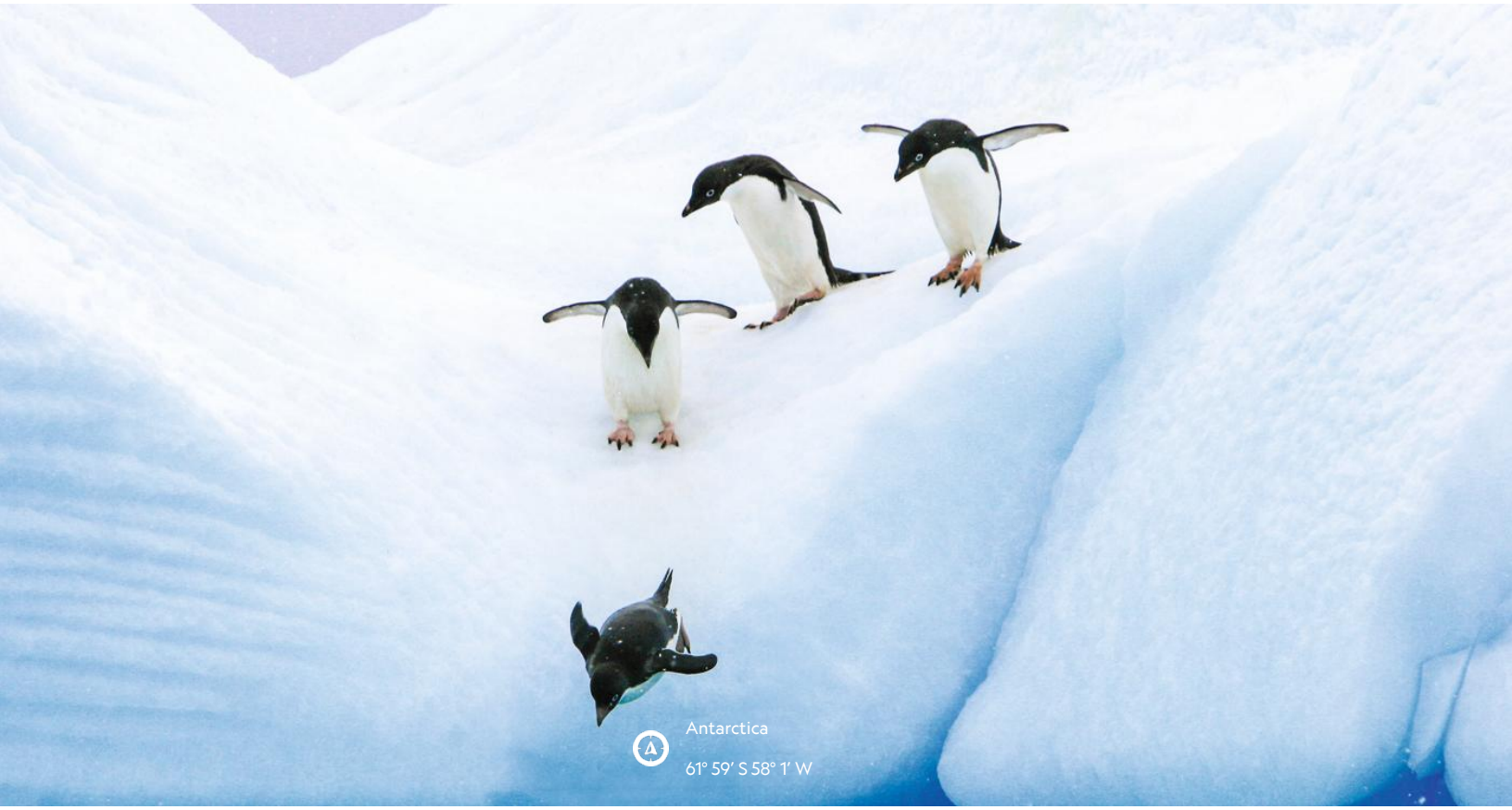


Antarctica Direct: Sail and Fly the Drake Passage

Experience the wild grandeur of the White Continent in a more efficient, expedient way with our 11-day option. On this new itinerary, cruise the Drake Passage one way, and then bypass the Drake Passage on the way back on a 2-hour flight from Antarctica and discover all of the highlights without sacrificing the extra time. Travel with a diverse team of experts aboard the National Geographic Explorer, the definitive expedition ship. Venture into channels and coves framed by towering peaks. Watch for whales off the bow; Zodiac cruise around enormous icebergs; and hike, kayak, and even possibly cross-country ski in complete tranquility. Choose an active agenda or surrender to the pleasures of relaxing downtime and shipboard camaraderie. Plus, get top shots with the help of a National Geographic Photography Expert.

NOTE: This is an expedition in the truest sense—flexibility is key. Delays and early departures of flights due to inclement weather are common in Antarctica. In the event of a flight adjustment, your expedition team may implement a contingency plan with alternative activities. For answers to questions you may have about our Fly the Drake Passage programs, please see our FAQ page .

From

A$ 21,286 / per person

Includes required flights

DATES
Jan, Feb, Mar and Dec

DURATION
12 Days

SHIPS
National Geographic Orion

STARTS AT
Puerto Natales, Chile

→

ENDS AT
Ushuaia, Argentina

Minimum Age Requirement: Any children booked on Antarctic or Arctic voyages must be at least 4 years old at time of embarkation.

NOTE: For answers to questions you may have about our Fly the Drake Passage programs, please see our FAQ page .

Highlights

- Experience it all—cruise the legendary Drake Passage aboard the National Geographic Explorer and then enjoy the ease of returning on our 2-hour direct flight from King George Island to Puerto Natales
- Explore the world's last great wilderness in the company of top naturalists, and the most experienced polar captains in Antarctica, with more than 55 years of expedition heritage
- Hike amid magnificent mountains; see huge glaciers; and observe a parade of gentoo, Adélie, and chinstrap penguins
- Kayak in protected waters, paddling in the Antarctic stillness as penguins swim nearby

FALKLAND ISLANDS
(ISLAS MALVINAS)
mapbox
© Mapbox, © OpenStreetMap

Day by day

DAY 1

Puerto Natales, Chile

Arrive in Puerto Natales. Originally a small fishing port, the town is nestled on the Last Hope Sound and boasts a stunning view of the sea surrounded by the Cerro Benitez Mountains—the gateway to Torres del Paine. Transfer from the airport to your hotel, where you'll enjoy dinner and attend a briefing on the following day's activities.

Arrival Time: Arrive by 2:00 p.m. local time
Arrival City: Puerto Natales, Chile

Meals included: dinner

DAY 2

Puerto Natales / King George Island, Antarctica / Embark Ship

Following breakfast, check out of the hotel and transfer to the airport for your two-hour direct flight to King George Island in Antarctica, where you'll begin your Antarctic adventure. Home to a diverse assortment of wildlife, King George Island also has a human presence. Researchers from a wide range of countries, including the U.S., Chile, Argentina and Brazil, call the various stations home. Your flight will land on a gravel runway at the Chilean research station. You will then be transferred to the rocky shoreline, where you will board Zodiacs to embark on the ship and set sail as you begin exploring this amazing region.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAYS 3-8

Exploring Antarctica

With long hours of daylight at this time of year, you'll have ample opportunities to explore. The schedule is flexible, allowing you to take advantage of the unexpected, whether you're watching whales at play off the bow of the ship, hiking alongside penguin highways or enjoying an evening Zodiac cruise amid porpoising penguins.

While wildlife is magnificent, ice defines the Antarctic. You'll get to know ice up close and personal—from icebergs the size of islands, bergy bits and near-vertical glaciers, to the fragile, nearly invisible layers that have just begun to freeze. One day, you might set out by kayak to encounter towering icebergs at water level; embark on a Zodiac excursion in search of seals and blue-eyed shags; or walk amid thousands of Adélie and gentoo penguins. The next, you might experience the thrill of the ship crunching through pack ice.

Everywhere you go in Antarctica, you'll be surrounded by opportunities to capture uniquely beautiful images. Along the way your expert expedition team will enrich every experience.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAYS 9-10

At Sea / Crossing the Drake Passage

This 500-mile-wide strait between the Antarctic Peninsula and South America is one of the most famous bodies of water in the world. Sometimes ferocious, sometimes flat calm, the Drake is always a fascinating place in its own right. This part of the journey is your best opportunity to see gorgeous seabirds like the wandering albatross, and you might be lucky enough to encounter orca whales or rare species of dolphins. Visit the Bridge (a great place to spot wildlife), have a relaxing massage, attend a talk about the biology of the penguins you've just seen or settle into a comfy chair in the observation lounge to look out over the waves and reflect on your incredible journey.

Toast your epic voyage at a festive farewell dinner.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◇ DAY 11

Ushuaia, Argentina / Disembark Ship

Arrive in Ushuaia. Sandwiched between ice-mantled peaks and the frigid waters of the Beagle Channel, this is a fittingly wild place to be known as "El Fin del Mundo" or "The End of the World." Transfer to your hotel. In the evening, enjoy dinner.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

■ DAY 12

Ushuaia

Check out of your hotel and transfer to the airport to begin your journey homeward.

Departure Time: Depart no earlier than 10:00 a.m. local time
Departure City: Ushuaia, Argentina

Meals included: breakfast

12-Day Fly-Sail

Puerto Natales, Chile → Ushuaia, Argentina

2027 DEPARTURE DATES

Aboard *National Geographic Orion*

10 Dec				

2028 DEPARTURE DATES

Aboard *National Geographic Orion*

08 Jan				
06 Feb				
06 Mar				

National Geographic Orion

GUESTS	CABINS
102	53

Joining the Lindblad fleet in 2013, the state-of-the-art *National Geographic Orion* serves as a luxurious base camp for voyages to the far-flung corners of the planet.

Built in Germany by the Cassens shipyard, the 102-guest *National Geographic Orion* was created with a high ice class to be able to venture safely into polar regions. A ship of her size is seldom built with such ice-cutting ability, which makes her a rarity. She is yacht-scale, yet rugged enough to venture far afield, making her a perfect addition to the Lindblad fleet, which she joined in 2013. Her size and nimbleness offer the perfect combination of safety and liberty to voyage untrammeled locations. In fact, *National Geographic Orion* currently holds the distinction of having sailed further south than any other Lindblad vessel.

Her menu, created by famed Australian chef, Serge Dansereau, owner of Sydney's acclaimed Bather's Pavilion restaurant, enormously popular with *National Geographic Orion*'s guests, so impressed Sven Lindblad, that Serge, a chef-owner who shared the Lindblad commitment to serving local and sustainable food, was enlisted to design the dining program for the entire National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions fleet.

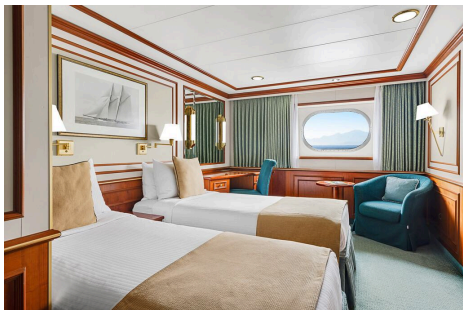
National Geographic Orion is gracious and intimate, with a rewarding, almost clubby feeling. Of her many amenities and features, the most appealing is her outside deck space which beckons in the balmy reaches of the Pacific, and on those days in Antarctica when the midnight sun and the spectacle of the ice makes going indoors, let alone going to bed, impossible.

Cabin Categories

Category 1

MAIN DECK **#316, 318-321**

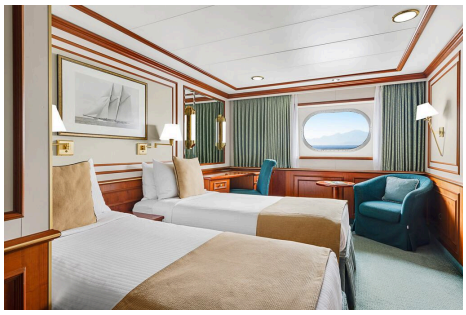
Cabins feature a luminous oval window and configurable beds: two single beds that can be converted to a queen. An armchair, reading lamps, a flat screen TV, two bedside tables, coffee table, desk and climate controls complete the amenities. Marble bathrooms are generously sized and include a spacious shower stall with a glass door.



Category 2

MAIN DECK **#302-312, 314, 315, 317**

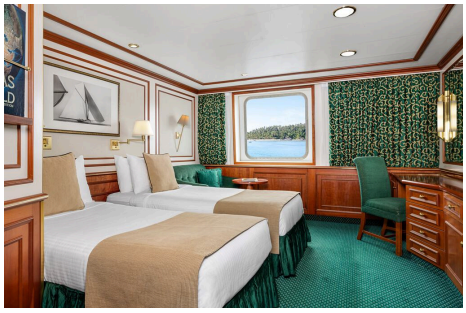
Cabins feature a luminous oval window and configurable beds: two single beds that can be converted to a queen. An armchair, reading lamps, a flat screen TV, bedside table, coffee table, desk and climate controls complete the amenities. Marble bathrooms are generously sized and include a spacious shower stall with a glass door.



Category 3

UPPER DECK **#401-412, 414-419**

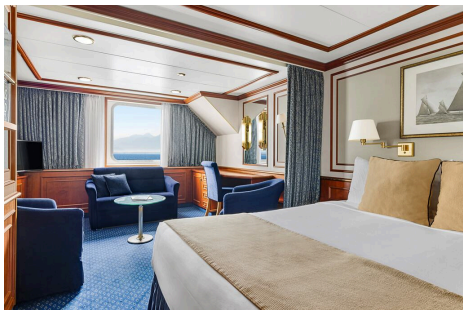
These suites feature a sitting area with a large window, a sofa—except slightly smaller #401 & #402—an armchair or two, writing/laptop desk, reading lamps, coffee table, flat screen TV, bedside table and climate controls. Beds are configurable (call for details). Marble bathrooms include a spacious shower stall with a glass door.



Category 4

BRIDGE DECK **#511, 515**

These two suites feature separate sleeping and sitting areas, with a chair and armchair, coffee table, and a two-cushion sofa facing an expansive window. Beds are configurable (call for details). Ample storage, reading lamps, a flat screen TV and climate controls complete the amenities. Marble bathrooms are generously sized and include a spacious shower stall with a glass door.



Category 5

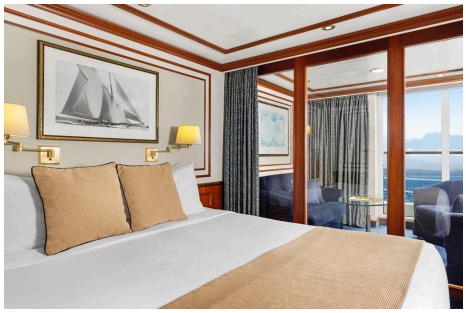
BRIDGE DECK **#501, 503-506, 508**

These spacious suites feature open living areas and sliding glass doors opening to a shared French balcony. Beds are configurable (call for details). A separate sitting area with armchairs and a sofa, a writing/laptop desk, coffee table, well-placed reading lamps, a flat screen TV and climate controls complete the decor. Marble bathrooms are generously sized and include a spacious shower stall with a glass door.

Category 6

BRIDGE DECK **#502, 507, 509*, 510**

These large, elegant suites feature a French balcony, except for #509 which has double windows. Each provides a separate living area with a sofa and two armchairs, coffee table, except for #502, which uniquely offers a 'soaking tub with a view' in addition to a shower stall and expansive vanity. All cabins have reading lamps, a flat screen TV and climate controls. Marble bathrooms are generously sized and include a spacious shower stall with a glass door.



Category 1 Solo

MAIN DECK **#301, 322, 323**

These solo cabins feature a window or two portholes, a queen-size bed, except for #301 which has a double bed, writing desk and chair, climate controls, reading lamps, coffee table, two bedside tables and a TV. Marble bathrooms are generously sized and include a roomy shower stall with a glass door.

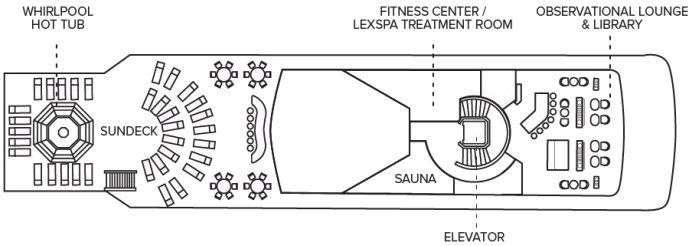
Category 3 Solo

UPPER DECK **#512**

This solo suite features two single beds and two large windows, plus two armchairs and a small table, reading lamps, coffee table a flat screen TV and climate controls. The marble bathroom is generously sized and includes a spacious shower stall with a glass door.

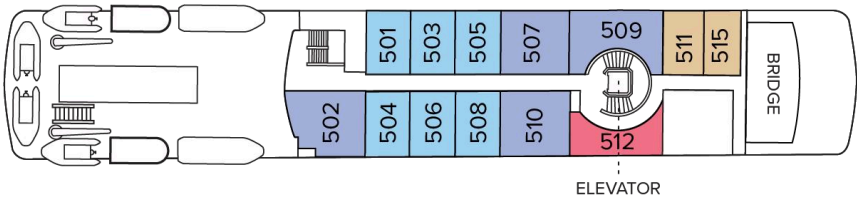
Deck Plans

Observation Deck



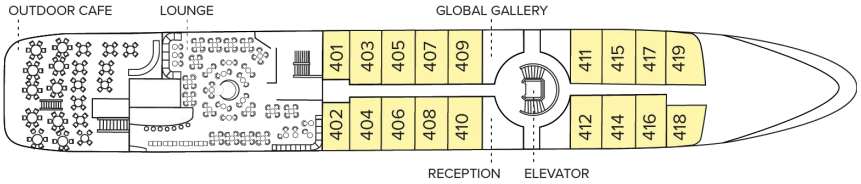
Bridge Deck

- Category 4
- Category 5
- Category 6
- Category 3 Solo



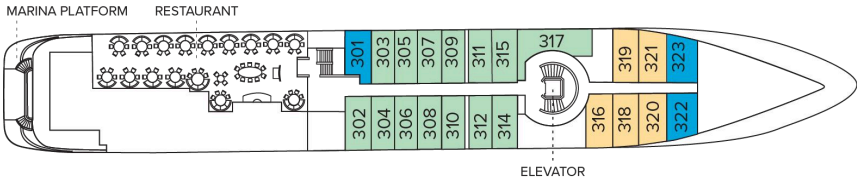
Upper Deck

- Category 3

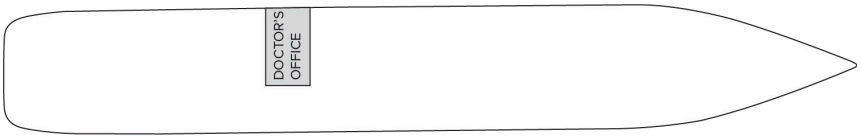


Main Deck

- Category 1
- Category 2
- Category 1 Solo



Expedition Deck



Ship Amenities

Public Areas

Reception; two dining areas; lounge with bar and state-of-the-art presentation facilities; OM System photo locker; sundeck with a whirlpool hot tub that doubles as a plunge pool in warm climates; observation lounge and library; global gallery; a marina platform; plus open access to the Bridge, the Captain, officers and on-duty wildlife spotters.

Meals

Meals are served in the dining room, or weather permitting, the outdoor café, at a single seating with unassigned tables for an informal atmosphere and easy mingling. Menus feature sustainable choices, local where possible.

Cabins

All cabins face outside with windows or portholes, private bathroom, and climate controls. Cabins feature a coffee table, lounge chair, desk, phone, TV with on demand entertainment, multiple outlets and USB, mini refrigerator, and safe. Luxury linens and pillows. Botanically inspired shampoo, conditioner, shower gel and lotion are all available in cabin bathrooms, as well as an Expedition Essential Kit. Hair dryers, complimentary insulated water bottles and a National Geographic Atlas are available in each cabin.

Expedition Equipment

Zodiac landing craft, a fleet of double kayaks, a crow's nest camera, a hydrophone, underwater video cameras, video microscope and an ROV. Plus, for South Pacific voyages: snorkeling gear for all guests, scuba gear for a number of pre-qualified guests, stand-up paddleboards, glass-bottom Zodiac and splash-cam.

Special Features

A full-time doctor, undersea specialist, National Geographic photographer and National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions certified photo instructor. A central staircase and elevator reach all decks. Enjoy daily teatime and the smoothies served after the sunrise stretch sessions on the sundeck in Polynesia.

Wellness

A fitness center, LEXspa treatment room and sauna, staffed by wellness specialists.

Self-Disinfecting Ships

ACT Clean CoatTM is a light-activated, self-disinfecting cleaning process that continuously breaks down viruses, bacteria, mold, and airborne allergens across all ship surfaces. This non-toxic, chemical-free system also helps us save over one million gallons of water each year in our cleaning procedures.

Special Offers

GO FARTHER. FIND WONDER.

Book from September 15 to November 4, 2026:

Receive savings of $2000AUD per guest deducted from cabin fare on select 2027 and 2028 voyages. Applicable savings will be deducted from cabin fare before any additional savings with the purchase of cabin fare. Promotional offer valid on new bookings only for select 2027 departures, subject to availability and offer may be withdrawn at any time without prior notice, not applicable on airfare or land programs, and may not be combined with other promotions. Standard cancellation policy applies. Additional restrictions may apply.

SUITE EXCLUSIVES

Spacious living areas and incredible views immerse you in the beauty of your marine surroundings. Our new Suite Exclusives package helps make your voyage all the more memorable. **Learn more**

SAVE 5% TRAVELING AS A GROUP

Save 5% when traveling as a group of 8 or more people. Valid for new bookings only on select departures, subject to availability, not applicable on extensions, and may not be combined with other offers. Call for details.

CELEBRATE LIFE'S MILESTONES

Celebrate a milestone with a group of eight or more and enjoy a special amenity package including: 5% savings on voyage fares, custom group photo, US$150 shipboard credit for the group, and other special gifts. Milestone celebration to be communicated at time of booking.

COMBINING OFFERS

Certain offers may be combinable, up to two savings opportunities, except where noted otherwise. For example, travel with a group of 8 or more on back-to-back expeditions, and take advantage of both savings.

INCLUDED IN PRICE

All accommodations aboard ship or in hotels per itinerary; all meals as indicated in the itinerary, both aboard and onshore; beer, wine, cocktails, liquors and spirits aboard the ship (except certain premium brands which are available for purchase); hors d'oeuvres, 24-hour access to snacks, premium coffees and teas, non-alcoholic beverages, and filtered water; excursions and airport transfers, as indicated in the itinerary, as indicated in the itinerary; crew gratuities; exploration tools curated to destination, such as Zodiacs, kayaks, snowshoes and cross-country skis; guidance and company of our leading expedition staff; assistance by the National Geographic photographer and National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions certified photo instructor; Basic Wi-Fi aboard ship; complimentary reusable water bottle; access to the OM System Photo Gear Locker; presentations by expedition staff and expert guest speakers; complimentary parka; complimentary reusable water bottle; onboard physician consultations; morning stretch classes and 24-hour access to exercise equipment; 24-hour access to lounges, observation decks, library, and other shared spaces; park and site entrance fees, special access permits, and port taxes. Unused services or items included in our programs are non-refundable.

NOT INCLUDED IN PRICE

Airfare (except flights* when indicated as included); pre- and post-expedition extensions; additional hotel nights (except when indicated as included); private transfers; laundry, spa treatments, enhanced and premium Wi-Fi plans aboard expedition fleet; phone services (except when indicated as included); travel protection plans; and passport, visa, and immigration fees.

*Recommended flight costs include flight(s) that take place during the date range of your trip to transport travelers from one itinerary destination to another. This cost also includes ground transportation, luggage transfer, and airport assistance. If you prefer to arrange your own flights privately, have alternate means of transport, or wish to modify at a later time, please contact an Expedition Specialist at 1.833.400.0831

Additional costs associated with medical services outside onboard physician consultation.

For select voyages, completing a medical evaluation form with VIKAND is required. If you utilize your physician, VIKAND's processing fee for your documentation will be added to your National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions invoice. If you utilize VIKAND's physicians, an additional charge will be due and payable directly to VIKAND.

TRAVEL PROTECTION PLAN

We strongly recommend our guests to take advantage of our Travel Protection Plan. This plan offers comprehensive coverage to protect you from cancellation fees, costs incurred due to trip delays/interruption, damage or loss of baggage, medical assistance, and evacuation during your travels. Our Travel Protection Plan is available for U.S. residents only, and may be purchased any time prior to final payment due date, Travel Protection premiums are non- refundable once plan is purchased. Learn more about our Travel Protection "Plus" Plan: https://www.expeditions.com/terms-conditions/travel-protection-plan/

CANCELLATION POLICY

Review our cancellation policy: https://www.expeditions.com/cancellation-policy/