



Darwin's Route from Punta Arenas

Re-trace the route of world-famous scientist Charles Darwin, visit Patagonia and explore his stomping grounds. Learn from experts about his research, scientific discoveries, sailing route and landing points.



YOUR
ADVENTURE
AWAITS

9 days/8 nights

ITINERARY

Day 1: Punta Arenas

Check in at the pier at 1385 O'Higgins Street (Arturo Prat Port) in Punta Arenas between 13:00 and 17:00 (1-5 PM) on the day of your cruise departure. Board the MV Stella Australis at 18:00 (6 PM). After a welcoming cocktail reception hosted by the captain and his crew, the ship departs for one of the remotest corners of planet Earth. During the night we cross the Strait of Magellan and enter the labyrinth of channels that define the southern extreme of Patagonian. The twinkling lights of Punta Arenas gradually fade into the distance as we enter the Whiteside Canal between Darwin Island and Isla Grande de Tierra del Fuego.

Day 2: Ainsworth Bay - Tuckers Islets

By dawn Stella Australis is sailing up Admiralty Sound (Seno Almirantazgo), a spectacular offshoot of the Strait of Magellan that stretches nearly halfway across Tierra del Fuego. The snow-capped peaks of Karukinka Natural Park stretch along the north side of the sound, while the south shore is defined by the deep fjords and broad bays of Alberto de Agostini National Park. We go ashore at Ainsworth Bay, which harbours copious bird life and a colony of southern elephant seals which can sometimes be spotted from the Zodiacs. Two guided excursions are available: one is along the edge of a stream, peat bog and beaver habitat to a waterfall-and-moss-covered rock face tucked deep inside a pristine sub-polar forest; the other is a more strenuous hike along the crest of a glacial moraine. Both afford views of Marinelli Glacier and the Darwin Mountains. Leaving Ainsworth Bay behind, we sail west along the sound to the Tucker Islets. After lunch, we board the Zodiacs again for a close-up view of the Magellan penguins that inhabit the tiny islands. More than 4,000 penguins use Tucker as a place to nest, give birth and nurture their chicks. Many other bird species also frequent the area including king and rock cormorants, oystercatchers, Chilean skuas, kelp geese, dolphin gulls, eagles and even the occasional Andean condor. In September and April — when the penguins live elsewhere — this excursion is replaced by a short walk to a glacier at nearby Brookes Bay.

Day 3: Pia Glacier - Glacier Alley

Overnight we sail around the western end of Tierra del Fuego via the very narrow Gabriel Channel, Magdalena Channel and Cockburn Channel. After rounding the remote Brecknock Peninsula, Stella Australis tacks eastward and enters the Beagle Channel again. By morning we are entering Pia Fjord and boarding the Zodiacs for a shore excursion to Pia Glacier. After disembarking we take a short hike to gain a panoramic view of the spectacular glacier, which extends from the mountaintops down to the sea or a longer much more difficult walk up a lateral moraine of the old Pia Glacier. No one knows for certain how the hulking mass of snow and ice got its feminine moniker, but one theory says it was named for Princess Maria Pia of Savoy (1847-1911), daughter of the Italian king. Back on-board Stella Australis, we continue east along the Beagle Channel through an area called Glacier Alley. Living up to its name, the passage features a number of impressive tidewater glaciers flowing down from the Darwin Mountains and Darwin Ice Sheet on the north shore. Most of them named after European countries — Holland, Italy, Germany, Spain and France.

Day 4: Cape Horn - Wulaia Bay

During the early morning we sail down the narrow Murray Channel between Navarino and Hoste islands and drop anchor at historic Wulaia Bay. Australis is the only cruise ship company with permission from Chilean authorities to navigate the Murray Channel to Cape Horn, and because of its exclusive concession the only travel company allowed to land passengers at Wulaia Bay.



Wulaia Bay is one of the few places in the archipelago where the human history is just as compelling as the natural environment. Originally the site of one of the region's largest Yámana aboriginal settlements, the bay was described by Charles Darwin and sketched by Captain FitzRoy in the 1830s during their voyages on the HMS Beagle. This area is also renowned for the mesmerizing beauty and dramatic geography. After a visit to the small Australis-sponsored museum in the old radio station — which is especially strong on the Yámana people and European missionaries in the area — passengers have a choice of three hikes (of increasing degrees of difficulty) that ascend the heavily wooded mountain behind the bay. On all of these you will be strolling through an enchanted Magellan forest of lengas, coigües, canelos, Ñirres ferns, and other endemic fauna to reach a panoramic viewpoint overlooking the bay. Before leaving Wulaia Bay, drop something into the wooden mail barrel inside the museum — letters or postcards meant to be hand delivered by future travellers — an ancient mariner tradition revived by Australis. In the afternoon we cruise across Nassau Bay into the remote archipelago that includes Cape Horn National Park. Weather and sea conditions permitting, we shall go ashore on the windswept island that harbors legendary Cape Horn (Cabo de Hornos). Discovered in 1616 by a Dutch maritime expedition — and named after the town of Hoorn in West Friesland — Cape Horn is a sheer 425-meter (1,394-foot) high rocky promontory overlooking the turbulent waters of the Drake Passage. For many years it was the only navigation route between the Pacific and Atlantic, and was often referred to as the “End of the Earth.” The park was declared a World Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 2005. The Chilean navy maintains a permanent lighthouse on the island, staffed by a lightkeeper and his family, as well as the tiny Stella Maris Chapel and modern Cape Horn Monument.

Day 5: Ushuaia

The following morning we sail into Argentine waters and dock in Ushuaia, the world's southernmost city. Disembarkation is scheduled at 8 AM. You have almost a full day to explore Ushuaia, founded in 1884 and one of the original points of contact between the indigenous Yámana and European cultures. Its name derives from the Yámana word for ‘penetrating bay’ and it's surrounded by the southernmost Andes peaks. With around 65,000 inhabitants, Ushuaia is the second largest city in Tierra del Fuego (after Rio Grande). Among its highlights is the Prison at the End of the World, a former penitentiary that is now a maritime museum, Antarctic collection and memorial to those once incarcerated there. The city is also good for shopping (especially locally made chocolate) or hanging out in its many cafes. Passengers are required to reboard Stella Australis at 17:30 (5:30 PM). After a welcoming cocktail reception hosted by the captain and his crew, the ship departs for more adventures in Tierra del Fuego. During the night we traverse the Beagle Channel, cross back into Chilean territorial waters, and turn into the narrow Murray Channel between Navarino and Hoste islands.

Day 6: Cape Horn - Wulaia Bay

By early morning, Stella Australis is once again cruising across Nassau Bay to Cape Horn. Our itinerary day repeats the shore landings and other activities from Day 4. However, second landings at some of the more iconic spots along the route can sometimes be more rewarding than the first time around and give you more time to explore each place in depth. At Cape Horn you have a second chance to visit the Stella Maris Chapel, chat with the lighthouse keeper and his family, or photograph the unusual sub-polar flora that covers the heights. At Wulaia Bay, explore the museum in much more depth, strike out on a longer walk than last time, bird watch along the shore, or sort through the mail barrel to see if anyone lives close to your own home. This second approach also increases your chances of landing on Cape Horn Island.

Day 7: Pia Glacier - Garibaldi Glacier

After nightfall we reenter the Beagle Channel and sail westward along the southern edge of Tierra del Fuego into a watery wonderland protected within the confines of Alberto de Agostini National Park. By morning we are entering Pia Fjord again and another chance to hike beside its famous glacier. Making our way further west along the Beagle Channel, we enter another long fjord and drop anchor near Garibaldi Glacier for another shore excursion. Garibaldi is one of only three glaciers in Patagonia gaining mass rather than staying the same or slowly shrinking. This time we hike through virgin Magellanic forest to a glacial waterfall, a towering wall of ferns and moss, and spectacular viewpoints looking down on the glacier and fjord. The walk is demanding — very steep, negligible trail, rough footing — and not for everyone. For those who choose to stay on-board, our captain will point the bow towards the beautiful sky blue Garibaldi Glacier so everyone can enjoy the panoramic view from the upper decks.

Day 8: De Agostini Sound - Aguila Glacier

Early in the morning we will sail through Cockburn Channel and enter Agostini Sound, where it's possible to see glaciers that descend from the middle of the Darwin Mountain Range — some of them reaching the water. We will disembark and go for an easy walk around a lagoon formed by the melting of the Águila Glacier, eventually reaching a spot right in front of that glacier with stunning views. In the afternoon, we will approach the Condor Glacier via Zodiac — and hopefully see some of the abundant Andean Condors in the area.

Day 9: Magdalena Island - Punta Arenas

After an overnight cruise through Magdalena Channel and back into the Strait of Magellan, we anchor off Magdalena Island*, which lies about halfway between Tierra del Fuego and the Chilean mainland. Crowned by a distinctive lighthouse, the island used to be an essential source of supplies for navigators and explorers and is inhabited by an immense colony of Magellanic penguins. At the break of dawn, weather permitting, we go ashore and hike a path that



leads through thousands of penguins to a small museum lodged inside the vintage 1902 lighthouse. Many other bird species are also found on the island. In September and April — when the penguins dwell elsewhere — this excursion is replaced by a ride aboard Zodiacs to Marta Island to observe South American sea lions. After a short cruise south along the strait, disembarkation at Punta Arenas is scheduled for around 11:30 AM.

**Camera extension poles/tripods are not allowed on Magdalena Island.*

Details

Group Size: N/A

2019 Seasonal Dates:

Low season:

March, 2019: 21, 29

High season:

January, 2019: 08, 16, 24

February, 2019: 01, 09, 17, 25

March, 2019: 05, 13

Prices 2019:

Promo:

Category B - US\$2,592

Category A - US\$3,478

Category AA - US\$3,650

Category AAA - US\$3,823

AA Superior - US\$4,599

AAA Superior - US\$4,815

Low season:

Category B - US\$3,240

Category A - US\$5,323

Category AA - US\$5,575

Category AAA - US\$5,843

AA Superior - US\$6,961

AAA Superior - US\$7,297

High season:

Category B - US\$4,136

Category A - US\$5,323

Category AA - US\$5,575

Category AAA - US\$5,843

AA Superior - US\$6,961

AAA Superior - US\$7,297

Port tax, migration fee and national park fee: US\$70 per person

Rates are shown in US\$ per person, based on two people sharing a cabin in the category shown. Single rates are available in categories A, AA, AAA, AA Sup or AAA Sup at 150% of the category rate. Single rate does not apply to Category B. Children between 1 and 3 travel free if sharing a bed with their parents. Children between 4 and 12 receive a 50% discount, sharing a cabin with an adult.

All rates shown are subject to change by the expedition company based on available inventory.

Trip Code:

008750 - W20



INCLUDED

- Accommodation aboard ship
- Sea transportation
- All meals
- Open bar including wines, beverages and liquors
- Shore excursions
- On-board entertainment

NOT INCLUDED

- Port tax, migration fee, and national park fee, approx. US\$60 per person (subject to change by the port authorities)
- Airfare to/from Punta Arenas
- Passport and visa fees, if required
- Travel insurance
- Gratuities
- Items of a personal nature

TOUR NOTES

Two centuries after his birth, Charles Darwin's legacy of research continues to surprise the world with his theories on natural selection, his detailed observations and interpretations.

The excursions described in the itineraries can normally be carried out. Notwithstanding the above, Transportes Marítimos Terra Australis S.A., Transportes Marítimos Via Australis S.A., and Transportes Marítimos Geo Australis S.A reserve the right to reschedule, shorten, or alter all or part of the itineraries and/or excursions without prior notice, in order to safeguard the wellbeing and safety of passengers, preserve the environment, or due to any extraordinary circumstances, acts of God or force majeure. For the same reasons, the hours of departure or arrival of the vessels may be subject to change. There is no guarantee of wildlife sighting because the precise location of these animals cannot be confirmed.

IMPORTANT: The itinerary on the eight-night Punta Arenas-Ushuaia-Punta Arenas cruise repeats excursions on Days 4 and 6 (landing on Cape Horn and Wulaia Bay) and visits Pia Glacier twice, on Days 3 and 7.

There will be several presentations on-board such as the Navigation Route, Discovering Tierra del Fuego, Cape Horn, Strait of Magellan, Glaciology in Patagonia and Informative Progress.

Disclaimer: We do our utmost to ensure that information posted on our website is correct at the time of publication, however trip details are subject to change without notice by the suppliers and operators involved. We update the information as soon as possible when changes are advised to us, however, we cannot assume responsibility for such changes made by the suppliers and operators.

ROUTE MAP





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Prices listed on our website are stated in Canadian Dollars unless otherwise indicated. Tour details, inclusions and prices were valid at the time of publication but are subject to change without notice due to currency fluctuations, tax increases and at the discretion of the supplier(s). Current prices will be re-quoted for you at the time of booking. By air, land or sea, we can take you anywhere – contact us for your quote today!