

Mingling with Penguins

Join Mark Carwardine and expert friends in South Georgia

via the Falkland Islands

11-28 November 2019 *(plus travel to and from Ushuaia, in Argentina)*



“If I had one day left on Earth – and could spend it anywhere – I’d choose the remote sub-Antarctic island of South Georgia. With 50 million seabirds and more than five million seals crammed onto an island the size of Essex, it’s impossible to exaggerate the sheer wonder and beauty of the place.” [Mark Carwardine](#)

We have exclusively chartered the 94-passenger Akademik Sergey Vavilov – a comfortable and ice-strengthened polar expedition ship – for this wonderful 17-night expedition cruise. We’ll visit prime sites in the Falkland Islands, and then concentrate on the remote island of South Georgia to see a mind-boggling variety of wildlife and wild places.

We’ll have loads of time ashore and plenty of opportunity to enjoy the overwhelming scenery – including some of the most impressive mountains on the planet – all in long hours of daylight. Along the way, we’ll mingle with literally hundreds of thousands of penguins, meet six-metre long elephant seals, sail across the Scotia Sea, meet researchers, visit Ernest Shackleton’s grave, and enjoy an outstanding schedule of entertaining and informative lectures, talks, workshops and seminars by top polar and wildlife experts, and professional photographers. Our journey begins and ends in Ushuaia, the southernmost city in the world, in Argentina’s Tierra del Fuego.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Travel on our exclusively chartered, very comfortable and safe, ice-strengthened polar expedition ship – the Akademik Sergey Vavilov.
- An exclusive charter makes for a far more cohesive and rewarding experience.
- Concentrate on South Georgia’s enigmatic wildlife, with a couple of days in the Falkland Islands.
- Enormous rookeries of king, macaroni, gentoo and chinstrap penguins (we also hope to see magellanic and rockhopper penguins).
- Fabulous encounters with southern elephant and Antarctic fur seals.

- Wandering, royal, black-browed, grey-headed and light-mantled sooty albatrosses accompany the ship.
- Wide variety of cetaceans likely, including: fin, sei, humpback, Antarctic minke and orca (several different ecotypes), as well as hourglass, Peale’s and Commerson’s dolphins (previous trips Mark has led to this part of the world have also seen southern rightwhale dolphins, southern right whales, long-finned pilot whales, sperm whales, southern bottlenose whales and even Cuvier’s beaked whales).
- We will be joined by award-winning landscape photographer Joe Cornish, and a resident team of polar experts.
- Exciting cruises in inflatable Zodiacs for up-close encounters with seals, penguins, whales, and other wildlife.
- Learn first-hand about the remarkable history of the region.
- Good-sized and exceptionally stable ship for comfortable sea crossings (ships that are too small take considerably longer and give a rougher ride).
- Spend maximum time ashore. Larger ships offer slightly cheaper tours but have so many passengers that they need to operate a shift system, which means that each passenger has far fewer landings and much less time ashore – plus they can’t get into many more remote areas that are inaccessible to such large vessels).



- Fabulous photographic and video opportunities, with special tuition and workshops by Mark and Joe Cornish.
- We lend you all the appropriate polar outdoor clothing – jacket, trousers and boots – as well as waterproof rucksack and binoculars.



ITINERARY

The cruise itinerary is outlined below (please bear in mind that we strongly advise you to arrive a day early in Ushuaia – we can help with an optional flight and hotel package).

Mon 11 Nov: There will be time to explore Ushuaia, on the north shore of the Beagle Channel, near the southernmost tip of South America, before boarding the Akademik Sergey Vavilov late in the afternoon. After becoming familiar with our home for the next 17 nights, we depart early in the evening for the Falkland Islands.

Tue 12 Nov: Our first day at sea, watching for whales, dolphins, albatrosses, petrels, prions, and other wildlife. There will be lots of photographic opportunities, as myriad seabirds follow the ship. Meanwhile, our onboard lectures, workshops and presentations begin, covering everything from wildlife and heroic stories of some of the early polar explorers to photography.

Wed 13 - Thu 14 Nov: Arriving in the Falklands overnight, by morning we are ready to make our first shore landings: Bleaker Island, which is home to magellanic, gentoo and rockhopper penguins and a large imperial cormorant colony, and is one of the few places where the rare flying steamer duck can be observed; and Sea Lion Island, best known for its large breeding colony of southern elephant seals and its resident orcas. We also have a good chance of seeing Commerson's and Peale's dolphins. We'll also have a short stop in Port Stanley, the colourful capital of the Falkland Islands.

Fri 15 - Sat 16 Nov: Now we sail south-east, bound for the remote island of South Georgia, watching for wildlife along the way and enjoying more lectures, workshops and presentations.

Sun 17 - Sun 24 Nov: Arriving on Sunday afternoon, we have seven full days to explore South Georgia. A mere speck in the immensity of the Southern Ocean, it

has an ethereal beauty that is nothing short of breathtaking and, with 50 million seabirds and more than 5 million seals, is home to some of the greatest concentrations of wildlife on the planet. There are animals everywhere – from wandering albatrosses and macaroni penguins to southern elephant seals and endemic South Georgia pipits – and they are so unconcerned by our presence that most of them merely stand and stare or come and take a closer look. We hope to see the writhing mass of Antarctic fur seals at picturesque Elsehul, visit Sir Ernest Shackleton's grave at Grytviken, mingle with 150,000 pairs of king penguins at St. Andrew's Bay, wander among the myriad wildlife at stunning Gold Harbour, and much, much more. The colour, the noise, the smell and the commotion of these unforgettable seven days guarantees sensory overload at every turn.

Mon 25 - Wed 27 Nov: Now we sail west back towards Ushuaia, watching for wildlife along the way and enjoying more lectures, workshops and presentations
Thu 28 Nov We bid farewell to the staff and crew of the Akademik Sergey Vavilov and, after breakfast, disembark in Ushuaia.

Please note: this tour is highly weather-, sea- and ice-dependent. Although we will stick to the itinerary as closely as possible, it may change to make the most of local conditions. It's part of the fun of polar exploration!

WHY NOVEMBER?

Mark has visited the region in every month during the southern summer and each has its own special highlights. But November is particularly good for several reasons. It's the start of the season and an adventurous time to travel. There is plenty of daylight (we plan to use all of it!) and the snow is pristine. The wildlife activity is really good, too – there will be lots of courting penguins, fur seal pups are being born and, on South Georgia, it is the only time to see the six-metre long

male elephant seals fighting on the beaches. It's also outstandingly good for photography, because we should get a few lovely snowstorms as well as the usual mix of sunny and overcast days.

WHY THIS TRIP?

Following the huge success of our expedition to South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula in late 2015, we decided – due to popular demand! – to do a return trip concentrating on the gloriously unforgettable South Georgia, with a few days in the Falkland Islands, too.

Mark and his team will make sure you get to see the very best the region has to offer. We'll spend much more time ashore than most comparable trips (you don't have to do every landing, of course, and you don't have to stay for the maximum time, but we believe in giving you the opportunity to see and do as much as possible). Unlike some cheaper trips with more passengers, everyone can land in one go, maximising the time and avoiding a rota system.

SHIP DETAILS

The Akademik Sergey Vavilov is a modern, safe, comfortable, ice-strengthened vessel, like a floating wilderness lodge. It is ideally suited for polar exploration. Over the years, Mark has travelled on many of the vessels available for polar adventures, and rates the Vavilov as one of the best ships working in the region.

Built in Finland in 1988, and recently refitted and refurbished, she is designed to be exceptionally stable – which is great news for long sea crossings! Her highly sophisticated internal stabilizers and built-in ballast trimming system reduce motion significantly and ease the way. The Vavilov is also remarkably quiet, with very little ambient noise in the cabins and public areas.

There is ample deck space, with viewing areas on each passenger level of the ship,



watching – and getting into (and out of) tight corners!

Safety is a priority, of course. The Akademik Sergey Vavilov is a Russian-flagged vessel and carries all

while the bridge and chart room are open to everyone virtually 24 hours a day. The bridge is excellent for sightseeing and viewing wildlife – expedition staff will be on duty most of the time, watching for wildlife and ready to answer questions.

The public areas are expansive and include a fabulous bar and lounge on deck 6, with incredible 180-degree views; tea and coffee are available here 24 hours a day. There is also a well-appointed library (with large windows overlooking the bow deck and the inevitably breathtaking scene beyond), a gift shop, a multi-media centre (with Apple Mac computers freely available, a small gym, hot tub and a tiny sauna. Briefings and lectures are held in a large presentation room.

There is also a full complement of Zodiacs (rigid-hulled inflatable boats) aboard, for breathtaking wildlife cruises, and to take everyone ashore.

The 117-metre vessel is maintained to the highest standards and kept immaculately clean. She has a crew and staff of 63 – the passenger-to-staff ratio is one of the highest in the industry – and there is an extremely high level of personal service. Attention to detail is second-to-none, yet the atmosphere on board is extremely relaxed and informal.

The Akademik Sergey Vavilov has an impressive maximum cruising speed of 14.5 knots. With a bow-thruster and a stern multi-directional propulsion unit, and twin controllable-pitch propellers, she is also incredibly maneuverable. It's the perfect set-up for wildlife

current certifications required by Russian and international maritime law for ensuring passenger safety and well-being. An extremely experienced captain and crew, and an ice-strengthened hull (Lloyds Register 1A, Canadian Type B) provide an exceptionally safe combination for polar expedition cruising. Safety and emergency equipment on board the vessel is inspected and tested on a regular basis and there are two fully-enclosed lifeboats with a total capacity of 132, as well as four life rafts with a total capacity of 200. There is also a small infirmary and a crew doctor, who is available to provide a basic and emergency medical service.

And, finally, the Vavilov is built and operated to be as environmentally friendly as possible, from using Marine Grade Fuel (the highest grade marine fuel with the lowest emissions) to the ecologically sensitive cleaning supplies used by the cabin stewards.

ACCOMMODATION

There is a choice of comfortable, fresh and clean cabins (triple, twin or superior) as well as suites, on four different decks (please see the ship's deck plan for more details). All are pleasantly decorated and furnished, with a writing desk and chair and ample storage. All of them have opening windows (except triple cabins, which have opening portholes) with some of the most spectacular views in the world! Some have sofa-beds, which are the size of normal beds, and just as comfortable, but double-up

as sofas during the day (they are converted every evening by the cabin stewards, while we are eating dinner). Bathrobes, as well as a toiletry kit, hairdryer and coffee/tea maker are provided in all cabins (only bathrobes in triple cabins).

Triple cabin (2 available):

two bunk beds and one sofa-bed, washbasin. Shared facilities.

Twin share cabin (6 available):

two bunk beds, washbasin. Shared facilities.

Twin semi-private cabin (12 available):

one single bed and one sofa-bed.

Facilities shared with one other cabin (the bathroom is in-between the two cabins – so you don't have to walk through a public area).

Twin private cabin (18 available):

two single beds. Private facilities.

Twin private-plus cabin (1 available):

two single beds, sofa.

Private facilities.

Superior cabin (2 available):

two single beds, sofa.

Private facilities.

Shackleton Suite (5 available):

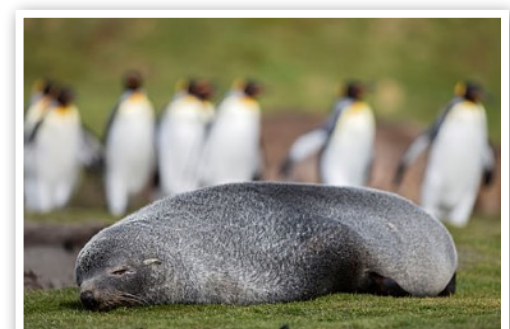
very spacious with separate sleeping quarters, with one double bed and one sofa-bed. Private facilities.

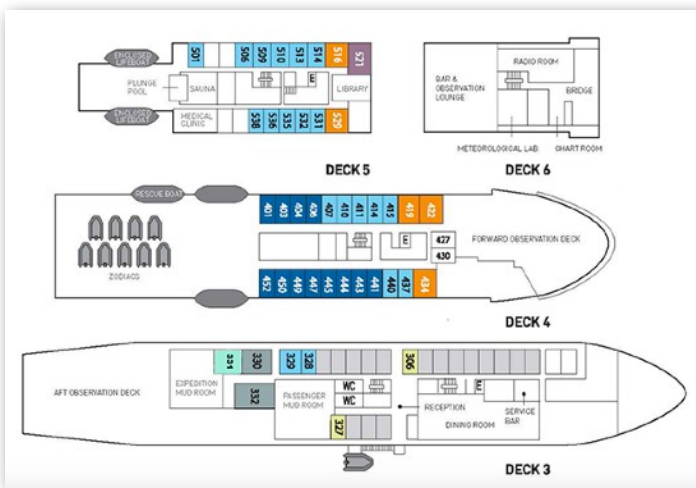
One Ocean Suite (1 available):

very spacious with separate sleeping quarters, with one double-bed and one sofa-bed. Private facilities with a bathtub. This cabin's windows overlook the bow.

MEALS

All meals aboard ship are included. The window-lined dining room (which can seat everyone in one sitting) is catered by international chefs, offering a daily choice of cuisine. The food is excellent, varied and tasty, with plenty of healthy options made with fresh ingredients.





Click [here](#) for more detailed information about the cabins

LEADERS

Mark Carwardine will be hosting the trip and will also give lectures and run workshops. As well as a highly experienced resident polar expedition team, he will be accompanied by Britain's best-known landscape photographer Joe Cornish (owner of his own photographic gallery and author of many books), and Rachel Ashton (Mark's project manager since 2004, and trip administrator), who will produce a film and slideshow of the trip for everyone to take home afterwards. And there will be several other members of the team – to be announced soon ...

GROUP SIZE

There will be approximately 94 passengers, plus Mark and his team.

WEATHER AND SEA CONDITIONS

The weather where we're going is highly variable – we're likely to get a bit of everything (bright sunshine, cloud, rain and snow). Temperatures in November typically range from 0°C to 7°C (but could be colder or warmer). With appropriate clothing (which we provide) this can be exhilarating and not at all uncomfortable.

We'll have quite a few days at sea (the rest of the trip – most of it, in fact – is spent in much calmer, sheltered waters close to shore). Sea conditions are hard to predict, of course. Most importantly, we have a good-sized ship with

highly sophisticated stabilizers and a built-in ballast trimming system to reduce motion.

PRICES (excluding flights)

- £10,695 (sharing triple cabin with shared facilities)
- £11,495 (sharing twin cabin with shared facilities)
- £12,395 (sharing twin cabin with semi-private facilities)
- £13,495 (sharing twin cabin with private facilities)
- £13,895 (sharing twin cabin-plus with private facilities)
- £14,295 (sharing superior cabin with private facilities)
- £14,995 (sharing Shackleton Suite with private facilities)
- £16,995 (sharing One Ocean Suite with private facilities)

Price includes: airport-to-ship transfer pre-voyage and ship-to-airport transfer post-voyage; 17 nights' accommodation in comfortable cabin on the Akademik Sergey Vavilov, with daily housekeeping; all breakfasts, lunches and dinners throughout the voyage; guide services of Mark Carwardine and expert friends from arrival in Ushuaia; leadership throughout the voyage by the resident Expedition Team; all shore landings and excursions during the cruise; comprehensive pre-departure advice and information; all miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the voyage; loan of polar jacket and trousers and Wellington boots (means you are well prepared – and saves packing space).

Price does not include: return flights to Ushuaia, Argentina; airport/government arrival and departure taxes; hotels, transfers and other land arrangements pre- and post-voyage (ie not listed in 'Price includes'); passport and visa expenses; excess baggage charges; cancellation, baggage and travel insurance (compulsory); meals on shore; alcoholic and soft drinks; items of a personal nature such as laundry and telecommunications charges; medical expenses; crew and resident expedition staff gratuities (we suggest about US\$10 per day – it's usually collected just prior to the end of the cruise).

OPTIONAL FLIGHT AND HOTEL PACKAGE

We are delighted to offer an optional hotel and flight package, to get you to and from the ship, in Ushuaia, with the minimum of fuss (or we are more than happy to book any other flight options for you):

British Airways (international) and Aerolineas Argentinas (domestic)

Sat 9 Nov: Fly London to Buenos Aires to Ushuaia (arrive 10th). Transfer to a comfortable hotel for the night.

Mon 11 Nov: Transfer to ship. [CRUISE UNTIL THURSDAY 28 NOVEMBER]

Thu 28 Nov: Transfer to domestic airport. Fly Ushuaia to Buenos Aires – transfer to a comfortable hotel for the night.

Fri 29 Nov: Transfer to international airport – fly Buenos Aires to London.

Sat 30 Nov: Arrive in London.

The flight/hotel package is **£1,995** per person (based on two people sharing hotel rooms) and this includes all economy flights and transfers and two nights' hotel accommodation with breakfast. BA World Traveller Plus, the package is **£2,795** per person return. BA Club World, the package is **£4,195** per person return. Single supplement in hotels, **£275**.

MAIN TOUR PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

- Non-refundable deposit due on booking: £2,000 per person.
 - First-stage payment due on 1 September 2018: £3,000 per person.
 - Second-stage payment due on 1 February 2019: £3,000 per person.
 - Balance due on 1 August 2019: varies according to cabin.
- ## OPTIONAL FLIGHT AND HOTEL PACKAGE PAYMENT SCHEDULE
- Non-refundable deposit due on booking: £500 per person.
 - First-stage payment due on 1 September 2018: £1,000 per person.
 - Balance due on 1 August 2019.

For more information, please contact:

Rachel Ashton
(Mark Carwardine Adventures)
tel: +44 (0) 117 904 8934
rachel@markcarwardine.com;

OR

Dan Free (Wildlife Worldwide)
tel: +44 1962 302072
danf@wildlifeworldwide.com

To book, please contact

Wildlife Worldwide,
tel +44 (0)1962 302 086
sales@wildlifeworldwide.com

Financial security

This trip's bonding and liability insurance is provided by Wildlife Worldwide – so all the money you pay is safe even in the highly unlikely event of cancellation or insolvency. Wildlife Worldwide holds an ATOL (Air Tour Operator's Licence) issued by the CAA, which regulates the entire travel industry.

ABTOT: registered member 5199
ATOL: registered member 10544

