



Expedition manual

Preparing for your voyage



**OCEANWIDE
EXPEDITIONS**

Preparing for your voyage

These notes will give you a brief idea of how to prepare for, and what you may encounter on, your voyage. We stress that this is an "expedition" style cruise. Our emphasis is on wildlife encounters, personal contact with the environment, visits to sites of historical interest and, to a lesser extent, scientific stations. Our actual program will vary to take best advantage of local conditions, spontaneous opportunities and wildlife. No two voyages are alike: there is always an element of the unexpected.

Required documents

Valid passport and visa if required. Please make sure your passport is valid for at least six months after your trip ends. Since visa requirements differ for each nationality, we ask that you check with the nearest consulates/embassies and secure visas if required.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations are not required for these cruises. However if you are visiting certain parts of Asia, Africa or South America prior to joining the expedition, you may be visiting areas infected with yellow fever. In that case you will need a yellow fever inoculation. Please consult the Public Health Service nearest to you.

Health

Any major health problem, disability, or physical condition that may require emergency care must be brought to our attention prior to the voyage.

Please complete the Personal Information Form which you have received from your booking agent and return it to your booking agent within 1 month after booking.

Personal Medications

Be sure to carry ample supplies of any prescription medications you require as well as medication against motion sickness (sea sickness). Carry your medication in your hand luggage.

General clothing advice

The choice of clothing for cold climates is a very personal matter. It depends on your individual experience with cold conditions. Are you more susceptible to cold temperatures than other people?

For your comfort and safety, avoid getting wet (whether from perspiration, precipitation, unsuitable boots or sea spray). Bring wind and waterproof outer layers. Beware of tight clothing that leaves no room for trapped air, which is an excellent insulator. Wool, silk and some of the new synthetic fibers like polar fleece retain heat better than cotton.

The secret to keep warm is the "layer principle". It is better to have several light layers of clothing than one heavy layer. This also gives you flexibility in your clothing so you can take off a layer if you are too warm or put another layer on if you are cold. The most important layer is the outer waterproof and windproof shell because even a light wind of 6 kph (about 4 mph) can carry away eight times more body heat than still air! The so-called "wind chill factor" measures the increase in cooling power of moving air, whether it's wind that is blowing or you who are moving rapidly and, in effect, creating a wind against yourself. A common complaint is "it's not the cold, it's the wind", but an equally common polar maxim is "there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing!"

In the Antarctic Peninsula Region we normally encounter temperatures around freezing (+ wind chill factor) during the summer months. In the Ross Sea however, we can experience significantly lower temperatures (<-10°C/<14 F + wind chill factor). Additional thermal protection is strongly recommended for the Ross Sea trips. **In the Arctic** we rarely encounter sub-zero temperatures during the summer. In the very early spring or in late autumn this however possible. Pack additional warm clothing accordingly.

Tips to stay comfortable and warm in cold weather

- ! Avoid overdressing to reduce perspiration.
- ! Wear water repellent outer garments that will keep you dry on the outside and still “breathe” enough so that moisture from your body can escape.
- ! Body heat is most likely to be lost from parts that have a lot of surface area in comparison to total mass—namely, the hands and feet. Keep them warm and dry. For hands, mittens are better than gloves.
- ! Another polar maxim is “if you have cold feet, put a hat on!” If the rest of your body is covered, as much as 90% of the heat you lose can come from your head, so be sure to wear a cap, beanie or balaclava. These items can be pulled down to protect your ears, forehead, neck and chin. The neck also needs protection with a synthetic scarf that can be wrapped around the face when travelling against the wind.
- ! Dress in comfortable, loose layers. For anyone out in the cold, it is far better to wear layers of relatively light, loose clothing than one thick, heavy item. Between each layer there is a film of trapped air which, when heated by your body, acts as an excellent insulator. Keep from overheating.
- ! Wool and silk are superior to cotton because they can trap warm air. Synthetic fabrics that spring back into shape after compression are also good. When damp or wet, polyester down is a better insulator than goose or duck down. Polar fleece is popular and recommended.

What to pack for your shore excursions

When packing, don't weigh yourself down with too many clothes or too much gear. Select informal, practical attire for your trip that can be worn in layers, including:

✦ Warm trousers

Ski pants are suitable if you have them; otherwise, bring any sturdy trousers that can be layered between your long underwear and rain over-trousers. Jeans and corduroys are good both for excursions and wearing aboard ship.

✦ Waterproof trousers

Water resistant over-trousers are essential for your comfort. Wear them over your regular clothes to keep you warm and dry. GoreTex and similar fabrics are both waterproof and 'breathable'.

✦ Thermal underwear

Silk or polypropylene underwear is highly recommended since it keeps you warm without adding bulk. Most people prefer a lightweight version - but this depends on your personal thermostat.

✦ Sweaters or a polar fleece jacket of medium weight are recommended.

✦ Turtlenecks

Bring several practical turtlenecks for layering and use around the ship.

✦ Mittens and gloves

Keeping your hands warm and dry is a challenge - and important. Thin polypropylene gloves can be worn underneath warm mittens. Thus, you can take off the mittens to operate your camera and still have some protection from the cold. It's a good idea to bring an extra pair of wool mittens to wear if your other pair gets wet (or lost).

✦ Woollen cap

A warm cap to protect your ears - and a scarf.

✦ Warm socks

Sturdy, tall wool socks worn over a thin pair of silk, polypropylene or cotton/wool socks should provide enough insulation for your feet. Bring several pairs, since you will inevitably get your feet wet.

✦ Waterproof & windproof jacket

A well-fitting jacket with attached hood that can be worn over your under layers with reasonable comfort. It is most important that this garment is thoroughly waterproof. Gore-Tex or sailing gear are ideal although it is possible to find more economical waterproof gear.

The waterproof jacket is the most important layer of clothing. There is nothing worse than wind on wet clothes at zero degrees.



✦ **Backpack**

A waterproof nylon backpack, rucksack, or similar bag with shoulder straps, for carrying your camera and other gear during shore excursions. Be sure to choose one with shoulder straps so that your hands are free. It is very important that you have some means of keeping your camera dry. Every summer we have disappointed people whose camera has been splashed in a Zodiac.

✦ **Sunglasses**

Good quality sunglasses. Note that the glare from the water and surrounding snow/ice can be quite penetrating, even when the sky is overcast.

✦ **A pair of binoculars** is highly recommended.

✦ **Camera and plenty of memory cards / film.**

From experience, it is advisable to bring an extra camera in case of malfunction or accident. Cameras have been dropped in the water and it is a disappointed photographer who can't take pictures. Bring twice the amount of memory cards or film you first plan to bring.

✦ **Earplugs** may be useful if you are sharing a cabin with a snorer!

✦ **Teva sandals** or similar are very useful to wear around the ship. Please make sure sandals have heel straps. It is required on board ships due to safety reasons.

✦ **T-shirts** are recommended (to wear inside the vessel as temperatures are comfortably warm).

✦ **Rubber boots (very important!)**

Only on Plancius and Ortelius rubber boots are available, and can be used for free. It is important to pre order the correct sizes (see below). On all other ships you are requested to bring a pair of knee-high rubber boots. These boots will be used in virtually all of our shore landings with Zodiacs. A pair of pull-on rubber and completely waterproof boots that are mid-calf or higher with a strong, ridged non-skid sole is ESSENTIAL for landings. Stepping out of the Zodiacs to shore almost always involves stepping into water, it is important to have waterproof boots that are high enough to avoid water going over the top and into the boots. Also, expect poor footing on the ice and ashore. For this reason boots such as Sorrels, snow boots, hiking boots or low rubber boots are not satisfactory (you'll get your feet wet!).

Please note: if you don't bring the correct footwear you might not be allowed to land during the expedition cruise.

Do not bring heavy, cumbersome boots that make it difficult to walk. Boots with waffle soles like those on a hiking boot or running shoe tend to give the best footing. Avoid imitation rubber boots made from PVC. These are unyielding and more prone to slipping. Ideal boots are "Wellies" type boots: other brands of rubber boots can be purchased from work clothing stores, surplus stores, farm co-op stores, garden supply centers, outdoor stores and marine supply houses.

Sailing boots that are sold at marine stores have good non-skid soles that are good for slick ship decks and wet rocks, but they lack traction on snow, ice or mud. The all-around traction soles are good for ice and snow but are not as slip resistant on slick decks or rocks.

Remember that you will be wearing these boots a lot. So they must be comfortable for extended wear and walking. The boots should not be too tight or too sloppy. If they are too tight you will get cold feet. If they are too loose you can, within reason, add an insole or extra socks to take up the space. For maximum warmth, wear loose-fitting boots and two pairs of socks. Rubber boots generally come in whole sizes and many brands are uni-sex. Be sure to get the best fit no matter what size they are.

Your boots are probably the most important item you need to bring, so if you have questions or just need some further advice please don't hesitate to contact us.

Those travelling to Antarctica can rent equipment in Ushuaia instead of carrying all the way from home. Please refer to information leaflet enclosed.

Rubber boots

Onboard Plancius and Ortelius all passengers are entitled to use a pair of sturdy rubber boots for free. Sizes need to be pre ordered with Oceanwide reservation departments latest 8 weeks prior to departure. A voucher will be sent with final travel documents approx. 4 weeks prior to departure. Laying claims on equipment items without pre order and voucher cannot be accepted when boarding the vessel. Boots will need to be returned to the expedition team at the end of the voyage. Rubber boots are of high quality, which keep your feet dry, warm and comfortable for all landings. Terms and conditions on the pre order form.



Aboard the ship 'A to Z' services and daily programme

We look forward to welcoming you on board one of our vessels which will be your home during the voyages. The following guidelines are intended to help make the most of your stay on board.

A Announcements: These will be made in English (or a second language during bilingual voyages, see 'Language') in order to alert or remind you of certain events.

B Books: Reference books (mostly English) are available in the library. Please read books (labelled with polar library stickers) in the bar or observation lounge only and return them to their original place. Non labelled paper back novels can be taken to the cabin.

Bar: The bar is the place on board to meet your fellow travelers. The bar is the social place to read, talk, write, listen to music and of course you can buy a drink. The bar is a non-smoking area. Hot drinks (tea and coffee) will be available at all time free of charge in the observation lounge.

Bridge visits: You are nearly always welcome on the bridge, an excellent place to watch ship operations and maintain a lookout for wildlife. Please remember, however, that the bridge is a working place. To enable our officers to navigate the ship, remain on one side of the bridge and please do not eat or drink. When in port, during rough weather, and other times for reasons of safety, the bridge will be closed to visitors. If you are in doubt, please ask the officer on watch.

C Communication: There are facilities onboard to send email messages and make telephone calls per Iridium satellite connections. The costs are at your expense.

Crew areas: Please do not enter crew areas.

Currency & payment: Refreshments from the bar and souvenirs will be charged to your cabin. The day before departure you can settle your bill with the Hotel Manager and pay by Visa or MasterCard, Diners Club/ Discover, Union pay or cash (Euro or US Dollar). The prices and standard currency on board all our vessels is the Euro. Other currencies may be accepted at the discretion of the hotel manager at prevailing rates.

Please note: aboard s/v Rembrandt van Rijn payments can be in cash Euro / US Dollar or with Visa or MasterCard, s/v Noorderlicht all payments are cash Euro or Norwegian Krone. We do not accept cheques of any kind.

D Daily programme: This will be displayed onboard (TV or whiteboards). Please check this on a regular basis in case of changes or new information. We will plan activities and schedules, but they are always subject to change at any time due to conditions that may occur. If a lecture is cancelled due to excursions or certain activities, it will be rescheduled for the next possible time. This is an expedition in every sense, and our exact route and itinerary are subject to changing weather conditions, our rate of progress through the ice, wildlife opportunities and many other factors. As with any voyage, information we collect en route is analyzed and taken into consideration. We will do our best to keep you informed over the intercom system, the notice board or directly, as changes may occur.

Dressing: In keeping with our expedition's atmosphere, dress on board is informal. Bring casual and comfortable clothing for all activities. Keep in mind that much of the spectacular scenery is best appreciated from the deck, which can be slippery. Bring sturdy shoes with non-slip soles and make sure your jacket is never far away in case the call "Whales!" comes over the loudspeaker and you have to dash outside. Wear layers since it is comfortably warm aboard the ship - and often cold on deck.

Doctor: Onboard the motor vessels we have a basic equipped infirmary for small injuries or first aid assistance. If you feel sick or uncomfortable please don't hesitate to consult the doctor. If you take special medication, or if you are allergic to any medicine, inform our doctor in time. In case of emergencies we need to know if there is any special treatments necessary. There is no doctor or hospital aboard the Noorderlicht and Rembrandt van Rijn.

E Electric current: The electrical supply aboard the ship is 220v, 60Hz. Electrical outlets are standard European with two thick round pins. U.S. passengers may need a 220v/110v converter.

Equipment: Rubber boots are available free of charge (loan only) onboard Plancius & Ortelius. Other vessels might have some left over boots onboard, but don't count on it. Other specialized equipment (camping, snowshoes etc.) will be provided for the activities booked. The activity manuals contain more information about it.

G Gratuities: The customary gratuity to the ship's service personnel is made as a blanket contribution in one envelope at the end of the voyage which is divided among the crew and staff. You will receive detailed guidelines aboard. Tipping is a very personal matter and the amount you wish to give is at your discretion. It is better for the crew and staff, if you can give cash, either US Dollars or Euros. You may give individually and / or communally as a personal 'thank you' to one or more of the ship's personnel.

L Language: English is the ship's language and spoken by all staff and crew. Several departures are dedicated to certain language groups, so called bilingual voyages. Some German speaking expedition staff will be on board for bilingual voyages (English – German). Welcome and safety briefings, announcements, daily briefings, and recaps will be provided in English and German. English and German lectures may vary in content. Simultaneous translations of lectures will not occur but a summary in the second language may be given at the end of a lecture. Guidance during activities ashore will depend on the group each passenger chooses according to their own physical ability. In the Arctic we aim at splitting into three groups: a hiking group on a strenuous walk, a medium-paced group with more time for photography etc., and a leisurely group. A German speaking staff member will not necessarily be available for each group. During Zodiac cruises, each boat's driver/guide will not necessarily be bilingual.

Laundry: Although limited, there is a laundry service on board (but not on s/v Rembrandt van Rijn & s/v Noorderlicht). In your cabin you will find laundry forms and linen bags. Please fill out the form and put the laundry in the provided bag and leave it on your bed. The cabin stewardess will pick it up and return within 24 hours. Dry cleaning is not available.

Life jackets: You will be provided with a lightweight inflatable life jacket, which inflates automatically on contact with water. These life jackets must be worn at all times in the zodiac while cruising. Please handle your life jacket with care and do not leave it lying around on the beach in the rain. Always bring the life jacket back to your cabin. For your own safety, wear the inflatable life jacket when it is windy outside on deck. Additionally there is a large 'heavy duty' bright orange life jacket in your cabin, which is to be used in case of ship emergency and for the lifeboat drill.

M Mealtimes and dietary requirements: All meals will be announced on the ship. Normally breakfast starts at 07:30, lunch at 12:30 and dinner at 19:00. Please inform the Hotel Manager if you have any dietary requirements, so our chefs have the time to prepare something special for you. Vegetarian and vegan meals have to be requested in the Personal Information Form (PIF) with the reservation department. **Vegan meals cannot be arranged on Noorderlicht.**

N Non-smoking policy: On board our vessels we have a non-smoking policy. It is prohibited to smoke inside the ship at all times. You can smoke outside on deck but do not throw your cigarette filter overboard! Do not smoke on the aft deck in the proximity of Zodiacs, engines and fuel. Please respect the wishes of non-smokers.

S Safe: If you have any valuables you can give them to the Hotel Manager, who will lock them up in a safe.

Safety: There will be a life jacket and life boat (“abandon ship”) drill at the beginning of the voyage and it is mandatory for all passengers to participate in this exercise. During the voyage the Master may have to perform an additional fire drill, which will be announced.

As on all ships, please anticipate pitching and rolling. Also, in the ice, there can be sudden lurches and stops as the ship collides with and works through the ice. Use the handrails whenever possible, especially going up stairways, ladders etc.

- ✦ Be careful while walking on open decks, they can be very slippery.
- ✦ Please watch your step going out on deck, as there are high steps in many doorways.
- ✦ When passing through all doorways, and while in your cabin, please do not place your hands on the edge of the doors, as a lurching movement could slam the door on your fingers.
- ✦ When walking on the ship, please remember: one hand for yourself, one hand for the ship.

Souvenirs: T-Shirts, Sweaters, postcards etc. are available in the ‘souvenir shop’ (items at display). Opening hours will be announced.

T Tag board: Before disembarking on daily excursions, turn your tag to ‘OFF’, and return it again when you get back on board. Every passenger must turn his/her own tag.

W Wildlife watch: To spot interesting wildlife and nature scenes the ships’ officers and staff are constantly on the lookout. Your participation is appreciated, so don’t hesitate to report a sighting to the staff or officers on the bridge. If we are fortunate enough to sight some special wildlife, we will announce it from the bridge to all cabins and decks, regardless the hour. If you wish to go back to sleep, please do so.



Zodiac Instructions

The proper handling and usage of Zodiac landing craft, is crucial for exploratory voyages. These rubber boats are ideal for our operations. They have shallow drafts, and contain six air-filled compartments which give them impressive floatation and weight carrying abilities. The compartments are connected by valves, which allow the internal air pressure to be regulated, and they will still float even if one (or several) compartments become deflated. With these safe, durable and dependable boats we can land in many, normally inaccessible sites; Such as, beaches, shallow river banks, rocky outcrops, coral reef flats, ice floes, etc., as well as more conventional places; such as, docks, sea walls and jetties. Passengers, however, must be aware of certain regulations involving the Zodiacs in order to assure adequate safety in our landing operations.

Important Zodiac notes:

- ! The Zodiac driver is in charge of the boat and its operations. Please follow his or her instructions at all times.
- ! Always wear the provided zodiac safety vests when travelling in the Zodiacs. This is for your safety, and is required at all times while in the Zodiacs regardless of weather or sea conditions.
- ! Always accept the helping hand of crew-members and Zodiac drivers when stepping into or out of the Zodiacs at the ship’s gangway or ashore. Keep both hands free for this operation, and use the preferred ‘sailor’s grip’; i.e., grip each other by the wrist, because this gives a much stronger grip than just holding hands.

- ! Minimize the number of separate articles taken along with you when using the zodiacs. Backpacks are ideal for consolidating such diverse objects as cameras, binoculars, rain gear, extra shoes, etc. Carry-on items may be handed to the boat handlers before embarking or disembarking. Keep both hands free.
- ! NEVER smoke in the Zodiacs. This is hazardous because there are exposed fuel tanks connected to the outboard engines. Lit cigarettes are also hazardous to the rubber construction of the boats.
- ! All landing conditions will be announced beforehand; i.e., 'wet' landings (these may require getting your feet wet by wading ashore), 'dry' landings (these make use of a dock or other object with which one can step ashore directly), and expected weather conditions.
- ! Never disembark or embark the Zodiac over the wooden transom (stern) when the boat is backed onto a beach. Oncoming waves may suddenly push the boat higher onto the beach, knocking the careless passenger with the uplifted engine and propeller, or crushing an exposed foot with the very heavy transom. During 'wet' landings one may safely get in or out of the boat by first sitting on the rubber pontoon and then swinging one's leg over the side. Always wait for instructions from the driver during landings.
- ! One should always use a weatherproof bag (or bring along a small plastic bag) to protect non-waterproof items; such as, cameras and binoculars, from sea spray (or rain) when in the Zodiacs.



Commonly asked questions

✳ Do I have to be really "fit" and in good health to join this expedition?

You must be in good general health and you should be able to walk several hours per day on rough terrain. However, the expedition is ship-based and physically not very demanding: although we spend as much time as possible ashore, you are welcome to remain aboard the ship if you like. It is very important, in order to join most excursions, that you are able to easily get up and down the steep gangway from the ship to the water level to board the Zodiacs. Staff will assist you in- and out of the boats. Ashore it can be slippery and rocky. You are travelling in remote areas without access to sophisticated medical facilities, so you must not join this expedition if you have a life-threatening condition, need daily medical treatment or have difficulty walking.

✳ What is the age range aboard?

Passengers on a typical voyage range from their 30s to their 80s - with a majority usually from 45 - 65 (a little bit younger on our sailing vessel). Our expeditions attract independent-minded travelers from around the world. They are characterized by a strong interest in exploring remote regions. The camaraderie and spirit that develops aboard is an important part of the expedition experience. Many departures have several nationalities on board.

✦ **Can I recharge my batteries and use electrical appliances on board?**

Yes, the power supply is 220v, 50Hz. The wall plugs accommodate two thick round pins like those found in most European countries. You may need a transformer and international adapter for your particular equipment.

✦ **Are there restrictions on what can be done while ashore?**

Yes, an overriding concern is the protection of the wildlife, environment and cultures in any of the areas we visit. We will address conservation issues in the on-board briefings and the expedition staff will assist you ashore.

Do not leave anything but footprints
Do not take anything but memories



✦ **How much time do we spend ashore?**

That is hard to say. Our aim is to spend as much time ashore as possible. But that depends on the weather and the constraints of time and distance. Depending on the voyage, you may spend several days aboard the ship, followed by a series of landings, each several hours long. On some voyages you land two or three times every day. During our time at high latitudes we will have almost continuous daylight. We would like to show you as much as possible but leave it up to you to skip an excursion.

✦ **Can I fly my UAV/quadcopter/drone during a trip with Oceanwide Expeditions?**

Oceanwide Expeditions does not allow recreational UAVs/quadcopters drones onboard our vessels.

The International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO) has decided that the recreational use of UAVs/quadcopters/drones is not allowed on board member vessels. Also the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands has issued a ban on recreational use of the these vehicles in their territory.

The Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO) has also decided not to allow the use of UAVs/quadcopters/drones on board member vessels.

Oceanwide Expeditions is full member of both organizations and support this decision.

✦ **Sea sickness?**

Many people ask us if they will get sea-sick. This depends very much on the individual. Our experience is that a small percentage of people get sick on any trip and most of these people are fine after a day or so at sea. If you feel that you are particularly susceptible to sea-sickness then it is a good idea to talk to your local doctor. Bring motion sickness tablets, be sure you have eaten enough and feel rested.

Sailing & combating sea sickness: We expect to sail at night most of the time but also during the day to visit different landing places. Anticipate some rough seas during the voyage (crossing the Drake Passage or Denmark Strait). Should you be prone to motion or sea sickness, please consult your physician which medication is appropriate and its side effects. To avert motion sickness, avoid alcohol, tobacco, excess liquids, and confined spaces. Most people feel better sitting on deck looking at the horizon or lying in bed. Oddly, you will feel better with some food, such as crackers or dry toast in your stomach. Many people eat to avoid feeling sick. Remember, once you start to experience motion sickness, medications are of little help, so take it well in advance. For those with roommates please take care of each other. If your room mate is not well it is good to bring him/her dry biscuits and tea. Also inform the doctor, expedition leader or Hotel Manager about the situation.