



Itinerary

23 Day In-depth Antarctica, Falklands & South Georgia

IMPORTANT NOTE: This is the default version of the tour itinerary. Any extra nights, optional tours or other amendments, will not be visible on this version. If you have booked extras, Please contact info@myholiday2.com.au for a personalised version of your itinerary

DAY 1: Arrive Santiago de Chile, Chile

Upon arrival in Santiago de Chile, make your own way to the hotel. The rest of the day is at your leisure. Welcome to Santiago, Chile's bustling capital. With its colonial-era architecture, award-winning restaurants and fascinating museums, it's the perfect place to start your expedition cruise. There's a lot to see, from the Mercado Central market to the Plaza de Armas and the Presidential Palace. Check out the Sky Costanera, which offers panoramic views of the city from 1,000 feet up.

You may want to arrive a few days early to join one of our optional Pre-Programmes.

MEALS: None

OVERNIGHT: Santiago 4 Star Hotel

DAY 2: Santiago de Chile ~ Punta Arenas

You leave Santiago early in the morning, so make sure to set your alarm. From the airport, you fly to Punta Arenas, the capital of Chile's southernmost region located on the Brunswick Peninsula, just north of the Strait of Magellan. What began as a penal colony boomed during the gold-rush and sheep-farming periods of the 1880s and early 1900s and is now one of only two low-tax ports in Chile.

MS Fram is waiting here for you, ready to get you started on your expedition cruise to Antarctica. Aboard the ship, you'll meet and greet the Expedition Team and crew members. They'll conduct a health and safety meeting for all guests before we set sail. Head out on the observation deck to catch a last glimpse of Punta Arenas as we begin our course south. Then sip on drinks and turn your eyes towards Antarctica while you enjoy views from the Explorer Lounge & Bar.

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Fram

DAY 3: At Sea ~ Strait of Magellan

Long after your epic voyage is over and you're flicking through your pictures, you'll realise that it was here, the Strait of Magellan, where your adventure truly began. It was named after Portuguese explorer Fernando de Magallanes who discovered it when he captained a Spanish expedition to circumnavigate the world in 1520. As you soak up the mesmerising views all around you, spare a thought for Fernando and his crew charting these waters in a rickety ship 500 years ago.

With our course set for the Falkland Islands, you'll now be in the hands of the expert Expedition Team. You'll find that they are not just inspirational teachers and attentive hosts, but bonafide adventurers who've got their share of stories to tell. Whether it's about marine biology, Arctic survival, oceanography or photography, you'll feed off their enthusiasm in each lecture. You can join them in the lecture hall and in the Science Center to learn about the Falklands interesting history and fascinating wildlife. If you are interested in art, you can attend art classes and even learn how to tie knots for when you go on landings.

Good times are also to be had in our restaurants which are located in the aft of the ship. You'll note that wherever your table is placed, you'll be able to gaze on the views outdoors. The strait also looks great while soaking in the outdoor hot tubs on deck 7.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Fram

DAYS 4-6: The Falkland Islands

The Falkland Islands are probably best known for their chequered past. Discovered by the British, settled by the French and the Spanish, they were then fought over by Argentina and Great Britain in the Falklands War. You will understand why these islands are so desirable when you see the natural beauty hidden in these islands across the three days we explore here.

The windswept green hills are home to large farms that have been family-owned for generations. And the beaches! The white sands and clear waters could easily be mistaken for the Caribbean. You will see penguin colonies alongside grazing sheep, while caracaras patrol overhead and geese forage at the water's edge.

There are close to 800 islands here and the list of possible places to visit is pretty long. Rather than be forced into a fixed itinerary, we prefer to keep your exploration loose and spontaneous. This is an adventure after all! The Expedition Team and Captain will look at the sea and weather conditions at the time and then pick the safest sites for that day. So, whether it's Saunders Island, West Point, Carcass Island, or another location that we visit, you can be sure it'll be the best option for your expedition.

One place that we will likely be able to visit is Stanley, the capital of the archipelago on East Falkland. It's a great little town to explore on foot and an excellent starting point for the optional excursions you can pick from. While in the town centre, you'll likely want to visit its array of local shops and maybe even stop in at an English pub to share a pint with the friendly locals.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Fram

DAYS 7-8: At Sea ~ Cruising the South Atlantic

Sailing from the Falklands, we spend two days cruising towards beautiful South Georgia. Known as the Galápagos of the Poles, you can look forward to seeing an archipelago of impressive and diverse wildlife. But that's still a couple of days away, so meet up with your friends in the Expedition Team and listen as they give you a heads up on what you can expect. They will tell you everything they know about South Georgia, including information about the area's wildlife, polar history, its geology, glaciology and legends of Norwegian whalers.

One of the fascinating stories in their canon is that of Sir Ernest Shackleton, the crew of the ill-fated ship *Endurance*, and their amazing feats of bravery. You'll also learn how to make your visit as safe and as sustainable as possible and you can join Citizen Science programmes to help collect data for current scientific research.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Fram

DAYS 9-12: South Georgia

If you love wildlife, you're going to love South Georgia. Nicknames like 'Serengeti of the Southern Ocean' and 'Galápagos of the Poles' promise a lot, but the islands more than live up to their reputation. Coming here, you'll understand why South Georgia is a top spot for wildlife photographers from all over the world. Uniquely positioned inside the Antarctic ecosystem yet outside the reach of sea ice, South Georgia is an ideal home for thousands of breeding penguins and seals. There are notable populations of king penguins who prefer the warmer weather here than their emperor cousins in Antarctica. Both South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands have also been identified as Important Bird Areas, supporting many seabirds including albatross, penguins, petrels, shags, skuas and terns.

We spend five days in South Georgia, and plan to go ashore at several possible places to take you closer to the wilderness and wildlife. One such place is the settlement of Grytviken, home to a Norwegian seaman's church built in 1913 and the final resting place of Antarctic explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton.

However, like the Falklands, our itinerary is not set in stone. We know all the interesting sites and penguin colonies to take you to, but we always adjust our plans according to the weather conditions. That's what makes our expedition cruises so memorable.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Fram

DAY 13-14: At Sea ~ Towards Antarctica

With lengthy stays in both the Falklands and South Georgia, you have had time to really immerse yourself in the destinations and their wildlife. Our Expedition Team now focuses your attention on the main event of your expedition – Antarctica. You'll take in comprehensive lectures and presentations covering polar explorer history, environment and, of course, the wildlife of the region.

Throughout our journey, the Expedition Team will also be taking water samples for you to study under the microscopes in the Science Center, allowing you to see wildlife at the cellular level.

As we are getting closer to Antarctica, the Expedition Team will talk about the very strict environmental guidelines and sustainability rules outlined by IAATO that we follow. This is a continent dedicated to peace, science and tourism. No human activity is permitted that might interfere with the natural balance that exists here. We want to leave nothing but footprints and take nothing but pictures. And even then, sometimes we'll wipe away our footprints to prevent penguins from getting stuck in them!

As always, the amenities of the ship are there for you to enjoy. If you haven't yet worked up a sweat in the gym or the sauna, now is your opportunity. Don't forget to go out on deck from time to time on your way to Antarctica. Spotting that first huge iceberg is always a real highlight.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Fram

DAYS 15-19: Antarctica ~ A World of Ice & Wonder

Forget everything you have ever experienced before. Antarctica is in a league of its own. No matter how high your expectations are, Antarctica never disappoints. Holding 90% of the world's ice, it's massive in every sense of the word. The only country in the world with more surface area is Russia. There is actually land to be found underneath all the ice, but in some places, you would have to dig your way through four kilometres of snow and ice to reach it.

You will probably see your first seals and penguins from the ship, and that in itself is a fantastic experience. But wait until you stand on the very same shore as a colony of thousands of penguins. Or if a seal shows up beside you as you enjoy an optional activity of kayaking among the icebergs. Caught up in the thrill of the moment, you might not even remember to reach for your camera to take a picture!

Just as the icescapes of Antarctica change through its seasons, so does its wildlife. In early spring there will be much more snow, making the landscapes even more pristine. This is when the penguins are meeting up. We rarely see whales at this time of year, in October and November. In December, however, whales become more frequent. That's also when the first penguin chicks hatch, which is always a charming sight. February and March are the peak of whale-watching opportunities, as the large amount of krill in the waters attract the most whale species who come for a veritable feeding frenzy.

There will be less snow then, and you will be able to see the clumsy penguin chicks are running around. If you are interested in birds, however, there are 46 species of birds here, including various petrels, albatrosses and terns.

Our Expedition Team will take very good care of you while you enjoy everything that Antarctica has to offer over the next five days. You can join them in ice-cruising and landings to really explore the icescapes of this frozen continent. If you are here early in the season when snow conditions are good, you may even get the chance to go snowshoeing. As before, there is no set list of sites we will definitely visit. We submit to the elements, allowing wind and sea ice to guide us in picking the best landing zones.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Fram

DAYS 20-22: Drake Passage & Beagle Channel

Five unforgettable days in Antarctica are over, and MS Fram has turned around to take you back north over the Drake Passage. Known for its potentially high winds and strong currents, the passage can also be silent and still, inspiring the nicknames 'The Drake Shake' and 'The Drake Lake' respectively. But don't worry, even if we experience rough seas, you will be perfectly safe on our purpose-built expedition ship. During our crossing, the Expedition Team will recap our experiences of Antarctica, making it possible to keep your head in Antarctica for a little while longer. As your cruise is coming close to its end, this is also the perfect time to go through the pictures you have taken on your cruise. And for all the things you have loved to do so far on the ship, there is still time to do all of them a couple of times more.

When we have put the Drake Passage behind us, we enter the scenic Beagle Channel, surrounded by mountains plunging straight into the icy water. Watch for rare endemic Peale's dolphin and other wildlife as we sail in this wild and remote area that seems almost undisturbed by humans.

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: MS Fram

DAY 23: Punta Arenas ~ Santiago de Chile

We arrive in Punta Arenas in the morning, back to civilisation again. You'll transfer to the airport for a flight back to Santiago where you'll have a second chance to explore the capital of Chile. Or maybe you would rather extend your vacation with a Post-Programme adventure to Easter Island, famous for its mysterious statues of giant heads? The choice is yours. Before that though, you'll first make your fond farewells to one another, the crew and the Expedition Team.

How do you end an experience at sea surrounded by some of the most remote, awe-inspiring scenery known to humankind? The answer is: you don't. The experience will continue on with the memories and knowledge you now carry with you. It lives in the photos and stories you'll bring back to your friends and family. We hope your experience of sustainable expedition cruising has been an inspiring one, renewing your awe for nature and reigniting a passion to protect it.

MEALS: Breakfast