



Expedition Cruising

The Essential Guide to Polar Cruising



A PASSPORT TO TRAVEL

Welcome!

Most people spend their whole life dreaming of an opportunity to go to Antarctica. If you're one of these people, congratulations on taking the first step to learning more about the world of expedition cruising!



This segment of the cruising market has grown by leaps and bounds over the last few years, and is poised to grow even more so in the next few years. Old standards in expedition cruising such as Lindblad Expeditions, Hurtigruten and Quark are refurbishing older ships to entice new-to-cruise travelers while also investing millions of dollars in green energy and sustainable travel methods such as low-sulphur fuel, LNG (Liquified Natural Gas), water purification systems and Dynamic positioning technology. Some cruise lines you may recognize as luxury brands, or from river cruising, are also jumping into the expedition market, bringing luxury to a region of the world you may not often associate with the word "luxury". These companies have incorporated all the bells and whistles to bring every creature comfort of home to the extraordinary reaches of the earth and bring new meaning to "something for everyone". Whether it is your first expedition cruise, or your third, I thank you for downloading this guide and hope you will find it useful on your path to choosing your next adventure!

In the meantime, come on over to Facebook and join my free group where we discuss everything expedition. Share your experiences or learn from those who have traveled before you: Expedition cruise VIP lounge is where you can find us!

Emma

10 things to know before you go

1. *Visas*

A visa is not generally required for U.S. or Canadian citizens. Argentina has suspended their visa reciprocity fee. For Arctic voyages that stop in Russia, a visa may be required before you depart. Please check with your travel agent or cruise line. In addition, your passport must be valid for at least 6 months past your return date.

2. *Currency*

Most cruise lines use U.S. Dollars, except Ponant who's currency of choice is the Euro (They do accept dollars as well). You'll need local currency for the countries for which you will either embark or disembark. Keep in mind Norway and Iceland are not part of the EU, and each have their own currency. Norway uses the Norwegian Krone. Iceland uses the Icelandic Krone. Argentina (for Antarctica departures from Ushuaia) uses the Argentine Peso and Chile (for Punta Arenas departures) uses the Chilean Peso.

3. *Motion Sickness*

I'm not going to sugar coat it. Polar voyages can be ROUGH. If you've done any research on Antarctica and the Drake Passage, you have probably heard of the Drake Shake. It takes about a 36 hours to cross the Drake Passage, so BE PREPARED! Load up on Dramamine before you leave and don't expect to get out of your cabin much if the crossing is rough. You may be pleasantly surprised and experience the Drake Lake effect, but you certainly can't count on it! Quark and Silversea offer flights from Ushuaia to the 7th continent for those who want to avoid the rough seas however, if it's rough at sea, it's bound to be rough in the air too. Even these flights are not immune and can be delayed due to inclement weather.

4. *Electricity*

Depending on the cruise line, voltage can be either 110V or 220V. Best to check with your travel agent or cruise line before departure.

5. Mobility

Expedition cruises do require a certain level of mobility and, more often than not, a doctor's consent form completed prior to travel. The biggest hurdle, literally, is getting in and out of the zodiacs from both the ship and from land. Most landings are dry landings, but sometimes a wet landing is necessary. (See #9 on Docking for more information about landings.)

If you're planning on doing any hiking or snowshoeing in Antarctica, a certain level of fitness is also required to trudge through the snow. Most companies provide access to trekking poles but, at the end of the day, it's still up to you to keep up with the group.

6. Activities

Expedition cruises are by their very nature more active than regular cruise line shore excursions. Again, a certain amount of fitness is required. All of the zodiac excursions are included in the price of your trip (Any traditional "shore excursions" might be extra. Best to consult with your travel agent or cruise line to find out what is NOT included in terms of daily excursions.)

All of your daily lectures from the on board specialists are included. Most cruise lines have a certified photographer on board to assist with your photography, which are also usually available to you at no additional cost.

Most days will consist of at least one zodiac excursion, depending on the size of your ship. The smaller ships may even have 2, depending on the itinerary and location.

7. Exploration Gear

Packing for an expedition cruise is an adventure in itself. You won't be needing shorts and t-shirts for this trip. Layering is the name of the game when packing for an Arctic or Antarctic experience. Thermal/long underwear, wool socks, moisture wicking clothing, waterproof pants, gaiters or balaclava's are all essential items on your packing list. Most cruise companies will have a suggested packing list for you. I have created a polar packing list for my clients which you can request by simply sending me an email.

Certain cruise lines will allow you to pre-reserve items such as trekking poles, waterproof pants or rubber boots to be delivered to the ship before you travel.

Check with your travel agent or cruise line to find out what they offer before you spend unnecessary money.

8. Ship size

Ship size is probably one of the most important features to pay attention to when researching your expedition trip - especially to Antarctica. The IAATO (International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators) has very strict guidelines for cruises traveling to the 7th continent. Your best experience will be on a ship carrying no more than 200 passengers. This will allow you to make more landings than other ships. Ships carrying more than 500 passengers are not permitted to make landings at all and is what the travel community calls a "drive by" sailing. You will see Antarctica from the deck of the ship, but you won't be getting out to do any sightseeing. There is a maximum of 100 passengers permitted at any one time on Antarctica. The smaller the group, the more you will see.

9. Docking

The very nature of an expedition is the absence of docking. The only time you will be docked is the day of embarkation/disembarkation. The majority of excursions will be from special zodiac boats and an onboard marine platform.

Any landings onto shore will either "wet" or "dry" landings. What's the difference, you ask?

Dry landing - The zodiac will pull up right onto shore and you will disembark the zodiac directly onto shore.

Wet landing - The Zodiac will come to a stop in shallow water and you will be required to jump out and walk the short distance to shore. Most cruise lines will provide rubber boots (complimentary or for a small rental fee) for these excursions.

10. Flexible itinerary/schedule

What does this mean? Simply put, the cruise itinerary is designed to be flexible. Often, the most memorable events are those that are unplanned. Naturally, your day of departure and arrival are set. However, once in the open waters, considerable time is left open for exploring. Perhaps you have arrived somewhere but wildlife activity is limited. Your captain can choose to move on in search of more active areas. Contrarily, if you happen to encounter killer or humpback whales, for example, you may choose to stay at that location longer and enjoy watching them play with their young or hunting and feeding, rather than having to rush off because you are due somewhere else.

So, what IS included with my expedition cruise?

ALL MEALS

All meals are included. Much like larger ocean cruises, and despite their smaller size, most lines offer multiple dining venues, available to you at no additional charge - unlike the specialty restaurants aboard ocean cruises. Some lines offer in-room dining, but not all.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Luxury cruise lines, such as Crystal, Scenic, Ponant and Silversea offer unlimited alcoholic beverages around the clock.

Others, such as Lindblad Expeditions, Quark and Hurtigruten will either charge extra for a beverage package or charge a la carte.

WIFI

Wifi can be sporadic, especially on true polar expeditions. The luxury lines generally include wifi at no additional cost. Other companies may charge extra for wifi, others will have very limited access.

A complimentary expedition parka is included for all true expedition voyages.



EXCURSIONS

One of the strongest allures of expedition cruising is the fact all excursions are included in the cost of the cruise.

Depending on your ship and destination, it may be up to 2 per day.

Rule of thumb for excursions: If you are NOT docked and going out on the zodiacs, it is included in your fare. If you are docked and being taken out by a third party tour, it will be an extra charge.

GRATUITIES

Who includes gratuities: Scenic, Crystal, Ponant.

Who doesn't include gratuities: Quark and Lindblad. Hurtigruten's policy is tipping neither required nor expected.

Crystal Yacht Endeavor



5 Reasons to Cruise with Crystal

1. **Ultra-Luxury:** 6-star all-inclusive luxury active discovery experience.
2. **All-suite accommodations:** 100 elegant suites featuring private veranda and butler service.
3. **Multiple dining options:** 6 dining venues to choose from including Umi Uma from notable chef Nobu Matsuhisa
4. **Expedition "Toys":** Submarine for underwater exploration and 2 helicopters for aerial sightseeing.
5. **Design:** Guest to space ratio one of the highest among expedition ships and with more crew than guests, personalized attention is guaranteed.

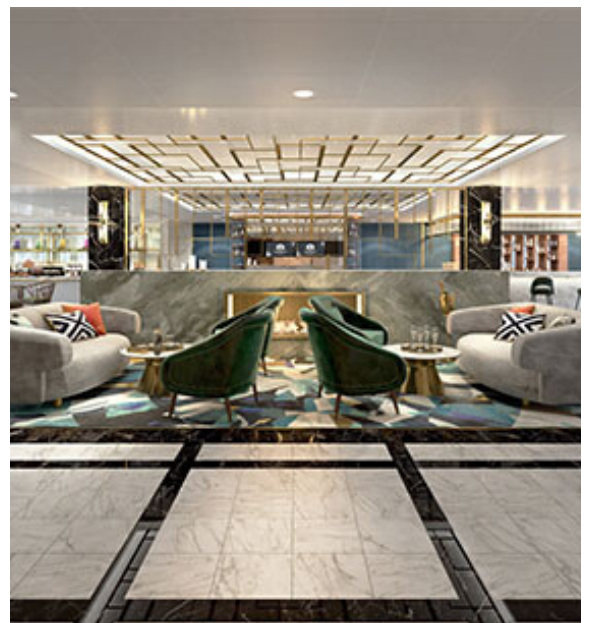
Inclusions: All suites feature private veranda and separate lounge area, butler service, mini-bar restocked daily, all dining, beverages and alcohol, wifi, gratuities, all zodiac excursions and transfers. Complimentary expedition parka and water bottle, use of trekking poles and rubber boots available while on board.

Ship Features

- 2 helicopters
- 1 six-person submarine for underwater adventures
- 14 2-person kayaks
- ROV (remote operated vehicle) with underwater camera which feeds images back to ship
- Dynamic Positioning System

Regions

- Northeast Passage
- Russian Far East & The Aleutian Islands
- Antarctica (including voyages via New Zealand)



Hurtigruten



5 Reasons to Cruise with Hurtigruten

1. **Young Explorer's Program:** A year-round program on selected Hurtigruten ships for curious and active youth aged 6-12 years of age.
2. **Hurtigruten Foundation:** Supports protecting the polar bear population, fighting plastic and marine pollution, and raising awareness in the areas they explore.
3. **Research:** Collaborate with scientific communities by providing important information about the Arctic and Antarctica
4. **Giving Back:** By trading and sourcing services locally, they contribute to the welfare of communities along their routes.
5. **Clean Energy:** High focus on hybrid electric-powered ships and sources for alternative fuels.

Inclusions: Expedition Parka on most itineraries, aluminum water bottle, zodiac excursions, Wifi, Gratuities not expected. Rubber boots, trekking poles and dry suits are available for use free of charge.

Extras: Drink Packages

Ships

- MS Fritjof Nansen
- MS Roald Amundsen
- MS Fram
- MS Spitsbergen

Regions

- Antarctica, South Georgia & The Falkland Islands
- Arctic, including Svalbard & Norwegian Fjords
- Greenland
- Iceland
- Northwest Passage



Lindblad Expeditions



5 Reasons to Cruise with Lindblad

1. **National Geographic**: Joint collaboration in exploration, research, technology, and conservation provides extraordinary travel experiences.
2. **Tools and technology**: Zodiacs, kayaks, paddle boards, and snorkel gear. Plus, bow cams, hydrophones, video microscopes to reveal wonders.
3. **Renowned expedition team**: Over 50 years of experience has earned them a reputation for the best expedition teams in the business.
4. **National Geographic Photographers**: Inspiration and expert tips from top pros on almost every departure
5. **Sustainability**: A carbon neutral company - offsetting ALL of its carbon emissions.

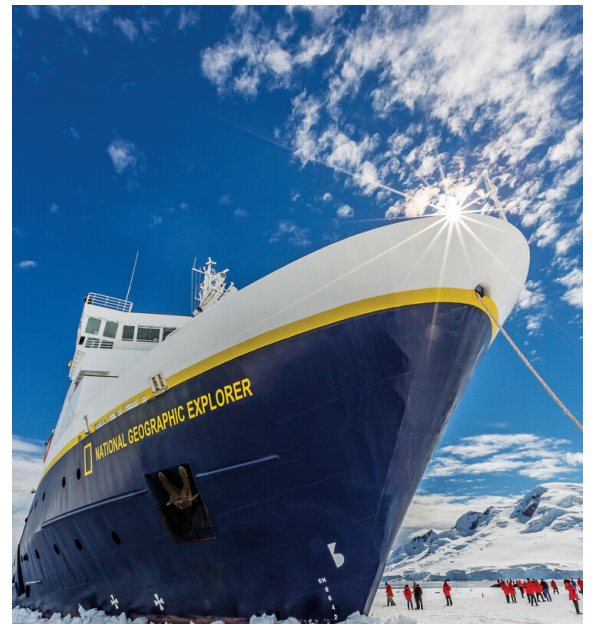
Inclusions: All excursions - both zodiac and kayak explorations, snorkeling equipment including wetsuits, masks and fins, expedition park, the expertise of a National Geographic photographer on board most sailings. Some sailings will also include bar tab & gratuities.

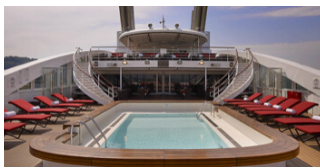
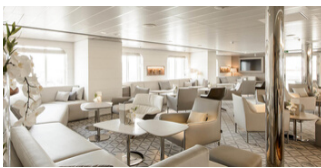
Ships

- National Geographic Orion
- National Geographic Explorer
- National Geographic Endurance
- National Geographic Resolution

Regions

- Antarctica, South Georgia & The Falkland Islands
- Arctic, including Svalbard & Norwegian Fjords
- Russian Far East, Bering Sea & Katmai Peninsula
- Greenland
- Northeast Passage
- Iceland





5 Reasons to Cruise with Ponant

1. **5-Star French Luxury**: understated french elegance and chic design. 95% of rooms have private balcony.
2. **Sustainable Tourism**: Off-set emissions by 150%; Using Low sulfur emission marine gas oil; Elimination of single use plastic.
3. **Certified Clean ships**: Eco-friendly features such as 40% carbon reduction; state of the art water filtration system and a GPS Dynamic Positioning System
4. **Dining** French-inspired cuisine with local specialties and a partnership with the Ducasse Conseil for chef training and menu concept creation.
5. Ponant Foundation: Supports innovative initiatives for ocean conservation.

Inclusions: All zodiac excursions, expedition parka, gratuities, open bar, 24-hour room service; all onboard events and entertainment.

Extra: Wifi

Ships

- Le Commandant Charcot
- Le Boreal, Le Lyrial, Le Soleal, L'Austral (sister ships)
- Le Bellot

Regions

- Iceland & The Faroe Islands
- Spitsbergen & Svalbard
- Northeast & Northwest Passages
- Russian Arctic & Greenland
- Antarctica, South Georgia & The Falkland Islands
- Sub-antarctic islands from NZ



Quark Expeditions



5 Reasons to Cruise with Quark

1. **North Pole:** The only expedition cruise line that will take you to the geographic North Pole. And on a Russian nuclear icebreaker!
2. **Hot air balloon ride:** Mark your arrival at the North Pole and get a bird's eye view from the air on a (tethered) hot air balloon.
3. **Once in a lifetime adventure options:** Amazing add-on adventures such as stand-up paddle-boarding, sea kayaking, mountaineering, cross-country skiing and alpine heli-trekking.
4. **Go camping on the 7th continent:** Wake up to the sound of penguins waddling and honking within feet of your tent.
5. **Fly the Drake:** A chance to fly over the Drake Passage and meet your ship in Antarctica.

Inclusions: Expedition Parka, all zodiac excursions

Extras: camping, kayaking, snowshoeing, heli-trekking, helicopter rides, hot air balloon ride, alcoholic drinks, gratuities

Ships

- Ocean Explorer
- Ocean Diamond
- World Explorer
- 50 years of Victory
- Kapitan Khlebnikov
- Ultramarine

Regions

- North Pole
- Canadian High Arctic
- Russian High Arctic
- Greenland
- Svalbard
- Antarctica, South Georgia and Falkland Islands



Scenic Eclipse



5 Reasons to Cruise with Scenic

1. **Ultra-Luxury:** 6-star all-inclusive luxury active discovery experience.
2. **Multiple dining options:** 10 dining options from in-suite dining to epicurean delights including sushi, fine french dining and teppanyaki.
3. **Chef's Table:** An exclusive invitation to a private dining experience.
4. **Exciting discovery tools:** The Scenic Eclipse features a 6-seat submarine for underwater discoveries and 2 6-passenger helicopters for aerial exploration.
5. **Spa experience:** Unwind after a full day of exploration in the 6,000 square foot Senses spa with indoor/outdoor pool, therapeutic jacuzzis and a yoga & pilates studio.

Inclusions: All suites feature private verandah and separate lounge area, butler service, mini-bar restocked daily, all dining, beverages and alcohol, wifi, gratuities, expedition parka, all shore excursions and transfers.

Ship features

- PC6 Polar class vessel
- 2 six-person helicopters
- 1 six-person submarine for underwater adventures
- Dynamic Positioning System

Regions

- Antarctica, South Georgia & The Falkland Islands
- Norwegian Coast & Svalbard
- Iceland
- Greenland
- Europe
- South America



Silversea



5 Reasons to Cruise with Silversea

1. **All-inclusive:** Wifi; Butler service; Gratuities; All beverages, including pre-stocked in-room refrigerator of your favorite drinks; room-service; excursions; lectures.
2. **Butler:** Every suite comes with a Butler.
3. **Expedition Gear rental service:** Arctic itineraries: Rent trekking poles, waterproof pants and rubber boots from the comfort of your home and have delivered to the ship before you sail.
- 4.: **Personalized Service:** Staff to guest ratio of almost 1:1
5. **Antarctica Bridge:** Fly over the Drake Passage to King George Island and meet your ship in Antarctica.

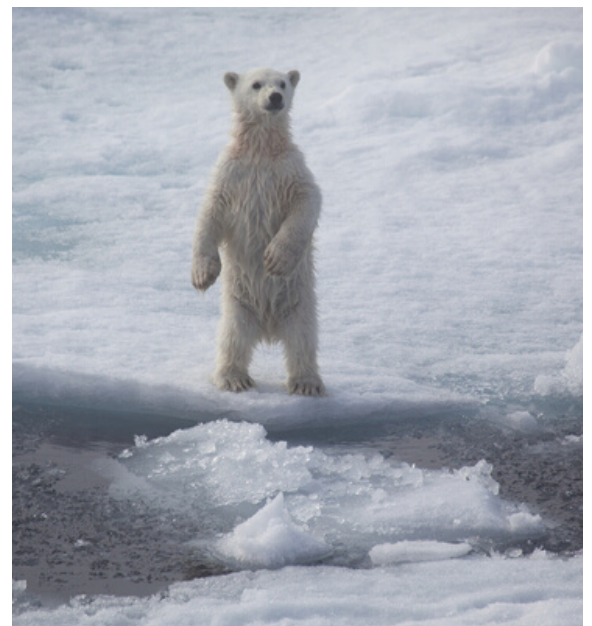
Inclusions: Pre-cruise hotel, in-country flights, polar parka, guided land, sea and zodiac tours, post cruise hotel and all transfers, wifi, alcoholic beverages, in-room stocked fridge of your favorite beverages.

Ships

- Silver Explorer
- Silver Cloud
- Silver Wind

Regions

- Antarctica, South Georgia & The Falkland Islands
- Subantarctic Islands from Dunedin, NZ
- Arctic, including Svalbard & Norwegian Fjords
- Greenland & Iceland
- Northeast Passage
- Northwest Passage





Which region should you choose?

While at first glance a Polar Expedition to either the North Pole or the South Pole might feel like one and the same, they are in fact, two completely different experiences. For some, the allure of seeing a polar bear in its' natural habitat is most enticing. For others, crossing the seventh continent off their bucket list is the top prize. Whichever one you choose, you will be guided along the way by some of the top experts in the field of oceanography, ornithology and marine biology.



Antarctica

The majority of cruises sail to the Antarctic Peninsula to see majestic icebergs, penguin rookeries and the hatching of baby chicks, albatross and sea leopards.

Some cruise lines offer the opportunity to fly over the Drake Passage in lieu of the 36 hour crossing -but keep in mind, rough seas can also mean turbulent air. Mother nature is always in control no matter how you decide to get there.



Falkands & South Georgia

If history and wildlife are your reasons for visiting Anatarctica, these destinations are a must for you. They can be done on their own or in combination with Antarctica. South Georgia offers the resting place of Ernest Shackleton and remnants of a whaling station from years ago. The Falklands shock your eyes and ears (and noses!) with the sights and sounds of thousands of penguins and seals.



Svalbard & Spitsbergen

Svalbard is a Norwegian archipelago in between Norway and the North Pole. Sptisbergen is its largest and most inhabited Island with as many polar bears as there are people. In addition to polar bears, you can see reindeer, arctic fox, a variety of seals and maybe even a glimpse of a walrus, or even the elusive Narwhal.



Greenland

Greenland has increased in popularity over the past few years. More often incorporated with Iceland and Northeast or Northwest Passage cruises. Greenland is a natural wonder in itself with a rugged terrain of majestic mountains and towering cliffs, but also offers plenty of opportunities to see more polar bears, walruses, and hopefully a bowhead whale and even an occasional puffin.



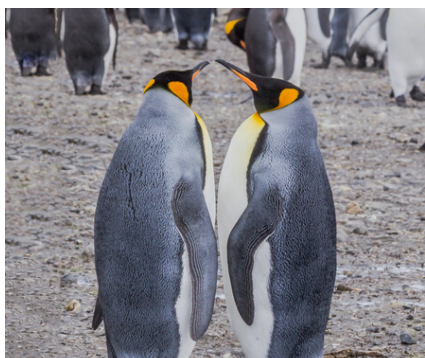
Northeast & Northwest Passages

Connecting the Atlantic and the Pacific, the passage is a tricky expedition at the best of times, and many intrepid sailors have failed in the past due to the lack of sonar, gps navigation and proper ships with icebreaking capabilities. Today, thanks to modern tools and technology, the journey is made easier. Depending on the harshness of the previous winter, the passage may still not be a guarantee. Those who are up for the challenge will not certainly not be disappointed.



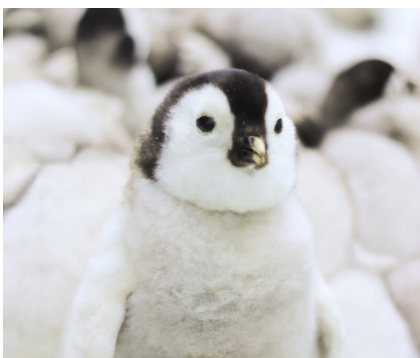
Antarctica highlights

The Antarctica season is already short, but within the season, there are also several micro-seasons. If you have specific goals about what you want to see and do when you're in Antarctica, the time of year of your trip is critical. Here are few of the highlights from each season.



October/November

- Mating season for penguins and seals
- Nest building in the penguin colonies
- Pristine snow and ice



December/January

- Hatching and rearing of penguin chicks
- Fur seal pups in S. Georgia
- Warmest & longest days



February/March

- Best time for whale watching
- Beautiful sunsets
- Rearing of seals and penguins



Arctic highlights

If you think trip to the Arctic is just miles and miles of water and ice, you are wrong. There are no less than 29 species of birds in this remote region of the world. While many species of whales migrate to warmer waters in the summer, beluga and bowhead whales make their home in the arctic year round. Here are just a few of the animals you can hope to see on your Arctic expedition.



Land and Sea mammals

- Polar Bears
- Arctic Fox
- Snowshoe hares
- Reindeer & Caribou
- Muskoxen



Marine animals

- Walrus
- Fur seals & sea otters
- Narwhals
- Beluga and Sperm whales
- Gray & humpback whales



Bird life

- Puffins
- Arctic terns
- Cormorants
- Eiders, Geese & razorbills
- Kittiwakes



Thank You...

Whether you're thinking about your first expedition, or are considering trying another cruise line or itinerary, I do hope you found the information practical and enlightening. While not entirely comprehensive, it does cover the most elementary facets of an expedition cruise.

It is not uncommon to plan such a trip 12-24 months in advance. With such a short season and small ships, itineraries book up quickly. Seasoned cruisers understand this and book early to get the best offers and the best suites.

Ready to start planning?

Call today and let's get you booked!



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