

Full details to come in AFS Trip Tips emailed to bookers. Air is easy roundtrip USA to Ushuaia Argentina. And it's now visa free! Go a day early as our past groups did to enjoy this delight fun city of Darwin's territory. Perhaps add on another South American city as a stopover.

**Dec 1:** Depart USA to Ushuaia, Argentina. LATAM allows stopovers where you please. Fill details on air and cruise come to come in AFS Trip Tips. Consider coming in a day early to enjoy USH. So much to do in this city with great dining – the land of king crab and sea bass.

### **Dec 2 - Trip begins when you board the ship.**



The voyage begins and ends in the southernmost city in the world, Ushuaia - in Argentina's stunning Tierra del Fuego region. Our ship, the Ushuaia, is named for this charming port and you will board in the afternoon and be greeted by your expedition and lecture staff. There will be some time to settle in before we set sail, making our way along the famous Beagle Channel and the stunningly beautiful Mackinlay Pass, marked by mountains, glaciers and waterfalls.

We'll have a welcome dinner for all aboard as we make our way south.

### **Dec 3 & 4 - Crossing the Drake Passage B/L/D**

For the next day and a half, we will be crossing the legendary Drake Passage. The 400-mile channel connecting the Atlantic and Pacific between South America and Antarctica was named for the renowned explorer, Sir Francis Drake, who sailed these waters in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It also marks the Antarctic Convergence, a biological barrier where cold polar water meets the warm equatorial waters and churns up nutrients. (Seas can be challenging here and one can never predict the waters. Some of our past groups had a calm "Drake Lake", whereas others had the "Drake Shake" with high seas, but all embraced the scenic voyage).

This region is teeming with marine and birdlife! Keep your eye out for an amazing variety of seabirds, including many albatrosses, whales and even penguins who make their way back and forth through these waters. Expert guides and naturalists will be out with you on deck to help identify all you see. Or you can take advantage of the ships' open bridge policy

and join officers on the bridge, learn about navigation and watch the waters from their vantage point.

There's a full program of lectures as well. By the second day, you'll have the first sightings of icebergs and snow-capped mountains, indicating that we have reached the South Shetland Islands. If conditions are favorable, we'll make our way ashore on one or more of the islands for our first encounter with the penguins and seals.

### **Dec 5-8 Exploring the Antarctic Peninsula and South Shetland Islands B/L/D**



Antarctica!!! The "White Continent" is larger than North America and there is so much to see. We'll spend the next 5 days exploring, visiting penguin rookeries, whale watching and more! Each day, the crew will assess what is the best route based on weather and wildlife opportunities. They will effort two landings a day. Orcas, Minke, Right, Humpback whales await. How about penguins like the Adélie, Gentoo, Macaroni and Chinstrap? Fur, Weddell, Crabeater, Leopard and Southern elephant seals, Kelp Gulls, Blue-eyed Cormorants, Antarctic Terns and Southern Giant Petrels. SO many things not seen elsewhere!

Sailing through the narrow passage into the flooded caldera of Deception Island is truly amazing. And among the places we'll visit:

- King George Island, the largest of the South Shetland Islands and home to scientific bases of many different countries.
- Livingston Island- covered in numerous penguin rookeries. Macaroni, Chinstrap and Gentoo Penguins as well as elephant seals await you.
- Lemaire Channel - along the Antarctic Peninsula, this narrow glacier-lined channel is considered one of the most beautiful passages on the continent.
- Paradise Bay is perhaps the most aptly named place in the world and we attempt a landing on the continent proper. Over 100,000 pairs of Adélie Penguins breed here.

- Paulet Island – home to colonies of blue-eye Cormorants. The Nordenskjöld expedition built a stone survival hut here in 1903. Today its ruins have been taken over by nesting penguins.
- Melchior Islands – a small archipelago and home to several research bases
- Cuverville Island – boasting the largest known colony of Gentoo Penguins on the Antarctic peninsula
- Portal Point – known for its stunning vantage points it is home to Chinstrap and Gentoo penguins.
- Neko Harbour – famous for its beautiful glacier that you may actually witness calving
- Pléneau Island – a prime spot to see elephant seals.
- Petermann Island – home to the southernmost colony of Gentoo Penguins.

### **Dec 09- 10 At Sea crossing the Drake Passage, Northbound B/L/D**

We leave Antarctica and head north, again crossing the Drake Passage. Our lecturers and naturalists will again be with us on deck as we search for seabirds and whales and enjoy some final lectures. Take the chance to relax and reflect on the fascinating adventures of the past days on the way back to Ushuaia.

**Dec 11** - Our ship arrives at Ushuaia in the early morning Dec 11. We will have a final breakfast aboard before disembarking and heading home.