

# Expedition to Charcot & Peter I Islands

From **14/12/2021**  
to **28/12/2021**

Ship: **LE COMMANDANT CHARCOT**

From **Ushuaia**  
to **Ushuaia**



Overnight in Santiago + flight Santiago/Ushuaia +  
transfers + flight Ushuaia/Santiago

Landing on **Peter I Island** is like landing on **the moon!** This image illustrates how extremely difficult it is to access this **small volcanic island** located in the **Bellingshausen Sea** 450 km (280 miles) from the Antarctic coasts, on which only a rare few people have set foot, like the astronauts on the surface of the moon.

Discovered in February 1821, **Peter I Island** could only be approached for the first time in 1929, as the ice front made approach and disembarkation difficult. Its summit still remains untouched to this day.

This unusual itinerary will also provide an opportunity to approach **Charcot Island**, thus named by **Captain Charcot** in memory of his father during its discovery in 1910.

*We are privileged guests in these remote lands where we are at the mercy of weather, ice, tidal and current conditions. Landings on certain sites and the observation of certain wildlife cannot be guaranteed. They vary from day to day, making each PONANT cruise a unique experience. The Captain and the Expedition Leader will make every effort to ensure that your experience is as rich as possible, while complying with the safety rules and instructions imposed by the IAATO.*



The information in this document is valid as of 19/2/2021

# Expedition to Charcot & Peter I Islands

## YOUR STOPOVERS :

### USHUAIA

Embarkation 14/12/2021 from 16h00 to 17h00

Departure 14/12/2021 at 18h00

Capital of Argentina's **Tierra del Fuego** province, Ushuaia is considered the gateway to the White Continent and the South Pole. Nicknamed "**El fin del mundo**" by the Argentinian people, this city at the end of the world nestles in the shelter of mountains surrounded by fertile plains that the wildlife seem to have chosen as the ultimate sanctuary. With its exceptional site, where the Andes plunge straight into the sea, Ushuaia is one of the most fascinating places on earth, its very name evocative of journeys to the unlikely and the inaccessible...

### CROSSING THE DRAKE PASSAGE

Arrival 15/12/2021

Departure 16/12/2021

Use your days spent in the Drake Passage to familiarise yourself with your ship and deepen your knowledge of the Antarctic. The Expedition Leader will first present the IAATO rules of conduct that must be observed during landings in the region and will explain everything you need to know about the Zodiac<sup>®</sup> outings. Lectures about the history and wildlife of the Antarctic will be an opportunity for you to learn more about this magical region, where every cruise is a unique experience. From the ship's bridge, you will experience exceptional sailing moments before joining the naturalist-guides on your ship's exterior decks to look out for albatrosses, cape petrels, and other seabirds flying over the Drake Passage.

### CROSSING THE ANTARCTIC CIRCLE

Arrival 17/12/2021

Departure 17/12/2021

Weather permitting, we'll cross the mythic line of the **Antarctic Polar Circle**, located along **66°33' south of the Equator**. This iconic area demarcates the point from which it is possible to view the midnight sun during the December solstice. Within this circle, the sun remains above the horizon for 24 consecutive hours at least once a year. Crossing this line, an experience known to few people, is sure to be an unforgettable highlight of your cruise through the polar regions.

### DETAILLE ISLAND

Arrival 17/12/2021

Departure 17/12/2021

Detaille Island is a small island situated off the Loubet Coast in the Crystal Sound, a magnificent region surrounded

by snow-covered peaks. A British research station was set up there in 1956, ahead of the International Geophysical Year 1957-58. Like the International Polar Years, organised for the first time in 1882-83, the purpose of this event was to take a coordinated approach to the geophysical research conducted by the different nations. With the island difficult to access, this station was shut down in 1959. The vestiges of the buildings and sledge dog pens that made it possible to map more than 4,000 miles around the island are now maintained by the United Kingdom Heritage Trust.

## THE GULLET

Arrival 18/12/2021

Departure 18/12/2021

The sumptuous landscapes of this narrow channel between Adelaide Island and Graham Land attract all visitors sailing towards Marguerite Bay. It is like an ice palace, its immaculate white walls reflected in the frozen mirror formed by the waters of the Southern Ocean, scattered with icebergs and gleaming blocks of ice. This passage was explored for the first time by the Jean-Baptiste Charcot expedition in 1909, which sketched its position. It was then surveyed in 1936 by the British expedition under John Rymill. It is here in this magical setting that some of the first subaquatic images of the Antarctic were shot during Philippe Cousteau's four-month expedition to Antarctica between 1972 and 1973.

## POURQUOI PAS ISLAND

Arrival 18/12/2021

Departure 18/12/2021

*Le Commandant Charcot* will land on the coast of Pourquoi Pas Island, so named in the 1930s by John Riddoch Rymill in honour of Jean-Baptiste Charcot, who discovered it from aboard his ship *Le Pourquoi Pas ?* during his second expedition to Antarctica between 1908 and 1910. This mountainous island, situated in the north of Marguerite Bay between Graham Land and Adelaide Island, is 28 km long and 14 km large. It is scattered with narrow fjords and snow-covered mountains. You will go to shore in a Zodiac® dinghy with your expedition team and you could get the chance to observe Adelie penguins going about their business on the island's rocky shores.

## MARGUERITE BAY

Arrival 19/12/2021

Departure 19/12/2021

The icebergs are each more majestic than the next and scattered around the deep and intense blue waters of Marguerite Bay, one of the most beautiful regions in the Antarctic. It is delimited in the north by the mountainous Adelaide Island, in the south by George VI Sound and Alexander Island, and in the east by the Fallières Coast. Charcot named it after his wife during his second expedition to the Antarctic between 1908 and 1910. In 1909, in the southern summer when the skies are at their clearest, he led an important scientific mission to map and study this region. The bay is home to a number of cetaceans and you may get the chance to observe leopard seals or Adelie penguins.

## EXPEDITION TO CHARCOT ISLAND

Arrival 20/12/2021

Departure 21/12/2021

When he discovered this island surrounded by sea ice in 1910 from aboard the *Pourquoi Pas ?* as he mapped Alexander Island, Jean-Baptiste Charcot had not be able to get less than 40 miles away from it. Situated in a zone that experiences frequent low-pressure systems and regular cloud cover, the island remains in many ways an enigma. It is entirely covered in ice and sheer cliffs, with the exception of the rocky outcrops extending over a dozen kilometres in the far north-west. The ice in the narrowest part of Wilkins Sound has been cracking in recent times, thus officially detaching this island from its neighbour, Alexander Island, lying 50 km away. Very few people have landed on this largely untouched island, whose waters attract numerous seabirds, such as petrels, Antarctic terns and skuas.

## EXPEDITION TO PETER I ISLAND

Arrival 22/12/2021

Departure 23/12/2021

You will then head for the legendary Peter I Island. Located 450 km away from the Atlantic coast, it was discovered in 1821 by the Russian explorer Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen, who named it in honour of the Russian tsar Peter the Great. In 1909, Captain Charcot sighted it for the first time from aboard the *Pourquoi Pas ?*, but was unable to land there: *"In the parting mists, one or two miles away, an enormous black mass shrouded in clouds appears suddenly before us: it is Peter I Island."* Surrounded by pack ice and with about 95% of its surface covered by ice, this volcanic island, whose highest peak reaches 1,640 metres, is protected by ice cliffs some 40 metres tall, making any approach difficult.

## AT SEA ABOARD LE COMMANDANT-CHARCOT

Arrival 24/12/2021

Departure 24/12/2021

Spend exceptional moments sailing aboard *Le Commandant-Charcot*, the world's first luxury polar exploration vessel and the first PC2-class polar cruise ship capable of sailing into the very heart of the ice, on seas and oceans which the frozen conditions render inaccessible to ordinary ships. *Le Commandant-Charcot* is fitted with oceanographic and scientific equipment selected by a committee of experts. Take advantage of the on-board lectures and opportunities for discussion with these specialists to learn more about the poles. Participate in furthering scientific research with PONANT and let us discover together what these fascinating destinations have yet to reveal to us.

## THE GULLET

Arrival 25/12/2021

Departure 25/12/2021

The sumptuous landscapes of this narrow channel between Adelaide Island and Graham Land attract all visitors sailing towards Marguerite Bay. It is like an ice palace, its immaculate white walls reflected in the frozen mirror formed by the waters of the Southern Ocean, scattered with icebergs and gleaming blocks of ice. This passage was explored for the first time by the Jean-Baptiste Charcot expedition in 1909, which sketched its position. It was then surveyed in 1936 by the British expedition under John Rymill. It is here in this magical setting that some of the first subaquatic images of the Antarctic were shot during Philippe Cousteau's four-month expedition to Antarctica.

between 1972 and 1973.

## CROSSING THE DRAKE PASSAGE

Arrival 26/12/2021

Departure 27/12/2021

If there is one place, one sea, one waterway dreaded by tourists, researchers and hardened seafarers alike, it is undoubtedly **Drake Passage**. Situated at the latitude of the infamous Furious Fifties winds, between Cape Horn and the South Shetland Islands, it is **the shortest route to connect Antarctica to South America**. Seasoned navigators will tell you that you must earn your visit to the White Continent! As the Antarctic convergence zone where cold currents rising up from the South Pole meet warmer equatorial water masses, Drake Passage harbours a very diverse marine fauna. Don't forget to look to the sky to catch a glimpse of elegant albatross and **Cape petrels**, playfully floating about in the wind around your ship.

## USHUAIA

Arrival 28/12/2021 early morning

Disembarkation 28/12/2021 at 08h00

Capital of Argentina's **Tierra del Fuego** province, Ushuaia is considered the gateway to the White Continent and the South Pole. Nicknamed "**El fin del mundo**" by the Argentinian people, this city at the end of the world nestles in the shelter of mountains surrounded by fertile plains that the wildlife seem to have chosen as the ultimate sanctuary. With its exceptional site, where the Andes plunge straight into the sea, Ushuaia is one of the most fascinating places on earth, its very name evocative of journeys to the unlikely and the inaccessible...