

# PHOTOGRAPHERS FIRST LIGHT ANTARCTICA AND SOUTH GEORGIA ISLAND

November 19th - December 6th 2016  
Led by Antony Watson





## ABOUT THIS EXPEDITION

South Georgia Island and Antarctica are miraculous. An island of incredible landscape and wildlife and a white continent of stark and beautiful desolation. For Nature photographers, South Georgia and Antarctica are without doubt the gold standard against which all other photography destinations are measured. Nowhere else on earth offers such incredible landscape and wildlife in such pristine and remote environments.

Our expedition begins with a charter flight from Santiago to Mount Pleasant in the Falkland Islands, where we will board our expedition ship, Polar Pioneer. We will then sail to South Georgia Island where we will explore and photograph the landscape and wildlife before sailing to Antarctica to explore and photograph this amazing continent. At the conclusion of the expedition we will sail back across the Drake Passage to Puerto Williams where we will catch a charter flight to Punta Arenas and conclude our expedition.

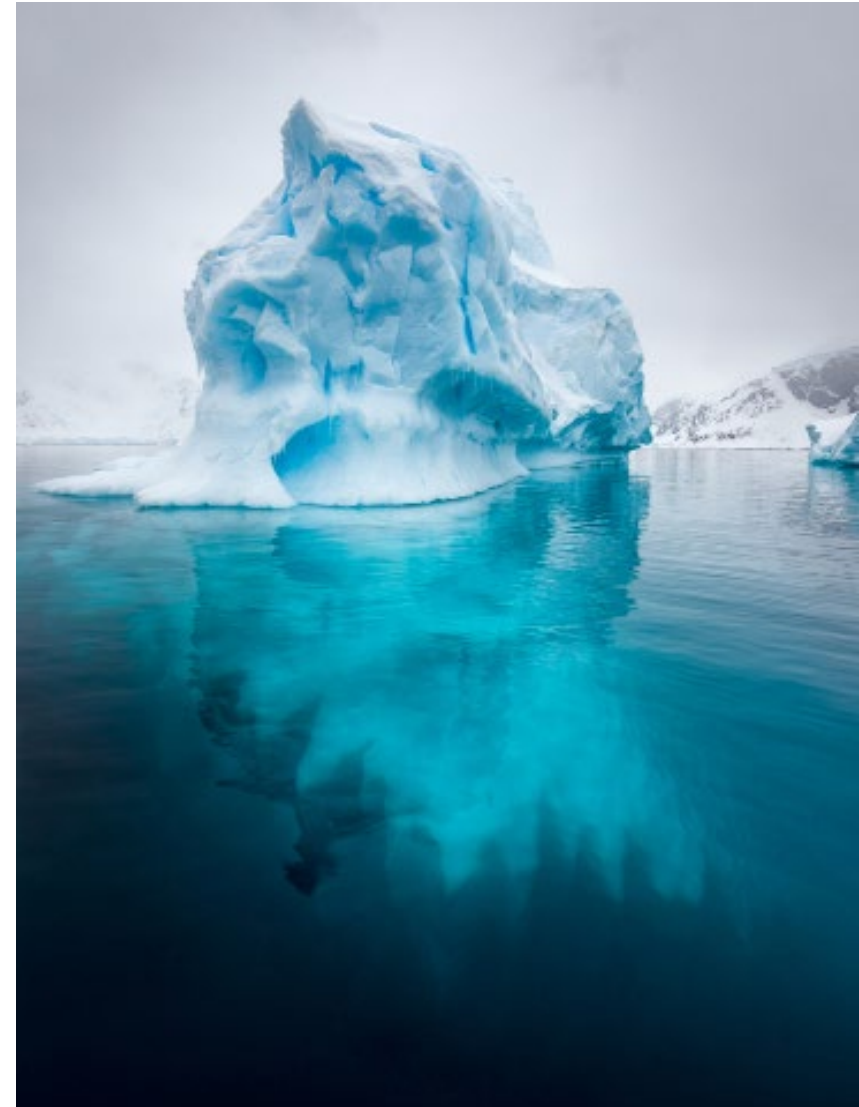
This expedition is for a strictly limited number of 50 participants plus leaders and expedition guide. We will be using an ice hardened expedition ship with a highly experienced crew so that we can position the ship for the best photographs. Our expedition ship the 'Polar Pioneer' is equipped with sufficient zodiacs and crew for all photographers to be shooting simultaneously with plenty of room to spare for camera equipment. So bring what you need!

### EXPEDITION HIGHLIGHTS

- The largest King Penguin Rookeries in the world
- Vast Adélie and Gentoo penguin colonies
- Antarctic Wildlife and Landscape Photography
- Midnight Sun light for Photography
- Giant glaciers, Mountains and Snow Fields
- Ice Hardened, Expedition Class Ship 'Polar Pioneer'

### EXPEDITION FACTS

**Dates:** 19-11-2016 to 06-12-2016  
**Duration:** 18 day Expedition  
**Start:** Santiago, Chile fly to Falklands  
**Finish:** Punta Arenas, Chile



## ITINERARY

18 Day Voyage - November 19 - December 6th 2016

This itinerary includes the flight from Santiago to Mount Pleasant in the Falkland Islands at the beginning of the voyage and the flight from Puerto Williams to Punta Arenas at the conclusion of the expedition.

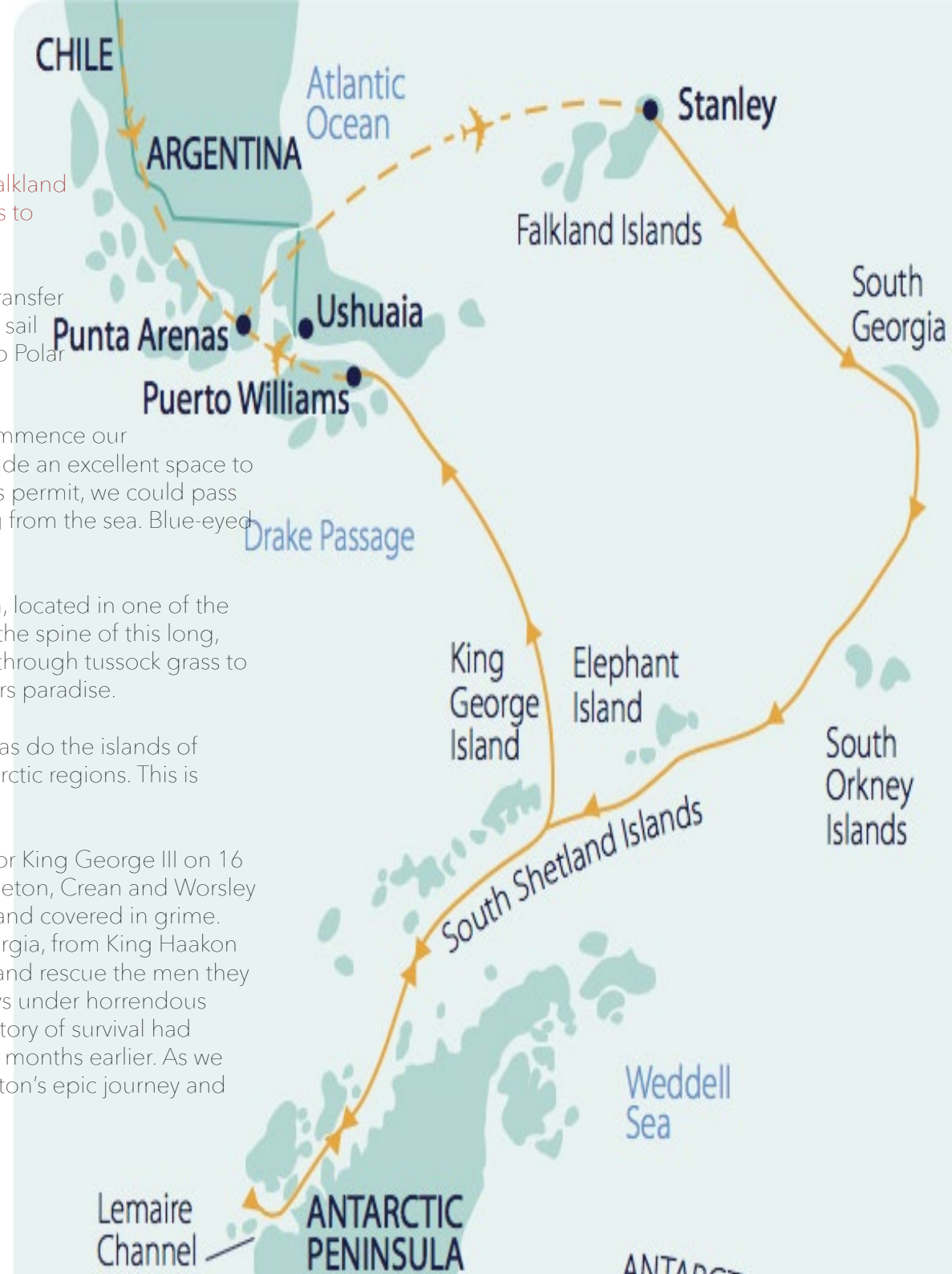
**Day 1** - Fly from Santiago to Mount Pleasant in the Falkland Islands and transfer to our ship 'Polar Pioneer'. Introduction and safety briefings before we set sail for remote South Georgia Island. Transfers from Mount Pleasant Airport to Polar Pioneer are included.

**Days 2 & 3** - Ease into shipboard life as we sail for South Georgia. We commence our photography and nature lectures. The outer decks and flying bridge provide an excellent space to see and photograph whales and sea birds. If time and weather conditions permit, we could pass close to Shag Rocks, a fascinating group of jagged rocky islets protruding from the sea. Blue-eyed cormorants fill the air; their precarious nesting sites are white with guano.

**Day 4 - 8** South Georgia island is a tiny speck in the South Atlantic Ocean, located in one of the most desolate areas of our planet. A 3,000-metre mountain range traces the spine of this long, narrow island. Between the mountains, shattered glaciers carve their way through tussock grass to the deeply indented coastline. It is a landscape and wildlife photographers paradise.

Though geographically speaking, the island lies in the sub antarctic area, as do the islands of Macquarie and Heard, it has a climate more in keeping with the true Antarctic regions. This is because South Georgia lies wholly within the Antarctic Convergence.

South Georgia is a British possession, having been claimed and named for King George III on 16 January 1775 by Captain James Cook. On 20 May 1916, Sir Ernest Shackleton, Crean and Worsley stumbled into the busy whaling station at Stromness; hungry, exhausted and covered in grime. They had just made the first ever crossing of the mountains of South Georgia, from King Haakon Bay, to find help for their three exhausted companions left at Cave Cove and rescue the men they had left on Elephant Island. They had sailed in the James Caird for 16 days under horrendous conditions and found safety in the tiny entrance of Cave Cove. This epic story of survival had begun with the sinking of his ship, the Endurance, in the Weddell Sea, six months earlier. As we explore South Georgia, we will have the opportunity to reflect on Shackleton's epic journey and photograph the awe inspiring landscape.



**Some of the other destinations we plan to visit in South Georgia include:**

### **Grytviken**

Originally a Norwegian sealing and whaling station, it was finally abandoned in 1965. Here we must be careful to avoid stepping on sleeping elephant seals as we skirt the ruins of factory buildings peering into the past, trying to imagine what it was like when whale processing was in full swing. Abandoned ships lie sunken alongside old wharves, while pitted concrete walls remind us of the more recent Falkland's War, which started here. There are 'rusty bits' everywhere for photographers and limitless possibilities for photography amongst the whaling ruins and remnants. Sir Ernest Shackleton died from a heart attack during his final expedition on board the Quest on 6 May 1922. His body was laid to rest here at Grytviken and we hope to make a pilgrimage to visit and photograph the cross his men erected in his memory looking out across beautiful Cumberland Bay.

### **St Andrews Bay**

The sandy black beach is a resting place for hundreds of elephant seals that haul out on the shore to moult. Behind the beach, the sight and sound of tens upon tens of thousands of king penguins at different stages of their breeding cycle will be overwhelming. The glacial river that runs into the sea here will be alive with penguin chicks and elephant seal pups testing their aquatic skills. If we lift our gaze from the wildlife for a moment, we will glimpse the snow-capped peaks of some of the world's most spectacular mountains - the perfect backdrop for our photography.

### **Godthul**

Imagine indented bays lined with bleached whalebones, teeming with fur seals and with penguins just "hanging about". Here you have the opportunity to clamber through the tussock to a spectacular plateau offering magnificent views across the island and the waters beyond. A careful descent leads us to a magnificent Macaroni penguin rookery and yet more photographic opportunities.

### **Prion Island**

We will aim to visit Prion Island where we can sit quietly to watch and photograph serene wandering albatrosses sitting proudly on eggs or cute downy chicks. We may be blessed by the performance of an intimate courtship dance, or may witness a youngster being lovingly fed. We will photograph adolescents exercising their wide wing spans as they try to launch themselves into the air.

Weather and time permitting we may also visit Elsehul Bay, Cooper Bay, Gold Harbor, Possession Bay, Larsen Harbor, Salisbury Plains, Stromness and Right Whale Bay

**Days 9 & 10** - We leave South Georgia (we may visit Drygalski Fjord as we leave South Georgia) and make for Antarctica. We head across the Scotia Sea in a south-westerly direction. There will be plenty of time for wildlife photography from our open bridge. The ocean takes on a whole new perspective once we are surrounded by the surreal presence of floating ice sculptures. The memory of the sight of your first iceberg will remain with you forever.

**Day 11** - Today, if weather permits, we set course for Elephant Island, a half-submerged mountain cloaked with an ice sheet at the outer limits of the South Shetlands. En route, our recaps and lectures will resume and there will be time to gather energy for the busy days ahead.

**Days 12 to 15** - Once we arrive in the calmer waters of the Bransfield and Gerlache Straits in Antarctica, we will generally make landings or Zodiac excursions two to three times a day. Days will be spent cruising and photographing along spectacular ice cliffs, following whales that are feeding near the surface and landing on the continent and its off shore islands to visit penguin rookeries and seal haul outs as well as a few of our favorite spots on the peninsula for photography.

There are many exciting places we may choose to visit and our final itinerary will be planned daily to take advantage of weather and light:

### **Half Moon Island**

A wildlife rich island tucked into a neat bay at the eastern end of Livingston Island. On a clear day the glaciers and mountains of Livingston Island dominate the scene and make for superb photographs. There is a large chinstrap penguin rookery tucked in between basaltic turrets colored by yellow and orange lichens. Gulls nest on these turrets and there are often fur seals and elephant seals hauled out on the pebble beaches. At one extremity of the island there is a large colony of nesting blue-eyed shags. At the other end lies a small Argentine station that is sometimes occupied by scientists conducting research on the penguin colony and surrounding waterways.

## Paradise Harbor

A protected bay surrounded by magnificent peaks and spectacular glaciers, the rocky cliffs of this unforgettable piece of heaven provide perfect nesting sites for blue-eyed shags, terns and gulls. The serenity of Paradise Harbor envelops us once the sound of the dropping anchor fades from our ears. This is a haven for whales and we keep our eyes open for humpbacks, orcas and minke, as well as crabeater seals, as we explore and photograph the bay in Zodiacs.

## Other places we may visit around the Antarctic Peninsula include:

Deception Island, Pleneau Island, Neko Harbor, Vernadsky; a Ukrainian scientific base, Port Lockroy; a historic British base that is now a museum and post office... plus a selection of our other favorite landing sites.

**Days 16 to 17** - We depart Antarctica and cross the Drake Passage. As we approach the tip of South America, our Captain may sail close to legendary Cape Horn, weather conditions permitting.

**Day 18** - During the early morning we quietly slip into dock in Puerto Williams at about 07:00 am. As soon as customs have cleared the ship, we disembark to the world's southern-most town. Puerto Williams has been declared one of the 20 most pristine places on the planet by UNESCO.

After exploring the town we'll board our short (35-minute ) private charter flight back to Punta Arenas, where we'll enjoy a birds' eye view over the breathtaking landscape of Cordillera Darwin. We conclude our expedition when we disembark our charter flight in Punta Arenas.

Please Note: At the conclusion of the expedition flights should not to be booked from Punta Arenas prior to 17:00 on the day of disembarkation. An overnight in Punta Arenas is recommended, but not mandatory.

Please note that all of our itineraries are at the mercy of weather conditions and not all landings are guaranteed. Our itineraries are flexible and will change voyage to voyage, allowing the best chance to make the most of surprising wildlife displays and unexpected opportunities.





## POLAR PIONEER DECK PLAN

### TRIPLE SHARED

Two lower bunks, one upper bunk, a desk, a small washbasin, ample storage, hanging space and portholes. Showers and toilets are very close by and are shared with other main cabins.

### TWIN SHARED

Two lower bunks, a desk, a small washbasin, ample storage, a couch, hanging space and portholes. Showers and toilets are very close by and are shared with other main cabins.

### TWIN PRIVATE

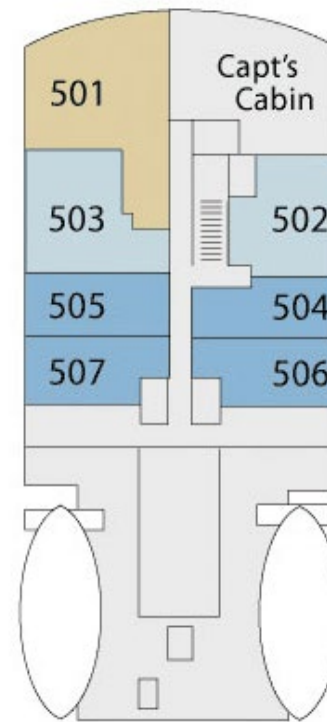
Two lower bunks, a desk, windows, ample storage, hanging space and private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. #402 and #403 have upper and lower bunks and a couch.

### MINI SUITE

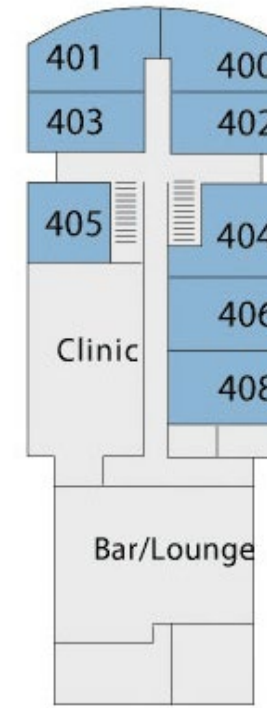
Double bed in a separate room, fold out couch that can be used as a single bed, TV, DVD player, windows, desk, table area, ample storage, hanging space, fridge and private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin.

### CAPTAIN'S SUITE

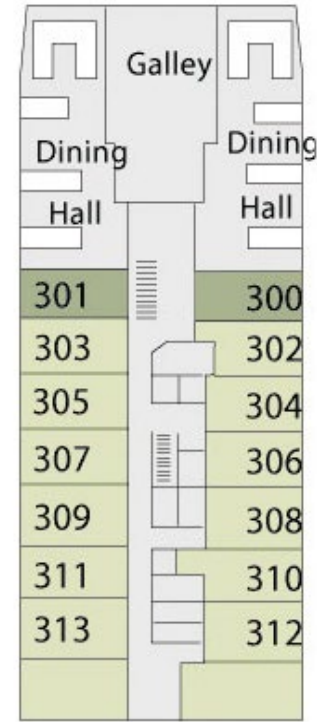
Double bed in a separate room plus fold out couch that can be used as a single bed, forward and port windows, lounge and table area, ample storage, fridge TV and DVD player and private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin.



Captain's Deck



Upper Deck



Main Deck

### DECK

Main  
Main  
Upper/Captain's  
Captain's  
Captain's

### CABIN

Triple, shared facilities  
Twin, shared facilities  
Twin, private facilities  
Mini Suite, private facilities  
Suite, private facilities

### PRICE P/ PERSON

USD \$14,300  
USD \$17,200  
USD \$20,790  
USD \$22,785  
USD \$24,200

Prices quoted are per person in US\$, based on twin-share. If you wish to have your own private cabin there is a single occupancy of 1.7 times the twin share price. No single travel fees apply if you are willing to share your cabin (triple & twin cabins only).

Fuel surcharge may apply in the event of significant fuel price increases. Please note that places are filled on a first come, first served basis and once they are spoken for that's it.

Please contact Antony Watson at [antony@antonywatson.com](mailto:antony@antonywatson.com) for more information or to request a reservation and booking form.



## EXPEDITION INCLUSIONS

- Accommodation on board Polar Pioneer and use of all public areas for the duration of the expedition
- All meals on board
- All Photography Guide Services
- All sightseeing, shore excursions and zodiac rides as required for the cruise itinerary
- All Port landing service charges
- Lectures, DVD's Slide shows and films on board ship
- Service of the vessel's Expedition Staff
- Basic attention and treatment by the ship's Medical Doctor
- Pre-Departure Information and Briefing
- Flight from Santiago to Mount Pleasant
- Flight from Puerto Williams to Punta Arenas

## PAYMENT TERMS

A \$2,500 USD deposit must be paid at time of registration to secure your place, with the balance due 90 days before the scheduled date of departure. All payments are made directly to the expedition charter company.

## FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

This expedition is suitable for a wide range of ages and physical abilities. Passengers on a voyage to Antarctica should be capable of walking up and down the ships gangway, getting in and out of zodiacs with staff assistance, walking on slippery rocks and snow.

Please contact Antony Watson at [antony@antonywatson.com](mailto:antony@antonywatson.com) for more information or to request a reservation and booking form.

## EXPEDITION EXCLUSIONS

- Air or land transportation to or from the ship (Other than that noted in the inclusions)
- Excess baggage on any flights
- Vaccination costs / passport / visa fees (if required)
- Airport departure or arrival tax or any government taxes or levies
- Items of a personal nature, laundry, bar charges, phone calls, etc.
- Any travel or personal insurances or emergency evacuation charges
- Any hotels, meals, transfers or other services before or after the expedition
- Any medication or treatments by the ship's medical staff other than basic day-to-day necessities
- Please note that travel insurance is mandatory and is not included in the expedition cost.



# PHOTOGRAPH THE SNOW KINGS OF SOUTH GEORGIA

South Georgia Island is home to the largest King Penguin rookeries in the world. During the expedition we will visit a number of different locations with tens of thousands of King Penguins.





## Polar Light

In Antarctica we will experience hours of wonderful soft light for Photography. We will time our zodiac cruises and landings to take advantage of the best possible light.





# EXPLORE AND PHOTOGRAPH THE MAJESTY OF ANTARCTICA



## **The Beauty of Antarctica**

*The thing that is most beautiful about Antarctica for me is the light. It's like no other light on Earth, because the air is so free of impurities. You get drugged by it, like when you listen to one of your favorite songs. The light there is a mood-enhancing substance.*

- Jon Krakauer



### Complimentary Polar Jacket

Each passenger will receive their very own Expedition waterproof multi-purpose jacket to use on the voyage. You will receive a link via email prior to your departure to view sizing options and to order your jacket, which will be ready and waiting for you at the start of your voyage.



## ANTARCTICA

*Antarctica has this mythic weight. It resides in the collective unconscious of so many people, and it makes this huge impact, just like outer space. It's like going to the moon.*

- Jon Krakauer

