

Weddell Sea - In search of the Emperor Penguin incl. helicopters

Searching for the Elusive Emperor Penguins



(/to-do/experiences/helicopter-trips)



Tripcode: OTL23-16
Dates: 27 Nov - 7 Dec, 2016
Duration: 10 nights
Ship: [m/v Ortelius](/our-fleet/m-v-ortelius) (/our-fleet/m-v-ortelius)
Embark: Ushuaia
Disembark: Ushuaia

Summary

[Download cruise info >>](/antarctica/cruises/otl23-16-weddell-sea-in-search-of-the-emperor-penguin-incl-helicopters/pdf) (/antarctica/cruises/otl23-16-weddell-sea-in-search-of-the-emperor-penguin-incl-helicopters/pdf)

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[South Shetland Islands cruises](/antarctica/south-shetland-islands) (/antarctica/south-shetland-islands)

[Weddell Sea cruises](/antarctica/weddell-sea) (/antarctica/weddell-sea)

Prices per person:

Quadruple Porthole	\$8650 \$7200 \$1450 discount
Triple Porthole	on request
Twin Porthole	\$9485 \$8750
Twin Window	on request
Twin Deluxe	on request
Superior	on request

Voyage details

Cruise to Weddell Sea - In search of the Emperor Penguin incl. helicopters

Your unique chance to be part of a true expedition voyage. The Emperor Penguin rookery is situated south of Snow Hill Island. Although we will probably not be able to reach that far through the ice (less than 50 % chance based on our voyages in the last three seasons), the idea is mainly to situate ourselves in or between the Antarctic Sound and James Ross Island, close to the ice-edge and observe the emperor penguins on their way to the open water. We will use our helicopters in our attempts to search for individual Emperor Penguins.



(/our-fleet/m-v-

ortelius)

m/v Ortelius

The ice-strengthened vessel Ortelius is an excellent vessel for Polar expedition cruises in the Arctic and Antarctica.

[Full ship info >>](#) (/our-fleet/m-v-ortelius)



(/our-fleet/m-v-

ortelius/cabin)

Cabins aboard

This is a sample image

[All cabin information >>](#) (/our-fleet/m-v-ortelius/cabin)

Map & itinerary

PLEASE NOTE:

Your unique chance to be part of a true expedition voyage! The Emperor Penguin rookery (ca. 4,000 breeding pairs) is situated south of Snow Hill Island. Although we will probably not be able to reach that far south through the ice (less than 50 % chance based on our voyages in the last three seasons), the idea is mainly to situate ourselves in or between the Antarctic Sound and James Ross Island, close to the ice-edge and observe the emperor penguins on their way to the open water. We will use our helicopters in our attempts to search for individual emperor penguins, to make scenic flights and to make helicopter landings in places otherwise inaccessible so early in the season. If ice-conditions are favorable and the route to Snow Hill Island is free of multi-year pack-ice, we will reschedule our voyage and offer ship-to-shore helicopter transfers to Snow Hill Island (as carried out successfully in 2013) at approx. 45 minutes walking distance from the emperor penguin Rookery. If we succeed, this will be a fascinating and a once-in-a lifetime experience. However, we made attempts to reach Snow Hill Island during our voyages in 2012, 2013 and 2014. We only succeeded in 2013; therefore the chances to reach Snow Hill Island are indeed less than 50 %.

A typical itinerary to the Weddell Sea is illustrated below. This itinerary is for guidance only. Programs may vary depending on local ice and weather conditions, the availability of landing sites and opportunities to see wildlife. The final itinerary will be determined by the Expedition Leader on board. Flexibility is paramount for expedition cruises.

Day 1: In the afternoon we embark our vessel m/v Ortelius in Ushuaia

In the afternoon, we embark in Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, the southernmost city in the world located at the Beagle Channel and sail through this scenic waterway for the rest of the evening.

Highlights



- [Ushuaia](/to-do/experiences/ushuaia) (/to-do/experiences/ushuaia)

Day 2 - 3: At sea, en-route to the Antarctic Peninsula where we cross the Antarctic Convergence

During these two days we will sail across the Drake Passage. When we cross the Antarctic Convergence, we arrive in the circum-Antarctic upwelling zone. In this area we may meet Wandering Albatrosses, Grey-headed Albatrosses, Black-browed Albatrosses, Light-mantled Albatrosses, Cape Petrels, Southern Fulmars, Wilson's Storm Petrels, Blue Petrels and Antarctic Petrels.

Highlights



- [Wandering Albatross \(/to-do/wildlife/wandering-albatross\)](#)
- [Grey-headed Albatross \(/to-do/wildlife/grey-headed-albatross\)](#)
- [Light-mantled Albatross \(/to-do/wildlife/light-mantled-albatross\)](#)

Day 4 - 7: The Weddell Sea! During these days we use the helicopters in our attempts to find individual Emperor Penguins.

A typical itinerary in the Weddell Sea could be as follows. This is a sample only, the final itinerary will be determined by the Expedition Leader on board.

We will sail into the Weddell Sea and if the Antarctic Sound is accessible and the ice does not prevent us to sail further, we might see the huge tabular icebergs that announce our arrival to the eastern side of the Antarctic Peninsula.

During these days we use the helicopters in our attempts to find individual Emperor Penguins. During our previous voyages we were always able to locate emperors. We will also offer scenic flights and – if the conditions allow us - helicopter landings on tabular icebergs and locations otherwise inaccessible so early in the season.

Possible landing sites is for example Brown Bluff, probably the most scenic spot in the entire northern tip of the Antarctic Continent. With steep canyon walls and tumbled boulders, an ice-cap looming above, beautiful volcanic creations and the scene is complete with thousands of Adélie penguins nesting on the slopes, and a few Gentoo's mixed in for fun.

Helicopter flights are a great contribution to the voyage, for example on the west side of the Antarctic Sound, an area usually only rarely seen from the air. The scenery is stunning with landscapes of layered sandstones, lava flows, glaciers tumbling into the sea and icebergs and pack-ice as far as the eye can see. We can observe individual Emperor Penguins and Adélie Penguins on the ice floes; Cape-, Snow, and Giant Petrels fly high in the sky while Kelp Gulls, skuas and Wilson's Storm Petrels scavenge down below us. The landscape is dominated by jagged mountains pierced through the ice-caps and walls of ice dropped onto the slopes below.

A beautiful helicopter flight over huge blue icebergs and fast ice can also be made close to View Point in Duse Bay. We land on a rocky hillock close to an old refuge hut overlooking the bay. There will be still a lot of snow and ice but much of the intended walk on the Antarctic continent will be over a beautiful frost-shattered rock, almost entirely covered with the most fascinating lichen of all shapes and colors.

If the ice-situation allows us to go further into the Weddell Sea area, we will visit Devil Island and Vega Island with a large colony of Adélie Penguins and a magnificent view for those hikers who can make it to the top of the hill. Melting ice sometimes provides spectacular waterfall from the cliffs close to point 'Well-Met'. Further south, we may also visit Seymour Island, where many fossils can be found.

On our way north through the Antarctic Sound we might pay a visit to the Argentinean

station Esperanza on the Antarctic Continent. We will still look out for Emperor Penguins on the ice-floes. In the afternoon we may visit Gourdin Island, with three penguin species; Chinstrap, Gentoo and Adélie.

Highlights



- [Helicopter flight above the Weddell...](#) (/to-do/experiences/helicopter-flight-above-the-weddell-sea)
- [Walking on the pack ice in the...](#) (/to-do/experiences/walking-on-the-pack-ice-in-the-weddell-sea)
- [Emperor Penguins & the Weddell...](#) (/to-do/experiences/emperor-penguins-the-weddell-sea)

Day 8: Early in the afternoon we will sail to Deception Island

In the morning we plan to visit Half Moon Island where we can see Chinstrap and Gentoo penguins, various other bird-species as well as a chance for Southern elephant seals and Weddell seals. Early in the afternoon we will sail to Deception Island where we have the last landing of our voyage at Pendulum Cove or Whalers Bay.

Highlights



- [Hiking on Deception Island](#) (/to-do/experiences/hiking-on-deception-island-antarctic-peninsula)
- [Chinstrap Penguin](#) (/to-do/wildlife/chinstrap-penguin)
- [Gentoo Penguin](#) (/to-do/wildlife/gentoo-penguin)

Day 9 - 10: At sea en-route to Ushuaia

On our way north we are again followed by a great selection of seabirds while crossing the Drake Passage.

Highlights



- [Bird Watching](#) (/to-do/experiences/bird-watching)
- [Drake Passage](#) (/to-do/experiences/drake-passage)

Day 11: The end of our voyage. We disembark m/v Ortelius in the morning in Ushuaia

We arrive in the morning in Ushuaia and disembark after breakfast.

Highlights



- [Ushuaia \(/to-do/experiences/ushuaia\)](/to-do/experiences/ushuaia)

Day 5 - 6: Alternative program if the route to Snow Hill Island is free of multi-year pack-ice (less than 50 % chance):

The use of helicopters has a great advantage and can support us in our goal to reach the Emperor Penguin colony, but the itinerary is ruled by the forces of nature, ice and weather conditions. If the conditions are favourable, we intend to spend the first two days in the Emperor Penguin rookery. The helicopter operation will take a full day and the flight duration takes approximately 15 minutes. The helicopter can accommodate 6 passengers per helicopter flight. The landing point of the helicopters will be carefully chosen and we will make sure that the Emperors Penguins are not disturbed or stressed by helicopter noise. Therefore, after arrival, the passengers continue their expedition on foot.

After a walk of approx. 45 minutes, passengers will experience an amazing rendezvous with the magnificent Emperor Penguins. Keep in mind that we are in the world's most remote area and there are no guarantees, including a specific amount of helicopter time. Conditions may change rapidly, having its impact on the helicopter operation and passengers should understand and accept this. Safety is our greatest concern and no compromises can be made.

Highlights



- [In Search for the Emperor Penguin \(/to-do/experiences/emperor-penguin-trips\)](/to-do/experiences/emperor-penguin-trips)
- [Emperor Penguin \(/to-do/wildlife/emperor-penguin\)](/to-do/wildlife/emperor-penguin)

Included in this voyage

- Voyage aboard the indicated vessel as indicated in the itinerary
- All meals throughout the voyage aboard the ship including snacks, coffee and tea.
- All shore excursions and activities throughout the voyage by Zodiac.
- Program of lectures by noted naturalists and leadership by experienced expedition staff.
- Free use of rubber boots and snowshoes.
- During voyages Weddell Sea and Ross Sea voyages: ship-to-shore helicopter transfers (with no specific amount of helicopter time)

guaranteed)

- Luggage transfer from pick-up point to the vessel on the day of embarkation, in Ushuaia.
- Pre-scheduled group transfer from the vessel to the airport in Ushuaia (directly after disembarkation).
- All miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the programme.
- Comprehensive pre-departure material.

Excluded from this voyage

- Any airfare, whether on scheduled or charter flights
- Pre- and post- land arrangements.
- Passport and visa expenses.
- Government arrival and departure taxes.
- Meals ashore.
- Baggage, cancellation and personal insurance (which is mandatory).
- Excess baggage charges and all items of a personal nature such as laundry, bar, beverage charges and telecommunication charges.
- The customary gratuity at the end of the voyages for stewards and other service personnel aboard (guidelines will be provided).