Antarctica - Weddell Sea, Elephant Island and Polar Circle Expedition

Trip Code: PEW

Version:

POLAR	GUIDED GROUP	LEISURELY 2



HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit some of Antarctica's most wildlife-filled waters and islands
- Explore the much less visited Weddell Sea - home to the beautiful Weddell Seal
- Sail through the stunning Crystal Sound and venture beyond the Polar Circle

- Expert team of expedition polar leaders onboard

AT A GLANCE

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

Introduction

We board our ship and set out from Ushuaia - the world's southernmost city, and cross the famous Drake passage. From here we enter the truly breath-taking landscapes of Antarctica; we are greeted by colossal ice bergs and possibly the beautiful sight of a humpback whale surfacing in the distance. This 16 day adventurous polar expedition continues on to combine the rich animal life of the Weddell Sea with the surreal shores and islands of the Antarctic Peninsula. We visit key landing sites, such as the wildlife-filled islands of Crystal Sound and the iconic site of Shackleton's legendary Elephant Island. Sailing to less commonly visited areas, along with opportunities throughout the holiday to join the longer walks, this holiday allows you to experience so much more of Antarctica than your average cruise.

Is this holiday for you?

This is principally a touring, sightseeing and wildlife viewing holiday, with minimal exertion required. If you choose to go ashore, you will need to make the transfers from the ship to a Zodiac and onto land. When on land, long and short walks are offered where possible (long walks being about 2 - 3hours), these are optional but of course can offer spectacular views. The walks are also weather dependent. Whilst on deck or during excursions, you need to be prepared for cold temperatures.

Please note that you must have full waterproofs to participate in the Zodiac excursions.

You should also consider that some of the classes of accommodation involve the use of bunk-beds.

The itinerary remains flexible, according to the variability of the weather and sea conditions at these southerly latitudes. A suggested itinerary for the holiday is given, but may be subject to change.

Itinerary

Version:

Holiday Information

What's Included

- Expert Expedition staff,
- All accommodation,
- All meals whilst on board and B&B whilst in Ushuaia,
- All shore excursions and Zodiac cruises with expert expedition team,
- Waterproof boots supplied (men's USA sizes 8-14 and women's USA sizes 3-9),
- Single timed airport transfer Ushuaia Airport on disembarkation

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Tips for staff
- Airport transfers on arrival in Ushuaia
- Transfers to/from vessel other than as described
- Dinners and lunches whilst in Ushuaia (if applicable)
- Airport departure taxes
- Transfers between airports in Buenos Aires
- Hotel night in Buenos Aires (if applicable),
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

On arrival in Ushuaia you will need to take a taxi to the hotel.

We have included a night in Ushuaia for you, if you would like another additional night, just in case of major flight delays please do call us for a quote.

On return to Ushuaia after your voyage you will disembark the ship at approximately 8am. A transfer from the port to the airport is provided after disembarkation between 8-9am. No other transfers are included. You should not book flights before12 midday on this day.

If your flight is in the early hours of the morning on departure we advise that you book a hotel room in Ushuaia. You will need to take a taxi from the port to the hotel and then to the airport for your flight. Please do let us know as soon as possible if you require extra hotel nights.

Hotel and ship contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

Breakfast only is included while staying in Ushuaia. All meals while aboard are included in the holiday price. We recommend you allow about US$25 per meal in Ushuaia.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your meals with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

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Food & Water

On board the ship a diverse range of international dishes are available. Meals are prepared and catered by professional chefs and all meals are included in the holiday price. Special dietary requirements, including vegetarianism, can be accommodated with advance notice (please advise at the time of booking). Coffee, tea and water are all provided free of charge. All other beverages, alcoholic and non-alcoholic, are not included and can be purchased in the dining room or the lounge areas.

Accommodation

During this trip the group will spend 1 night in a hotel in Ushuaia and 13 nights on board the MV Plancius, the MV Ortelius or the MV Hondius (Depending on departure date). Standard cabins on the MV Plancius, MV Ortelius and MV Hondius are quad berth cabin with porthole. All cabins have en-suite facilities. All accommodation is on a sharing basis. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex.

Upgrades are available to triple or twin berth with porthole, twin berth with window, and superior/ suite. Depending on availability, it is also possible to arrange a single cabin.

Please contact the office for upgrade and single cabin prices. Please note that if you wish to upgrade ensure that you book early to avoid disappointment.

Group Leader & Support Staff

An international team of Polar experts and field guides is enthusiastic about sharing their in depth knowledge with lectures, briefings and field excursions. Lectures are selected and relevant to the destinations we travel to. We cover major topics such as marine biology, geography, geology, glaciology, ornithology and history. Our staff is skilled, trained and qualified in the activity they are in charge of: mountain guiding, photography, kayaking, zodiac driving. Expedition guides organize the informative ship program and actively guide our shore excursions in different languages but always English as well.

Spending Money

Prices onboard are in Euros or US dollars. It is not practical to set a recommended amount for personal spending money on a holiday like this. All meals while on board are included in the trip price. The main extra spend on board will be on drinks and this will very greatly from person to person. A drink onboard costs from Euros 2.50. On board ship, bar bills can be put on a tab and paid at the end of the cruise by credit or debit card or in cash Euros or US dollars You will also need some money for any meals taken in Ushuaia and for tips. As a guide, we recommend you allow $10 - 15 per day for tips to your crew and expedition staff. It is possible to withdraw local currency at ATM's in Ushuaia, but we recommend that you bring a minimum of US$200 in cash for emergency situations where you are unable to withdraw money from ATMs.

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Guidance on Tipping

The customary gratuity to the ship's service personnel is made as a blanket contribution in one envelope at the end of the voyage which is divided among the crew and staff. You will receive detailed guidelines aboard. Tipping is a very personal matter and the amount you wish to give is at your discretion. It is better for the crew and staff, if you can give them cash, either US Dollars or Euros. You may give individually and / or communally as a personal 'thank you' to one or more of the ship's personnel. As a guide, we recommend you allow $15 - 20 per day for tips to your crew and expedition staff.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a daypack. Luggage with wheels is useful for this holiday. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline (the baggage limit on the domestic flight between Buenos Aries and Ushuaia is 15kg).

Please note that you should be able to carry your own luggage.

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General Information

Passport & Visas

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THOSE TRANSITING THROUGH THE USA

If your flights pass through the USA, even if only in transit, you will require either a visa or an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation). Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can apply for an ESTA under certain conditions*. This must be done online via https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov, no later than 72 hours prior to travel and applies whether entering the country by sea or by air. You will need to have a biometric passport to apply for an ESTA. The fee is currently US$40 *(as of 30/09/25)*. Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely be refused boarding.

*If you have visited Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen since 2011 or have dual nationality with any of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA. You will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate instead. Additionally, if you have travelled to or have been in Cuba since the 12th of January 2021, you will not be eligible for an ESTA visa waiver and will need to apply for a US visa. You should consult the US State Department website to determine which you will need.

When completing the ESTA application form you will be asked to enter your 'Point of Contact' information. This is not required if you are only transiting through the USA.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THOSE TRANSITING THROUGH CANADA

UK citizens will require an ETA (Electronic Travel Authorisation), and you must get this before boarding any Canada-bound aircraft or ship, or entering on a land border. The fee is CAD$7 and you should apply for it at http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta-start.asp. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office

Entry requirements can change regularly so please ensure you have the most up to date information before travelling by checking visa entry requirements at the relevant embassy in your country of residence: (US Embassy in London: http://london.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.html)

Visa Argentina

UK and USA passport holders do not require a visa for short stays.

New entry requirements to Argentina

Please note that, due to recent changes in Argentina's Immigration Regulations, new entry requirements apply to all foreign non-resident travellers as of May 28, 2025.

To enter the country, each traveller must present the following documents:

- Valid medical insurance that provides coverage for the entire duration of the stay.
- A return ticket or proof of onward travel out of Argentina
- Accommodation booking or the address of the place where they will be staying.

Failure to provide any of these documents may result in denied entry, at the discretion of the immigration authorities.

We strongly recommend to all travellers to ensure all the travel documents are complete and up to date before departure to avoid delays or inconveniences upon arrival.

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations:

You should be up to date with the routine vaccinations recommended in the UK for overseas travel.

You must also contact your doctor or travel clinic to check if there are specific vaccinations or other preventive measures that you need for the area you are visiting, in good time before you are due to depart.

Please ensure you are looking at the recommendations for all countries visited on your holiday plus recommendations for any borders you cross.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dental check-up.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates.

Please check the FCDO and Travel Health Pro. For all of your intended destinations for up-to-date advice.

Severe Allergies:

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips.

Climate

Along the Antarctic Peninsula, temperatures as high as 15°C have been recorded, though during the Antarctic summer temperatures are typically between 0 and 2°C. The wind will be a significant moderating factor and you must come prepared for 'real feel' temperatures as low as -20°C. The Antarctic is technically classed as a desert averaging 166 mm of precipitation per year. Although you are unlikely to experience precipitation, storms can and do occur.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's **'Travel Aware'** campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. All other nationalities should check their government websites for relevant information.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our Travel Insurance page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

PAB & Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum. Dress on board is informal. Beware of tight clothing that leaves no room for trapped air, which is an excellent insulator. Wool, silk and some of the synthetic fibers, like polar fleece, retain heat better than cotton.

You must bring the following items:

- Casual shoes / Trainers or similar for onboard
- Rubber boots (Wellington boots)*
- Walking shoes*
- Socks (Warm, high wool or similar socks worn over a thin pair of silk, polypropylene socks should

provide enough warmth and insulation for your feet. Bring several pairs of socks, since you will inevitably get your feet wet)

- Waterproof jacket
- Trekking trousers
- Waterproof pants/trousers
- Thermal baselayer - leggings
- Underwear
- Baselayer shirts / fleece
- Casual shirt and/or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Scarf and/or neck gaiter
- Sunglasses
- Gloves or mittens (Thin polypropylene gloves under warm outer gloves is a good combination)
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottles 1 Litre x1 (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Washbag and toiletries

- Antibacterial handwash
- Small towel
- Rucksack 25 litres
- Selection of dry bags (to keep rucksack contents dry)
- Small daypack
- Warm jacket (down)
- Basic First Aid Kit including: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, and plasters. Glucose tablets and multi-vitamin tablets are also a good idea.

The following items are optional:

- Warm Ski pants
- Shorts
- Spare gloves
- Ski goggles in case of bad weather
- Travel clothes
- Camera (in a dry bag)
- Binoculars
- Penknife (remember to pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Seasickness remedy

Snowshoeing Equipment:

- Snowshoes are provided. You can make use of the supplied rubber boots to attach the snowshoes to or you may wish to wear waterproof ankle height walking boots
- Waterproof ankle height walking boots & gaitors (see note above)
- Walking poles
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Mountaineering Equipment:

Please ensure your rucksack/backpack has straps to tie snowshoes to when not in use.

- Mountaineering boots (B2 Min)
- Gaitors
- Walking poles
- Suitable additional clothing: Down jacket / mountain gloves / salopettes / socks etc
- *Helmet, Ice-axe, Crampons (with anti-balling plates fitted), Climbing harness, Karabiners

Camping & Mountaineering:

Pee bottle: e.g. a wide opening Nalgene bottle (special adaptors for ladies are available).

*** Notes**

Rubber boots / Wellington boots:

Complimentary waterproof boots are supplied for the following sizes: (please confirm your preffered size to KE at least 8 weeks prior to departure)

Men's USA size 8-14 / UK size 7 to 13½ / Europe 41 to 48½

Women's USA size 3 to 9 / UK size 1 to 6 Â½ / Europe 33 to 40

If you have different feet sizes to these you should bring your own rubber boots. These should be rubber, waterproof boots that are just below your knee with a strong, ridged non-skid sole.

Mountaineering Boots:

You need to take a pair of warm and reasonably substantial mountain boots that are sufficiently rigid to be securely fitted with crampons. The B2 (semi-rigid) boot rating is appropriate.

Crampons, ice axe, helmet and harness with karabiner are all provided along with all ropes and snow shovels etc. If you wish to take your own crampons, helmet, ice axe and harness you are welcome, but it is not necessary.

Walking shoes - There is the opportunity to sightsee around Ushuaia. If you intend to make the most of these opportunities, you should make sure that you take suitable footwear.

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary joining at the hotel in Ushuaia. For clients making their own flight arrangements, Ushuaia Airport is the most convenient.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Ushuaia. Outbound flights will usually depart from the UK in the evening, arriving in the morning of the following day (day 1 of the itinerary). Return flights will depart Ushuaia in the afternoon of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK in the afternoon of the following day. Please note that you may need to book an extra night in either Ushuaia or Buenos Aires on your return due to the flight connection times. You will have to change airports in Buenos Aires on your return and the connections may involve some lengthy waits at an airport. Please be prepared for this. Regional departures and/or alternative carriers are available on request.

If you would like to stopover in Buenos Aires thus shortening your 'flying time' please contact the Customer Sales & Support Team.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

KE's very own Sarah has travelled on this fantastic adventure - she is more than happy to answer any questions you may have.No surprise costs.All zodiac excursions, landings and all meals on board are included in the price.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 11/11/2026 and the trip is subject to change