is best complemented by active adventure. Our knowledgeable guides will offer hiking and hill climbing for an even greater perspective of this raw polar wilderness. For sea kayakers, the wildlife-rich waters of Antarctica offer many chances to paddle with seals and penguins in some of the world's most scenic waterways. To make the most of your time on the White Continent, you can also spend a night camping ashore, surrounded by untamed Antarctic nature.

This is expedition cruising at its most authentic. Our precise route and exploration opportunities will be shaped by weather and ice. Our experienced captain and expedition leader will continually adjust plans to take maximum advantage of the conditions in this challenging polar environment. With nearly 20 hours of daylight per day, we seize every opportunity to experience excellent wildlife viewing and amazing scenery on shore excursions and Zodiac cruises.



Day 9-10: Back across the Drake Passage

It is now time to head back across the Drake Passage toward South America, but the adventure is not quite over. Seabirds are our constant companions and there is always the possibility of whale encounters in these wild waters. This is also the time for festivities such as the Captain's Farewell Cocktail and the end-of-voyage slideshow. Finally, as we enter the calm Beagle Channel, we enjoy a night of smooth sailing toward Ushuaia.



Day 11: Disembarkation in Ushuaia, Argentina

After yet another delicious breakfast on board, we bid you a fond farewell in Ushuaia. We provide a group transfer to the airport or to the city center if you wish to spend more time here. As you look back on your wonderful experience in Antarctica, you may already be looking forward to your next polar adventure!