



## ANTARCTICA - BEYOND THE POLAR CIRCLE - WILKINS ICE SHELF AND THE SEARCH FOR THE AURORA AUSTRALIS

This voyage explores a number of historically significant Antarctic areas, such as the very rarely visited Bellingshausen Sea, Marguerite Bay, and Alexander Island. We focus on places discovered by Adrien De Gerlache on his Belgian Antarctic Expedition (1897 - 1899) and Jean-Baptiste Charcot on his French Antarctic Expedition (1904 - 07). Beyond the Polar Circle: Wilkins Ice Shelf This voyage is a true expedition, exploring the rarely visited region of the Bellingshausen Sea, Marguerite Bay, and Alexander Island. We explore many of the places discovered by Adrien de Gerlache on his Belgian Antarctic Expedition (1897 - 1899) aboard the Belgica. This voyage leaves Ushuaia and heads straight beyond Antarctic Circle, where we aim to spend the rest of the trip. The variety of landings and wilderness in this region are rivalled by few other places on Earth. We will see Antarctic ice shelves, land on islands where few people have set foot, and enjoy this awe-inspiring area far from the beaten track of regular Antarctic cruises. We may also see a range of exotic wildlife, including humpback and minke whales, orcas, and a variety of seals: leopard, elephant, crabeater, Weddell, Antarctic fur, and maybe even a Ross seal. Gentoo and Adelle penguins, skuas, terns, and giant petrels are just some of the bird species we may see as well. Spring 2025 marks the best chance to see the rare aurora australis, also known as the southern lights. Unlike the northern lights, the southern lights travel over no cities or villages and are only rarely seen from land. The sun's 11-year cycle of activity peaks around 2025, making for more active auroras that are best seen around the equinoxes. We will maximize our chances of seeing the elusive and enchanting



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southern auroras by traveling below the Antarctic Circle when there is little moonlight in the sky. We will also have the chance to see many Southern Hemisphere stars and celestial objects, including the Southern Cross and Magellanic Clouds. Dr. Tyler Nordgren will lead our night sky viewing activity on deck when the weather and auroras are favorable, speaking about the southern sky and its auroras. Nordgren is a professor of astronomy and physics at the University of Redlands as well as a former member of the Board for the International Dark Sky Association. Dr. Julie Rathbun will continue this trip's theme of polar and astronomical exploration, leading discussions about how Antarctica is used as a site to study Europa, one of Jupiter's moons. A senior scientist with the Planetary Science Institute, she is part of NASA's Europa Clipper spacecraft mission, which launches in October 2024 to investigate the liquid ocean beneath Europa's

icy surface.

## ITINERARY

**Day 1: End of the world, start of a journey**

Your voyage begins where the world drops off. Ushuaia, Argentina, reputed to be the southernmost city on the planet, is located on the far southern tip of South America. Starting in the afternoon, you embark from this small resort town on Tierra del Fuego, nicknamed "The End of the World," and sail the mountain-fringed Beagle Channel for the remainder of the evening.

**Day 2 - 3: Path of the polar explorers**

Over the next two days on the Drake Passage, you enjoy some of the same experiences encountered by the great polar explorers who first charted these regions: cool salt breezes, rolling seas,

maybe even a fin whale spouting up sea spray. After passing the Antarctic Convergence - Antarctica's natural boundary, formed when north-flowing cold waters collide with warmer sub-Antarctic seas - you are in the circum-Antarctic upwelling zone. Not only does the marine life change, the avian life changes too. Wandering albatrosses, grey-headed albatrosses, black-browed albatrosses, light-mantled sooty albatrosses, cape pigeons, southern fulmars, Wilson's storm petrels, blue petrels, and Antarctic petrels are a few of the birds you might see.

**Day 4: Through the Pendleton Strait**

You arrive at the Antarctic Peninsula near the Antarctic Circle in the afternoon. If sea ice allows it, you can then continue through Pendleton Strait and attempt a landing at the rarely visited southern tip of Renaud Island. Here you have the opportunity to see the first Adelie penguins of the trip as well as enjoy spectacular views of the icebergs in this surreal, snow-swept environment. In the afternoon we sail to the Fish Islands and encounter one of the southernmost Adelie penguin and blue-eyed shag colonies in the Antarctic Peninsula. Spending the night in the area of Crystal Sound the scenery will leave you staying up until the small hours, there is a chance to see Orca, Humpback and Minke Whale in this area.

**Day 5: Detaille Island and The Gullet**

Detaille Island - You may make a landing at an abandoned British research station here, taking in the island's lofty position and imposing glaciers scenery. We then sail through The Gullet, one of the most impressive narrow channels in Antarctic, with towering mountains either side, birds following the ship and playful penguins and seals frolicking in the water as we sail through this very special part of the journey. If ice conditions allow we will also carry out a landing or cruise in the afternoon.

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### Day 6: Porquoi Pas and Horseshoe Islands

Discovered and charted by the famous explorer Charcot, Pourquoi Pas offers a pleasant landing on a rocky beach against the backdrop of the mighty Moider Glacier. A gentle walk from the landing site provides an impressive view, while Antarctic fur seals relaxing behind the beach are a nice addition to the wildlife we've encountered on this voyage. After lunch we head toward Horseshoe Island, named for its distinctive shape. An abandoned research station provides an insight into the early days of scientific research, and original artifacts show how different life was in those pioneering days. The hut is set among some of the most beautiful scenery in Antarctica, with views over the mountains and snow of Pourquoi Pas Island as well as Horseshoe Island's mountain range. This is a photographic landing in many senses. Two old wooden boats even remain at the landing site as if waiting for their final launch.

### Day 7 - 10: George IV and Wilkins Ice Shelf

Provided ice and weather conditions allow, you next head toward Antarctica's ice shelves (the George IV and Wilkins). Here we hope to show you the scale of these vast cliffs and expanses of ice that will dwarf us and our ship. A range of Antarctic wildlife like humpback whales, fur seals, Adelie penguins, and maybe even one or more Ross' seals may appear.

### Day 11: Jenny and Leonie Islands

Jenny Island will give another aspect to your Antarctic experience, offering raised beaches, hanging glaciers, and moss carpets. The island is also popular with wildlife: Terns, skuas, elephant seals, leopard seals, and Adelie penguins are all regular visitors. A landing at Leonie Island will take your breath away. There is also the possibility to take a hike to the peak of

the island, giving you a dramatic panorama of Marguerite Bay and Adelaide Island.

### Day 12: Lagoon and Mikkelsen Islands

Lagoon island is the most northern island of the Leonie Islands group, also discovered and charted by Jean-Baptiste Charcot. This low lying island will provide a stark contrast to the previous days with its gently sloped beaches and flat areas to explore. The wildlife here will vary depending on snow cover. If there is little snow the ground is almost desert-like in appearance. The Mikkelsen Islands offer a spectacular Zodiac cruise where we hope to encounter up to five Antarctic seal species. We may also see some beautiful birdlife, such as giant petrels and Adelie penguins.

### Day 13 - 15: Familiar seas, familiar friends

Your return voyage is far from lonely. While crossing the Drake, you're again greeted by the vast array of seabirds remembered from the passage south. But they seem a little more familiar to you now, and you to them.

### Day 16: There and back again

Every adventure, no matter how grand, must eventually come to an end. It's now time to disembark in Ushuaia, but with memories that will accompany you wherever your next adventure lies.

### Please Note:

All itineraries are for guidance only. Programs may vary depending on ice, weather, and wildlife conditions. Landings are subject to site availabilities, permissions, and environmental concerns per IAATO regulations. Official sailing plans and landing slots are scheduled with IAATO prior to the start of the

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season, but the expedition leader determines the final plan. Flexibility is paramount for expedition cruises. The average cruising speed for our vessel is 10.5 knots.



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## YOUR SHIP: HONDIUS

**YOUR SHIP:** **Hondius**

**VESSEL TYPE:**

**LENGTH:**

**PASSENGER CAPACITY:**

**BUILT/REFURBISHED:**

Hondius is the first-registered Polar Class 6 vessel in the world, meeting the latest and highest Lloyd's Register demands for ice-strengthened cruise vessels. Hondius also exceeds the requirements of the Polar Code as adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), allowing you to enjoy the polar regions as much as possible while impacting them as little as possible. Upon completion, Hondius will be the most flexible, advanced, innovative ice-strengthened vessel in the polar regions. It is optimized for exploratory voyages that provide you the utmost first-hand contact with the Arctic and Antarctica. Hotel comfort, expedition class Hondius offers high-quality accommodation for 176 passengers in a range of suites and cabins. The spacious 'Hondius' suite (35 square metres, 377 square feet), six grand suites with balconies (27 square metres, 291 square feet), eight junior suites (19 to 20 square metres, 205 to 215 square feet), eight superior cabins (20 to 21 square metres, 215 to 226 square feet), 11 twin deluxe cabins, (19 to 21 square metres, 205 to 226 square feet), 14 twin window cabins (12 to 14 square metres, 129 to 151 square feet) as well as 28 twin porthole cabins, two triple porthole cabins, and four quadruple porthole cabins that vary in size from 12 to 18

square metres, or 129 to 194 square feet all offer a high level of accommodation. The passenger capacity certificate for Hondius is 196 persons. One deck consists of a large observation lounge and separate lecture room, which are reserved for a wide variety of interactive workshops, exhibitions, and performances particular to Hondius. Though elegantly designed in stylish mid-century modern decor, this vessel holds true to Oceanwide's distinctive cozy and informal atmosphere. Swift & safe ship-to-shore operations It is the philosophy of Hondius' managers to keep sea time as short as possible so that they can focus instead on fast, effective access to shore and near-shore activities. To give you the maximum contact with the nature and wildlife you traveled so far to see, they employ a tough fleet of rigid-hull inflatable Zodiac boats that guarantee swift and safe landing operations for all passengers at the same time. Hondius has two separate gangways and a sheltered indoor Zodiac embarkation platform that can also be used for special outdoor activities, such as kayaking. The fast, flexible, friendly heart of the polar regions The top priority is taking advantage of every wildlife and terrain opportunity as it occurs. To keep the itineraries flexible itineraries and the response time rapid, Hondius is equipped with advanced stabilizers and two main engines capable of powering the vessel up to 15 knots. But Hondius sacrifices no warmth to achieve its keen polar edge: You will have 72 crew and staff members (including expedition and hotel staff) at your service while on board, ensuring that what little time you do spend on the ship you will spend comfortably

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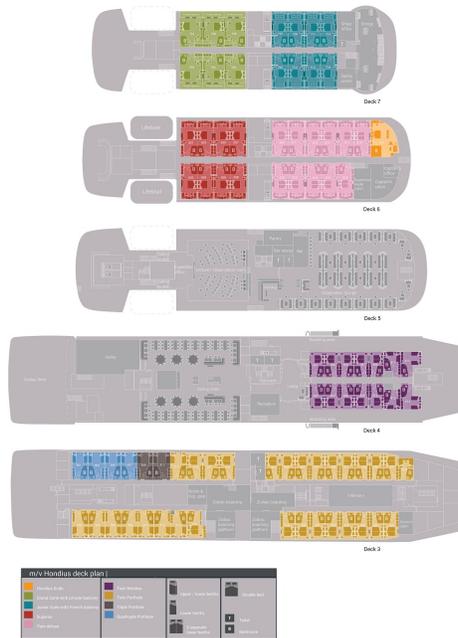
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## INSIDE YOUR SHIP





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