Antarctic & Arctic

# antarctic explorer aboard sylvia earle






## trip highlights

- Icebergs and active glaciers
- Historic sites
- Spectacular mountains rising directly out of the sea
- The most wildlife-rich part of Antarctica - penguins, whales, seals, sea birds
- Narrow sheltered waterways and fjords



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| **Trip Duration** | 12 days | **Trip Code:** SOG7356 |
| **Grade** | Discovery and Cruising | |
| **Activities** | Cruising, Wildlife Viewing, Optional Kayaking | |
| **Summary** | 10 nights aboard Sylvia Earle, 2 nights hotel in Punta Arenas | |

## welcome to World Expeditions

Thank you for enquiring about our Antarctic Explorer aboard the Sylvia Earle voyage. It's one of an ensemble of small group voyages to the Polar Regions of Antarctica and the high Arctic, offered by World Expeditions. Travelling to such delicate eco-systems requires a responsible approach from the outset and choosing to travel on an ice strengthened ship that carries no more than 120 passengers is the ideal way to minimize your impact. Small group voyages also help to maximize your time on shore and create a more personal and interactive mood while on the ship. Our zodiacs transfer us from ship to shore each day while the sea-kayaking option is available on many of our voyages and ideal for those seeking more activity during their Polar experience. If you prefer to stay on the boat, then the Captains Bridge, library, theatre room, bar and wellness centre will always keep you occupied, in between informative lectures from experienced naturalists and polar guides. We hope you will join us for a life changing experience!

## why travel with World Expeditions?

We offer unique, small-group expedition cruises that allow you to enjoy the natural wildlife and scenery of some of the world's most spectacular and pristine shorelines. The size, capacity and capability of our ice-strengthened vessels have proven to be a successful formula for many years. Most importantly, our adventures have always sought to safeguard the ecosystems we explore and contribute to the sustainability of travel in the regions we experience. You will be accompanied by a crew whose knowledge and passion for the Antarctic will add a unique dimension to your trip.

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World Expeditions does not require single travellers pay a surcharge for travelling alone. We will arrange for you to share a cabin with another traveller of the same gender. If you prefer not to share a single supplement is payable to guarantee single occupancy of the cabin, ask us for pricing details.

## the trip

Beginning with a flight from Punta Arenas to King George Island in the South Shetland Islands, we commence our sea voyage aboard the Sylvia Earle. The Antarctic Peninsula is a hauntingly beautiful region that provides a haven for the greatest concentration of wildlife on the continent, and offers some of the world's most stunning and surreal landscapes. In true expedition style we encourage exploration and adventure, offering flexibility in challenging environments in a way that puts you among the action to see and do as much as possible. This itinerary is only a guide and subject to change due to ice and weather conditions.

## our partners

World Expeditions have enjoyed a long standing relationship with Aurora and share a similar operational philosophy of a low impact, small group travel approach. The voyages are operated with these very principles in mind. Primarily the Sylvia Earle is staffed by Aurora personnel however a World Expeditions staff member will accompany some of the voyages.

## at a glance

| | |
|---|---|
| DAY 1 | JOIN PUNTA ARENAS OVERNIGHT AT HOTEL |
| DAY 2 | FLY TO KING GEORGE ISLAND, AFTERNOON BOARD THE SYLVIA EARLE |
| DAYS 3-10 | EXPLORE THE ANTARCTIC PENINSULA |
| DAY 11 | FLY KING GEORGE ISLAND TO PUNTA ARENAS |
| DAY 12 | IN PUNTA ARENAS, WHERE TRIP CONCLUDES |

## what's included

- 11 breakfasts, 9 lunches and 9 dinners
- Beer, house wine and soft drinks with dinner
- Return flights Punta Arenas to King George Island (days 2 & 11)
- Comfortable cabin accommodation and use of all public areas on cruise
- Two nights hotel accommodation in Punta Arenas - one pre and one post voyage (twin share)
- Specialist expedition staff
- All shore excursions from the ship including the use of Zodiacs
- Lectures, videos, slide and film shows and guide services
- Medical services (there is a resident medical officer and infirmary on board)
- Port taxes and port charges imposed by government authorities
- Pre-departure information
- Complimentary Polar Expedition Jacket
- Complimentary use of muck boots during the voyage
- Keepsake Photo Book (one per booking) created from photography taken during your voyage

## what's not included

- Air transport and airport transfers before and after the cruise unless specified in itinerary
- Passport and vaccination charges, reciprocity fees and airport departure taxes
- Accommodation and meals or other services not included in the ship cruise itinerary
- Laundry, postage, personal clothing, medical expenses, travel insurance and items of a personal nature such as bar charges, wine and phone calls.
- Emergency evacuation charges

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## trip dates

**2023** 26 Jan - 06 Feb

## important notes

**BP -** Base Price

## fast facts

**Countries Visited:**
Antarctica

**Visas:**
Please check visa requirements with your reservations consultant*

**Vaccinations:**
Please consult a travel vaccination specialist for up to date information

**Private Groups:**
Private group options are available for this trip*

**Singles:**
A single supplement is available for this trip*

**Advice for people with limited mobility**
This trip is not suitable for people with limited mobility.

*Ask our staff for more information

## detailed itinerary

### DAY 1 Join Punta Arenas overnight at hotel

Join in Punta Arenas and transfer (off selected flights) to the group hotel for overnight accommodation in a twin share room.

**meals: NIL**

### DAY 2 Fly to King George Island, afternoon board the Sylvia Earle

Fly to King George Island and explore the port until we embark the ship in the afternoon. You will be warmly greeted by the crew and expedition staff as you embark the Sylvia Earle. We will settle into shipboard life and enjoy our first meal on board.

**meals: B,D**

### DAYS 3-10 Explore the Antarctic Peninsula

It's almost impossible to describe the feeling of arriving in Antarctica. Spotting your first iceberg and taking a deep breath of some of the most fresh, crisp air on earth is an experience that will stay with you forever.

The western side of the Antarctic Peninsula and the South Shetland Islands are ours to explore, and we have a host of choices available to us. Because we are so far south, we will experience approximately 18-24 hours of daylight and the days can be as busy as you wish.

Your experienced expedition team, who have made countless journeys to this area, will use their expertise to design your voyage from day to day, choosing the best options based on the prevailing weather, ice conditions and wildlife opportunities.

We generally make landings or zodiac excursions twice a day. You'll want to rug up before joining Zodiac cruises along spectacular ice cliffs or among grounded icebergs, keeping watch for whales, seals and porpoising penguins. Zodiacs will also transport you from the ship to land, where you can visit penguin rookeries, discover historic huts and explore some of our favourite spots along the peninsula.

While ashore we aim to stretch our legs, wandering along pebbly beaches or perhaps up snow-covered ridgelines to vantage points with mountains towering overhead and ice-speckled oceans below. If you have chosen an optional activity, you'll have the option to do that whenever conditions allow, and of course keen polar plungers will have the chance to fully immerse themselves in polar waters - conditions permitting!

In addition to zodiac cruises and shore excursions, we may ship cruise some of the narrow, dramatic straits separating offshore islands from the mainland, or linger in scenic bays to watch whales travelling or feeding. This is a great time to enjoy the observation lounge or make your way to the bridge for uninterrupted views of Antarctica in all its splendour. Keep an ear out for the creak and deep rumble of glaciers as they carve their way from summit to sea, and take a quiet moment to experience the wonder of this incredible white continent.

**meals: B,L,D**

### DAY 11 Fly King George Island to Punta Arenas

As we approach Frei Base on King George Island, it is time to farewell Antarctica and our amazing adventure before boarding our return flight (1 hour, 45 minutes) to Punta Arenas, Chile. On arrival at the Punta Arenas airport, you will be transferred to our group hotel.

**meals: B**

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## trip grading

### Discovery and Cruising

Although there is no commitment to extended walking on this journey we nonetheless want to keep the 'accent on the active'. We therefore advise that any physical training you complete before undertaking the trip will be to good effect.

**DAY 12 In Punta Arenas, where trip concludes**

After breakfast, bid a fond farewell to your fellow travellers as we all continue our onward journeys, hopefully with a newfound sense of the immense power of nature (breakfast included). A transfer to the airport is included in the voyage fare.

**meals: B**

This itinerary is subject to change with any change in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

## places of interest

Half Moon Island

A wildlife rich island tucked into a neat bay at the eastern end of Livingston Island. On a clear day the glaciers and mountains of Livingston Island dominate the scene. There is a large chinstrap penguin rookery tucked in between basaltic turrets coloured by yellow and orange lichens. Gulls nest on these turrets and there are often fur seals and elephant seals hauled out on the pebble beaches. At one extremity of the island there is a large colony of nesting blue-eyed shags. At the other end lies a small Argentine station, that is sometimes occupied by scientists conducting research on the penguin colony and surrounding waterways.

Deception Island

Visiting Deception Island is like making a journey to the moon. We sail through the narrow opening of Neptune's Bellows to enter the flooded volcanic crater. Inside is an unworldly scene, virtually devoid of life. Glaciers flow down from the edge of the crater, littered by black volcanic ash.

We can explore the lifeless remains of a derelict whaling station and a vacant British base, or climb to the rim of the crater. Steam rises from the shore indicating that the water is actually warm enough for a swim, for those who dare. Outside the crater, if conditions allow, we might land at Bailey Head to explore the enormous chinstrap penguin rookery that featured in David Attenborough's 'Life in the Freezer' series.

Paradise Harbour

A protected bay surrounded by magnificent peaks and spectacular glaciers, the rocky cliffs of this unforgettable piece of heaven provide perfect nesting sites for blue-eyed shags, terns and gulls. The serenity of Paradise Harbour envelops us once the sound of the dropping anchor fades from our ears. This is a haven for whales and sometimes we meet humpbacks, orcas and minkes, as well as crabeater seals, as we explore the bay in Zodiacs. Imagine being so close to a whale that when he surfaces to blow, the fishy spray of his exhalation momentarily blurs your vision. Words cannot describe this experience.

Lemaire Channel

If the ice conditions allow, standing on the bow and quietly moving through the narrow Lemaire Channel will be one of the highlights of our voyage. Cliffs tower 700 metres directly above the ship. The water can be so still that perfect reflections are mirrored on the surface. Often gigantic icebergs clog the channel, creating navigational challenges for our captain and crew, and they may even obstruct our passage.

Robert Point

A fine example of the South Shetland Islands. A tiny toe of land that is literally alive with wildlife. Here we will find two species of penguins breeding - chinstraps and gentoos. It is not uncommon to find wallows of elephant seals that are 40 beasts strong. Giant petrels nest on the ridgeline. The vegetation consists of mosses, lichens and the only grass species that grows in Antarctica. All this is set against a stunning backdrop of the mountains and glaciers of the surrounding islands.

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Other places we may visit around the Antarctic Peninsula are: Pleneau Island, Neko Harbour, Andvoord Bay, Vernadsky - a Ukrainian scientific base, and Port Lockroy - a historic British base that is now a museum and post office... or a variety of other surprises.

## suggested extensions

- Paine and Fitz Roy Trek
- Patagonia Adventure
- Torres del Paine Circuit
- We have a range of Patagonia options including short customised itineraries and group departures. Ask our office for details.
- We also have a range of options to Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, and more
- Refer to our website, www.worldexpeditions.com for more details

## climate

The climate in Antarctic is characterized by a long winter and a relatively short summer. We visit the Peninsula during the summer (November to March) when temperatures hover between –15 and +2 degrees Celsius during the day. Wind chill can cause this temperature to drop below –15 degrees Celsius. The Antarctic continent is considered to be the coldest desert in the world. Precipitation can occur during the summer on the Peninsula however it is unlikely to persist for longer than a few hours.

## a typical day

Because of the exploratory nature of these voyages we do not have a set itinerary. The final decisions on our daily program will make best use of local ice and weather conditions, spontaneous opportunities and wildlife. These notes are designed to give you a good idea of our intentions.

Kayaking Option: You should be an intermediate kayaker and have an adventurous spirit. This should not be your first sea kayak experience. You do not have to be an expert or know how to roll. However, you should have practiced a wet exit and assisted re-entry before the trip. This can easily be practiced in waist deep water at home, with a friend's help or under tuition. You should also recognize that the weather will influence greatly what we can and can't do. You need to be proficient putting a spray skirt on yourself. Try to rent a kayak locally before leaving home if you feel you need some additional experience or seek out a local operator for some paddling tuition. We could be paddling in winds and will not have any opportunity to instruct before our first paddle. We often begin our first paddling session from the shore and after that will be launching directly from the ship so you should be comfortable paddling on seas that could have up to half a metre swell. Generally the water surface ranges from glassy calm to a 30-40 cm wind chop, so do practice in a variety of conditions.

Photography Workshops: Catering to both amateurs and the more experienced photographers, our onboard team of photography guides deliver photography workshops and one-on-one instruction from the deck or Zodiacs and during landings.

## dietary requirements

Provided we are advised in advance we are able to cater for vegetarian diets and can assist with medically recommended diets (allergies and intolerances). Please ensure you discuss your requirements with us well in advance to determine whether we can cater on your chosen adventure. Please note that options are likely to be limited in remote locations or alternatives may be more expensive or unavailable. There may be times when those with special requirements may need to provide their own food. Passengers must travel with all necessary medications for food allergies and be capable of self-administering these medications.

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## accommodation on the trip




Balcony Stateroom Category C

Cabin & balcony combined size: 19.5m2 - 28.7m2 (209.9ft$^2$ - 308.9ft2)

We have three cabin categories of our Balcony Staterooms. These are classified as A, B or C depending on the cabin size.

Our 11 Balcony Stateroom – C cabins are our most economical, fitted with all the necessities and comfortable for up to 2 people. These cabins are scattered throughout Deck 6.

All cabin images of the Sylvia Earle are artist's impressions only and final results may vary.

## equipment required

A comprehensive gear list is provided in the pre-departure information supplied on booking.

## protecting the environment

Antarctica is the largest wilderness region on earth and deserves special protection. The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) was formed in 1991 to promote environmentally responsible travel to the Antarctic. World Expeditions is committed to responsible travel and true sustainability and we are proud to be an Associate Member of IAATO. Participants on our voyages are briefed on the environmental codes of conduct & the scientific explanations behind them to help maximize the enjoyment of their visit without compromising the pristine environment.

## non exclusive trips

Please note that this trip is not exclusive to World Expeditions clients and you will be joining a group of 120 adventurers from around the world.

## wildlife

Apart from the deep sea, Antarctica is the oldest and largest self-contained ecosystem in the world. The animal world is very closely linked with the sea and is consequently to be found mainly on the periphery of the continent. With the exception of a few insects, all forms of life capitulate in the face of the increasingly harsh climatic conditions further inland. The coastal regions are populated by sea birds such as petrels, albatrosses, skuas and penguins as well as marine mammals like the crabeater seal, leopard seal, Ross seal, Weddell seal, fin and right whale, and sea lions. The Antarctic sea regions contain the greatest quantities of animal protein on Earth.

Antarctica's marine food chain

The most common Antarctic shrimp, krill, uses its front legs to catch microscopic unicellular algae known as diatoms. The word krill comes from the Norwegian and means "food of the whale". All living creatures consume 90% of their food for their everyday activities and thus convert only 10% into body weight, meaning that nutritional value declines exponentially as one progresses through the food chain. The whale jumps these links in the chain by preying directly on krill rather than on fish or sea birds. A fin whale requires about 2-3 tonnes of krill per day to reach an impressive length of 24 metres and a weight of up to 80 tonnes.

Antarctic birds

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Penguins represent half of the Antarctic bird population, nine-tenths of its biomass. These birds depend on the sea for their food. They eat about 4.7 million tons of food each month, mainly crustaceans and fish, but also squid. While penguins dominate the bird biomass, tube-nosed petrels constitute the majority of the breeding species. Other groups include cormorants, skuas, gulls, and terns.

It takes a tough bird to overcome Antarctica's notorious inclemency. One might infer from the enormous concentrations of sea birds that do occur that the populations are invincible. They are not. The long isolation of Antarctic birds has produced an extraordinarily innocent and docile avifauna - a quality attractive to both scientific study and tourism, but one that leaves these highly vulnerable birds open to harm from human presence or mismanagement.

Natural factors such as storms or abnormally extensive sea ice can cause extremely high mortality in nesting areas. But Antarctic bird species have evolved to overcome these adversities. Human activity is another matter. On the evolutionary time scale, people and their machines have just entered the Antarctic scene. The birds have had little time to adjust. Studies have shown that even casual or occasional contacts with Antarctic bird colonies can adversely affect breeding success. After visits are ended or controlled, bird populations have been observed to return to former levels.

Today, much is known about some of these birds at breeding sites, but virtually nothing about the longer time they spend at sea.

## flora

Infertile and wasteland are two words one often hears in connection with the polar regions. Yet over 800 species of flowering plant flourish in the Arctic, though by contrast there are only two species of flowering plants on the Antarctic mainland since it is a long way from the next continent, a fact which reduces the chances of new plant species becoming established. The major part of Antarctica is also covered by eternal ice and the climate is much harsher than in most parts of the Arctic. In the few places where plants can grow, mosses and lichens play a bigger role than flowering plants. Some lichens even grow in the polar desert areas in the interior of Antarctica where the conditions are truly extreme. Arctic plants have to be very small to survive. A tall plant would be helplessly exposed to the sharp ice crystals with which the wind would constantly batter it.

## visas

Whilst visa's are not required to visit Antarctica many passport holders may require visa's for countries they transit en-route to the voyage. Please check with your reservations consultant or travel agent to determine if visa's are required for your journey.

## private groups

The adventures featured in our brochures, and on our website, are just a starting point for many of our private group travellers. Working closely with our Groups Department we can organise custom designed itineraries for groups of friends, clubs, charity's, schools or even work colleagues. Our team will assist you with all aspects of your private group adventure from itinerary design to group flights. Contact our team today.