

VOYAGE TO ANTARCTICA

Optional Buenos Aires & the End of the World Pre-tour

 Walking Adventures
INTERNATIONAL

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January 9-19, 2020 * 11 Days * Tiered Pricing Available
30+ Participants: \$9,975 * 25-29 Participants: \$11,900

This is not your garden variety Adventure! Flying to the bottom of the world, sailing through the oft-tumultuous Drake Passage, going ashore in Zodiac rafts, walking/hiking over uneven, rocky terrain, encountering wildlife and icebergs close-up and in color—all combine to make this the most adventurous Adventure we offer to date. This is a continent like no other! This is an experience like no other!

The itinerary described below reflects possible stops and possible walks we may experience during the voyage based upon the likely route of our cruise and past experience. A final projected itinerary will be established during the summer of 2019 when the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) meets to approve 2020 itineraries for all small ships cruising Antarctic waters. IAATO was founded in 1991 to promote the practice of safe and environmentally responsible travel to the Antarctic. Managing itineraries also serves to reduce the likelihood that ships will encounter one another while cruising and especially during shore excursions.

The approved itinerary will then remain tentative due to the possible need for the captain to reroute according to variables such as weather and ice and other changing conditions. These variables make for a fluid and exciting program (we once spent an hour circling a huge slanting iceberg because a colony of penguins was entertaining us by attempting to jump out of the waves onto the ice), but rest assured that you will see plenty of the 7th continent with two shore excursions per day while we are in Antarctic waters (days 4 through 8), lots of great viewing from the ship as we sail, and a full slate of outstanding naturalist lectures!

HIGHLIGHTS —

- ❁ Penguins – pinstriped stars of any trip to Antarctica provide entertainment on many shore excursions
- ❁ Birds – albatrosses, petrels, terns, skuas, and shags amazing us with antics and acrobatics
- ❁ Seals – crabeater seals and fur seals are likely; leopard seals, the penguin predator, are also lurking; if lucky, we'll see bobbing blobs of blubber called elephant seals
- ❁ Whales – humpbacks and minke are most likely, though several species feed in these waters
- ❁ Ice – you may be surprised at how fantastic and full of color, light, and texture ice can be
- ❁ Naturalists – education was never this fun and fascinating when we were in school!
- ❁ Wow Walks – stroll amidst surreal southern landscapes that few humans have trod!





Your Walking Adventure Guides ➡



Scott Isom & Russ Isom are a father-son team who share a passion for exploring the outdoors and have enjoyed hiking the natural wonders of the Pacific Northwest area for years. As one of WAI's busiest guides and on-site Adventure planners, Scott has led tours on all 7 continents. Russ will be assisting Scott on this tour, and has been both guiding and assisting on Walking Adventures for over 10 years. Scott and Russ will be accompanied by guides and naturalists aboard the *M/V Plancius* and look forward to exploring the wonders of *Antarctica 2020* with you!



DAY 1~January 9: Set sail from Ushuaia, Argentina (D)

The epic Adventure departs this evening on the *M/V Plancius* from Ushuaia, southernmost city on the planet. Embarkation is from 4 to 5 p.m. Shortly thereafter, we weigh anchor and begin a voyage of discovery like no other! We sail through the mountain-fringed Beagle Channel en route to Antarctica, the "7th continent", a shadowy myth throughout human history until just a couple hundred years ago.

DAYS 2 & 3~January 10 & 11: At Sea (BLD)

Leaving the Beagle Channel, we head south into the Drake Passage, crossing the Antarctic Convergence where warmer currents meet colder Antarctic waters. This rite of passage can be a challenge. At this latitude, no land masses provide obstacles to ocean currents and the U.S. Navy has classified this as one of the world's most forbidding bodies of water. Fortunately, our crossing takes place in the relatively placid period of Antarctica's summer. Still, travelers need to be mentally and physically prepared for rough waters with seasickness remedies and an informed strategy for moving about the ship if conditions are rough. This time onboard is ideal to prepare for the exciting days ahead with lectures and other presentations by the ship naturalists and expedition team. We will likely encounter a changing variety of bird life including four different species of albatross, cape pigeons, southern fulmars, and three different species of petrel.

DAYS 4 to 7~January 12 to 15: Antarctic Peninsula (BLD)

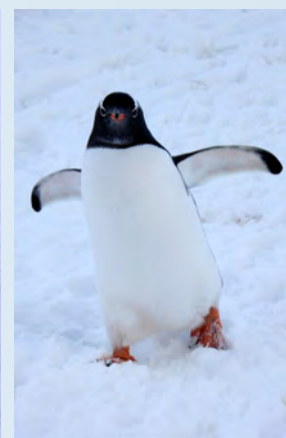
As we head south, we plan to visit a number of Antarctica highlights, generally enjoying two shore excursions each day. Cuverville Island, for example, offers a hike with penguin rookeries framed by stunning sea and mountain views. Danco Island hosts a large colony of Gentoo penguins and breeding pairs of Brown Skuas. Neko Harbour and Paradise Bay provide breathtaking vistas of icebergs and deep cut fjords, especially in windless conditions when the sea acts like a massive mirror. A walk at Pléneau Island provides eye-popping panoramas over ice-strewn waters; we've interacted with curious leopard seals here in the past. It is likely that we'll sail through spectacular Lemaire Channel to Petermann Island for a walk with Adélie penguins and blue-eyed shags.

Zodiac cruising is a regular feature of our landings, often zipping us amongst mountains of floating ice. Chances are good for encountering Humpback, Minke, and Fin whales, either from the ship, or even close up from our zodiacs! Late mornings and afternoons are often spent in the lecture room, advancing our understanding of this environment through naturalist presentations on various aspects of the natural and historical wonders of this fascinating region at the bottom of the globe.



DAY 8~January 16: South Shetland Islands (BLD)

The volcanic islands of the South Shetland Islands are wind-swept, often cloaked in mist, and well known for their prolific wildlife! Expect to see Chinstrap penguin rookeries, a variety of seabird species with likely closeup sightings of Fur seals, and perhaps Elephant seals. At Deception Island, the ship plunges through Neptune's Bellows, a narrow opening that leads to a sea-filled caldera, creating a natural harbor for our ship! Ashore we'll find hot springs, an abandoned whaling station, and thousands of cape petrels, kelp gulls, brown and south polar skuas, and Antarctic terns.



DAYS 9 & 10~January 17 & 18: At Sea (BLD)

On our way north across the Drake Passage, we are again followed by a plethora of different species of seabirds. Several fascinating lectures are made on the return voyage by the ship's illustrious expedition staff.



DAY 11~January 19: Depart from Argentina (B)

Disembark at Ushuaia this morning and catch flights home at the close of the most unforgettable adventure of your life! 🐧

Optional Pre-tour ~

Buenos Aires & the End of the World

January 6 - 9, 2020 * 4 Days * Price TBA

The program for the optional pre-tour will include 2 nights in Buenos Aires and 1 night in Ushuaia, Argentina. Activities will include a city walk in Buenos Aires, a guided coach tour of Buenos Aires, an outstanding tango dinner dance show with famous Argentinean beef, and a walk right at the "end of the world" in Tierra del Fuego National Park just before we board the ship to Antarctica! The itinerary and pricing for the optional pre-tour will be available in January of 2019. 🏠



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What's Included:

- ✿ Accommodations onboard the *M/V Plancius*, tour price is based on accommodations in Twin Porthole cabin (Upgrade details below)
- ✿ Group departure transfer (one departure offered by the ship) from the ship to Ushuaia airport on January 19
- ✿ Port charges
- ✿ All Zodiac cruising and shore transfers
- ✿ 29 meals: all meals aboard ship – breakfast, lunch, dinner (BLD)
- ✿ Coffee, tea, & snacks throughout the cruise
- ✿ Complimentary use of rubber boots for shore excursions and walks
- ✿ All walks
- ✿ Walk credit for 2 walks for those collecting IVV credit
- ✿ Services of Expedition team for shore excursions, including leading walks
- ✿ Lectures aboard ship by naturalist guides & expedition team members
- ✿ WAI guide service throughout (2 guides)
- ✿ Pooled tips aboard ship are not included

Pricing is based on double occupancy; single accommodations are prohibitively priced aboard our small ship and may not be available.

OUR SHIP – *M/V PLANCIUS*

M/V Plancius is a great expedition vessel for 116 passengers with lots of open-deck spaces including full walk-around possibilities on Deck 4, maximizing wildlife viewing while cruising! It was built in 1976 and was fully rebuilt in 2009.

The ship is comfortable and nicely decorated, but not luxurious. It's designed for explorers! It has a restaurant/lecture room on Deck 3, and on Deck 5 a spacious observation lounge, with bar, offers large windows for full panoramic views. The vessel is manned by 17 highly experienced international nautical crew members, 19 hotel staff (including 6 chefs), 7 expedition staff (1 expedition leader and 6 guides/lecturers), and 1 doctor.

The Cabins

The *M/V Plancius* has 6 decks. Cabins are on Decks 3, 4, 5 & 6. The Adventure price is based upon the category of cabin called Twin Porthole. These cabins are on Deck 3 and provide a porthole, 2 lower berths, private shower & toilet, hair dryer, desk & chair, and ample storage space. They are 129 square feet in size. We have a limited number of these cabins available on a first-come-first-serve basis.

Upgrades can be booked on a space available basis as follows:

Deck 4 Twin Window: These cabins are slightly larger than Twin Porthole cabins (either 135 or 145 square feet) and have a full window in place of porthole.

- ✿ Upgrade fee: \$450 per person

Deck 4 Twin Deluxe: These cabins have the same amenities as Twin Porthole except that there are two windows, a flat screen TV, telephone, and internet connection. These are corner cabins and are therefore a bit more spacious at 145 square feet.

- ✿ Upgrade fee: \$850 per person



WAI is a registered seller of travel in Washington (601 677 299) and California (2039567-40). Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the state of California.

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1.800.779.0353



Fun@WalkingAdventures.com



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WALK DESCRIPTIONS

Below is a short summary of walks that may be part of our Antarctica program, depending upon weather and navigation factors. Landfalls could be quite different than the plan, but these descriptions are intended to provide a feeling for the type of walking we have done in the past; many will likely be part of the 2020 program.

WHALER'S BAY, DECEPTION ISLAND ~ 5 KM, RATED 2B

Whaler's Bay in the caldera of Deception Island offers a few options for discovery. One direction takes us along a sandy beach for a short climb over lava flows to the viewpoint at Neptune's Window. A second spur trail climbs Ronald Hill, with an elevation gain of just over 300 feet, providing outstanding views, in good weather, of the island and sea-filled caldera.

HANNAH POINT ~ 3.5 KM, RATED 2B

Hannah Point offers a marvelous out and back hike from the landing beach, around penguin rookeries, past blubbery piles of elephant seals, cutting across the sloped hill of cinder and gravel back down to a beach where we have the chance to discover fossils.

CUVERVILLE ISLAND ~ 2 KM, RATED 2B

Cuverville Island is a stone's throw from the mainland of the Antarctic Peninsula and is home to one of the largest Gentoo penguin colonies in Antarctica. Walking here generally takes place along the shore, with the option to climb a hill that gains us close proximity to the penguin rookeries and provides stunning views out over the iceberg-strewn water (where our ship awaits us) and over to the mainland.

NEKO HARBOUR ~ 1 KM, RATED 2B

The hike here passes penguin rookeries and ascends a snow field to a rock outcrop with commanding views of the bay. Glaciers feed into the bay here, often calving while we are in the area. When conditions are right, some of our best photography takes place on this hike!

JOUGLA POINT ~ 1.5 KM, RATED 2C

This walk is normally paired with a visit to Port Lockroy, the British scientific station boasting the only post office on our journey. The route begins with a detour of 100 meters to a blue-eyed shag rookery. Retracing our steps, we climb to a high point on the island, with awesome views of the Neumayer Channel. This involves crossing a snow patch and tricky footing, at times, over loose stone, sometimes stepping from stone to stone.

Highlights?
"The walks... Seeing the seals, whales, penguins, towering mountains, glaciers—everything I expected!"
~Carol Y., OHIO

PETERMANN ISLAND ~ 2.5 KM, RATED 2B

A hike on Petermann Island leads to Petermann's southernmost point. The route has two spur trails. The first spur takes us to a small rock promontory past the world's southernmost Gentoo penguin colony. Crossing a rocky stream, snow patches, and rocky areas takes us to a viewpoint with a nice view of the colonies. We return to the start point and go left on the longer spur, (twice the distance of the first) that passes colonies of Gentoo and traverses partially melted snow fields to a rock outcrop with views of the other side of the island.

PLÉNEAU ISLAND ~ 1.5 - 2 KM, RATED 2C

The visit here generally goes first to see a Gentoo penguin colony, where Elephant seals are also known to lounge. Retracing our steps, we climb through rock outcroppings, used earlier in the year as penguin rookeries, to the summit of this small island. Breathtaking views can be had here of the iceberg-bejeweled bay on the opposite side of Pléneau. This hike has tricky footing in several places, and the rock surfaces can be slippery. The second half of our visit to Pléneau typically involves a Zodiac iceberg cruise where we've had encounters with leopard seals in the past. 🐆



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