



If your goal is to set foot on Antarctica but also — having traveled to the extremes of the Southern Hemisphere — explore the historic Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) and remote South Georgia, this is the ideal small-ship expedition. From Shackleton's lonely grave to spectacular Iceberg Alley to Zodiac landings at remote penguin rookeries and other areas rich with wildlife, come follow the early explorers on a remarkable Antarctic experience.

This is active exploration aboard nimble, ice-strengthened former research vessels, with frequent Zodiac landings; specialist presentations, and interaction within a close-knit group of adventurers.

Day 1: Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina

Ushuaia (pop. 50,000) means “the bay that reaches into the west.” Ironically it is the world’s southernmost city. The town is situated in the foothills of the Andes, in one of the most stunning locations in the world. Expect wonderful views from the airplane as you land.

Ushuaia is served by flights arriving from Buenos Aires, Argentina and Santiago, Chile. At the airport in Ushuaia, upon exiting the security area, you are welcomed by our representative, holding a Quark Expeditions sign. The representative is available to offer any needed assistance, and to direct you to the taxi stands. Your hotel is not far from the airport and the taxi fare is reasonable. On arrival at the hotel, register with the front desk then settle in your room. (Note that your room may not be available for occupancy until mid-afternoon. You may store your luggage and explore the community should you arrive early.)

Our representative will be available in the hotel lobby at scheduled times to offer suggestions about the best places to dine, shop or visit. Two suggestions are the Maritime Museum (formerly a prison); or the Museo del Fin del Undo, where you see exhibits on the region’s indigenous people, almost none of whom remain.

If you need to stretch your muscles after a long flight, climb the nearby *Glaciar Martial*, for a close encounter with ice, and a bird’s eye view of Ushuaia. If you prefer to relax, you can sit at a table in a sidewalk café and soak up the ‘end of the world’ feeling this frontier town offers.

Day 2: Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina

In the morning, you may join the included guided tour of Tierra del Fuego National Park, home to caracaras, the Black-faced Ibis, Magellanic Woodpeckers and the Fuegian red fox. Stroll seaside paths through guindo forest or wander by mountain lakes on the Chilean frontier.

The tour ends at a rustic dining hall where a stream rushes past. You learn about the local food culture while you enjoy a traditional Argentine *asado* barbecue. Meat is barbecued by skilled chefs over an open fire and served on large picnic tables, located indoors and out. As you enjoy the barbecue, get to know your fellow adventurers. Before spending the last few moments in the city exploring downtown.

In late afternoon, a bus transfers you and your fellow adventurers to the pier to board the ship. Have your identification on hand, because you must pass through security.

Giant petrels and South American Terns swoop around the ship as the ship moves into the Beagle Channel guided by an Argentinean pilot. The channel was named for the ship H.M.S. *Beagle* that carried Charles Darwin during the time he formulated his ideas for *The Origin of Species by Natural Selection*. The *Beagle* and its crew spent months investigating the natural history and the peoples of Tierra del Fuego in the early 1830s.

The Expedition Team directs you to the lounge, for a safety briefing. Emergency procedures are explained then followed by a practical demonstration. One of the enclosed lifeboats is lowered to give you the opportunity to see what is within and how you would survive in the unlikely event of an emergency at sea.

After dropping the pilot, the ship steams into the southern Atlantic Ocean on a north easterly course towards the Falkland Islands.

Later a three-course dinner with a choice of main courses and a complimentary glass of wine is served in the dining room. There is no need for formal attire, as our style is casual. After all you never know when you may want to return to the deck should the Expedition Team announce “whales off the starboard bow!”

During the after-dinner Welcome Briefing, the Expedition Leader introduces the team of specialists that accompanies every expedition. The EL delivers an overview of the voyage, after which the ship’s doctor may provide practical advice about coping with seasickness.

Day 3: At Sea

Our formal shipboard education program begins with an introduction to the species of bird you can expect to sight throughout the expedition. You could apply your newly acquired knowledge on deck, as there may be as many as 50 birds following and circling around the ship.

For avid birders, on deck the lessons continue as our specialists help you identify the birds: Black-browed Albatrosses, giant petrels, prions of various kinds, Cape (Pintado) Petrels, and the diminutive Wilson’s Storm-petrels.

Another briefing prepares you for the landings to come in the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas). These islands lie in the South Atlantic between 51 degrees and 53 degrees South, east of South America and west of South Georgia.

They consist of East and West Falkland, divided by Falkland Sound. The highest peak is Mount Osborne at 2,312 feet (705 m), located north of Darwin settlement on East Falkland. There are 778 small islands in the archipelago, many of them having thousands of seabirds during the breeding season.

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Although informality is a hallmark of our expeditions, there are two occasions when you may choose to wear something a little less informal than expedition gear. The first is the Captain's Welcome Cocktail Party and Dinner. The daily program, which is delivered to your cabin each evening, informs you of the next day's activities and special events such as this one.

Day 4: West Point and Carcass Island

Should conditions permit, we suggest that you awaken early to enjoy the impressive approach to West Falkland Islands through "The Woolly Gut." Commerson's Dolphins have been known to escort the ship as it sails past the steep cliffs into Hope Bay, as South American Terns soar on the wind. On West Point Island birds could be everywhere. Black-browed Albatrosses and Giant Petrels may swoop past. Should you hear numerous splashes, turn your attention to the first of many 'porpoising' penguins.

Scan the landscape for geese nesting in the tussock or Kelp Gulls flying past. If the weather conditions are right, the scene is alive with wildlife as the Captain skillfully anchors in the bay.

Her Majesty's Customs Officer checks passenger credentials. Afterward, you may board a Zodiac for the transfer to a white pebble beach. Striated Caracaras, one of the rarer birds on the planet could be posing for the cameras as soon as you step on the beach. They are often seen dancing on the red tin roofs of buildings on the island. Some have been seen running along the jetties and beach.

Once the life jackets are stored, the first shore activity may be a hike to a sheltered valley, where a house and farm are snuggled in a cloak of trees. Depending on the date of your voyage, brilliant yellow gorse (introduced from the UK) could be running along a sweeping plain of beige and green and then down into the valley where the birds are nesting.

Be on the alert for bird activities such as nest building, mating and courtship. If you look closely you may glimpse an occasional egg. Some Black-browed Albatrosses may be on eggs, but others may still be establishing nests. The stage of development that you witness depends on the date that you travel.

With so much to watch and see, it may be several hours before you slip into West Point farmhouse to have a *cuppa* and a piece of cake. Your hosts are the owners of this private island paradise.

The proposed second landing of the day—Leopard Seal Beach on Carcass Island—requires the Captain to reposition the ship. The beautiful white sand beach, could be alive with Upland Geese, oystercatchers, a few skuas, Magellanic Penguins, and patrolling terns and Giant Petrels.

Accompanied by an Expedition Team member, you hike across a plain where geese graze and Magellanic Penguins stand outside their burrows watching you as intently as you watch them. Some penguins may be in their burrows incubating eggs. The penguins share incubation—14 days for the female followed by 17 days for the male. After this period the shifts grow shorter.

Mulled wine on the foredeck is a Quark Expeditions tradition. The Hospitality Team tries to serve it on a day when the weather is so perfect you are reluctant to take shelter inside the ship. Today could be that day, but the wine may not be mulled until later in the voyage.

If weather threatens, meet in the bar for a recap session led by the Expedition Team. Today's recap could cover the ozone layer, land mine threats, the Falklands (Malvinas) fritillary butterfly, eggs from penguins, and Tussock plants—huge, valuable, and as old as 300 years in undisturbed areas!

Day 5: Stanley, Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)

Stanley, the primary community of the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas,) was named for Lord Stanley, the Treasurer who authorized the funds to set up the original settlement. The town is set amongst starkly beautiful and wild rough moorland at the eastern end of East Falkland. It is one of the last outposts of the former British Empire. It has been suggested that there are about 2,000 residents in the Falklands and around 750,000 sheep. Stanley is a centre for commerce, bringing in high revenue from the squid fishing rights offshore used by the Koreans and other Far Eastern countries. It is also a center for mineral exploration.

Your visit to Stanley could inspire a shipboard debate: Should the need for quick cash through petroleum production override the longer term maintenance of the natural beauty and richness of the wildlife for ecotourism consumption? The debate may continue once Customs clears the ship for sailing in the late afternoon, and the Captain sets a course out into the open sea.

Day 6: The Scotia Sea

The day may start with an informative geology talk about the places you may visit in South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula...or...you could continue bird-watching. If the wind moves across the bow, birds fly and hang around the rigging.

Illustrated talks introduce you to the fur and elephant seals of South Georgia. During the recap session you may learn about the man who gave his name to the Wilson Storm-petrel—his history and death!

Day 7: Shag Rocks

Shag Rocks are the smallest of the Sub-Antarctic islands and the first sign that the ship is approaching South Georgia. They are purported to have been discovered in 1762 by the ship *Aurora* whose crew named them the "Aurora Islands." They were seen again in 1790 by Manuel de Oyarvido in the *Principessa*. By the 19th century the islands were well known to sealers.

Shag Rocks are covered in guano, giving them a light brown appearance. There are six main rocks in two groups of three. The principal rock is 70 m (230 feet) high and the smallest, which is the southern group is 30m (100ft) high. There are a few small outliers which are often awash.

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Geologically they form an extension of the South Georgia continental shelf and are composed of highly altered and metamorphosed sedimentary rock types similar to that found in the South Orkney Islands. Rock samples were collected by British Antarctic Survey geologist Geoff Tanner in 1972, possibly the first landing ever by a human on the rocks. It was achieved from a helicopter working off H.M.S. *Endurance*.

Day 8: South Georgia, Bay of Isles, Prion Island and Fortuna Bay

South Georgia is roughly 100 miles (160km) by 20 miles (32km) wide at maximum. The legendary Captain Cook landed at Possession Bay claiming the island for King George IV of England in 1775. His published account of his exploration drew a large number of sealers seeking their fortune.

The first landing may be Prion Island in the Bay of Isles, where you could see fat, grumpy, male fur seals jousting with each other, ripping bits of flesh from their rough, maned, thick necks. The females ashore could be pregnant, giving birth, or suckling young pups.

You could participate in a climb up a flagged path to the top of a slope where magnificent Wandering Albatrosses are nesting amongst Southern Giant Petrels. Note that the nests of the giant petrels and Wanderers are made of hundreds of beak-fulls of moss and tussock peat.

You could follow a paved walk to the green and beige carpeted top of Prion Island where large white male Wandering Albatrosses may be sitting on the nest sites that they have claimed. Overhead, 6-8 massive female birds may swoop low over the island causing the males to go into a frenzy of mating growling calls – raising their bills skywards to try and tempt any female to their sides. Two Wanderers on the far side who have been paired for a long time, could be preening each other, singing duets, and mating frequently. Scientific research has shown that only those pairs that have been bonded by years of dancing will mate successfully.

South Georgia Pipits could be singing their hearts out from tussock headlands. White-chinned Petrels nest in bigger burrows towards the edge of the cliffs and may be seen swooping low over the island, as do the ever vigilant skuas and Southern Giant Petrels. From the ridge beyond us, ecstatic calls of incubating and brooding Gentoo Penguins should be heard. The backdrop is equally stunning – superb glaciers and spiked mountains.

On your return, there may be a photo opportunity on the beach: molting sub-adult elephant seals, their gorgeous harems of petite females with even more delightful black pups. On one of our expeditions, the return to the ship was delayed because a cow gave birth to a wet and black, tadpole of a pup just as the group was boarding the Zodiacs!

You might grab a quick bite to eat before returning to the deck because the Captain is cruising close along the coast - Possession Bay, Antarctic Bay, and then Fortuna Bay, with its glacier melt-water tracing a marvelous milky blue freshwater line out to sea.

The second landing of the day may be at Fortuna Bay. The Fortuna Glacier area has many historical links: Shackleton and comrades crossed the front of the Fortuna Glacier on their way to Stromness whaling station after their epic crossing of South Georgia in 1915.

The purpose of this landing is to visit King Penguins in their natural habitat, under the moraines of the Koenig Glacier. If conditions permit, you slowly meander past a string of glorious animals – all of which appear to be posing for photographers. Elephant seals may be seen playing in the melt-water streams, Pintail Ducks paddle and swim, reindeer in smart cream coats and black velvet amble about. And, of course, the stars of the day could be the glorious King Penguins, their orange throats seemingly aflame.

Reindeer were introduced in 1911 by Norwegians. They arrived in two batches with subsequent additions. The deer provided an alternative meat source and some sport! Recently there has been an attempt to start a herd in the Falklands. There are also moves to remove reindeer completely from South Georgia because of their destructive affect on the tussock grass and the fact that the glaciers are receding. The receding glaciers allow the reindeer access to more and more land for grazing and trampling.

Just before a Shackleton film is shown, you could cruise close to Stromness Bay and an old whaling station. The Expedition Team points out Shackleton Pass and the waterfall where “The Boss” struggled down to the valley. The governor’s white house is visible with its red roof. Train your binoculars far up a steep scree slope. You could see sheets of corrugated iron that were ripped from the roofs of buildings and deposited there by a dangerously strong wind. Afterward you may attend a shipboard briefing about tomorrow’s landing, which could be King Edward Point, Grytviken.

Day 9: Grytviken or “Pot Cove” and Godthul

The Harbor Master comes aboard to check the ship and its contents, before giving his permission to land. Once ashore, you can follow a path from the museum to the little white Larsen church which is open to visitors. The museum is the initial stopping point. There you can buy postcards, presents, jewelry, t-shirts, and examine the exhibits.

You should have time to pay respects to Shackleton, who died and was buried here in January 1922. On the other side of the bay where the fog rolls in and out and flurries of wind whip the water surface, you can see a large white cross marking the place where the crew from the *Quest* built a memorial to their dead leader.

A visit to Nordenskjöld Glacier occurs, if the weather permits. The glacier is named after Otto Nordenskjöld, the leader of the Swedish Antarctic Expedition which called here in their ship, the *Antarctic*, on the way south to Snow Hill Island in the Weddell Sea, in 1902-3. Some scientific work was done in the area, including establishing and mapping the glacier front that now bears his name. In command of the *Antarctic* was Captain Larsen, who subsequently returned to South Georgia to establish the whaling station at Grytviken in 1905.

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Expect petrels to whiz around the ship as it returns to the Cumberland Bay area. At King Edward Point, it is possible that a glacier might calve.

Day 10: Gold Harbour and Cooper Bay

Today's first landing might be a beach scene of sub-elephant seals (animals that have not bred this year), sparring with neighbors in vast thigmotactic (moves in response to touch) piles of itchy molting blubber, skin, and fur.

Along the beach, the lagoon may be lined with a frill of penguins below a glowering cliff. Surf continues to pound and the wind starts to build, prompting you to meander back along the beach to board a Zodiac.

The Cooper Bay anchorage could be the next landing. There, you would climb a steep shingle and tussock slope to view Macaroni Penguins, bathing in the sun, golden plumes shimmering. Perhaps you witness a skua taking a brown egg smaller than you expect. This is a sacrificial egg that the Macaroni lays first. Two eggs may develop in a good season, but more often than not only the larger egg hatches.

Above you, towards the headland where the Blue-eyed Shags are nesting, four Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses could be displaying in superb flying synchrony – 8 or 9 times – screaming their weird and wild calls of bonding and love!

After dark, the lights are dimmed, yet you could pick out tens of thousands of Antarctic Prions around the ship. The waters may be covered in what looked like bird snow, particularly when they flew off and whirled around in the blackness of the night, flashing like moths in the ship's lights. These birds were waiting for pitch darkness so that they could go into their burrows amongst the tussock with minimum problems from their predators – skuas and petrels.

If the Expedition Team has an astronomer in its complement, then there may be star-gazing on the top deck tonight. Every Expedition Team offers a unique assortment of expertise on which we encourage you to draw throughout the voyage.

Day 11: Drygalski Fjord and Larsen Harbour

Fjords (an Old Norse word from the age of Vikings) are U-shaped valleys carved by glaciation that fill with sea water. The fjord that you may visit today was named for Erich von Drygalski, a scientist with the German deep sea Gauss expedition. On the northeast side of the fjord, the rocks are about 180-200 million years old, but this rock is almost entirely obliterated by the later intrusion of sheets or dykes of a basic rock type. On the southwest side of the fjord the rocks are predominantly ocean floor pillow lavas extruded onto the seabed by submarine vents. Geologists have dated the rocks at about 140 million years old.

The two contrasting pieces of earth history are separated by a major fault dislocation that has been exploited by the Risting Glacier, which once would have filled and scoured out the fjord to a depth of some 750 feet of water but which has now retreated to its present position. The jagged ridge topography of the Salvesen Range and the ridge of the southern peaks contrast with the more rounded outline of the rocks seen earlier in South Georgia.

If conditions permit, you could cruise Larsen Harbour in Zodiacs, gazing at steep slab sided rock buttresses that soar upwards for 700 meters (2000 feet). Look for plankton, large and various, and polyps, jellyfish, amphipods, krill, and animal larvae – a huge variety that are large enough to see.

On the snow slopes and stone beaches there may be Weddell seals hauled out in the sun. Larsen Harbour is the most northerly place for Weddells to pup at the start of the austral spring.

Watch for Antarctic Terns in slick dove-grey upper mantle, white underneath, with beautiful red bill, smart black cap, and tail streamers distinctive of breeding birds. They could be dipping in the waters for marine tidbits, trilling contact calls across the stillness. Blue-eyed Shags may also be there quietly fishing, while Southern Giant Petrels occasionally trawl past.

All around, reflected in the inky still waters, may be superb banks of moss and grasses, tussock and lichens, an exuberance of color and vegetation that will not be seen in the following days on the Antarctica Peninsula. Birds may soar fulmar-like high above, investigating rock ledges or, perhaps, breeding places.

You may return to the ship for a short briefing before a cruise to the head of the Drygalski Fjord. The Expedition Team explains the geology and provides up-to-the-minute information about South Georgia before the ship ventures south.

Cape Disappointment, named by Captain Cook, is where you may try to imagine what it was like for the explorer to discover that South Georgia was an island and NOT the lost continent for which he searched.

Day 12: The Scotia Sea, Southbound

The Scotia Sea and the sky may be the same shade of gray, while winds whip the water as you sail towards the Antarctic Peninsula. Early risers may be the first to sight whales unless the weather starts to get uncomfortable for the sea dwellers.

The education program continues. The morning lecture may be about life at Stonnington Base in Antarctica, a thought provoking insight in the days when primary expedition research was conducted by professionals with teams of dogs. Inevitably talk turns to penguins. Our specialist provides behavioral notes about the species that you will encounter on the Peninsula, preparing you for a world of ice and snow, and the rich feeding grounds where penguins thrive.

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Day 13: At Sea

The temperature may get colder by the day, necessitating more layers of clothes each time you venture out on deck. The complimentary Quark Expeditions parka, which was in your cabin on the day of embarkation, is designed to accommodate any kind of weather. The hooded shell protects you from the rain. The fleece liner can be worn as a jacket to keep you warm on a chilly night. Worn together, you are ready for a squall or snow storm.

Today you may spot the first tabular iceberg, which would have broken off the Larsen Ice Shelf in the Weddell Sea. It would be pushed by the Antarctic Coastal Current NNE at a speed of 1 to 0.5 of a knot. It could be immense, as much as 70 kilometers (44 miles) long by 48 kilometers (30 miles) wide. In failing light the ice could look just like land. The radar image may be of a long line barring entry into the Weddell Sea.

During the evening you could be crossing the Antarctic Convergence, a circumpolar region, drawn as a line undulating between 50 and 60 degrees South. It is marked by a sharp drop in water temperature with a resultant decrease in air temperature. Sometimes this area can be marked by a belt of fog – where warm surface currents moving South from the Tropics meet colder waters from the Antarctic. These conflicting currents converge and sink, mixing and providing a rich, well aerated, nutrient rich environment for the abundance of plankton and, hence, seabirds and sea mammals.

Day 14: Paulet or Elephant Island

As you draw closer to the Peninsula massive tabular bergs are joined by bergy bits and growlers. Growlers lie low in the water and are particularly dense pieces of ice which, when hit at speed, could damage the hull badly. Have no fear, our officers and crew have decades of experience navigating through polar waters.

Paulet Island lies three miles southeast of Dundee Island and at the northern edge of the Weddell Sea (63°03'S 55°04'W). It is a roughly circular island about one mile in diameter, rising to a distinct peak at 1,158 feet/350 meters. There are two melt-water lakes on the northern side of the island. There is evidence of a raised beach on the northern side which would indicate a relative fall in sea level/rise in land level. The coastline is fringed with steeply shelving beaches which are often impeded with ice. The island is a young volcano, perhaps active within the last 1,000 years. The absence of deep snow/ice cover may be due to its youth and residual warmth in the ash/lava deposits. Large tabular icebergs which have been generated from the ice shelves of the southern and western Weddell Sea are often seen in the vicinity. Paulet Island contains a huge colony of Adélie Penguins, estimated at 100,000 breeding pairs. There are also significant numbers of Blue-eyed Shags and Wilson's Storm-petrels. Antarctic Skuas patrol the penguin colonies, as do Snowy Sheathbills. Weddell seals sometimes haul out on the beaches or on floes.

Paulet Island was first discovered by a British Expedition commanded by James Clark Ross in 1839-43, and named by him for Capt. the Right Hon. Lord George Paulet R.N. Paulet Island contains the remains of a hut built by the shipwrecked mariners from the *Antarctic*, the ship of the Swedish National Antarctic

Expedition, commanded by Otto Nordenskjöld. The ship was beset and sank some 30 miles east of Paulet while trying to penetrate the pack to collect the wintering party on Snow Hill Island. Everyone on board, including the ship's cat, took two weeks to make it across the ice with a few provisions and artifacts to the island.

A stone hut was constructed and roofed with a few spars and sailcloth to house the sailors. During the winter (June 7, 1903) one seaman, Ole Wenersgaard, died and was buried adjacent to the beach under a stone cairn. A large number of penguins were slaughtered and used for food and these were stored in a small hut adjacent to the main structure. The remains of these dwellings are now an Antarctic Historic Monument.

In 1915, after the demise of *Endurance*, Shackleton had hoped to make for Paulet Island, but the drift took the party too far east and north to make this feasible and they eventually made for Elephant Island, the northern most of the South Shetland Islands. Weather and ice conditions will determine which of the two islands you visit on your expedition.

Day 15: Deception Island, Whalers Bay, Pendulum Cove, Hannah Point

This morning you should awaken among the South Shetland Islands. Major islands in the group include Robert, King George, Nelson, Greenwich, Livingston, Snow, Deception, Smith and Low. On Deception Island is a breached caldera formed when the central plug of a volcano subsided below sea level, creating a crater 8 miles in diameter.

Early morning may be eerily misty, with fog pouring off the cliffs wetting and chilling all those on deck. The ship sails through Neptune's Bellows into Whalers Bay, where Port Foster is situated. The beach could be steaming enough to remind you that this is an active volcano. The last recorded eruption was in 1970.

The landing may be on the right-hand side of the beach in line with the last standing shed nearest Neptune's Window. You walk along the black ash beach, stopping at the water boats, the piles of barrels, and the whale bone – unforgettable subjects for photography.

If the tide and weather conditions are just right, you may want to change into your swimsuit for dip in Pendulum Cove. The cove was named by Capt. Henry Foster during the visit of H.M.S. *Chanticleer* in 1829, when geophysical measurements of magnetism and gravity were made with the use of a pendulum clock.

If conditions permit, once on board the ship, after some sailing time the captain may reposition off Hannah Point, to allow the Zodiacs to be lowered for another landing.

Day 16: Errera Channel, Paradise Harbour, Damoy Point

The day could dawn somewhat misty and overcast, with lots of wonderfully shaped icebergs, being buffeted by a light breeze. As the ship steams through Errera Channel, join your fellow adventurers on deck to watch for wildlife. Chinstrap and Adélie Penguins on ice and small bergs may amuse you.

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When the ship turns towards Paradise Harbour, the channel narrows. Watch for the station Presidente Gonzalez Videla, a striking scene with the red huts and flags of residency flying. This base was the location of Waterboat Point, the site of an early British expedition to the Antarctic – the grandly titled British Imperial Expedition – of Bagshawe and Lester. These two young scientists wintered here for a year and a day in 1920/1, and lived in a hut partially constructed from a waterboat, i.e. a wooden craft which would have been filled with water, or perhaps ice, to feed steam boilers in whaling vessels.

The ship may turn into Paradise Harbour to anchor within easy striking distance of the Almirante Brown Station – this could be the moment when you first step on the Antarctic Continent.

From Paradise Harbour the ship may set course for the narrow Neumayer Channel, which leads past Damoy Point, where there is a small Argentinean hut and a slightly larger British hut built in 1976 and used as a staging post for aircraft to take people further south early in the season.

Day 17: Lemaire Channel

Low cloud and snow flurries may reduce visibility, but as long as the Lemaire is not ice-choked the Captain will forge ahead, past towering cliffs. Keep watch for whales, penguins, Giant Petrels, and skuas on the ice. You may see a large raft of ice with Gentoos feeding on the ice edge. The sort of tasty treat for which orcas are on the hunt. If the cry, “whales dead ahead” is heard, Zodiacs may be lowered for a closer look.

From this farthest south point the ship could head north to Neko Harbour, a small bay indenting the west coast of Graham Land on the Antarctic Continent. It was first seen and roughly charted by the Belgian Antarctic Expedition under Gerlache, 1897-99 and named after Christian Salvesen’s floating factory *Neko*, which operated in the South Shetland Islands and Antarctic Peninsula area for many seasons between 1911 and 1924, and which often used this bay.

You could land on a narrow granite beach choked with brash ice. Climb high because the view is superb – ice glacier, white sweeping snow slopes, and blue water with variable smatterings of brash ice like polka dots on the surface. Watch for Chinstrap Penguins and Weddell seals.

The Great Antarctic Barbecue – a Quark tradition – occurs on the most still and calm evening possible. Glühwein, mulled wine, whets your appetite. On one voyage Minke whales came close to the ship, surfacing and puffing so that whale breath bathed the deck!

Day 18: Port Lockroy

Before landing, a short briefing about the history of Base Station A, is delivered. Then the Zodiacs are lowered for the transfer ashore. There is a shop and post office, and a Gentoo penguin colony to explore.

Once all have returned to the ship, the Captain may set a course to the Melchior Islands for a Zodiac cruise, one final activity before entering the Drake Passage, which is notorious for high winds and rolling seas. Traversing the Drake is as much a part of the Antarctic experience as penguins and krill. With the right weather conditions your passage will be relatively easy.

Day 19: The Drake Passage

Packing day has arrived. A briefing is held, final remarks are made and instructions for disembarkation are delivered. You learn when to place your luggage in the corridor outside the cabin door for collection.

By this day in the itinerary you may have crossed the South Atlantic Ocean to the Southern Ocean and the infamous Drake Passage, following in the wake of some of the great names in exploration Drake, Cook, Scott and Shackleton.

The Captain’s Farewell Reception is the second excuse to dress after nearly three weeks in expedition gear. The choice to dress is yours – informality is the hallmark of our expedition style. You can thank the Captain, and officers, whose skills are essential to the safety and success of this voyage.

Day 20: Ushuaia, Argentina

After breakfast aboard ship, you are transferred by bus to the passenger collection point at the end of the quay.



What's Included:

- Pre-expedition hotel accommodation in Ushuaia, Argentina, for 1 night with breakfast.
- Shipboard accommodation in your choice of cabin occupancy and category.
- All breakfasts, lunches and dinners on board the ship throughout the voyage, including a complimentary glass of house wine with dinner.
- All shore landings and excursions by Zodiac according to the daily onboard program.
- Leadership throughout the voyage by our experienced Expedition Leader, including shore landings and other activities arranged by the Expedition Team.
- Formal and informal educational presentations by our Expedition Team as scheduled during the voyage.
- A digital post-expedition log combining narrative, photography and video.
- A specially designed expedition parka to keep.
- The loan of a pair of rubber boots for the duration of the voyage (so you don't have to pack any).
- Comprehensive pre-departure materials, including a map and an informative Antarctic book.
- Round-trip transfers between the ship and the local airport at the port of embarkation and disembarkation—plus all baggage handling aboard the ship.
- All miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the program.

Please refer to our Antarctica 2006-2007 brochure for a list of what is not included in the expedition rates, and our terms and conditions.

Embracing the Unexpected

Quark Expeditions takes you to remote polar regions where very few travelers venture. We constantly adjust our routes in progress to take best advantage of weather and ice conditions—which can vary unpredictably from day to day. In some cases our exact landings depend on official permission that can only be obtained locally. And we are always ready to alter plans accordingly to take advantage of wildlife sightings and other one-of-a-kind opportunities. All this to say that our itineraries are painstakingly planned but are not definitive summaries of the journey you will actually experience. We cannot guarantee that all shore landings will take place or that they will include all the events we've outlined in advance. Embracing the unexpected is part of the legacy—and excitement—of expedition-style travel, and a measure of flexibility is something all of us must bring along on the voyage.