

WINTER TRAVEL

A top-notch trip to the bottom of the world



PHOTOS

This page top: First sighting of the serene and peaceful Antarctic Peninsula near Elephant Island, Below right: Klaus with wife Susan at Bulnes Fort near Punta Arenas, Chile, overlooking Straits of Magellan, Below left: The Oceania cruise ship Marina anchored in the fjord at Puerto Chacabuco, Chile.

Right page clockwise from left to right: The Marina's passengers enjoy a view of the rocky coast in Admiralty Bay. A flock of albatross navigate the winds over the tumultuous Drake Passage. Penguin colonies thrive in the region and these two watch the tour group near Puerto Madryn, Argentina, Some historical and cruise locations near the Antarctic Peninsula; Iceberg floating along with Antarctic currents sighted near Deception Island.

CRUISE PHOTO CREDITS: Klaus Katzch and Susan Bach



By Klaus Katzch

On January 15, my wife, Susan Bach, and I embarked on a 20-day trip to Antarctica. We flew to Buenos Aires, Argentina, for a few days before boarding the Oceania cruise ship.

Buenos Aires is a beautiful city with many wide boulevards and plazas. There seemed to be four restaurants on every corner. Argentinians love their steaks!

On January 17, our ship set sail. The ship was amazing with great meals, fabulous entertainment, lots of bars and cool places to hang out on board. Four professors gave daily lectures on various topics regarding the Antarctic, including the history and wildlife of the region.

We sailed to Montevideo and Punta Del Este, Uruguay, as well as a few other places in Argentina. We were supposed to visit the Falkland Islands but, unfortunately, that stop had to be cancelled due to bad weather.

A few days later, we landed in the Antarctic after crossing the Drake Passage. This is where the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans converge and it was a rough time as 20 to 30-foot swells were the norm.

Once we arrived in the Antarctic Peninsula, we were stunned by the beauty of it all. This was the highlight of our trip. As the pictures indicate, it truly is a special place. Fortunately, there was very little wind when we were there. The weather was cool, around 2 to -5 degrees C, but the sun was up for about 20 hours a day.

No one owns the Antarctic. Treaties were signed years ago by many nations to keep it pristine and pollution free. Also, many countries have research stations down there.

We saw whales and penguins, although the penguins were only visible through binoculars.

When these guys are in the water they really move! We witnessed them as far as 50 miles out to sea.

We left a few days later. Crossing the Drake passage was again an adventure. Sometimes the ship would pitch so severely that the propellers would be partially out of the water.

After six days at sea, it was nice to finally encounter land again in Ushuaia, Argentina, the southernmost city in the world. We explored the Chilean fjords taking in the Straits of Magellan and various ports along the way.

The fjords are a unique kind of wilderness with mountainous terrain ending in the sea.



We finished our trip in San Antonio, a two-hour bus ride to Santiago, Chile. We spent two nights there exploring the city, which has a French/Spanish-like feel, similar to Buenos Aires.

We had an incredible adventure. It's hard to get your head around the fact that explorers ventured there over 150 years ago.

If you have the chance to go to Antarctica, do it. It's the trip of a lifetime.

Ernest Shackleton's 1914 Antarctic voyage

The discovery of Ernest Shackleton's ship *Endurance* on March 9, 2022, in nearly 10,000 feet of clear and icy waters in Antarctica's Weddell Sea, recalls the grueling and failed 1914 expedition to walk across the Antarctic continent. The British ship had become immobilized and the hull was squeezed until broken by the heavy ice. After unloading provisions from the ship, the men set up camp on the sea ice. Twenty-five days later, what remained of the wreck shook once more and then disappeared beneath the ice.

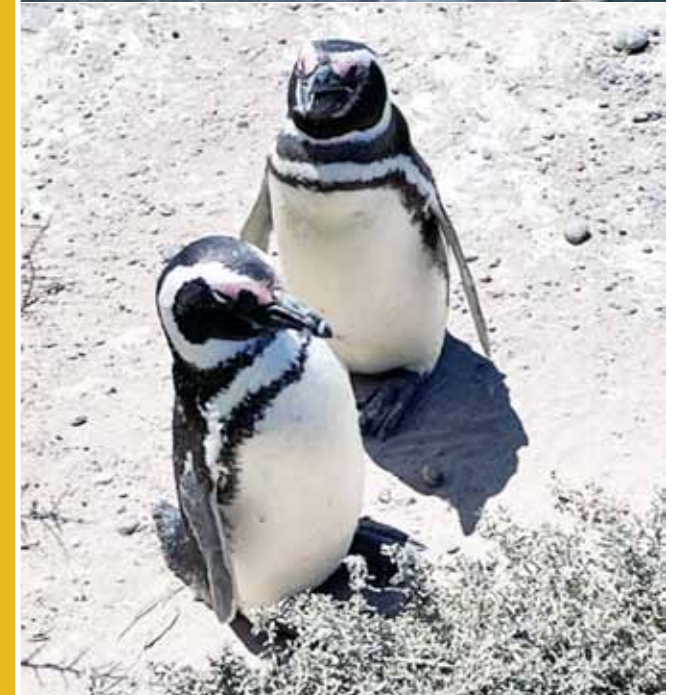
Enduring hunger, brutal cold, seething seas and near madness, after 21 months all 28 men miraculously survived.

Years later Ernest Shackleton died on board his ship *Quest* on the 5th of January 1922 and is buried at Grytviken cemetery in South Georgia.



The *Endurance* was trapped in ice for months finally sinking in 1915. A newspaper ad in the *London Times*.

"During the Drake passage crossing, the ship would pitch so severely that the propellers would be partially out of the water"



The white continent

Antarctica, the "white continent," has a mystique that has attracted travelers looking for adventure since its discovery in 1820. South Pole expeditions by legendary figures Scott, Shackleton, and Amundsen captivated the public imagination.

Today, visitors can enjoy this remote getaway in much better conditions. Modern cruise ships bring approximately 35,000 passengers from South America each year between November and March. Most visit the Antarctic Peninsula region although with special permission, a few cruises extend within the Antarctic circle.

The continent is protected by the Antarctic Treaty, which preserves it for peaceful and scientific use. All human activity is carefully managed and planned, including environmentally sensitive tourism.

Because no country owns Antarctica, a visa is not required for travel there but planning well in advance is advised.