

## Ushuaia - Punta Arenas (4 nights)

M/V Via Australis

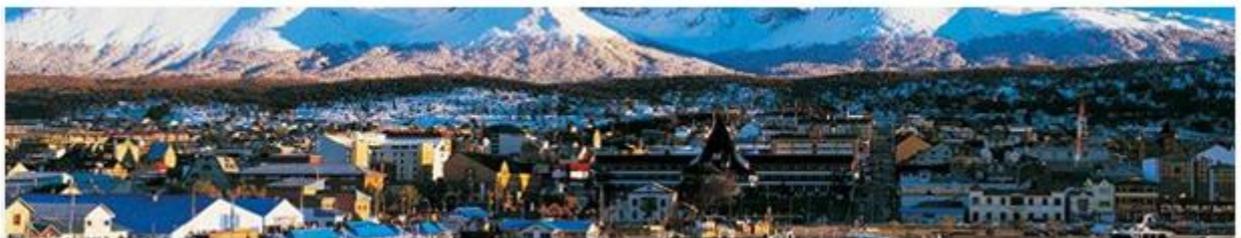
Excursions per trip: 7



\* In September and April, this excursion is replaced by a ride aboard Zodiacs to Marta Island



### Day 1: Ushuaia



Check in at the Australis travel center at 409 San Martín Street in downtown Ushuaia between 10:00 and 16:00 (10 AM-4 PM) on the day of your cruise departure. Board the M/V Via Australis at 17:30 (5:30 PM). After a welcoming cocktail reception hosted by the captain and his crew, the ship departs for one of the most remote corners of planet Earth. During the night we traverse the Beagle Channel and cross from Argentine into Chilean territorial waters. The lights of Ushuaia disappear as we turn into the narrow Murray Channel between Navarino and Hoste islands.

## Day 2: Cape Horn – Wuluaia Bay



By early morning, *Via Australis* is cruising 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 harbours legendary Cape Horn. 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 light-keeper and his family, as well as the tiny *Stella Maris* Chapel and modern Cape Horn Monument.

Sailing back across Nassau Bay, we anchor at fabled Wuluaia Bay, 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 its mesmerizing beauty and dramatic geography. After a visit to the *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, ferns, and other endemic fauna to reach a panoramic viewpoint overlooking the bay. Before leaving Wuluaia 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*.

## Day 3: Pia Glacier – Garibaldi Glacier



Casting off from Wuluaia Bay, we retrace our route to the Beagle Channel and sail westward along the southern edge of Tierra del Fuego into a section of Alberto de Agostini National Park called Glacier Alley or Avenue of the Glaciers. Flowing down from the Darwin Mountains and Darwin Ice Sheet are a number of impressive tidewater glaciers, most of them named after European countries -- Holland, Italy, Germany, Spain and France. In amongst this frozen league of nations we enter the narrow Pia Fjord and board the Zodiacs for a shore excursion to Pia Glacier. No one knows for certain how the hulking glacier got its feminine moniker, but one theory says it was named after princess Maria Pia of

Savoy (1847-1911), daughter of the Italian king. After disembarking we take a short hike to gain a panoramic view of the spectacular glacier, which extends from the mountain tops down to the sea or a longer much more difficult walk up a lateral moraine of the old Pia 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 4: Piloto and Nena Glaciers – De Agostini Sound and Aguila Glacier



Rounding the Brecknock Peninsula at the western extreme of Tierra del Fuego, the ship is exposed to the open Pacific for a brief time before entering the Cockburn Channel. Dead ahead is Chico Sound and our next Zodiac excursion. Traveling in the swift little boats, we explore Alakaluf Fjord and enjoy incredible views of Piloto and Nena glaciers from the sea. You will find yourself being drawn to the intense blue color of Piloto Glacier, caused by its compression and age. During the excursion we learn about the formation of glaciers and their influence on the extravagant topography of the Fuegian-Patagonian channels. During the excursion it's often possible to spot rare rock and king cormorants nesting on the stones facing the glaciers.

In the afternoon Via Australis navigates Magdalena Channel and Keats Fjord to reach De Agostini Sound. Named after an Italian Salesian priest who worked among the region's indigenous people during the first half of the 20th century, the sound is flanked by numerous glaciers and saw-toothed peaks. After landing on the beach, we hike around the edge of a lagoon to the base of towering Águila ("Eagle") Glacier. Condors can sometimes be seen soaring high above, but there is always abundant bird life around the lagoon.

#### Day 5: Magdalena Island – Punta Arenas



After an overnight cruise that takes us 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 sail south along the strait, disembarkation at Punta Arenas is scheduled for around 11:30 AM.

Note: The excursions described in this itinerary 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.