

Snow Hill to the Peninsula Shackleton's Emperors

Onboard Ultramarine



Expedition Overview



Stand Among Emperor Penguins at Snow Hill

The crown jewel of our 18-day **Snow Hill to the Peninsula: Shackleton's Emperors** is the rare opportunity to visit the legendary colony of 4,000 pairs of breeding Emperor penguins and their chicks at Snow Hill—which thrive in temperatures as low as -50°C . This is also the only itinerary in the polar industry that spends five days exploring the rarely visited eastern coast of the Peninsula, vast stretches of which resemble the planet Mars. Travelling on *Ultramarine*, you will explore this remote wilderness by ship, helicopter and Zodiac.

The technologically-advanced *Ultramarine* brought guests to Snow Hill on two separate voyages in 2023 and repeated that feat in 2025. With a maximum of 150 guests, expect an intimate onboard experience.

- Embrace the expeditionary spirit on a quest to reach the 8,000-fold Emperor penguin colony at Snow Hill
- Explore with the expedition team that has an unrivalled track record in bringing guests to Snow Hill Island
- Enjoy helicopter sightseeing and Zodiac cruising for unique perspectives of the Antarctic Peninsula
- Spend up to five days exploring the rarely-visited eastern coast of the Antarctic Peninsula
- Travel aboard our helicopter-equipped *Ultramarine*
- Enjoy the intimacy of traveling with a reduced capacity of 150 guests

Day by Day Itinerary



Day 1

Arrive in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Upon arriving in this splendid city, known for its vibrant Argentinian culture, European architecture and cosmopolitan vibe, you will independently transfer to the designated group hotel, which is included in your Charter Flight & Hotel package.

Day 2

Fly to Ushuaia and Embark

After an early breakfast at the hotel, the group will transfer to the airport and board our private charter flight to Ushuaia, Argentina. Upon arrival, you will be transferred from the airport to a central downtown location to explore this quaint port town on your own before making your way to the designated meeting spot. After a late afternoon embarkation, you will sail along the historic Beagle Channel, which transects the Tierra del Fuego archipelago in the extreme south of South America. Excitement builds in anticipation of your next stop: Antarctica.

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Days 3 & 4

Crossing the Drake Passage

The storied Drake Passage, the 800-kilometer waterway between the southern tip of South America and Antarctica, is an adventure unto itself. Its position at the confluence of the Pacific, the Atlantic and the Southern oceans can mean either a turbulent or calm passing. While under the attentive care of our expert staff and expedition team, you'll have plenty of time to gaze out at the expansive ocean waters, photograph seabirds as they swoop down around the ship, and get to know your Expedition Team and fellow travelers.

Day 5

Navigating into the Weddell Sea

Today, we begin our passage through Antarctic Sound. This stretch of water separates the northern tip of the peninsula from the Weddell Sea. It's notorious for being filled with massive ice chunks which originate from the Filchner-Ronne Ice Shelf—so have your cameras and binoculars ready. The onboard team will teach you everything about ice, as the Weddell Sea boasts the world's most impressive floes and tabular icebergs. The captivating flat-topped icebergs on this eastern side of the Peninsula are known to be exponentially bigger and more visually impressive than those observed off the western coast.

Daily presentations by or polar experts will enrich your expedition experience. You'll hear what it was like a century ago for the brave polar heroes who embraced the unknown. Expect a fascinating deep-dive into the world of ice-dwelling Emperor penguins.

Days 6–10

Quest to Land at Snow Hill Island: Emperor Penguin Colony

The journey toward Snow Hill Island will put you in explorer mode as the captain and Expedition Leader keep you updated through weather briefings, as well as meteorological and sea ice condition reports. The thickness of ice will determine how close *Ultramarine* can get to Snow Hill Island, at which point the ship's twin-engine helicopters will take over.

Like summiting a mountain from base camp, parties set out from *Ultramarine* towards the Emperor penguin colony. As experienced by all of our guests who visited Snow Hill Island with us in November 2023, the adventure begins with an extended helicopter transfer that will reveal a landscape of snow-capped peaks and apartment-building-sized tabular icebergs. As seasoned polar explorers can attest, these mammoth, flat-topped icebergs will captivate you with their majesty.

The colony itself is located on the sea ice off the south coast of Snow Hill Island, and we will land as close to the penguins as possible—yet at a safe distance to avoid disturbing the birds. Upon landing, your party will walk across the ice to the fabled Emperor penguin colony. Your auditory senses will be on high alert: the non-stop Antarctic wind, the crunch of the ice beneath your feet, and, of course, the chatter of thousands of Emperor penguins.

On your guided walk to the colony, you may be surprised to find yourself walking next to paths in the snow carved by penguins that waddled by before you. As with all of our off-ship excursions, native wildlife and their habitat always take priority. We do everything possible to minimize any disturbance to their environment. The singular sounds of the flightless birds get louder as we march toward one of the rarest wildlife scenarios on the planet: the colony of 8,000 rarely seen Emperor penguins.

Our plan is to ensure that every guest visits the remote colony during the voyage, the possibility of an additional visit will be dependent on conditions. The Expedition Team and special experts will stay close so they can answer your questions and help you take it all in. You'll observe how the Emperors behave as a tightknit community, how they care for their young—with male and female adults sharing parental duties—and how they body surf across the ice in a way that can only be described as quirky yet efficient.

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Each day our polar experts, who include penguin scientists, glaciologists, biologists and polar historians, will present on various aspects of Emperor penguins and their behaviors, ice formations such as the breathtaking tabular, and the experiences of polar explorers who braved the Weddell Sea over a century ago. Or you may, on one of the days, decide to take the polar plunge, or test your balance on a stand-up paddleboard. Or pamper yourself at *Ultramarine's* Tundra Spa, the sauna with floor-to-ceiling windows, fitness room, or yoga space.

However you spend your time immediately following your visit to the legendary colony, we urge you to take some time to reflect on everything you've witnessed, and appreciate that you are one of the few humans to have experienced the rare wildlife spectacle at Snow Hill.

Days 11–15

The Rarely Visited Eastern Coast of the Peninsula

The next stage of our specialized itinerary focuses on the rarely visited east side of the Antarctic Peninsula—where few operators visit. We will spend time each day in stunning locations that allow us to enjoy off-ship opportunities shaped by the weather. Our ultimate goal is to maximize your experience of Antarctic wildlife, ice and landscapes.

Our time exploring the Antarctic Peninsula will showcase the flexibility and technical prowess of our industry-leading expedition team, pilots and crew. They will look for opportunities to experience Antarctica beyond the coast and over the expansive glacial terrain of the last great wilderness. Much of this will be achieved on helicopter flightseeing excursions, which are included in your trip. These heli-flightseeing experiences differ from the helicopter ride that transported you between the ship and the Emperor penguin colony at Snow Hill Island.

Helicopter flightseeing enables you to soar freely among the icy peaks of Antarctica while looking out over vast expanses of ice, rock, coast and sea.

Within the eastern Antarctic Peninsula, Antarctic Sound, Erebus and Terror Gulf, and the northwestern Weddell Sea are the main theater for this venture. As we sail through Antarctic Sound, pausing to view stunning fields of tabular icebergs, we'll set our sights on visiting Paulet Island, located in the Weddell Sea. This small, circular island is home to a large Adelie penguin colony. The iconic cone rising up 353 meters (1,158 feet) is a reminder that Paulet Island was once home to active volcanoes. In addition to penguins, you may be interested in visiting the historic hut built by members of the Swedish Antarctic Expedition of 1901-04. Shackleton was aware of this hut—and of the provisions stored there. When he and his crew were forced to abandon the *Endurance*, Shackleton's objective became clear: to reach the safety, shelter and supplies at Paulet Island. Alas, as history attests, the ice and current of the Weddell Sea had other plans.

We will visit two towering geological features: Madder Cliffs on Joinville Island, and Brown Bluff on the most northerly tip of the Antarctic continent where we plan to set foot. Brown Bluff is believed to be an exposed volcano that once erupted beneath the glacial ice, causing the lava to spread laterally and create the stunning geological layering that's visible on the imposing 745-metre bluff walls. The base of the bluffs is home to rookeries of both Adelie and gentoo penguins, which number in the thousands.

During our standard excursion days, we aim to offer a variety of off-ship experiences tailored to the location and weather. These include Zodiac cruises, shore landings on islands and the continent, as well as our paddling programs.

Also featured in this portion of the itinerary: the James Ross Island archipelago, adjacent to Erebus and Terror Gulf, which is highly valued geologically. On these islands we'll find fossilized specimens, ventifacts (ancient rocks polished smooth over time by wind and grains of sand), and the remains of the KT Boundary, which marks the transition between

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the Cretaceous Period (dinosaurs and reptiles) and the Tertiary Period (mammals). Our goal is to provide opportunities for guests to see ventifacts up close, and to better appreciate the significance of wind erosion—by sand or ice particles—over long periods. Ventifacts provide valuable information about the climatic history and prevailing wind patterns of the region.

A highlight of the eastern side of the peninsula is Devil Island, marked by its twin towering cones of ash and hardened lava that emerge from a bay on the north shore of Vega Island. At low tide, grounded bergy bits and sea ice reveal the extraordinary visual formations on the underside of the ice—shapes uniquely sculpted by brine channels and ocean waves.

Before returning back across the Drake Passage, we intend to visit the wildlife-rich South Shetland Islands. As with any polar expedition, our team has devised multiple plans for our visit to this region. Our ultimate goal, however, is to set foot on Livingston Island, which showcases the most spectacular mountains of the South Shetland Islands, as well as the chinstrap penguin colonies along the rugged coast. The towering peaks you'll see are the Tangra Mountains (stretching 32 kilometers long by 8.5 kilometers wide), Mount Friesland (rising to a height of 1,700 meters/5,578 feet), Bowles Ridge (822 meters/2,697 feet), and Pliska Ridge (667 meters/2,188 feet).

One other fascinating landing option is Deception Island. In addition to waddling penguins and lounging seals, visitors can also see the rusting remnants of long-abandoned whaling operations on the beach. We hope to offer guests longer walks leading to breathtaking viewpoints on Deception Island. The stark contrast between the snow and dark volcanic sand—with geothermic steam along the shoreline—creates a uniquely atmospheric feel. Additionally, Deception Island is home to one of the most renowned chinstrap penguin colonies in the world. Estimates range from 50,000 to 70,000.

Days 16 and 17

At Sea: Sailing North Across the Drake Passage

The journey back across the Drake Passage provides a final opportunity to enjoy the invigorating Southern Ocean air. Spend time on deck watching for seabirds and scouting for whales, enjoy presentations by your Expedition Team, and celebrate the experiences you've shared off the beaten track in remote Antarctica.

Day 18

Disembark in Ushuaia and Fly to Buenos Aires

You will arrive in Ushuaia in the morning and disembark after breakfast before transferring to your group charter flight to Buenos Aires.

Arrival & Departure Details



* Arrive anytime on Day 1 or earlier. Day 1 includes an optional briefing.
** Consider booking your international flight home after the Final Day as charter flight times may vary.
✈ International flights are not included in the cost of the voyage.

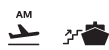


Arrival Day and Embarkation

Day 1 Arriving in Buenos Aires and Hotel Night

Upon arrival in Buenos Aires, you will make your way to the designated group hotel, which is included in your Charter Flight & Hotel Package. A presentation room will be open from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. for luggage weighing and tagging. A Quark Expeditions representative will be available to answer your questions and provide information about the next day's flight and ship embarkation.

- Make your own way from the airport to the designated hotel
- Weigh and tag your luggage in the presentation room



Day 2 Ushuaia and Embarkation

After an early breakfast, your group will transfer to the airport and board our private charter flight to Ushuaia, Argentina. In Ushuaia, your Charter Flight & Hotel Package will allow for some free time to explore this quaint port town. We will transfer the group to the ship for embarkation around 4 p.m.

- After breakfast, transfer with the group to the airport
- Board your charter flight to Ushuaia
- Enjoy free time to explore Ushuaia
- Around 4 p.m., transfer with the group to the ship



Final Day

Disembarkation in Ushuaia

The ship is scheduled to arrive back at the pier in Ushuaia between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. After breakfast you will bid farewell to your Expedition Team before completing your disembarkation. This process takes approximately one hour. The group will then be transferred to the airport for the charter flight to Buenos Aires.

- Ship arrives at the pier in Ushuaia between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m.
- Disembark after breakfast
- If flying home from EZE, we recommend booking flights departing after 9 p.m.
- If flying from Aeroparque/Jorge Newbery Airport (AEP), we recommend booking flights departing after 10 p.m.

Departing from Buenos Aires

Upon arrival in Buenos Aires, you may be able to connect directly with your homeward flight. Our charter flight lands at Buenos Aires international airport (Ministro Pistarini International — EZE). The included flight lands at approximately 5 p.m. We recommend you only select flights departing after 9 p.m. Check your itinerary carefully before booking. Some South America-bound flights originate at Jorge Newbery Airport (IATA code: AEP), which is also known as Aeroparque (IATA airport code: AEP). Due to unpredictable traffic in Buenos Aires, we recommend you only select flights departing Jorge Newbery Airport after 10 p.m.

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Final Day

For the absolute safest travel plans, we recommend that you book an extra hotel night in Buenos Aires between flights. Expedition travel is occasionally unpredictable. We also strongly recommend booking flexible international air tickets. Quark Expeditions is not responsible for any air ticket change costs you may incur.

Airport Transfers

Arrival transfers from your international flights in Buenos Aires are not included.

Luggage Restrictions

- Travel with one checked bag and one carry-on bag

Charter Flight Luggage Limit

This expedition includes charter flights. Your package includes one checked bag and one carry-on bag. Luggage weight restrictions on these flights are typically lower than those on international carriers. There is no option to pay for additional luggage. Specific weight limits will be confirmed in your final travel documents.



Photos captured with a telephoto lens from a responsible distance, following regulatory IAATO guidelines.



Book Your Next Adventure

Contact your travel professional or a Quark Expeditions Polar Travel Advisor.

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