39 - DAY EXPEDITION TO SOUTH GEORGIA, ANTARCTICA & USHUAIA, FROM MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY

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My greatest travel adventure γet was sailing to Antarctica as part of the voyage crew on Bark Europa. I don't imagine any traveling adventure will ever be greater 33

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# THE BARK EUROPA

#### History

The EUROPA was built in 1911 under the name of 'Senator Brockes' at the Stulcken shipyard in Hamburg, at the request of the city of Hamburg. The ship was put into service as Elbe 3 light ship on the river Elbe and later worked as a stand-by vessel. In 1986 the ship was brought to the Netherlands and was completely rebuilt and rigged as a three-masted barque. Since that time Bark EUROPA has been crossing oceans and seas on a regular basis and has a reputation of a ship that really sails.

#### Ocean wanderer

Bark EUROPA follows the favourable winds of traditional sailing routes. This has brought her to all the continents sailing both the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Ocean, thus earning her nick name 'ocean wanderer'. "I met a huge variety of people from many different countries, all united in their love of the ocean and of the beautiful ship we were so lucky to be on. I also developed a deep appreciation for my surroundings amazing sunsets that brought a tear to the eye, magnificent landscapes, beautiful starry skies and an ocean that you could stare at for hours without getting bored."

Katie -

From December to March, in the Southern summer, the EUROPA sails to the Antarctic Peninsula. In the Northern summer EUROPA participates in the Tall Ships races, the largest international ocean races for sail-training ships in the world. Races occur annually in various parts of the world with millions of spectators. In many of the ports we visit during the year it is possible to embark the ship and sail with us, either

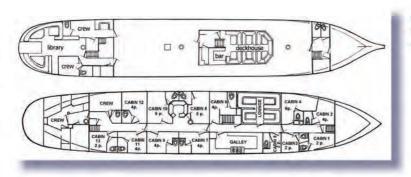


for a short voyage or a full ocean crossing.

#### No sailing experience needed

One hour on board the Bark EUROPA and it will instantly be clear: "teamwork" has to be the key to this beautiful traditional sailing vessel. No winches, but an infinity of lines; at first glance maybe a complete jungle. The hundreds of blocks look like spiders in their webs. Everyone on board will be assigned to the watch system to navigate and steer the ship and to hoist and lower the sails.

Sailing experience is not required. The permanent crew is happy to explain everything about navigation, sail handling, square rig sailing and more. This will be done in a "Dutch" easy going style, without yelling,



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blowing whistles and so on. Also, you will find no uniforms on the Bark EUROPA. The novice sailor will be introduced to these matters every day and, after a few weeks, all those lines, blocks, stays, booms with their impossible names and functions become an open book.

#### Life on board

Bark Europa is a sailtraining ship and you are part of the voyage crew. As voyage crew you are taking part in a watch system. Everyone is asked to take the helm, set sails, assist with manoeuvres, climb the rigging, be on look out, furl the sails on the yards and much more. The permanent crew will give lectures and instruct you during the voyage in steering, navigation and line handling. During the visits of Antarctica and South Georgia the watchsystem is down to a voluntary anchorwatch at night, so you are able to get the most from your visits ashore.

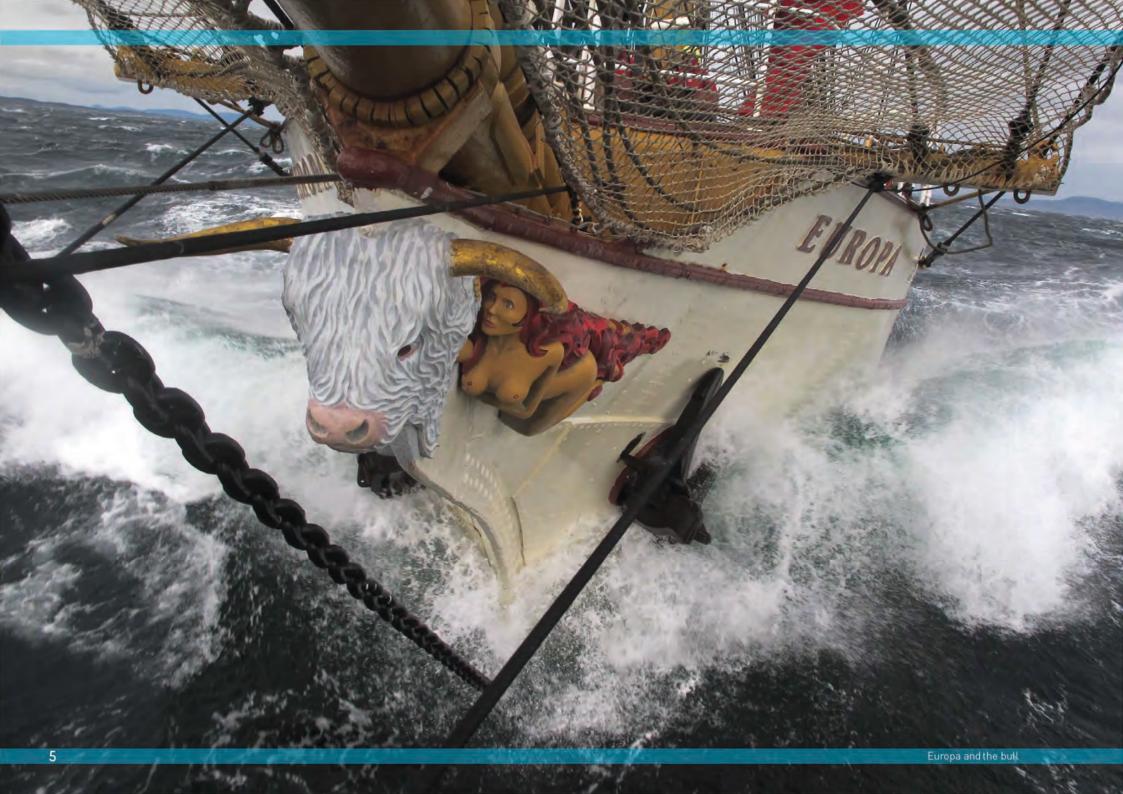
Although a part of the permanent crew is Dutch, usually you will find various nationalities among



them. Our crew and guests are international and from all ages.

The common language on board is English. As one team you will sail to new horizons and experience all aspects of a sailor's life on board: The wind, the sea, new friends and adventure. Creating new friendships with people from all over the world and having the time of your life, that is what sailing on board EUROPA is all about.





<sup>56</sup> The Phoenicians had a proverb: "days spent at sea are not deducted from your allotted life span. 33

# DESTINATIONS

Some people become interested in Antarctica and the Scotia Sea after reading about the voyages of Ernest Shackleton and other expeditions. Others are more fascinated by the rich wildlife or the beauty of the unspoilt natural environment. Antarctica is one of the oldest continents on our planet, but man has always been unable to live here because of its extremely cold climate. It is the last great wilderness on Earth. Over the years, thousands of tourists have visited this continent. When winter grips this great, white desert, tourist activity is no longer possible.

#### MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay

Montevideo, port and capital of Uruguay. The ideal city for city walks along interesting historical buildings and squares. The old Ciudadela – old city gate – forms the entrance to the oldest area of the city: Ciudad Vieja. Here you can visit several churches, museums and theatres. There is enough to explore: cafes with tango music and dancers fill the streets and terraces. Montevideo has one of the best sandy beaches to enjoy.

From Montevideo we will set sail to one of the most spectacular destinations of all: South Georgia. It will take about 10 days of sailing. The perfect time to get introduced to the watch system on board and to all sails and lines on board the EUROPA.

South Georgia belongs to the sub-Antarctic islands that surround Antarctica. There is an extremely rich animal life. Because only a small area of Antarctica is not covered by ice, many animals choose the safe beaches and cliffs of a Sub Antarctic island such as South Georgia. We will spend about a week here and have a daily routine of moving the ship from one









fjord to the other and make landings virtually every day enjoying the wildlife and hikes. We'll find the remains of a former whaling station at Grytviken and see the grave of Shackleton, one of the most heroic pole travellers. It is an old tradition to drink a glass of whisky near his grave.

Many of us have read the incredible story of Sir Ernest Shackleton. From now on we will follow his steps from South Georgia. About 90 years ago in the Weddel Sea area, an epic journey of survival and endurance started. Ernest Shackleton's ship, the Endurance, was crushed by the pack ice and sank in the Weddell Sea. After a tough journey on the pack ice and sailing to Elephant Island using their small sloops, Shackleton and his men managed to land on this rocky island. But no help was to be found there, so he decided to sail all the way to South Georgia with a handful of his crew on board the sloop James Caird.

After 17 days, they landed on the western coast of the island. From there, they had to undertake a strenuous and dangerous alpine crossing to the other side of South Georgia, where the whaling station Stromness was located. There the crew finally were back in civilisation and safety. Shackleton still had to rescue the rest of his crew from Elephant Island. That enterprise took several attempts before he finally succeeded.

Between South Georgia and our next destination, Antarctica, we have to cover about 1000 NM. We have scheduled ten days to get there. Different circumstances; the sea, the weather and life on a Tall Ship make you get to know the people on board very well. On the Southern Ocean the winds blow continuously and these seas have the reputation of being stormy; seamen speak about the Roaring Forties and the Furious Fifties.

When possible we will make a stop at the South Orkney Islands. Once in Antarctica, we operate completely in the style of the old expeditions and it will be easy to let your thoughts go back to these epic times. Especially during these days it is important to let your adventurous side speak. As the natural elements have a large influence on this part of our voyage we will need to stay flexible. Depending on the weather and ice conditions the expedition leader and captain will find the best islands to anchor, land or the best places to sail with the dinghies between the icebergs. Without a doubt. It was the most rewarding, challenging, beautiful travel adventure of my life. Once you experience Antarctica on Bark Europa, you will forever dream of being at sea.

# **SOUTH GEORGIA**

#### Flora and fauna

South Georgia belongs to the sub-Antarctic islands that surround Antarctica. It is 120

kilometres long and 32 kilometres wide. It is rocky, geologically an offshoot of the Andes. Besides the highest mountain 'Mount Paget' (2.934 metres), 12 other peaks of more then 2000 metres high arise. There are 150 glaciers that offshoot in spectacular fjords.

There is an extremely rich animal life. Seals, penguins and seabirds live in the seas around Antarctica and look for a place on land to raise their young. Because only a small area of Antarctica is not covered by ice, many animals choose the safe beaches and cliffs of a Sub Antarctic island such as South Georgia. Especially Wandering Albatrosses and Black-browed Albatrosses are commonly seen.

South Georgia is home to different species of penguins. Sometimes we will see the Macaroni and Gentoo Penguin. The most common is the King Penguin. On the whole island there are around 30 rookeries with a population of over 400,000 pairs. In addition to this we will also see rookeries of Chinstrap Penguins.

South Georgia is home to 95% of the world population of Fur Seals, 1.8 million

at present. Groups of Elephant Seals, some 300,000 on South Georgia, occupy the beaches. Fortunately more Humpbacks have been sigh- ted in recent years. The sea is full of krill here, the food for these baleen whales. Other kinds of whales, such as Killer and Fin Whales have been seen occasionally.



In the past South Georgia was famous for its whales, witness the whaling stations, which are still there. In 1910 Norwegian whaling companies introduced reindeer, for sport and to serve as food. There are still some 2000 left, but each year after a harsh winter their number drops. Vegetation, like tussock grasses but also some other species is only to be found in the low coastal areas. South Georgia boasts 26 (native) species of plants. Furthermore, there are various herbs, as well as rushes and over 125 different species of mosses. Striking are the Red Burnet and the Yellow Antarctic Buttercup.

Shallow coastal waters are filled with three species of kelp; it is the place where young fishes find their food. This flora is related to that of the Falkland Islands and southern South America. There are fewer species because of the long way seeds have to travel across the sea.

#### History

In 1775 Captain Cook was the first to land on South Georgia; he claimed the island in the name of King George III. South Georgia is British territory, but has also been claimed by Argentina. At present the governor of the Falkland Islands administers the island.

In 1904 in Grytviken a large Norwegian whaling station was established and a number of people lived of the processing of whale oil. In the sixties the whaling industry collapsed and the whaling stations were deserted.



#### Flora and fauna

Antarctica is a huge, cold, white plain, which appeals to the imagination of everybody. Many are fascinated by the rich wildlife or the beauty of the unspoilt Antarctic natural environment. All penguin species are restricted to the Southern Hemisphere, but the greatest concentrations are on Antarctic coasts and sub-Antarctic islands. On the peninsula Gentoo and Chinstrap Penguins are the most common. Near the colder Weddell Sea we also find Adelie and Emperor Penguins, although the Emperor penguin is seen more rarely. The Antarctic waters support a vast variety of seabirds. Only a few species are adapted to breed regularly on the continent. Skuas are widespread and prominent in the Antarctic. They prey heavily on the eggs and chicks of penguins and small petrels. Also prions, fulmars, and shearwaters are often seen, as well as terns, sheathbills, and two species of cormorants.

Fish and krill in the Antarctic are important components of the marine ecosystems. They are major prey for higher predators, including the baleen whales, as the Humpback, Minke and Fin Whale. The Orca or Killer Whale is also seen in this area. There are many seals. Depending on the species, seals feed on fish and squid or krill. The Leopard Seal is a predator of penguins and other seals. Seals can leave the water and move on dry land to breed, rest and moult.

The greater part of the Antarctic continent is covered by permanent ice and snow. Less than 1% is available for colonisation by plants. Most of this ice and snow free land is found along the Antarctic Peninsula. There are no trees or shrubs and only two species of





#### flowering plants; Antarctic Hair grass and Antarctic Pearl wort are found. The vegetation is predominantly made up of lower plant groups (mosses, liverworts, lichens and fungi), which are specially adapted to surviving in extreme environments.

#### History

Many people become interested in the South Pole after reading about the voyages of Shackleton. The history goes further back to Captain Cook who passed the South Pole circle in 1773 and made a voyage around the continent. It was suspected there was a continent, but nobody did see Antarctica during this voyage.

In 1819 the South Shetlands were discovered with on the beaches an enormous number of fur seals, over the next three seasons people slaughtered almost all of them. A hundred years ago, during a Belgian Antarctic expedition from 1897 to 1899, under command of Adriën de Gerlache, the first wintering took place.

Nowadays a couple of thousand researchers spend the southern summer living in several research stations, but during the southern winter, that number dwindles to less than 1000. Several countries claim territorial rights over different parts of the continent, but no country has ownership or sovereignty over any part of Antarctica. Following the International Geophysics Year 1957/58, the Antarctic Treaty of 1959 was drawn up, sharing responsibility for the continent between twelve countries. It was agreed that Antarctica would only be used for scientific research activities and that free access to the results of all research would be guaranteed. No type of military activity is allowed on any part of this territory and territorial claims of any sort are prohibited. In 1991, an Environmental Protocol was drawn up to introduce new regulations applicable specifically to tourism.

During our visit to Antarctica we will adhere strictly to these regulations.

#### IAATO

Furthermore Rederij bark EUROPA is a member of IAATO, an organization founded in 1991 to advocate, promote and practice safe and environmentally responsible private-



sector travel to the Antarctic. We consider it a great honour to be able to see this immense monument of Nature with our own eyes.

#### **Expeditions in Antarctic waters**

In the southern summer, the 56 meter long threemasted Bark EUROPA sails to the Antarctic Peninsula. This voyage will appeal to the sailing enthusiast, the birdwatcher, the photographer, the artist and the nature-lover who want to discover the unspoilt environment.

#### Guides on board

During the Antarctica expeditions there will be one or more a guides on board the Bark EUROPA. He/she knows the area we will be visiting very well. The guide gives lectures on board the ship about the flora and fauna we will encounter, prepares you for the landings on shore and will guide you on the walks ashore.



# DESCRIPTION OF THE **EXPEDITION**

These voyage details are partly based on experiences of previous expeditions which

EUROPA undertook to Antarctica and South Georgia. This description is only an example of what the voyage may look like. In the past it has happened that we were not able to visit a location.

Waiting for better weather doesn't work, it would only mean we would run out of time later during the voyage. It is important to realize that our day-to-day activities will depend on wind, weather, ice and regulations. We aim to give you an idea of what to expect of your voyage. We hope that this helps you decide to sign up for the voyage from Montevideo to Ushuaia on EUROPA.

DAY 1 Signing on in Montevideo, Uruguay

You are welcome on board on November 14th 2016 at 5 p.m. Keep room for flight delays or late arrival of your luggage by booking overnight stay in Montevideo one night prior to embarkation. After signing on and taking your luggage to your cabin, you will



enjoy your first meal on board. The captain and the expedition leader will inform you about the plans. Usually we will stay in port overnight, but occasionally we already depart during the night.

# DAY 2 TILL 11 Ocean Sailing

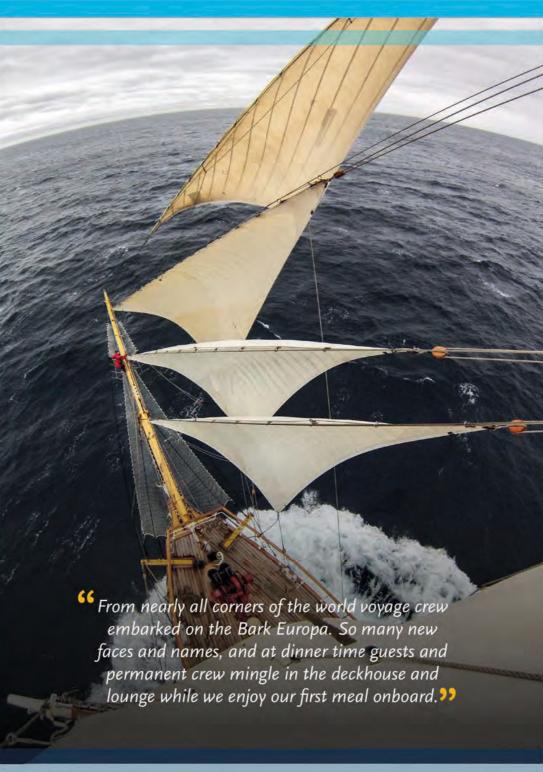
Casting off to South Georgia. We cast off our mooring lines. Once underway, the crew will show you how to put on the life jackets and introduce you to the necessary safety instructions. After that it is time for a lesson in the many lines and sails on board.

#### Sailing the bark europa

This voyage is a real sailing trip that involves the sailing between our destinations and finally crossing of the Drake Passage, under sail whenever possible. During the many sailing days, you will be part of the watch system, fulfilling sailing duties on board: steering, lookout and sail handling. You will also enjoy the lecture program put together by our guides and crew for the whole trip. Some subjects covered during these talks are about the rigging, the lines, the different sails, navigation concepts and rope work. During the natural history talks you will learn to see the difference between various species of birds, including the mighty albatrosses, like the Black-browed, Wandering and Light Mantled Sooty Albatross.

In this way, during the voyage, you will be developing sail handling skills and expanding your knowledge on wildlife, history, glaciology, meteorology and other topics related with our trip. The Southern



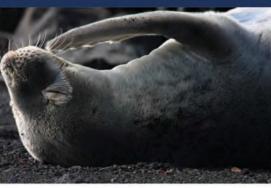




Atlantic Ocean is infamous for its roughness, hence the names: "Roaring Forties", "Furious Fifties" and "Screaming Sixties" corresponding with the degrees of latitude. Sailing from one destination to the next gives you the time to experience all the aspects of seaman's life.

You will learn to see the difference between the Black browed Albatrosses and Light-mantled Albatrosses. Nature decides the daily work on board. It forces us to adjust the self-image of the human being and that can be very refreshing. Then, on the horizon the ice-covered mountains of the Sub Antarctic Island of South Georgia will be visible.







# DAYS 12 TILL 18 South Georgia

Once in South Georgia, we count on approximately seven days to enjoy this remote and spectacular oasis in the Southern Ocean, offering one of the best wildlife spectacles on earth.

The island is well known for its changeable weather and harsh conditions, located as it is in the middle of the Scotia Sea and completely exposed to the weather systems passing by, predominantly from west to east. It is for this reason, that the chances for visits ashore are highly dependant on the weather and sea conditions.

During this week, we will have the opportunity to make several landfalls exploring the impressive landscapes that the island offers. We will try on several occasions to visit a variety of different landing sites, mixing activities themed on history, wildlife, glaciology and geology. For example, we may visit some derelict whaling stations from the golden age of whaling in the Antarctic area at the beginning of the 20th century (keeping a safety perimeter of 200m around the remains).

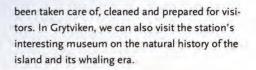
Also, we could have the opportunity to visit Wandering Albatross nesting colonies where strict rules apply. The incredibly vast King Penguin rookeries spreading over the beaches and lower slopes of the mountainous landscape provide another highlight we hope to enjoy. Other penguin colonies may be visited, including those of the Macaroni penguins.

But we need to have in mind that usually they nest in swell exposed areas amongst steep cliffs, making their colonies difficult to reach. If the weather allows us, we also plan to do some hikes, for example one following Ernest Shackleton's footsteps on the last part of his epic crossing of the whole island.

We may pay a visit to his grave in Grytviken, where he lies side by side with his right hand during their expedition, Frank Wild. There we have the opportunity to walk around the whaling station, which has



King penguins on South Georgia



On the island's shores, we can also find several shipwrecks, like that of the Bayard. She was a fully rigged ship - one of the first to be built of steel in 1864 in Liverpool. In 1911 she was blown from her moorings and, despite rescue efforts, ran hard aground. This was the very same year the Bark Europa was launched.

# DAY 18 TILL 26 Return to the Ocean

It is time to leave the sub-Antarctic paradise. Over 1000 NM to Antarctica lies ahead of us. We have scheduled ten days to get there. The watches start again. The life ashore you normally lead seems far away behind the horizon. Together you will form an "identity" casually called "the crew" but which will be different every voyage and carries its own atmosphere.

On the Southern Ocean the winds blow continuously. These seas have the reputation of being stormy, seamen speak about the Roaring Forties and the Furious Fifties. When the barometer drops, a depression is approaching and we will have to roll up and take in sail. The crew is alert and stand by for steering, reefing, furling, setting and taking in the sails. Tired and maybe even cold after an active watch on deck, you will sleep like a log. Not a single sound of wind, water or sails, ropes or iron can keep you awake. When possible we will make a stop at the South Orkney Islands. As we sail south, the likelihood of seeing icebergs increases. Large ice plateaus are visible on the radar, but sometimes smaller ones are not; we keep a good lookout so that we avoid them. Fortunately, the nights are short during the southern summer. It is amazing when we see the brilliant white shapes of the floating icebergs on the horizon. They are huge, and very high! This is the first sign that we are really approaching the great white mass of Antarctica!

The rough sea we are crossing is the Scotia Sea, that was crossed in an opposite direction in a spectacular way 90 years ago. In this area Sir Ernest Shackleton's ship the Endurance was crushed by ice and sank. After a rough journey across the ice and water in small sloops Shackleton and his men landed on Elephant Island. As there was no help to be found on this island, Shackleton decided to sail to South Georgia. Shackleton left Elephant Island for South Georgia with a handful of men in the sloop James Caird. After 17 days he landed on the south coast.

Once ashore they had to undertake a long walk



across the island to the whaling stations on the other side of the island. It was only after several attempts they were able to return from South Georgia to Elephant Island to rescue the crew.

#### DAY 27 AND 28 Islands of the Weddell Sea

We sail into the rough and less visited part of Antarctica, the Weddell Sea. We operate completely in the style of the old expeditions and it will be easy to let your thoughts go back to these epic times. Especially during these days it is important to let your adventurous side speak. As the natural elements have a large influence on this part of our voyage we will need









to stay flexible. Depending on the weather and ice conditions the expedition leader and captain will find the best islands to anchor, land or the best places to sail with the dinghies between the icebergs. We see Killer Whale and hope to spot the Snow Petrel.

The Weddell Sea is known as the iceberg factory. Large icebergs break off the continental ice shelf and drift away on the currents. Don't forget to get up early and see this magnificent view of the icebergs at sunrise. The sea was named after James Weddell, a British sailor and sealer. During a trip in 1823 he not only discovered the Weddell Sea, but also the Weddell Seal.

#### DAY 29 From the Antarctic Sound to Deception Island

To get west of the Antarctic peninsula we must pass the Antarctic Sound. In this strait, named after the ship of the Swedish Nordenskjöld expedition in 1902, we will see many icebergs floating from the Weddell Sea. Today might be a good day to stay on deck and watch for fins and tails as the area is very popular with Humpback Whales.



# DAY 30 Deception Island

This island is an imploded active volcano, also called a caldera. The EUROPA will sail through a small opening called "Neptune's Bellows" into the volcanic crater and will drop anchor in Whalers Bay, near the ruins of a whaling station. These buildings were also used as a base for research work, but in 1969/70 several Gentoo-, Adelie- and Chinstrap Penguins. The stations were destroyed by a volcanic eruption. You can walk to "Neptune's Window" and enjoy the magnificent view where the rim of the crater steeply glides back into sea. It's also an impressive panorama to look back into the crater.

A couple of miles further into the crater thermal currents rise. Sometimes, when the tide is right, those who wish may bath in the geothermically warmed waters. Water temperatures can rise up to 50 degrees Celsius, while land temperatures are below zero.

# DAY 31 Arrival at the South Shetland Islands

The South Shetland Islands are of volcanic origin and the area is still volcanically active. The islands consist of dark rock with steep cliffs. A beautiful example is Edinburgh Hill, a steep cliff that rises vertically out of the water. Close up, we can see that it is made up of basalt, solidified magma from the centre of a volcano. Pressure from inside the earth has pushed the plug to this height, but so far the volcano has not erupted. Which island we will visit of the South Shetland Islands may vary. It can







be either Barrientos Island, Half Moon Island or Yankee Harbor.

All these islands have an impressive wildlife with penguins, seals and various species of petrels. The crew will take us ashore with the dinghies. Everywhere around the ship we see penguins porpoising through the water and the smell of the penguins reaches us even before we land. We share the beaches with the Gentoo- and Chinstrap Penguins and maybe a Weddell Seal or Fur Seal.

# DAY 32 TILL 36 Drake Passage

The crossing of the Drake Passage is approximately 450 nautical miles. The seas around Cape

Horn have the reputation of being stormy, but in between the lows they are calm. Let us hope that the wind is favourable when we sail towards Argen-







tina. Back in the watch system, we have time to absorb everything we have done, to let it all settle in. We will be accompanied on this passage by dolphins and many sea birds.

Cape Petrels, White-chinned Petrels and albatrosses are our companions. Albatrosses are the best equipped for a permanent stay at sea. Their territory is the open ocean. They love windy regions, because they are unable to fly with little wind. During the crossing everybody can help the crew to steer, set, shorten, take away and stow sails. DAY 37 Cape Horn and Tierra del Fuego

Soon we will see Diego Ramirez Island on our port side. Now we are near to the infamous Cape Horn. Cape Horn confirms to us that our crossing of Drake Passage is almost finished. Today we have reached quieter waters, sheltered by the rocks and islands of Tierra del Fuego. We set a course through the chaotic rocks and islands towards the Beagle Channel. The islands and fjords are remarkably green after our Antarctic visit. They are the habitat of more than 150 kinds of birds. Wild geese, beavers, rats and con-

dors also inhabit this beautiful wilderness. On the Beagle Channel we wait for the obligatory pilot.

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# DAY 38 Arriving in Ushuaia

We are close to Ushuaia, but there is still something to see on the way. A few miles before the port of Ushuaia we pass near two rocky islets covered with sea lions, the Islas de Lobos. So keep your binoculars at hand. Sea lions don't go to Antarctica. Huge males

lie around, keeping a watchful eye on their harem, protecting them from invaders. A little further on a Fur seal proudly grasps its prey, and blue-eyed shags take up every free metre of space. It's packed. When we see the red and white lighthouse 'Les Eclaireurs', Ushuaia comes within sight and we enter the harbour.

The citizens in Ushuaia look out over the Beagle Channel. From 1884 to 1947 Ushuaia was a safe haven for political exiles and criminals. The old prison is now open to the public. You are free to do as you please. A quiet walk or perhaps buy a few souvenirs in this welcoming town. In this small town, also known as "El Fin del Mundo – The End of the World", you can make beautiful hikes in the mountains and National Park and you will meet travellers who have just returned from an expedition or from any other part of South America to come to the most southern city of the world.

### DAY 38 Signing off in Ushuaia

After breakfast you say goodbye to each other. Some will be able to stay for a few days In Argentina. For others the journey home has started. Antarctica and South Georgia have probably been an unforgettable experience for everybody. Some of you will have caught the Polar fever, which will never leave you.

"When I embarked on Europa it felt like going back into a calm and peaceful time period. The scenery at departing was an exhilarating feeling for the voyage ahead. After a few days of sailing the trainee crew from all over the world has become accustomed to life on board and enjoys this wonderful adventure." - CECILE -

