



VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS

ITINERARY

ANTARCTICA, SOUTH GEORGIA, & THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

Aboard *MS SEAVENTURE*

December 28, 2024 - January 18, 2025

BUENOS AIRES PRE-TRIP

December 26-29, 2024

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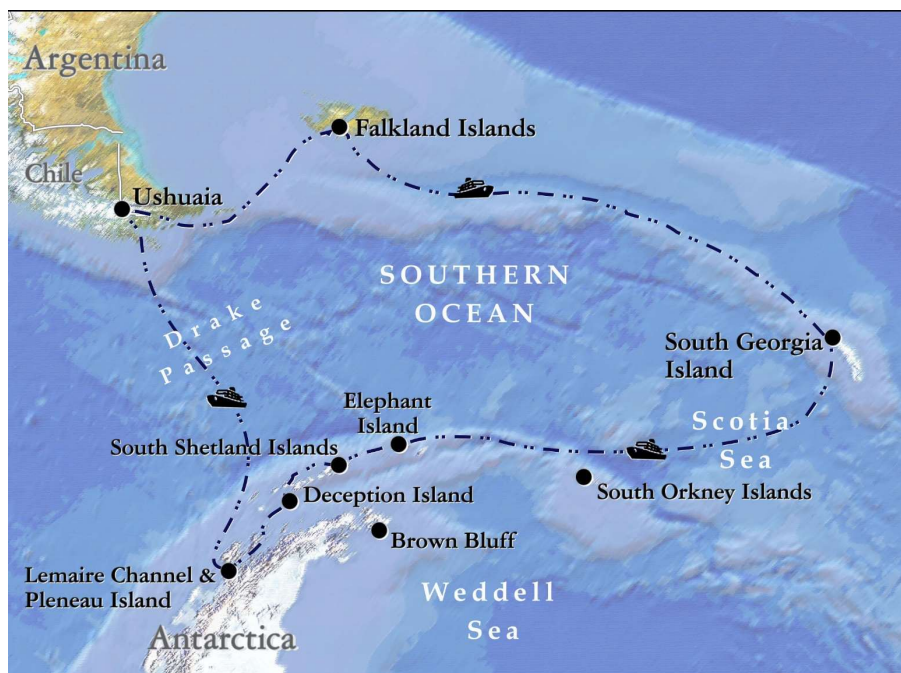


Wandering Albatross on nest, Prion Island, South Georgia © Andrew Whittaker

“Glittering white, shining blue, raven black, in the light of the sun the land looks like a fairy tale. Pinnacle after pinnacle, peak after peak—crevassed, wild as any land on our globe, it lies, unseen and untrodden.”

— Captain Roald Amundsen, 1911

The Antarctic is a region of superlatives, and for many, represents the ultimate travel destination. Here, the visitor, a stranger in an ice-filled world of breathtaking beauty, comes face-to-face with some of the world's most sensational wildlife spectacles, replete with penguins, albatrosses, skuas, seals, and whales. Soaring, snow-covered mountains, fantastically sculpted icebergs, and icy waterways present panoramic scenery of unsurpassed splendor. Captain Amundsen offered his description of Antarctica over a century ago, yet he understood then what is still true for travelers today; that nobody who goes to Antarctica returns unmoved, that the continent's raw wilderness and exquisite natural beauty are as timeless as the ancient snows that veil her.



In this remote and ageless environment, touched but not tainted by the hand of man, the legendary wildlife of Antarctica flourishes. During the austral (southern) summer, seals, whales, penguins, and other seabirds flock to the nurturing Southern Ocean to feed on huge schools of krill, the vital link in the Antarctic food chain. So special and unique is Antarctica that in 1959 the Antarctic Treaty was drafted to preserve the region for peaceful and scientific purposes only.

VENT and Polar Latitudes are proud to present an opportunity for interested travelers, natural history enthusiasts, and birders to venture to the White Continent, a place that has enticed explorers into its waters for more than a century. For this remarkable voyage, we've assembled an itinerary that offers maximum opportunities for viewing the birds and mammals of the Antarctic Peninsula AND the two South Atlantic island outposts of South Georgia and the Falkland Islands. For birders and nature-oriented travelers, this is essential as this is where most of the wildlife is found. Simply, this is the most comprehensive expedition to the Southern Ocean – truly the trip of a lifetime!

Over the course of this journey, you will witness some of the finest scenery on the planet, enjoy intimate encounters with wildlife that is totally unafraid, and experience the thrill of treading in places where relatively few will ever go. Among the many highlights, we'll cruise the Beagle Channel, surrounded on all sides by rocky headlands and snow-capped mountains, enjoying the thousands of seabirds that fill the sky and water around us. Penguins, albatrosses, giant-petrels, petrels, and diving-petrels, shearwaters, and skuas are all typically encountered.

In the Falklands we will walk windswept moorlands and visit a colony of Southern Rockhopper Penguins and Black-browed Albatross.

On majestic South Georgia we will wander among thousands of King Penguins, view nesting Wandering Albatross, and see a colony of Macaroni Penguins. We will take time to visit an old whaling station at the island capital of Grytviken.

In reaching the Antarctic Peninsula, we will voyage through magnificent waterways, protected bays, and deep-water fjords. We will see massive glaciers calving enormous chunks of ice into the sea, make numerous excursions to remote islands and hidden bays aboard Zodiac landing craft, and visit active scientific research stations.



Chinstrap (left) and Gentoo Penguins on fast ice; Brown Bluff, Antarctica © Andrew Whittaker

During our time at sea, we will have opportunities to observe a tremendous variety of birdlife. The pelagic birding in these southern waters is among the best in the world. In crossing the famed Drake Passage and the Polar Front (Antarctic Convergence), we should see as many as five species of albatross, including the huge Wandering and Royal albatrosses, as well as several species of prions, storm-petrels, petrels, diving-petrels, and shearwaters. When not searching for wildlife on the above decks, you'll attend lectures in the below decks by ship staff who will bring expertise on all facets of natural history and human exploration of Antarctica.

We have partnered with Polar Latitudes, a world class leader in Antarctic voyages, for this departure and will travel aboard the 139-guest Seaventure, a state-of-the-art expedition vessel perfect for exploring rugged Antarctic environments. Once aboard, you will cruise in total comfort, enjoying immaculate accommodations and excellent cuisine. Seaventure features comfortable, outside facing cabins (some with private balconies) with lower beds, private bathroom facilities, and individual temperature controls. The dining room seats all passengers at leisurely single seating. Ample public spaces offer comfortable settings for relaxing and socializing. A superior quality restaurant leads the superb list of facilities including a library, lounge, and more. Outside, there's plenty of open deck space while an observation area platform forward below the bridge is ideal for gaining tremendous views of Antarctic seascapes and wildlife. The ship's ice-strengthened hull and stabilizers assure safety throughout your voyage. An experienced cruise staff, physician, and onboard lecturers accompany all voyages.

This remarkable voyage will be led by VENT leaders Michael O'Brien, Louise Zemaitis, and Mark Garland along with a host of first-rate lecturers and staff provided by Polar Latitudes.

As a bonus, an optional two-night Buenos Aires Pre-trip is available for those who desire more birding time on the South American mainland than is offered in this program, or who simply want to break up the long trip to Ushuaia. This trip will visit at least two high quality birding areas in the Buenos Aires area where we expect an array of landbirds and waterbirds.



Zodiac landing at Paulet Island © Michael O'Brien

December 28-29, Days 1-2: Travel to Ushuaia, Argentina. Participants should plan to depart from home on Day 1 aboard flights to Buenos Aires, arriving on the morning of Day 2. In Buenos Aires, take a connecting flight to Ushuaia, arriving in the afternoon. Upon arrival, you will be transferred to our hotel where a room will be reserved in your name. The rest of the day is at leisure with a welcome reception and group dinner scheduled for the evening.

Special note: Buenos Aires has two airports, Aeropuerto Internacional Ministro Pistarini and much more commonly known by the name Ezeiza (airport code EZE), and Jorge Newbery Airfield, usually referred to as "Aeroparque" (airport code AEP) which handles most domestic flights. All international flights arrive at EZE, while flights between Buenos Aires and Ushuaia can be through either airport. Be conscience as to which airport your flight arrives and/or departs from. If it is necessary to change airports, the travel time between airports is roughly one hour.

NIGHTS: On board commercial aircraft (Day 1)
Hotel Arakur, Ushuaia (Day 2)

December 30, Day 3: Tierra del Fuego National Park; embark *Seaventure*. With 67,000 inhabitants, Ushuaia is a thriving port city set amid spectacular surroundings on the southern coast of Tierra del Fuego. Ringed by snow-capped mountains and overlooking the Beagle Channel, Ushuaia provides an exciting and picturesque embarkation point for our voyage. Based on an afternoon boarding time, our schedule will afford us most of the day in Ushuaia, in which case participants may choose from one of two morning-long excursions:

Option 1: Participants can take a leisurely boat ride on the Beagle Channel and disembark in dramatic Tierra del Fuego National Park for nature hikes and scenery gazing. Another possibility includes a visit to Martial Glacier, followed by a city tour and lunch in Ushuaia.

Option 2: For those who desire a more strongly focused birding excursion, we will offer a morning-long field trip into Tierra del Fuego National Park, situated west of town just beyond the city limits.

At more than 130,000 acres, majestic Tierra del Fuego National Park sits along the international border with Chile and harbors some of the finest glacial scenery in South America. Alpine lakes, extensive beech forests, and rugged mountains characterize the landscape. The birding in the park is often very good. In our visit we may find Spectacled Duck, Black-necked Swan, Great Grebe, Black-faced Ibis, Andean Condor, White-throated Caracara,

Chilean Swallow, Thorn-tailed Rayadito, Tufted Tit Tyrant, White-throated Treerunner and Patagonian Sierra-Finch, among other Fuegian birds. The ultimate prize is the Magellanic Woodpecker, one of the largest and most beautiful woodpeckers in the world. Previous trips have encountered this species at several places in the park.

After lunch outside the park, we may have time for some coastal birding while en route to the ship. Many of South America's most elegant waterfowl use the near-shore waters and coastal ponds for breeding during the summer season. We will watch for Kelp and Upland geese, Crested Duck, Yellow-billed Pintail, Speckled Teal and Chiloe Wigeon. Red Shoveler, Flightless and Flying steamer-ducks are some of the more sought-after species that occur here. Beyond waterfowl, we're likely to encounter the beautiful Dolphin Gull, Brown-hooded Gull, and South American Tern.



King Penguins, South Georgia © Michael O'Brien

In the mid- to late-afternoon, we'll board the *Seaventure* and begin our cruise, traveling east down the Beagle Channel. With a fresh perspective from being aboard the ship, we'll find ourselves surrounded on all sides by dramatic mountain scenery, with many of the higher peaks still garbed in winter snow. Seabirds fill the air and water around us when we should have our first Albatross Black-browed. Chilean Skuas are common while Magellanic Oystercatchers and Flightless Steamer-Ducks inhabit the rocky coastline. We'll also encounter the first of many seabirds, watching especially for Magellanic Diving-Petrel.

NIGHT: On board *Seaventure*

December 31, Day 4: Cruising the South Atlantic, from the mainland to the Falkland Islands. We'll spend the entire day at sea today making our way from the mainland to our first major destination, the Falkland Islands. The crossing requires most of a day to complete but offers our first opportunities for sea-watching. From the time we leave the port in Ushuaia, we will be immersed in the remarkable abundance of seabirds that are typical of the waters off southern South America. We'll watch for seabirds, whales, and dolphins from the ship's decks, particularly in the nutrient-rich waters closer to the mainland. Sightings of Commerson's Dolphins; Sooty, Manx, and Great shearwaters; Gray-backed, Fuegian and Black-bellied storm-petrel; and Slender-billed Prion are regular in these waters, while farther out to sea we are bound to encounter some of the more exciting seabirds, such as Southern Royal and Gray-headed albatrosses. When not on deck, we will enjoy the amenities *Seaventure* has to offer, including presentations by the expedition staff.

NIGHT: On board *Seaventure*



Wandering Albatross © Michael O'Brien

January 1, Day 5: The Falkland Islands. Lying 300 miles off the coast of Argentina, the rainy, windswept cluster of islands known as the Falklands, occupy a remote corner of the South Atlantic. For many, the Falkland Islands are a historical oddity, the site of a short, but bitterly contested war between England and Argentina in 1982 over ownership of the islands. Today, the islands exist as a self-governing territory of the United Kingdom, with a population of 3,000, most of which resides in the territorial capital, Port Stanley (or just Stanley to locals).

The Falklands are in fact a wildlife-rich location, with many important colonies of breeding penguins, albatross, waterfowl, and land-birds. Several species of seals and dolphins that occur in the near shore waters are not found in the colder waters to the south. The Falklands are not true sub-Antarctic islands, but they hold much wildlife not found in the Southern Ocean and serve as a popular stop between ocean crossings to and from South Georgia.

NIGHT: On board *Seaventure*



Falkland Steamer-Ducks, flightless and endemic to the Falkland Islands © Andrew Whittaker

The Falkland Islands are home to a number of birds and marine mammals that we will not encounter elsewhere on the voyage. Following is a list of notable residents in the islands, some of which we'll seek:

Birds

Upland Goose	Rufous-chested Dotterel
Kelp Goose	Blackish Oystercatcher
Ruddy-headed Goose	Magellanic Oystercatcher
Flying Steamer-Duck	South American (Magellanic) Snipe
Falkland Steamer-Duck	Brown Skua
Crested Duck	Dolphin Gull
Speckled Teal	South American Tern
Silver Teal	Blackish Cinclodes
Gentoo Penguin	Dark-faced Ground Tyrant
Magellanic Penguin	Cobb's Wren
Southern Rockhopper Penguin	Sedge (Grass) Wren
Black-browed Albatross	Austral Thrush
Magellen Cormorant (Rock Shag)	Correndera Pipit
Imperial Cormorant (Blue-eyed Shag)	White-bridled Finch (Black-throated Finch)
Variable (Red-backed) Hawk	Long-tailed Meadowlark
Striated Caracara	Black-chinned Siskin
Two-banded Plover	

Notable Mammals of the Falklands

Peale's Dolphin
Commerson's Dolphin
South American Sea Lion
South American Fur Seal

January 2, Day 6: The Falkland Islands; Stanley. Stanley is a lively hub of activity nestled in a sheltered harbor. Today we will have the opportunity to foot explore the museum, shops and services centered on the port, or look for sea lions, dolphins and bird life along the shore.

NIGHT: On board *Seaventure*

January 3-4, Days 7-8: Cruising the South Atlantic, from the Falklands to South Georgia Island. We'll enjoy these next two days at sea cruising the considerable distance to South Georgia Island. As the crossing is lengthy, you'll have many opportunities to join your leaders on deck for a couple of hours of sea watching, or simply relax in comfort below decks. Ship staff present lectures on the history, geology, and wildlife of South Georgia to prepare us for our arrival.

The sea-birding is rewarding throughout these waters and sightings of spouting and breaching whales are anticipated. Among the numerous Black-browed Albatross, giant-petrels, Cape Petrels, and Slender-billed Prions, are smaller numbers of Royal and Wandering albatrosses, Common Diving-Petrel, Soft-plumaged Petrel, and Gray-backed Storm-Petrel.

One-hundred-fifty miles west of South Georgia, the lonely Shag Rocks rise out of the Atlantic Ocean. Time permitting, we will cruise part way around them, observing the vast numbers of birds that congregate around hillside nesting colonies. South Georgia Shags and Antarctic Prions nest here by the thousands and the surrounding waters literally teem with thousands of other seabirds. The whole scene provides a truly incredible spectacle. As South Georgia marks the northeastern-most point of our route, the oceanic waters in this corner of the Atlantic occasionally attract such rarer bird species as Sooty Albatross and Atlantic Petrel.

At some point we'll cross the Polar Front, or Antarctic Convergence. Between 50° and 60° south, the Polar Front represents a critical interface in the ocean, where warmer sub-Antarctic water flowing south overrides colder Antarctic water flowing north. This overlap zone produces jarring changes in water temperature and salinity. Krill, the vital link in the Antarctic food chain, flourishes here and sustains the millions of birds and animals that call

the Southern Ocean home. With luck Kerguelan Petrel could be seen powering through with its characteristic flight pattern.

NIGHTS: On board *Seaventure*

January 5-8, Days 9-12: South Georgia Island. Lying 870 miles east of the Falklands, South Georgia rises from the Southern Ocean like a great alpine citadel. Treeless, mountainous, ice-clad, and alone at the edge of the submarine Scotia Ridge, this island outpost provides beautiful scenery in staggering proportions. Lofty, snow-covered peaks tower 9,000 feet above sea level; hilly, windswept moorlands characterize the lower slopes; and a magnificent coastline is scalloped with inlets and deepwater fjords, carved over eons by more than 150 glaciers.



Cape (Pintado) Petrels, seen here taking off from calm waters © Andrew Whittaker

South Georgia also hosts some of the world's most stupendous wildlife spectacles, with millions of penguins being its most obvious inhabitants. Tens of thousands more albatrosses, petrels, diving-petrels, Antarctic Fur Seals, and Southern Elephant Seals roam the island's beaches and grassy slopes. The Antarctic Peninsula may garner more attention, but it cannot provide the overwhelming combination of beauty and wildlife found at South Georgia. A colorful human history rounds out the experience of a visit here. For more than fifty years, whaling stations on the island formed the hub of the South Atlantic whaling industry.

Formerly included in the Falkland Islands Dependencies, South Georgia was designated as a British Antarctic Territory following the end of the Falklands War. We will have three full days to explore different parts of the island and surrounding islets. We will make zodiac excursions to a number of bays and beaches; spend time at some of the largest penguin colonies; and visit the territorial capital Grytviken, home to the silent remains and artifacts of an abandoned whaling station. We will view the granite marker on the humble grave of the polar explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton.

Among the many possible landing sites while at South Georgia are:

Elsehul – This bay at the northwest corner of the island is known for its nesting Gray-headed Albatross, in addition to huge numbers of Antarctic Fur Seals and Macaroni Penguins.

Bay of Isles – One of the best-known sites on the northwest coast of South Georgia, the Bay of Isles offers access to broad gravelly beaches, beautiful mountain scenery, and a huge abundance of wildlife. A Zodiac landing at Salisbury Plain puts us in close company with 100,000 pairs of King Penguins, the most colorful and second largest of the penguins; Brown Skuas; Antarctic Fur Seals; and Southern Elephant Seals. Depending on access, nearby Prion Island is home to nesting Light-mantled and Wandering albatrosses, Brown Skuas, and the highly localized South Georgia Pipit.



Amazingly, 70% of the world's Macaroni Penguins breed at South Georgia © Andrew Whittaker

Hercules Bay – A Zodiac cruise of this small bay takes us up close to Macaroni Penguins and South Georgia Shags.

Stromness – Situated within scenic Stromness Bay, this former Norwegian whaling station was abandoned in 1961. A stop here now offers terrific mountain scenery and opportunities to visit a colony of Gentoo Penguins and to wander close to the abandoned whaling station. This is also the site where Sir Ernest Shackleton and his party arrived after crossing the island's glaciers on foot.

Grytviken – Territorial capital of South Georgia, Grytviken is the site of South Georgia's first whaling station, established by the Norwegians in 1905. Abandoned since the early 1960s, it currently is manned by only a couple of people, but still offers several fascinating sights, including a restored whaler's church, a post office, and the small South Georgia Museum. In the nearby whaler's graveyard "The Boss," Sir Ernest Shackleton, rests in peace.

Wildlife is abundant at Grytviken as well, with opportunities to view King Penguins, Antarctic Terns, and Southern Elephant Seals.

St. Andrews Bay – St. Andrew's Bay, on the east coast of South Georgia, boasts an enormous colony of King Penguins rivaling that of Salisbury Plain. Approximately 150,000 pairs reside here during the Antarctic summer. A walk through the colony will bring us up close to birds of all stages of development, and also reveal Brown Skuas, Kelp Gulls, and Snowy Sheathbills. An added benefit of a landing at St. Andrews is sweeping vistas of the entire colony and the sea beyond.

Royal Bay – Royal Bay is a large circular indentation on South Georgia's northeast coast, home to incredible scenic beauty and excellent wildlife viewing. At the far end, Moltke Harbor boasts a broad sandy beach and a river outfall where King Penguins, Antarctic Terns, and elephant seals congregate. Over the south end of the bay towers an imposing mix of rock walls and serrated ridges—all partly encased in ice. Royal Bay is also the site of the remains of a base built by a German expedition team.

Gold Harbor – Among the most famous of South Georgia's wildlife viewing areas, Gold Harbor offers excellent access to elephant seals, fur seals, and King Penguins for starters. Steep, tussock-covered hillsides are the preferred nesting site of Light-mantled Albatross, and giant-petrels lounge on the beach. Besides the wildlife, majestic natural surroundings include glaciers, towering cliffs and a broad gravel beach.

Drygalski Fjord – The Drygalski Fjord is a spectacular narrow waterway punching eight miles inland from the island's southeastern edge. Among the visual delights are towering sheer cliffs, plunging waterfalls, razor-sharp

ridges, and Larsen Harbor, an even narrower arm off the fjord that offered protection against bad weather for whaling ships. The channel continues all the way to the face of the Risting Glacier, a magnificent wall of ice marking the head of the fjord. Cape and Snow petrels are often found here in abundance and the scenery is mesmerizing.

NIGHTS: On board *Seaventure*

January 9-10, Days 13-14: Cruising the Scotia Sea, from South Georgia to Antarctica. Of the four ocean crossings we'll make on our expedition, the voyage through the Scotia Sea between South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula is often the most exhilarating. We'll take two days to cover almost 800 miles, during which time we'll head steadily southwest into the higher latitudes. Our transit through these far southern waters will be eventful with plenty to look forward to, including seawatching for birds and marine mammals, re-crossing the Polar Front (Antarctic Convergence), and enjoying the rocky pinnacles full of breeding shags at Shag Rocks, eventually encountering ice.

The first ice we see is likely to be smaller bergs that have drifted with the currents north from the Weddell Sea. In time the ice becomes more plentiful and larger until we begin to observe the massive remains of the disintegrating winter icepack. Icebergs of all shapes and sizes appear around the ship, from horizon to horizon. Cutting through the slushy water, the sound of debris ice scraping against the ship's reinforced hull is unforgettable; the sight of giant chunks of ice floating like monuments will leave you mesmerized. In between you'll witness icebergs of all shapes and sizes. Some appear as massive squared off edifices while others show up as wave-sculpted masterpieces. Behemoth tabular icebergs finally appear, broken off the continental ice shelf and adrift. Bigger than life, some of these bergs tower hundreds of feet over the ocean and stretch for over a mile. Ice often becomes compressed as it ages. When this happens, it loses its ability to reflect the full spectrum of colors that comprise white light and instead can only reflect blue. We'll observe blue ice, some of which gleams incredible cobalt under overcast skies.



Snow Petrel © Michael O'Brien

Besides the dazzling ice spectacle, you'll once again be under the spell of Antarctic wildlife. Near South Georgia, Blue Petrels skim across the ocean, while further south Southern Fulmars and White-chinned Petrels arc through the ship's wake. We'll watch for the ghostly white Snow Petrel, a bird closely tied to the pack ice and whose

presence is difficult to predict. We will be sifting through flocks of prions on the lookout for the difficult to find distinctive tail pattern of the much rarer Fairy Prion among the hordes of Antarctica and Slender-billed.

Our next sighting of land will be Elephant Island—rugged, mountainous, and ice-covered, yet undeniably beautiful. The ice-covered islands, snow-blanketed mountains, and picturesque waterways of the Antarctic Peninsula and South Shetland Islands form the most wondrous panoramic scenery on Earth. The peninsula is a narrow finger of land that projects north from the main continent toward South America and separates the Weddell from the Bellingshausen seas. The South Shetlands meanwhile, exist as a natural gateway to the peninsula as well as the Weddell Sea. Today we will spend part of the day at Elephant Island.

Elephant Island lies at the eastern terminus of the South Shetland group and is probably best known for its location where Shackleton's men over-wintered as they awaited rescue. High, impenetrable, and locked in glaciers, Elephant is an island fortress. Yet it is also a place of incredible beauty and the site of thousands of breeding Chinstrap Penguins and Antarctic Shags. Sea conditions and heavy cloud-cover often prevent ships from landing, but for those that make it, what awaits visitors are huge cracked glaciers, an ice-blue bay at Point Wild and thousands of nesting seabirds.

NIGHT: On board *Seaventure*

January 11-14, Days 15-18: Expedition cruising between the Antarctic Peninsula and Weddell Sea. The next five days will be spent exploring the region, expedition cruising through numerous scenic straits and channels. Aboard the ship's fleet of Zodiacs, we'll cruise among ice floes, land at penguin colonies, and visit with scientists at research stations. We'll also be sure to make a continental landing on the peninsula in at least one place, allowing us to "claim" the seventh continent!

The onset of the Antarctic summer allows us to experience the rich colors of the sea and ice, the dramatic etchings of coastlines, and the sheer walls of towering icebergs. The pristine air lends an unusual quality to Antarctic light, so that colors are truer and landscapes sharper. We can clearly see snow-capped peaks on every horizon, often tinted rose-red or burnt orange by the late evening sun.



Antarctic Sound © Michael O'Brien

We will experience incredible wildlife encounters on a daily basis. Three species of "brushtail" penguins—Chinstrap, Adelie, and Gentoo—nest here and we hope to visit colonies of each. Moving south along the peninsula, South Polar Skuas replace the Browns and we may even have the opportunity to compare the two side by side. We will pay close attention to the ice floes, where leopard, crabeater, and Weddell seals haul out to rest on the fast ice. Whales often use these protected, food rich waters for feeding and we have good chances for encountering minke, killer, and humpback whales. We'll also be keeping our eyes peeled on the ice flows and fast ice for the elusive Emperor Penguin. Young birds are normally found in one out of every three VENT trips to Antarctica. Although the specific itinerary depends on sea and ice conditions, we will have no shortage of places to explore! This list serves as a guideline only of the possible places we may experience:

South Shetland Islands – When coming from South America or South Georgia, the South Shetlands provide a spectacular entrance to the Antarctic region. Rugged mountainous islands rise from the ocean like an impressive volcanic gateway, giving first time visitors a taste of what lies beyond. Massive tabular icebergs float freely in the inter-island waters and Bransfield Strait, and huge colonies of Chinstrap Penguins form during the Antarctic

summer on the slopes of many of the islands. This sub-Antarctic archipelago covers a considerable distance from northeast to southwest.

Brown Bluff – Situated on the periphery of the Weddell Sea, Brown Bluff is significant as it is one of the best places to make a continental landing in Antarctica. The volcanic promontory of the bluff rises 2,450 feet above an ash beach covered with enormous boulders. Some 20,000 pairs of Adelie, and hundreds of Getoo penguins make their homes here. Cape and Snow petrels nest near the top of the cliffs and Kelp Gulls and South Polar and Brown skuas fill the air with perpetual sound.

Gourdin Island – Located north of the tip of the Antarctic Peninsula, Gourdin Island is home to 14,000 pairs of Adelie Penguins as well as over 550 pairs of Gentoo Penguins.



Unforgettable Antarctic Sunset © Andrew Whittaker

Deception Island – Deception Island is quite unlike any other place we will visit on the cruise. Featuring a blown-out caldera in the middle of a still-active volcano, Deception offers visitors a chance to stroll on black gravel beaches and actually take a dip in geothermally heated waters. The island is accessed through a hole in one side known as Neptune’s Bellows, so named for strong winds that whip across the entrance. A stop at Whaler’s Bay provides time for a walk to Neptune’s Window, which provides thrilling views of the sea and sometimes the Antarctic Peninsula beyond. Whaler’s Bay possesses a colorful history of Norwegian whaling station turned into a base of British occupation in WWII. Volcanic activity since the 1960s has demolished nearly all of the remaining buildings and the bay is now the domain of Antarctic Terns, elephant seals, fur seals, and penguins.

Lemaire Channel – The extravagant beauty of the Lemaire Channel makes it a popular, and essential, destination for many Antarctic voyages. Situated along the Antarctic Peninsula, the Lemaire offers a spectacular transit of a narrow icy waterway, with 3,000-foot peaks looming on either side. The high point of the trip is a spectacular four-mile stretch, lined by sheer rock and ice, with Booth Island towering above. If the weather is clear the dramatic mountains are reflected beautifully in the water. Crabeater and Leopard seals and Adelie Penguins are seen with frequency resting on ice floes. Though only an hour is required to cruise the length of the Lemaire, the whole experience is totally unforgettable.

Pleneau Island – Near the Lemaire Channel, Pleneau Island features a cobbled beach, upsloping smooth rock terraces, and an ice cap. A stunning labyrinth of grounded icebergs lies in the shallow waters west of the island, presenting a superb Zodiac cruising experience.

Anvers Island and the Neumeyer Channel – Anvers Island is among the largest of the islands along the north Antarctic Peninsula, measuring some 37 miles wide. It is separated from the mainland by the wide Gerlache Strait. Though most visitors do not typically visit the island itself, the chief attraction is a cruise through the 17-mile long Neumeyer Channel. Like the Lemaire, the Neumeyer presents landscapes of overpowering beauty, characterized

by snow-capped peaks and massive glaciers. Leopard Seals haul out on ice floes and the rarer Antarctic Petrel is occasionally seen.

Bailey Head – Known as a hard place to land a boat, Bailey Head offers an unforgettable traiipse up a glaciated valley into the heart of a massive colony of Chinstrap Penguins. Hundreds of thousands of penguins live here during the Antarctic summer and form long black-and-white processions as they move back and forth from the sea to their nests. The spectacle is overwhelming as seemingly every patch of ground up to the surrounding ridgelines is occupied by Chinstraps in various stages of the breeding cycle.

Port Lockroy – Established by the British in 1944 as a weather and reconnaissance station, Port Lockroy operated until 1962. The original building now represents the oldest British building on the Antarctic Peninsula. Now restored, it is listed under the Antarctic Treaty as a historic site and monument. It is open during the summer months, where it operates as a museum and visitor center. A post office allows visitors to send postcards or letters home via the Falkland Islands and the U.K.



Leopard Seal demonstrating why it is one of the apex predators of the Antarctic © Andrew Whittaker

Palmer Station – Established by Americans in 1964, Palmer Station sits at the southwest corner of Anvers Island. The facility is a center for active research, including a study monitoring the long-term effects of changing sea ice cover on Antarctic marine life. Well run, the station houses impressive saltwater tanks and aquariums. The gift shop is said to be the best in Antarctica.

Paradise Harbor and Neko Harbor – Situated along the peninsula’s Danco Coast, these two harbors are an important and popular stop in Antarctica. The reason is that it offers visitors the chance to actually set foot on the Antarctic continent. Beyond that, the scenery here is extraordinary, with ice in the water and ancient, deeply cracked glaciers ringing the bays on all sides. The Chilean and Argentine bases, Gonzalez Videla and Almirante Brown, are here as well and receive many visitors. The snowfields surrounding Neko Harbor hold a colony of Gentoo Penguins and the rocky cliffs above Paradise Harbor host a colony of Antarctic Shags.

King George Island (South Shetlands) – Largest of the South Shetland Islands, King George is largely covered by glaciers. Admiralty Bay is the site of a Brazilian research base and remains ice-free year round.

Greenwich Island and Yankee Harbor (South Shetlands) – Yankee Harbor is a protected bay on the south side of Greenwich Island and hosts large numbers of Gentoo Penguins and Snowy Sheathbills.

NIGHTS: On board *Seaventure*

January 15-16, Days 19-20: Cruising the Drake Passage. Between the tips of South America and the Antarctic Peninsula, the Southern Ocean pinches in, forming the Drake Passage. Discovered by Sir Francis Drake in 1578, the Drake Passage is a region where circumpolar ocean currents concentrate and bring the waters of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans together. This area is justly famous, or infamous, to every type of traveler who has ever crossed it. And no trip to Antarctica would be complete (or possible!) without crossing “The Drake.” When on its best behavior the “Drake Lake” offers an effortless transit on smooth seas; but can add some excitement to the voyage when riled by strong westerly winds. Fortunately, the seas are at their calmest during the Antarctic summer and many crossings are easy.



White-chinned Petrel © Andrew Whittaker

During our journey we are sure to witness a wondrous abundance of wildlife. The pelagic birding in these Antarctic and sub-Antarctic waters is among the best in the world. We should see as many as five species of albatross, including the lovely Gray-headed and the giant Royal (both species), Light Mantled, and Wandering (Snowy).

Among the thousands of other seabirds, we’re likely to see Northern and Southern giant-petrels, White-chinned Petrel, Soft-plumaged Petrel, Black-bellied and Gray-backed storm-petrels, and Antarctic Prion. One of the most beautiful birds to grace the Southern Ocean is the Cape (Pintado) Petrel. Painted a striking combination of black and white, these endearing little birds serve as constant companions through much of

the crossing. At times they swirl around the ship, only feet above the ocean surface, while at other times they’ll take advantage of sudden updrafts and vault to eye level before peeling away. These nutrient-rich waters also support an impressive mix of cetaceans. Past trips have recorded Fin, Sei, Antarctic Minke, Humpback, Long-finned Pilot, and Killer whales. Several of the rarer “beaked-whale” species are observed on occasion.

Below decks you can attend lectures by expedition staff on a variety of topics related to the Drake Passage and Cape Horn. At some point we’ll re-cross the Polar Front (Antarctic Convergence).

NIGHTS: On board *Seaventure*

January 17, Day 21: Disembark *Seaventure* in Ushuaia; departing flights home. We’ll disembark *Seaventure* this morning in Ushuaia and transfer to the airport (USH) in time for return flights to Buenos Aires (EZE) and connections to international flights home.

NIGHT: Aboard commercial aircraft

January 18, Day 22: Arrive home. International flights departing Buenos Aires on the night of January 17 and will arrive in the United States this morning.

Antarctica programs are designed as expeditions which require a degree of flexibility and spontaneity. Every effort will be made to follow the published itinerary, but please note that they are offered subject to change at the discretion of the ship’s captain, based on sea, weather, and ice conditions.

BUENOS AIRES PRE-TRIP December 26-29, 2024



Many-colored Rush-Tyrant, a specialty bird of South American wetlands © Andrew Whittaker

Buenos Aires is regarded by many as the finest, most sophisticated city in Latin America. An obvious European influence permeates the city's parks, architecture, and culture. Sometimes called the "Paris of the South," Buenos Aires has long been an enticing destination for many travelers. For birders and other natural history enthusiasts, Buenos Aires is equally compelling. Several premium birding areas are accessed from the city center in an hour or less. On this short cruise pre-trip, we will explore a variety of wetland and dry forest habitats seeking a variety of birds typical of eastern Argentina. Among these are a range of waterfowl, depending on water levels, including Coscoroba and Black-necked swans, Red-gartered Coot, and Rosy-billed Pochard; and a broad array of landbirds, examples of which are Chimango Caracara, Guira Cuckoo, Many-colored Rush-Tyrant, Red-crested Cardinal, Diademed and Sayaca tanagers, and Scarlet-headed Blackbird.

December 26-27, Days 1-2: Travel to Buenos Aires, Argentina; afternoon birding at Costanera Sur. Pre-trip participants should plan to depart the U.S. on Day 1 and arrive Buenos Aires, Argentina (EZE) with flights generally arriving between 8-10:00 AM on the morning of Day 2. After clearing customs and immigration, you will be met by our ground operator and transferred to our hotel where your room is available for immediate occupancy. Lunch is on your own. Participants arriving on other flights may either take a taxi to the hotel or arrange a private transfer through our office at an additional charge.

We will convene at 2:00 PM on Day 2 for a brief pre-trip welcome and introduction, followed by a birding trip to Costanera Sur, an enormous preserved wetland alongside a major metropolitan park. Costanera Sur provides a truly fantastic setting where a system of ponds, mudflats and reed beds provide important refuge to thousands of shorebirds, waders and other waterbirds. A wide levee and several viewing platforms allow for limitless viewing and we will spend the majority of the afternoon looking over the extensive habitat. With so many birds so easily seen, there simply is no better way to experience the joy of birding in Argentina.

Waterfowl are the primary attraction as the majority of the waterfowl of southern South America occurs here, a sampling of which includes Coscoroba Swan, White-faced Whistling-Duck, Rosy-billed Pochard and Silver and yellow-billed teal. Gray-hooded and Brown-hooded gulls, Snowy-crowned Tern, Collared Plover, Southern Lapwing, and many wintering shorebirds from the northern hemisphere crowd the mudflats. Woodlands and

marshes hold Glittering-bellied Emerald, Black-backed Water Tyrant, Rufous Hornero and spectacular Red-crested Cardinal. Nanday (Black-hooded) and Monk parakeets are both a common site here.

We'll return to the hotel in the late afternoon.

NIGHTS: On board commercial aircraft (Day 1)
Hotel Hilton (or similar), Buenos Aires (Day 2)

December 28, Day 3: Deltaic Habitats of Parana River. We will have an entire day today to explore the largest and most important birding areas in Buenos Aires with plans to return late this afternoon.

After breakfast at the hotel, we will go to the Deltaic Habitats of Paraná River north of Buenos Aires where we will spend a full morning birding before enjoying an authentic Argentine lunch. We will spend a full morning here before enjoying an authentic Argentine lunch. Following lunch, we will be birding marshlands and forest patches in the adjacent province of Entre Ríos before returning to the hotel in the late afternoon to clean up before dinner at an authentic Argentine restaurant.

A short list of the many possibilities includes Maguari Stork, Long-winged Harriers, Snail Kite, Rufous-sided Crane, Green-barred Woodpecker, Gilded Sapphire, Many-colored Rush Tyrant, Wren-like Rushbird, the odd Curve-billed Reedhaunter, Spectacled Tyrant, Brown-and-yellow Marshbird, Scarlet-headed and Yellow-winged blackbird, Pale Bay-wing, and the lovely Black and Rufous Warbling Fich.

We will return to the hotel in the late afternoon to clean up before reuniting for dinner

NIGHT: Hotel Hilton (or similar), Buenos Aires

December 29, Day 4: Flight from Buenos Aires to Ushuaia; afternoon birding at the waterfront. This morning you will transfer to the Buenos Aires Jorge Newbery Airfield (AEP) in time for your flight to Ushuaia, the southern-most city in South America. Upon arrival, you will be met by our local agents and transferred to our hotel. The main cruise program commences upon hotel check-in.

TOUR SIZE: The *Seaventure* holds 139 guests of which VENT has reserved 30 berths for this expedition. If registrations do not warrant this size of an allotment, the cruise company may sell any unsold berths to the general public. The Buenos Aires Pre-trip will be limited to 12 participants.

MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE REQUIREMENT: All passengers must carry a Travel Insurance Plan on this voyage that covers for personal injury, medical expenses, repatriation expenses, evacuation expenses, and pre-existing medical conditions as this tour visits remote locations where immediate access to primary medical care may NOT be available. **For this reason, travel insurance which covers you for emergency evacuation is required for participation on this tour.** This coverage is included in the **Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™** program. Through Ripcord, "emergency evacuation" can be purchased as a stand-alone benefit or as part of a comprehensive travel insurance policy. If you choose not to purchase insurance through Ripcord, you are required to obtain it through another provider. Any potential evacuation from Antarctica can cost up to \$150,000 we recommend that no policy carry less than this amount of coverage. **Polar Latitudes will require information as to carrier, policy number, and a 24-hour contact number prior to boarding.**

VENT LEADERS: Michael O'Brien, Louise Zemaitis and Mark Garland will be your VENT leaders for the cruise. A local leader will be on the Buenos Aires Pre-trip.



Michael O'Brien is a freelance artist, author, and environmental consultant living in Cape May, New Jersey. He has a passionate interest in bird vocalizations and field identification, and a serious addiction to migration and nocturnal birding. His travels have taken him throughout North and Central America and beyond. At home in Cape May, Michael serves as an Associate Naturalist with Cape May Bird Observatory for whom he conducts numerous workshops, and, for many years, conducted a fall songbird migration count. He is co-author of *The Shorebird Guide*, *Flight Calls of Migratory Birds*, and *America's 100 Most Wanted Birds*, and is primary author of *Larkwire*, an online and handheld application for learning bird sounds. His illustrations have been widely published in books and field guides, including the *National Geographic Field Guide to*

the Birds of North America and the new Peterson field guides. Michael also has an intense interest in butterflies, leads several “Birds & Butterflies” tours with his wife, Louise Zemaitis, and is coordinator of the Cape May Butterfly Count.



Louise Zemaitis is an artist and naturalist living in Cape May, New Jersey where she is a popular field trip leader teaching birding workshops as an Associate Naturalist with New Jersey Audubon's Cape May Bird Observatory. She also enjoys leading birding groups and lecturing at birding festivals and is known for her enthusiasm for all natural history subjects. Louise and her husband, Michael O'Brien, have been guiding young birders at birding events and conferences for many years. In addition to leading, Louise is field coordinator of the Monarch Monitoring Project in Cape May, served as compiler of the Cape May Christmas Bird Count for over 20 years, and owns Swallowtail Studio in West Cape May. An honors graduate of Temple University's Tyler School of Art, she

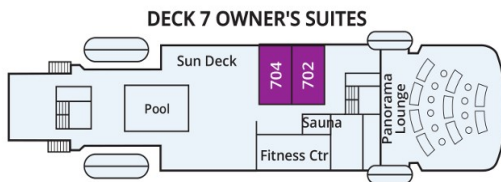
enjoys working as a freelance artist and her illustrations have been widely published. Her proudest accomplishment has been the raising of her two sons, Bradley, a biologist and artist, and Alec, a library scientist and musician.



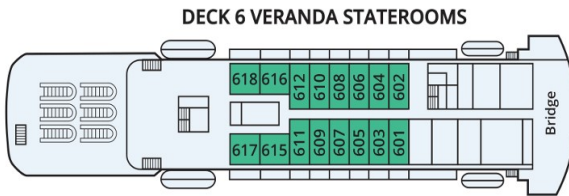
Mark S. Garland is a naturalist who has been sharing his enthusiasm for nature with others professionally for over 40 years. He holds B.S. and M.S. degrees from the University of Maryland's College of Agriculture. His work experience includes six years as a Ranger/Naturalist with the National Park Service, 17 years with the Audubon Naturalist Society (ANS), now known as Nature Forward, and four years with New Jersey Audubon Society's Cape May Bird Observatory. He has also led tours for Smithsonian Journeys, Massachusetts Audubon Society, Riveredge Nature Center, and Betchart Expeditions. For 14 years he taught week-long birding classes in Cape May for the Road Scholar program by Elderhostel each spring and fall. He teaches one or two sessions each summer at the Hog Island Audubon Camp in Maine. From 1984–2001 and

from 2006–2016 he planned and operated the Nature Travel Program for the ANS. He has also organized and led many private tours. Mark is the author of the book *Watching Nature: A Mid-Atlantic Natural History* (1997). Mark founded the Cape Charles, Virginia, Monarch butterfly research project in 1995, and from 2015–2022 he was Director of the Monarch Monitoring Project in Cape May. He has co-authored three scientific papers on the Cape Charles Monarch migration project and one on the Cape May Monarch studies. From early 2015 he authored the “Birders Question Mark,” Q&A Column for *Bird Watchers' Digest*. For over 15 years he appeared regularly on the weekly radio program Metro Connection on Washington D.C.'s public radio station WAMU. He has written regular columns for the *Cape May Star and Wave*, for birdcapemay.org, and for the *Audubon Naturalist News*; one of the latter pieces was awarded the Excellence in Mass Media Award by the American Association of University Women in 1995. Mark is a frequent speaker at various events, ranging from nature and birding festivals to bird club monthly meetings. In March 2019 he was awarded the Paul Bartsch Award for Distinguished Contributions to Natural History from the Audubon Naturalist Society.

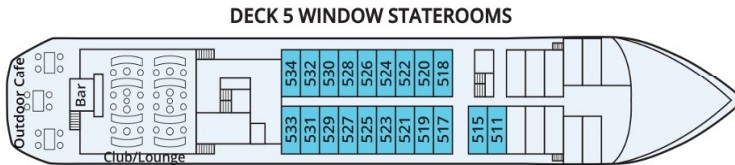
Deck Plan: M/S SEAVENTURE



● OWNER'S SUITES 331 SQ. FT. (30.8 M²)
INCLUDING A 58 SQ. FT. (5.4 M²) BALCONY
Suites with sitting area and private balcony



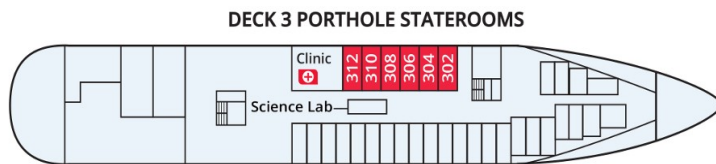
● VERANDA STATEROOMS 224 SQ. FT. (20.8 M²)
INCLUDING A MIN. 39 SQ. FT. (3.6 M²) BALCONY
Staterooms with sitting area and private balcony



● WINDOW STATEROOMS 188 SQ. FT. (17.5 M²)
Staterooms with windows and sitting area



● TRIPLE STATEROOMS 188 SQ. FT. (17.5 M²)
Staterooms with extra single bed and sitting area
Family Triples (409 & 411) have one queen and one single



● PORTHOLE STATEROOMS 188 SQ. FT. (17.5 M²)
Staterooms with portholes and sitting area

CRUISE INFORMATION

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: Prices quoted are per person based on double occupancy. All staterooms are outside cabins with two lower beds and en suite bathroom. Cabins will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. Limited single accommodations are available at 1.7X the double occupancy rate listed. Please note quoted prices are per person on double occupancy:

OWNER'S SUITES (Deck 7):	(Call for Availability)
VERANDA STATEROOMS (Deck 6):	\$28,666*
WINDOW STATEROOMS (Decks 4 & 5):	\$24,927*
TRIPLE STATEROOMS (Deck 4)	(Call for Availability)
PORTHOLE STATEROOMS (Deck 3)	(Call for Availability)

*Includes a 15% Early Booking Discount off the regular retail price.

Included in your cruise package:

- Land transfers in Ushuaia as stated in the itinerary including: group transfers hotel to ship on day 3; group transfer from ship to airport on day 21

- Accommodations: Shipboard (18 nights, days 3-20); Non-shipboard (1 night in Ushuaia, day 2)
- All shipboard meals, including soft drinks, beer and wine with lunches and dinners
- Non-shipboard meals including group dinner in Ushuaia on day 2 and group meals in Ushuaia on day 3
- Zodiac excursions
- Services of Ship staff (Expedition Leader and lecturers), crew (including Zodiac drivers), and VENT leaders
- On-board medical officer
- Antarctica visitation fees, landing fees, and port charges

Not included in your cruise package:

- International airfare from your home to Ushuaia and return
- Hotel accommodations other than those stated in the itinerary
- Meals prior to dinner on day 2 or after breakfast on day 21
- Land excursions other than our day trip in Ushuaia on day 3 or after arriving at the airport in Ushuaia on day 21
- Items of a personal nature including laundry, postage, telephone calls, emails and internet usage, bar charges, wine, and liquor
- Insurance coverage such as emergency evacuation, accident, baggage, and cancellation
- Medical services
- Passport or visa fees
- Excess baggage charges
- Airport arrival and departure taxes
- Optional gratuities to ship staff, Expedition Leader and lecturers
- Fuel surcharges (If applicable)

FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this voyage. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of brochure printing. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES: In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Our prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

TOUR REGISTRATION: A deposit of 20% of the cabin price is required to reserve a space on this cruise. The balance of the fee is due 150 days prior to departure (July 31, 2024).

If you prefer to pay the initial deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. If you would like to pay your initial deposit by check, money order, or bank transfer, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at www.ventbird.com) should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

This cruise is designed for persons in reasonably good health. By forwarding the expedition deposit, you certify that you do not have a physical condition or disability which would create a hazard to you or other passengers. VENT reserves the right to decline to accept or retain you or other passengers should your health, actions, or general deportment impede the operations of the expedition or the rights, welfare, or enjoyment of other passengers.

PAYMENTS: All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 150 days prior to the tour departure date.

CRUISE CANCELLATION POLICY: \$1000 of your initial deposit is non-refundable if cancellation occurs up to 181 days prior to the departure date. For cancellations that occur between 180 and 151 days, the deposit is non-refundable; cancellations within 150 days of the departure date are 100% non-refundable whether previously paid or not. Any refunds will be reduced by applicable airline cancellation penalties. No refunds will be made in the event of “no shows” or cancellations made on the day of sailing.

<u>If you cancel:</u>	<u>Your refund will be:</u>
181 days or more before departure date	Your deposit minus \$1,000
Between 180 and 151 days before departure	No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance will be refunded
Fewer than 150 days before departure date	No refund available

Upon cancellation of the transportation or travel services, where you, the customer, are not at fault and have not cancelled in violation of the terms and conditions of any of the contract for transportation or travel services, all sums paid to VENT for services not received by you will be promptly refunded by VENT to you unless you otherwise advise VENT in writing. This policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside the services described in the tour itinerary.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

BUENOS AIRES PRE-TRIP INFORMATION

The fee for the Buenos Aires, Argentina Pre-trip is \$1,775 in double occupancy from Buenos Aires. Rates are based on group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small party supplement may be charged.

The single supplement for the Buenos Aires Pre-trip is \$270.

Included in the optional Buenos Aires, Argentina Pre-trip:

- Two-night accommodation at the Buenos Aires hotel, Days 2 & 3
- Land transfers from arrival in Buenos Aires on Day 2 to departure for Ushuaia on Day 3
- Guided birding excursions around Buenos Aires on the afternoon of Day 2, and full day on Day 3 with return to the hotel each evening
- All meals from dinner on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 4
- Gratuities for operators and local guide

Not included in the Buenos Aires pre-trip:

- Air transportation from the passenger’s home to Buenos Aires, as well as Buenos Aires to Ushuaia to join the cruise.
- Laundry, postage, telephone calls, emails
- Meals prior to dinner on Day 2
- Hotel accommodations prior to Day 2

- Alcoholic beverages

BUENOS AIRES REGISTRATION, DEPOSIT AND PAYMENTS: To register for the Buenos Aires Pre-trip, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$1,000** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, the deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. If you would like to pay your deposit by check, money order, or bank transfer, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at www.ventbird.com) should be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 150 days (July 31, 2021) prior to the tour departure date.

BUENOS AIRES PRE-TRIP CANCELLATION & REFUNDS

Cancellation by Participant:

Refunds, if any, for any cancellation by a participant are made according to the following schedule: If participant cancels 180 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$500** per person will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$100** per person. If cancellation is made between 179 and 151 days before departure date, the deposit is not refundable, but any payments covering the balance of the tour fee will be refunded. If cancellation is made fewer than 150 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre- and post-tour extensions. **For participants’ protection, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance that covers trip cancellation/interruption.**

<u>If participant cancels:</u>	<u>Participant’s refund will be:</u>
180 days or more before departure date	Participant’s deposit minus \$500*
179 to 151 days before departure date	No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance of the tour fee will be refunded
150 days or less before departure date	No refund available

*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$100 per person. To qualify, cancellation must occur 180 days or more before departure date; deposit transfers must be made at the time of cancellation; and one transfer per deposit.

Cancellation by VENT:

If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A “**Force Majeure**” event means any act beyond VENT’s control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

GENERAL INFORMATION

GOVERNMENT FEES, TAXES, AND VISITOR'S FEES: *Seaventure* is responsible for port costs at embarkation and disembarkation. Visitor fees for the various landings presently scheduled for this itinerary are not being assessed. In the event, however, that Visitor Fees are assessed by any governmental or governing bodies before embarkation of the cruise, Victor Emanuel Nature Tours reserves the right to pass such fees to the Client and must be paid before the commencement of the voyage.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with Redpoint Travel Protection as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend their **Ripcord** plan. Designed for all types of travelers, Ripcord is among the most comprehensive travel protection programs available.

Critical benefits of Ripcord include a completely integrated program with a single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims; **medical evacuation and rescue services** from your point of injury or illness to your **hospital of choice**; comprehensive travel insurance for **trip cancellation/interruption**, primary medical expense coverage, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as security evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or other security events, **waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion**, and a **“Cancel for Any Reason”** benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.*

For a price quote, or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: <https://ripcordtravelprotection.com/ventbird>; or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help and Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 14 days of making your tour deposit. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, mid-payment, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The “pay as you go” approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to “pay as you go,” you must cover each deposit or payment within 14 days in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. The primary medical expense benefit is available to U.S. residents only. For this reason, non-U.S. residents will pay an adjusted premium when purchasing a comprehensive policy, which includes all of the other benefits available to U.S. residents. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

Coronavirus (COVID-19):

Concerns about COVID-19 may present uncertainty for those holding travel insurance policies or who are considering future travel and purchasing such insurance. Redpoint features a **Coronavirus FAQ page** on its website that addresses questions and concerns regarding its travel insurance and the impact of COVID-19. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of topics such as policy coverage and limitations, policy modifications, cancellation, refunds, and more.

Please visit the **Coronavirus FAQ** page at the following link:

https://redpointtravelprotection.com/covid_19_faq/

Additionally, some countries maintain COVID-19 entry requirements, including mandates to purchase travel insurance covering medical expenses due to COVID-19 illness and in case of quarantine. Ripcord's comprehensive travel insurance plans are designed to satisfy the various country-specific travel insurance entry requirements. Those who purchase a Ripcord policy will receive a "letter of confirmation" that affirms that the policy satisfies such requirements.

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: \$50 domestic; \$75 international.* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. **Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.**

*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

BAGGAGE: We request you limit your baggage to one large duffel (or soft sided suitcase) and one carry-on bag. **Please consult your pre-departure materials and airline to find out specific weight restrictions.** The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. As a precaution against lost luggage, we suggest that you pack a change of clothes, essential toiletries, medications, a change of clothing, important travel documents, optics, and any other essential items in your carry-on. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security we recommend that you check the website of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for the most updated information: <http://www.tsa.gov/>

When travelling, it is suggested that you wear clothing and a pair of shoes suitable for birding in case your baggage is delayed. It is wise to carry several copies of a list of your expensive equipment—cameras, binoculars, tape recorders, spotting scopes, etc.—for customs inspectors. This list should include a description of the object (include the serial number if possible), place of purchase, and price. Visitors are rarely challenged about such equipment, but U.S. customs may be more difficult. If you are taking a large amount of equipment with you, it is advisable to declare this to a customs officer before you leave the United States.

CONDITIONS:

The Ship - The *Seaventure* is a comfortable and contemporary expedition vessel. Public spaces include a large lounge, a sauna, a fitness center, a custom-built citizen science lab, library stocked with fiction and reference books along with a selection of games, and a single-seating dining room. Outside decks feature a bar, spa, heated saltwater pool and a sun deck where meals are served in pleasant weather. All staterooms feature ocean views, a sitting area, en suite bathroom, large wardrobes, small refrigerator, and television. A fleet of Zodiac landing craft permits landings anywhere nature or curiosity dictates.

Technical Information:

Passengers: 139
Crew: 90 (includes Staff)
Built by: Mitsubishi Shipyard, Kobe (Japan)
Built in: 1990
Reimagined: 2019
Refurbished: Spring 2021
Registered in: Limassol, Cyprus
Length: 111,5 m / Width: 17,0 m / Tonnage: 6 752 GRT
Class: B.V. Ice Class 1A Super (highest available)
Stabilization: Retractable-type Fin Stabilizers (11 m2 ea)

Zodiac Landing Craft – Expedition cruise ships carry fleets of Zodiac landing craft. Developed as a means for gaining access to places where larger vessels cannot go, Zodiacs are employed to bring greater intimacy to your travel experience. Each craft is constructed of high performance plastimer fabrics and outfitted with a powerful motor, and designed to withstand the challenging conditions of the harsh Antarctic environment. During your cruise you'll make numerous excursions to shallow bays and landings on isolated beaches, coming face-to-face with an assortment of wildlife. Each craft holds as many as 10 passengers. Although flat-bottom design allows for direct on-shore landings, passengers will need to walk through shallow surf on some occasions.

Dining – The restaurant can comfortably seat all passengers at leisurely single seating for all meals, with tables unassigned. A choice of a buffet or table service is available for breakfast or lunch. Dinner is served at the table. The chefs can prepare food according to special dietary needs, provided the ship receives sufficient notification. Please advise of any special needs at the time of registration. Kosher meals are not available.

While on Land – Walking conditions on land are generally not difficult, yet it is important to pay close attention to footing and walking conditions. The diversity of topography in Antarctica guarantees that you'll experience a variety of terrain, from soft sand, to coarse gravel, to stepping around large boulders. Walks to penguin rookeries frequently involve treks of varying length through shallow snow and ice. In the Falklands, most walking is over fairly even ground, but tall grasses are often slick with recent rain. Conditions on South Georgia are similar to Antarctica.

While at Sea - While cruising at sea you'll have options to join your leaders on the viewing decks for sea watching, or remain below decks and relax in the library, the passenger lounge, or your stateroom. The sea is generally at its calmest during the austral summer, but rough conditions may develop at any time. Heavy winds regularly affect the latitudes around 40° and 50° south. Many summertime crossings of the Drake Passage are uneventful, but passengers should be prepared for the possibility of a rough transit. The same can be said of the crossing between the Falkland Islands and South Georgia.

Extra time in Argentina – Participants with an interest in seeing more of Argentina than is available in the cruise program are encouraged to come early or stay after the cruise. Buenos Aires is among the finest, most modern cities South America has to offer as it contains a wealth of interesting cultural and historical sites. Some of the city's famous major landmarks you can visit on your own are:

The **Plaza de Mayo**—a site and sculpture commemorating the first Argentine government; **Casa Rosada (Government House)**—seat of the executive branch of the Argentine government; **Cabildo**—town hall of colonial times; **City Hall and Cathedral**—a mausoleum housing the Great Liberator, General Jose de San Martín; **San Telmo**—the city's oldest district features a flea market, old mansions, and an antique market; **La Boca**—Italian immigrant neighborhood features colorful houses and sidewalk cafes; **La Recoleta Cemetery** – Neo-classical gates, Greek columns and marble mausoleums adorn the “national” cemetery, which hosts the gravesites of some of Argentina's most important and famous people, including Eva Perón; **Palermo Park**—one of the most beautiful parts of the city features botanic and zoological gardens, in addition to **Congress Building and Square**; **9 de Julio Avenue**; and **Puerto Madero**.

Ushuaia is a picturesque city at the tip of the South American continent. Attractions include plenty of bars and restaurants and opportunities for shopping.

CLIMATE & WEATHER: All expedition cruises to Antarctica take place during the austral summer, from November–March. In this timeframe, we can expect a wide range of conditions, often quickly changing without warning, including beautiful sunny days, overcast with poor visibility, and precipitation in the form of rain and snow. November/December departures coincide with the onset of the summer season and tend to be a little colder, with a greater likelihood of experiencing snowfall. The January-March period means warmer daytime temperatures and more prolonged periods of sunshine. Whatever precipitation there is occurs in the form of rain. While cruising at sea, a steady wind-chill can dramatically affect even moderate temperatures. All temperatures are listed in Fahrenheit (°F).

Ushuaia, Argentina lies at the tip of South America, with weather affected by the city's proximity to the sea and mountains. Temperatures range from the upper 30s to low 50s, but can feel much colder on a windy day.

Temperatures at the Antarctic Peninsula are likely to be the coolest of the trip, averaging in the low to upper 30s. Sunny days and intermittent overcast are expected. Visibility should be good most days, but low clouds can obscure viewing conditions.

Lying considerably farther north, the Falkland Islands are likely to be 10-20 degrees warmer than at the peninsula, but you should be prepared for cool conditions. Wind and rain are aspects of life in this archipelago, making moderate temperatures feel colder. Temperatures in the Falklands range from the upper 30s to mid 50s, but average in the low to mid 40s in December and January.

The weather at South Georgia changes frequently and is difficult to predict. Overall, you should expect conditions that average between those in the Falklands and the peninsula. Temperatures range from the mid 30s to mid 40s and precipitation occurs in the form of light rain and snow showers. Prolonged periods of sunshine are regular in the summer months, but periods of bad weather and high wind are possible.

CLOTHING & FOOTWEAR: Antarctic expeditions are casual environments. Comfortable and practical clothing is recommended while on board the ship and ashore, for daytime and evening wear. For the Captain's Welcome Aboard and Farewell dinners, Smart-Casual attire is appropriate. For women this includes casual dresses or slacks/blouses ensembles; for men, khakis/slacks and open-collared shirts. Men may choose to wear a sports jacket for such occasions.

A list of essential items includes:

- **Waterproof Rain-pants – REQUIRED** for protection against precipitation, ocean spray in zodiac landing craft and wet landings. Your rain-pants should fit comfortably over your regular pants. Some types feature a zipper on the outside of the lower pant leg, enabling you to pull your pants on and off without removing shoes or boots.
- **Warm, waterproof gloves and mittens – REQUIRED** for almost every circumstance. Thin glove liners are a good choice when trying to use your fingers for taking pictures or using binoculars.
- **Warm Socks** – Thin cotton or polypropylene socks are a good choice, in combination with a few pairs of wool socks. It is important to have clean, dry socks through the duration of the voyage. Pack accordingly.
- **Regular Pants** – Denim, cotton, corduroy, or wool pants are acceptable in dry conditions, such as when birding from the ship's decks; and for evening recaps, social hours, and dinners.
- **Hats, scarfs and gaitors – REQUIRED.** You will need a cotton, knit, or wool pull down cap at the least, while a warm scarf or gaitor come in handy when exposed in windy conditions.
- **Long Underwear - STRONGLY RECOMMENDED.** Silk or other lightweight material is sufficient for most people. Those who are easily chilled might consider multiple layers of long underwear, or a heavier material, such as wool.
- **T-shirts (long- and short-sleeved)** – Simple cotton shirts for wearing under warmer outerwear.
- **Turtlenecks and flannels** – More warm weather clothing for wearing under parkas, fleeces, and sweaters.

- **Warm Sweaters or Polar fleece** – Offers excellent insulation against cold temperatures.

PARKAS - You will receive a complimentary expedition parka, with hood, for your cruise to Antarctica. These parkas are made of quality material and are designed to keep you insulated against cold temperatures and precipitation. Some companies prefer that you submit your order weeks or months before the cruise departs, while others simply distribute the parkas at the time of boarding. **Please read your pre-departure material carefully, as it will provide information for obtaining the parka.** Please keep in mind that you will still want to bring warm layers to wear under your parka.

FOOTWEAR – **Polar Latitudes will provide a loaner pair of pull-on rubber, waterproof, knee-high boots with strong rubber-ridged, nonskid soles that fit comfortably.** With wet landings, you will be stepping from the zodiac into icy water that may be up to 10” deep. You should expect to walk over icy, uneven ground between the shore and the various penguin colonies you’ll visit. Waterproof lightweight boot coverings that can be worn over hiking boots or shoes, such as NEOS Performance Overshoe, are also recommended. When on board the ship, comfortable walking shoes, or deck shoes are sufficient.

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Laundry service is provided by the ship staff for an extra charge. Check with the staff upon embarkation for procedures and turnaround time.

EQUIPMENT: One of the most important aspects of having an enjoyable travel experience is being prepared with proper equipment. The following items will come in handy during your Antarctic expedition:

- **Backpack** – Good for carrying extra clothing, field guides, supplies, and optical equipment during all landings and excursions
- **Ziploc bags** – Excellent for keeping small items or any items of value dry; bring several different sizes
- **Notebooks and pens**
- **Travel alarm clock**
- **Polarized sunglasses with good UV protection**
- **Sunscreen, lip balm, skin lotions**
- **Personal toiletries**
- **Cameras, lenses, film, memory cards, and extra batteries**
- **Collapsible walking stick**
- **Tissue packs**

Binoculars – We strongly recommend good binoculars of at least 7x35, 8x42, 10x40, or 10x42 magnification. We recommend that you do NOT bring mini-binoculars of any kind. Some people like them because they are small and lightweight; but they have an extremely small field of view and very poor light gathering power. Trying to find a bird in your binoculars using minis is like trying to read a book through a keyhole. You will be very frustrated, and even if you do manage to get the bird in your binoculars before it flies, you will have a poor view. You will find that 7x35 or 8x42 binoculars are compact and light enough.

Spotting Scopes – Since most wildlife viewing will take place on a moving ship or zodiac, or among the birds and animals at very close range, you do not need to bring a spotting scope. Your tour leaders will have one available for group use on the occasions where it is necessary to have one.

PASSPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

PASSPORTS - A valid passport is required. Please check the expiration date on your passport. **If it is not valid for at least six months after your trip return date, you will need to get it renewed.** You will also want to make sure that you have at least two blank pages in your passport for stamps. If you need a passport, you should get it well in advance of your trip departure date. For additional fees, a passport can be issued on an expedited basis. In the United States this can be done at the nearest passport office, most post offices, or the county clerk’s office. You may also visit www.state.gov/travel/ for information on how to get or renew a passport.

As a safety measure, photocopy the first two pages of your passport. Keep the photocopies in a safe place, so if your passport is lost you will have proof of identification. Your passport should be signed and easily available at all times. You will need it for check-in at the airport on your first day of departure, so **do not pack it in your checked luggage**.

On board ship, it is customary for the purser to hold all passports for clearance with Customs and Immigration authorities. Your passport will be collected prior to or upon embarkation, and returned upon disembarkation. Depending on the cruise route, you may have opportunities to have your passport stamped in the Falkland Islands, South Georgia, and on the Antarctic Peninsula. The purser will keep all passengers informed when such options become available.

VISAS - Visas are not required for U.S. and Canadian citizens for entry into Argentina, the Falkland Islands, South Georgia, or Antarctica.

CURRENCY & MONEY MATTERS: Your trip to Antarctica includes most necessary expenses, including all meals aboard the ship. You will want to bring enough cash to cover such extra expenses as taxi rides, gifts, laundry, gratuities, meals on your own before and after the cruise, and personal items. Small denominations of cash are best as the places we visit may be unable to provide change for large bills or travelers checks. In Ushuaia change is returned in local currency. Traveler's checks, Visa, MasterCard or American Express are accepted as payment for chipboard accounts. The USD is the official currency onboard the *Seaventure*.

Should you extend your vacation in Argentina beyond what is offered in the cruise program, you'll want to consider obtaining local currency. Please check with your bank and credit card issuer for more information regarding banking and the use of ATM and credit cards overseas.

The official currency of Argentina is the Argentine Peso (ARS). 100 centavos = 1 peso. You can check the latest currency conversion rate by visiting "XE-The World's Favorite Currency Site" at: <http://www.xe.com/>.

ELECTRICITY: Power in Argentina is 220V, with the recessed outlets of the round, two-pronged European type (often referred to as Type C electrical receptacle). If you plan to use American standard 110V equipment with the flat-pronged plugs, you will need to bring an all-purpose transformer to convert the current for 110V use, in addition to a round European-type adapter plug. Power onboard the *Seaventure* is both the American-style outlets (two flat prongs) at 110 V and the round European-type.

TIME: Argentina and the Falkland Islands are all three hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (EST), and South Georgia is 4 hours ahead of EST. Antarctic Standard Time is the same as Greenwich Mean Time, which places it 5 hours ahead of EST, however, many people stationed in Antarctica adopt the time zone of their home territory.

MEDICAL SERVICES: A qualified physician is in attendance at all times, but must be made aware of any potential medical problems that might arise because of any medical condition, disability, or illness of any passenger on board. **Please return your medical information form in a timely manner.**

If you will be bringing personal, prescriptions or over-the-counter medications, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the expedition safely. Please consult your physician as necessary and remember to pack all medications in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medications.

No sophisticated medical facilities are available in Antarctica. Passengers who are not fit for an expedition cruise, including those with physical disabilities that affect mobility and balance, heart or immune deficiencies, or other conditions associated with poor health, are advised not to join the cruise. A serious health emergency in Antarctica may result in an air evacuation, which will come at considerable expense to you. **Refer to the section on Trip Insurance for information pertaining to coverage for medical and emergency evacuation coverage which is included with your cruise fee.**

HEALTH

1) GENERAL INFORMATION: If there is any doubt as to your physical fitness to travel, consultation should be sought with your doctor bearing in mind the following points:

- Most shore excursions involve a fair amount of standing and quite a bit of walking, often over rough or occasionally wet ground and sometimes uphill. Mobility is essential for climbing in and out of zodiacs used to transport participants to shore during the cruise.
- Temperatures in the Antarctic region are generally cold, accompanied by ever-changing weather conditions. You should be prepared to spend several hours outdoors in temperatures that may fall into the upper 20s, with rain and snow possible.

Participants should be active and in a good state of health in order to participate fully in this cruise. Any passenger who is not fit for an expedition cruise, including those with physical disabilities that affect mobility and balance, heart or immune deficiencies, or other conditions associated with poor health, are advised not to join the cruise.

2) THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC): Although we make every effort to provide the most recent information on travelers' health recommendations, it is advisable to check with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) prior to your departure to be certain that there have been no changes to their recommendations. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travellers' Information Line 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) or the website <http://www.cdc.gov/>. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health).

3) ROUTINE VACCINATIONS: As of this writing (January 2017), no major shots or inoculations are required for entry into any of the countries on this itinerary. As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots. You should also be up to date with the "Routine Vaccinations" which are **measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) and diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT)**.

4) RECOMMENDED IMUNIZATIONS: HEPATITIS A & B – Strongly Recommended. The word "hepatitis" means inflammation of the liver. Toxins, certain drugs, some diseases, heavy alcohol use, and bacterial and viral infections can all cause hepatitis. Hepatitis is also the name of a family of viral infections that affect the liver. Hepatitis A vaccinations traditionally involved a 2-shot sequence while Hepatitis B required a series of 3 shots. A single series of 3 shots that combines both vaccines is now available.

5) GENERAL HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS:

SUN EXPOSURE - The sun's ultraviolet rays are more dangerous in Antarctica than most other places in the world. Anytime you are outdoors you will want to protect your skin, including your lips, eyes, nose, and ears. Severe sunburn is potentially very painful and will affect your level of enjoyment. Always protect yourself when outdoors and be sure to bring an ample supply of high SPF sunscreen and lip balm. We strongly recommend the use of ultra-violet blocking, polarized sunglasses.

MOTION SICKNESS – Travelers should anticipate being in rough water at some point during the voyage. Although the Drake Passage is known for its turbulent seas, passengers may experience challenging sea conditions on any of the crossings. Even people who have never been motion sick may find themselves at risk in the Southern Ocean. Many ships visiting Antarctica carry a supply of anti-motion sickness medications for general availability to passengers. We recommend that you consult your physician on an appropriate medication.

COVID-19: We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These

measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying “Up to Date” with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance regarding recommendations for avoiding COVID-19. Please visit the **Coronavirus Travel Update** page of our website <https://ventbird.com/covid-19> for our official statement regarding COVID-19 and the operation of our tours. Please visit the CDC website for the most up to date information about COVID-19 and associated guidance for proper health and hygiene: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers’ Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). You can check the CDC website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html> (click on Travel Health).

SUGGESTED READING: A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend www.amazon.com which has a wide selection; www.buteobooks.com and www.nhbs.com which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and www.abebooks.com for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

Antarctica is a subject widely written about. A great many books and magazine articles have been written over the past century addressing its magnificent wildlife and rich human history. Although a person could research the topic indefinitely, the following list highlights some of the best material available about Antarctica that will prepare any traveler for a trip to the White Continent.

Birds and Reference:

Jaramillo, Alvaro. *The Birds of Chile*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003. This is the best book available for this tour; it is a modern easy-to-use, pocket-size field guide covering all of Chile’s birdlife, including southernmost Tierra del Fuego. Most importantly, the guide also includes **ALL** of the species the tour could possibly encounter in the Falkland Islands, South Georgia, Antarctica, and the Southern Ocean.

Onley, Derek and Paul Scofield. *Albatrosses, Petrels, and Shearwaters of the World*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007. This identification guide to the world’s seabirds is a major asset on any trip to the Southern Ocean and vicinity. The book’s excellent illustrations and range maps are supplemented by in-depth species accounts and discussions on the complicated taxonomy of seabirds. Some of the book’s strong suits include recognition of subspecies, updated taxonomy, detailed illustrations of all ages of the very similar members of the “great albatross” group, and thorough treatment of the confusing prions. Highly recommended.

Shirhai, Hadoram. *The Complete Guide to Antarctic Wildlife*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007 (second edition). A beautifully constructed book offering species accounts, with photographs, maps, and illustrations, of all the “birds and marine mammals of the Antarctic Continent and the Southern Ocean.” Highly recommended.

Mammals:

Shirhai, Hadoram and Brett Jarrett. *Whales, Dolphins and Other Marine Mammals of the World*. Princeton Field Guides. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006. This is among the best field guides available for identification of the world’s ocean-going mammals.

Natural History:

- Campbell, David G. *The Crystal Desert: Summers in Antarctica*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, Paperback reprint, 2002. From the Publisher: *The Crystal Desert: Summers in Antarctica* is the story of life's tenacity on the coldest of Earth's continents. It tells of the explorers who discovered Antarctica, of the whalers and sealers who despoiled it, and of the scientists who are deciphering its mysteries. In beautiful, lucid prose, David G. Campbell chronicles the desperately short summers on the Antarctic Peninsula. He presents a fascinating portrait of the evolution of life in Antarctica and also of the evolution of the continent itself.
- Safina, Carl. *The Eye of the Albatross*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2003. This is a beautifully written account of Amelia, a Laysan Albatross from the Hawaiian Islands. More than just a story about a bird, Safina interweaves science and natural history with a genuine knack for storytelling to create a powerful account of marine life in the Pacific.

History:

- Amundsen, Roald E. and A.G. Chater (translator). *The South Pole: An account of the Norwegian Antarctic Expedition in the Fram, 1910-1912*. New York: New York University Press, 2001. Considered by many the greatest polar explorer of all, Captain Roald Amundsen provides a personal account of his successful expedition to reach the South Pole. First published in 1912.
- Cherry-Garrard, Apsley. *The Worst Journey in the World*. New York: Carroll & Graff, 2003. First published in 1922, this is an excellent account of Robert Falcon Scott's 1910-1913 expedition to the South Pole, including the unforgettable story of the three members (including the author) who battled the odds to collect Emperor Penguin eggs at Cape Crozier.
- Fienes, Ranulph. *Race to the Pole: Tragedy, Heroism, and Scott's Antarctic Quest*. New York: Hyperion, 2004. This is a more recent and highly regarded historical account of Scott's quest to reach the South Pole before his rival Amundsen. Highly recommended.
- Lansing, Alfred. *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage*. New York: Carroll and Graff, 1995. First published in 1959, this is the incredible story of the 1914-1917 expedition of the ship, *Endurance*. Featuring polar explorer Ernest Shackleton, this is one of the greatest adventure stories of all time and an essential read for this tour.
- Murphy, Robert Cushman. *Logbook for Grace: Whaling Brig Daisy 1912-1913*. Time-Life Books, 1982. This is the remarkable autobiographical account of the young naturalist Robert Cushman Murphy's year aboard one of the last Yankee whale ships on an expedition to the Southern Ocean. Over the course of the 1912 journey, Murphy wrote detailed accounts, often with tremendous humor, of his encounters with the incredible wildlife of the Antarctic region, and of the actions of his fellow shipmates. The book takes its name from the collection of letters Murphy sent daily to Grace, the young wife he left behind for the sake of adventure.

TIPPING: Tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, and local guides) is included on all land portions of this tour in the cruise fee. Gratuities to the ships staff (Cruise Director, Expedition Leader, Officers and trip naturalists/guides) as well as gratuities to the ship's crew (housekeeping, dining room service, maintenance workers, and deckhands) **are not** included. Gratuities are a personal decision and the amount extended should be based on the quality and manner of the service you receive.

RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc., a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, "VENT") act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on February 9, 2023 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant's Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "**Airline**") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

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