

Spirit of Antarctica

Aboard *Greg Mortimer* | 05 Dec – 15 December 2023



Ushuaia, Argentina

DAY 1 | Tuesday 5 December 2023

Position at 0700 on 5 Dec

Latitude: 54°48.6'S

Longitude: 068°17.9'W

Course: 193°

Speed: 0 kts

Wind Speed: SW 20 kts

Barometer: 1010 hPa

Air Temp: 2°C

Here we are in the stunning town of Ushuaia, 'el fin del mundo', the end of the world.

The wharf was abuzz this afternoon with arrivals, departures, fishing vessels unloading their catch, and all sorts of activity. Our Expeditioners were met by the Aurora Team and had our photos taken for our 'photo board' to help us learn each other's names. Drinks and a buffet awaited us in the Elephant Island Bar, then our hotel team helped us navigate the decks to our cabins and settle into our 'home away from home'. It had been a long couple of days of travelling, and many of us probably wanted to crawl into the comfort of our beds, but there was no time to rest just yet!

After a welcome briefing from our Expedition Leader Alex and an introduction to the E-Team, Anne gave us some handy hints about life on board.

We then had introductions from Dr Anzor and Hotel Director Pascal.

Finally, the all-important safety drill. The sound of the ship's horn signalled us to muster in the lecture theatre and don bulky orange lifejackets. We followed our crew up to Deck 7, where the polar-class life vessels sit (they can hold 136 people each, for five days!). With the safety drill completed, we were cleared to begin our journey.

However, we had our first introduction to polar weather: an intense double-header weather system in the Drake Passage. Alex explained the decision-making process to delay our departure by 24 hours for safety's sake, and we settled in for a night tied safely to the dock.

We made our way to the dining room to enjoy a delicious dinner, prepared by our talented galley team and served by our welcoming wait staff.

The last task was a jacket swap, so we can cope with whatever weather Antarctica decides to throw at us.

Together we total 104 passengers (40 Americans, 32 Australians, 1 Canadian, 6 from the UK, 23 Chinese, 1 Malaysian, 1 Pole, 1 Taiwanese, along with 104 crew from all around the globe).

Our 23 Expedition Team members have a variety of specialities including polar exploration, marine mammals, mountaineering, skiing, glaciology, geology, history, marine and terrestrial biology, ornithology, photography, medicine, and kayaking.

After the many hours of travel to reach the *Greg Mortimer*, it's time to kick back, breathe in the sea air, and get excited for the next 12 days of adventure!



Ushuaia | Beagle Channel

DAY 2 | Wednesday 6 December 2023

Position at 0750 on 6 Dec

Latitude: 54°48.6'S

Longitude: 068°17.9'W

Course: 98°

Speed: 0 kts

Wind Speed: 32 kt SW

Barometer: 1016 hPa

Air Temp: 3°C

I learned today that early settlement in Ushuaia depended upon a prison, prison guards and their families to populate an otherwise challenging location, to attract settlers. Settlers were needed to create a sense of sovereignty, and to convince Chile this was in fact Argentinian soil.

It is difficult to recall all of the amazing information we were provided as we drove from Ushuaia (which, by the way, means 'Deep Bay') by the expert tour guides aboard buses that transported us through history and geography, to Lagos Escondido and Fagnano. But, I get ahead of myself...

Let's start with the early morning, when Expeditioners woke to some of the strongest winds ever experienced in the harbour where the *Greg Mortimer* was docked. Local residents reported that winds like we were experiencing only occur three, maybe four times a year. This was indeed an exceptional morning! The decision of our Captain and Expedition Leader to remain in Ushuaia for a day to allow the winds to ease off, proved wise!

Reading weather maps, and knowing the limitations of crossing the Drake Passage in such winds, plans were made to provide an alternative adventure as we waited out the weather: a bus tour to the stunningly beautiful Lagos Escondido and Fagnano. The journey took us along winding roads, passing through dense beech forests and breathtaking mountain ranges. The winds calmed as we crossed over Garibaldi Pass and descended into the drier climate on the eastern side of the mountains. In fact, looking down upon Lago Escondido, the waters appeared almost tranquil and calm.

Compared to the almost veiled nature of Lago Escondido (which means 'Hidden Lake'), Lago Fagnano was massive, its waters stretching nearly as far as the eye could see.

Our bus journey was made complete with a fantastic lunch of lamb, salad, water and wine, in a wonderful rustic lodge. By mid-afternoon, we were back aboard the *Greg Mortimer*, preparing for departure. Not all participated on this tour; some Expeditioners chose to spend time in Ushuaia, taking the opportunity to rest, or to prepare for the journey ahead.

In the late afternoon, our Expedition Leader Alex provided more updates in the lecture hall, followed by a very busy time in the mudroom, where everyone tried on their Muck Boots and lifejackets. The kayakers and snowshoers received their respective briefings and shortly thereafter, we were all treated to a fantastic Welcome Dinner put on by the amazing culinary crew.

So here we now are, poised for the Drake, meandering through the Beagle Channel through the evening. The

Beagle Channel, named after Charles Darwin's ship, offered a stunning view of the rugged coastline. The Beagle Channel is the gateway to Antarctica, and its icy world of penguins, seals, birdlife, and icebergs.



At Sea, Drake Passage

DAY 3 | Thursday 7 December

Position at 0620 on 7 Dec

Latitude: 55°36'3"S

Longitude: 66°35'3"W

Course: 193°

Speed: 7 kts

Wind Speed: 35 kts SW

Barometer: 1025 hPa

Air Temp: 7°C

We fell asleep in the Beagle Channel and awoke in the infamous Drake Passage. Named, of course, for the English explorer and privateer Sir Francis Drake, known for his circumnavigation of the world during 1577-1580.

A wonderful breakfast set us up for our first lecture of the voyage. Linda introduced us to the amazing seabirds of the Southern Ocean and some of their fantastic adaptations. We learned of tube noses, their salt sloughing, scent sniffing and barometric sensing. Their elbow-locking mechanism and dynamic soaring allows these creatures to be like kites and spend very little energy to travel ever so far.

A short break for fresh air, and to see these birds and adaptations in action with our own eyes got us curious for Joselyn's introduction to citizen science and the programs we can participate in on board over our expedition. FjordPhyto and a Secchi disk can help us understand and estimate phytoplankton concentrations.

Happy Whale allows us to track the whales we will see all over the world. NASA's Globe Observer will allow us to help satellites figure out cloud type, density, location, and elevation. There are so many ways we as citizens can contribute vital data to researchers all over the world!

With our minds full, it was time to fill the belly. As the waves increased, lunch was a little lighter than some of us hoped... with such a tasty looking buffet. Nevertheless, fuelled up and wanting some fresh air, we took to the outer decks for a citizen science bird survey.

Looking out the window, there only seemed to be ocean waves; however, once on the back deck, all the birds from Linda's lecture came to life: light-mantled sooty albatross, wandering albatross and black-browed albatross, Wilson's storm petrel, both dark morph, light morph and everything in between: giant petrels, cape petrels and some prions too.

Back inside for a great introduction to Antarctic history with Tim. Who knew Tim's favourite polar explorer would be Mawson of Australia? We were happy to join Isabelle for a briefing on Zodiac operations and a quick glimpse into our future excursions. A quick break before finally getting to meet the Master of the *Greg Mortimer*, Captain Olek. With his fantastic team taking care of us both above and below deck, we are in great hands, and look forward to another delicious dinner.

Don't forget to try your hand at the iceberg competition as we look forward to more interesting lectures tomorrow.



At Sea Towards Antarctica

DAY 4 | Friday 8 December 2023

Position at 0530 on 8 Dec

Latitude: 59°50'4" S

Longitude: 063°53'8" W

Course: 164.9

Speed: 12.6 kts

Wind Speed: WSW 26.6 kts

Barometer: 1020 hPa

Air Temp: 3°C

Today we woke up to fog, lots and lots of fog.

We also reached Antarctica! Much to everyone's relief the seas were somewhat calmer. Today we crossed both the Antarctic convergence, and the political boundary at 60 degrees South.

We were served up a schedule of interesting talks to prepare us for what we will see in Antarctica.

The first talk was by Jamie about how to take great pictures in Antarctica, which was both informative and entertaining! All of us who attended learned some good tips on taking pictures in Antarctica. We were also treated to seeing some great pictures that Jamie has taken on the ice continent.

The next talk was by Linda, an 'Introduction to Antarctica'. A great overview of the history of the continent. She shared her expertise on wildlife, some human history, and the geology of the continent.

After a good, hearty lunch, more talks. We had the mandatory IAATO briefing which, was not so brief but important, as well as a thorough gear cleaning. We learned that the risk posed by avian influenza is very real and that we can play a role in transmitting it if we do not operate with caution in the region.

Following the afternoon briefing, we were treated to an interesting lecture by Melina on what we don't see when we look at Antarctica. Melina has worked as a geologist in Antarctica for several years and knows her rocks. She shared with us the origin of various geological formations and she also gave us valuable insight into what it means to do fieldwork in such a remote place.

During our evening recap, Deanna shared tricks of the trade for identifying whales through the following characteristics: blows, dorsal fins, dives and tails.

Dan spoke on how clouds are indicators of upcoming weather, and how we can interpret wind forecasts to give us an idea of the clouds we may see.

Joselyn provided us with an introduction to the Antarctic convergence and how ocean currents impact the region and where they originate from.

And last but not least, just before dinner, we got word from Alex that we will be seeing land this evening.

He gave us a peek into just how much thought goes into preparing an expedition schedule, and how many moving parts need to be considered.

And to top it all off, we saw our first iceberg!



Freud Passage | Brialmont Cove

DAY 5 | Saturday 9 December 2023

Position at 0515 on 9 Dec

Latitude: 64°11'4"S

Longitude: 61°53'9"W

Course: 182°

Speed: 6 kts

Wind Speed: 3 kts SSE

Barometer: 1003 hPa

Air Temp: 3°C

We woke up early and looked outside to find an icy fortress of snow-covered mountains and icebergs all around the ship. Our first day in Antarctica! We launched Zodiacs and cruised among the icebergs. Dan's clouds did not disappoint. They seemed almost painted on the sky, creating a dreamy skyscape. Among the icebergs we found sleepy humpback whales bobbing at the surface and occasionally lifting their tails high for a deeper dive. We also got our first look at porpoising penguins.

The afternoon felt like an entirely different day. The sky darkened and the wind picked up, almost as if to remind us all that we've entered one of the most inhospitable places on earth. We repositioned to the only area where ships could operate, given the winds whipping through the Gerlache Strait and all around us.

We were undeterred by the weather, as this was an opportunity to set foot on the continent of Antarctica, an area called Brialmont Cove.

A cruise amongst the bergs gave us the chance to see Adélie, chinstrap, and gentoo penguins before going ashore.

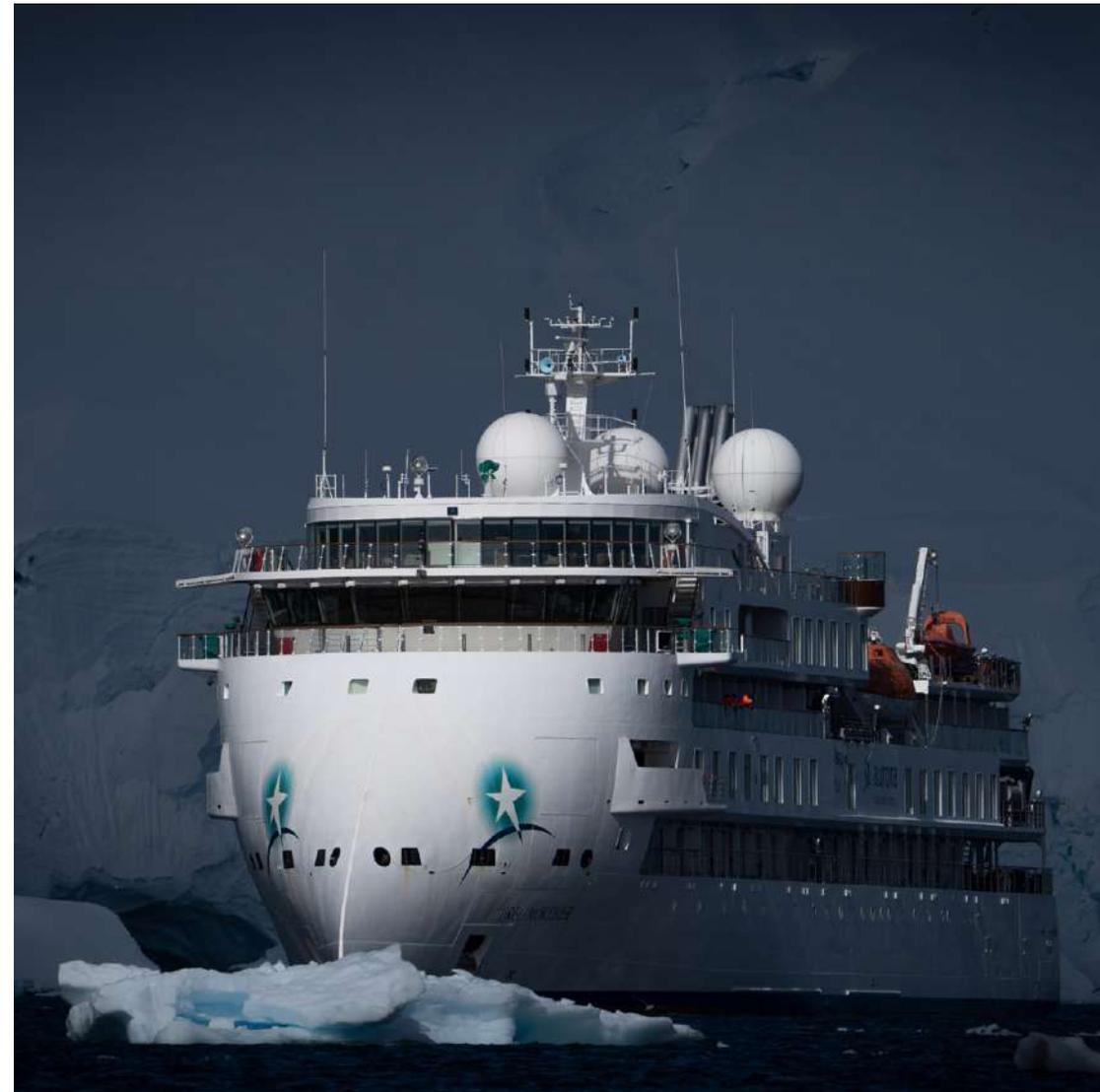
We also saw Weddell seals hauled out on an iceberg. Our Adélie seals of the trip!

The landing was rugged, with deep snow and a bit of a climb. Our Expedition Team had never been here before either, which made it feel like a true expedition. We climbed the hill up to the old refuge huts and looked up to see our group of snowshoers traversing the snow-covered mountainside. We looked out to the ocean, to take in the vastness and appreciate it all. It was breathtaking. The scale of things here is almost unimaginable.

The Zodiac ride back to the ship was a splashy and bumpy one and might have been classified as type-2 fun. Some of us were a tad nervous, but the smiles on our guides' faces were reassuring. Back on board, hot coffee and tea awaited us. All in all, a perfect first day in Antarctica.

Fun fact!

Weddell seals are huge! The females reach 450 kilograms in size. They live in Antarctica year-round and are able to live in ice-covered waters by excavating breathing holes through the ice with their teeth. At this time of year they are having their pups on ice, nursing, and weaning them. This is a rather quick process compared to other mammals. The mother nurses her pup for just seven weeks. In that time, the pup gains enough blubber to insulate its warm body and begin to swim in the icy waters for the first time.







Cuverville Island | Jougla Point | Damoy

DAY 7 | Sunday 10 December

Position at 0525 on 10 Dec

Latitude: 64°33'9"S

Longitude: 062°29'4"W

Course: 230°

Speed: 4 kts

Wind Speed: 25 kts WNW

Barometer: 994 hPa

Air Temp: 0°C

There's more than one reason that Cuverville Island is a popular stop, both with expedition cruise ships and the people on board them. A spectacular graveyard for grounded icebergs set beneath huge peaks so high, they're often lost in cloud. It would be worth visiting for its own sake, but the fact it's also home to one of the largest gentoo penguin colonies in Antarctica makes Cuverville unmissable.

There was light snow in the air as the passengers on board the *Greg Mortimer* made it ashore, but before long the dusting had turned into something more significant. With almost no wind, the snowflakes fell thick and beautifully for the majority of the landing, with the penguins seemingly as delighted as the passengers by the weather.

After time on land moving between the colonies, some people were able to see Weddell seals and a dozing leopard seal on ice floes, while kayakers and snowshoers had their own adventures around other parts of the scenic island.

The afternoon transit was a chance for some to rest, but it also passed through the scenic Neumayer Channel, providing photographic opportunities too good to resist. Light lanced through low-lying cloud, creating dramatic contrast on icebound cliffs and mountains. As the *Greg Mortimer* continued to follow the ill-fated route of Adrien de Gerlache and his hapless crew, it was easy to wonder if the antique Belgians had a chance to enjoy any of this scenery as their expedition turned increasingly sour.

Such travails seemed like distant impossibilities as we pushed on to Jougla Point. Ordinarily, this landing would be twinned with a visit to Port Lockroy and its famous post office. However, the virulent strain of avian flu threatening to reach Antarctica has made this season anything but ordinary. Our time ashore was instead spent exclusively on Jougla, in the company of more narcoleptic Weddell seals, hundreds of noisy gentoo penguins and dozens of nesting antarctic cormorants.

As the weather again closed in, it seemed unlikely that a planned camping trip would be able to take place, but after careful consideration, Dan made the call during dinner that it would indeed go ahead. Campers duly helped themselves to a second dessert and kitted up for the long night ahead.

Landing at what was soon jokingly dubbed Camp Despair, a vicious squall of snow and wind whipped into the would-be campers, and for a time it looked as though the expedition would be cancelled after all. The hardy souls on that lonely shore held their nerve, though, and bravely faced the cold uncertainty of Antarctica together.







Lemaire Channel | Petermann Island | Flanders Bay

DAY 8 | Monday 11 December

Position at 0445 on 11 Dec

Latitude: 64°48'5" S

Longitude: 063°29'8" W

Course: 6°

Speed: 0 kts

Wind Speed: 11 kts SW

Barometer: 1001 hPa

Air Temp: 1°C

Big day today! Some of us woke to the ecstatic call of gentoo penguins and crawled our way out of our sleeping bags to be rewarded with beautiful sun on the distant, clear mountains around Damoy Point. Some woke rested, and some were ready for a nap before breakfast. Some of us woke in warm beds to the gentle call of our Expedition Leader Alex and crawled our way out of the duvet to be rewarded with beautiful sun on the distant mountains as well.

Shortly after, we entered the famous Lemaire Channel, a tight but navigable channel, transporting us from the Gerlache to the Penola Strait. Did we feel the difference? Did we get lost in the still morning reflections? Jamie wrangled us for a team photo outside the observation room up on deck 8, smiling faces and brash ice behind. What a happy crew!

Petermann Island and its Adélie penguins were waiting for us, along with a whole host of gentoos. Penguins on eggs, and Weddell seals on snow, dotted the rocks around the site of Charcot's wintering expedition of the *Pourquoi-Pas*. Kayakers took off for a pretty much circumnavigation of Petermann, passing penguins, seals, icebergs and finishing with a trio of humpback whales. Snowshoers really got some distance, blasting along the ridge line, for amazing views in all directions and a good stretch of the legs.

Sailing back north to avoid the ever-present storms of the Southern Ocean, we took the French Passage, as the Lemaire was now choked with ice. Some napped, others joined Deanna for an incredible lecture on marine mammals. Who knew Weddell seal milk is 60 per cent milk fat? That's double whipping cream! Then it was photos with Jamie, tenacious lichens and mosses with Joselyn, and a few camping stories recounting the joys of reindeer sleeping bags with Mark.

Under the snow on deck 8 the galley prepared an impressive BBQ feast for us. Every meat imaginable was cooked to perfection; we ate with silly hats and cold fingers.

The embers were still hot and the ribs still sweet on our tongues as Zodiacs were lowered for the third time today. We set out for a digestive cruise in the fog and snow. We couldn't see much from the ship but once out exploring, Flanders Bay came to life! Humpback whale, snow petrel, southern fulmar, and even a chinstrap penguin on a pinnacle iceberg. What a way to end an epic day! To bed we go, dreaming of what tomorrow will bring.







Palaver Point | At Sea in Antarctica

DAY 9 | Tuesday 12 December

Position at 0600 on 12 Dec

Latitude: 64°18'3"S

Longitude: 061°55'2"W

Course: 16°

Speed: 8 kts

Wind Speed: 24 kts NE

Barometer: 998 hPa

Air Temp: 0°C

Today was our last day in the Antarctic Peninsula. The early morning weather was cloudy, with cold, wind-driven snow in our faces as the *Greg Mortimer* lowered its Zodiacs on a choppy sea. We raced across to Palaver Point in search of chinstrap penguins. We found them in several rookeries, busily nesting and squawking to each other.

As the morning progressed, the weather improved. It stopped snowing and the sun tried to break through the clouds.

We could not stop taking photos of the spectacular sculpted icebergs along the shoreline. There was a gigantic ice duck and some lovely mushroom-shaped figures.

At about 10.30am, a crowd of Expeditioners had mysteriously formed at the rocky beach where we had landed. What was the attraction? It was a dozen or so crazy Expeditioners who had decided to brave the cold and do the polar plunge. One by one, they threw off their garb and walked across the rocks into the icy water. Dan, meanwhile, had thrown in a few extra icebergs to keep the temperature down. Jamie stood ready to photograph the moment of madness. It was a curious mixture of swimwear, underwear and polar bare! The Zodiacs then rushed the plungers back to the onboard Jacuzzis and sauna.

Whilst all this was happening, the Captain had been studying the weather patterns around Cape Horn, including some approaching gales. Once everyone was back on board, the *Greg Mortimer* promptly headed north into the Drake Passage.

We enjoyed a smooth run in the afternoon with swells only developing at the end of the day. After lunch there were presentations by Linda on the peculiarities of ice. There was great enthusiasm for a fiercely contested game of 'How Big Is It?', hosted by Mark and Liz.

At our evening recap, Alex explained the Captain's plan to minimise our exposure to the sea swells. Tim did a presentation on the history of the polar plunge (who knew?) and followed up with the story of the gentleman explorer Jean-Baptiste Charcot, who had bestowed names on many of the islands we had visited.

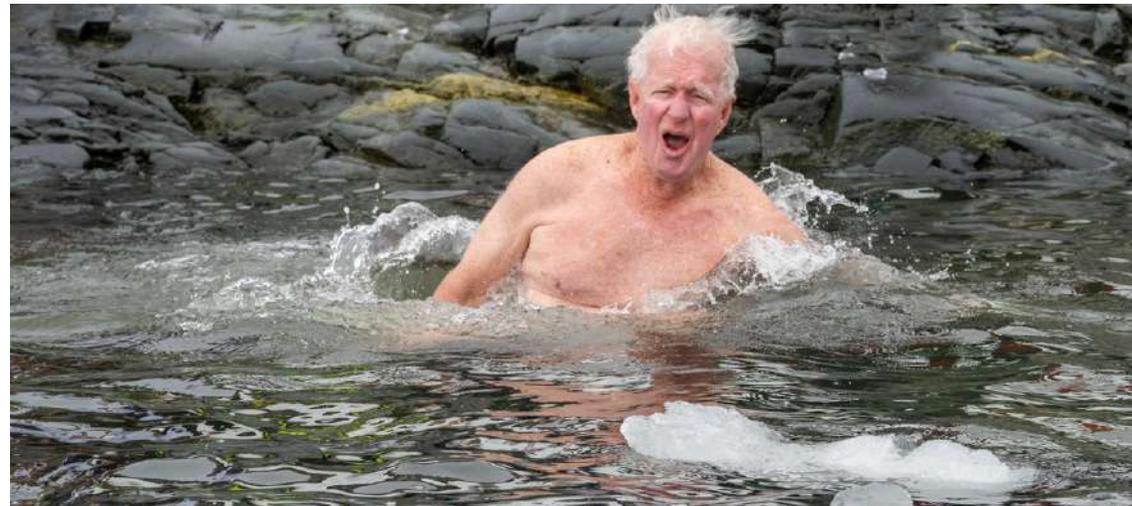
As we sailed away from the Antarctic Peninsula, I could not help but think of the stanza from Coleridge's 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner':

"The ice was here, the ice was there, the ice was all around
It cracked and growled
It roared and howled
Like noises in a swound!"



Polar Plunge

DAY 9 | Tuesday 12 December





At Sea

DAY 10 | Wednesday 13 December 2023

Position at 0620 on 13 Dec

Latitude: 59°51'0"S

Longitude: 062°10'7"W

Course: 357°

Speed: 14 kts

Wind Speed: 20 kts SW

Barometer: 980 hPa

Air Temp: 2°C

We were granted the opportunity for a sleep-in this morning. Experiencing Antarctica for the first time is a humbling and transformative journey. It is not only about the breathtaking scenery and wildlife, but also about the camaraderie and shared sense of awe amongst fellow Expeditioners.

It also reminds us of the vastness and beauty of our planet, and the importance of our role in preserving it.

Leaving this magical place is like leaving a piece of your heart behind. But the memories and lessons learned will stay with us forever.



At Sea in the Drake Passage

DAY 11 | Thursday 14 December

Position at 0620 on 14 Dec

Latitude: 56°25'8"S

Longitude: 65°33'2"W

Course: 310°

Speed: 10 kts

Wind Speed: 23 kts NW

Barometer: 988 hPa

Air Temp: 2°C

Back on the Drake, where the winds were strong
We got used to the shake and rode along
From Antarctica's embrace, we now depart
Snow-filled memories etched in our heart

Kayaks and snowshoes tucked in for a rest
Adventure-filled days were truly the best
Muck Boots and life vests in lockers they wait
With memories and stories they helped us create

Orca cards exchanged when going to sea
Given to Reza with a heartfelt decree.
In those cards, stories of waves and spray
A piece of Antarctica to carry away

Steph, a beacon of wisdom, took to the floor
In her lecture, her knowledge did pour
Ocean currents and circumpolar stream
A captivating tale, a traveller's dream

With Joselyn, we ventured into science's domain
Citizen researchers, under Antarctic reign
Cloud and seabird surveys, each data point shared
Under Jamie's watch, seabird photos compared

Anne, our manager, with knowledge profound
Led an info briefing as we gathered around
Disembarkation wisdom, procedures laid clear
For our day in Ushuaia with memories dear

In Deanna's lecture, a crash course quite grand
Marine mammals from Antarctica's land

Blue whales to Minkes, their tales she unfurled
A symphony of life in our polar world

At the Captain's farewell, a cocktail in hand
We toast to the journey, a seafaring band
In the glow of twilight, memories we sip
It seems like yesterday, we started this trip

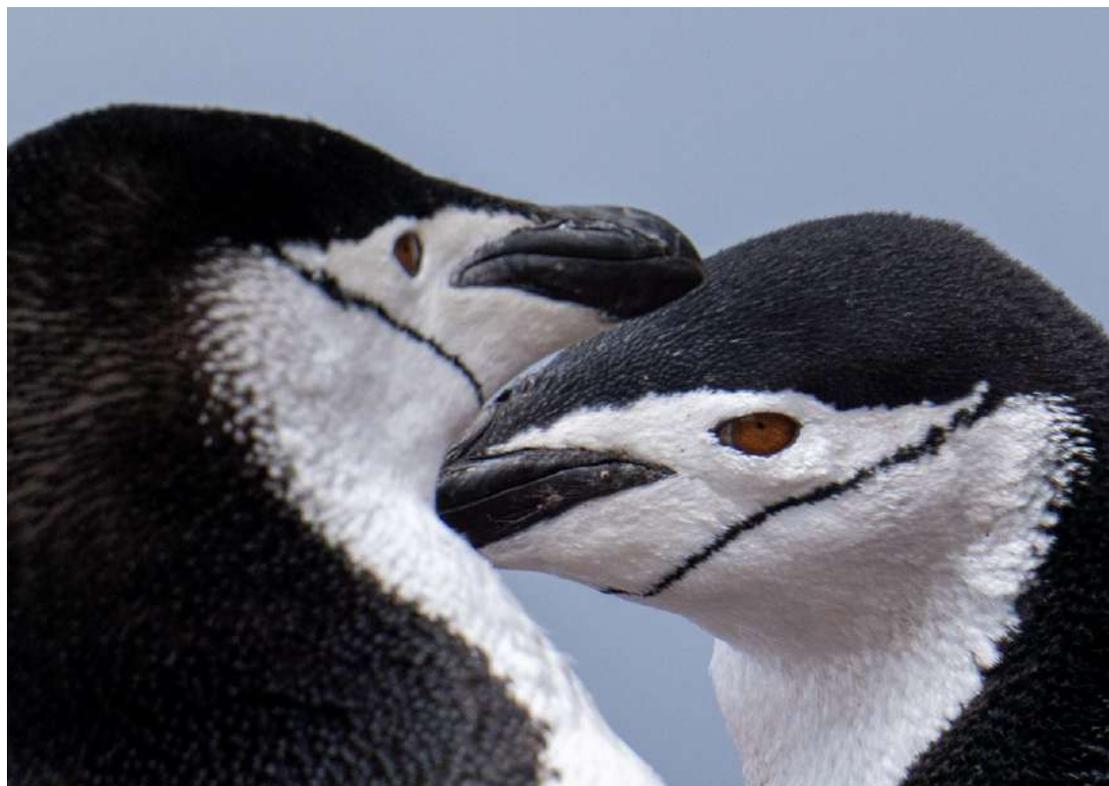
Thanks to the crew and their maritime skill
Guiding us safely, filled with good will
And hotel staff, heart of our floating home
Under their care, we ate, slept, and roamed

Engineers below, their work unseen
Powering our journey, where the ice is keen
Officers on the bridge, steering with might
Navigating the Drake all day and all night

The E-Team guides so sharing and wise
Navigators of wonder, under the skies
With their info, Antarctica comes alive
A journey enriched by stories revived

Reflections shimmer in the polar light
Memories of Antarctica, vivid and bright
In quiet moments, we close our eyes
Recalling the wonders beneath polar skies

The journey concludes but echoes endure
Of frigid landscapes and adventures pure
As the Drake rocks us gently in its cradle of foam
We carry Antarctica's spirit back to our home.



Ushuaia

DAY 12 | Friday 15 December 2023

The entire Aurora Team thank you for joining us on this adventure, and we hope to see you on the high seas again!



Kayaking Log

Kayak Masters: Liz MacNeil, Lisa Deziel, Michael Gray

Number of Paddlers: 20

Total Paddle Outings: 3

Total Distance Paddled: 18.9 km

Paddlers:	David Klenerman	Cherie Hill	Jerrold Golden
Melinda Butcher	Catherine McCosker	Anthony Poeton	David Hurley
Christopher Butcher	Eric Gruter	Rowenna Poeton	Alan (Ken) Gibson
Louise Hay	Jennifer Kabler	Corinne Laverty	
Timothy Sullivan	Tracy Newman	Roger Laverty	
Margaret Naylor	Dashiel Cockrill	Linden Rhoads	

10 December 2023 AM. Cuverville Island - 6 km

Sixteen participated in our first paddle of the trip, while some went to shore for a landing via Zodiac. Conditions were fairly calm, light winds and moderately heavy snow falling in big, lazy flakes. We paddled through a garden of icebergs, bergy bits and brash, to large gentoo colonies that were well away from established landing sites. Everyone was awestruck by the numbers of penguins porpoising around them and curious birds coming down the rocks to investigate the colourful boats. We also noted a lone Adélie and several skua atop bergy bits, waiting for unsuspecting gentoos to leave an unattended egg.

11 December 2023 AM. Petermann Island - 7.5 km

We got the whole group out on the water this morning, six for a check-out paddle and the rest to enjoy the smooth water after our breakfast transit of the Lemaire. We opted for a clockwise circumnavigation on the outskirts of the gentoo colony to see a blue-eyed shag rookery. We then paddled through a bergy bit graveyard of grounded ice sculpted by the elements into fantastic shapes, some glowing neon blue. We were joined by antarctic tern overhead, skuas, kelp gulls, a few seals lounging up high on the snow and one swimming with us. Our loop was capped off by a sighting of three humpback whales lazily swimming towards the Lemaire.

11 December 2023 PM. Flanders Bay - 5.5 km

We offered up an after-dinner slightly unhinged kayak trip out amongst the icebergs in the middle of moderately heavy falling snow. A half-dozen intrepid souls joined us to Zodiac out to a drop zone in the brash, to paddle around amongst big sea ice with land fading in and out of view in the distance. This ice tour had a soundtrack of whale blows and glacial thunder as ice falls crashed out in the distance, beyond view.

12 December 2023 AM. Two Hummock Island

We attempted a trip this morning with everyone suited up to go at 8.30am for a tow-out launch in blustery conditions. Liz took the Zodiac out to scout conditions and determined there was limited sheltered paddling opportunities that were in a safe zone away from ice faces. Since this was our last chance for a landing and seeing a chinstrap colony, we thought the greater reward was to cancel and join the landing and land-based polar plunge. All seemed happy with this decision.





Snowshoeing Log

Guides: Dan Phillips, Sylvia Forest, Marco Delesalle, Peter Wainwright

Snowshoers:	Kerri Lange	Lindsay Roitmain
Carla Garbis	Louise McKerrell	Gene Walker
Nancy House	Betsy (Elizabeth) McManus	Rachael Walker
Janet Hurley	Kevin Potts	
Craig Lange	Kiersten Potts	

Day 5 – 9/12/23

PM - Spring Point, Brialmont Cove (Hughes Bay – Mainland landing)

The first outing on snow after a Zodiac-cruisy morning, we got on the mainland of the Antarctic continent! The very first documented people to set foot on the Antarctic continent, American Sealer John Davis and some of his crew in 1821, did so in Hughes Bay and very possibly in this same spot. What a feeling to set foot on the same place the original explorers of the continent set foot themselves all those years ago. We geared up on a small spit of snow just below the old, rundown huts from expeditions past, and forged our way up the snow past the onlooking penguins and skua. The ropes and snowshoes were new to us, and we fiddled and finicked our way through gearing up, to walk up high, past the regular landing track, to a majestic skua nesting terrace above the chaos and violence of the tidewater glacier below. The bold then forged on ahead up the snow slopes of the glaciated tongue of snow that presented itself. High above the Zodiacs and icy waters of the ocean, we perused the landscape and took in all the majesty of the surrounding chaos of ice gradually flowing down to the ocean like a frozen river in slow motion.

Day 7 – 10/12/23

AM – George’s Point, Ronge Island

While the landing party and trekking group spent time at Cuverville, the snowshoe group opted to explore a different area: George’s Point. The temperature had dropped to -4C overnight, giving the snow a good freeze. This made for much easier snowshoeing than experienced the day before, with a firm surface and easier walking. We were greeted by a very active, noisy gentoo colony, and we thoroughly enjoyed observing their behaviour for some time, before venturing onto the glacier above. Travelling on the glacier allowed the group to learn more about glaciation, and to practise the skills of roped travel. At the base of a steep slope, Dan guided the adventurous group to a high col, which offered stunning views of the next bay and vistas all around. Meanwhile, Syl guided the wildlife enthusiasts back to the gentoo colony for more time with the local residents. All in all, it was a fantastic outing.

Day 7 – 10/12/23

PM – Jougla Point, Wiencke Island

Having meandered down the renowned Neumeyer Channel, we rounded the corner to the sheltered harbour of Port Lockroy – the site of British Base A and Bransfield House. It’s a stunning place among the backdrop of the leviathan Mont Francais, and the impressively jagged ridges of Jabet Peak and the Fief Mountains and the Wall Range. We landed on a small spit of rock behind the UKAHT base and between two Weddell seals and some whalebones - remnants of the devastating whaling industry that once existed here. We donned snowshoes and began weaving our way through the gentoo rookeries, past a bay still frozen over with a dozen sleeping Weddell seals hauled out on the fast ice. We worked our way onto a small high point overlooking nesting kelp gulls and skuas, and then checked out the steep ramp leading up onto the glacier. We admired the cross-section view of crevasses and their snowbridges before winding back down to the rookeries for a bit of free-roaming among the gentoos.

Day 8 – 11/12/23

AM – Petermann Island

Petermann Island was the icing on the cake, after a spectacular transit through the impressive Lemaire Channel. Petermann is a beautiful, tiny island, complete with a small emergency refuge, gentoo and Adélie penguins, and whales in the bay! The snowshoe gang once again were able to go further afield, and explored different quadrants of this tiny piece of land, gaining great vistas and visiting penguins while maintaining distance and respecting their space. We had planned on walking further, as there was an inviting height of land to traverse, but the draw of photographing the wildlife won out, and we spent our valuable time admiring, and occasionally laughing at, the antics of the two species of penguin that call this islet home.

Day 9 – 12/12/23

AM – Palaver Point, Two Hummock Island

Our last day in the Antarctic Peninsula offered another amazing opportunity to explore the shoreline, plateaus, and glaciers of this remarkable ecosystem. The snowshoe group were treated to a wonderful meander around the rocky outcrops and snowfields that characterise this islet, with the chance to spend time with the chinstrap penguin which dominates this place. The alpine trekkers explored a bit further, and were able to climb to the top of the peninsula we landed on. We gazed up at the true summit of Two Hummock Island, and down upon twin coves, separated by a narrow neck of glaciated land that connected our headland from the main island. The glaciation was spectacular, the icebergs in the bay were picturesque, and the travel on snow was good. Everyone was able to spend time with the chinstraps, before adjourning again to the ship. It was with joy we visited this place, and with just a nod of sadness we finally had to say our goodbyes. But there is more to explore in this amazing world, and many photos to remind us of the amazing experiences we had in Antarctica.



Alpine Trekking Log

Alpine Guides: Dan Phillips, Sylvia Forest, Marco Delesalle, Peter Wainwright

Trekkers:

Wendy (Yi Tzu) Chen
Robert Chiu

Day 5 – 9/12/23

PM - Spring Point, Brialmont Cove (Hughes Bay – Mainland landing)

With Marco the guide, Rob and Wendy loaded quickly into the first Zodiac, and landed right behind the E-Team shore party. Saddling up with gear quickly before the rest of the passengers, Marco quickly set a track weaving up through the rock terraces, past the Argentinian refuge and numerous skua nests before reaching the edge of the glacial ramp between icefalls. Here, the team roped up and began the steeper climb up the ice. The snow was soft and punchy from the mild temps so snowshoes were essential; however, the lack of bridging strength made snow bridges over the crevasses very suspect and when Marco probed the snow depth as dropping from 140cm to 80cm over the ice he decided it was time to turn around and avoid continuing further up the glacier. It was, however, still a significant high point, with great views into Hughes Bay and over to Sprightly Island. The Zodiacs looked like tiny ants, dwarfed by the icebergs and glacier fronts. It was also a great shakedown outing, getting used to the snowshoes and roping up. The descent back down to the landing was quicker and we loaded up for a bumpy ride back to the ship.

Day 7 – 10/12/23

AM – Cuverville Island, Ronge Island

On Cuverville the Alpine Trekkers made an early start on their ascent to the top of Cuverville Island. We quickly passed the main rookeries of gentoos and began switchbacking up the steeper slope above the bench. Before long, the angle eased back and the snow became firmer and easier to travel. We threw the rope on for the final ascent to the summit ice cap, and we were treated to spectacular views of the grounded icebergs in the shallows between Cuverville and Ronge Island. The clouds lifted a bit, for a magical glimpse down the Errera Channel, before it was time to turn around and go back.

Day 7 – 10/12/23

PM – Jougla Point, Wiencke Island

After the morning's exertion at Cuverville, Rob and Wendy were keen to spend at least part of the afternoon among the penguins and seals, rather than hustling to reach another summit or peak. So, we switched our attention from Jabet Peak and decided instead to join the snowshoers for a mellower outing at Jougla Point. (see snowshoe log)

Day 8 – 11/12/23

AM – Petermann Island

With the prospect of seeing another species of penguin – the Adélie – it was decided to focus initially on visiting this declining Adélie rookery before taking on the small ice cap covering the small peak on Petermann Island. However, as is often the case, the wildlife was so distracting and we quickly realised we didn't actually have enough time remaining to travel up and over the ice cap to a different pick-up on the north end of Petermann. Instead, the alpine trekkers continued on a loop with some of the keen snowshoers.

Day 9 – 12/12/23

AM – Palaver Point, Two Hummock Island

While Two Hummock Island offers some technical climbing up the twin summits of Buache and Modev Peak, which give the island its name, today the cloud base was obscuring these two peaks. Not wanting to wander around on broken glaciers in a whiteout, we decided the best objective was to get to the high point on the peninsula of Palaver Point. We switchbacked up the slopes, past the chinstraps that nest surprisingly high on these slopes. Soon we passed the last rocky scree slopes and approached the ice cap on top, roping up to mitigate for a potential crevasse fall. We had magical views of the tidewater glaciers all around the island and the ice-cloaked main mass of the island, as we climbed above the glacial isthmus connecting the peninsula to the rest of the island. At the top we celebrated with a few photos and special moments before retracing our steps and heading down to spend a bit more time photographing the chinstraps.









Expeditioners:

Kim Attwood	Jianmei Feng	Daniel Korzeniewski	Maggie Naylor	Joyce Thomson
Warrick Attwood	Benhong Feng	Craig Lange	Tracy Newman	Steven Trautman III
Kesha Barrington	Georgina Foster	Kerri Lange	Julie Norton	Jan Unsworth
Pamela Benfield	Charles Franklin	Corinne Laverty	Craig Parr	Ken Unsworth
Ellen Blanchfield	Carla Garbis	Roger Laverty	Sue Pavish	Gene Walker
Chris Butcher	Matthew Garey	Catharina Lea	David Pavish	Rachael Walker
Mel Butcher	Ken Gibson	Randy Lea	Barbara Peterson	Jiading Wang
Amber Calkins	Jerrol Golden	Ai Choo Lee	Efsio Podda	Huijun Wang
Laurie Charsinsky	Timothy Griffiths	Jiong Li	Anthony Poeton	Susan Wellik
Kenneth Charsinsky	Eric Grueter	Junwu Liu	Rowenna Poeton	John Wellik
Yining Chen	Sonja Gustafson	Geling Liu	Kiersten Potts	Catherine Wright
Wei Chen	Ha Hao	Anne Mahar	Kevin Potts	Jili Wu
Yi-Tzu Chen	Jennie Hastie	Thomas Mc Grath III	Wenhui Qi	Aiping Xia
Oon Chin	Lou Hay	Elizabeth Mc Manus	Linden Rhoads	Xiuxia Xu
Robert Chiu	Cherie Hill	William Mc Philamy III	Lindsay Roitman	Lin Ye
Dave Cleland	Nancy House	Catherine McCosker	Joanne Salmond	Cuixiang Zhang
Dashiel Cockrill	Pei Huang	Aileen McCosker	Husheng Shen	Li Zhao
Jeremy Crowley	Janet Hurley	Louise McKerrell	Shaoling Shen	
Paula Crowley	David Hurley	Sue Merryfield	Karen Squires	
Lihua Deng	Jonathan Hutson	Tripp Meyer	Tim Sullivan	
Lawrence Doolan	Jenn Kabler	Jean Meyers	Yi Sun	
Barbara Dunn	Dave Klenerman	Katherine Moller	Mary Thomson	



Expedition Team:

Expedition Leader: Alex Cowan

Assistant Expedition Leader: Isabelle Howells

Onboard Expedition Manager: Anne Oeyasaeter

Onboard Expedition Manager Trainee: Kerry Lorimer

Onboard Expedition Assistant: Reza Rusooly

Naturalist/ Ornithologist: Linda Steutel

Marine Biologist: Deanna Leonard

Naturalist: Joselyn Fenstermacher

Naturalist: Mark Brophy

Geologist: Melina Pelzmajer

Historian: Tim Griffiths

Mandarin Speaking Guide: Zhongyuan Chen

Expedition Medic: Steph Kempton

Expedition Medic Trainee: Eddie Quinn

Photography Guide: Jamie Lafferty

Zodiac Manager: Sergei Andronov

Kayak Guide: Michael Gray

Kayak Guide: Lisa Deziel

Kayak Guide: Liz MacNeil

Alpine Guide: Marc Delesalle

Alpine Guide: Dan Phillips

Alpine Guide: Peter Wainwright

Alpine Guide: Sylvia Forest

Senior Officers & Heads of Department:

Master: Oleg Kapko

Chief Officer: Andrey Zakalashnyuk

Safety Officer: Sergeii Voina

Bosun: Francis Marvin Linga

Deck Cadet: Goncalo Alexandre Saraiva Aniceto Costa

Ship Doctor: Anzor Chomakhidze

Chief Engineer: Dimitar Vasilev

Hotel Director: Pascal Joubin

Chief Purser: Pia Blanca Bangug

Executive Chef: Edgar Mangalinao

Head Waiter: Jemuel Alcantara

IT Officer: Ihor Yesmienieiev

Receptionist: Ana Gabriela Fernandez

Receptionist: Jonathan Valdez

Head Stateroom: Florente Lusomg

Able Seaman: Dan Well Danico

Able Seaman: Jufri Mujahid

Able Seaman: Nikola Georgiev

Able Seaman: Mark Christian Torero

Able Seaman: Joel Noble

Able Seaman: Roberto Ixtan Mejia

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