

The Weddell Sea & the South Sandwich Islands

From **3/12/2023**
to **3/29/2023**

Ship: **LE COMMANDANT CHARCOT**

From **Ushuaia**
to **Montevideo**



Overnight in Santiago + flight Santiago/Ushuaia + transfers

From Patagonia to the Antarctic peninsula, via South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, this **itinerary** will take you into the heart of **the Scotia Arc**.

This volcanic archipelago at the junction of the Andes cordillera and the Antarctic continent will be revealed to you in all its riches and splendour. **All the wildlife of the Far South** can be found there: king and gentoo penguins, elephant seals, fur seals mingle on the beautiful dark sand beaches... At sea, orcas, humpback whales and other cetaceans will escort you along your navigation through frozen waters.

This cruise will also be an opportunity to discover **four very different ecosystems**, from the wooded heights of the Tierra del Fuego and the table top icebergs of the **Weddell Sea** to the glacier-covered mountains of the **South Sandwich Islands** and the snow-capped summits of **South Georgia**.

We are privileged guests in these extreme lands where we are at the mercy of weather and ice conditions. Our navigation will be determined by the type of ice we come across; as the fast ice must be preserved, we will take this factor into account from day to day in our itineraries. The sailing schedule and any landings, activities and wildlife encounters are subject to weather and ice conditions. These experiences are unique and vary with each departure. The Captain and the Expedition Leader will make every effort to ensure that your experience is as rich as possible, while respecting safety instructions and regulations imposed by the IAATO.



The information in this document is valid as of 7/4/2022

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YOUR STOPOVERS :

USHUAIA

Embarkation 3/12/2023 from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Departure 3/12/2023 at 6:00 PM

Capital of Argentina's **Tierra del Fuego** province, Ushuaia is considered the gateway to the White Continent and the South Pole. Nicknamed “**El fin del mundo**” by the Argentinian people, this city at the end of the world nestles in the shelter of mountains surrounded by fertile plains that the wildlife seem to have chosen as the ultimate sanctuary. With its exceptional site, where the Andes plunge straight into the sea, Ushuaia is one of the most fascinating places on earth, its very name evocative of journeys to the unlikely and the inaccessible..

CROSSING THE DRAKE PASSAGE

Arrival 3/13/2023

Departure 3/14/2023

Use your days spent in the **Drake Passage** to familiarise yourself with your ship and deepen your knowledge of the Antarctic. The Expedition Leader will first present the IAATO rules of conduct that must be observed during landings in the region and will explain everything you need to know about the zodiac outings. Lectures about the history and wildlife of the Antarctic will be an opportunity for you to learn more about this magical region, where every cruise is a **unique experience**. From the ship's bridge, you will experience exceptional sailing moments before joining the naturalist-guides on your ship's exterior decks to look out for albatrosses, cape petrels, and other seabirds flying over the Drake Passage.

SOUTH SHETLAND ISLANDS

Arrival 3/15/2023

Departure 3/15/2023

On the edge of the Antarctic Peninsula, 120 km (70 miles) from the White Continent, the **South Shetland Islands** offer surreal and mysterious scenery. On these volcanic islands of dark rock, the landscapes alternate between long, jagged and snow-covered coast and large, gently sloping bays. These lunar and wild lands are home to important scientific research stations and a large number of animal species: chinstrap penguins, crabeater seals or Weddell seals, Antarctic terns, giant petrels and elephant seals have taken up residence here.

NORTH ANTARCTIC PENINSULA

Arrival 3/16/2023

Departure 3/16/2023

Throughout your time in the north of the Antarctic Peninsula, you will find yourself in the heart of a spectacular decor in subtle shades of blue and white, surrounded by exceptional wildlife. You will sail through the Antarctic Sound, named after Swedish explorer Otto Nordenskjöld's ship, which was trapped by the ice during an important scientific expedition in 1902. The gateway to the Weddell Sea, this sound is filled with gigantic tabular icebergs and plates of sea ice drifting northward from the coastal areas of this vast sea. It is home to Adelie penguins and a great many leopard seals.

THE WEDDELL SEA EXPLORATION

Arrival 3/17/2023

Departure 3/18/2023

Impassable, extreme and captivating: this is the best way to describe the **Weddell Sea**, much of which is covered by a layer of thick, densely packed ice. It is a challenge and a privilege to sail upon this sea. Your exploration of this vast polar expanse, a real labyrinth frequented by majestic tabular icebergs, will plunge you into the heart of an extraordinary and enchanting silence. These ice giants come from the calving of the legendary Larsen Ice Shelf which looms in the southern part of this mythical sea. It was in this zone that the ship *Endurance*, commanded by Ernest Shackleton, was crushed and swallowed by the ice. "What the ice gets, the ice keeps" he said. Not exactly, though, since the famous wreck was miraculously found in 2022... While polar expeditions are no longer the same as they were a century ago, the adventure continues. Humpback whales, orcas, colonies of Adelie penguins, and giant petrels are all to be found here, yet the lord of the kingdom is no other than the Weddell seal. On these lands, only the throbbing of its cries breaks the surrounding tranquillity. A record-breaker (it can remain underwater for more than an hour), you will recognise it by its dark grey pelage and spotted belly.

SOUTHERN THULE, SOUTH SANDWICH ISLANDS

Arrival 3/19/2023

Departure 3/19/2023

The southernmost island in the Sandwich Islands is a volcano that rises to an altitude of 700 metres. For a long time, this former military base was the source of conflicts between the British and the Argentinians, who finally took possession of the island in 1982 after the Falklands War. While you are there, you may get the chance to observe impressive elephant seals and Adelie or chinstrap penguins.

COOK ISLAND, SOUTH SANDWICH ISLANDS

Arrival 3/19/2023

Departure 3/19/2023

Cook Island, an uninhabited volcano buried under a thick white coat, seems to float on the surface of the ocean. There is a striking contrast between the imposing and peaceful mass of glistening ice and the brown sheer cliffs that loom over its shores. Its highest peak, Mount Harmer, rises to an altitude of 1,115 metres. This island, the largest in the Southern Thule island group, was discovered by James Cook in 1775, the first explorer to have crossed the Antarctic

Circle in search of a new continent. In 1819, the Russian explorer Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen christened it as a tribute to this illustrious explorer.

SAUNDERS ISLAND, SOUTH SANDWICH ISLANDS

Arrival 3/20/2023

Departure 3/20/2023

The brown volcanic silhouette of Saunders Island, overlooked by Mount Michael, which rises to an altitude of more than 900 metres, will then come into view on the horizon. The island's frozen and rugged shores are considered very difficult to access. You may be lucky enough to spot chinstrap and Adelie penguins in this lunar landscape and observe Cape Petrels nesting in the cliffs. It is one of only eight volcanoes in the world whose summit crater, with a diameter of 700 metres, contains a persistent lava lake. Its most recent eruption was in 2005.

ZAVODOVSKI ISLAND, SOUTH SANDWICH ISLANDS

Arrival 3/21/2023

Departure 3/21/2023

Lying in the north of this archipelago, this majestic volcanic island is often ice-free year round, unlike the islands further south. Different species can be found on either side of this bio-geographic border: Subantarctic species in the north and Antarctic species in the south. Enveloped in the warmth of the volcanic fumeroles, one of the world's largest colonies of chinstrap penguins (over two million individuals) thrives in this ideal environment. This volcanic island was discovered in 1819 by the Russian explorer Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen, who named it in honour of his ship's captain.

AT SEA ABOARD LE COMMANDANT CHARCOT

Arrival 3/22/2023

Departure 3/22/2023

Spend exceptional moments sailing aboard *Le Commandant Charcot*, the world's first luxury polar exploration vessel and the first PC2-class polar cruise ship capable of sailing into the very heart of the ice, on seas and oceans which the frozen conditions render inaccessible to ordinary ships. *Le Commandant Charcot* is fitted with oceanographic and scientific equipment selected by a committee of experts. Take advantage of the on-board lectures and opportunities for discussion with these specialists to learn more about the poles. Participate in furthering scientific research with PONANT and let us discover together what these fascinating destinations have yet to reveal to us.

SOUTH GEORGIA

Arrival 3/23/2023

Departure 3/24/2023

Aboard your ship, discover **South Georgia**, a region formed by an underwater mountain chain that extends from the Andes to the Antarctic Peninsula. All the wildlife of the Far South can be found there: **king and Gentoo penguins, elephant seals, fur seals...** You might get the chance to discover the majestic glaciers of Gold Harbour and the vast plains of Fortuna Bay. If you are fortunate enough to land at Salisbury Plain, you can expect a wonderful spectacle:

more than 300,000 king penguins, which you will recognise by the bright orange mark on their head and neck, have taken up residence there.

AT SEA ABOARD LE COMMANDANT CHARCOT

Arrival 3/25/2023

Departure 3/28/2023

Spend exceptional moments sailing aboard *Le Commandant Charcot*, the world's first luxury polar exploration vessel and the first PC2-class polar cruise ship capable of sailing into the very heart of the ice, on seas and oceans which the frozen conditions render inaccessible to ordinary ships. *Le Commandant Charcot* is fitted with oceanographic and scientific equipment selected by a committee of experts. Take advantage of the on-board lectures and opportunities for discussion with these specialists to learn more about the poles. Participate in furthering scientific research with PONANT and let us discover together what these fascinating destinations have yet to reveal to us.

MONTEVIDEO

Arrival 3/29/2023 early morning

Disembarkation 3/29/2023 at 7:00 AM

Perched on the far southern tip of Uruguay, **Montevideo** is a white city, and one of the loveliest capital cities of South America. Come and admire the beautiful historical remains dating from Spanish rule; you'll find the most interesting within the **Cuidad Vieja**, formerly fortified, its old town dates from the 18th century. The best preserved are the cathedral and the former governmental palace of the **Cabildo**, both listed historical monuments. In the crook of a vast blue bay, the city is also blessed with **beautiful beaches**.