Wild Nature between Argentina and the Falkland Islands

From **12/03/2024** to **26/03/2024**	Ship: ***L'AUSTRAL***	From **Ushuaia** to **Buenos Aires**



This 15-day cruise takes you on a deep-dive to discover surprising and curious wildlife in an exceptional and pristine natural setting. Board *L'Austral* for a great adventure that will take you from **Tierra del Fuego** to **the Falkland Islands**, from the **Chubut province** to the bustling capital of **Argentina**.

After setting sail from Ushuaia, you will chart a course for the **legendary Cape Horn**, where the Atlantic and Pacific oceans meet in a tumult of rough seas, before sailing toward **Isla de los Estados** for an unforgettable journey. The island is home to the famous **Lighthouse at the End of the World**, after which a Jules Verne novel was named.

You will leave Tierra del Fuego in your wake to discover the magnificent Falkland Islands over five unforgettable day and as you sail in this **archipelago of 200 islands**, you will be escorted by sei whales. Composing the wild beauty of the shorelines are beaches of white sand, jagged cliffs, windswept moors and tall grass swaying with the wind. This is the perfect setting for the black-browed albatrosses watching from above, the Gentoo and king penguins, elephant and fur seals, and sea lions. This season is ideal for spotting the young, curious and spirited adolescents that are preparing to leave their parent. ***L'Austral* is the first cruise ship to cross the Falkland Sound**, a winding channel separating the archipelago's two main islands. On board, admire the spectacle of endless moors interspersed by the bays and coves punctuating the coastline.

The scenery soon shifts, as the mountains give way to the barren landscapes of the **Chubut** province, in Argentine Patagonia. Welcome to the **Valdes Peninsula**! This wildlife sanctuary, where the beauty of the underwater world is unmatched, also reveals numerous treasures on land. The scenery is composed of arid steppes, a rich and varied flora, and distinctive haciendas. In these unspoiled lands home to more than 180 bird species, **orcas** hunt young **maned seals** on the beaches under the watchful eye of the **Magellanic penguins**, as **guanacos** gallop across the

arid plains and **dusky dolphins** swim around peacefully. Here, the majestic beauty of nature offers a gateway to a whole new world.

We are privileged guests in these extreme lands where we are at the mercy of weather and ice 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 29/03/2024

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YOUR STOPOVERS :

USHUAIA

Embarkation 12/03/2024 from 16:00 to 17:00
Departure 12/03/2024 at 18:00

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...

SAILING AROUND CAPE HORN

Arrival 13/03/2024
Departure 13/03/2024

It's at the meeting point between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans that you enter Chilean Patagonia where you head for the Tierra del Fuego archipelago and its famous **Cape Horn.** From the top of its impressive 425-metre high cliff, South America's southernmost tip has, for many centuries, seen merchant ships from the world over passing by. Because of its legendary storms and rough seas, getting round this cape has gone down in history as a challenge for all seafarers.

SAILING ALONG ISLA DE LOS ESTADOS

Arrival 14/03/2024
Departure 14/03/2024

Mountainous and rugged, the **Isla de los Estados** reveals the last ripples of the Andean cordillera. At the extreme far-east of the Tierra del Fuego, this tiny Argentinean island **edged with deep**, narrow bays, is a real **nature sanctuary**. From the sea, admire its relief, covered with a dense and **inaccessible forest**, and the **rich wildlife** that peoples its waters (Magellanic penguins, Commerson's dolphins, etc.). This mysterious island is home to the lighthouse that inspired Jules Verne's *Lighthouse at the end of the world* - and you may be lucky enough to see it during your journey.

BLEAKER ISLAND

Arrival 15/03/2024
Departure 15/03/2024

The name of the island, a corruption of the word "breaker", is in reference to the waves that break on the shores of

this land exposed to the turbulence of the Atlantic Ocean. On the southeastern edge of the Falkland Islands, the swells pounds the low cliffs of this narrow strip of land interspersed with vast beaches of white sand or pebbles. Covered in pasture where a few sheep and bovines roam, the island is, in part, a National Nature Reserve. From gentoo penguins to king penguins, blackish oystercatchers, and large colonies of imperial shags, a total of some fifty bird species live here. In a Zodiac dinghy or on foot, discover the beauty of the Falklands with this unique port of call.

PORT STANLEY

Arrival 15/03/2024
Departure 15/03/2024

Situated at the far eastern end of the **Falklands' largest island, Port Stanley**, is the capital of this remote archipelago in the South Atlantic, composed of nearly 700 islands and islets. In 1764, **Louis Antoine de Bougainville** settled the first pioneers here and the port grew rapidly. Placed under the Spanish crown in 1767, then under British sovereignty since 1833, the town has retained some South American features fused with the **Victorian style** that punctuate the city, and the houses with their colourful roofs brighten the moorland landscapes with their windy and harsh climate reminiscent of the Scottish islands of Orkneys or Shetland. In front of the Cathedral, built in 1933, an arch made of whale jaw bones reminds us that Port Stanley was once a whaling port.

BARREN ISLAND

Arrival 16/03/2024
Departure 16/03/2024

At the southern entrance of the Falkland Sound, Barren Island is composed of plains dotted with ponds and, along its coast, numerous coves. As fur seals and sea lions bask on its shores, colonies of giant petrels fly over this island which is also home to an abundant colony of gentoo penguins. You will arrive at the island in a zodiac dinghy, to discover its incredible diversity. This will be an unforgettable moment for those who enjoy unspoiled and majestic scenery.

SAILING IN THE FALKLAND SOUND

Arrival 16/03/2024
Departure 16/03/2024

Between the two main lands of the Falkland Islands, West Falkland and East Falkland, your ship will cut a path to the heart of these remote islands. For the first time, a cruise ship will sail on the Falkland Sound, a channel where the deep blue of the water merges with the distinctive green of the peat-covered moors. Admire this peaceful prairie landscape punctuated by coves and bays which you will discover as you sail along.

CARCASS ISLAND

Arrival 17/03/2024
Departure 17/03/2024

Situated in the north-west of the Falklands, **Carcass Island** was named after the ship *HMS Carcass*, which visited the island in the late 18th century. Its landscapes, combining steep rocks, sheer cliffs, wild expanses and white-sand beaches, form a rich and varied panorama that amateur or experienced bird watchers will appreciate. On this island,

one of the few where no predators have been introduced, numerous species of birds live, breed and are born in total serenity. Due to the fresh, windy and humid subarctic oceanic climate, a fauna and flora similar to those of Patagonia, situated 460 km (286 miles) away, thrive here. You could get the chance to observe **royal or southern rockhopper penguins**.

THE NECK, SAUNDERS ISLAND

Arrival 17/03/2024
Departure 17/03/2024

The Neck is a narrow stretch of land connecting the two sides of **Saunders Island**, located on the north-western edge of the **Falklands**. You'll safely enter these blustery surroundings with the assistance of your naturalist guides. And once there, a reward awaits you: a veritable paradise of endless shoreline lapped by **turquoise waters**. Several bird species, also attracted to this stunning location, have settled here. At the other end of The Neck, you'll encounter Magellanic penguins, southern rockhopper penguins, **black-browed albatross** and **king penguins**, all basking in the beauty of their surroundings.

GRAVE COVE

Arrival 18/03/2024
Departure 18/03/2024

Make your way through the turbulent Woolly Gut strait and emerge in the stillness of **Grave Cove**. Located in the northern edge of **the Falkland Islands**, this bay owes its name to the vestiges of whalers' graves that overlook the beach. As you step off the boat and onto the white-sand beach, you might find yourself escorted by a few hospitable **Commerson's dolphins**, elegantly adorned in black and white. A stroll along the grassy dunes will lead you to a vast plain of lush green grass, tended by a few sheep. On the other side of the island you'll find one of the largest **gentoo penguin** colonies in the area. With some luck, you'll also glimpse a sea lion scouring the waves for his next meal.

NEW ISLAND

Arrival 18/03/2024
Departure 18/03/2024

This island with its distinctive jagged relief is located on the western edge of the **Falkland Islands** and is home to a tiny village of two families. Step onto the golden sand of its flower-lined beaches, beside which an old stone house still stands, and you'll feel like you've entered a natural paradise. A narrow pathway weaves around typical Falkland moorlands. Follow it and in under 20 minutes you'll find yourself at the heart of a colony of southern **rockhopper penguins**, **black-browed albatross and imperial shags**. It's the perfect opportunity to watch the albatross swoop down from the cliffs and skim the waves that crash against the rocks on the exposed side of the island.

WEST POINT ISLAND

Arrival 19/03/2024
Departure 19/03/2024

It is no coincidence that West Point Island was once called **Albatross Island**. Like everywhere else in the **Falkland Islands**

, seabirds have taken up residence here. Among them, the huge colonies of **black-browed albatrosses** observe your arrival by zodiac dinghy, from the surrounding cliffs. The **gentoo and king penguins** are also curious about travellers arriving by sea. The **turquoise waters** of the island wash up against the **undulating shores**, where the **stretches of yellow gorse** brighten the scenery composed by this wild natural environment. On the hill overlooking the bay stand the **dwellings** of the few people still living in this remote land. The calm and serenity of the island is only broken by the sound of the wind.

STEEPLE JASON ISLAND

Arrival 19/03/2024
Departure 19/03/2024

If one island of **the Falklands** calls for use of superlatives, it would undoubtedly be **Steeple Jason**. Located at the extreme north-west corner of the Falklands, the island is home to **the largest black-browed albatross colony in the world** . You'll be rapt at the sight of these magnificent birds with black-contoured eyes. Photographers will delight in immortalising the endless ballet of the albatross, who soars majestically and then alights awkwardly amidst nests. Caracaras, **gentoo penguins** and **Magellanic penguins** are also abundantly present, as if to prove to the visitor that here nature is king.

AT SEA

Arrival 20/03/2024
Departure 20/03/2024

During your journey at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This journey without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, depending on the activities offered, or to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship’s upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

CAMARONES

Arrival 21/03/2024
Departure 21/03/2024

Camarones is a small town located in **Chubut Province**, in Southern Argentina. Chubut stretches from the Atlantic to the Andes, the coast is marked by **high cliffs** and **sandy beaches**. Before the Spaniards arrived in the Americas, nomadic indigenous people had inhabited the Patagonia region. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Spanish missionaries settled. Camarones is the head town of the Florentino Ameghino department which is noted for its wealth of geological and paleontological features. People are attracted to the region by its lengthy unspoiled coastline and its fauna. Camarones means ‘shrimps’ in Spanish, once the town was well-known for the abundance of shrimps in its bay.

PUERTO MADRYN

Arrival 22/03/2024
Departure 23/03/2024

On the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, in the Argentinian province of **Chubut**, stands the city of **Puerto Madryn** nestling in the Golfo Nuevo and surrounded by wild and abundant nature. You will be able to follow the narrow strip of land formed by the isthmus for a few kilometres, to reach the **Valdes Peninsula nature reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site** . Its microclimate, protected from the extreme conditions of the Southern Atlantic, makes this an ideal breeding ground for southern right whales in winter, but also for southern elephant seals, southern sea lions, and orcas. You may get the chance to spot numerous birds, Magellanic penguins, guanacos and Patagonian maras living in this desert steppe.

AT SEA

Arrival 24/03/2024
Departure 25/03/2024

During your journey at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This journey without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, depending on the activities offered, or to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

BUENOS AIRES

Arrival 26/03/2024 early morning
Disembarkation 26/03/2024 at 07:00

A port city built on the south-western shore of the Rio de la Plata, between the Atlantic Ocean and the vast Argentine Pampas, Buenos Aires is a unique city in Latin America. Nicknamed "the Little Paris of South America", the Argentine capital is a clever blend of architecture with European influences and a joyful Latin American atmosphere. Designed on an orthogonal grid plan, it has 48 districts, all of which are as charming as they are different, with a range of styles such as Belle Époque, gothic and baroque. With its markets overflowing with treasures, its legendary cultural and architectural heritage, and tango providing its background music, the Argentine capital will delight you on every street corner.