

## Ushuaia - Punta Arenas (3 nights)

M/V Stella Australis

Excursions per trip: 4



### 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 *Stella 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 Argentina 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 – Wulaia Bay



Around the break of dawn, *Stella Australis* crosses Nassau Bay and enters the remote archipelago that comprises 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 (currently awaiting repair after being damaged by fierce winds). Sailing back across Nassau Bay, we anchor at fabled Wulaia 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 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 stroll through an enchanted Magellanic forest of lengas, coigües, canelos and ferns to reach panoramic viewpoints overlooking the bay.

## Day 3: Agostini Sound – Aguila Glacier



After nightfall we re-enter 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. Rounding the Brecknock Peninsula as the western extreme of Tierra del Fuego, *Stella Australis* is briefly exposed to the open Pacific. We then navigate a zigzag route through the Cockburn Channel, Magdalena Channel and Keats Fjord to reach scenic 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, De Agostini Sound is flanked by numerous glaciers and sheer saw-toothed peaks reminiscent of Torres del Paine. Our shore excursion this morning is Águila ("Eagle") Glacier, which hovers above a placid glacial lagoon surrounded by primeval forest. After a Zodiac landing on

the beach, passengers hike around the edge of the lagoon to a spot near the base of the frozen facade. Condors can sometimes be seen soaring high above, but there is always abundant bird life around the lagoon. This landing provides the perfect opportunity to experience the beauty of Patagonia's sub-Antarctic rainforest and to see how the power of nature has moulded the spectacular landscape.

#### Day 4: 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 are prohibited on Magdalena Island \**

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.