



EXPLORE!

In Shackleton's Footsteps - M/V Polar Pioneer
18 days

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

In Shackleton's Footsteps - M/V Polar Pioneer

In Shackleton's Footsteps

This all-encompassing voyage covers the wildlife havens of the Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia and the Falkland Islands, as well as heading deep into the continent to the Weddell Sea. You'll enter a world inhabited by king penguins, the second tallest in the world, elephant seals and killer whales (orcas), plus various other penguin species. You're also in Shackleton's domain, and will see where this pioneering explorer's crew survived for four months in the harsh Antarctic winter.

Trip highlights

- ★ Follow in Shackleton's footsteps - into the heart of Antarctica
- ★ Incredible wildlife - view colonies of King and Adelie penguins, fur & elephant seals
- ★ Whales - sail alongside orca, minke and humpback whales
- ★ Travel into the Weddell Sea - one of Antarctica's premier wildlife havens
- ★ Small expedition ship - travel on a small, friendly ship, limited to just over 50 passengers

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 - Ushuaia

Step aboard the Polar Pioneer in Ushuaia in the late afternoon. Enjoy a warm welcome, introductory briefing and an evening departure along the Beagle Channel with your fellow shipmates.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Dinner

DAY 2 - Drake Passage

As we cross Drake Passage, we keep watch for giant petrels, wandering and black-browed albatross and our first icebergs. Safety and environmental briefings prepare us for landings, while the outer decks and bridge offer the best vantage points for Photography and Wildlife viewing.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 3 - Drake Passage

Fur seals and penguins pepper the sea surface as we approach our first landing in the South Shetland Islands.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 4 - The Weddell Sea

An autumn dawn greets us in the spectacular Antarctic Sound where we may stop at towering Brown Bluff, before pushing on into the Weddell Sea.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 5 - The Weddell Sea

There's a strong fossil focus at this time of year, as the pack ice movement may allow a continental landing and visits to the world-renowned fossil beds of Seymour, Vega and James Ross islands, and if we're extremely lucky, Nordenskjold's Hut on Snow Hill Island.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 6 - The Weddell Sea

In the Weddell Sea, we begin to trace Shackleton's path. Our informative on-board lectures give us further insight into Shackleton's epic journey and what his men endured on this incredible expedition.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 7 - Elephant Island

Cape Wild on Elephant Island is so exposed that landings here are very rare. We will however attempt a landing, if only to pay tribute to the man who's leadership skills kept Shackleton and his men alive for four months while awaiting rescue.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 8 - The Scotia Sea

We keep watch for great whales while sailing the Scotia Sea towards South Georgia.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 9 - The Scotia Sea

A further day at Sea with informative on-board lectures, 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 10 - King Haakon Bay

We enter King Haakon Bay and attempt a ceremonial landing at Cave Cove, Shackleton's first landfall, before continuing up past Peggotty Bluff where Shackleton, Worsley and Crean set off to cross the island.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 11 - South Georgia

While our "Crossers" negotiate Shackleton's historic route, we immerse ourselves in one of the World's greatest wildlife spectacles - King penguin rookeries half-a-million strong!



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 12 - South Georgia

Over the next few days, we will be spoilt for choice of landings; king, chinstrap, Gentoo and macaroni penguin colonies, wandering albatross on nests and long beaches thick with elephant and fur seals. The wildlife found here will certainly not disappoint and for those who like to spend their time behind the lens, South Georgia is often referred to as a photographer's paradise and you will very quickly understand why.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 13 - South Georgia

We hope to walk the final leg of Shackleton's epic journey, from Fortuna Bay to Stromness, before visiting "The Boss's" grave and whaling museum in Grytviken.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 14 - South Georgia

We have one final full day to explore the delights of South Georgia before our days at Sea.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 15 - Cross the Scotia Sea

We watch for whales and enjoy entertaining talks from our Expedition team as we cruise towards the Falklands Islands.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 16 - Cross the Scotia Sea

More time at Sea to enjoy our informative lectures or for birdlife spotting from the bridge or outer deck.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 17 - Sail the Scotia Sea to the Falkland Islands

On this leg we are usually travelling into the prevailing weather, so it is difficult to estimate our arrival time in the Falklands.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 18 - Punta Arenas (or Santiago)

Dawn greets us in the Falkland Islands/Maldivas capital, Stanley, where we bid farewell to the Polar Pioneer. You have the option of either spending more time exploring the Falkland Islands or continuing on to Punta Arenas or Santiago, Chile.



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

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

Falkland Islands

South Georgia & South Sandwich Islands

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note:

These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Kayaking:

Kayaking can be booked as an option 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.

Photography:

Capture your adventure through your lens and take your photography to the next level with our on-board photography workshops. Includes workshops and one-on-one sessions with our on-board polar photography expert guide. This activity is provided on board at no additional cost. No pre-booking is required.

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

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

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

£11

Dinner price

£20

Beer price

£3-4

Water price

£2

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

Falkland Islands

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.

Foreign Exchange

South Georgia & South Sandwich Islands

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.

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.

Cabins

Prices are based on the use of outward facing, category one cabins on the main deck. Category one cabins are based on triple share. They are comfortable, with two lower bunks and one upper bunk. The cabin has a desk, a small washbasin, a sofa and a porthole. Showers and toilets are close by and shared with other main deck cabins. The Polar Pioneer has a number of different cabin categories, all are outside facing and most cabins have two beds (suites have double beds.) Most cabins have en suite facilities and some have larger windows, rather than portholes. Single occupancy is an option on board, subject to availability. Call us for details on the cabin choice to fit your requirements.

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.

Price Guarantee

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 and Passport 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 on line - <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 are 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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

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.

Argentina

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. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Falkland Islands

South Georgia & South Sandwich Islands
