

Antarctica Sailing expedition 2025

Puerto Williams

-54.93467402411842, -67.61857018889565

The small port is the scene for the start of our epic voyage across to Antarctica. But with all things to do with Antarctica you are at the mercy of weather, wind and ice. So, when the captain suggested we delay departure for 12-24 hours, we knew there was a good reason. The anticipation would need to subside for another day. But spirits were high, and Puerto Williams is not a bad place to stay for an extra day. And a great place for bird photography, Cara Cara, Ibis, Heron, sand pipers, king fishers to name a few. As we got ready to set sail, we would take in the snow-capped mountains and lush green landscapes one more time before we head south.



The Beagle Channel

-54.9167246738555, -67.34050183224659

Heading out the beagle channel the excitement was high and within minutes of entering the channel, Albatross made their presence know, as they ride the high winds following our yacht. Not long into our voyage and dusky dolphins were escorting us out of the channel, bow riding and leaping in our wake, truly putting on a show. It was a sign of more to come.



The Drake Passage

-56.7254160455687, -66.1826605301969

The Drake Passage was relatively calm, but the ocean movement was affecting some of the team, as we retreated to our bunks to ride out the rough seas. When you are on the ocean for 4 days you look for any distraction to keep you entertained. The stronger winds also meant the seabirds were gliding across the Southern Ocean moving elegantly with the updraft and diving low across the ocean swell. Everything about these large seabirds was graceful. Soon they were joined by giant petrels, prions, storm petrels and sooty shearwaters. It was a menagerie of winged giants.



First glimpse of Antarctica

-62.86683663112654, -61.92641558486284

Our first glimpse of Antarctica was shrouded by a thick fog. But it didn't quell the excitement, I think it made the anticipation even more intense as the closer we got to land. Glimpses of the mountains, ice and glaciers became more prominent, and the stunning vistas became reality. That first sight of land was our first real shared experience of what it meant to be part of an expedition like this. The sense of place was overwhelming, and the dramatic clouds and impressive landscape was truly indicative of how we perceived our first experience in Antarctica would feel like.



Mikkelsen Harbour – Trinity Island

-63.89060015533631, -60.78924782424489

Our first step on land, and there was a sense of awe as the realisation set in that we were in Antarctica. Despite the heavy snow, we were all eager to explore the D'Hainaut Island in Mikkelsen harbour. Gentoo penguin colonies sprawling across the small rocky landscape, remnants of old whaling boats slowly degrading over time, present on the shoreline. And the tragic remains of ocean giants, whale bones littered the shoreline. Remnants of a bygone era and a hope not to repeat history in such a devastating way.



Cieva Cove

[-64.14347706208537](#), [-60.92845971665644](#)

It was all about the ice today as we donned our drysuits and hit the icy water to check all our gear worked. Leaks and technical issues ensued; it was a perfect day to make sure we had everything ready for the next few weeks. Not only did we get to play with some spectacular ice in the water, but we also watched penguins jumping in off icebergs, curious Minke whales circling our vessel. To top it off our anchorage was in a picturesque cove with towering peaks and glaciers. A great spot to watch the sun set over Antarctica.



Recess Cove & Portal Point

-64.50608925673811, -61.646178332723025

It started with the snow but ended with jubilation as we watched Humpback whales cruising in the clear calm waters. Although they weren't extremely active, we did have some curious close encounters along the way. But the day was perfect, sunny skies, massive glaciers surrounding us at every turn. A perfect day for wildlife watching. Not to mention the impressive icebergs with intricate shapes and structure. Some were simply towering over the landscape putting their size in perspective as we sailed by in our expedition vessel. By evening we had scoured the bay looking for whales. As the sun started to dip low in the sky, dramatic clouds formed across the mountain ranges and the scene was set for another Antarctic experience.



Cuverville Island/Erera channel

-64.69068589738472, -62.6312307036352

We would spend a few days here in Cuverville Island, as this would be the scene of many first encounters, our first leopard seals, first swim with penguins and our first zodiac cruise through the Erera channel. After dinner we set out to find wildlife in the brash ice, within minutes we had spotted our first leopard seal on ice, then our second, third, fourth and fifth, it was like a dream come true for many, which would only get more exciting in the days to come. The next morning, we donned our drysuits and explored the shallows, penguins entered the water on their way out to see, large strands of Salps connected in chains were everywhere, it was an explosion of strange creatures from the icy waters below. The highlight was a curious leopard seal circling our boat one evening. Just when we thought the activities were over, a few of the more adventurous team jumped in the zodiac to check out the impressive seal.



Neko Harbour

-64.8162757761297, -62.63581006411032

Ice was everywhere but the wind had picked up making our plans even more challenging, it was blocking us from getting to our landing point. We pushed further in but the spray from the ocean was in our face, and it was becoming harder to navigate between the icebergs and brash ice.

The weather had got the better of us on this day, but we knew our next destination was certainly going to make up for it with stunning glaciers, ice, and an expectation of whales.



Paradise harbour /Skorntof cove

-64.90311393489301, -62.86485653392336

This would be a memorable evening, as we took the zodiacs out after inner in search of wildlife. Little did we know it was going to put on a show for us. Our first sightings, whale blows in the distance against a sunset sky. The blows increased and soon there were more whales, as they began to feed. Deep dives followed several seconds later by the large open mouths lunging through the surface with a mouth filled with krill. It was one of nature's great events. We watched as several pods began to show the same behaviour, diving and lunging for food. The excitement was contagious, and we returned to the yacht on a high. What would tomorrow bring.



The Lemaire Channel

-65.06506262675539, -63.93796834959848

This morning, we had glassy conditions, the sun was shining and the impressive entrance to the Lemaire channel was in our sights. Everything had aligned and as we sailed between these impressive peaks, the reflections below really showing the grandeur of this place, as we absorbed everything Antarctica had to offer. A curious whale buzzed our yacht right at the entrance and continued to find us interesting as it followed behind for several minutes. It was like a dream, but we absorbed all the sights and sounds or lack of sounds to be precise as the calm quiet came over the landscape. But it wasn't all clear sailing so to speak, we still had to navigate between some seriously large icebergs which dwarfed our yacht substantially. It was a great feat of navigation by our skipper. The last berg was an exceptionally tight squeeze, and we had to run the gauntlet. A sigh of relief as the channel opened to reveal Pleneau Island and a sea of icebergs funnelled into this area by the Antarctic currents. We were in the famed Iceberg Grave yard and the scenery just got better and better.



Port Charcot

-65.07773458419912, -64.00471521424768

The scope of our adventure was beyond our imaginations. We reached Port Charcot, then all bets were off as what we imagined, was now happening. This had to be one of our most productive and exciting locations we visited. We loved it so much we ended up staying for 3 days. We spent hours in the water floating with penguin rafts, watching them dive to the depths for food and appear in the hundreds several minutes later. It felt like their numbers were increasing with each resurfacing, it was truly a spectacle to be in. It was like they had accepted us into their raft and did not see us as a predator, so would freely swim around us. The only time they moved was when interrupted by another krill seeker, the humpback whale. Several humpbacks were following the penguins and diving in a sort of synchronisation to feed on the krill, we can only speculate were at great depths below. The occasional minke whale would also make an appearance but the showstoppers were the humpbacks and penguins interacting with each other. This may have been a form of cooperative feeding or simply the instinct of the two species, but we watched as this behaviour continued for days.



Argentine Islands/Vernadsky

-65.2459521118532, -64.25890066319651

It was early evening as we pulled into the protected channels of the Argentine islands. As we set up our anchor lines and prepared ourselves for a quiet night in, our plans would be disrupted by a curious leopard seal around an iceberg next to our yacht. The call went out as we frantically put our drysuits on, set up our cameras and jumped into the icy water. It was worth the chaos, as the leopard seal curiously watched as we entered its realm and calmly investigated us while staying close to its icy comfort zone. Truly a great way to start and finish our first night in the archipelago.

The next day we zodiac cruised around the island close to Vernadsky station, coming across seals, birds and penguins moving around the shoreline. Not to mention some impressive ice. The plan was to look for leopard seals hunting but to no avail. Our second attempt was more successful, we explored each cove around the colony and suddenly found a leopard seal patrolling the beach in search of an easy meal. Once again, we hit the water which made the seal even more curious, coming up to each diver individually to investigate. Keeping a safe distance, we let the encounter play out on the Leopard seals terms. It was exhilarating to say the least and we left the area with a renewed respect for these intelligent creatures.

The next day we set sail north passing through so much ice, with penguins on icebergs putting on a show, we watched for hours. Conditions were calm and penguins were launching themselves out of the water at high speed to land on the iceberg. The reflections in the water

were breathtaking and it felt like the icebergs were sculpted for our viewing. It was a marvellous way to farewell our most southerly point.



Port Lockroy

-64.8242728459498, -63.494387305567074

A safe harbour for the night in one of Antarctica's most iconic places. The thought of visiting the British base at Port Lockroy and being able to send a postcard back to loved ones or even yourself, had everyone giddy. As you first come ashore and walk up the path to the base you are surrounded by nesting Gentoo penguins. Our timing coincided with a heavy snowstorm that was blanketing down across the small islands, the visibility dropped almost immediately but it created an atmosphere that was synonymous with our visual concept of remote life on a small base in Antarctica.

We explored the island and the channels behind. Minkes made an appearance as we zodiac cruised along the channel, popping up in all directions. Some of the team went to take advantage of the snow-covered landscape, penguins, and old whale bones. It was a place of wonder and lent to some beautiful moments that we would capture in our photos and videos.



Curverville Island

-64.69068589738472, -62.6312307036352

Back to Curverville to check on our leopard seal friends, but as we have learned along the way, every day is different in Antarctica. Conditions had changed, and it was very windy but it gave us a different perspective of a place we had some amazing encounters. But when you have icebergs lining the seascape, penguins returning to their colony and whales transiting through the Erera channel, it is still a pretty great day.



Enterprise Island

-64.53039406355843, -61.99326681888693

Heading for Enterprise Island our first way point and safe anchorage, before we make our way home, it was starting to become a reality that our journey was slowing down, and we only had a few more excursions before we start thinking about our departure. But enough of that for now! We were in exploration mode, so we jumped into the zodiacs and went exploring the small coves and the wreck of the Governon and old ship that was towed to shallow waters after a fire engulfed the vessel. Fur seals lined the landscape, old water boat ruins on shore and sea birds foraging along the coastline.



Hydruga rocks

This rocky island in the middle of the Gelache is such a great place to see chinstrap colonies and Weddell seals. And the weather was holding strong with clear sunny skies. But our window to visit was short as we knew this was literally the calm before the storm. We enjoyed watching Chinstrap penguins returning to their colony. Only a few young chicks remain as many had already fledged their down feathers and had gone out to sea. While Weddell seals laze the day away finding refuge on patches of snow across the rocky terrain.



Mikkelsen Harbour - Trinity Island

-63.90528206621674, -60.80218132439822

One last chance to explore D'Hainaut Island in Mikkelsen harbour and the Antarctic weather didn't disappoint. Snow was falling and it had a very Antarctic feel to the environment. The colony was overflowing with Gentoo penguins on the small rocky outcrop. Tomorrow we were heading for the South Shetland Islands, and an environment and landscape we were not familiar with. But the region was abundant with history, so it would give us a new perspective on what life was like in the region more than a century ago.



Deception Island/Whalers Bay

-62.983534035295385, -60.55671163030181

Remnants of a bygone era, the crumbling remains of whaling stations, slowly being consumed by the volcanic landscape. An eerie reminder of the devastation of a species during this period of prosperity for humans. Hopefully a reminder of what not to do in the future. You walk along the black sandy beach in relative quiet except for the sounds of playful fur seals jousting with each other for fun. You feel a sense of cold, despair and hardship as you try and understand what life was like for those that chose to live here. We sailed into a caldera, an active volcano, that erupted as recently as 1969. The steam rises from the sandy shore as the temperatures drop, the landscape resembling the moon reaches into the clouds. It is a place where history made its mark.



Hannah Point

[-62.639535220976775, -60.611995582065674](#)

Our last excursion in Antarctica, which felt a little bittersweet, but we couldn't have asked for a better place to farewell Antarctica. The black sandy beaches were lined with Gentoo penguins. Steam was rising from large haul outs of Elephant Seals lining the shores. Giant Petrels were nesting up on high and hunting leopard seal was making a meal out of unsuspecting penguins. Nature in all its glory revealed itself. With each glance a piece of the story unfolded as we watched how life in the freezer survives in Antarctica's harsh conditions. Truly a time to absorb the sights, sounds and even the smells, but also a perfect moment to reflect on our time in Antarctica.



The Drake Passage – The Return

-60.110392923390144, -65.90138900637007

The infamous Drake Passage for many can be a right of passage when coming to Antarctica, but for some of us it means nausea and sea sickness. Despite its imminent nature, it is also part of the experience, so you learn to embrace this side of the journey. The ocean is making us rock and roll in all directions as the various low-pressure systems hit us from different ends of the globe. We take our turn at watch each day 3 hours on 6 hours off becomes our standard routine. But you adapt and try to keep each other entertained, especially when you have the 3am shift.



Homeward bound

-54.92254084512821, -67.27392579794362

Our final leg down the beagle channel and a month-long expedition was ending. The reality was starting to set in, and we would soon have to say goodbye to our fellow expeditioners. But we could enjoy this amazing place a little longer. It felt like we were sailing at warp speed, as each day we woke to see how much distance we had covered. This must have been the fastest crossing I have done on a yacht with a little under 3 days. And although the seas were a little more challenging the short crossing made us forget the negatives and enhance our great memories of all we had seen on our epic Antarctic expedition.

