

# ANTARCTICA: IN SHACKLETON'S FOOTSTEPS – 2018

## OVERVIEW

Tour Date: 27 February 2018 – 27 March 2018

Tour Duration: 29 days

Tour Cost (\$AUD): \$29,995

Single Supplement (\$AUD): \$13,980

Price based on twin-share Classic Suite

Upgrade to Superior Suite \$1,800pp twin-share

*The centrepiece of this remarkable tour is a 16-night Antarctica exploration that re-traces the path followed by the great Polar explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton, more than a hundred years ago.*

We begin in Chile's sophisticated capital, Santiago, dramatically surrounded by the snow-capped Andes and the Chilean Coastal Range. We then head to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Valparaiso, a delightfully Bohemian and colourful city, before continuing on to the spectacular lakes and volcanoes of the Chilean/Argentine Lake District. Crossing the lakes we arrive in Bariloche, set against a backdrop of magnificent Lake Nahuel Huapi and soaring mountain peaks. We then fly south to Ushuaia, the world's most southerly city, located on the Tierra del Fuego archipelago and surrounded by the Martial Mountains and the Beagle Channel. Here we prepare to embark on our 16-night cruise aboard Sea Spirit following in the wake of the legendary polar explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton. Our remarkably comfortable ship is equipped with spacious suites and carries a maximum of 112 passengers, and on-board Antarctic experts will brief us throughout the cruise. Over the following days, we cross the Drake Passage and thread our way through the waterways and ice-filled bays of the Antarctic Peninsula, sailing past majestic mountains and glaciers and spectacular icebergs as we look out for whales, seabirds, seals and penguins. We enjoy multiple shore landings before setting sail for Elephant Island from where Shackleton began his historic journey to South Georgia. Known as the 'Galapagos of the south', South Georgia is endowed with awe-inspiring scenery and a huge abundance of wildlife, and here we also visit the legendary explorer's grave. After a brief stop at the Falklands Islands, we continue to Puerto Madryn, and bid a fond farewell to Sea Spirit and her crew. Finally we spend three nights in the vibrant Argentine capital, Buenos Aires – a fitting finale to our momentous tour!

Tour Fitness Level: Active

# ANTARCTICA: IN SHACKLETON'S FOOTSTEPS – FEBRUARY 2018

## TOUR ITINERARY

### 27/02/2018 Australia – Santiago (D)

Fly from your preferred capital city to Sydney, connecting with the flight to South America. Crossing the International Date Line, we arrive in Santiago on the same day.

Depart Sydney Lan LA 800, 11.10

Arrive Santiago 13.50

On arrival we transfer to our hotel where we enjoy a welcome dinner.

Atton El Bosque Hotel

Santiago

### 28/02/2018 Santiago (BLD)

Centrally located in the Santiago Basin, Chile's capital city is surrounded by the snow-capped Andes and the Chilean Coastal Range. Home to five million people, it is a dynamic and vital city with many contrasting neighbourhoods. Today we embark on a city tour visiting the historical centre of Santiago, including the Presidential Palace – La Moneda, the cathedral and the main square. In the evening we enjoy dinner in the nearby market place.

### 01/03/2018 Santiago – Valparaiso – Santiago (BLD)

This morning we leave Santiago to explore the coastal towns of central Chile, travelling through the wine-producing valleys of Curacavi and Casablanca until we reach the picturesque port of Valparaiso. Set amongst a maze of 43 hills, this Bohemian and colourful port city is known as the 'Jewel of the Pacific'. A UNESCO World Heritage site, this amazing city is endowed with a spectacular faded grandeur, a warren of narrow, winding streets and staircases, and some of the best street art in Latin America. After lunch we continue on to Vina del Mar – known as the 'Garden City' for its pretty parks and flower-lined streets.

### 02/03/2018 Santiago – Puerto Montt – Puerto Varas (BLD)

Early this morning we transfer to the airport for our flight to Puerto Montt.

Depart Santiago Lan LA 275, 08.30

Arrive Puerto Montt 10.10

On arrival we transfer to nearby Puerto Varas and check in to our hotel. After lunch we enjoy an excursion to the small town of Frutillar on the edge of Lake Llanquihue, from where we have spectacular views of the Osorno and Puntiagudo volcanoes. This charming lakeside town is reminiscent of Bavaria, with its well-preserved wooden buildings and colourful flower beds, and we explore the town on foot before returning to Puerto Varas.

Cabanas del Lago Hotel

Puerto Varas

### 03/03/2018 Puerto Varas – Bariloche (BLD)

Today is an exciting one as we cross the spectacular lakes of the Chilean/Patagonian Lake District. We drive through attractive alpine villages that have been heavily influenced by the German settlement that began in 1852, as we skirt Lake Llanquihue. Here incredible views of Osorno and Calbuco Volcanoes dominate the scenery. Boarding a boat we cross Los Santos Lake to Peulla and ecological village and nature lover's paradise. After lunch we reach the Chile-Argentina border and cross the Andes Mountain Range to Puerto Frias. Our final lakes navigation takes us across the magnificent Nahuel Huapi glacial lake to Puerto Panuelo, where we board our bus to Bariloche.

Edelweiss Hotel  
Bariloche

#### 04/03/2018 Bariloche (BLD)

We return to Nahuel Huapi Lake this morning, and board a boat for a two-hour cruise through the most sublime scenery to Victoria Island and its renowned myrtle forest. We enjoy a walking tour through the forest and may see small deer, known as Pudu Pudu, that live in the area, and were the inspiration for the Walt Disney character 'Bambi'.

#### 05/03/2018 Bariloche – Ushuaia (BD)

After breakfast we transfer to the airport for our flight to Ushuaia.

Depart Bariloche Aerolineas Argentinas AR 1690, 10.50

Arrive Ushuaia 14.40

Ushuaia is the capital of Tierra del Fuego and the most southerly city in the world. It is dramatically located at the foot of the Martial Mountain Range and overlooks the Beagle Channel. On arrival in the city, we transfer to our hotel and check in for our overnight stay. In the evening we attend a briefing on the details of our embarkation to our Antarctic cruise ship, Sea Spirit, the following day.

Hotel Arakur

Ushuaia

#### 06/03/2018 Ushuaia – On Board Sea Spirit (BD)

This morning is free to explore Ushuaia and pick up any essential supplies you may need for our Antarctic cruise. Mid-afternoon we board Sea Spirit and settle in to the place that will be our home for the next 16 nights. In the early evening we sail down the majestic Beagle Channel past magellanic penguin, rock cormorant and sea lion colonies, as we head towards Antarctica. Just after midnight we enter the legendary Drake Passage.

#### 07/03/2018 – 08/03/2018 Crossing the Drake Passage (BLD)

We cross the famous stretch of water which sits between the Antarctic continent and South America and which takes its name from the 16<sup>th</sup> century English explorer Sir Francis Drake. Our on board lecture program commences today, preparing us for what lies ahead. Our Antarctic experts give a fascinating insight into the frozen continent, with presentations on the wildlife, history, and geology of Antarctica. Weather permitting, we may head out on deck to look for whales, dolphins and trailing sea birds such as albatrosses, prions and petrels. Depending on sea conditions we may reach the South Shetland Islands by the second night.

#### 09/03/2018 – 12/03/2018 Exploring the Antarctic Peninsula

Over the next four days we explore the islands and waterways of the Antarctic Peninsula and cruise among ice-filled bays, looking out for wildlife as well as making shore landings. Here we expect to find a host of animals, and may encounter Weddell, crabeater, leopard and elephant seals; and Gentoo, Adelie and chinstrap penguins. There is plenty of opportunity to gaze upon majestic mountains, incredible glaciers and gigantic icebergs as we cruise through this pristine and scenic wonderland.

#### 13/03/2018 Elephant Island (BLD)

Leaving the Antarctic Peninsula we head north towards Elephant Island, where weather permitting, we make a landing. This ice-covered mountainous island was the desolate refuge for 24 of Sir Ernest Shackleton's men, after the loss of their ship Endurance, in 1916. In one of the greatest survival stories of all time, Shackleton sailed 1,287km with five men in an open lifeboat to South Georgia, where he summoned the aid of the local whalers. Four and a half months

later, after several attempts at reaching the stranded men had failed due to heavy ice, the tug 'Yelcho' reached Elephant Island and successfully rescued the men.

#### 14/03/2018 – 15/03/2018 At Sea (BLD)

Setting sail again we head for the open seas and retrace Shackleton's historic path to South Georgia. Over the next two days we have the opportunity to spot seabirds, whales and other wildlife, as we soak up the magnificence of the ice-swept seascape. We also have the opportunity to listen to expedition lectures from our on-board Antarctic experts.

#### 16/03/2018 – 18/03/2018 South Georgia (BLD)

Over the next few days we explore the wonderful island of South Georgia and gain an understanding of why the island is known as the 'Galapagos of the South'. Boasting enormous quantities of sea birds, hundreds of thousands of king penguins, thousands of fur seals, and a wealth of history, South Georgia is spectacularly picturesque and a highlight of our Antarctic cruise. We visit the old whaling settlement of Grytviken and pay a visit to the grave of the legend himself – Sir Ernest Shackleton.

#### 19/03/2018 At Sea (BLD)

Leaving South Georgia, Sea Spirit charts a course north-west for the Falkland Islands. As we sail the open sea, we have the chance to spend time out on deck scanning the horizon for seabirds and other wildlife, or perhaps listening in on a lecture on the dramatic history and rich wildlife of the Falkland Islands.

#### 20/03/2018 Falkland Islands (BLD)

Arriving in the Falklands, we explore the capital, Stanley, which is located on the island of East Falkland. We take a historical walking tour of the town and learn more about Stanley's rich and colourful history. Time permitting, we also visit nearby bird and penguin colonies. In the afternoon we re-board Sea Spirit and set a course for Puerto Madryn, Argentina.

#### 21/03/2018 At Sea (BLD)

As we sail towards Puerto Madryn, we have time to reflect on the spectacular scenery and prolific wildlife encountered during the voyage, and the endeavours of explorers such as the legendary Shackleton, who pioneered polar expeditions more than a hundred years ago.

#### 22/03/2018 Puerto Madryn – Buenos Aires (BLD)

This morning we explore the wildlife oasis of Puerto Madryn on the Patagonian coast before returning to the ship for lunch. We disembark and transfer to Trelew airport for our flight to Buenos Aires.

Depart Trelew Aerolineas Argentinas AR 1897, 15.45

Arrive Buenos Aires, 17.30

On arrival we transfer to our hotel.

Hotel Lafayette

Buenos Aires

#### 23/03/2018 Buenos Aires (BL)

A fun-filled relaxing day today as we head out of the city on a 'Fiesta Gaucho' tour. We drive into the fertile grasslands – the pampas – which surround Buenos Aires, to an estancia or horse ranch. After cocktails and empanadas our hosts provide a typical Argentinian BBQ and a vibrant gaucho folk show.

#### 24/03/2018 Buenos Aires (BD)

Buenos Aires, the fabulous capital of Argentina, is the most European city in South America with many beautiful parks and plazas. 'Portenos', as the locals call themselves, are fun-loving people who enjoy their city and music. On our city tour we take in Government House (Casa Rosada, or Pink House), the House of Congress, the Metropolitan Cathedral, Eva Peron's tomb in the Recoleta Cemetery, and the famous Italian La Boca district. This evening we enjoy a spectacular tango show.

**25/03/2018 Buenos Aires – Santiago (BL)**

Today is a leisurely day to relax and enjoy the city on our own or do some last minute souvenir shopping. This evening we transfer to the airport for our flight to Santiago and Sydney.

**Depart Buenos Aires Lan LA 480, 20.20**

**Arrive Santiago 22.45**

**26/03/2018 Depart Santiago**

**Depart Santiago Lan LA 801, 00.05**

Whilst in-flight we cross the International Date Line.

**27/03/2018 Arrive Sydney**

**Arrive Sydney 08.00**

On arrival in Sydney we transfer to the domestic terminal for our connecting flight home.