

VOYAGE INFORMATION

Voyage Name	Antarctica featuring the Ross Sea
Voyage Code	ROSS040122G
Dates	04 – 30 January 2022
Duration	27 days / 26 nights
Embark	Hobart, Tasmania
Disembark	Hobart, Tasmania
Ship	<i>Greg Mortimer</i>
Optional Activities	Kayaking
Forms Due	04 October 2021

VOYAGE SUMMARY

Step back into the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration to discover a wildlife wonderland. Departing Tasmania's glorious south coast, sail to New Zealand's Auckland and Enderby Islands to encounter sea lion harems and yellow-eyed penguins in rata forests. While on Campbell Island, magnificent royal albatross court amidst megaherb meadows. Crossing the Antarctic Convergence, enter pack ice alive with orca, seals and emperor penguins. Our expedition days within the Ross Sea offer icy drama, rich wildlife experiences and extraordinary stories of human exploration and survival. Sail north, aiming for the remote Balleny Islands, then on to the tussocked coast of Macquarie Island, home to half a million king penguins and vast wallows of elephant seals. After a month away, the emerald shores of Tasmania greet you like a warm smile.

ITINERARY OVERVIEW

Day 1	Arrive in Hobart; Welcome Reception & Pre-Embarkation Briefing
Day 2	Final health screening/testing; Embark the <i>Greg Mortimer</i> ; Set sail
Days 3-5	At sea
Days 6-8	Auckland Islands, Campbell Island
Days 9-12	At sea
Days 13-19	Ross Sea
Days 20-22	At sea
Days 23	Macquarie Island
Days 24-26	At sea
Day 27	Hobart

VOYAGE HIGHLIGHTS

- Delve into New Zealand's hobbit world of stunted rata forests on Enderby Island where shy, yellow-eyed penguins shuffle and sea lions roar, and witness Campbell Island's royal albatross ballet.
- Stand quietly in huts little-changed since Scott, Shackleton, Mawson and others wintered over, then launched desperate journeys that would define the Heroic Age (ice and weather permitting).
- Gaze in wonder at ethereal, ice-clad summits of the Transantarctic Mountains, in the unique 'Ross Sea' ecosystem – part of a "Hope Spot" designated by Sylvia Earle's Mission Blue team.

EXPEDITION INCLUSIONS

- Arrival transfer from airport to hotel on Day 1
- Welcome Reception / Pre-Embarkation Briefing on Day 1
- One night's hotel accommodation with breakfast in Hobart on Day 1
- City tour on Day 2
- Mandatory pre-embarkation health screening and COVID test on Day 2
- Departure transfer from *Greg Mortimer* to airport or hotel on last day
- Onboard accommodation during voyage including daily cabin service
- All meals, snacks, tea and coffee during voyage
- Beer, house wine and soft drinks with dinner
- Captain's Welcome and Farewell reception including four-course dinner, house cocktails, house beer and wine, non-alcoholic beverages
- All shore excursions and Zodiac cruises
- Educational lectures and guiding services from expedition team
- Complimentary access to onboard expedition doctor and medical clinic (initial consult)
- A 3-in-1 waterproof polar expedition jacket
- Complimentary use of muck boots during the voyage
- Port surcharges, permits and landing fees
- Gratuities for ship crew

EXPEDITION EXCLUSIONS

- International or domestic flights not mentioned in the itinerary
- Transfers not mentioned in the itinerary
- Airport arrival or departure taxes
- Passport, visa, and vaccination charges
- Travel insurance or emergency evacuation charges
- Hotels and meals not included in itinerary
- Optional excursions not included in the itinerary
- Optional activity surcharges
- All items of a personal nature including but not limited to: alcoholic beverages and soft drinks (outside of dinner service), laundry services, personal clothing, medical expenses, gratuities, Wi-Fi, email or phone charges.

Day 1 Hobart

Having made your way to Hobart, you will be met by a representative of Aurora Expeditions and transferred to our group hotel. Upon arrival, kindly remind hotel check-in staff to provide you with Aurora Expeditions cabin tags for your luggage. Please clearly label the tags with your name and ship cabin number.

That evening, enjoy a light refreshment as you meet your fellow expeditioners at a Welcome Reception and Pre-Embarkation Briefing. Afterwards, there's free time to dine at your leisure (Dinner not included).

Accommodation: Crowne Plaza Hobart Hotel.

Day 2 Hobart

This morning, please ensure your cabin luggage is fitted with cabin tags clearly labelled with your name and cabin number. Please take your cabin luggage down to hotel reception by 10.00 am. Please keep any valuables or personal items with you throughout the day. Enjoy breakfast in the hotel before a short walking tour of Tasmania's Antarctic heritage (approx. 2 hours).

During this time, your luggage will be transferred to the ship for sanitisation and delivery to your cabin. We will then conduct our final, mandatory pre-embarkation health screening and COVID (rapid antigen) testing before you are transferred to the Port of Hobart for embarkation of the *Greg Mortimer* in the late afternoon. Settle into your cabin before attending important safety briefings, and enjoy the thrill of departure as we 'throw the lines' and set sail.

In the evening, meet your expedition team and crew at the Captain's Welcome Dinner as we follow in the wake of Sir Douglas Mawson and the *Australasian Antarctic Expedition* of 1911, that also sailed down the Derwent River and into Storm Bay. Keep an eye out for the magnificent views of Cape Raoul's striking dolerite cliffs of Tasman Island.

Days 3-5 At sea

Enjoy exciting days at sea, with entertaining talks on exploration and natural history. Spend time on deck photographing seabirds and keeping an eye out for the rare sight of Campbell, Salvins and white-capped albatross, seen in few other regions.

Days 6-8 Auckland Islands & Campbell Island

First discovered in 1806 by British whaler Abraham Bristow, these remote specks of land in the Southern Ocean are a refuge for thousands of birds and sea lions. Depending on weather and sea conditions, Enderby Island, the most northern in the Auckland Islands, is our first landing. Hop aboard a Zodiac to cruise into Sandy Bay, land near a researcher's hut, and be greeted by raucous New Zealand (Hooker's) sea lions, the world's rarest and most endangered of the five sea lion species. It's breeding season, as 500-kilogram adult males fight for the favour of females, who form harems of up to 25 attended by a single dominant bull. Keep an eye out for newborn pups. Enter a forest fit for hobbits, walking among twisted trunks of southern rata trees. Stretch your legs on a hike across the island's megaherb moors, spotting yellow-eyed penguins, light-mantled sooty albatross and royal albatross with a wingspan of nearly 3.5 metres. Our second day begins with an exciting Zodiac cruise through Victoria Passage, a lively channel separating Adams Island from Auckland Island (Motu Maha), and finishes with explorations of Carnley Harbour, with superb Zodiac-cruising, walks through rata forests alive with birdsong and historic sites from early sealers and World War II coastwatchers.

Campbell Island (Motu Ihupuku), New Zealand's most southerly subantarctic island, is the highly eroded remnant of an ancient volcano that rises to 570 metres and cops some rough weather – gusts over 50 knots (96 kph) occur at least 100 days a year. Wind and weather permitting, we plan to Zodiac cruise protected harbours and coves to

photograph waterfalls, yellow-eyed penguins and possibly the reintroduced endemic Campbell Island snipe. At Perseverance Harbour, an opportunity to hike up a boardwalk through flowering megaherb meadows to breeding southern royal albatross allows us to sit quietly and watch as they unfurl their three-metre wingspan, clack their beaks and issue their unforgettable, mournful cries.

Days 9-12 At sea

Marvel at the ULSTEIN X-BOW's ability to smooth our ride as we sail the Southern Ocean, admiring wandering albatross in flight. Cross the Antarctic Convergence, where cold, dense polar waters meet temperate waters, hopefully heralding our first iceberg. Entering the ethereal world of pack ice, rejoice at how quickly the seas calm. Keep a watch for orcas, seals and penguins as we navigate a wonderland few have experienced.

Days 13-19 Ross Sea

Over these next expedition days, the nature and timing of our outings will be dictated by ice, wind and weather and other conditions beyond our control. The places of interest below are a general guide of the places we hope to visit.

Cape Adare

Cape Adare, at the tip of the Ross Sea, is home to Antarctica's largest Adélie penguin colony and site of the first recorded landing in Antarctica. Ice and weather permitting, wend your way through ice-floes to land on the flat, cobbled spit shared by more than a million noisy penguins, many busy feeding chicks before joining the endless conveyor of adults moving to and from the sea. Treading carefully, we plan to make our way to Borchgrevink's Hut, the oldest in Antarctica, where Norwegian/Australian Carsten Borchgrevink and his small team overwintered in 1899-1900. Step inside to inspect the interior and its artefacts and marvel at what it took to spend a dark winter here.

Cape Hallett

Set against the spectacular backdrop the wild Admiralty Mountains, Cape Hallett was the Antarctic foothold for the Australian Bicentennial Antarctic Expedition led by Aurora Expeditions founder (and ship's namesake) Greg Mortimer. In 1988, Greg Mortimer and his team hauled sledges inland from here to climb 4263-m Mt Minto. If conditions permit, we plan to land near an abandoned American/New Zealand base to photograph the many Adélie penguins and Weddell seals on this breathtaking site.

Terra Nova Bay

Named after one of Robert Falcon Scott's relief ships for his 1901-04 *Discovery Expedition*, Terra Nova Bay contains the remains of Drygalski Ice Tongue, what's left after two massive icebergs sheared more than 200 sq km of ice from it in 2005 and 2006. We hope to visit the second largest emperor penguin colony in Antarctica at Cape Washington, and Inexpressible Island, where in 1912, Scott's Northern Party dropped off six men for geological work over six weeks. Pack ice stopped their ship from returning and they spent a miserable winter in a 3.7 m x 2.7 m ice cave they excavated, living on the few seals and penguins they could find. In the Spring, they trekked 320 km around the coast to the main expedition party on Ross Island.

McMurdo Sound

McMurdo Sound could be described as the 'heart of Antarctica'. If the ice permits, we enter a surreal world of exquisite beauty, where steam erupts from the 3,794 metre summit of Mt Erebus, the Transantarctic Mountains

shimmer to the west, and the polar icecap wraps around Ross Island, home to Antarctica's greatest monuments from the Heroic Age of Exploration. If conditions permit, we may have a chance to visit Discovery Hut (Scott's Nimrod expedition), Shackleton's Hut at Cape Royds, and/or Scott's Hut (British Antarctic Expedition) at Cape Evans. Stand quietly amidst artefacts from these great expeditions then step outside to the busy world of Adélie penguins and Weddell seals.

Ross Ice Shelf

Sail along the perfectly cleaved ice cliffs of Antarctica's largest ice shelf. Rising 30 metres from icy waters patrolled by pods of orca, the Ross Ice Shelf is about the size of France and the world's largest body of floating ice. Watch for ethereal snow petrels as they play on air currents sweeping down from the polar ice cap.

Ross Sea Coast

Enjoy an exploration day, as we make our way back to the top of the Ross Sea. We may try landing on Franklin Island, with its vast Adélie penguin rookery and the chance to hike to the island's summit. Or Zodiac-cruise the small rocky islets of Possession Islands; or simply pick a spot on the map to see what we can see.

Balleny Islands

We will attempt to reach the remote Balleny Islands, a 160-km chain of islands that provides resting and breeding habitat for seabirds and three seal species, yet few people have ever landed here. Volcanic in origin, some islands are still active. Elephant, leopard and crabeater seals have been identified in surrounding waters and Adélie penguins breed on shore. Simply seeing the islands would be a thrill, to Zodiac-cruise amongst them even better, a landing – the best. True expedition cruising.

Days 20-22 At sea

As we put the grandeur of Antarctica behind us, these days at sea can mark a time for reflection, reading or pursuing creative activities. But keep watch outside, as these waters are rich in whale species, from humpback and orca, to the greater whale species, like blue.

Days 23 Macquarie Island

Douglas Mawson set up his communication base here in December 1911, and now supports one of the highest concentrations of wildlife in the Southern Ocean. Millions of penguins of four different species – king, rockhopper, gentoo and the endemic royal – breed here. Upon arrival, we hope to land at Sandy Bay, where a boardwalk leads up to a royal penguin rookery teeming with showy birds displaying their golden head feathers. At the shore are stately king penguins and chicks, and above fly black-browed and light-mantled sooty albatross. Fur and elephant seals hide amongst thick tussocks that have come back to life, thanks to a successful pest-eradication program.

Days 24-26 At sea

Heading north, take time to assimilate the rich experiences of the past few weeks. Organise photo files, tidy up a journal or simply relax before stepping back into the 'unreal' world. As you approach Tasmania, breathe in the warmth and smells of the 'Apple Isle', a delight after almost a month away in the frozen latitudes. Like Mawson before us, we make our way into Storm Bay and up the Derwent to Hobart.

Day 27 **Hobart**

After breakfast, farewell your expedition team and disembark to be transferred to the airport or your hotel accommodation.

Important note: In the spirit of expedition travel, we encourage exploration and adventure offering flexibility in challenging environments. This itinerary is only a guide and is subject to change due to weather, sea state, ice and other conditions beyond our control.