

The Atlantic Odyssey cruise visits some of the remotest islands in the world, crossing the migratory paths of Arctic Terns, Long-tailed Skuas, other birds, and a variety of whales as they make their annual expeditions north for the breeding season.

## 27/3/2023 Day 1: End of the world, start of a journey

Your voyage begins where the world drops off: Ushuaia, Argentina, said to be the southernmost city on the planet, located on the far southern tip of South America. Starting in the afternoon, we embark from this small resort town on Tierra del Fuego (nicknamed “The End of the World”) and sail the mountainous Beagle Channel for the rest of the evening.

## 28/3 - 30/3 Day 2 – 4: Sea route to South Georgia

Today we are en route to South Georgia. After passing the Antarctic Convergence, which is a natural boundary formed when north-flowing cold waters collide with warmer sub-Antarctic waters, we enter the circum-Antarctic upwelling zone. Not only does the marine life change, the bird life changes, too: A variety of albatrosses and petrels show up, along with Cape pigeons and southern fulmars. On clear nights, you can observe the stars of the southern sky as well as the Magellanic Clouds, the small neighbors of our own galaxy.

## 31/3 - 2/4 Day 5 – 7: South Georgia sights

Our aim today is to visit some of the world’s top king penguin rookeries. This time of year you have a good chance of seeing these animals nesting on eggs, with their chicks nearby. The rookeries are sometimes overflowing, with penguins traveling to and from the beach.

Possible visits in this region include:

**Salisbury Plain, St. Andrews Bay, Gold Harbour** – Here you can see not only the massive king penguin colony, but also elephant seals and limitless fur seal pups playing in the surf.

**Prion Island** – This is a great location to watch for wandering albatrosses.

**Grytviken** – We also have the opportunity to check out this abandoned whaling station, where king penguins walk the streets and elephant seals lie around like they own the place – because they basically do! You might also see the South Georgia Museum as well as Shackleton’s grave here.

**Cooper Bay** – This is a fine place for a Zodiac cruise, and this bay also houses a rookery of macaroni penguins. King penguins, pintails, and giant petrels may also appear here.

**Moltke Harbour** – Located in Royal Bay, this scenic spot gives you the chance to see the huge king penguin colony that lives here. This bay was also the site of the astronomical station where a German expedition using the vessel SMS *Moltke* observed the Venus transit in 1882.

## 3/4 - 6/4 Day 8– 11: Once more to the sea

A pleasant tailwind often accompanies the vessel through the westerlies, and on both sides of the Antarctic Convergence, you might see large numbers of Antarctic and sub-Antarctic seabirds. If the conditions are right, you can also observe the stars changing position as we travel north.

## 7/4 Day 12: The quest continues at the great Gough Island

Today we plan to approach Gough Island for a Zodiac cruise in Quest Bay, if the weather permits. Here you might see northern rockhopper penguins and sub-Antarctic fur seals. In previous years, it has been possible for us to circumnavigate most of Gough Island’s 33-mile circumference, taking in this area’s splendid scenery and abundant wildlife.

## 8/4 - 11/4 Day 13 – 16: Tristan da Cunha and all the pretty birds

The remote islands of Tristan da Cunha are famed for their plentiful bird populations, which include rockhopper penguins, several species of albatross, petrels, skuas, terns, and many others. Our goal during this stage of our voyage is to visit the small settlement on the west side of the main island, but we might also land at Seal Bay on the south side of Tristan da Cunha or at Sandy Point on the east side.

In these stunning locations, you could encounter such exotic wildlife as yellow-nosed albatrosses and sub-Antarctic fur seals, all while exploring a rarely visited spot. We also intend to land at Nightingale Island and Inaccessible Island, both of which offer great views of beautiful seabirds ranging from yellow-nosed albatrosses to brown noddies.

Two days are reserved at Tristan da Cunha in case of bad weather, but please remember that nature determines our itineraries here: Since beginning the Atlantic Odyssey cruise in 1998, adverse weather led to the cancellation of 35% of Tristan da Cunha landings. If we have to divert for safety reasons, we will find good alternatives.

## 12/4 - 15/4 Day 17 – 20: Subtropical seas and seabirds

Seabirds and dolphins often follow our vessel in this area, where you may also be able to see how the constellations are changing again. As we sail, the northern constellations start to appear while the Magellanic Clouds sink low to the horizon.

## 16/4 - 18/4 Day 21 – 23: Highlights of Saint Helena

After we land at Jamestown on Saint Helena Island, you will have the opportunity to enjoy the area’s local culture, pleasant climate, and endemic bird life. You can pay a visit to Longwood House, where Napoleon died in exile; walk the 699-step Jacob’s Ladder, if you’re feeling ambitious; or snorkel the shallows offshore, seeing multitudes of tropical and subtropical fish. We also plan to visit the location where English astronomer Edmond Halley observed the southern sky, describing nearly 400 stars and their constellations during the 17th century.

**Please note:** You have the option to disembark and fly home from Jamestown, if flights are available.

## 19/4 - 20/4 Day 24 – 25: Sailing the Mid-Atlantic Ridge

Today we aim to sail along the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, the sprawling submarine mountain range that runs about 16,000 km (10,000 miles) from the Arctic Ocean toward the southern tip of Africa. Join us for stargazing on the aft deck, where we will show you the many highlights of the equatorial sky. Weather permitting, these celestial wonders can be seen with binoculars or even with the naked eye.

## 21/4 Day 26: Ascension Island

This dry volcanic island is a major home for sooty terns (also known as wideawakes), whose colony here sometimes grows to over a million breeding pairs. You may get the chance to hike up to the richly vegetated summit of the island, and we might also visit the beach to watch green turtles laying eggs.

## 22/4 - 26/4 Day 27 – 31: Crossing the equator

Joining us across the equator are Arctic terns and long-tailed skuas flying their northbound spring migration. At this stage of the voyage, we will hope for good weather as we attempt more stargazing on deck, observing how the polar star becomes visible on the northern horizon.

## 27/4/2023 Day 32: The pleasures of Praia

We arrive in the town of Praia on Cape Verde’s Santiago Island, disembarking later that day at 18:00 hours. Though no lunch will be served, you are free to stay on board or store your luggage until disembarkation. If you have the time, we offer an additional tour in and around Praia. Here you can visit the historic Cidade Velha and its massive hillside fortress, built to defend against English raiders. Other sights include the oldest Christian church in the tropics as well as the slave whipping post in the main square. You can also simply explore the streets of Praia, enjoying the folk music spilling out of tavern windows.

### Our astronomical program: –

During the voyage described above, we will travel in both the Southern and Northern Hemispheres, assembling on the aft deck to observe how stars and constellations change as we travel north. Southern constellations like the Southern Cross, with its so-called “jewel box” of stars, will be visible if the weather permits. We might also see the large globular cluster, Omega Centauri, as well as the Magellanic Clouds, which are “satellite clouds” of our own galaxy, first reported by Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan in 1521.

On the South Georgia leg of our voyage, we plan to visit Moltke Harbour in Royal Bay. On top of being the location of a great king penguin colony, this is also the site of an astronomical station where a German expedition using the vessel SMS *Moltke* observed the Venus transit in 1882. As we sail north across the Atlantic, new constellations will appear over the northeastern horizon.

Weather and time permitting, we also intend to climb the hill at Saint Helena Island, where English astronomer Edmond Halley (discoverer of Halley’s Comet) investigated the southern sky and described nearly 400 stars in their constellations during the 17th century.

When we cross the equator, you will notice the moon looks different in its phases in the Southern Hemisphere as opposed to the Northern. Some of the stars we will look for, like Epsilon Eridani, have planets around them, which can inspire discussions about the likelihood of extraterrestrial life.

We will offer optional workshops in astronomical navigation with sextants during our sea days. These fascinating workshops are limited in the number of people who can participate, however, and reservations are required. You can practice calculating a position at sea while also learning about the Huygens clock, Mercator projection, and other related topics.

In addition, we will provide a workshop about astrophotography (also limited, reservations required) that will focus on the photography you can do with your own equipment. The focus on board will be the theoretical background and image-processing techniques, since conditions on a moving ship will most likely not allow astrophotography. But if weather and time allow, we may practice some photography on Saint Helena.