

The Weddell Sea & Larsen Ice Shelf

From **3/12/2021**
to **14/12/2021**

Ship: **LE COMMANDANT CHARCOT**

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



Overnight in Santiago + flight Santiago/Ushuaia +
transfers + flight Ushuaia/Santiago

Insurmountable, extreme and captivating: this is the best way to describe the **Weddell Sea**, mostly frozen by a thick and compressed **ice floe**. It is a challenge and a privilege to sail on it, with its promise of **exceptional landscapes** and **original encounters**.

As you advance across this immense polar expanse, you will enter an **infinite ice desert**, a world of silence where there is nothing but calm and serenity.

To the northwest of the **Weddell Sea**, stretching along the eastern coast of the **Antarctic Peninsula**, stands an imposing ice shelf known as the **Larsen Ice Shelf**. An extension of the **ice sheet** onto the sea, this white giant is equally disturbing and fascinating, if only due to its colossal dimensions and the impressive **table top icebergs** - amongst the largest ever seen - that it generates.

This voyage will be an opportunity to come as close as possible to the **Weddell Sea**, a real refuge for **wildlife**.

We are privileged guests in these remote lands where we are at the mercy of weather, ice, tidal and current conditions. Landings on certain sites and the observation of certain wildlife cannot be guaranteed. They vary from day to day, making each PONANT cruise a unique experience. The Captain and the Expedition Leader will make every effort to ensure that your experience is as rich as possible, while complying with the safety rules and instructions imposed by the IAATO.



The information in this document is valid as of 11/8/2020

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YOUR STOPOVERS :

USHUAIA

Embarkation 3/12/2021 from 16h00 to 17h00

Departure 3/12/2021 at 18h00

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 4/12/2021

Departure 5/12/2021

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 6/12/2021

Departure 6/12/2021

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 7/12/2021
Departure 7/12/2021

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

Arrival 8/12/2021
Departure 8/12/2021

Amidst the eerie stillness of **the Weddell Sea**, you'll wend your way through a veritable labyrinth of dense ice floe and majestic table icebergs. Sweeping ice platforms sculpt a landscape unlike any other, populated by **fur seals, penguins, wandering albatross** and other imposing seabirds. **The Weddell seal**, king of this realm, will welcome you to his territory with a haunting cry that pierces the surrounding silence. You'll recognise him by his dark grey coat and spotted belly. Weddell seals have the impressive distinction of being able to stay underwater for more than an hour.

SAILING TOWARD LARSEN ICE SHELF

Arrival 9/12/2021
Departure 10/12/2021

On the Weddell Sea, you will sail close to the gigantic Larsen ice shelves. These floating ice shelves help to prevent the erosion of the Antarctic ice sheet. Over the last fifty years, scientists have however observed regular collapses of these shelves, along giant cracks that can be several hundred kilometres long and deep. In 2017, a portion measuring more than 6,000 km², so barely smaller than Corsica, had broken off the Larsen C ice shelf, forming one of the largest tabular icebergs in the world. This disintegration is believed to be due in part to global warming and melting sea ice.

THE WEDDELL SEA

Arrival 11/12/2021
Departure 11/12/2021

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CROSSING THE DRAKE PASSAGE

Arrival 12/12/2021

Departure 13/12/2021

If there is one place, one sea, one waterway dreaded by tourists, researchers and hardened seafarers alike, it is undoubtedly **Drake Passage**. Situated at the latitude of the infamous Furious Fifties winds, between Cape Horn and the South Shetland Islands, it is **the shortest route to connect Antarctica to South America**. Seasoned navigators will tell you that you must earn your visit to the White Continent! As the Antarctic convergence zone where cold currents rising up from the South Pole meet warmer equatorial water masses, Drake Passage harbours a very diverse marine fauna. Don't forget to look to the sky to catch a glimpse of elegant albatross and **Cape petrels**, playfully floating about in the wind around your ship.

USHUAIA

Arrival 14/12/2021 early morning

Disembarkation 14/12/2021 at 07h00

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...