



Russian Coast 2011

White Sea | Franz Josef Land | North East Passage | Kamchatka | Kuril Islands



Dear Expeditioners,

We're going back to Russia! Three years ago I led Aurora Expeditions' inaugural voyages through the Kuril Islands and along Kamchatka Peninsula and was blown away by the wildlife, the people and fantastic landscapes.

Now, after a short break, Aurora Expeditions is returning, adding amazing voyages to the White Sea, remote Franz Josef Land, and most incredible of all, a 26-day adventure across the North East Passage, from European Russia to the Far East.

A warning though, Russia can be very addictive. Rosy, my wife, discovered this years ago. After annual pilgrimages to study Russian language at St. Petersburg State University, she joined Sergey Frolov, now Aurora Expeditions special guest lecturer, on a pioneering voyage through the Kuril Islands to Kamchatka. Their reports and photos inspired Aurora to run the first Australian expedition cruises to the region.

Each landing brings a sense of wildness or intrigue. There is abundant wildlife, incredible seabird rookeries, exotic cultures and the thrill of investigating abandoned military or weather outposts. The intensity of experience and sense of discovery reminds me of our first voyages to Antarctica nearly two decades ago.

Our goal is to investigate the secluded islands and spectacular coastline of this forgotten land. The lack of infrastructure makes access to many places virtually impossible by any means other than by ship.

This is definitely not a conventional cruise. If you're expecting to arrive on time at each location on our proposed itineraries, this is not the trip for you. We may wake up to find ourselves a long way from where we expected to be, thanks to weather, currents, possibly even pack ice. Flexibility is not only the key to a successful voyage, it's the essence of adventure.

We invite you to join us, along with our team of expert lecturers and expedition leaders, as we journey into one of the world's wildest frontiers.

Howard Whelan
Expedition Leader



Above: Our Zodiacs take us deep into this remote wilderness. Photo: David Mannix.
Front cover: Bear stands while fishing for salmon in Tikhaya River. Kromotsky Volcano is in the background. Photo: Igor Shpilenok.

2011 EXPEDITION PROGRAM		
Cruise dates	Trip	Page
17 July – 26 July 10 days	Secrets of the White Sea – Murmansk to Arkhangelsk	10
26 July – 8 August 14 days	Voyage to the End of the Earth – Arkhangelsk to Murmansk	12
10 August – 4 September 26 days	Across the North East Passage – Murmansk to Anadyr	14
5 September – 16 September 12 days	Bering Sea Explorer – Anadyr to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy	18
16 September – 28 September 13 days	The Ring of Fire – Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy to Korsakov	20

“To sit quietly in a Zodiac surrounded by several thousand chirruping crested auklets while countless more swirled overhead remains as one of my most indelible wildlife experiences.” AURORA EXPEDITIONS' NATURALIST, ALAN BURGER

Voyage Highlights

Secrets of the White Sea features complex history, culture, taiga wilderness and astounding birdlife. From the Barents Sea to the White Sea, we call into isolated Pomor villages, search for prehistoric petroglyphs and labyrinths, tour medieval monasteries built by hermit monks, later taken over for Stalin's harsh gulags. Join us for optional hikes in Arctic light.

Voyage to the End of the Earth offers a rare chance to visit Novaya Zemlya and Franz Josef Land. Access to these Arctic wonderlands has been restricted for decades, due to their military sensitivity. The highly productive Kara Sea attracts diverse marine life, including walrus, whales and seals. Explorers have been drawn to this area for centuries, searching for both the North Pole and a maritime route to the east. Our own explorations take us to historic huts and abandoned research stations.

Across the North East Passage attempts one of the great geographical challenges of our time – a must for explorers and the adventure-minded. We traverse nine time zones and six seas, from Murmansk to Anadyr, following in the wake of Baron Nils Nordenskjöld – the first to succeed. We call at numerous archipelagos, huge Siberian river deltas and discover isolated Eskimo villages, polar bear dens and a treasure trove of Arctic wildlife.



Bering Sea Explorer reveals a wildlife wilderness. Chukotka's deep bays and mountainous coast blaze with autumn colour. We encounter Chukchi fishermen, brown bears, walrus and whales. Commander Islands captivate us with Aleut cultural performances, sea lions, fur seals, otters, extensive bird cliffs and explorer Vitus Bering's grave. Kamchatka's 120 or so volcanoes rise above abandoned villages and bird-filled forests. Koryak culture and geological wonders are set amidst a stunning landscape.

The Ring of Fire displays the spectacular results of the forces that shape our world – tectonic plates and volcanism. Active volcanoes, sculpted basalt sea cliffs, archways, tunnels, and lush vegetation provide habitat for an astounding diversity of wildlife. We see large numbers of seabirds, sea lions, otters and whales. Soak in hot springs, hike through megaherb forests, visit Cold War listening posts, secret Soviet Navy bases and remains of the Ainu villages.



Above left: Reminders of Russia's historic past feature as we travel along her remote coastline. Photo: Kris Madden. **Above:** Bolshie Kozly Village. Photo: Sergey Frolov. **Left:** A group of walrus swimming off Appolonov Island. Photo: B&C Alexander/ArcticPhoto.

Ask us about our free Russian Coast information events in your state. Call +61 2 9252 1033 or 1800 637 688 (freecall within Australia) or visit www.auroraexpeditions.com.au



80°

60°

40°

20°



Explore remote Russia with friends

Exotic and rarely visited, Novaya Zemlya, Franz Josef Land, Chukotka, Kamchatka, and the Kurils encompass a wilderness protected by Arctic storms, strong tides and, for some, shifting pack ice. Voyage itineraries are subject to change, an unpredictability we believe is the essence of adventure.

Wilderness voyages off the beaten track are best experienced in small groups, from the comfort and safety of our floating base camp, *Akademik Shokalskiy*. We take a maximum of 54 passengers. This, combined with our small, ice-strengthened ship, gives us the flexibility to reach places closed to larger vessels, and allows us more time to explore.

The relaxed, casual atmosphere we enjoy on board dovetails our passion for 'getting out amongst it' at every opportunity. In an age where adventure travel has become a commodity, and more and more small companies are subsumed into huge conglomerates, our original goals remain unchanged. We exist to visit wild places that stir the soul, to share adventures with new friends and deliver personal attention on unforgettable expeditions.

Come and see why we treat every voyage as if it were our first.

Why travel with us?

Exciting things come in small packages.

Unlike the massive cruise ships that dwarf us in Murmansk, Arkhangelsk and Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy, we carry 54 passengers at most and delight in the camaraderie of small group adventures.

Our expedition staff put you first.

Experienced and enthusiastic, our expedition teams are the best in the business. Your safety, comfort and understanding of wild Russia are their priorities.

We give you the freedom to enjoy Russia in your own way.

Explore the coastline, hike across tundra, sit and photograph wildlife, or simply take in views from the ship. We aim to make two to three landings a day.

We push the boundaries.

Explore polar bear country. Sea kayaking near walrus haulouts. Cross the North East Passage. We continue to pioneer adventure activities in far flung parts of the world.

We have fun.

We love what we do and believe that everyone on board, from passengers and expedition staff to our crew, all share the same goal – the best Russian Coast experience imaginable.



Top left: Arctic birds nest on the coastal sea cliffs. Photo: B&C Alexander/ArcticPhoto.

Above: Small group exploration is the best way to discover this region. Photo: David Mannix.

80°



“I was blown away by the diversity and abundance of the marine life around Kamchatka and the Kuril Islands.”

AURORA EXPEDITIONS' NATURALIST,
ALAN BURGER



Above left: Witness the unique landscapes of this vast wilderness. Photo: Peter Juliff. **Above:** Kayakers will explore remote and peaceful surroundings. Photo: Al Bakker. **Below:** Summer through Autumn, delightful tundra wildflowers will dot the coastline. Photo: Kris Madden. **Below left:** Kayakers paddle to the shoreline. Photo: Peter Juliff.

Adventure is our heritage

In the early 1990s, adventurers Greg and Margaret Mortimer began sharing their love of untamed places by organising ship-based trips to Antarctica for keen friends and fellow travellers, and founding Aurora Expeditions along the way. It was natural that we established the first Antarctic trips to offer camping, mountaineering, sea kayaking and scuba diving. Since then Aurora Expeditions has led trips to the High Arctic, the Amazon, Galapagos Islands, Papua New Guinea, Australia's Kimberley Coast, the Antarctic Peninsula and Eastern Antarctica. Today, our spirit of adventure and exploration is as strong as ever as we explore deep into the Russian Arctic and along Siberia's north coast.

In addition to these new, expeditionary voyages, we offer our ever-popular sea kayaking. We're dedicated to maintaining the values that our founders established: an easy-going, informative style; enthusiastic, expert staff and – most of all – a personal approach that warmly welcomes you to the Aurora family.



Visit our website for more information
on our Russian Coast voyages!
www.auroraexpeditions.com.au



80°

Excitement of shipboard life

60°

Whether in Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, Anadyr or Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy remnant Soviet architecture and lively street scenes captivate us as we make our way from airport to waterfront. After months of planning, preparation and travel we finally arrive on the wharf, where salty sea air and clear Arctic light engulf us, and our hearts race as we spot *Akademik Shokalskiy*. Our sturdy little ship is the perfect vessel to carry us to places few have ever seen.

40°

As we step aboard to a heartfelt welcome, we appreciate the camaraderie and the relaxed, exciting atmosphere. After our initial briefing, we gather on the flying bridge as the ship's lines are cast off, and with a blast of the horn, our adventure begins.

20°

If the weather is kind, the bright sunshine of an Arctic evening may sparkle on the Barents, White or Bering seas before we head inside to prepare for the next day's landings. Thanks to our Captain's "open bridge" policy we have a congenial place to watch for seabirds, whales and pack ice. The outside decks also provide great viewing platforms.

Zodiacs whisk us to soaring seabird cliffs, Pomor villages, medieval monasteries, explorers' historic huts or simply ashore to stretch our legs on tundra and mountain walks. Thanks to the Midnight Sun, our philosophy of making the most of every opportunity to explore is put to practice. The sauna is especially appreciated after a Polar Plunge, a day's hiking, kayaking, or a brisk Zodiac cruise. Our excellent chefs prepare three healthy, delicious meals each day, with snacks and treats available in the dining rooms at other times.

20°

The *Akademik Shokalskiy* bar is a homey spot to play cards and read in the afternoon, a buzzing place at Happy Hour where the day's excitement is shared, digital photos swapped and even a mini dance floor on the open seas.



"It was great to know we were in such capable hands, your highly knowledgeable expedition team and crew were great."

FIONA TWYFORD, ANTARCTICA 2009

Above: Passengers enjoy a buffet dinner on the deck. Photo: Ania Hart. **Below left:** Passengers are always welcome on the ship's bridge, a great place for watching seabirds and spotting bigger wildlife. Photo: David Mannix. **Below right:** Other times the dining room makes for a comfortable atmosphere during dinner time. Photo: Quark Expeditions.

40°



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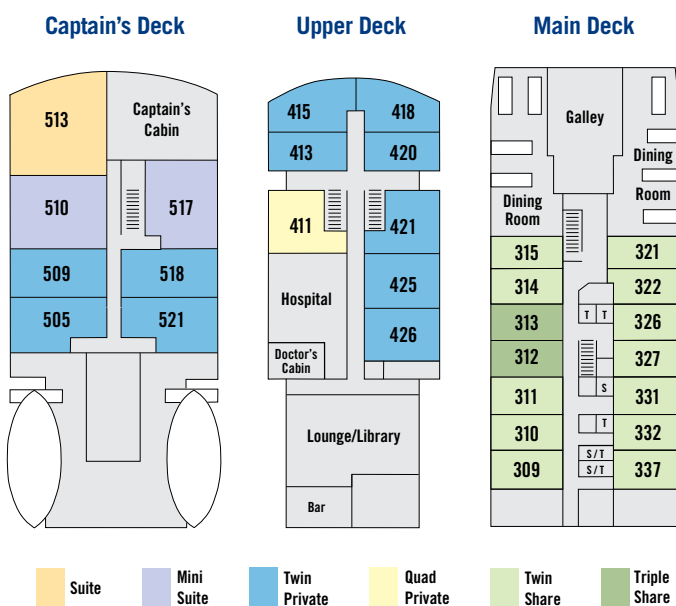


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Welcome aboard *Akademik Shokalskiy*

Aurora Expeditions is pleased to present *Akademik Shokalskiy* – our newest vessel and sister ship to our famed *Polar Pioneer*. Designed and built as an ice-strengthened research ship in Finland in 1982, she has explored much of the world's polar waters. Fully refurbished in 2008, the ship provides simple yet comfortable accommodation for a maximum of 54 passengers. Her excellent reputation for polar expedition cruising is due to her strength, manoeuvrability and size.

Our highly experienced Russian captain and crew are among the best ice navigators in the world. The spacious bridge is always open to us and decks are ideal for viewing the dramatic polar landscapes and wildlife. All cabins have outside portholes and ample storage space, whilst the public areas include a lounge bar, a lecture room/library, sauna, medical office and dining rooms. Meals are wholesome, delicious and prepared by Western chefs, while Russian stewardesses attend the dining room. The vessel is also equipped with a small fleet of inflatable Zodiacs ensuring easy travel from ship to shore.



AKADEMIK SHOKALSKIY IS AN EXCEPTIONAL VESSEL FOR POLAR TRAVEL. SHE HAS A VARIETY OF CABIN CHOICES WITH TRIPLE, TWIN, QUAD, SUPERIOR CABINS AND SUITES. OUR EXPEDITION EXPERTS CAN TALK THROUGH THE FEATURES OF EACH CABIN AND HELP YOU DECIDE WHICH ONE WILL SUIT YOUR NEEDS.

The Captain's Suite: Double bed in separate room, plus foldout couch that can be used as a single bed; forward and port windows; lounge and table area; fridge; TV; DVD player and private bathroom, with shower, toilet and washbasin.

Mini Suite: Double bed in a separate room, foldout couch that can be used as a single bed, TV, DVD player, windows, desk, and private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin.

Quad Private: Two upper and lower bunks, window and private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. Suitable for a family of four or a group of friends travelling together.

Twin Private: Two bunks, a desk, windows and private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin.

Twin Public: Two bunks, desk, small washbasin, ample storage & hanging space, couch and a porthole. Showers and toilets are close by and are shared with other Main Deck cabins.

Triple: Two lower bunks and one upper bunk, desk, small washbasin, ample storage and hanging space and portholes. Showers and toilets are close by and shared with other Main Deck cabins.

SPECIFICATIONS	
Length	71.6 metres
Beam	12.8 metres
Draft	4.5 metres
Cruising speed	10 knots
Registry	Russian

Top right: Our new ship, Akademik Shokalskiy, is our floating base camp during our Russian exploration. From the moment you step aboard, you'll appreciate the warm, welcoming atmosphere and the easy camaraderie between our Russian crew, Aurora staff and expeditioners alike. Photo: Quark Expeditions. **Above right:** Our simple, comfortable cabins offer a wonderful place to recharge after the day's adventures. Photo: Quark Expeditions.



Our Russian experts welcome you

Aurora Expedition staff were initially chosen from close friends and experts who shared common adventures. The common threads were adventurous spirits and a deep love of wild places. As the company grew, we sought experts with valuable experience who would add safety and good humour to our trips. Our staff members are chosen not just for their impressive credentials, but because they enjoy people and have a deep passion for the regions we visit.

Limited voyages keep our teams fresh, keen to go ashore whenever possible and to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with you. Each voyage has an expedition leader, assistant expedition leader, naturalist and doctor. For our Russian Arctic trips, a guest historian joins our team and for Russia's Far East, a geologist well-versed in vulcanology. A highly skilled sea kayaking guide accompanies you on selected voyages. Through informal talks, illustrated by stunning images, our team will open your eyes to the world around us.

Our expedition staff are among the industry's best. The Russian Arctic and subarctic regions can be challenging environments, and our staff's hard-won experience often makes the difference between whether or not you go ashore. Your safety comes first, followed closely by exhilarating adventure!



Above right: A commemorative monument at an old polar station in the Russian Arctic. Photo: B&C Alexander/ArcticPhoto. **Below right:** Local villagers greet us with traditional welcomes. Photo: Kris Madden. **Below:** A variety of birdlife calls the coastline home, just like this tufted puffin. Photo: Kris Madden.

“One of the treats of Kamchatka and the Kuril Islands was to experience the diversity and abundance of seabirds. I recorded twelve species of alcids (auks) including two species of puffins as well as murrelets, guillemots and the wonderfully ornamented auklets.”

AURORA EXPEDITIONS' NATURALIST, ALAN BURGER



Here's a sample of our expedition staff who might welcome you aboard *Akademik Shokalskiy*.



Sergey Frolov

Our special guest lecturer was born into a long line of Russian seafarers and grew up in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy, where he developed a love of sled dog mushing and exploration. Between 1987-1991, Sergey lived in the Russian Arctic, where the Siberian Yupik Eskimos taught him to build "umiaks", traditional skin boats, which they used to cross Bering Strait to Alaska three times, reuniting families split by the Cold War. His entertaining talks are beautifully illustrated and give a rare insight into the places we visit.



Howard Whelan

Expedition leader, journalist and cinematographer, Howard filmed the first Australian ascent of Mt. Everest, was founding editor of Australian Geographic and led film crews to Antarctica for the Academy Award-winning feature *Happy Feet*. His passion for exploration has seen him lead expeditions to some of the planet's most remote regions, including Antarctica, the Amazon, Galapagos Islands, and the Russian Far East. He spent three months in Russia researching an article for *Outside* magazine, travelling from the Kola Peninsula, across Siberia to Kamchatka.



Rosy Whelan

Assistant expedition leader, Rosy is a researcher, writer, teacher, and adventurer, with a wide range of experience in film, television, publishing and education. As one of the first Aurora Expeditions employees, she developed environmental policies that helped shape Antarctic tourism. Rosy originally visited Russia in 1998 to study Russian language at St. Petersburg State University. She has returned many times since, and has thoroughly enjoyed sampling a variety of Russian destinations.



Dr. Alan Burger

Expedition naturalist, Alan was born and raised in the South African bushveld. He's studied albatross, petrels, penguins, and terrestrial invertebrates. Alan immigrated to Canada in 1980 and is now an Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Victoria in British Columbia. A wildlife conservationist, Alan has worked with Aurora Expeditions in the Antarctic, Arctic and Russian Far East.



James Cresswell

Geologist, glaciologist, mountain guide and photographer, James is from the Brecon Beacons National Park in Wales and has a degree in Geology and a Masters in Oceanography. He is especially interested in Climate Change, and frequently gives Climate Change talks around the UK. James has also worked in the TV documentary industry and has guided in Antarctica, Arctic, Canada, Greenland, Svalbard, Papua New Guinea and Australia.



Dr. Jaye Martin

Medical officer Jaye is a specialist physician based in Broome, WA. The unpredictable and varied nature of her work involves extensive 4WD travel in the remote Kimberley, and means that she is resourceful and adaptable! She grew up and graduated from Medical School in the UK, immigrating to WA in 1991. She worked in the WA Goldfields, Central Desert Wheatbelt, and Perth, before moving to the Kimberley.

Have a chat with our expedition experts and find out more about our voyages to the Russian Coast.
Call us on +61 2 9252 1033 or Freecall 1800 637 688 (within Australia) or visit www.auroraexpeditions.com.au



Join us for our inaugural Russian Arctic voyages!

The Russian Arctic spans nine time zones, six seas and one ocean. Like an epic tale set across taiga, tundra and polar desert, the region's intriguing history can be read in the landscape and its cultural sites.

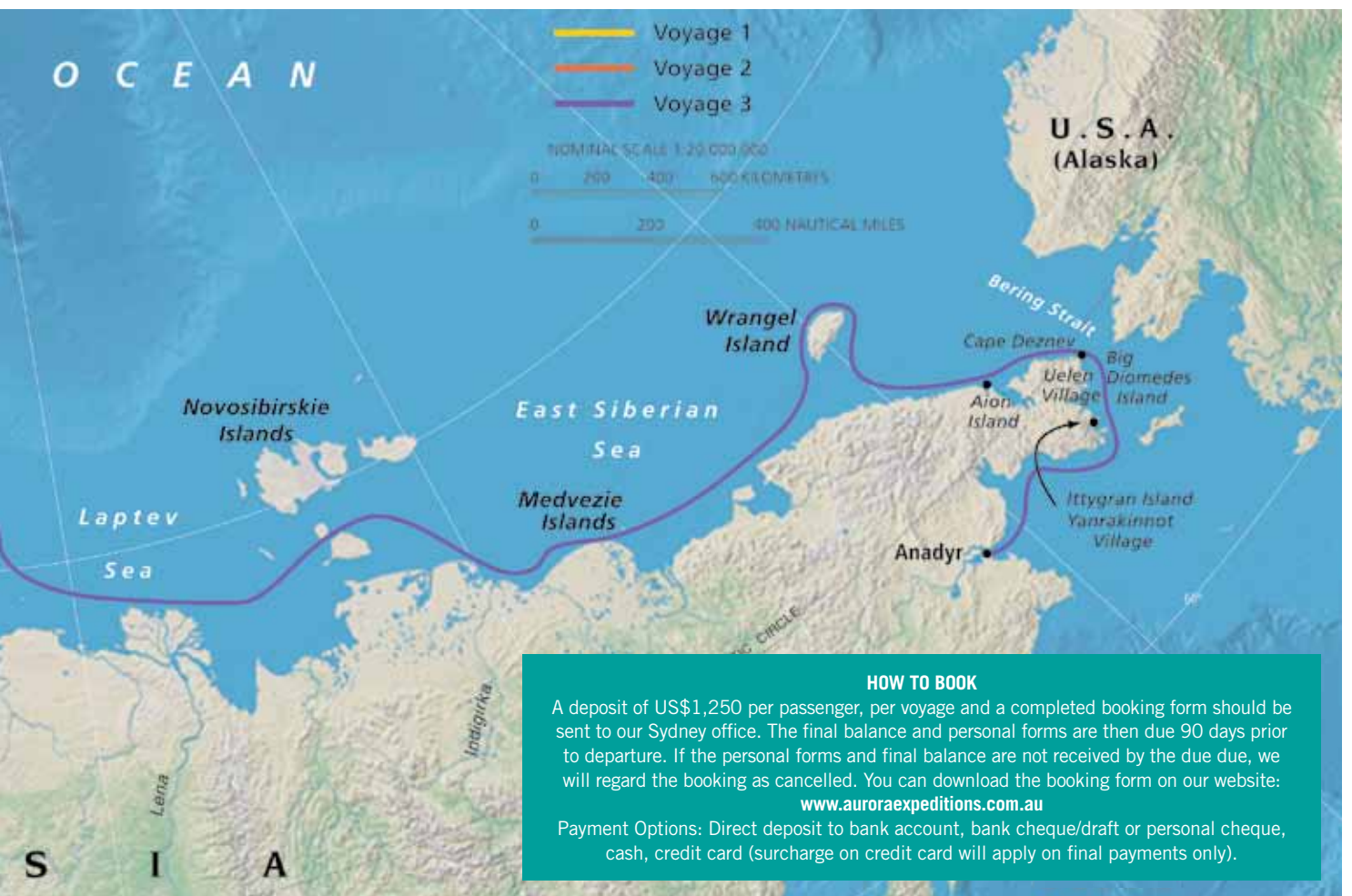
Our inaugural voyages carry us to archipelagos that were once hills and mountaintops rising from the Great Arctic Plain, savannahs where rhinoceros and woolly mammoth grazed and died, leaving fossils in the permafrost.

As sea levels rose, people settled on the White Sea coast, creating beautiful stone labyrinths and ceremonial sites. In the early 12th century, the Pomors arrived and built a string of villages from the Kola Peninsula to halfway across Siberia.

The Arctic Ocean's productive waters attracted walrus, Beluga whales, narwhals and millions of seabirds. Fishing and hunting sustained the Karelians, Eskimos, Inuit and Chukchi.

In the 14th century, two hermit monks, sailed to the Solovetskie Islands in search of solitude. A vision prompted them to build a small monastery, a project that pilgrims championed for 500 years, until Stalin's desecration reduced magnificent churches and fortresses into gulags.





HOW TO BOOK

A deposit of US\$1,250 per passenger, per voyage and a completed booking form should be sent to our Sydney office. The final balance and personal forms are then due 90 days prior to departure. If the personal forms and final balance are not received by the due date, we will regard the booking as cancelled. You can download the booking form on our website: www.auroraexpeditions.com.au

Payment Options: Direct deposit to bank account, bank cheque/draft or personal cheque, cash, credit card (surcharge on credit card will apply on final payments only).

Secrets of the White Sea departs Murmansk to trace the stunning Kola Peninsula coast. Birdlife is prolific and we see bearded and ringed seals, stopping at Pomor villages on our way to the World Heritage listed Solovetskie Islands. Our kayakers hope to paddle the centuries old stone channels.

When Finnish-Swedish explorer Baron Nils Nordenskjold first navigated the North East Passage in 1879, most of the Siberian coast had been mapped, and archipelagos as far north as Franz Josef Land discovered and claimed. Other polar explorers – like Barents, Lomonosov and Nansen – left a legacy of weathered shelters. Two World Wars brought Allied convoys to the White Sea, and a Russian military presence across the Arctic that remains today.

Voyage to the End of the Earth departs Arkhangelsk and sails to Franz Josef Land. Swept by pack ice and home to polar bears, walrus and whales, the archipelago's icy mountains are rarely visited. On the way we hope to land at Novaya Zemlya, one of Russia's most restricted areas.

Across the North East Passage departs Murmansk for one of the planet's greatest expedition voyages. We land on isolated archipelagos like Severnaya Zemlya and Novosibirskie Islands, explore two of Russia's great river deltas and visit World Heritage listed Wrangel Island. We hope to pass through Bering Strait, between Russia and Alaska, completing our epic journey in Anadyr.

Choose the Russian Arctic adventure that best suits you!



Left: Our Zodiacs allow us to get up close to the local residents. Photo: K. Robinson/ArcticPhoto.
Above: Our ice-strengthened ship pushes us through the Arctic pack ice. Photo: Sue Werner.

Secrets of the White Sea

Voyage 1 : 10 days : 17 July 2011 – 26 July 2011 (Sea Kayaking option)



MEDIEVAL MONASTERIES, GULAG MUSEUMS AND REMNANTS OF ANCIENT CULTURES SET AGAINST A HIGH ARCTIC BACKDROP. MIGRATORY BIRDS FILL THE SKIES, PINE AND SPRUCE TREES SING BENEATH SNOW-TINGED MOUNTAINTOPS. DEPARTING FROM MURMANSK – GATEWAY TO THE ARCTIC AND FAMED FOR HOSTING ALLIED CONVOYS DURING TWO WORLD WARS – ARRIVING IN ARKHANGELSK, RUSSIA'S OLDEST SEAPORT, THIS VOYAGE CARRIES YOU FROM THE BARENTS SEA TO THE HEART OF THE WHITE SEA. OUR EXPLORATIONS TAKE US ACROSS WATERS RICH IN MARINE LIFE AND THROUGH NEAR-DESERTED POMOR VILLAGES, MUNCHING WILD BERRIES, ADMIRING EXQUISITE WOODEN CHURCHES. WE DISCOVER A TUNDRA-COVERED COAST SPECKLED WITH SUMMER'S REMNANT WILDFLOWERS; POLAR TERN, KITTIWAKE AND GUILLEMOT COLONIES; PREHISTORIC STONE LABYRINTHS AND AN ISLAND OF PINK GRANITE. FROM MUSHROOM GATHERERS TO ORTHODOX MONKS, WE MEET A PEOPLE PROUD AND PROTECTIVE OF THEIR REMARKABLE HERITAGE.

Day 1

After your overnight stay in Murmansk and city highlights tour, you will be transferred to *Akademik Shokalskiy* mid-afternoon to a warm welcome, and set sail on the inaugural Aurora Expeditions White Sea voyage beneath the midnight sun.

Day 2

We skirt the Kola Peninsula coast, hoping to visit Pomor villages and hike across mineral-rich tundra studded with semi-precious stones. Zodiacs carry us to seabird and seal colonies.

Day 3

We enter the White Sea and explore Morzovets Island, combining spectacular birdwatching, a leisurely hike, and a visit to the weathered, wooden houses of a remnant Pomor (meaning 'maritime') village.

Day 4

Hauntingly beautiful, World Heritage listed Solovetskiy Archipelago stretches across Onega Bay. Rare bird species, including the whooper swan, merlin and marsh harrier, are some of the 190 summer species. We plan to visit the famous, sprawling medieval monastery and fortress, founded in 1436. The monastery's collection of ancient manuscripts draws pilgrims from around the world, while the remains of Stalin's infamous camps of this Gulag Archipelago speak of darker times. An uneasy alliance between church and state means visits aren't assured. We hope to land close beneath the monastery's massive walls and tour the magnificent towers, churches and prehistoric stone labyrinths. Our kayakers may paddle the forest-bound lakes via interlinking channels, some dating back centuries.

Day 5

Wander amongst European Russia's largest array of prehistoric stone labyrinths, possibly sacred sites to the long vanished pro-Saami people. Nearby are 16th-19th century monastery buildings and a Stalin era gulag.

Day 6

Muksulma Island hosts polar tern colonies and the 1830s remains of the monastery's dairy and farmhouse. Mt. Favor hikers may pass gun emplacements once used by the Northern Fleet's training base.

Day 7

Climb Verbokolskaya or Golgotha Mountain on Anzer Island for stunning views; visit Golgotha monastery and neighbouring 19th century stone church, hike to tranquil Trinity Bay to see the beautiful, wooden Holy Trinity Monastery (1620).

Day 8

Zodiac ashore for memorable walks amongst Kuzova Island's exquisite pink granite domes, created by volcanic activity. Haven for migratory gulls, geese and ducks, and the White Sea's largest auk colony; bearded and ringed seals also frequent these waters.

Day 9

At Mudyug Island in the mouth of the Northern Dvina River, we see monuments to the allied forces imprisoned here by the Russians in 1918, along with an old gulag, a small interpretive museum and a lighthouse.

Day 10

An early morning arrival in Arkhangelsk signals the end of our White Sea adventure. Farewell to the crew and shipmates, followed by transfers to the airport.



Left page: This historic-laden monastery is sure to take us back in time. Photo: Sergey Frolov.
Above: These pre-historic labyrinths scatter the islands. Photo: Alexander Ladygin.
Below left: Weathered, wooden churches show the influence of religion. Photo: Jonneke van Eijsden.
Below right: We aim to make two to three landings a day, where we can relax onshore or take optional hikes to explore the islands. Photo: Sergey Frolov.

Deck	Cabin	Cruise Cost*
Main	Triple, shared facilities	US\$6,900
Main	Twin, shared facilities	US\$7,925
Upper	Quad, private facilities	US\$8,250
Upper / Captain's	Twin, private facilities	US\$9,150
Captain's	Mini Suite, private facilities	US\$9,900
Captain's	Suite, private facilities	US\$10,225

*All-inclusive surcharge for sea kayaking – US\$775. These prices are per person and quoted in US\$. They do not include airfares to or from city of embarkation or disembarkation. Single occupancy is 1.7 times the twin share price. Fuel surcharge may apply in the event of significant fuel price increase. Voyage inclusions: group transfer from Murmansk airport & to Arkhangelsk airport. Overnight accommodation in Murmansk, city highlights tour and group transfer to ship. Conditions apply. No refund for unused services.



Voyage to the End of the Earth

Voyage 2 : 14 days : 26 July 2011 – 8 August 2011 (Sea Kayaking option)



A RARE CHANCE TO VISIT THE ONCE FORBIDDEN NOVAYA ZEMLYA AND EXPLORE FRANZ JOSEF LAND'S DISTANT AND WONDROUS ISLANDS. LIKE MANY A POLAR EXPLORER BEFORE US, WE DEPART ARKHANGELSK AND SAIL NORTH INTO THE 'WHITE NIGHTS', TO A WORLD FEW HAVE SEEN. SEA TIME PASSES QUICKLY, WITH ENTERTAINING AND INFORMATIVE TALKS ABOUT THE REGION'S EARLY EXPLORERS, THE MARVELS OF THE LANDINGS AHEAD AND THE WILDLIFE AND PLANTS WE HOPE TO SEE IN THE RUSSIAN ARCTIC NATIONAL PARK. ON THE BRIDGE AND OUT ON DECK WE ENJOY NATURE'S DISPLAY AS WE WATCH FOR WHALES, SEALS AND SEABIRDS. APPROACHING PACK ICE, WE SEARCH FOR POLAR BEARS. SPECTACULAR BIRD CLIFFS FEATURE, AS DO LONG TUNDRA WALKS AND HISTORIC HUTS. IN TRUE EXPEDITION STYLE, WEATHER AND PACK ICE DICTATE OUR EXPLORATIONS.



Day 1

Today you will be met at the airport to enjoy the delights of Arkhangelsk and Malye Korely, Europe's largest open-air wooden architecture museum. Board *Akademik Shokalskiy* and depart down the Northern Dvina River and into the White Sea on our inaugural voyage to Franz Josef Land.

Day 2

Tide and weather dependent, we visit one of the White Sea's Pomor villages. Formerly thriving, then nearly abandoned a decade ago, young people now return to renovate old wooden homes. Morzovets Island offers walking, birding, more fascinating Pomor culture.

Days 3 – 5

Sailing north across the ice-speckled Barents Sea, we have a fantastic opportunity to hear the stories of explorers Barents, Nansen, Sedov and many more. Spend time with our enthusiastic crew and staff, watching for Arctic wildlife and distant pack ice.

Day 6

Mountainous and shrouded in mystery, the Novaya Zemlya archipelago remains one of Russia's most restricted regions. Most lies within a closely guarded military zone, but we head north, some of the first visitors to Putin's recently extended Arctic National Park. We Zodiac cruise around island bird rookeries,

photographing glaucous gulls, Arctic terns, Snowy owls, geese and eider ducks.

Days 7 – 11

As we push north to the outer limits of the Barents Sea, an archipelago of 191 ice-covered islands rises from the horizon – Franz Josef Land, the planet’s last major landmass to be discovered! Over the next five days we enter a world of exquisite Arctic beauty that few have seen. Uninhabited, bar a few Russian border guards who maintain a presence here, this is the realm of the polar bear, walrus, seals and elusive beluga whales. Summer visitors include kittiwakes, fulmars and gulls. While the archipelago is 85 per cent glaciated, the mostly ice-free shoreline of each island is unique. We may visit explorers’ huts on Bell and Hall islands; Nordbrook Island’s seabird cliffs; walrus haulouts at Stolichky and Appolonov Islands; Hooker Island’s abandoned polar research station with its unpredictable polar bear visitors. Marvel at Champ Island’s unique stone spheres up to 3m in diameter.

Days 12 – 13

As we sail southwest across the Barents Sea, we have time for lively discussions about all we’ve seen, to enjoy the beauty of high Arctic light, and top up our tally of whales, seals and seabirds.

Day 14

We enter Kola Bay for an early morning arrival in Murmansk – largest city north of the Arctic Circle. After bidding our crew and staff goodbye, you will be taken to your hotel and on a city tour. After an overnight stay, you will be transferred to the airport to catch your early morning flight.

Deck	Cabin	Cruise Cost*
Main	Triple, shared facilities	US\$8,080
Main	Twin, shared facilities	US\$9,450
Upper	Quad, private facilities	US\$9,885
Upper / Captain's	Twin, private facilities	US\$10,985
Captain's	Mini Suite, private facilities	US\$12,175
Captain's	Suite, private facilities	US\$13,300

*All-inclusive surcharge for sea kayaking – US\$900. These prices are per person and quoted in US\$. They do not include airfares to or from city of embarkation or disembarkation. Single occupancy is 1.7 times the twin share price. Fuel surcharge may apply in the event of significant fuel price increase. Voyage inclusions: group transfer from Arkhangelsk airport, city tour & group transfer to ship. Group transfer from ship, overnight accommodation in Murmansk & group transfer to Murmansk airport. Conditions apply. No refund for unused services.



Left page top: Be one of the first to explore this frozen wilderness, a place that is sure to excite and surprise us! Photo: Jonneke van Eijsden. **Left page below:** Kittiwakes nest on the islands bird cliffs. Photo: Henny Miltenburg. **Right:** One of the remarkable spherical stones on Champ Island. Photo: B&C Alexander/ArcticPhoto. **Below:** This region is one of the last homes of the polar bear, let's hope we get to see one! Photo: B&C Alexander/ArcticPhoto.



Across the North East Passage

Voyage 3 : 26 days : 10 August 2011 – 4 September 2011 (Sea Kayaking option)



AUTUMN, WHEN ARCTIC PACK ICE IS AT ITS MINIMUM, OFFERS THE BEST CHANCE TO COMPLETE THE NORTH EAST PASSAGE. CROSS NINE TIME ZONES, TRAVERSE SIBERIA'S VAST NORTH COAST, LAND IN PLACES FEW FOREIGNERS HAVE EVER SEEN. MARVEL AT THE TUNDRA'S BREATHTAKING AUTUMN COLOURS AND MILLIONS OF MIGRATORY BIRDS HEADING SOUTH, WHILE POLAR BEARS HURRY TO FEED CUBS BEFORE WINTER'S HIBERNATION. WE EXPLORE A WILDERNESS MAZE OF MASSIVE RIVER DELTAS, AND WANDER ACROSS ISLANDS DISCOVERING SIGNS OF THE WOOLLY MAMMOTHS THAT GRAZED HERE WHEN IT WAS THE GREAT ARCTIC PLAIN. AS OUR ICE-STRENGTHENED SHIP TRACKS CLOSE TO THE COAST, WE LAND AT WHIM, VISITING HUNTING CAMPS AND HISTORIC SITES, AND MEETING LOCAL PEOPLE WHO THRIVE IN THIS SURREAL WORLD. A TRUE EXPEDITION, ONLY ADVENTUROUS SPIRITS NEED APPLY.

Days 1 – 3

Board *Akademik Shokalskiy* late afternoon for an evening departure from Murmansk. Enjoy informative talks, preparatory briefings, bird and whale watching on the Barents Sea.

Days 4 – 5

We explore militarily restricted Novaya Zemlya and visit the historic Willem Barents' 1597 overwintering site and replica house. Make sure you look for migrating terns, grouse and Snowy owls.

Days 6 – 7

We will enter the icy Kara Sea aiming for Uyedineniya and Pakhtusova Islands, favoured by seabirds, walrus and polar bears.

Days 8 – 10

Severnaya Zemlya's four biggest islands sport mountains, ice caps, glaciers and fjords. Little auks, guillemots and kittiwakes wrap up their breeding season.

Day 11

We seek the world's biggest migrating caribou herd, a diversity of birds and woolly mammoth tusks on the Taimyr Peninsula, mainland Asia's northernmost feature.

Day 12

We enjoy the Mighty Lena River delta, the world's second largest, fosters carpets of moss, lichen, medicinal herbs and flowers. Look out for walrus, seals and the magnificent Beluga whales and narwhals forage.

Days 13 – 15

The melting permafrost on the Novosibirsk Islands reveals megafauna bones and tusks 200 millennia old, when mammoths and rhinoceros roamed the Great Arctic Plain. We may see sanderlings, sandpipers, red knots, wolves and polar bears.



Day 16

The Indigirka delta's patchy forests, autumnal grasses and mosses provide habitat for a myriad of birds in one of the world's most important breeding grounds.

Day 17 – 18

Often icebound, even during summer, the Medvezie (Bear) Islands are a popular denning area for polar bears. When winter snow melts, Chukotka's Aion Island pastures lure reindeer herds. In the 1920s-30s, Russian archaeologists unearthed ancient Eskimo artefacts here.

Days 19 – 21

Wrangel Island, the world's most northern World Heritage Site, is a wildlife paradise! Never glaciated, the low mountains, rivers and wetlands support 400 plant species and the planet's greatest concentration of polar bear dens. There are thousands of migrating birds, countless animals and the last-known stamping grounds of the woolly mammoth for you to observe.

Day 22

The Zodiacs transport us to Kolyuchin Island's sea cliffs where puffins, gulls and cormorants fledge.

Day 23

We enjoy the skilled Chukchi and Eskimo ivory carvers and hunters in Uelen village and share their culture. From Cape Dezhnev, easternmost point of mainland Asia, we visit Big Diomed Island.

Day 24

'Whalebone Alley', Yttygran's historic sculpture park of weathered whalebones, precedes our visit to the Chukchi inhabitants of Yanrakinnot village. Pintegney Bay and Seniavinskiy Strait may reveal puffin rookeries, walrus and Beluga whales.

Day 25

We explore the amazing Achen Lagoon, a favourite of migratory birds, and cruise amongst Preobrazheniya Bay's extraordinary basalt spires and overhangs.

Day 26

Disembark in Anadyr in the morning and celebrate this trip of a lifetime. You will be transferred to the airport for your onward adventures.



Deck	Cabin	Cruise Cost*
Main	Triple, shared facilities	US\$14,750
Main	Twin, shared facilities	US\$17,550
Upper	Quad, private facilities	US\$18,250
Upper / Captain's	Twin, private facilities	US\$18,950
Captain's	Mini Suite, private facilities	US\$20,600
Captain's	Suite, private facilities	US\$23,500

*All-inclusive surcharge for sea kayaking – US\$1,400. These prices are per person and quoted in US\$. They do not include airfares to or from city of embarkation or disembarkation. Single occupancy is 1.7 times the twin share price. Fuel surcharge may apply in the event of significant fuel price increase. Voyage inclusions: group transfer from Murmansk airport, overnight accommodation, Murmansk City tour & group transfer to ship. Group transfer to Anadyr airport. Conditions apply. No refund for unused services.



Left page: We hope to see polar bears hunting for seals amongst the summer pack ice. Photo: B&C Alexander/ArcticPhoto. **Top left:** Sunset over Wrangel Island, the world's most northern World Heritage site. Photo: Colin Monteath/hedgehoghouse.com. **Top right:** Chukchi villagers will share their culture as we venture along Siberia's shoreline. Photo: B&C Alexander/ArcticPhoto. **Above:** We will discover ancient bones on a visit to ceremonial site, Whale Bone Alley. Photo: B&C Alexander/ArcticPhoto.

Wildlife wilderness of fire and ice – Russian Far East

Tightly closed during the Cold War, the Russian Far East is gradually revealing a wilderness of sublime beauty – rich in wildlife, alive with indigenous culture and steeped in history.

Snow capped volcanoes rise in symmetrical beauty above emerald forests the length of Kamchatka Peninsula, a stunning landscape born of the dark forces that continue to shape it.

Just off the coast, the Pacific plate slides beneath Asia with enough force to create magma, which escapes to the surface as volcanic Islands arcs. Of the entire Pacific Ring of Fire, the Kamchatka-Kuril Islands arc has the most volcanoes – around three hundred, sixty nine of which are active.

Pioneering adventurers arrived about 15,000 years ago. These hunters and gatherers were the ancestors of the Chukchi, Eskimo, Koryak and Aleut people who now inhabit Chukotka, Kamchatka and the Commander Islands. Interestingly, the Kuril Islands were populated by the Ainu, believed to have come from Mongolia.

Tsar Peter the Great commissioned Danish explorer Vitus Bering to seek a route from Kamchatka to America. Bering established Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy in 1740 and a year later reached southern Alaska. On the return journey he perished in the Commander Islands.



Above: The local wildlife explore shipwrecks and abandoned factories. Photo: Ania Hart.
Below: The Russian Far East is home to one of the largest birds of prey in the world, the Steller sea eagle. Photo: Alan Burger.

“Many beaches are thick with Steller sea lions or northern fur seals and encounters with whales are a regular delight. A feast for the binoculars!”

AURORA EXPEDITIONS' NATURALIST, ALAN BURGER

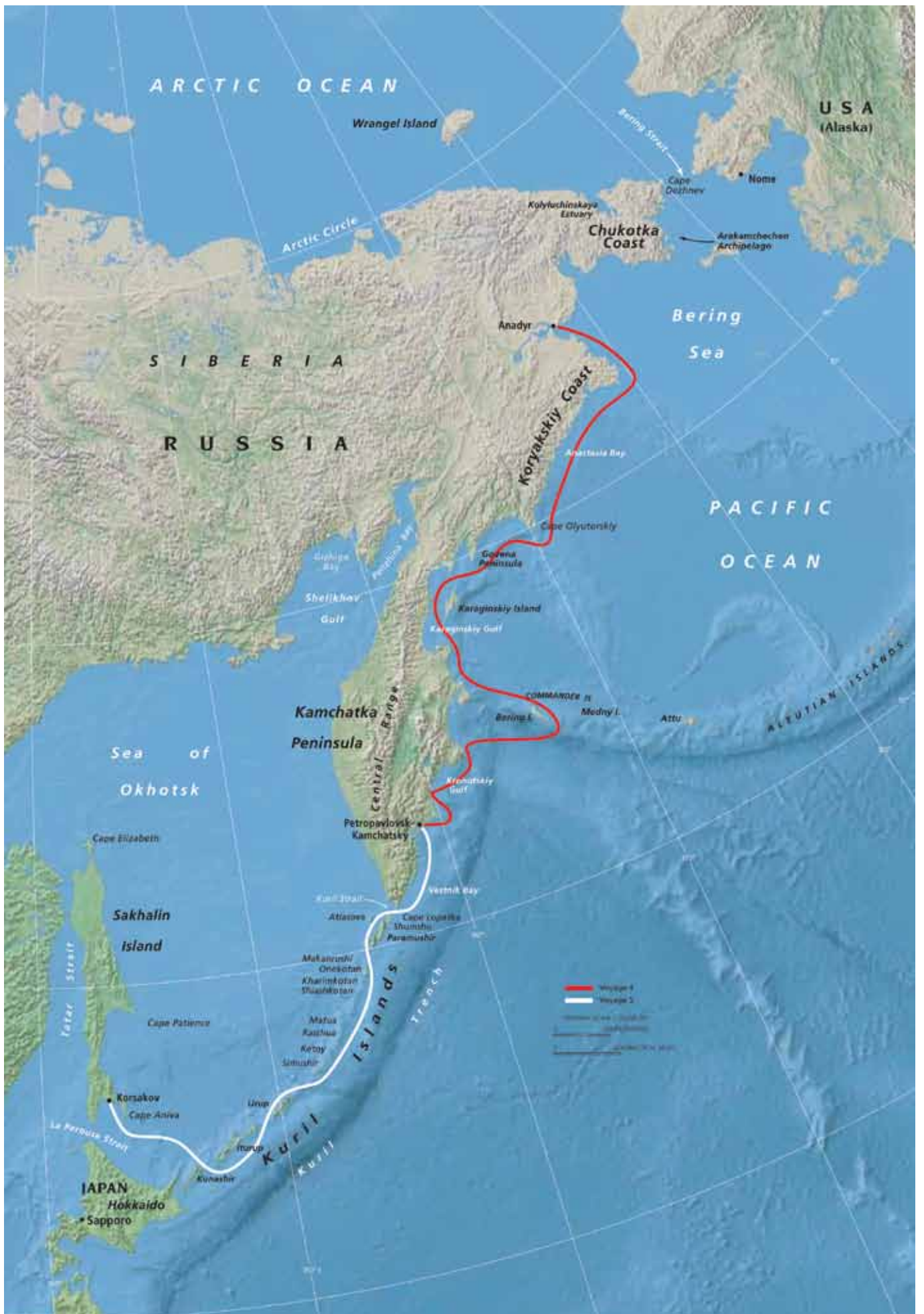
Bering Sea Explorer departs from Anadyr and follows the rugged wilderness coast of Chukotka, to Kamchatka Peninsula. On our inaugural voyages three years ago, the landscape and wildlife took our breath away and we can't wait to return.

Prepare yourself for rafts of sea otters, pods of orcas, flocks of a thousand whiskered auklets and such rare wonders as the grey whale and Steller's sea eagle. Our route parallels one of the greatest bird migration paths and we'll see species both abundant and rare.

With a history as volatile as the 100-odd volcanoes that built this fog-shrouded archipelago, the Kuril Islands have become a rarely visited wilderness.

The Ring of Fire unlocks the mysteries of the Kurils, taking us deep into a wildlife and geological wonderland.





Bering Sea Explorer

Voyage 4 : 12 days : 5 September 2011 – 16 September 2011 (Sea Kayaking option)



SIBERIA'S ENDLESS FORESTS AND EXPANSIVE TUNDRA PRESENT SPECTACULAR AUTUMN COLOURS, DELICIOUS BERRIES AND REMNANT WILDFLOWERS. ALONG CHUKOTKA'S MAGNIFICENT COAST OF GLACIER-CARVED FJORDS AND JAGGED MOUNTAINS, WE MAY MEET CHUKCHI FISHERMEN AND HIKE TO ALPINE LAKES. LUSH VEGETATION RECLAIMS ABANDONED FISH PROCESSING PLANTS, NOW PLAYGROUNDS FOR BEAR CUBS. SUBARCTIC COMMANDER ISLANDS BRING AN ALEUT WELCOME, EXPLORER VITUS BERING'S GRAVE AND WATERS TEEMING WITH SEA LIONS, FUR SEALS, AND OTTERS. TOWERING BIRD CLIFFS PULSATE WITH PUFFINS, MURRES, AUKLETS, KITTIWAKES AND COUNTLESS OTHERS. KAMCHATKA'S COASTLINE FEATURES POWERFUL BROWN BEARS, ACTIVE VOLCANOES AND A SPECIAL KORYAK PERFORMANCE. WE VISIT NATIONAL PARKS HOSTING MIGRATORY BIRDS, AND MAY SOAK IN COASTAL HOT SPRINGS NEAR THUNDERING WATERFALLS. WE WATCH HEROIC SALMON PUSH UPSTREAM TO SPAWN AND ENJOY AUTUMN WEATHER, THE MOST STABLE OF THE YEAR.

"Being up, close and personal with the wildlife was one of the highlights of my trip!" ANIA HART, RUSSIA 2008

Day 1

Fly to Anadyr, and receive a warm welcome at the airport before being transferred for an afternoon boarding of *Akademik Shokalskiy*. Set sail across the Gulf of Anadyr and into the Bering Sea.

Day 2

Explore Gabriela Bay's wide river mouth and lagoon. We may meet local Chukchi fisherman and inspect an abandoned polar weather station. Watch for brown bears, wolves, and Beluga whales.

Day 3

Lush valleys and jagged mountains characterise the Koryakskiy Reserve. Dezhneva Bay offers a coastal lagoon for birders and, possibly, grey whales. In Anastasiya Bay are walrus haulouts and birdlife, including the bluethroat and Siberian rubythroat.

Day 4

Wake to spectacular mountains rising above Nataliya Bay. Zodiac cruise beneath Bogoslov Island's sea cliffs, where puffins, kittiwakes, murres and cormorants breed. Walk the grand valleys of St. Peter Bay, or Glybokaya Bay.

Day 5

A Zodiac cruise takes us into stunning Lavrova fjord whose abandoned herring factory attracts bears. Orcas and Bryde's whales frequent these waters. Afternoon hike through Uznaya Glubokaya Bay's iris fields past waterfalls to a spectacular vantage on glacial moraine.

Day 6

Small, narrow Verkhoturova Island harbours cormorants, gulls, kittiwakes and auklets. A heartfelt Koryak greeting awaits at Tymlat Village, along with a feast of senses, as these wonderful, hardy folk display their unique culture through dance, games and deliciously fresh food.

Day 7

We ramble across the fantastic, terraced, recently uplifted coastline of Soldatskaya Bay. Thick vegetation draws a variety of wildlife, including long-billed murrelets and salmon-fishing bears.

Days 8 – 9

Spectacular sea cliffs, arches and stacks signal our arrival in the Commander Islands. We pay tribute to explorer Vitus Bering and visit his grave and memorial. Highlights include: Peregrebnaya Bay, summer nesting site for red-legged and black-legged kittiwakes; Cape Monati, to spot albatross and whales; northern fur seals and Steller sea lions; cruising around volcanic Ariy Kamen, surrounded by thousands of kittiwakes, puffins and murrets. At Nikolskoe village, Russia's remaining Aleut community entertain us with lively performances.

Day 10

Kronotskiy Biosphere Reserve protects stunning volcanoes, dwarf pine thickets, hundreds of brown bears, a Steller sea lion rookery, salmon-rich rivers, eagles, gyrfalcons and wolverines. Enjoy soaking in the soothing hot springs of Kamenistaya Bay.

Day 11

Careful Zodiac navigation takes us past salmon fishing camps into the powerful Zhupanova River, as far upstream as we can go. Look for brown bears and Steller's sea eagles as distant mountains beckon.

Day 12

Early morning, we cruise into Avacha Bay to dock in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy. Farewell fellow adventurers as you are transferred to the airport, or stay on board for a sensational Kuril Islands' voyage!

Deck	Cabin	Cruise Cost*
Main	Triple, shared facilities	US\$7,400
Main	Twin, shared facilities	US\$8,310
Upper	Quad, private facilities	US\$8,850
Upper / Captain's	Twin, private facilities	US\$9,230
Captain's	Mini Suite, private facilities	US\$9,830
Captain's	Suite, private facilities	US\$11,050

*All-inclusive surcharge for sea kayaking – US\$825. These prices are per person and quoted in US\$. They do not include airfares to or from city of embarkation or disembarkation. Single occupancy is 1.7 times the twin share price. Fuel surcharge may apply in the event of significant fuel price increase. Voyage inclusions: Group transfer Anadyr airport to ship and from ship to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy airport. Conditions apply. No refund for unused services.



Left page: We make the most of the warm waters and soak our muscles in the coastal hot springs. Photo: Al Bakker. **Top:** Tundra starts to highlight Autumn colours as we make our way down the Far East coast. Photo: David Mannix. **Above:** Our Zodiacs allow us to get up close to the wildlife of the Russian Far East. Photo: Lesley Gordon. **Left:** We watch out for wild brown bears along the Kamchatka coastline. Photo: Lesley Gordon.

The Ring of Fire

Voyage 5 : 13 days : 16 September 2011 – 28 September 2011 (Sea Kayaking option)



STELLER SEA LIONS CALL OUT FROM ROCKY OUTCROPS; OTTERS FLOAT AMONGST FIELDS OF KELP; CLOUDS OF WHISKERED AUKLETS, NORTHERN FULMARS, TUFTED PUFFINS AND PODS OF ORCAS CONTRAST WITH THE HAUNTING REMAINS OF A WORLD AT WAR. ACTIVE VOLCANOES BLAST STEAM AND ASH INTO THE SKY, OR TRICKLE LAVA DOWN SNOWY SLOPES AS WE ZODIAC AROUND, SOMETIMES THROUGH, GEOLOGICAL WONDERS. SUBTLE REMAINS OF AINU VILLAGES HINT AT A ONCE STRONG OCCUPATION, WHILE FOG ADDS MYSTERY TO ABANDONED COLD WAR LISTENING POSTS, SECRET SOVIET NAVY BASES, JAPANESE BUNKERS AND AIRFIELDS. WOODEN GULAGS DECAY IN LUSH VEGETATION, ALIVE WITH THE SOUND OF RARE BIRDS. BROWN BEARS AND CUBS, TUNDRA RICH WITH BERRIES, STUNNING AUTUMN COLOURS, BLISSFUL HOT SPRINGS AND RUSHING RIVERS FILLED WITH SALMON – THE KURIL ISLANDS ARE UNFORGETTABLE.

Day 1

Upon your arrival at Petropavlovsk-Kamchataskiy airport, you will be transferred to *Akademik Shokalskiy* in the evening for a late night departure.

Days 2 – 3

We awake to lush valleys and snow-capped volcanoes of Kamchatka's east coast. Brown bears feast on berries and salmon. Expect Steller sea lions, countless breeding seabirds and seals, whales and otters.

Day 4

On Shumshu, a peaceful river snakes through grassy wetlands with remnant orchids and wild roses. Soviet gulag remains on Atlasova share a volcanic landscape with nesting cormorants.

Day 5

Of Paramushir's 23 volcanoes, five are active including Ebeko, which has erupted in the past two years. We take a hike across Onekotan's autumnal tundra and through bonsai pine forests to Black Lake, watching for red foxes and remains of Ainu dwellings.

Day 6

Ekarma offers sanctuary to many birds, including puffins, auklets, fulmars and cormorants. Sea otters swim just off the northeastern cape. Traces of Ainu culture await on Shiashkotan.

Day 7

Northern fur seals, Steller sea lions, auklets and petrels enliven the Lovushki Islands. Cruising Matua's northwest coast, we see lava flows from Sarychev, which last erupted in 2009. Ashore are WWII remains of Japanese airfield and bunkers.

Day 8

Fumaroles steam and seabirds nest on steep cliffs around Yankicha's emerald green caldera. At dawn, thousands of whiskered auklets stream out to sea. We explore the ghostly remains of a secret Soviet Navy base on Simushir.

Day 9

We Zodiac cruise in evocative mists that often engulf Chirpoy Island twin volcanoes. A roar heralds the Steller sea lion colony on Brat Chirpoy Island, while thousands of northern fulmars, albatross and crested auklets float nearby.

Day 10

Urup offers 120km of stunning volcanoes, lush vegetation, lakes and rivers. Cruise the Twins, a geological wonderland of twisted basalt sea cliffs, hike up to Japanese bunkers with spectacular views and tufted puffin nests. On the west coast, we may Zodiac through basalt tunnels of Petroskov Rocks.

Days 11 – 12

Iturup is Kuril's largest island, where harbour seals forage in Zolotoy Bay. Przhivalskya Point's black lava sea cliffs host Japanese cormorants and tufted puffins. We cruise inside Lion's Mouth Bay, caldera of an ancient shield volcano. At Kurilsk, the locals welcome us with tours and performances. Our final day offers landings depending on local conditions. Along the way we watch for minke whales, harbour seals and pods of Dall's porpoise. We may find a megaherb forest or hot springs to enjoy. In the Kurils, there's always scope for surprise!

Day 13

Arrive early morning at Sakhalin's southern port, and disembark at the end of our magical adventure before being transferred to the airport for your early morning departure.



Left page: The unforgettable landscape of Kamchatka and the Kuril Islands is a wondrous sight. Photo: Peter Juliff. **Above & below:** Our Zodiacs take us ashore to explore the lush forests of the Kurils. Photo: David Mannix. **Below left:** Auklets brighten the Island's streams. Photo: Peter Juliff.

Deck	Cabin	Cruise Cost*
Main	Triple, shared facilities	US\$7,250
Main	Twin, shared facilities	US\$8,350
Upper	Quad, private facilities	US\$8,790
Upper / Captain's	Twin, private facilities	US\$9,350
Captain's	Mini Suite, private facilities	US\$9,870
Captain's	Suite, private facilities	US\$10,850

*All-inclusive surcharge for sea kayaking – US\$875. These prices are per person and quoted in US\$. They do not include airfares to or from city of embarkation or disembarkation. Single occupancy is 1.7 times the twin share price. Fuel surcharge may apply in the event of significant fuel price increase. Voyage inclusions: Group transfer from Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy airport to ship & group transfer from ship to Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk airport. Conditions apply. No refund for unused services.





80°
60°
40°
20°
20°
40°
60°
80°



Caring for our world

Aurora Expeditions believes that travel to remote destinations can create lifelong ambassadors for environmental protection. From our very first Antarctic voyage in 1992, we made a commitment to establishing environmentally responsible tourism practices. We were founding members of the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO) and continue to establish strong environmental guidelines in Antarctica.

Each year, the average Arctic temperature increases at almost twice the rate of anywhere else. As the sea ice declines, it affects polar bears, Arctic fox, seals, fish, sea birds, and the Eskimos who rely on them.

In 2003 we became founding members of the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO). We pioneer research, donate funds, and allocate resources to ensure we leave places we visit as we found them – or better. Leading by example, we take every opportunity to explain the fragile ecosystems we encounter and hope to inspire our guests to spread the word of environmental stewardship. If you return from one of our expeditions with a greater awareness and understanding of environmental protection, then we know that we have achieved our goal.

Above left: The Russian Far East is a special and unique ecosystem, which we are eager to protect. Photo: David Mannix. **Above:** This spotted seal smiles for the camera. Photo: David Mannix. **Below:** These guillemots rest on the sea cliffs. Photo: Peter Juliff. **Below left:** Keeping in small groups helps lower our impact on these precious environments. Photo: Peter Juliff.



“The sharp transition between deep ocean trenches and shallow continental seas creates massive upwelling and marine productivity.”

AURORA EXPEDITIONS' NATURALIST,
ALAN BURGER



Brand new kayaking adventures

Every day is a new adventure as our paddle strokes draw us away from our mother ship *Akademik Shokalskiy*. The North East Passage across Russia has been closed for half a century and we are delighted to experience its wildness and immensity from our kayaks. Native cultures, polar bear breeding grounds, history and raw wilderness make for unique discoveries.

The North East Passage

Wild mountain landscapes, pack ice, remote tundra, indigenous cultures and profuse wildlife draw us deep along the Russian Arctic. Dramatic cliffs swarming with sea birds, walrus breeding sites and one of the world's main denning areas for polar bears provide the backdrop for kayak cruising in one of the most truly remote areas of the world. Wrangel Island Nature Reserve, a jewel with snow geese, spoon-billed sandpipers, muskox, polar bear, arctic wolves and huge seabird colonies.

"If you love wild places, you'll find that to experience them from a kayak is a whole new adventure. You don't have to be young and you don't have to be an expert!"

ROBIN SPENCER, JEWELS OF THE ARCTIC 2009

Above right: Our kayakers have a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Photo: Judd Hill.
Below: These friendly walrus come for a closer look. Photo: Lesley Gordon.



Bering Sea Explorer

Join us on a voyage of discovery to the Chukotka Coast, Kamchatka Peninsula, and Commander Islands. Spectacular wilderness, Wild mountain landscapes, remote tundra, indigenous cultures and profuse wildlife. Jagged peaks and volcanoes tower above us as we explore coastal rivers, visit pristine nature reserves and experience hot springs and geysers in this geothermal wonderland. Fur seals, Steller sea lions, sea otters and untold thousands of sea birds. Along the Koryakskiy Reserve and Chukotka Coast we hope to encounter the native inhabitants of these lands, living a traditional life of reindeer herding, hunting and fishing. Kayaks are the ideal way to observe the land and seascapes, with each day holding the promise of new and enriching experiences.

Ring of Fire

A vast wilderness with large seabird colonies, rich marine life, primeval spruce forest, active smoking volcanoes and hot springs. Spotting whales, otters, brown bears, eagles are daily events on this wild and remote voyage. On clear days volcanoes tower above us and on misty days kayaks reign supreme as we venture close along the shoreline accompanied by a background clamor of thousands of sea birds. Numerous bays reveal sea otter and sea lion colonies and secret coves and passages. The air is alive with guillemots, kittiwakes, puffins, auklets and eagles. Kayaking in this dramatic scenery is a privilege few have experienced.

*Kayaking places are limited. Please call an expedition expert.



Aurora – your travel agent

FROM YOUR FIRST CONTACT WITH US, THROUGH BOOKING ARRANGEMENTS TO WHEN YOU'RE WELCOMED ABOARD, YOU'LL APPRECIATE THE FRIENDLY EXPERTISE OF OUR KNOWLEDGEABLE RESERVATIONS STAFF. OUR FOCUS IS TO DELIVER ONE-ON-ONE SERVICE FOR YOUR UPCOMING EXPEDITION. AS A LICENSED TRAVEL AGENCY, WE CAN CREATE A PERSONAL ITINERARY TO COMPLIMENT YOUR VOYAGE, INCLUDING AIRFARES, ACCOMMODATION, TRAVEL INSURANCE AND ADDITIONAL TRAVEL OPTIONS.

Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy – Valley of the Geysers

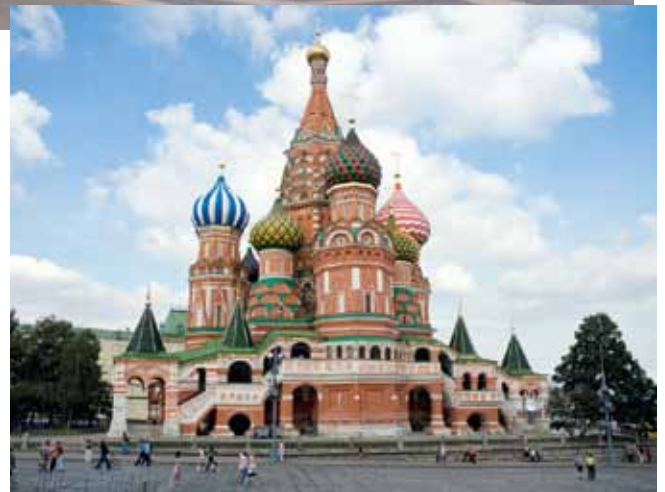
Wonderful sites with over 20 big geysers an indisputable World's Miracle, the most precious natural relict of the mankind legacy. Although, helicopter flights are very weather dependant it is well worth the visit.

Focus on Moscow

Four day Moscow package including: Hotel accommodation, transfers with private guide; City sightseeing tour including metro; Visit to Kremlin including Territory; Armoury; Evening Circus

Focus on St. Petersburg

Four day St. Petersburg package including: Hotel accommodation; transfers with private English speaking guide; City sightseeing tour including Peter and Paul Fortress; Hermitage sightseeing tour; Visit to town of Pushkin including Catherine Palace, park and Alexandrovsky Palace; Evening Folklore show.



Top: The collection of the State Hermitage includes more than three million works of art and artefacts. Photo: Sergey Peterman
Above: Discover the bright colours of Moscow's famous St. Basil's Cathedral. Photo: Cloki. **Left:** A helicopter ride to the remote Valley of the Geyser is an amazing experience. Photo: Lesley Gordon. **Back cover:** A group of walrus on an ice floe off Appolonov Island, Franz Josef Land. Photo: B&C Alexander/ ArcticPhoto.

Visa Requirements

Foreigners entering the Russian Federation require a valid visa. A tourist visa is issued for a period of 30 days. Please refer to your appropriate Consulate in your country of residence for details. Please visit <http://sydney.rusembassy.org> for more information.

HOW TO BOOK

A deposit of US\$1,250 per passenger, per voyage and a completed booking form should be sent to our Sydney office. The final balance and personal forms are then due 90 days prior to departure. If the personal forms and final balance are not received by the due date, we will regard the booking as cancelled. You can download the booking form on our website: www.auroraexpeditions.com.au
Payment Options: Direct deposit to bank account, bank cheque/draft or personal cheque, cash, credit card (surcharge on credit card will apply on final payments only).

Please read the booking conditions carefully. They set out your agreement with Aurora Expeditions and contain important information. We have tried to keep the fine print to a minimum, so please bear with us.

By booking with us and paying your deposit you are agreeing to the General Terms and Conditions outlined below. If you do not understand these General Terms and Conditions please contact a member of the Aurora Expeditions sales team for clarification.

INCLUDED IN THE EXPEDITION PRICE

- Ship's accommodation. All public areas are open to all passengers.
- All meals on board ship.
- All shore excursions from the ship including Zodiacs.
- Lectures, videos, slide and film shows and guide services.
- Medical services. There is a resident doctor and a basic medical clinic on board.
- Port taxes and port charges imposed by government authorities.
- Pre and post land arrangements as mentioned in the itinerary.
- Pre-departure information.

NOT INCLUDED IN THE EXPEDITION PRICE

- Air transport to and from the ship.
- Visa, passport and vaccination charges and airport departure taxes.
- Hotels and meals not included in ship cruise itinerary.
- Optional excursions not included in the ship's cruise itinerary.
- Laundry, postage, personal clothing, medical expenses, personal travel insurance and items of a personal nature such as bar charges, phone calls and optional end of voyage tips.
- Credit card surcharge, if making your final payment by credit card.
- Emergency evacuation charges. Travel insurance is mandatory for all passengers.

General Terms and Conditions

Mandatory Travel Insurance

Passengers travelling with Aurora Expeditions are required to be covered by a travel insurance policy that includes emergency evacuation coverage. We travel to remote regions of the world and we recommend that the policy's emergency evacuation benefit be higher than minimum. Please ask your Aurora Expeditions consultant or your travel agent about travel insurance.

Cancellations

If it becomes necessary to cancel your holiday, you must notify Aurora Expeditions immediately in writing. Cancellation will take effect upon receipt by Aurora Expeditions of your written notice. If cancellation takes place more than 90 days prior to departure, USD\$500 per person will be payable by you. If cancellation takes place less than 90 days prior to departure, you will be required to pay the full cost of the trip. Personal travel insurance is not included in the tour price.

Delay or change of itinerary

Aurora Expeditions may for any reason change the date of departure or conclusion of the tour, the scheduled point of departure for the tour, omit or change any scheduled stop or route on the tour or change the scheduled place of conclusion for the tour whether before or after the tour has departed, without prior notice to you. You will have no right to any refund and Aurora Expeditions will have no obligation to you or be liable for any loss, consequential damages, expenses, loss of time or enjoyment or inconvenience in respect of such changes.

Aurora Expeditions reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure in which case any payment made by you will be refunded in full and you will not be entitled to make any further claim for compensation or damages, for any loss, consequential damage, expenses, loss of time or inconvenience which may result from such cancellation.

Trip costs

Trip costs are based on ground costs, fuel prices, ship charter rates and airfares at time of printing. While we try our utmost not to increase our prices, this is sometimes outside our control. We reserve the right to amend our prices. Amendments should occur only in the event of significant surface increases and/or marked fluctuations in the US\$ exchange rate upon which the land content is based or large fluctuations in fuel costs. Any increase in price must be paid by you before your departure.

Responsibility

This is very important – please read carefully. By my/our signature(s) as set forth on the booking form I also acknowledge and confirm the following:

Except to the extent that this waiver may be prohibited or restricted by the Trade Practices Act 1974 or other legislation that may exist from time to time in Australia, I hereby release Aurora Expeditions, its servants and agents and any licensor or licensee of it from all claims and actions that I/we have or may have at any time in the future against them or any of them, howsoever arising, for personal injury, death, property damage or any other loss, damage or expense that I/we may suffer as a result of my/our participation in any trip organised with or in conjunction with Aurora Expeditions.

I am aware that your adventure trip, in addition to the usual dangers and risks inherent, has certain additional dangers and risks, some of which may include: physical exertion for which I may not be prepared, weather extremes subject to sudden and unexpected change, remoteness from normal medical services, evacuation difficulties

if I am disabled. I accept all the inherent risks of the proposed adventure trip and the possibility of personal injury, death, property damage or loss resulting therefrom. I acknowledge that the enjoyment and excitement of adventure travel is derived in part from the inherent risks incurred by travel and activity beyond the accepted safety of life at home or work, and that these inherent risks contribute to such enjoyment and excitement, being a reason for my participation. I agree that if I suffer injury or illness Aurora Expeditions can, at my cost, arrange medical treatment and emergency evacuation service, as Aurora Expeditions deems essential for my safety.

In entering into this Agreement, I am not relying on any oral, written or visual representatives or statements by Aurora Expeditions or its staff or any other inducement or coercion to go on the adventure trip, hence, only of my own free will. I confirm that I am over the age of 18 years and that I have read and understand the terms and conditions of contract and this Agreement prior to signing it and agree that this Agreement will be binding upon my heirs, next of kin, executors, administrators and successors. I agree that this Agreement shall be governed in all respects by and interpreted in accordance with the law of New South Wales AUSTRALIA.

Health, Fitness, Trip Grades and Age Limits

It is your responsibility to advise Aurora Expeditions of any pre-existing medical conditions and /or disability that might reasonably be expected to increase risk of you requiring medical attention, or that might affect the normal conduct of a voyage and the enjoyment of other voyage members. You are required to provide an assessment of your medical condition from a fully qualified medical practitioner. Aurora Expeditions reserves the right, at its reasonable discretion, to cancel your booking and refund the money paid by you, less any unrecoverable costs. Aurora Expeditions also reserves the right to cancel your participation in a voyage at any time, including after the commencement of the trip, with no right of refund if your medical condition and/or disability could be reasonably expected to affect the normal conduct of the trip and the enjoyment of other voyage members.

Any person travelling under 18 years of age must be traveling with their legal guardian.

Authority of the Expedition Leader

At all times the decision of the Aurora Expeditions Expedition Leader or representative will final on all matters likely to affect the safety and well-being of the trip. This includes any decision that the Aurora Expeditions Expedition Leader makes about your on-going participation in the trip or certain activities that compromise part of the trip. If you fail to comply with a decision made by the Aurora Expeditions Expedition Leader, or interfere with the well-being of the group, the Aurora Expeditions Expedition Leader reserves the right to terminate this contract and order you to leave the tour immediately, with no right of refund.

Feedback

If you have any complaints about your trip, you must make it known at the earliest opportunity to the Aurora Expeditions Expedition Leader or an Aurora Expeditions representative, who will be able to take appropriate action. If at the end of the trip you feel that your complaint has not been properly dealt with please write notify us in writing within 30 days of the end of your trip.

Aurora Expeditions NSW Travel Agents, Lic. Number 2TA07028
Aurora Expeditions Pty Ltd ABN 85 139766 911

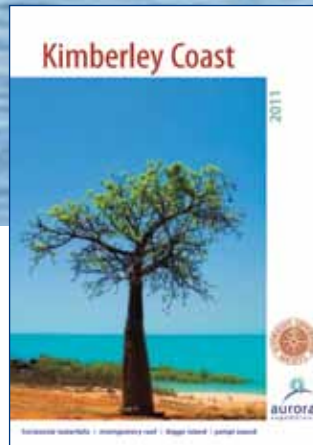
Discover the unknown

Abundant wildlife and incredible seabird rookeries in Russia, polar bears stalking seals in the Arctic, Zodiacs cruise through icebergs in Antarctica, the ancient landscapes in the Kimberley and the coral reefs and lush vegetation of Papua New Guinea.

Like to know more?

Give us a call and we'll help you to choose the adventure of a lifetime or visit our website for more inspiration:

www.auroraexpeditions.com.au



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