



Antarctic Express: Crossing the Circle

December 2019 – January 2020

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January 2021-March 2021

Overview

A short, comfortable flight from Punta Arenas, Chile, to King George Island in Antarctica has you with boots on the ground in no time, overtaken by the sheer magnitude of the 7th Continent. Fully immersed in the Antarctic environment, you'll experience a roller coaster of emotions, from excitement to exquisite solitude to incredible gratitude for the wonder of it all.

You may go in search of whales and find yourself bearing witness to a glacier calving. Or you may plan to climb one more peak for a better vantage point and find yourself in a rookery of curious penguins. Antarctica will leave you in awe, but it won't leave you unchanged.

Note: Antarctic Circle crossings in the early part of the season are heavily dependent on ice conditions

Highlights

- Experience the fastest, most direct way to Antarctica
- Fly over the Drake Passage
- Marvel at all the Antarctic Peninsula highlights, including crossing the Antarctic Circle
- Take advantage of optional polar camping along the Peninsula
- Enjoy on-board lectures and educational presentations from polar specialists



Day 1 — Arrive in Punta Arenas, Chile

Your adventure begins in Punta Arenas, Chile, the most populated city in southern Patagonia. If you arrive early, there are many museums, restaurants and shops to keep you busy for days. By early afternoon, a Quark Expeditions® representative will meet you at the official starting point hotel, where you'll enjoy a welcome dinner and be briefed about preparing for your embarkation day.

Day 2 — Fly to King George Island and Embarkation

Your charter flight from Punta Arenas to Antarctica will have you crossing the legendary Drake Passage in only a few hours. Far below, the ship will approach King George Island for your arrival. Your first glimpse of dramatic Antarctic landscapes will be from a unique perspective, as your plane descends for landing in the South Shetland Islands. After landing, stretch your legs with a one-mile (1.6 km) walk to the shore, before being transferred by Zodiac to your ship to set sail for the Antarctic Peninsula!

Days 3 to 5 — Antarctic Peninsula and South Shetland Islands

There are few places in the world as evocative as Antarctica. As your ship approaches the White Continent, you may be overcome by feelings of excitement and awe. Much of Antarctica is indescribable and can only be fully appreciated through your own eyes.

As your captain and Expedition Team keep a lookout for whales and seabirds, you'll be alerted to any new sightings. Our team of expert lecturers will also provide in-depth explanations of the glaciology, history and wildlife of the region.

Even more exciting are your land excursions. Your first Zodiac landing is something you'll never forget! Walking on a beach dotted with penguins is the most intimate way to experience the unique wildlife of Antarctica.

Each landing is different and dependent on weather, but every day presents new sightings and photo opportunities, and it won't be long before you can tell the difference between an Adélie, gentoo and chinstrap penguin.

You may take a Zodiac cruise in search of whales and icebergs one day, followed by a hike to a penguin rookery the next day. From the booming sound of a calving glacier to the thrill of spotting apex predators like leopard seals and killer whales in action, you'll wake up early and welcome each day with a sense of adventure and a desire to explore this unrivaled travel experience.

Your Expedition Team will accompany you along the way, ensuring safety and providing insights into the places you visit.

Days 6 and 7 — Antarctic Circle

Crossing the Antarctic Circle is an impressive achievement, as most expeditions to the Antarctic Peninsula do not reach 66°33' S. If conditions allow us to cross this famed line at 66°33' S, you and your shipmates will celebrate in style with a well-earned glass of sparkling wine!

As you toast the first explorers who ventured this far south, you can take pride in knowing you've made it to a part of the world visited by very few people. This is raw Antarctica, home of the midnight sun, Weddell seals and some of the most peculiar, yet magical ice formations you'll see anywhere on the continent.

Days 8 and 9 — Northbound Along the Peninsula

If you haven't had your fill of Antarctic wildlife and icebergs by now, you'll surely be satisfied by the time you return to King George Island. You will continue to explore by Zodiac or on land as you travel north along the western Antarctic Peninsula.

Your Expedition Team will always be on the lookout for species of seabirds, seals and whales that may have eluded you on your journey south.

Day 10 — Disembarkation and Fly to Punta Arenas

After your week of exploration, you'll say goodbye to your Expedition Team and disembark at King George Island. Your two-and-a-half-hour flight across the Drake Passage to Punta Arenas, Chile, brings your adventure to an end. After your group transfer to the hotel, you are free to explore and enjoy an evening on your own, in the city or at the hotel to reminisce about the sights and sounds of Antarctica.

Day 11 — Depart Punta Arenas

After breakfast, you are welcome to continue on your own travels or make your way to the Punta Arenas airport for your homeward flights.