

Spirit of Shackleton, Antarctica

Discover the abundant wildlife and the unrivalled landscape of the Falkland Islands, South Georgia, the South Shetland Islands and the Antarctic Peninsula



Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

Holiday overview

Style	Polar Cruising
Accommodation	Hotels, Expedition ship
Grade	Tour
Duration	26 days from London to London
Min/Max group size	1 / 140 (maximum capacity of the cruise ship) Guaranteed to run for 1
Trip Leader	Local Leader Antarctica
Land only	Joining in Buenos Aires, Argentina



Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available

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Departures

Group departures

2024 Dates:

Mon 08 Jan - Fri 02 Feb

2025 Dates:

Wed 08 Jan - Sun 02 Feb

Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

Deposit and payments

A higher deposit is required to secure your booking on this holiday and your final balance is due 120 days before departure. For full details please refer to our terms and conditions on our website <http://www.mountainkingdoms.com/essential-information> or contact us for a postal copy.

Single cabins - if you are travelling on your own and are willing to share, we will attempt to pair you up with another solo, same sex traveller. If you would prefer a single cabin a supplement applies, price is available on application.

Cabin categories - there are 5 cabin categories on the M/S Expedition. Our price is based on twin share in a Category 2 cabin. Prices will vary according to departure date and grade of available cabin. Please contact us for details and availability.

No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 1 person and for a maximum of 140 (maximum capacity of the M/S Expedition). In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts, who will have first-hand experience of the destination/s you want to visit. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday. If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

Your guide



On board are expert, English-speaking guides who have an intimate knowledge of the area and an infectious passion for nature. They are very hard-working, attentive and helpful. The M/S Expedition has one of the highest ratios of expedition team members to guests - with one expert for every 10 guests there is always someone on hand to answer your questions and provide greater insight and appreciation of the world at its extremes. Along with a resident photographer, the expedition team is comprised of professional and highly skilled historians, marine biologists, and naturalists who offer keen insight and a unique personal perspective to each and every adventure. On your Expedition cruise, shore excursions and on board lectures will be provided by knowledgeable, expert members of the crew. For example Terence (Scobie) Pye, pictured.

Terence (Scobie) Pye is a research scientist with a Master of Science degree and decades of research time in the Antarctic. His main scientific interests are focused on the conservation and management of the sub-Antarctic islands, the impact of introduced mammals on these fragile ecosystems, sustainable tourism in the Antarctic and the history of the region. Scobie brings his years of professional experience in the logistical support and safety of polar operations in Antarctica and the Arctic. In 1978, Scobie was awarded the Fuchs Medal for outstanding service to the British Antarctic Survey.

Your route



Your trip highlights

- Exceptional value - our price includes Includes internal flights as well as additional nights in quality hotels in Buenos Aires & Ushuaia
- 19 days on board the M/S Expedition Polar Cruise Ship with international cuisine, comfortable en suite cabins and excellent facilities on board
- The adventure of a lifetime. Massive, magnificent and unforgettable astonishing scenery, towering icebergs, glaciers and snow-capped mountains
- Visit Ernest Shackleton's final resting place on the wildlife rich island of South Georgia
- Zodiac excursions with the expert expedition team who also provide regular lectures throughout your cruise
- Get up close to the captivating wildlife and birdlife of the Falkland Islands and meet the hardy locals
- Encounter enormous rookeries of penguins when you set foot on Antarctica, the least visited continent
- Time to explore the southernmost city of Ushuaia

At a glance itinerary

Days 1-2	Fly London to Buenos Aires. Overnight in Buenos Aires
Days 3-4	Fly to Ushuaia for two nights. Free day in Ushuaia
Days 5-7	Embark M/S Expedition. Sail through the Drake Passage
Days 8-12	Antarctic Peninsula and South Shetland Islands
Days 13-14	Anatrctic Peninsula and Scotia Sea
Days 15-18	The Scotia Sea and South Georgia
Days 19-20	South Georgia and the Southern Ocean
Days 21-22	Falkland Islands
Day 23	Sail to Ushuaia through the Beagle Channel
Day 24	Disembark M/S Expedition. Fly back to Buenos Aires for last night
Days 25-26	Transfer to airport. Fly to London

Trip summary

Your adventure begins in Buenos Aires, the vibrant capital City of Argentina, before you fly down to Ushuaia the southernmost city in the world and starting point for the rarest of adventures. Enjoy the spectacular mountains of the Martial Range sweeping around this small city in the southerly reaches of Tierra del Fuego. There is plenty to see and do in the two nights that you spend there, before you board the superbly equipped M/S Expedition cruise ship - your home for the next 19 nights.

Your awe-inspiring voyage begins as you set sail out through the famous Drake Passage to reach the South Shetland Islands and Antarctic Peninsula. This region abounds with wildlife activity. Penguins gather with their fast-growing chicks, whales are seen in great numbers, seals haul out onto ice floes and beaches, and numerous seabirds trail in the ship's wake. You may visit scientists working in modern research bases and there is plenty of time to enjoy the sheer beauty and the breathtaking scenery of blue and white icebergs, impressive glaciers, rugged snow-capped mountains and you will set foot on the Great White Continent. Dreams are made of this.

Once you are in the Antarctic Peninsula you will be stepping onto land as two shore landings are attempted per day (weather permitting). You will tread carefully through enormous rookeries of Gentoo, Chinstrap and Adélie penguins as Weddell seals bask in the sun and Leopard seals prowl on the ice flows. You may be lucky enough to see Minke and Humpback whales breaching in the sun of a late evening dusk, with a backdrop of stunning landscapes few have ever witnessed.

Antarctica is the coldest, windiest and driest continent. The interior of Antarctica is the largest desert on Earth. Its land mass is over 14 million square kilometres and 98% of the continent is covered by mile thick ice. It has 70 per cent of the world's fresh water, frozen as ice, and 90 per cent of the world's ice! Its average height at over 2,300 metres is greater than any other continent. The highest peak, Mount Vinson is 4,897m/16,067ft, and was only spotted in the late 1950s and climbed for the first time in 1966. Over 1400 climbers have attempted

the climb since then. The peninsula also has a remarkable human history. During the voyage, you will learn about some of the most important and dramatic expeditions to this remote corner of the world.

Your expedition continues through the Scotia Sea to reach South Georgia and the Falkland Islands. South Georgia is home to many interesting historical sites including former whaling stations, and with inspiring lectures onboard, illuminating Ernest Shackleton's legend, it will be poignant to visit his final resting place. South Georgia is also immensely rich in wildlife and a visit to a huge colony of King penguins is a major highlight of this part of the journey. Your final stop is on the Falkland Islands which provide a rare opportunity to witness the biological diversity and extraordinary scenery of Antarctica. Penguins and albatross are abundant here and the Falklands have the largest Black-browed albatross colony in the world. In Stanley you will meet the hardy local inhabitants whose colourful houses provide contrast to the long dark winters.

Cruises run during the Austral summer. Typically, the weather is at its crispest during the long Antarctic days of late November, December and January when you will see thousands of penguins and their chicks as well as seals and the occasional whale. Later in the season, February and March, penguins are already beginning to fledge; the weather can be a bit less crisp, some of the blue days fade away, but more whales and orcas are attracted to the nutrient rich waters. There are no guarantees with wildlife and no two expeditions are alike, but you are sure to see a great variety of birds and marine life.

One thing you can be assured of though is that you will cruise in great comfort and safety on board the M/S Expedition polar cruise ship. Cabins are comfortable with en suite facilities and sea-facing windows. Dining is first rate with a high standard of international cuisine and even the chance for al fresco dining. The highly experienced M/S Expedition crew comprises experts in geology, ornithology and marine biology as well as a resident photographer, and there are regular presentations and film shows to make sure you get the most out of your voyage. There's a gym, sauna, medical centre and library on board to keep mind and body active as well as a pub and lounge to relax in.

During your cruise there may also be the option (at an additional cost), to spend a thrilling night camping on the Antarctic ice or to enjoy a kayaking excursion. And, at the end of your cruise, you'll get to keep your premium quality expedition parka - a great souvenir of a truly amazing experience.

Special notes

Why has Mountain Kingdoms chosen the polar cruise ship the M/S Expedition?

There are many different polar cruise ships; some large, some small, some basic and some luxurious. We believe the M/S Expedition is the best choice because:-

- Smaller ships suffer in the Southern Ocean swells. M/S Expedition is fitted with powerful stabilisers to give comfortable cruising
- The larger polar ships are not so flexible. They cannot get so close to the shore and they suffer from being too impersonal. M/S Expedition carries a maximum of 140 passengers, making it a very friendly experience.
- The ship was refurbished in 2009 and offers high quality accommodation
- It offers a high staff-to-passenger ratio - 1:10

Facilities, amenities and safety features:

- 360° top observation deck and raised forward observation deck
- All cabins with private en-suite facilities and outside views
- Large fleet of Zodiacs with four stroke engines
- Free expedition parka to use and keep and complimentary wellington boots for the duration of your cruise
- Fine dining - international cuisine in one sitting
- Large aft deck with barbecue facilities
- Gift Shop and Polar Bear pub
- Medical clinic and cruise doctor
- Sauna & gym
- Library and computer room with internet where available
- Optional kayaking - all equipment provided (contact the office for details)
- Large drying room for clothes and boots
- Designed to 'Ice Class 1B' specifications for service in sea ice
- Four covered lifeboats provide capacity for all passengers and crew, while six life-rafts boast a capacity of 150 persons. Full immersion cold weather survival suits for all passengers and crew.

Weather Information

Antarctica is synonymous with cold. From November to March, the Austral summer, as the ice recedes and coastlines become accessible, the temperatures become tolerable and conducive for your Expedition. On the coast, temperatures are considerably warmer from 5°C (41°F) to -5°C (23°F) in the austral summer.

The Antarctic Peninsula experiences the highest temperatures year round compared with the rest of the continent of Antarctica. The interior of Antarctica is the world's driest desert, since the extreme cold in winter freezes water vapour out of the air. Annual snowfall on the polar plateau is equivalent to less than 5cm (2in) of rain.

You will need warm and waterproof clothing for the zodiac landings. Dress onboard is informal. We will send you details of what to pack in our trip dossier.

Your trip itinerary

Day 1: Fly London to Buenos Aires

Fly overnight London to Buenos Aires.

Overnight: In flight

Day 2: Arrive Buenos Aires. Group transfer to hotel. Time at leisure.

On arrival in Buenos Aires you will be met and transferred to your hotel. You are free to enjoy the sights and sounds of Buenos Aires.

Overnight: Hotel Intersur Recoleta, Buenos Aires

Day 3: Fly to Ushuaia.

Transfer to the domestic airport for your flight to Ushuaia. On arrival in Ushuaia, the southernmost city in the world, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Ushuaia has plenty of bars, coffee shops and restaurants catering for all tastes and plenty of shops to get those last minute bits of extra kit you forgot to pack.

Overnight: Hotel Las Lengas or Hotel Albatros, Ushuaia (Meals: B)

Day 4: Day at leisure in Ushuaia.

Sitting on the shores of the Beagle Channel, Ushuaia actually means 'the bay facing westward' in the language of the original Yamna inhabitants. It was once a penal colony (the presidio was disbanded in the 1940s) for political prisoners as well as hardened criminals. Ushuaia is now a major tourist attraction, particularly catering for people about to embark on a cruise to Antarctica. The town of 40,000 is also a major ski resort area for both alpine and cross-country skiers and offers magnificent hiking in Parque Nacional Tierra del Fuego, the only coastal national park in Argentina.

Overnight: Hotel Las Lengas or Hotel Albatros, Ushuaia (Meals: B)

Day 5: Free morning. Embark on the Polar cruise ship, M/S Expedition.

After a night in a hotel and a good breakfast your sense of anticipation grows as your ship, the MS Expedition is positioned in the port being readied for your embarkation in the afternoon.

Embarkation time is set for 16:00hrs. The morning is free to do any lastminute shopping, an optional excursion to Tierra Del Fuego National Park, or a good hike up to the Marshall Glacier (arranged locally). The evening is spent on board the ship watching the sunset over the Beagle Channel which is around 150 miles long and forms part of the border between Argentina and Chile. The Beagle Channel was named after the HMS Beagle after it's 1820s voyage around the southern coasts of South America. On board was Captain Robert Fitzroy whose name was later given to the famous Fitzroy and Paine mountains in Chile. On a later voyage to the region he brought along a young naturalist called Charles Darwin!



Please note that while it is our intention to adhere to the itinerary described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. On the first day onboard, your Expedition Leader will give you an expedition overview.

Overnight: M / S Expedition (Meals: B D)

Day 6: Crossing the Drake Passage.

Today you will begin your crossing of the Drake Passage - a 600 mile long stretch of the Southern Ocean that bears the name of the 16th Century English Explorer Sir Francis Drake. The MS Expedition is at home in this part of the ocean renowned for the unimpeded, never-ending fetch of the winds that encircle the Antarctic.

At some point today you will cross the Antarctic Convergence, a meeting of cold polar water flowing north and warmer sub-Antarctic water moving in the opposite direction. It is the largest biological barrier on earth and is marked by a change in temperature, salinity and nutrient levels. The north flowing Antarctic waters predominantly sink beneath southward moving sub-Antarctic waters. While further south associated areas of mixing and upwelling create an ocean very high in marine productivity.

As the Expedition crosses the passage there will be time to become acquainted with the ship and frequent the common areas that include the lounge, dining hall, library and lecture hall where you meet your guides, ship's crew and expedition staff.

Your programme of lectures and information sessions will also begin to help develop your knowledge of the extraordinary human and natural history of Antarctica.

Overnight: M / S Expedition (Meals: BLD)

Day 7: Crossing the Drake Passage.

You continue your crossing of the Drake Passage. Wandering, Black-browed and Light-mantled Sooty albatross, Prion's and Cap petrels are among some of the species of seabirds that may join you in your journey. Undoubtedly the best way to experience the wildlife here is to be on deck keeping a look out for birds and whales!

Overnight: M / S Expedition (Meals: BLD)

Day 8: Antarctic Peninsula and the South Shetland Islands.

Welcome to the Great White Continent. Over the next few days, the Expedition will navigate southwards making stops in the South Shetland Islands then through the Bransfield Strait and to the Antarctic Peninsula. The goal is to attempt shore landings daily whilst navigating through the area but the itinerary and daily schedule will be based on the local weather and ice conditions encountered.

The Antarctic Peninsula and the South Shetland Islands abound with wildlife activity. Take time to enjoy the sheer beauty and the breathtaking scenery of ice-choked waterways, blue and white icebergs, impressive glaciers and rugged snow-capped mountains. The Peninsula also has a remarkable history and, during the voyage, you can learn about some of the most important and dramatic expeditions to this remote corner of the world.

Overnight: M / S Expedition (Meals: BLD)

Day 9: Antarctic Peninsula and the South Shetland Islands.

Antarctica is a continent of superlatives. It is the coldest, windiest, driest, iciest and highest of all the major landmasses in the world. It is the continent with the longest nights and the longest days. The coastal areas you visit have some of the greatest concentrations of wildlife on the continent. It is also one of the last true wildernesses, also the largest wilderness area left on earth - largely unchanged since the first sealers, whalers, and early explorers landed on its inhospitable shores less than two centuries ago. The lowest temperature ever recorded anywhere on earth, -89.2°C , was recorded on July 21, 1983, at Vostok Station. Winds have been recorded at 200 mph in the interior of the continent and the average annual water precipitation in the interior is only about 50 mm.



There may be an opportunity to visit a research base today (depending on the routing). It is remarkable to meet the people who live in this wilderness for months on end with little contact with the outside world. Researchers may have their partners and children with them, some bases have school rooms and other facilities that make them feel like a little village. One such base that you might visit is the Esperanza Base in Hope Bay. The Argentinean base was established in 1975 and projects include the study of biology, geology, glaciology, seismology and oceanography. Since the 1940's nations have established bases in Antarctica and now there are over 30 countries represented, all of whom have signed the Antarctic Treaty.

Overnight: M / S Expedition (Meals: BLD)

Day 10: Antarctic Peninsula and the South Shetland Islands.

Another day of exploring and more landings as the Zodiacs deliver you to shore. You might enjoy a walk up a small peak to get a magnificent vista back across the bay and towards the shore. Your guides will accompany you and assist in picking out the best route and one that does not interfere with the wildlife. The schedule can vary greatly in Antarctica and while no two days are alike we also cannot guarantee which days certain excursions will occur.



Whales

Thanks to the abundance of the small, shrimp like krill as the basis of the food chain, many species of whale make the water south of the Antarctic Convergence their summer home. Some of the species found in the frigid southern waters include: the Humpback whale, which consumes over a ton of krill each day, the Southern Right whales easily identified by the whitish callosities on the jaws and forehead, the Sperm whales made famous in Moby Dick, the Killer Whale which is actually not a whale at all, but the largest of the dolphin family, the Sei whale which can achieve speeds up to 55km/h over short distances, the playful Minke whales very common in the peninsula area, and the Fin Whale which can attain a length of 25 to 27m, making them the second largest whales.

Overnight: M / S Expedition (Meals: BLD)

Day 11: Antarctic Peninsula and the South Shetland Islands.

The Antarctic Peninsula and the South Shetland Islands abound with wildlife activity. If you are travelling early in the season your landing today will have you walking amongst penguins as they gather with their fast-growing chicks, and later in the season whales are seen in great numbers, seals haul out onto ice floes and beaches, and always numerous seabirds trail in the ship's wake.

Penguins

'Penguin' is the common name for all flightless, aquatic birds and they are only found south of the equator. Penguins have been grouped into 18 species and 6 genera, with most making their homes in Antarctica and the sub-Antarctic islands, though others are native to the coasts of Australia, South Africa, South America, and the Galapagos Islands. Penguins are speedy and agile swimmers, but extremely slow on land. The regions you visit aboard MS Expedition are inhabited by 6 different species including the giant King penguin which can grow up to 1m in height (found only on South Georgia Island), the Adelie penguin named after French explorer Dumont d'Urville's wife, the Chinstrap penguin identified by the distinctive black line connecting the black cap to below the chin, the Gentoo penguin with its orange bill and white flash above and behind its eyes and the Macaroni penguin which is the most numerous and the most difficult to see (only on South Georgia Island). They number roughly 12 million and are easily identified by the orange tassels meeting between the eyes. There is also the Rockhopper penguin (seen only in the Falkland Islands) and are similar to the Macaroni in appearance, but slightly smaller and have yellow tassels.

Overnight: M / S Expedition (Meals: BLD)

Day 12: Antarctic Peninsula and the South Shetland Islands.

It's your last day sailing along the Antarctic Peninsula and visiting the South Shetland Islands so make the most of your shore landings and wildlife viewing.

Overnight: M / S Expedition (Meals: BLD)

Day 13: Antarctic Peninsula and the Scotia Sea.

As you enter the Scotia Sea you will sail for two days retracing Shackleton's route from Elephant Island to the Antarctic Peninsula towards South Georgia.

Life on board is very comfortable in marked contrast to some of the great explorers you will hear about in the lectures provided onboard. Shackleton is the most famous of the Antarctic Explorers and his story is inspirational. You will also hear about Roald Amundsen. In 1911 the Norwegian Explorer led his expedition in search of the South Pole which they reached in December. He later led expeditions to the North Pole (in 1926) and, prior to both these Polar firsts, was the first man to successfully navigate the Northwest Passage. Douglas Mawson, at the time a young Australian geologist, is another of the great polar explorers and the book 'Mawson's Will' is billed as the greatest Polar survival story ever written, it is well worth a read on these days at sea.

Overnight: M / S Expedition (Meals: BLD)

Day 14: The Scotia Sea.

The waters of the Scotia Sea are rich with nutrients and the long summer days provide the ingredient that is missing most of the year. The result is a complex food chain topped by several species of whales, seals, and seabirds.

Overnight: M / S Expedition (Meals: BLD)

Day 15: South Georgia.

South Georgia Island is home to many marvels including Shackleton's grave, former whaling stations, incredible scenery and prolific wildlife. Weather permitting you will have four full days to explore this island. On nearby islands you will hope to spot Wandering albatross in their nesting grounds. A huge colony of King Penguins is the highlight of this part of the journey. The gravel beach at St. Andrews Bay has a King Penguin rookery of 100,000 and landing here is like entering another world, the sheer scale of the rookery is hard to comprehend.

Shackleton

The British explorer Sir Ernest H Shackleton landed at King Haakon Bay on the southwest coast after the 800-mile journey in a 20-foot open boat from Elephant Island. They proceeded to hike the ice-covered mountainous terrain, arriving to Stromness whaling station on May 20, 1916. Shackleton returned to South Georgia in 1922 for one last assault on Antarctica but passed away after suffering a major heart attack while in his cabin. He was buried at the whaler's cemetery at Grytviken station at the request of his wife. With fair weather, you may be able visit his final resting place. Shackleton is synonymous with Antarctic exploration and it is a poignant reminder of the man who endured such hardships in the pursuit of unheralded adventure.

Overnight: M / S Expedition (Meals: BLD)

Day 16: South Georgia.

Since the end of whaling activities 40 years ago, wildlife has slowly returned to the island. You will explore more of the coast today and should have two landings weather permitting.

Whaling and Hunting

Known for its brutal whaling and exploratory history, this 170km long and 40km wide island is considered the first gateway to Antarctica and was the centre of the huge Southern Ocean whaling industry from 1904 to 1966. The famous Captain James Cook was the first to land on South Georgia on 17th January 1775 and named the island after King George III. During the 62 years of whaling activities, any number between 183 whales the first year and the record 7825 whales in 1925-26 season were killed annually for their oil.



Whales were not the only animals hunted for their oil at that time. A total of 498,870 seals - mostly giant Elephant seals - were also slaughtered.

Overnight: M / S Expedition (Meals: BLD)

Day 17: South Georgia.

Today the island's wildlife is extraordinary, not only in its variety, but also for its sheer abundance. South Georgia is home to roughly 300,000 Elephant seals, 3 million Fur seals, and 25 species of breeding birds, including Wandering albatrosses, South Georgia pipits and pintails. You will make land again today as you tour in the zodiacs and come to shore to see some more wildlife and almost certainly in great numbers.

Overnight: M / S Expedition (Meals: BLD)

Day 18: South Georgia.

You might have seen King Penguins in the Antarctic Peninsula but not in the numbers you will see here on South Georgia which has some of the largest colonies in the world. King Penguins are the second largest species after the Emperor penguin. Seeing these large flightless birds tobogganing on the ice is something that will stay with you forever and anyone who can recall such an experience cannot fail to smile. Like penguins elsewhere they are endlessly fascinating, they are graceful and powerful swimmers, and on land comically endearing.



Overnight: M / S Expedition (Meals: BLD)

Day 19: South Georgia and the Great Southern Ocean.

Sailing west, you set course for the Falkland Islands. The vast distances between landfall and habitation really make you appreciate the isolation for anyone living in the tiny settlements of the Great Southern Ocean. As you traverse this vast ocean, there's more time on deck to relax and keep your eyes peeled for the whales that inhabit these waters.

Overnight: M / S Expedition (Meals: BLD)

Day 20: The Geat Southern Ocean.

Continue towards the Falkands. Your days at sea will be filled with wildlife watching from the observation deck and lectures to prepare you for the sights and natural wonders of the Falklands.

Overnight: M / S Expedition (Meals: BLD)

Day 21: The Falkland Islands.

The Falkland Islands provide a rare opportunity to witness the biological diversity and extraordinary scenery of the southern islands. Penguins are abundant here, and the Falklands have the largest black-browed albatross colony in the world. Here you would hope to catch your first glimpses of penguins, including the Magellanic, Rockhopper, Gentoo, and King penguins. With a little luck you may also see the Elephant seals, Sea lions, King cormorants, Black-browed albatross, skuas, Night herons, Giant petrels, Striated caracaras and of course sheep!

The islands consist of 700 small and mostly uninhabited islands and 2 main islands - East and West Falklands. Located 490km east of Patagonia, the Falklands have always been a land of hot debate. Officially discovered on 14th August 1592 by John Davis they remained uninhabited until 1764 when the French built a garrison at Port Louis, disregarding the Spanish claim to the islands.

From that moment and over the next 200 plus years, there have been many disputes between Spain, France, Britain and Argentina until the end of the Falklands War between Britain and Argentina in 1982 brought the islands firmly under Britain's control.

Overnight: M / S Expedition (Meals: BLD)

Day 22: The Falkland Islands.

The Falkland Islands provide a rare opportunity to witness the biological diversity and extraordinary scenery of the southern islands. Nesting albatross, penguins and elephant seals are abundant. Now with a human population of around 2,500 the islands are the first stop in your journey.

You will come ashore and visit Port Stanley which provides an opportunity to meet the hardy local inhabitants whose colourful houses provide contrast to the long dark winters. The town is the capital of the Falklands and it is used by most of the locals to do their shopping, visit the post office or get in a round of golf! The bomb disposal unit from the 1982 war is also in town as well as several war museums.

Overnight: M / S Expedition (Meals: BLD)

Day 23: Beagle Channel.

It's your final day onboard as you sail back to land through the Beagle Channel. This is a chance to relax and review the adventures of a memorable voyage with the lecturers and staff before returning to Ushuaia. As this is your last night onboard the M/S Expedition there will be a chance to celebrate having had the experience of a lifetime with your fellow travellers.

Overnight: M / S Expedition (Meals: BLD)

Day 24: Disembark the M/S Expedition. Fly Ushuaia to Buenos Aires.

Today you will disembark the M/S Expedition between 8-9am. Depending on the time of your flight back to Buenos Aires you will either be transferred directly to the airport at Ushuaia, or have free time with additional transfers provided at 12:30hrs or 16:30hrs.

Fly to Buenos Aires for your last night. You might choose to take in a Tango show or enjoy a meal in one of the many fine restaurants available. For steak lovers, Argentinean steak is arguably the best you will ever taste.



Overnight: Hotel Intersur Recoleta, Buenos Aires (Meals: B)

Day 25: Depart Buenos Aires for London.

Some free time to enjoy the city before the group transfer leaves for the airport for your overnight flight from Buenos Aires to London.

Overnight: In flight (Meals: B)

Day 26: Arrive London.

Our grading system

Spirit of Shackleton is graded as a Tour, as described below.

Tours

Tours may include any of the following activities: sightseeing, visiting local villages, exploring temples, game viewing, birdwatching, husky sledding, mountain flights, city tours and dramatic journeys by road, rail, sea or river. Occasionally there will be short, gentle walks so that you can properly explore the cultural sites you are visiting.

What the price includes

Mountain Kingdoms aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

What's included:

- ✓ All internal flights and hotel/airport transfers in Buenos Aires and Ushuaia
- ✓ 2 nights good standard hotel accommodation in Buenos Aires and in Ushuaia
- ✓ Prices based on Category 2 cabins
- ✓ Free high performance expedition parka
- ✓ 19 nights aboard the M/S Expedition in twin-share cabins (all with en suite bathrooms and porthole window). Please note that all cabins consist of twin-size berths and are ocean-facing
- ✓ Zodiac excursions with our expert expedition team
- ✓ Use of onboard library, gym and sauna
- ✓ Lectures and educational programs
- ✓ Waterproof boots supplied for men's UK sized 7-13 & women's UK sized 3-7.
- ✓ All meals included on board the M/S Expedition. Breakfast included at the hotels.
- ✓ One Expedition team member per 10 guests.(the highest ratio amongst Polar ships 1:10)
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK & UK Departure Tax (flight inclusive only)
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project for clients taking our flight-inclusive option
- ✓ A free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle

Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

What's not included:

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Airport departure taxes, excepting UK Departure Tax
- ✗ Lunch and dinner in Buenos Aires and Ushuaia
- ✗ Optional kayaking and camping excursions from the G Expedition (must book in advance - contact the office for details)
- ✗ Tips

Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

For our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag (these are required for certain treks), there is the choice of receiving either a free Water-to-Go bottle or a free Mountain Kingdoms fleece. If you are not eligible for a free bottle, you will still be able to buy a special Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle from us at a discounted rate. For further information about our campaign visit <https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign>.

Your accommodation

We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



Hotel Intersur Recoleta, Buenos Aires

The Hotel Intersur Recoleta is a comfortable, modern, 4* hotel located in the commercial and residential area La Recoleta. All rooms are en-suite with a/c, satellite TV and free Wi-Fi and there's a spa and fitness centre on the upper floors.



Hotel Las Lengas or Hotel Albatros, Ushuaia

The Hotel Las Lengas is a 3* hotel. Rooms have en suite bathrooms and free Wi-Fi. It's located about 10 minutes walk from the centre, with superb views from the dining room straight down the Beagle Channel. If there is no availability at the Las Lengas we will use the Hotel Albatros which is of a similar standard and located close to the harbour front.



M / S Expedition

The M/S Expedition provides an intimate small-ship cruising experience. Completely refurbished in 2009, she boasts spacious cabins, each featuring ocean-facing windows or portholes and private en-suite facilities. Large common areas and observation decks provide panoramic views of the distinctive landscapes of some of the world's most remote regions. The Expedition's spacious confines can hold up to 140 passengers. Many expedition cruise operators offer you a choice of space, comfort or expertise; the M/S Expedition delivers all three at a price few can top. There are five general categories of cabin aboard - our per person price is based on sharing in a Category 2 twin cabin (with a porthole window, private en-suite and ample storage for all your kit), other cabin types are available on request:

Category 1A Quad (4 people sharing); Category 1 Triple (three people sharing); Category 2 Twin (as above); Category 3 Twin (slightly roomier with picture book window); Category 4 Twin (much roomier with larger window and larger en-suite); Category 5 Double (a junior suite with separate living area as well as larger bedroom and bathroom and the only double bed on the ship).

Meal arrangements

Full board is provided during your cruise. Bed and breakfast in Buenos Aires and Ushuaia (23 x breakfasts, 18 x lunches, 19 x dinners).

Flight arrangements

Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

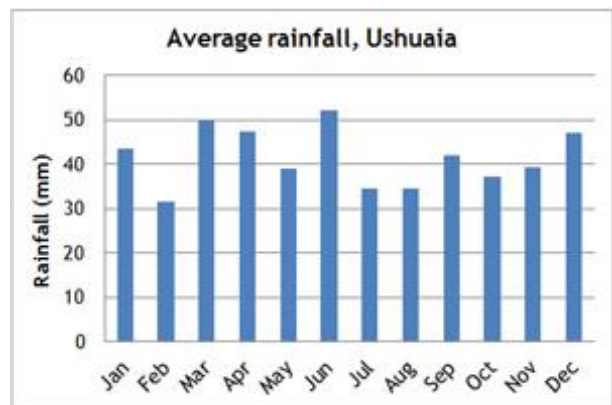
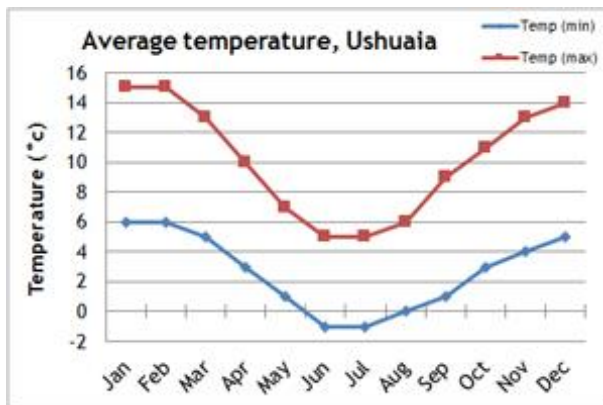
Further information

When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

The nature of adventure travel

Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

Climate information



Extensions

Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at www.mountainkingdoms.com.



Iguazú Falls, Argentina

Visit one of nature's most awe-inspiring sights on a 2 or 3 night extension to Iguazú Falls. Fly from Buenos Aires to Puerto Iguazú and visit both the Argentine and Brazilian sides of the Iguazú National Park in the company of an expert guide. Walk along the park's many trails that wind through rainforest, and feel the raw power of the falls from numerous viewing points. The extension includes accommodation in a good quality hotel in Puerto Iguazú, flights and all airport transfers.

Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

- We offer exceptional value as we include additional nights in Buenos Aires and Ushuaia in good quality hotels as well as all internal flights and transfers.
- By adding a night in Buenos Aires at the start of your trip we break up the long flight from the UK to the far south. The 2 nights we include in Ushuaia give you time to explore the southernmost city in the world.
- At the end of your cruise you return to Buenos Aires for a night with the option to extend your stay in this vibrant Latin city.
- Your trip is guaranteed to run - Antarctic cruises are extremely popular, please book early!
- This superb Antarctic cruise includes 19 nights on board the excellent M/S Expedition, among the most comfortable and spacious expedition ships in its class.
- The M/S Expedition boasts generous cabins, each featuring ocean-view windows or portholes and private en-suite facilities. It also has a library, gym and sauna as well as offering international fine dining.
- There are large common areas and observation decks which provide superior views to enjoy the sweeping panoramas.
- You will set foot on the great white continent! Daily zodiac excursions once in the Antarctic Peninsula, sometimes two if conditions permit.
- Your expert English speaking guides have excellent knowledge and experience of the geology, flora and fauna in this unique geographical region.
- There is an Expedition guide to passenger ratio of 1 to 10.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights team for flight options, quotes and further information.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: www.mountainkingdoms.com or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

What our clients say



Nothing quite prepares you for a trip to the great white continent. It was the most breath taking, jaw dropping, tears in the eyes, and lump in the throat experience of my life to have had the privilege to visit Antarctica.

- Mr S, Wiltshire

The cruise with couldn't be faulted. Great staff, organisation and food.

-Mr & Mrs A, Gywnedd



Excellent organisation.

-Mr & Mrs G, Bristol

We want you to know that we thoroughly enjoyed it all. The ship was excellent - the team was super, the Captain too, and they all did their very utmost to give everybody the best possible experience, and some of the lectures were outstanding. The general ship's crew were also excellent and everything was done or provided to a high level, with a smile and obvious willingness. Unfortunately the desserts were irresistible! It was certainly a well-run and happy ship.



So many thanks to Mountain Kingdoms - to Jim for his well-timed phone call that put us on a ship with the desired route with only a six-month wait (many on board had booked two years in advance), for April's efficient flight booking and Liz's overall organisation and question answering.

Mountain Kingdoms have been recommended by us already, so hopefully you'll get some more bookings.

We hope to travel again with you in the future.

-Mr & Mrs M, Devon

Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

Truly independent

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

Complete financial security

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

No Surcharge Guarantee

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

Award winning Responsible Tourism

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at www.mountainkingdoms.com.

Genuine small group travel

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

Loyalty Discount

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

Comprehensive information

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit www.tourismdeclares.com

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

Carbon Offsetting

Already doing:

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

Will do:

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

Reducing Carbon Emissions

Already doing:

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

Will do:

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.

