

EXPLORE!

Falklands, South Georgia and Antarctic Peninsula - M/V Polar Pioneer
18 days

Argentina, Falkland Islands, South Georgia & South Sandwich Islands - Trip code PPF5



Falklands, South Georgia and Antarctic Peninsula - M/V Polar Pioneer

We start our journey from the Southern tip of Argentina in Ushuaia. From here we set sail across the Beagle Channel into the infamous Drake Passage, before reaching the calm shores of the Antarctic peninsula. We will follow in the wake of Shackleton, heading towards the wildlife haven of South Georgia. Often described as the gem of the Southern Ocean, the splendour of South Georgia is hard to describe - stunning snow-capped mountain landscapes, deep fjords, tousled tussock grasses and wild beaches all combine to provide superb stunning photo opportunities.

Here is the most important colony of king penguins, fur seals and elephant seals and it is estimated that over 10 million sea birds visit South Georgia each year. Our wildlife -rich journey continues as we set sail to the Falkland Islands. This archipelago of over 400 islands, is an important breeding ground for penguins, elephant seals and sea lions and we will have plenty of time to explore and admire its delightful offerings.

Trip highlights

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Premium

Our premium accommodation is hand-picked and chosen for its character, location or local importance. These properties have excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service. They provide the perfect wind down after an active day.

TRIP PACE:

Relaxed

You can enjoy easy-going activities and experiences on these Relaxed pace tours, with opportunities to absorb the sights and immerse yourself in the local surroundings, but still come home feeling relaxed and refreshed.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Fly from Santiago or Punta Arenas to the Falkland Islands

You can choose to start from either Santiago or Punta Arenas and will fly from Punta Arenas onto Stanley, in the Falkland Islands. You will be met at the airport on arrival and will enjoy a brief tour of Stanley before boarding your ship.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Dinner

DAY 2 - At Sea

At sea, albatrosses, giant petrels and tiny Wilson's storm petrels escort us, as we sail towards South Georgia.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 3 - At Sea

During our days at sea, we will be entertained by our expert naturalist and historian who will enliven the crossing with informative lectures. On the outer decks, keep a watchful eye out for seabird-peppered Shag rocks or albatross flying over-head as we edge closer to South Georgia.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 4 - South Georgia

Arriving in South Georgia's spectacular northern coast we have ample time to explore the world's largest king penguin rookeries and majestic albatross nests. In Stromness and Grytviken harbours, 3000-metre peaks form dramatic backdrops to the remains of whaling stations. Kelp-strewn beaches are cluttered with basking elephant seals, feisty fur seals and penguins.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 5 - South Georgia

There will be plenty of time to explore the king penguin rookeries of St Andrews Bay and Salisbury Plain and to lose yourself amongst these gracious-looking creatures -an absolute highlight of South Georgia. Ensure cameras are fully charged for this fantastic wildlife spectacle.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 6 - South Georgia

For those interested in Antarctic history, this area is key to the Shackleton story. His Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition encountered difficulties in South Georgia in 1916 and Shackleton himself had to abandon his vessel in a smaller boat to find help on the mainland. Amazingly, Shackleton and two others covered 35 km of tough mountainous terrain and Antarctic weather to reach assistance.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 7 - South Georgia

You will have the opportunity to visit the fascinating whaling museum at Grytviken, as well as pay your respects to Sir Shackleton at his nearby grave. Grytviken was once a Norwegian whaling station and is now the administrative capital of South Georgia.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 8 - South Georgia

As we explore the pristine, kelp-strewn beaches, playful seals and basking elephants seals provide entertainment and there will be ample time to cruise by Zodiac into magnificent sites such as Elsehul Bay, along the north coast of South Georgia.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 9 - The Scotia Sea

Leaving South Georgia we head across the Scotia Sea in a south-westerly direction.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 10 - The Scotia Sea

The ocean takes on a whole new perspective once we are surrounded by the surreal presence of floating ice sculptures.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)

■ Premium Boat



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 11 - Elephant Island

Conditions permitting, we approach Cape Wild, a bleak, rocky spit along Elephant Island's dramatic north coast. If conditions allow, we'll Zodiac cruise, possibly even step ashore, to pay tribute to Shackleton's men who survived four months here.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 12 - Antarctica

Once we arrive in the calmer waters of the Bransfield and Gerlache Straits, we will generally make landings or Zodiac excursions two to three times a day. Days will be spent cruising along spectacular ice cliffs, following whales that are feeding near the surface and landing on the continent and its off shore islands to visit penguin rookies and seal haul outs, as well as a few of our favourite spots on the Peninsula.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 13 - Antarctica

The Antarctic Peninsula has an abundance of wildlife - from whales to rookeries, birdlife to seals - there will be plenty to take in over the next few days whilst we explore this frozen land. The scenery is simply breathtaking and we will have plenty of time on shore and in Zodiacs, to soak up our surroundings.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 14 - Antarctica

The Peninsula also has a remarkable history and during the voyage, we will learn more about the dramatic expeditions that took place in this remote corner of the world.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 15 - Antarctica

A final day to enjoy the serenity of Antarctica, before heading north again.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 16 - Drake Passage

Returning to the realm of the albatross - you will have time to celebrate and reflect, as we head across the Drake Passage.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 17 - Drake Passage

Rich in memories and with a wealth of Antarctic knowledge under our belts, there will be time to reflect on this magnificent journey.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 18 - Ushuaia

We arrive in Ushuaia in the morning and disembark after breakfast for onward travel.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Polar information

Ship information

The M/V Polar Pioneer is a Finnish ex-research vessel, refurbished to provide an adventurous journey in the polar regions; its ice class means it has excellent manoeuvrability. The vessel accommodates only 54 passengers, meaning more time with the experts and a friendly on-board experience. Informed crew and experts will ensure you learn about how a polar expedition runs, your unique surroundings and the wildlife; Zodiacs will take you to shore for close encounters.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 17
Lunch: 16
Dinner: 17



Transport

Polar Pioneer
Zodiac



Trip staff

Expedition Crew
Naturalist(s)



Accommodation

17 nights premium boat

Trip information

Country information

Argentina Holidays & Tours

Climate

Argentina has a climate that ranges from subtropical in the north to cold in the temperate south. The Andes has erratic rainfall and flash floods from December to May. From June to September spring like sunny days temper the cold nights.

Time difference to GMT

-3

Plugs

3 Pin Flat

Religion

Predominantly Roman Catholic.

Language

Spanish is the main language throughout this region, along with a number of indigenous dialects, of

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Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Kayaking can be booked as an option on both of our departures at a supplementary fee. This must be booked in advance and through the ship operator directly. Please note, you will need to have some experience of kayaking to participate in this activity.

Clothing

Parkas You should look for a lightweight, roomy, wind and water-resistant parka with some insulation. Bright colors are more visible - and thus safer - in polar environments. **Gloves** Keeping your hands warm and dry can be a challenge. Thin polypropylene gloves can be worn underneath warm outergloves. This allows you some protection from the cold when removing your gloves to operate your camera etc. We strongly recommend that you bring more than one pair of gloves, in case one gets wet (or lost). **Hat/Cap** Warm, woollen hat/cap to protect your ears, as well as a scarf, neck gaiter or other face protection, such as a balaclava. **Trousers** Water-resistant trousers of coated nylon or, even better, Gore-Tex® are essential for your comfort. They can be worn over your regular clothes to keep you warm and dry. We suggest that you purchase trousers a few sizes larger than you normally wear as you will be wearing them over other clothing. Gore-Tex® or similar fabrics are excellent for keeping out wind and water without trapping excess heat. Rain gear and Gore-Tex® products can be found in any outdoor sport clothing store. In addition to your waterproof trousers, warm ski pants are suggested if you have them. Warm trousers such as jeans, corduroys etc are also good. **Socks** Warm wool socks worn over a thin pair of silk, polypropylene socks should provide enough warmth and insulation for your feet. Bring several pairs of socks, since you will inevitably get your feet wet. **Outer Clothing** Woollen, knit or cotton sweaters/tops, polar fleece tops (medium weight), several cotton turtlenecks and T-shirts for layering on and off the ship. **Underclothing** Thermal underwear is highly recommended as it will keep you warm without adding bulk. Most polar travellers prefer a lightweight version.

Footwear

Complimentary waterproof boots will be supplied on-board. However, if you have extra small or large feet, you are advised to bring your own. Also ensure you take good walking boots and trainers for relaxing.

Luggage

15Kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself. Please note that a 15kgs luggage weight limit is sporadically enforced on the internal flight to Ushuaia, occasionally charges may be levied

against passengers taking luggage in excess of 15kgs.

Equipment

There are no hairdryers aboard the Polar Pioneer. Sunglasses and sun cream Insect repellent Personal toiletries A refillable water bottle Books/reading material Camera and memory cards Seasickness remedy Walking poles

Tipping

Local crew

Tipping is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. It is an expression of satisfaction. The suggested amount is USD \$10 - 12 per person per day spent on board. Of course, tipping is a personal choice and the suggested amount is set only as a guideline.

Country Information

Argentina Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£10

Dinner price

£17

Beer price

£2

Water price

£1.3

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Peso

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Carry all your funds in US cash NOT Sterling or Travellers Cheques which are more difficult to exchange. We recommend to take a minimum of US\$400-\$500 of your total spending money in cash, in mixed denominations. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they might be difficult to exchange.

Where To Exchange

Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

Available in Buenos Aires. In Patagonia some cards with Chip and Pin do not work in the ATM machines. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are useful and can be used in some places, but may be subject to a 10% service charge

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques can be awkward or expensive to change

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Foreign Exchange

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Polar Pioneer, Zodiac

Ship description

The M/V Polar Pioneer is a Finnish ex-research vessel, refurbished to provide an adventurous journey in the polar regions; its ice class means it has excellent manoeuvrability. The vessel accommodates only 54 passengers, meaning more time with the experts and a friendly on-board experience. Informed crew and experts will ensure you learn about how a polar expedition runs, your unique surroundings and the wildlife; Zodiacs will take you to shore for close encounters.

Ship dining

Onboard the expedition ship you'll find a diversity of international cuisines prepared and catered by professional chefs; all meals are included in the price of your expedition. Dining is casual in one of two dining rooms. There is always a selection of different meals available, and vegetarians will find plenty of options. Special dietary requirements can be accommodated with advance notice, please advise us at time of confirmation. Coffee, tea and water are all provided free of charge. All other beverages, alcoholic and non-alcoholic, are not included and can be purchased in the bar.

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure. USA (If flights transit): you will need to apply for an ESTA if you are transiting the USA as you will have to disembark and clear immigration before re-boarding for the onward flight. Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) - where you apply for an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), which applies if you enter the country by sea or by air. This must be done online - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> no later than 72 hours prior to travel. Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely to be refused boarding. When completing an application for transit you should enter the words 'In Transit' with your final destination location in the address line. You must have an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information about the passport owner. UK passports which have a biometric feature a small gold symbol (camera) at the bottom of the front cover. If you have visited Iraq, Syria, Iran or Sudan in the past five years or are dual nationals of these countries, you cannot travel under the Visa Waiver Programme. Instead you will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. If you are unable to provide a valid visa before boarding flights to the US, or entering via another method, you may not be permitted to travel. For further information please check out the US embassy website. Visa applications - <http://london.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.html>

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel

dates.

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Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, polio and hepatitis A. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please note many countries in Central America, South America and the Caribbean require a yellow fever vaccination certificates if travelling from infected areas. A detailed list of these countries can be found on the NaTHNaC website - <http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>. Also on the NaTHNaC site there is a list of Countries (and specific areas within a country) which are at risk of infection and a vaccination is therefore recommended.. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

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