

Antarctica, South Georgia and the Falklands

Newsletter

November 2018



Revealing Antarctica

A journey to the ice wilderness of Antarctica is an unparalleled adventure, an extraordinary experience with an abundance of wildlife and dramatic scenery. Antarctica is the coldest, driest and windiest continent on the planet and 98% of it is covered by ice that is at least a mile thick.

Follow in the path of the great expeditions from the golden age of polar exploration with modern, spacious and well-designed ships for the journey of a lifetime.

At Revealed Travel we have considerable expertise in booking expedition cruises to Antarctica, the South Shetland Islands, the Falkland Islands and South Georgia.

The only practical time of the year to go is October to March, avoiding the darkness of the Antarctic winter.

Early booking is advisable: usually a year in advance. We will book transatlantic flights in first class, business class, premier economy or economy according to your preference together with any necessary internal flights and any hotels, excursions, transfers and land arrangements before or after your expedition cruise.

These pages have been designed to help you to provide a comprehensive overview to the full range of Antarctic cruises and expeditions.

Our Antarctica Revealed website has further information with details on every ship that travels to Antarctica and includes some special itineraries at the start and the end of the Antarctic season when ships are being repositioned, taking in lesser visited places such as Easter Island, Devil's Island, St Helena and Tristan da Cunha.

Antarctica Revealed

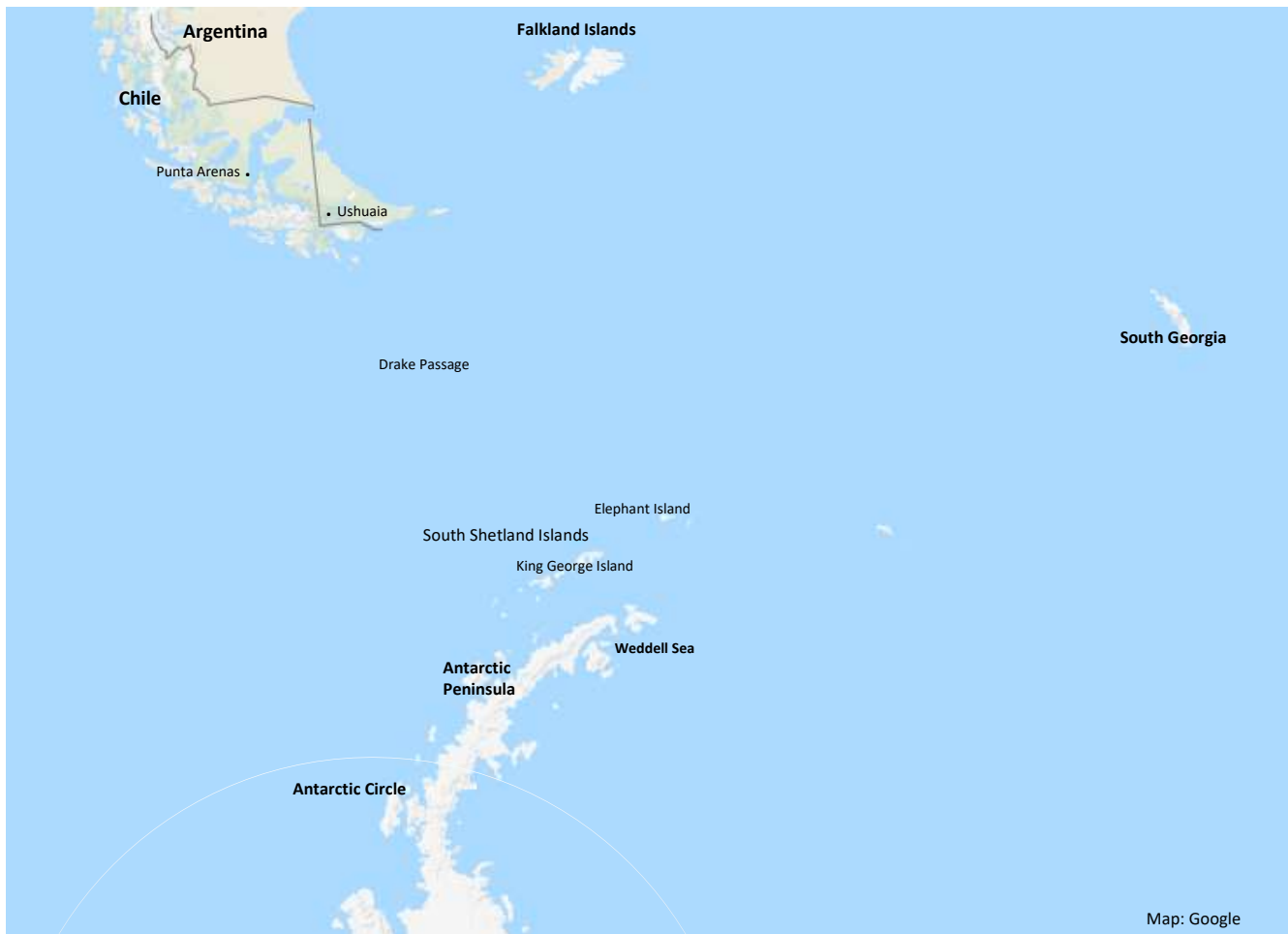
Antarctica Revealed is part of the Revealed Travel group owned by Mercator Enterprises Ltd.

Revealed Travel are dedicated to promoting travel to some of the world's most exciting destinations with a team of travel specialists who have considerable experience and a good understanding of passenger needs.

We aim to combine quality of service with in-depth knowledge and expertise.

Antarctica cruises are governed by the provisions of the Antarctic Treaty under which '...Antarctica shall continue for ever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and shall not become the scene or object of international discord.' Fifty-three nations are signatories to the accord. Of particular note are the Environmental Protocols of 1991 concerning the protection of wildlife in Antarctica, details of which can be found on the following website:

www.iaato.org/visitor-guidelines



Practical Information

Most cruises will start or end in Ushuaia, in southern Argentina, from where it is a day and a half's journey to cross Drake's Passage to reach the Antarctic Peninsula. A traditional Antarctica Peninsula itinerary would last 10-12 days, starting and ending in Ushuaia and include the southerly South Shetlands.

Between December and February a few itineraries navigate further south from the Antarctic Peninsula to cross into the Antarctic or Polar Circle, adding a couple of days onto the journey. Longer itineraries of 17-22 days might include South Georgia and/or the Falkland Islands.

If time is short and you don't have particularly good sea-legs, there are some Antarctic Air-Cruises which include flights from Punta Arenas to and from King George Island in the South Shetlands from where you travel to the Antarctic Peninsula. These itineraries save time by flying across Drake's Passage in each direction. The first night is usually in a hotel in Punta Arenas.

Some itineraries start or end in Stanley in the Falkland Islands and include a flight to/from Chile (either a charter flight from Santiago or a flight to/from Punta Arenas). Other itineraries might start or end with a charter flight across Drake Passage between Punta Arenas and the Chilean airbase at King George Island.

Trips which start in Montevideo (Uruguay), Puerto Madryn or Buenos Aires (Argentina) may include the first night in a hotel but please check details with us. Similarly, itineraries which start in Santiago, Valparaiso or San Antonio (Chile) may include an initial night in a hotel.

Further Information

Our Antarctica Revealed website has information on every ship that travels to Antarctica and includes some special itineraries at the start and end of the season when ships are being repositioned, taking in such remote destinations as Easter Island, the Amazon, Devil's Island, St Helena, Tristan da Cunha and Cape Verde.

We will book transatlantic flights to South America in first class, business or economy according to preference together with internal flights and any hotels and ground arrangements you require before or after your expedition.



The South Shetlands

The South Shetlands are located some 60 miles northwest of the Antarctic Peninsula and are regarded as the mildest and most accessible part of the region. Amongst the wildlife, there are colonies of chinstrap penguins, elephant seals breed on the beaches and humpback whales feed in the rich protected waters.

The quickest Antarctic air-cruise itineraries fly from Punta Arenas in Southern Chile to King George Island from where you board your expedition ship to the Antarctic Peninsula.



The Antarctic Peninsula

The spectacular Antarctic Peninsula is 600 miles south of Tierra del Fuego across the Drake Passage. The north-western tip is ice-free for most of the year attracting vast colonies of penguins and seals and forming the feeding waters for whales.

The Gerlache Strait is the centre-piece for most journeys into the western Antarctic Peninsula with stunningly beautiful scenery and an abundant richness of wildlife.



Falkland Islands

Expedition ships usually stay for a day or two at the Falklands, visiting such places as West Point Island, Carcass Island and Stanley. Amongst the birdlife are southern giant petrels, endemic Falkland steamer ducks, kelp and dolphin gulls, black-crowned night herons, red-backed hawks and peregrine falcons.

Please contact us to discuss longer tailor-made itineraries to the Falkland Islands, either with flights from RAF Brize Norton or via Chile.

In brief:

Ushuaia – Southern Argentina: the starting point for many expeditions to the Antarctica Peninsula.

Punta Arenas – Southern Chile: some itineraries fly from here to King George Island (South Shetlands) to board expedition ship.

Drake Passage – the stretch of ocean between the southern tip of South America and Antarctica.

South Shetland Islands – 11 major islands including King George Island, Deception Island, Livingston Island and Elephant Island.

Antarctic Peninsula – 60 miles south-east of the South Shetlands, the tip of the peninsula is known as Antarctic Sound.

Falkland Islands – 300 miles east of southern Argentina consisting of 2 main islands (West and East Falkland) and about 740 small islands and islets. Stanley is the capital.

South Georgia – 860 miles east-south-east of the Falklands.

Weddell Sea – eastern side of the Antarctic Peninsula from Antarctic Sound.

Antarctic Circle – also called the Polar Circle, the most southerly of the parallel circles of latitude.

Important Information

Note that Category 1 expedition vessels up to 200 passengers have a broader range of potential landing sites than larger ships (Category 2, 201-500 passengers). Cruise-only ships carrying more than 500 passengers are not permitted to make landings.

Briefings for Travellers
<https://iaato.org/visitors-slide-show>



South Georgia

South Georgia is 860 miles east-southeast of the Falkland Islands and provides the greatest breeding and feeding grounds for warm-blooded marine life. The island supports some 5 million fur seals, 100 million sea birds, around half the planet's elephant seals and millions of penguins. The beach at Salisbury Plain alone is the breeding ground for half a million king penguins.

Famously, after leaving his men at Elephant Island, Sir Ernest Shackleton reached South Georgia in dramatic journey in an open lifeboat and returned to rescue them.





King Penguins at Volunteer Point, Falkland Islands

Weddell Sea

The Weddell Sea, on the eastern side of the Antarctic Peninsula, has a colder climate and more sea ice, making for more difficult navigation and unpredictable landings. But the sight of vast tabular glaciers (perhaps up to a mile in length) coming out of Antarctic Sound is truly breath-taking. Noted for Weddell seals, humpback, killer and Minke whales and Adelie penguins.



Sub-Antarctic Islands (New Zealand)

For an altogether amazing experience travel between New Zealand and Argentina via the sub-Antarctic Macquarie Island, Ross Sea, Polar Circle and Antarctic Peninsula.

Macquarie Island is home to Leopard and Southern Elephant Seals and the endemic Macquarie Island Shag. It is also the most important habitat for Royal Penguins.



St Helena



Polar Circle

Some of the longer trips to the western Antarctic Peninsula aim to navigate through the spectacularly beautiful narrow passage of Lemaire Channel and push further south to cross the Antarctic Circle.

Between October and November the sea ice is too dense so such itineraries usually have to wait until later in the season.



Remote Islands and Repositioning

From Easter Island in the Pacific to St Helena and Tristan da Cunha in the Atlantic or Manaus in the Amazon, there are expedition ships which call in at remote places or travel further afield whilst they are repositioning vessels at the start and end of each season.

Departure Dates and Costs:

Our Antarctica Revealed website has information on every ship that travels to Antarctica.

As most of our bookings are for two passengers travelling together we have based costs on twin/double cabin with a private bathroom.

Some of the older ships travelling to Antarctica offer cheaper cabins with shared bathrooms (between two cabins) or triple/quadruple cabins.

Single Passengers:

Please contact us if you are a solo traveller. If you are willing to share it may be possible to avoid paying any supplement for your own cabin.

Recommended Reading:

For a first-hand account of the ill-fated Terra Nova Expedition (1910-1913) commanded by Captain Robert Falcon Scott, we thoroughly recommend "The Worst Journey in the World" by Apsley Cherry-Garrard (Virago Classics). First published in 1922, this book has never been out of print.

For a dramatic account of the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition (1914-17) led by Sir Ernest Shackleton we recommend "The Endurance: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition" by Caroline Alexander (Bloomsbury 1998). The book includes photographs by Frank Hurley.



Know your Penguins



Emperor Penguins

Emperor penguins are the largest and heaviest of all the penguin species. They grow to a little under 4ft (1.15m) and weigh up to 88lbs (40 kg). Emperor penguins are able to swim underwater for over 20 minutes and can also dive deeper than other penguins to feed on fish, krill and squid at greater depths. Their most dangerous predator is the Leopard Seal.

Although they had first been sighted during Captain Cook's second voyage (The Resolution, 1772-1775), the first breeding colony was only discovered in 1902 during Captain Scott's 1901-04 Discovery Expedition. For a time some thought that penguins might be a 'missing link' in evolution and, in July 1911 (in the middle of the Antarctic winter), zoologist Dr Edward "Bill" Wilson, Lieutenant Henry "Birdie" Bowers and assistant zoologist Apsley Cherry-Garrard travelled to Cape Crozier to collect Emperor penguin eggs, a trip which provided the title for Cherry-Garrard's book: "The Worst Journey in the World". Wilson and Bowers were later to perish, along with Scott, Lawrence "Titus" Oates and Petty Officer Edgar Evans on their way back from the South Pole.

The Emperor Penguin ranges throughout the coastal waters of Antarctica (and up to 56 miles inland). The northernmost breeding colony is on Snow Hill Island off the east coast of the Antarctic Peninsula in the Weddell Sea. There are occasional expeditions which travel here.



Rockhopper Penguins

Rockhopper Penguins grow to 22 inches (55 cm) tall and weigh about 6 pounds (3 kg).

Northern Rockhopper Penguins (*left*) are to be found on Gough Island and Tristan de Cunha in the Atlantic Ocean.

Southern Rockhopper Penguins (*right*) can be seen in the Falkland Islands (particularly Beauchene, Steeple and Grand Jason Islands) between early October and the end of April.





King Penguins

King Penguins (*left*) are seen in South Georgia and at Volunteer Point on East Falkland where there are more than 1,000 breeding adults.

Gentoo Penguins

The Gentoo Penguin (*right*) has a distinctive white bar over the crown and a long orange and black bill. They grow to about 30 inches (76 cm) and can be seen all year round in the Falklands. They are also to be found in South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula.



Magellanic Penguins

Magellanic Penguins (*right*) stand about 27 inches (70 cm) and weigh around 9 pounds (4 kg). They are named after Ferdinand Magellan who spotted them in South America on his 1519 voyage.

Magellanic Penguins are seen in the Falklands between early September and mid-April. Carcass Island in particular.

Magdalena Island in the Strait of Magellan in Southern Chile has a large population. They can also be found along the Argentine coast.



Chinstrap Penguins

Chinstrap Penguins are found in South Georgia, the South Shetlands and the Antarctic Peninsula. They grow to about 28 inches (72 centimetres) tall and weigh up to 14 pounds (6.35 kg). Males are larger and heavier than females.

Chinstrap penguins are one of the boldest and most aggressive species of penguin.

Royal Penguin

The Royal Penguin (*right*) is found in the sub-antarctic Macquarie Island, south of New Zealand and the nearby Bishop and Clark islets.

The breeding season runs from September to March. Royal Penguins are monogamous and form large colonies of up to half a million birds



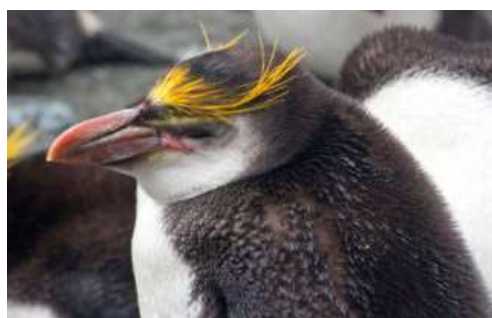
Macaroni Penguins

Macaroni Penguins are to be seen in South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula, the South Shetlands and the subantarctic islands of Australasia. Although this is the most abundant type of penguin, numbers have declined dramatically in the last 30 years possibly due to climate change, marine pollution and, with increased commercial fishing, a reduced density of krill, the Macaroni penguin's main food.



Adelie Penguins

There are large populations of Adelie penguins in the Weddell and Ross Seas. Although numbers are thought to have declined over the last 40 years, a 'supercolony' was discovered by satellite photography in 2014 in the Danger Islands off the Northern tip of the Antarctic Peninsula in the Weddell Sea. A 2015 research expedition, making use of drones, estimated the numbers of Adelie Penguins in the colony to be 1.5 million.



Other Penguin Species

The **Galapagos** Penguin is the only type of penguin found north of the Equator. The **Humboldt** Penguin can be seen on the Pacific coast of Chile and Peru and is closely related to the **African** Penguin found along the coastline of South Africa and Namibia. The **Yellow-Eyed** Penguin, **Snares** Penguin and **Little Blue** are all found in New Zealand. The **Australian Little** Penguin is a different species to the Little Blue.

