Explore Antarctica
A Natural History and Photographic Adventure
7 Dec - 18 Dec, 2012

A visit to mysterious and vast Antarctica is a visit to the very ends of the earth. This is a land of glittering ice, majestic peaks and dazzling beauty. For millions of years, this region has been a haven for migratory birds, whales, seals, and other marine mammals that come each summer to feast in its food-rich coastal waters.

We will be visiting during the Antarctic summer, when temperatures are mild and generally hover just above freezing. You will experience an 11-day cruise aboard the 96 passenger Akademik Ioffe: a well-equipped, highly maneuverable, and very stable research vessel. Weather permitting, we will ride in Zodiacs among the icebergs; walk on ice, snow, and rock to visit penguin rookeries; and explore on-land cultural sites.

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) trip leaders have extensive experience in the Antarctic. UNLV geologist, Margaret Rees, Ph.D., was funded by the National Science Foundation to conduct scientific research in the Transantarctic Mountains for eight field seasons. She was awarded the US Congressional Polar Medal for Scientific Service in Antarctica and an Antarctic mountain was named after her in honor of her geological explorations.

Nevada artist and naturalist Sharon K. Schafer has worked extensively in the Antarctic and Sub-Antarctic Islands as an artist-in-residence, photographer, and videographer. Her paintings and photographs of the Antarctic region have been exhibited in museums across the country.

For more information please contact:

Michelle Baker, Program Coordinator
michelle.baker@unlv.edu
702 895-3254

Sharon K. Schafer, Artist / Naturalist
skydancestudio@earthlink.net
702 293-3929
ANTICIPATED ITINERARY

December 7 - 18, 2012
11 Nights / 12 Days

PLEASE NOTE: Itinerary subject to change due to weather conditions or unforeseeable circumstances.

Day 1: Ushuaia
Arrive in Ushuaia, the world’s southernmost city on the tip of Argentina. Transfer from Ushuaia Airport to hotel with overnight lodging at Hotel Altos.

Day 2: Ushuaia / Transfer / Embarkation
Breakfast at Hotel Altos then you have a free morning to explore the fascinating city of Ushuaia. Transfer to the ship for a 4 p.m. boarding. Board our ship and settle into your “home” for the next 11 days. In the early evening, we set sail and begin our voyage leaving behind Ushuaia and charting a course through the Beagle Channel to the icy world of Antarctica.

Days 3-4: Drake Passage
Excitement is in the air as we cross the Drake Passage and make our way ever closer to the white continent. Soak up the friendly atmosphere onboard as numerous Polar experts and your UNLV leaders prepare you for your adventures with presentations on everything Antarctic - from wildlife to history. Photo workshops will be offered by your UNLV trip leader Sharon K. Schafer.

Eventually, we will cross the Antarctic Convergence where we will notice a distinct drop in temperature as we enter the waters of the Antarctic Ocean. Along the way, we will witness spectacular sights from icebergs to an array of seabirds and even several whale species that may occasionally flaunt their size in full breach.

Days 5-9: Exploring the Antarctic Peninsula
In the waterways of the Antarctic Peninsula, we will travel by inflatable Zodiac boats to explore up-close the wildlife and landscapes of the stunningly beautiful Antarctic wilderness.

Planned excursions may include Neko Harbor, Wilhelmina Bay, and Petermann Island. We may observe Weddell, crabeater, and elephant seals; many species of seabirds; and an abundance of penguin species. At Half Moon Island, we will observe a breeding colony of chinstrap penguins that share their territory with fur seals and blue-eyed shags.

If we are lucky we may see the gentle humpback
whale dining on krill in its feeding grounds and possibly have an opportunity to observe killer and Minke whales.

You will finally make your landing on the actual continent of Antarctica at Paradise Bay or Neko Harbor. The scenery here is amazing. The bay is filled with oddly shaped icebergs that look like sculptures, as well as colossal tabular icebergs that have broken away from the continental ice shelf.

Hopefully, the weather will be mild enough to allow optional overnight camping on the continental shore. Whatever your vantage point, whether it is onboard or onshore, expect to feel transformed as you experience the twilight of the short Antarctic night.

**Days 10-11: Drake Passage**
As we leave this magical place heading across the Antarctic Convergence and the Drake Passage, we will have time to share and reflect on our wonderful experiences. After rounding Cape Horn and then entering the Beagle Channel, we will have a special dinner to celebrate the conclusion of our Polar expedition.

**Day 12: Ushuaia / Disembarkation**
In the early morning we arrive back in Ushuaia. It is time to say farewell to your crew and fellow travelers. Guests will be transported to their hotels or to the airport for return flights home.

---

**OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

**Camping Option**
No pre-booking required. If conditions are suitable and you choose to camp on the continent, all the required gear such as tents, bivy sacks, and sleeping bags will be provided. This excursion is managed with strict environmental regulations. A portable outhouse tent is used and absolutely everything is transported back to the ship afterwards.

**Sea Kayaking Option**
Pre-booked option for up to 16 guests. If you have experience sea kayaking and are interested in doing this activity during the expedition, then you will need to book this option through UNLV prior to August 3. You cannot book this activity once onboard. There is a separate document for sea kayakers that you will need to review beforehand. Provided equipment includes full Gore-Tex drysuits, kayak-specific PFD’s, neoprene booties, a waterproof deck bag, pogies, and many other vital paddling accessories.