

# Antarctica, The Falklands and South Georgia

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

January 2027 Exclusive Charter

## Outline itinerary

<b>Day 1</b>	Depart London	<b>Day 13/14</b>	At sea
<b>Day 2</b>	Ushuaia	<b>Day 15</b>	Elephant Island or South Orkney Islands
<b>Day 3</b>	Embark M/V Plancius & begin cruise	<b>Day 16/19</b>	Antarctic Peninsula & South Shetland Islands
<b>Day 4</b>	At sea	<b>Day 20/21</b>	At sea
<b>Day 5/6</b>	Falkland Islands	<b>Day 22</b>	Disembark M/V Plancius & fly Buenos Aires
<b>Day 7/8</b>	At sea	<b>Day 23</b>	Depart Buenos Aires
<b>Day 9/12</b>	South Georgia	<b>Day 24</b>	Arrive London

## Dates

Monday 18th January – Wednesday 10th February 2027

## Cost (Per Person)

Quadruple Cabin with porthole - £16,595 (London/London)

Triple Cabin with porthole - £17,595 (London/London)

Twin Cabin with porthole - £18,595 (London/London)

Twin Cabin with window - £19,995 (London/London)

Twin Deluxe Cabin - £20,395 (London/London)

Superior Cabin - £20,995 (London/London)

Cruise Only – Minus £2,300 from the above prices.  
(no flights or Buenos Aires/Ushuaia hotels)

NB - For additional information on each cabin grade please refer to page 13 of this itinerary.

## Grading

Grade A – See page 10 for further information.

## Focus

Antarctic wildlife and scenery.



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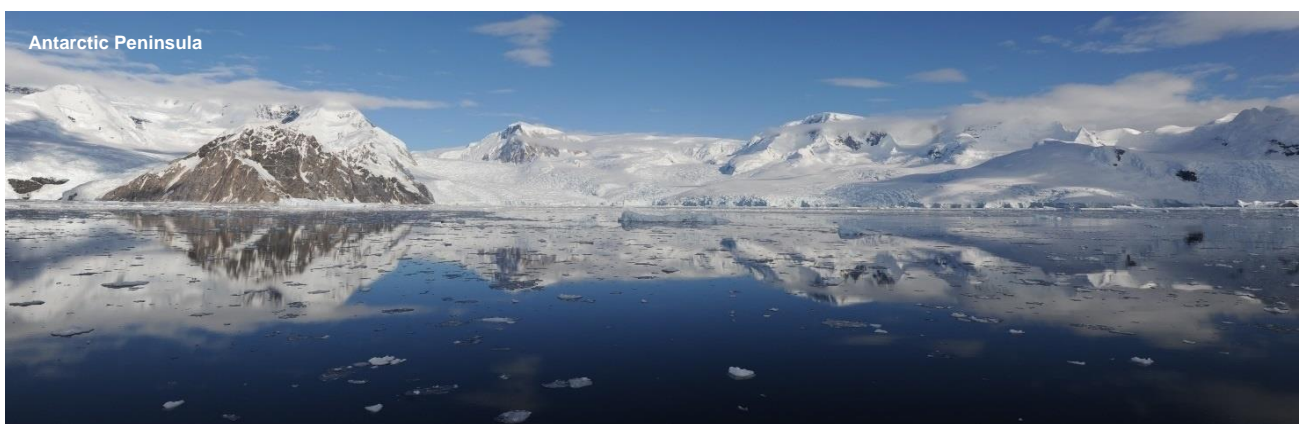
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## Introduction

Antarctica is a land of superlatives. It is the coldest, windiest, driest, iciest and highest of all the major landmasses of the world. It is a continent of extremes, but also one of extreme beauty! Those fortunate enough to explore its icy shores cannot fail to be awe-struck by the sheer grandeur of the landscape, the towering glaciers, rugged snow-covered mountains and huge icebergs calved into a myriad of shapes by the relentless pounding of the Southern Ocean. This encircling ocean is, in turn, one of the richest of all seas and the basis for the food-chain that supports Antarctica's huge concentration of wildlife. Every spring, as the pack-ice slowly retreats, millions of penguins, seabirds and other creatures leave the vastness of these turbulent waters to converge on the continent, and its surrounding necklace of islands, to breed and raise their young. By mid-January the breeding season is at its peak, penguins and albatrosses are busily feeding chicks and the race to fledge is in full swing before darkness descends once more heralding the return of winter's even icier grip.



An expedition to Antarctica is no small undertaking, and for most people will be something they only do once in their life. If you have a serious interest in the wildlife, or perhaps want the best possible opportunities for photography, you will want to make the most of your time and considerable investment. In January 2027 Naturetrek is planning on operating our next full charter on the 108-passenger, ice-strengthened, MV Plancius for 19 nights, with the aim of repeating the itinerary – and success – of our past exclusive wildlife charters around the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula. Taking a full charter of MV Plancius is the key to the success of our cruises for it allows us to design the itinerary to include only the very best wildlife sites and fill the ship with like-minded Naturetrek clients. It also allowed us to bring along a selection of our most experienced naturalist tour leaders ensuring that all aspects of natural history are covered and that our group enjoy three weeks of unforgettable wildlife sightings and breathtaking polar scenery! It's a winning formula we plan to repeat every few years, the next one being January 2027!



## Itinerary

Please note that the following itinerary should be treated as a guide only, not an exact program. Flexibility is the key to all Antarctic voyages and our exact route and program will depend on ice and weather conditions, wildlife encounters, the experience of the expedition leader and the advice of the ship's captain and crew.

### Day 1

### In Flight

We depart London this evening on an Iberia Airlines scheduled overnight service to Buenos Aires, the capital city of Argentina (changing aircraft in Madrid).

### Day 2

### Ushuaia

Arriving in Buenos Aires early-morning we transfer to our onward flight to Tierra del Fuego and specifically Ushuaia, the southernmost city in the world. This spectacular flight, a little over three hours in length follows the Argentinean coastline south, over the patchwork of woodlands and fields that surround the capital, then onward over Peninsular Valdez and the seemingly endless flat lands of the Argentinean Pampas. Finally, as the snow-capped peaks of the Andes slowly appear out of the mist we begin our spectacular descent along the Beagle Channel and into Ushuaia. In less than one day we have transferred from the cold mid-winter of the UK to the cold mid-summer of Tierra del Fuego!



We are due into Ushuaia in the early evening where we will be transferred to a comfortable hotel for a one-night stay (on a bed and breakfast basis). Whilst Ushuaia is officially a 'city' it is actually no more than a mid-sized 'frontier' town with a population of around 57,000 people. Backed by the dramatic jagged snow-capped peaks of the Tierra del Fuego National Park and fronted by the Beagle Channel, Ushuaia is a very pleasant city in its own right and a fascinating place to wander for a few hours. It has an interesting history on view in the local museum (the town was originally settled as a penal colony), and an excellent street of small souvenir and outdoor shops in case the need for a bit of last minute woolly hat shopping should arise!

### Day 3

### Ushuaia & Beagle Channel



We are scheduled to board MV Plancius, our home for the next 19 nights, around mid-afternoon so we have the morning free to explore Ushuaia or take a trip into the nearby Tierra del Fuego National Park (not included in the tour price. Costs will be available closer to departure). The Tierra del Fuego National Park is a spectacular area of high snow-capped peaks, the lower slopes of which are clothed in twisted and gnarled forests of Southern Beech. Valley lakes, fast flowing rivers, upland meadows and rocky shoreline add to the scenic grandeur of the place. This mix of habitats is home to a variety of interesting birds such as the Long-tailed Meadowlark, Thorn-tailed Rayadito, White-crested Elaenia, Ashy-headed Goose,

Dark-bellied Cinclodes, Bar-winged Cinclodes, Patagonia Sierra-Finch, Dark-faced Ground Tyrant, Crested Caracara, Chilean Wigeon and Great Grebe. It's worth making a special effort, however, to look for the most spectacular avian inhabitant of these southern forests, the beautiful Magellanic Woodpecker. This is one of the largest woodpeckers in the world and certainly one of the most beautiful.



Kelp Goose

The rocky coastline also holds an interesting assemblage of birds. Two species of gull, the Kelp Gull and the attractive Dolphin Gull frequent the shoreline, along with two species of southern goose, the Upland Goose and Kelp Goose. Both return to Tierra del Fuego in the southern summer to breed, along with Crested Ducks, Fuegian Steamer Ducks and South American Terns, all of which are commonly seen here. Other species to look out for include Southern Lapwing, Magellanic and Blackish Oystercatchers, Red Shoveler, Night Heron and Chilean Skua. Out on the Beagle Channel we may see our first Southern Giant Petrels gliding low over the water. These huge birds, known as 'Stinkers' by the mariners of old will and be a common companion on our forthcoming voyage.

We are due to board MV Plancius (our home for the next 19 nights... one night longer than most similar cruises!) around 1600 hours and a couple of hours later the ship will slowly pull away from the pier and set course along the scenic Beagle Channel and east towards the Southern Ocean.



Magellanic Penguin

Following a briefing by the crew and the compulsory lifeboat drill, you will be free to relax or head up on deck to look for birds and watch the scenery slip past. The cold nutrient rich waters of the Beagle Channel support an abundance of marine life and this in turn attracts in numerous seabirds from the open ocean. It will not be very long before we start to find our first Black-browed Albatrosses gliding over the water, alongside Southern Giant Petrels, White-chinned Petrels and Chilean Skuas. Here we should see our first penguin species of the voyage, the Magellanic Penguins

which breed on islands in the channel but are often seen bobbing on the water's surface in small groups. The sharper-eyed birdwatchers may also see the brief glimpse of a small bird skittering over the water's surface before rapidly diving under the waves. This is likely to be a Magellanic Diving Petrel, a small unobtrusive seabird that looks not unlike a cross between a Little Auk and a storm-petrel. Other species to lookout for include Imperial Shag, Arctic Tern (down here for their second summer of the year), South American Tern and for the fortunate maybe even a pod of Dusky Dolphins which often frequent the mouth of the Beagle Channel.

## Day 4

## At Sea

We will awake this morning to a 360 degree view of the open ocean. Today will be spent at sea, but there is plenty to entertain us during this time as the ship will be accompanied for most of the journey by a wonderful variety of exciting seabirds ranging in size from the tiny Wilson's Petrel to the magnificent Wandering Albatross. The commoner species include Sooty Shearwater, Great Shearwater, White-chinned Petrel, Slender-billed Prion and

both Northern and Southern Giant Petrels. Perseverance, and a little patience, is sure to be rewarded with a variety of other species including Blue Petrel, Fairy Prion, Soft-plumaged Petrel, Common Diving Petrel and Subantarctic (Brown) Skua. The real lords of the oceans, however, are the albatrosses and amongst the omnipresent Black-browed, several other species are sure to drift by. The sight of a Wandering Albatross effortlessly gliding over the water's surface on the longest wings in the avian world is sure to be one of the most enduring memories of the holiday, but we also hope to see a few of its smaller cousins in particular Grey-headed Albatross and the occasional Light-mantled Sooty Albatross. The large Northern Royal and Southern Royal Albatrosses are also likely, the former most readily identified by the white leading edges to their wings. Fin, Humpback and Sei Whales are also possible, along with a several dolphin species including Dusky and Peale's Dolphin.



## Days 5 – 6

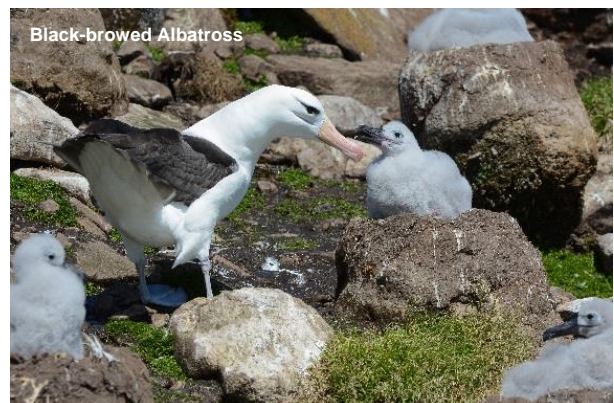
## Falkland Islands



We are due to arrive at the Falkland Islands early morning on Day 5. Lying just 480 kilometres from the coast of Argentina amid some of the richest fishing grounds of the South Atlantic, the Falkland Islands are inhabited by huge numbers of seabirds during the breeding season which extends from October to March. Arriving from Britain the visitor finds a landscape which brings to mind the northern isles of Scotland and, although there is an essentially British feel to life in the settlements, the wildlife is excitingly different. It is this constant blend of the familiar and

unfamiliar that makes the Falklands such an interesting place to visit. Walking along the seafront at Stanley one might almost imagine being in a small North Sea resort until a Southern Giant Petrel sails past on stiff wings and reminds you that these waters are only some 1,000 kilometres from the edge of Antarctica!

We will then spend the next two days exploring this spectacular and wildlife rich archipelago including visits to Carcass Island and the larger Saunders Island. These windswept islands are situated in the west of the Falklands and contain some of the most spectacular scenery and largest concentrations of wildlife. Comical-looking Southern Rockhopper Penguins leap from the pounding surf onto the rocks, whilst numerous Black-browed Albatrosses nest on the nearby grassy slopes and South American Fur Seals guard the beach. Gentoo Penguins (around 600 pairs), King Penguin and Magellanic Penguins also breed here, plus Striated Caracara, Cobb's Wren, Black-throated Finch, Grass Wren and Tussacbird. The waters around Carcass are home to Commerson's and Peale's Dolphins which are often seen close in shore or from the zodiacs.



Flexibility is the key ingredient of this holiday and our exact itinerary for each day will depend on a variety of factors including the advice of our expedition leader and the weather. Other possible islands to explore include Sealion Island home to Southern Rockhopper Penguins and Southern Elephant Seals, or perhaps even a close pass by the remote Steeple Jason where tens of thousands of Black-browed Albatrosses breed.

Although the focus of our cruise will be the wildlife and scenery, no trip to the Falkland Islands is complete with a few hours in the capital, Port Stanley. The brightly painted roofs of Port Stanley clustered along the shore of a wide inlet look strangely familiar from many hours of news coverage but the capital is much smaller in reality than most visitors expect. The population of around 1,800 is barely that of a small English town and even on the busiest of days the sparse motor traffic is a refreshing contrast to the chaos of modern cities. Stanley was once regularly visited by sailing ships and early steam vessels taking advantage of a final refuge before braving the treacherous waters of Cape Horn and the harbour formed the last resting place for some of these vessels which returned from the experience in such a damaged condition that they were unable to continue their voyage.



## Days 7 – 8

## At Sea

We spend the next two days at sea crossing the Scotia Sea enroute to South Georgia, undoubtedly the wildlife highlight of the cruise! At some point on our journey we will cross the Antarctic Convergence, a biological barrier where cold polar waters sink beneath the warmer waters of the more temperate zones. We are now truly within the Antarctic realm, the temperature will have dropped by as much as ten degrees centigrade and several new species of birds appear. Southern (Antarctic) Fulmars, Black-bellied Storm-petrels and Antarctic Prions should now be following the ship and we may start to see our first ice-bergs of the holiday too. Our journey will take us over several deep water canyons, likely areas to look for a cetaceans such as Fin Whale, Sei Whale, Humpback Whale, Hourglass Dolphin and perhaps one or two of the elusive beaked whales such as Southern Bottlenose Whale and Gray's Beaked Whale. As we near South Georgia we need to keep an eye open for the rare Southern Right Whale which return to the waters off of the island most summers to feed.



For those wishing an occasional warming break, hot drinks are always available in the bar and a variety of interesting lectures will be offered by the expedition team.

## Days 9 – 12

## South Georgia



Light-mantled Sooty Albatross

We are due to arrive at South Georgia on the afternoon of Day 9 and have the following three and half days to explore the spectacular landscapes and wildlife of this remote outpost, widely regarded as one of the most beautiful and inspiring places on Earth. South Georgia lies 1,300 kilometres east-south-east of the Falklands. First sighted in 1675 and later visited by Captain James Cook in 1775, this is a spectacular island cut by more than 160 glaciers and home to millions of breeding seabirds. Our itinerary here will be dependent on the

region's notoriously fickle weather, but we hope to include a visit to the abandoned whaling station at Grytviken and the King Penguin colony at either St Andrew's Bay or Salisbury Plain home to hundreds of thousands of these endearing and comical birds. We will also visit the grave of the polar explorer Ernest Shackleton and, if open to visitors (the island is currently closed), the breeding colony of Wandering Albatrosses on Prion Island.

There are numerous other beautiful areas to explore which may include Elsehul, Right Whale Bay, Possession Bay, Gold Harbour and Drygalski Fjord. The wildlife of South Georgia is breathtaking. Millions of Macaroni and King Penguins breed here, alongside smaller numbers of Gentoo and Chinstrap Penguins. Antarctic Furl Seals are abundant and will offer a somewhat grumpy welcoming party to many of our landings. Groups of Southern Elephant Seals lounge on the beaches, whilst Grey-headed Albatrosses, Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses, Northern and Southern Giant Petrels soar overhead. White-chinned Petrels, several species of prions and storm-petrels, Sub-Antarctic Skuas, Kelp Gulls, Antarctic Terns, sheathbills and the endemic South Georgia Pintail also breed here along with the island's only breeding passerine, the South Georgia Pipit. Once rare, the recent eradication of rats on South Georgia has tempted pipits back into their former haunts and they are now frequently seen along the coast.

For many, our time on this spectacular island will be one of the highlights of the voyage.



King Penguins, St Andrews Bay



## Day 13 & 14

## At Sea

Another couple of days at sea and time to relax, listen to lectures, edit your photographs or test your seabird identification skills on the wealth of petrels, albatrosses and prions following the ship.

The further south we travel the more icebergs we are sure to pass and there will be wealth of photographic opportunities as a we cruise past huge bergs dotted with penguins and some of the most breathtaking scenery our planet has to offer!

## Day 15

## Elephant Island or South Orkney Islands

En route to the Antarctic Peninsula we will make a brief stop at either Elephant Island or at the Orcadas Station on the remote South Orkney Islands. We hope to visit Elephant Island, but this will depend on the region's fickle weather and whether permits can be secured nearer the time. The swell usually prevents a landing, but a visit (or zodiac cruise) here is still a unique experience for it was on this remote icy outpost that Sir Ernest Shackleton left his men back in 1916 while he crossed the turbulent Southern Ocean to South Georgia in a wooden rowing boat to fetch help! In addition to its fascinating history, Elephant Island is also an excellent place for wildlife and is home to breeding penguins, plus Leopard Seals and cetaceans in the surrounding seas.

## Days 16 – 19

## Antarctic Peninsula & South Shetland Islands



Antarctic Peninsula

We have now reached Antarctica and have the next four days (one day longer than most similar voyages) to explore the Antarctic Peninsula itself and the South Shetland Islands. This icy realm is a haven for wildlife and home to vast breeding rookeries of penguins and other seabirds. Antarctic Fur Seals guard some of the beaches, whilst on others huge adolescent Southern Elephant Seals wallow in groups on the foreshore or rear up on their hindquarters to spar for dominance. Chinstrap, Gentoo and Adelie are by

far the most abundant penguins here, but we may find one of the Macaroni Penguins that occasionally join the colonies to nest. All the colonies are scavenged by Snowy Sheathbills and the rocky screes and cliff faces are home to breeding Cape Petrels, Southern Giant Petrels and Wilson's Storm-petrels. Weddell Seals, Crabeater Seals and Antarctic Minke Whales are also occasionally seen in this area.



Naturetrek group & Weddell Seals

The Antarctic Peninsula is the most readily accessible part of the continent and has some of its very best wildlife and scenery. This is a truly awe-inspiring landscape, the ship and its inhabitants are continually dwarfed by the sheer grandeur of the huge glaciers, snowy mountains and vast towering icebergs. As we slowly make our way through this breathtaking scene we are sure to pass, and be passed by, numerous groups of Gentoo, Adélie and Chinstrap Penguins porpoising rapidly through the water on the way to and from their breeding colonies. Ice-free land is a rare commodity on the Peninsula and almost every rocky beach or ice-free slope is home to a colony of these endearing creatures. There is also the chance of something a little more unusual such as a stray Emperor Penguin, the largest and undoubtedly hardiest of the family. Whatever we see, such breathtaking scenery and abundant wildlife will ensure that photographers will expend a great deal of memory cards; the clear unpolluted atmosphere giving a sharp definition to every picture-book scene.



Chinstrap Penguins

Once again, our exact itinerary will depend very much on the weather conditions at the time and on the advice of our expedition leader and ship's captain. We may head south along the western coastline of the Antarctic Peninsula or may round its northern tip and enter the Weddell Sea or 'Iceberg Alley' as it is often called. Here vast icebergs, some measuring kilometres in length, drift north after breaking from the ice-shelf and glaciers; the glacial bergs readily identified by

their beautiful blue colouration. Groups of penguins stop to rest for a while on the bergs, whilst around their tops and cliff-like edges we may be fortunate to find the ghostly white Snow Petrel, a real denizen of these southern latitudes, or the rare Antarctic Petrel. If ice conditions allow we may try to visit the huge Adélie Penguin colony on the volcanic come of Paulet Island, a spectacular outpost usually surrounded by huge icebergs.

Throughout our time along the peninsula we need to keep a careful lookout for whales and other marine mammals. Antarctic Minke Whales are frequently seen and we also hope to find groups of Humpback Whales which move south to the



Humpback Whale



Leopard Seal

Antarctic in the Austral summer to feed on the

blooms of plankton and krill. If fortunate we may even find a pod of Killer Whales (also known as Orcas) which also patrol these waters in the summer. Any icefloes need to be checked for lounging Weddell or Crabeater Seals, whilst those near penguin rookeries, are often frequented by Leopard Seals, a huge predatory pinnaped that feeds on penguins and occasionally other seal species. Leopards have an almost reptilian, snake-like appearance when hauled out

on a floe and, alongside the Orca, sit on the very top of the Antarctic food chain. The sight of a Leopard Seal on an ice-floe or swimming in the sea will be yet another highlight of the holiday.

There should also be time to stop at the spectacular South Shetland Islands. We may opt perhaps to visit Bailey Head on Deception Island, home to a huge colony of Chinstrap Penguins. Landing here is difficult but, even if we cannot get ashore, we are still assured the sight of thousands of Chinstraps bobbing on the sea and porpoising alongside the ship. We may also venture into the spectacular flooded caldera within Deception Island the entrance of which is through a dramatic narrow cleft in the cliff-line known as Neptune's Bellows. This volcanic island is still active and the shoreline is dotted with thermal springs, the perfect place for a refreshing swim! On shore there are the remains of an early Norwegian whaling station to explore and even a few very hardy birds such as Antarctic Tern and breeding Cape Petrels. If time and weather conditions permit, our expedition leader may also choose to take us to the penguin colonies on Livingston, Aitcho or Half Moon Islands.



## Days 20 – 21

## Drake Passage

Today we must sadly leave Antarctica and head north once more across the Drake Passage. This will give us a final opportunity to enjoy the wealth of albatrosses and other seabirds that abound in the Southern Ocean and another chance to practice our prion and petrel identification. As we near land we should look out for pods of playful Dusky Dolphins and maybe a stray Southern Rockhopper Penguin from one of the nearby colonies.



Weather permitting, our captain may choose to take us round the notorious Cape Horn, named by early Dutch sailors in honour of their hometown of 'Hoorn'. This will be a fitting finale to our Antarctic adventure and shortly after sunset on Day 21 we will be back into the sheltered waters of the Beagle Channel.

## Day 22

## Buenos Aires

We will awake to the familiar sights and sounds of Ushuaia. We have now come full circle and following breakfast we will say our sad farewells to the ship's crew and expedition staff before disembarking and spending the morning at leisure in the town. Our flight back to Buenos Aires departs in the early afternoon. On arrival we will transfer to a comfortable hotel for the night.

## Day 23

## In Flight

If time permits, we can take an early morning walk to the Costanera Sur Ecological Reserve, a remnant of the marshes which once extended along the length of the River Plate. This is one of the finest urban bird sanctuaries in the whole of South America. Black-necked Swans sail serenely on the open water and Snail Kites are plentiful over the marshes. In this incongruous setting we can find a wide variety of different species of birds including Southern Screamer, Coscoroba Swan, Limpkin, White-tufted Grebe, Red-fronted, White-winged and Red-gartered Coots, Wattled Jacana, Picazuro Pigeon, Monk Parakeet, Red-crested Cardinal, Yellow-winged Blackbird, and Argentina's national bird, the Rufous Hornero.

Around mid-morning we will return to Buenos Aires Ezeiza Airport in time to catch our early afternoon Iberia Airlines flight to London Heathrow (changing in Madrid).

## Day 24

## Arrive London

We are due to arrive into London's Heathrow Airport mid-afternoon.

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## Tour grading

Grade A/B – Optional morning and afternoon walks on shore, plus zodiac cruising. Entering and leaving the zodiac craft can be tricky when the sea is choppy, but there are always plenty of crew to lend a hand if necessary. Longer walks are occasionally offered for those who wish to stretch their legs, especially whilst in the Falklands and South Georgia. Please also be aware that the terrain will be rough and slippery at times and you will spend much of your time (especially whilst on the Antarctica Peninsula and South Shetland Islands) walking over ice and snow. Excursions will be mostly by zodiacs – rubber, inflatable landing craft – and a mix of wet landings (directly onto a beach) and the very occasional dry landings (where a dock or pier is available).

It is also important that you are able to get up and down the steep gangway – with railings – from the ship to the water level to board the zodiac craft. Please also be aware of the need to climb up and down several short but steep stairways/steps when moving around the ship. Should you require additional information on the above please give the Naturetrek office a call on 01962 733051.

Please remember that you are travelling in very remote areas without access to sophisticated medical facilities, so we would ask you not to join the tour if you have a life-threatening condition, need daily medical treatment or have difficulty walking over uneven/rough terrain.

## A typical day

Of course every day in the Antarctic is different, but a typical day – if there is such a thing – starts with an early wakeup call around 0700 hours followed by breakfast. Everyone would have been briefed the day before and the program will be on display should anyone need their memory jogged. When at sea the staff will offer a series of lectures covering such diverse topics as geology, history of Antarctic exploration, wildlife, ecology, glaciology, oceanography etc. Your Naturetrek tour leaders will also be on hand to take you up on deck to watch for seabirds and cetaceans. Once at the Falklands, South Georgia etc zodiac excursions will be offered to visit the penguin colonies and other wildlife, places of historical interest or for scenic walks. You will then need to wrap up warm, don your rubber boots and life vest and board one of the fleet of sturdy inflatable zodiacs driven by the staff.

There are generally two zodiac excursions per day (one in the morning and one after lunch) each lasting around three hours. On occasion one zodiac excursion might be replaced by a scenic cruise aboard ship and, with the long hours of daylight at these latitudes, evening and early morning excursions are offered now and again too. In-between excursions the ship will be repositioned to the next point of interest, but even these journeys can be outstandingly beautiful. In fact, with such long hours of daylight and such wonderful scenery and wildlife on offer, the only real problem is finding the time to eat and sleep!

## Tour itinerary

As mentioned early, flexibility is the key ingredient of this cruise. The above itinerary should be taken as a guide to the programme not an exact itinerary. Shore excursions are carefully controlled in all the places we will be visiting and only a certain number of people and cruise vessels are allowed at each site each day. The ship operators are unable to request and confirm the exact programme of excursions until the summer of 2026. These deadlines apply to all operators of Antarctic voyages. Naturetrek will be requesting landings at the very best wildlife sites available and, whilst we are confident of getting access to the vast majority of these areas, we reserve the right to amend the programme to take account of availability of landing slots and adverse weather conditions.

NB – Please note that some of the wildlife sites we will be visiting on this cruise have a maximum limit of 100 people on shore at any one time. The MV Plancius (one of the smaller ships that cruise Antarctica these days) carries a maximum of 108 guests plus tour leaders/guides. If there is a landing limit, passengers will be split into two groups. One group will take a zodiac cruise (or similar activity) and the other will do the landing. The two groups will then swap. On other occasions it may be possible to split the group by taking one half to one wildlife site and the other half to another. You can be assured, however, that unlike many of the larger cruise vessels that ply the Antarctic waters these days, you will not be left twiddling your thumbs for hours on board the ship whilst awaiting your turn to make a landing! For further information please call 01962 733051.

## Accommodation & food

All food and accommodation is included in the cost of the holiday except for lunches and evening meals in Ushuaia and Buenos Aires. For these pre and post-cruise nights we use comfortable hotels with private facilities.

For this cruise, Naturetrek has taken exclusive charter of the ice-strengthened MV Plancius, a very comfortable expedition vessel, perfect for exploring the Antarctic realm ... not a luxury cruise liner! Plancius was built in 1976 and served as an oceanographic research ship for the Royal Dutch Navy until 2004 when she was rebuilt and

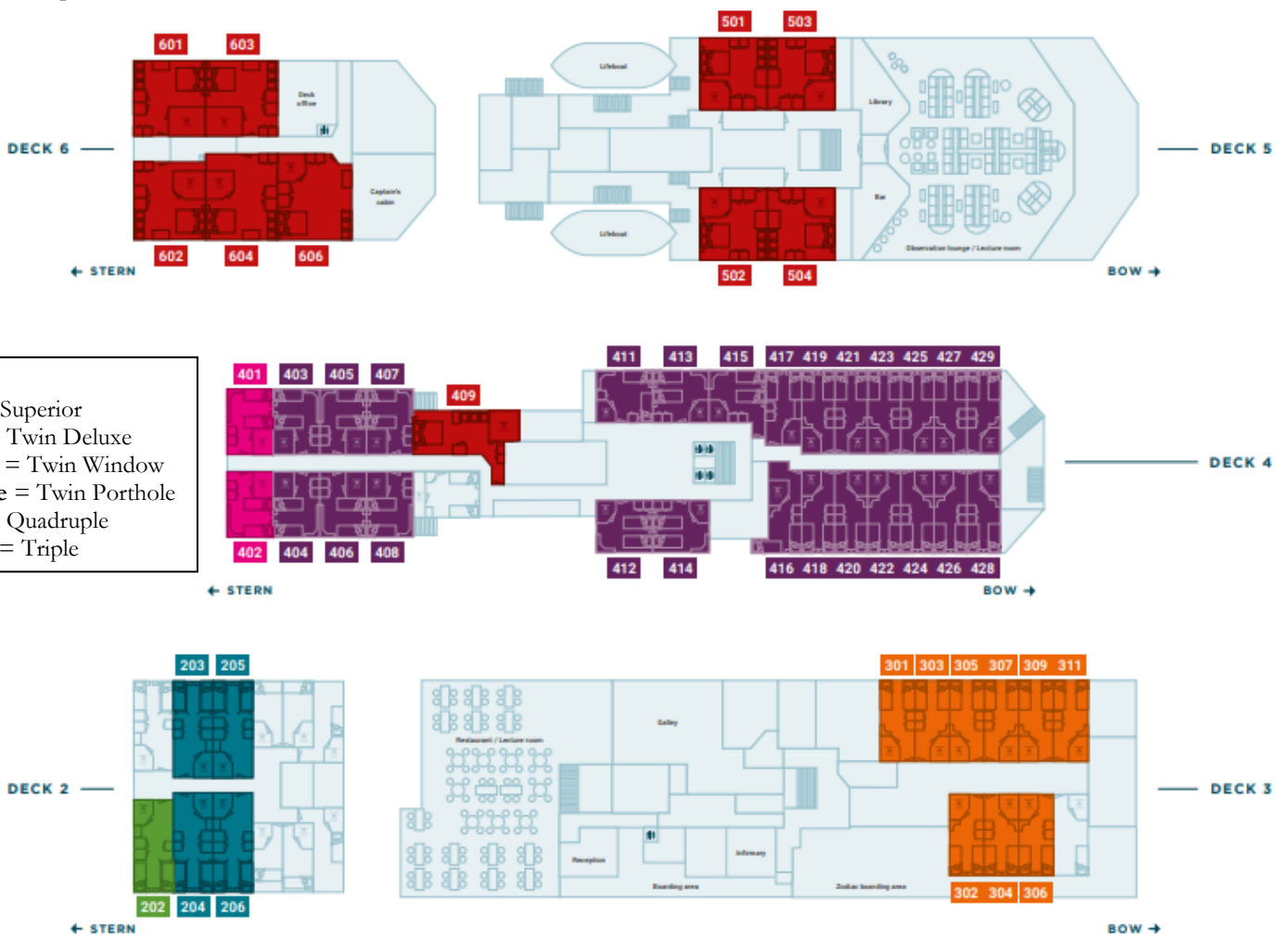


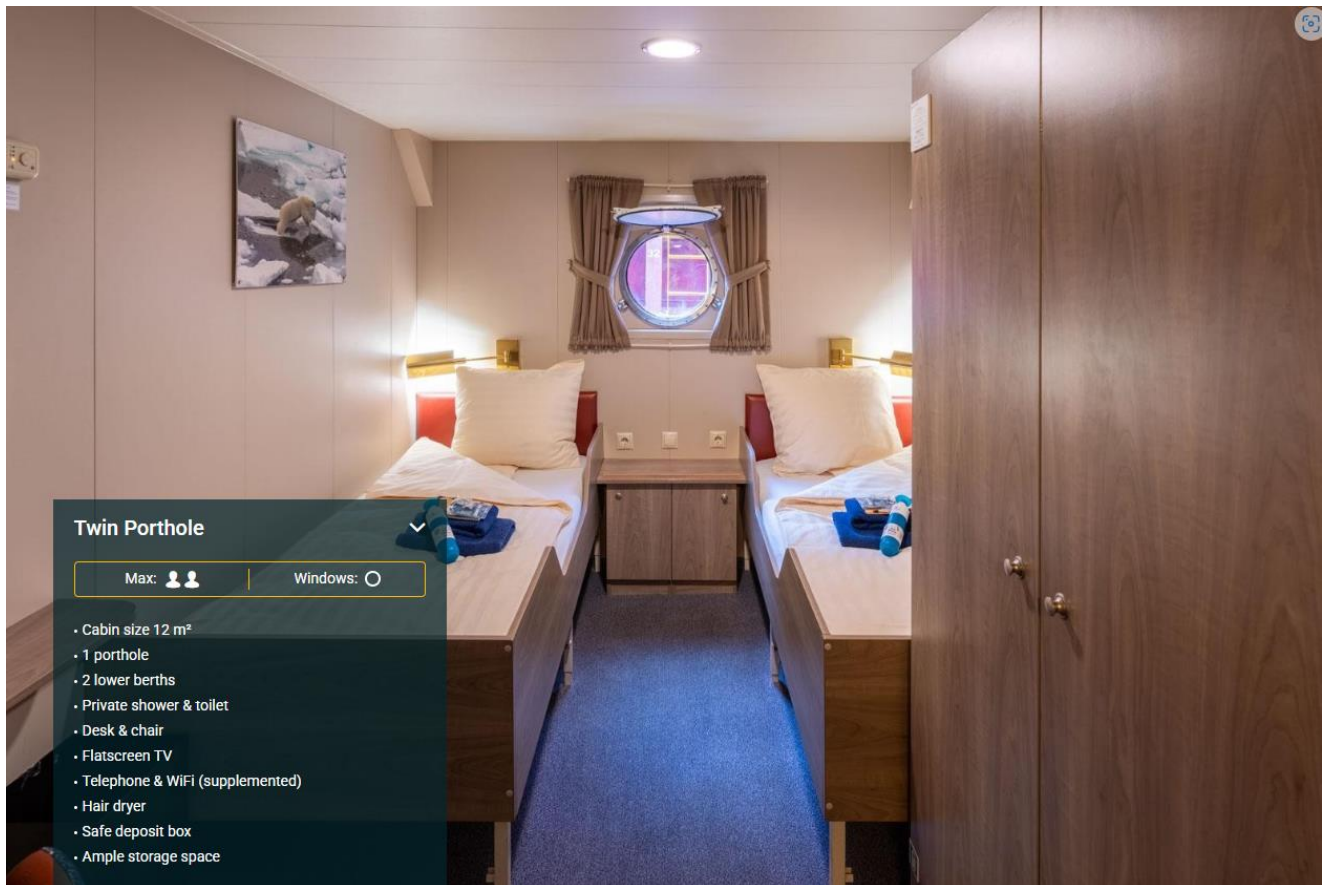
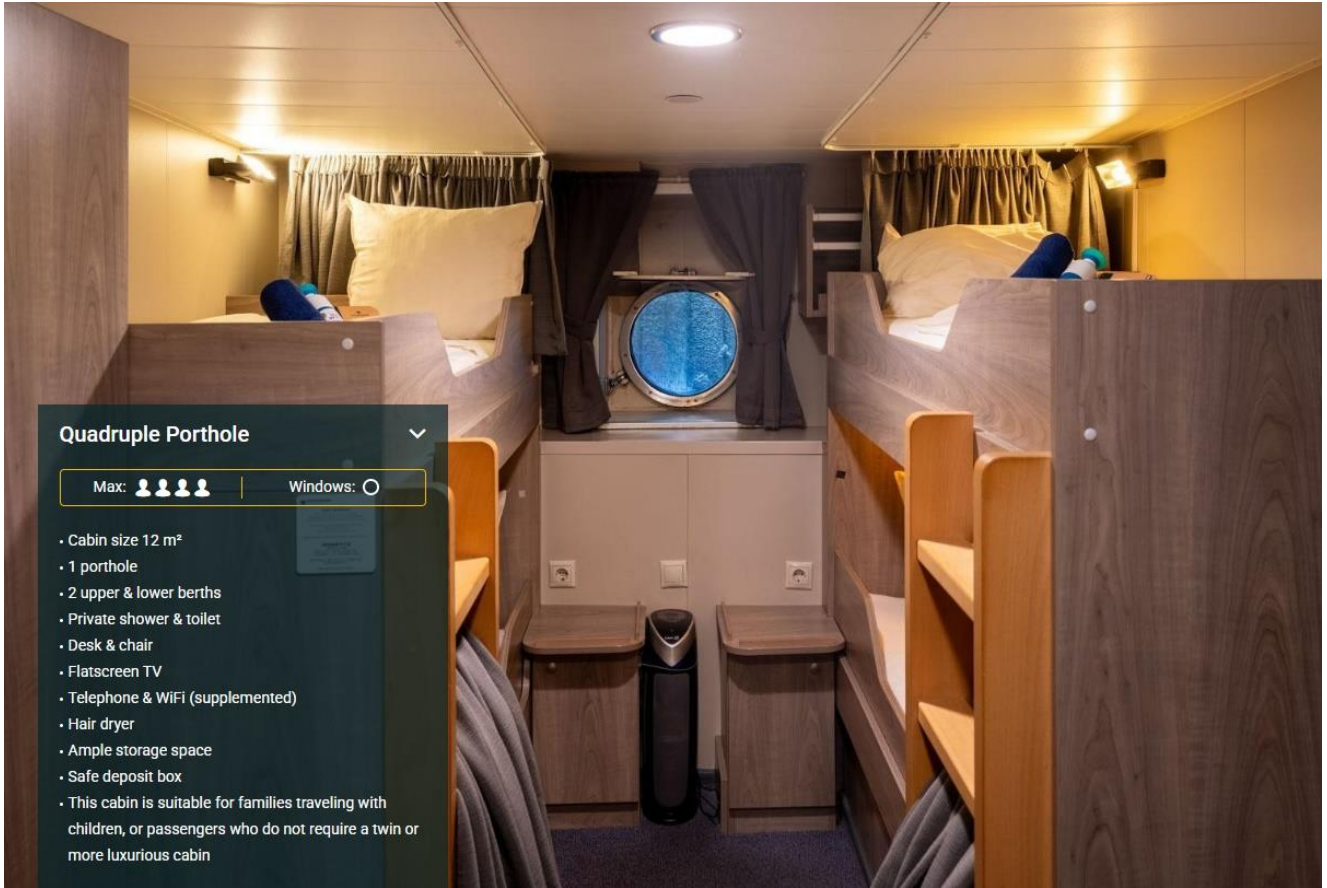
refitted as a passenger vessel. The ship is Dutch flagged, has central heating throughout and comes equipped with a full complement of inflatable zodiac landing craft, enough for all guests to leave the ship at the same time. The vessel is ice strengthened (Ice Class 1D) and is therefore able to venture out into the pack-ice. MV Plancius carries a maximum of 108 guests and features two dining rooms, a bar/lecture room, an observation lounge

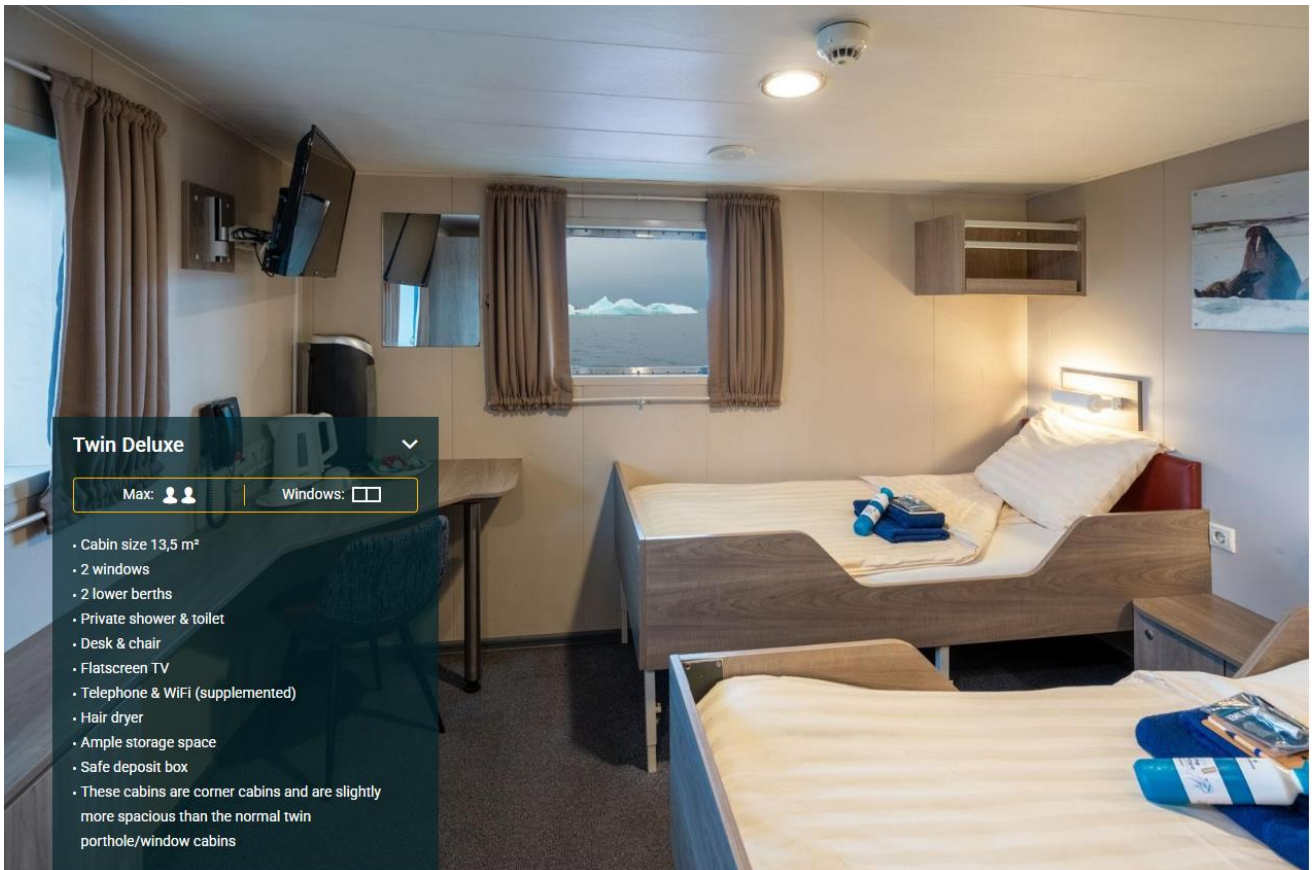
with large windows, plenty of outside deck space and a large bridge which is open to passengers. She is manned by 40 highly experienced nautical crew, 15 international catering and cleaning staff, a doctor and five experienced expedition staff. The local staff and crew will be joined by four Naturetrek naturalist guides. Further information on the cabin grades and a deck plan follows.

**Cabins:**

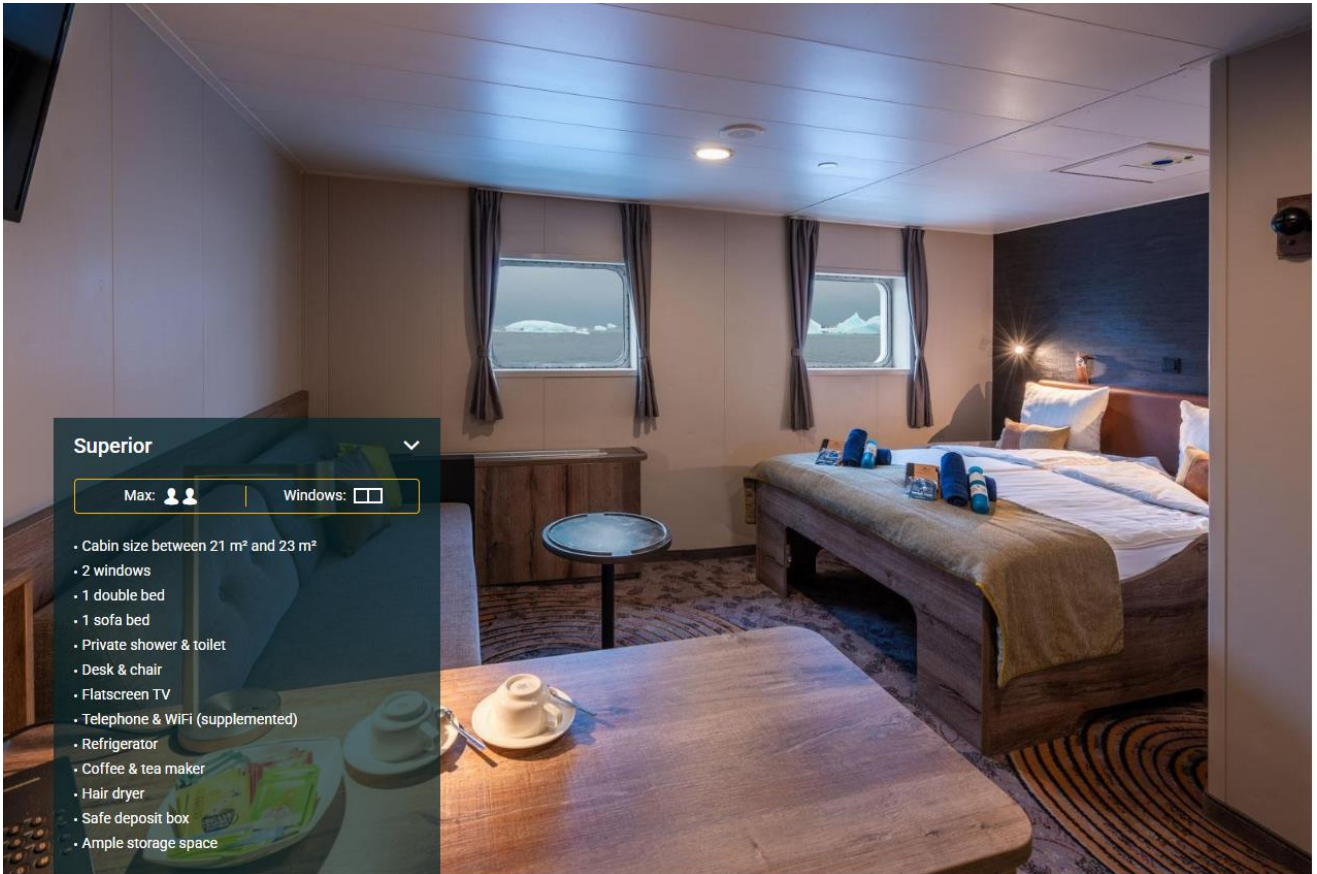
MV Plancius offers the following cabin grades. The photographs on the following pages show a typical cabin of that grade. Please be aware, however, that cabins of a particular grade are not uniform in shape and size and the exact layout of each may vary a little from those illustrated. The size and shape of each cabin is outlined on the deck plan outlined below.











## Pre and post-cruise overnights

Your holiday includes one night in Ushuaia before the cruise on a bed and breakfast basis and one night in Buenos Aires after the cruise, also on a bed and breakfast basis.

## Extra expenses

Lunches and dinners in Buenos Aires and Ushuaia are not included in the tour cost along with excursions into the Tierra del Fuego National Park, drinks, laundry and all items of a personal nature. Although solely at your discretion, you might like to allow approximately £250 or so per person for tips for local expedition staff and the ship's crew.

NB - Please note that due to the volatile nature of fuel prices and currency exchange rates at the moment Naturetrek reserves the right to impose a surcharge on this cruise should fuel prices increase significantly (and the boat operators request an additional payment) or if there is a further significant weakening of the Pound Sterling over the next couple of years. As always, however, we will do our very best to avoid such increases in costs.

## Climate

The Polar regions are cold even in the summer – but probably not as cold as you may think. Antarctica has an exceptionally cold, dry, and windy climate, with very little precipitation. This is due to its high altitude, high latitude, and the snow-covered cap of ice (i.e. the reflectivity of the icy surface results in minimal heat storage). However, this is not the whole truth. Expedition cruises to Antarctica never reach the interior of the continent. Passengers only travel to coastal regions and only in summer, when conditions are much milder. Here, low pressure and high pressure systems alternate, so expect thick clouds, strong winds, some rain or snow, interrupted by clear skies and sunshine. Mean coastal temperatures along the Peninsula are seldom far from the point of freezing whilst summer temperatures in the Falklands are more comparable to a mild British winter (and can be very warm on occasion). Please note, changes in Antarctic weather can be rapid and dramatic. Fine, sunny conditions can shift in minutes to storms with very cold winds and snow flurries. So one has to be prepared for these possible weather changes!

## Your Safety & Security

Risks to your safety and security are an unavoidable aspect of all travel and the best current advice on such risks is provided for you by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. In order to assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination, it is essential that you refer to the Foreign Office website – [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) prior to travel.

## How to book your place

In order to book a place on this holiday, you will need to read the Naturetrek terms and conditions in the back of our brochure or on our website, and then book either online at [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk), by calling us on 01962 733051, or by completing and returning the booking form in the brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost.

With thanks to Dave Horsley, Martin Johnson, Tony Marsh, Paul Stanbury, Peter Dunn and Shutterstock Images for the photographs used in this itinerary.