PRIVATE JOURNEYS WITH JOURNEY LATIN

SIGNATURE ANTARCTICA: HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ANTARCTIC PENINSULA

13 days from **£8,700pp**

ANTARCTICA / ANTARCTIC PENINSULA AND SOUTH SHETLAND ISLANDS



WHY US

We are the UK's No.1 specialist in travel to Latin America and have been creating award-winning holidays to every corner of the region for over four decades; we pride ourselves on being the most knowledgeable people there are when it comes to travel to Central and South America and passionate about it too.

OUR JOURNEY

As our name suggests, we are single-minded about Latin America. This is what sets us apart from other travel companies – and what allows us to offer you not just a holiday but the opportunity to experience something extraordinary on inspiring journeys throughout Mexico, Central and South America.

WE LOVE LATIN AMERICA

- A passion for the region runs through all we do
- All our Consultants have lived or travelled extensively in Latin America
- Up-to-the-minute knowledge underpinned by 40 years' experience

TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

- Fully bonded and licensed
- ATOL-protected
- On your side when it matters
- Book with confidence, knowing every penny is secure

THE REAL LATIN AMERICA

- Our insider knowledge helps you go beyond the guidebooks
- We hand-pick hotels with character and the most rewarding excursions
- Let us show you the Latin America we know and love

OVERVIEW & OUTLINE ITINERARY

The best classic Antarctic overview holiday at a competitive price. Travel on a stable, high-quality purpose-built cruise ship among bergs and glaciers.

DAY 1	**Arrive in Buenos Aires. Transfer to your hotel in downtown Buenos Aires.**
DAY 2	**Guided city tour.**
DAY 3	**Fly south to Ushuaia (Tierra del Fuego) and board your vessel**
DAYS 4-5	**Cross the Drake Passage.**
DAYS 6-10	**Visit the South Shetland Islands, and continue on to and explore the Antarctic Peninsula.**
DAYS 11-13	**Cross the Drake Passage. Disembark in Ushuaia; fly to Buenos Aires.**

ITINERARY

You don't have to venture deep into this huge continent – larger than Europe – to have a rewarding experience of what Antarctica has to offer. One of the most frequent and popular itineraries is this journey which crosses the Drake Passage to visit the most accessible region of the continent around the Antarctic Peninsula, a slim finger of land and offshore islands reaching out from the main continental mass towards southern Argentina. You will observe prolific wildlife, extraordinary ice-carved landscapes and evidence of historic human impact – derelict whaling stations, and research outposts.

You'll view the highlights from your ship, Zodiac or onshore excursions; but, on some departures and only if conditions permit, you may also be able to opt to paddle round the bergs in a kayak, or atop a stand-up-paddle board. You may even have an opportunity to camp out on the ice.

This expedition reveals the snow-drenched mountains and icebergs of the more accessible fringes of the White Continent. The cliffs and bays are brought to life by the chattering and wheeling of birdlife, sea-lions and penguins. You pass through the oft stormy Drake Passage and the Antarctic Convergence Zone, where the up-welling of nutrients, as warm water meets cold, attracts wildlife in astonishing abundance.

The specific itinerary shown, departure dates and costs are based on the MS Fridtjof Nansen, however a huge number of ships operate variations on this popular route, each offering slightly different durations, inclusions, optional activities and levels of comfort. Contact us to discuss the best option to suit your requirements.

Please note: Many Antarctic expedition cruise operators offer early booking discounts and other restricted offers that depend on availability. Our advertised prices do not take these into account. Contact one of our Travel Experts for the best available rates.

DAY 1

Arrive in Buenos Aires. Transfer to your hotel in downtown Buenos Aires.



You will be met at the airport and escorted to your hotel in downtown Buenos Aires by one of our local representatives.

Buenos Aires is an elegant, cultured and cosmopolitan city famed for its interesting museums and the fascinating port district of La Boca, with its cobbled streets and brightly painted houses. It was here that the tango was born, and Diego Maradona honed his footballing skills.

The centre of town is home to the colonial heartland, government buildings and churches, as well as chic shopping districts, which have a nostalgic Parisian feel. The bohemian quarter of San Telmo is full of quaint old houses interspersed with antiques shops, tango bars and classy restaurants. Slightly further out of the centre is the Recoleta district, even more evocative of French belle époque and Italian influence.

DAY 2

Guided city tour.



Your guided city tour takes you along Avenida 9 de Julio, one of the widest boulevards in the world and studded by the Obelisk, an emblematic symbol of the city.

Along this majestic highway is the 19th century Teatro Colón which, in terms of its architecture and design, as well as its excellent acoustics, is considered one of world's best. On to the Plaza de Mayo, enclosed on 3 sides by the Metropolitan cathedral, the town hall and the Casa Rosada, the presidential palace. Time permitting, the tour continues to bohemian, arty La Boca, which was settled and built by Italian immigrants and has streets lined with brightly painted corrugated iron-clad houses.

DAY 3

Fly south to Ushuaia (Tierra del Fuego) and board your vessel



Transfer to the airport and fly to Ushuaia in Tierra del Fuego, Patagonia, at the southernmost tip of the continent. Depending on the number of intermediate stops, your flight takes 3-5 hours.

The city has grown rapidly in recent years, partly as a result of government incentives to settlers, and its establishment as a Free Port, and partly a tourist centre – most Antarctic cruises, like yours, leave from the port here. The setting is spectacular; jagged mountains hem in the town down to the shore of the Beagle Channel.

Transfer to the port and embark your ship. We offer a wide choice of expedition ships, most of which are purpose-built for Polar expedition cruising.

Polar expedition ships are small by the standards of conventional cruise liners; most carry fewer than 200 guests, while our largest carries up to 530. Ships have ice-strengthened hulls and carry Zodiacs for exploration and remote landings. Each voyage is accompanied by skilled team of expedition guides. Some are accompanied by a practicing scientist, historian, or researcher who conducts fieldwork during the trip.

Depart and head towards the Drake Passage through the Beagle Channel, so named after the HMS Beagle which later took Charles Darwin on his explorations around the South American continent.

Please note: Many operators include a pre-cruise overnight in Ushuaia.

DAYS 4-5

Cross the Drake Passage.



Cross the Drake Passage, hundreds of kilometres of open water and the shortest crossing between Antarctica and the rest of the world. This is a notoriously choppy convergence zone so those concerned about seasickness should speak to our team of expert travel advisors to find the best ship and itinerary to suit you. Whales and dolphins can often be seen as well as an abundance of marine birds such as petrels, albatrosses and penguins. During this part of the voyage, there are briefings and presentations on the Antarctic ecosystem.

DAYS 6-10

Visit the South Shetland Islands, and continue on to and explore the Antarctic Peninsula.



At last, the first sight of land: an iceberg and then the mountains of the South Shetland Islands. The main stop here is at Deception Island, the centre of which is a volcanic caldera that last erupted in 1969. A rugged, heavily-glaciated chain of four island groups and dozens of islets hugs the Antarctic Peninsula, providing a sheltered sea passage defined by towers of black rock. Names evoke the experiences and imagination of the early explorers – Deception and Desolation Islands, the Watchtower, and elephant Island, where Shackleton's expedition was stranded for 135 days.

Continue to explore the Antarctic Peninsula. The Peninsula is the most accessible area of the continent and hosts some of the most interesting scenery and wildlife, as well as many of the continent's scientific bases.

Exactly where the ship lands will vary from one expedition to the next and according to the polar conditions as the ship edges its way southwards through the slush and abstract patterns formed by the fractured sea ice. Here, the silence is so complete that interruptions become indelible memories: noisy penguins squabbling over prized pebbles on Cuverville Island, the boom and crack of a calving glacier in Paradise Harbour, for example. The soaring peaks and stark rocks of Lemaire Channel are just the excuse you need to grab your camera gear for a shooting session from the deck, if the channel is free of ice. Wildlife you may encounter includes gentoo, chinstrap and Adélie penguins, petrels, shags, elephant and fur seals, and perhaps whales.

DAYS 11-13

Cross the Drake Passage. Disembark in Ushuaia; fly to Buenos Aires.

Leaving Antarctica, your ship sails northward and returns across the Drake Passage towards Ushuaia, arriving on the morning on day 13. Transfer to the airport and fly to Buenos Aires, from where you can either fly home or continue your adventure with a visit to Iguazu Falls, the wine region or one of Argentina's other fantastic highlights. Buenos Aires is also a good hub from which to reach some of Latin America's other extraordinary countries. Contact our Travel Experts for some advice about where would best suit your interests and requirements.



INCLUDED EXCURSIONS

- City tour of Buenos Aires
- Shore excursions on the Antarctic cruise

ESSENTIALS

2 flights (4hrs); 10-night cruise.

The hotel in Buenos Aires is a good, practical, upper-mid-range property, though many other options are available. Choose from a selection of expedition ships from mid-range to first class, which depart throughout the season. This holiday is based on a 10-night cruise. Shorter and longer cruises may also be available, covering a similar route.

Breakfast daily; full board days 3-12.

GUIDES

We carefully select our local partners, some of whom we have worked with for over 30 years. Their English-speaking guides understand the expectations of our clients very well, and are consistently singled out for praise by the latter on their return.

SUMMARY OF NIGHTS

13 days, 12 nights: Buenos Aires 2; Antarctic cruise 10.

TRIP SUITABILITY

- Kayaking.
- Camping
- Snowshoeing.

These activities are offered on some but not all departures and in some cases previous experience is advised or required. It is advisable to pre-book (and pre-pay) any optional activities which are charged for, as some of these have limited numbers and can fill up before the cruise commences. Please enquire with us for details. Hiking and Yoga classed are also offered at no additional cost on selected departures.

MONEY

For our latest currency advice for Argentina please see our FAQs section.

On the cruise ship you can pay your bill for extras with a credit card (most accepted excluding Diner's Club), or in US dollars cash.

CURRENCY

The unit of currency in Argentina is the Argentine peso. The ship works with US dollars.

DAILY SPEND

Meals on board ship are included. Water, coffee and tea are complimentary but other drinks may be charged (depending on ship). You pay for your extras (in US dollars or by credit card) at the end of the cruise. There isn't much else to pay for on board.

TIPPING

Tips are expected and local guides often rely on their tip as a significant proportion of their income.

Workers will expect a tip of some kind and so it is useful to have spare change for cruise ship staff, hotel porters, taxi drivers and the like. It is common to leave 10 – 12% in restaurants. On the cruise, a tip of $US 8-10 per person per day for the crew and guides is considered appropriate.

Some vessels include tips in the voyage price. See your voyage specific documents for details.

INSURANCE

Travel insurance is essential. Make sure your insurance covers you for the full amount if you have to cancel.

Details of our recommended policy can be found at Travel Insurance.

AIRPORT TAXES

If you have purchased your flights through Journey Latin America, the international departure tax is usually included in the ticket.

TRIP SUITABILITY

The cruise ships will be well heated, with well equipped cabins and there is often a limited health spa on board. There are optional excursions on some departures (enquire) such as kayaking and cross-country skiing. Previous experience is advisable for some activities.

The cruise:
Antarctica is very remote: once committed to your journey, you are at the mercy of the weather and ocean conditions, the melting and freezing of ice-packs, and the movement of icebergs. This is expeditionary cruising: you will be facing the same environmental challenges as the early explorers, albeit in much greater comfort, and with the assistance of modern technology and communications.

You need to be sufficiently agile to get in and out of small landing craft and walk over rocky terrain. There is a doctor on board but if you fall ill while on the cruise or have an accident, it could be a long time and maybe an arduous journey before you return to a destination with good medical facilities, so bear this in mind if you have a pre-existing condition.

Buenos Aires is hottest January-March (very humid with tropical showers, occasionally over 40°C during the day). November and December may be a little cooler.

Patagonia/Tierra del Fuego is best to visit in the summer (December-February) when days are long and mild. March and November can be sunny and clear, but it may be windy.

Antarctica is accessible by ship from late October to March, the southern hemisphere summer. Outside this period days are short and dark. The Peninsula has a typical maritime climate with average temperatures during the cruising season varying between 1°C and -15°C. Antarctica is a desert, so you won't see much precipitation.

The southern hemisphere summer is hot in Buenos Aires, so take loose-fitting light clothing for maximum comfort at this time. An umbrella is a good idea in case of a tropical shower. Spring and autumn are milder and less predictable.

South America is in general a relaxed continent and you won't need clothes for formal dining but you may wish to take some smart casual wear if you intend to visit top of the range restaurants.

On the cruise:
Protective clothing is the single most important way of ensuring a comfortable and enjoyable cruise and the key is to dress in layers. For Antarctic landings, many operators provide a complimentary parka consisting of a fleece jacket and an outer shell which is wind and waterproof. In addition, you should bring (to be worn beneath your parka) a breathable, thermal base layer to wick away perspiration and a warm mid-layer such as a fleece or down sweater; trousers (with thermal lining, or base layer of thermal leggings) and an outer shell of waterproof trousers; hat, warm socks, scarf, gloves and sunglasses. Rubber boots are essential for Antarctic landings; these can be pre-ordered and are loaned on board free of charge. Dress on board ship is informal and it's sensible to bring a spare change of warm, dry clothing for wearing out on deck between landings.
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Preventative vaccinations are recommended against the following: typhoid; polio; tetanus; hepatitis A. You should consult your GP for specific requirements.

You can also find helpful information on the Masta Travel Health website.

Holders of a full British passport do not require a visa, although passports must be valid for at least 6 months after the trip begins. Anyone with a different nationality should enquire with us or check with the relevant consulate.

If flying to the US, or via the US you will need to fill in your online ESTA application.

Many factors play a role in shaping the expedition's progress – the prevailing wind, weather and ice conditions, for example. Ideally, on most vessels, you will depart the ship by Zodiac to explore the peninsula with at least two excursions daily – on land, by Zodiac or a combination of both, lasting anything between two and four hours. There are no man-made jetties in Antarctica so landfalls are 'wet landings' where you scramble ashore from the Zodiac in rubber boots and waterproofs. You are then free to explore on your own or in groups, before later being picked up again by Zodiac. Evenings may be spent relaxing, reliving the days' events with a briefing or lecture, or out on the deck, keeping an eye on the dramatic, ever-changing scenery. Itineraries will vary from the original plan if conditions demand/permit.

It's a long time at sea, but the variety and intrinsic fascination of what can be seen is spell-binding.

The theatre of wildlife in Antarctica as a whole displays an ever changing narrative of birth, struggle, pleasure, fulfilment and death. You may witness the comedy of a waddling penguin building its nest, a mother bird feeding its young or reuniting with a returning mate; a wily seal escaping the clutches of a hunting whale.

A large variety of marine birds, including 6 species of penguin – emperor, king, macaroni, chinstrap, gentoo and Adélie, visit the White Continent – though generally it will be the latter three that are seen on the peninsula. Mammals abound here: blue, orca, humpback, minke and southern right whales prowl the chilly ocean, while Weddell, Ross, crab-eater, leopard and elephant seals sprawl on the beaches.

Plant life in Antarctica proper is restricted to lichen, mosses and algae but there are hundreds of colourful varieties of these.

What to see as the season unfolds:

November:
- Start of the season: clean, untouched landing sites.
- Courtship rituals of penguins and other seabirds, nest building.
- Elephant and fur seals court and carve out their territories.

December –January:
- Long days of summer light, milder temperatures.
- Penguin chicks hatch in the Antarctic Peninsula.
- Whale sightings increase.

February – March:
- Excellent whale-watching opportunities.
- Penguin chicks begin to fledge.
- Fur seals increasingly numerous on the Antarctic Peninsula.
- Colourful snow algae break the snow white domination of the landscape.
- Spectacular sunrises and sunsets add a rosy glow to the ice.

Specific to your cruise:

Drake Passage and the Antarctic Convergence:
Over 35 species of bird may accompany your crossing. Species include giant petrels, Antarctic fulmars, and the black-browed and wandering albatrosses with wingspans up to 3m.

South Shetland Islands:
Visitors include chinstrap, gentoo, macaroni and Adélie penguins; giant petrels, Wilson's and black-bellied storm petrels, brown and south polar skuas, Cape pigeons, Antarctic terns, blue-eyed shags, Dominican gulls, elephant, fur, leopard and crab-eater seals; humpback, minke and orca (killer) whales offshore.

Antarctic Peninsula:
Chinstrap, gentoo and Adélie penguins abound. Breeding birds include skuas, Antarctic terns, giant petrels, snowy sheathbills, Antarctic shags, kelp gulls, Wilson's storm, and Antarctic and snow petrels.

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GET IN TOUCH WITH US...

Our friendly, knowledgeable team of travel experts are always happy to chat about holiday ideas and share helpful advice. Give us a call today and begin planning your perfect trip to Latin America.

0208 747 8315

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

SEND US AN EMAIL

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