



**BIRDING CRUISE ANTARCTICA: TIERRA DEL FUEGO, THE
FALKLANDS, SOUTH GEORGIA, AND THE ANTARCTIC
PENINSULA**

3 - 22 DECEMBER 2018



King Penguin (©Thomas Laumeyer) is one of our targets on this trip.

This magnificent cruise starts in the world's southernmost city, Ushuaia. This Argentinean city is bounded by the famous Beagle Channel on one side and by the mountains of Tierra del Fuego ("Land of the Fire") on the other. We already start looking for "mainland" birds here before we set sail to the Falkland Islands, famed for the massive colonies of **King Penguin** (plus four other penguin species), **Black-browed Albatross**, and a fabulous suite of other charismatic birds as well as marine mammals. We then head to South Georgia, where we hope to find some endemic birds along with all the penguins, petrels and other seabirds, including one of the world's most iconic birds, the massive **Wandering Albatross**. We'll eventually head to the Antarctic Peninsula itself, where we hope to see **Snow Petrel** and to add new penguin species to our list, among many other things. We'll try (ice-permitting) to sail into the Weddell Sea. On our way back to Ushuaia, we'll keep scanning the ocean for species we may have missed before – perhaps a **Sooty Albatross** or **Light-mantled Albatross**!

IMPORTANT: The below is a standard itinerary to the Falklands Islands, South Georgia, and Antarctic Peninsula regions. It is for illustration purposes only, and actual schedules could change due to various factors such as weather, berthing availability, and wildlife opportunities. The tour leader will decide on the eventual itinerary, and it is therefore essential to remain flexible. The vessel cruises at an average speed of 10.5 knots.

Itinerary (20 days/19 nights)

Day 1: Boarding of our vessel in Ushuaia

The Beagle Channel is home to the world's most southern city, Ushuaia in Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, and it is here where we will board our ship for the breathtaking Antarctic region. We will spend the evening admiring the captivating, passing scenery.

Day 2: Sailing towards the Falkland Islands

We spend the entire day at sea in the direction toward the Falkland Islands. The prevailing winds from the west will bring us a wide range of remarkable birds, such as diving and storm petrels, a variety of albatrosses, and some shearwaters.

Day 3: Exploring the Falkland Islands

Our first day exploring the Falkland Islands will be spent in the western part, which will include a visit to Carcass Island. Here a walk on the shoreline will reward you with marvelous sightings of **Gentoo Penguin**, **Magellanic Penguin**, passerines, **Black-crowned Night Heron**, and close-up views of waterfowl.

As we discover Saunders Island, the rare sight of four species of breeding penguins can be seen. These are the magnificent **Rockhopper**, **Magellanic**, **King**, and **Gentoo Penguins**. Other remarkable birds to observe will include **Imperial Shag** and **Black-browed Albatross**.

Day 4: Discovering Stanley

We spend the day exploring the Falklands' capital, Stanley. This is the ideal opportunity for you to experience the island's culture, which is a perfect blend of old British charm and South American style. It is difficult to miss the long-ago-stranded shipping vessels that dot the coastline! There are several local and cultural attractions to visit in Stanley, including the

museum and church (admission fees for clients' own account), and clients may spend some time visiting the area by themselves.

Days 5 – 6: En route to South Georgia

The next two days will be spent en route to breathtaking South Georgia. Sailing across the Antarctic Convergence and entering the much cooler Antarctic waters, you can now expect significantly cooler temperatures! As we head toward the Antarctic Convergence, you can expect to see several kinds of fabulous birds such as petrels, skuas, albatrosses, prions, and, of course, shearwaters.

Days 7 – 10: Exploring South Georgia

Our arrival in spectacular South Georgia will be in the early afternoon. If conditions are favorable, we could visit the Bay of Elsehul, which is home to an extremely active Antarctic fur seal breeding beach.

Later we will sail directly to Right Whale Bay, Salisbury Plain, Godthul, St Andrews Bay, Gold Harbour, Cooper Bay, and Drygalski Fjord to give you the best chance to view a large array of the most stunning scenery and wildlife. This will include the likes of **Macaroni Penguin**, **King Penguin**, southern elephant seal, and Antarctic fur seal.

Prion Island may just be the best part of your trip! Here we will experience first-hand views of the immense **Wandering Albatross** as it breeds while, at the same time, reveling in its displays. (Note that the island is closed for visitors during breeding season from 20 November to 7 January).

Depending on the group and other conditions, once we reach Fortuna Bay we could do exactly as the noble British explorer Ernest Shackleton did and hike all the way over to Stromness Bay.

Grytviken affords you the thrilling opportunity to see an abandoned whaling village. Instead of humans, **King Penguins** now roam the streets, and seals now occupy the buildings. This is certainly a sight to see! The South Georgia Museum in Grytviken, a whaling history museum, as well as Ernest Shackleton's grave, are not-to-miss sights in this area.

We leave South Georgia on Day 10 in the afternoon.

Day 11: Birding on the Water

Although we spend the entire day at sea, there is certainly no shortage of seabirds! The birding may change, especially if the vessel encounters some sea ice, as this is where we are likely to observe some special, high Antarctic birds such as **Snow Petrel** or **South Polar Skua**.

Day 12: Orcadas Station, South Orkney Islands

Today we will visit Orcadas Station, which is an Argentinean base situated on Laurie Island in the South Orkney Islands archipelago. Here you will be greeted by the friendly staff of the base, who will give us a tour of their premises. We will also take in the spectacular views of the glaciers surrounding us. Alternatively, we could attempt a berthing on Coronation Island at Shingle Cove.

Day 13: At sea en route to Antarctica

The day will be spent admiring the magnificent scenery from the vessel. Be sure to have your camera ready as we pass spectacular icebergs. There is also a good possibility of spotting fin whale and **Antarctic Petrel**.

Days 14 – 17: The magnificent Antarctic Peninsula

Ice conditions permitting, we will sail through the icy Antarctic Sound and into the famed Weddell Sea. As we arrive at the eastern side of the Antarctic Peninsula it is difficult not to stand in awe of the grand, tabular icebergs that greet us!

An exciting visit to Paulet Island will reveal Brown Bluff and an immense number of **Adelie Penguins**. If conditions are favorable, we may be able to set foot on the continent. Hopefully the weather will allow us to spend some more time in the Weddell Sea.

Although the South Shetland Islands are volcanic and windswept in nature and are often very misty, they do offer great natural delights such as a wide range of flora (beautiful flowering grasses, lichens, and mosses) and fauna (including **Chinstrap Penguin**, **Gentoo Penguin**, and **Southern Giant Petrel**).

The unique **Chinstrap Penguin** can be observed in all its glory during our visit to Half Moon Island, while the ever-so-cheeky Weddell seal can be clearly spotted on the beach close to Cámara Base (the Argentinean scientific research station).

To reach our next destination, Deception Island, our ship will barrel through the amazing Neptune's Bellows, the crater's entrance. The island is a subducted crater opening into the sea, forming a natural harbor for our vessel. On Deception Island there is incredible birdlife! You can view species such as **Antarctic Tern**, **Black-bellied** and **Wilson's Storm Petrels**, **South Polar Skua**, **Kelp Gull**, and thousands of **Cape Petrels**.

Days 18 – 19: Birding on the ship en route to Ushuaia

These days are spent on board the vessel on our way back to Ushuaia. As we cross the Drake Passage we can observe a large number of spectacular seabirds.

Day 20: Disembarkation from our vessel in Ushuaia

Arrival in Ushuaia in the morning and disembarkation

Duration:	20 days
Limit:	The group sizes of cruises are a function of the capacity of the ship, so our usual small group size policy naturally can't apply here.
Date:	3 – 22 December 2018
Start:	Ushuaia, Argentina
End:	Ushuaia, Argentina

Price per person (on sale):

Quadruple porthole – sharing **US\$10,500** (was US\$13,100)

Triple beds porthole – sharing **US\$11,500** (was US\$14,350)

Twin beds porthole – sharing **US\$12,700**, single **US\$21,590** (was US\$15,900, US\$27,030)

Twin beds window – sharing **US\$16,650**, single **US\$28,305** (was US\$16,650, US\$28,305)

Twin beds deluxe – sharing **US\$17,200**, single **US\$29,240** (was US\$17,800, US\$30,270)

Double bed superior – double **US\$35,600**, single **US\$30,260** (was US\$38,300, US\$32,555)

All cabins contain private shower and toilet, flat screen TV, telephone and internet connections, hair dryer, and ample storage space.

Price includes:

All meals throughout the voyage aboard the ship, including snacks, coffee, and tea
All shore excursions and activities throughout the voyage by Zodiac
Program of lectures by noted naturalists and leadership by experienced expedition staff
Free use of rubber boots and snowshoes
Luggage transfer from pick-up point to the vessel on the day of embarkation in Ushuaia
Pre-scheduled group transfer from the vessel to the airport in Ushuaia (directly after disembarkation)
All miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the program
Comprehensive pre-departure material

Price excludes:

Any airfare, whether on scheduled or charter flights
Pre- and post-tour land arrangements
Passport and visa expenses
Government arrival and departure taxes
Meals ashore
Baggage, cancellation, and personal insurance (which is mandatory)
Excess baggage charges and all items of a personal nature, such as laundry, bar, beverage charges, and telecommunication charges
The customary gratuity at the end of the voyage for stewards and other service personnel aboard (guidelines will be provided)