

**BERING SEA EXPLORER**  
**KAMCHATKA, COMMANDER ISLANDS AND CHUKOTKA**  
**7-19 JULY 2012**

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**KAYAK EXPEDITION NOTES AND ITINERARY**

The “Bering Sea Explorer” is a ship-based exploration of the rugged wilderness coast of Kamchatka Peninsula, Commander Islands and Chukotka. The spectacular terrain combined with a lack of suitable infrastructure makes travel to most areas difficult except by sea. We believe travel by expedition ship is the safest, most efficient and enjoyable way to unlock the secrets of one of the world’s great wilderness frontiers.

These notes will give you a brief idea of what you may experience on this new and remote voyage. Our emphasis is on exploring pristine landscapes, unique wildlife encounters and learning about the fascinating geology that has shaped this region. However, we stress that this is an expedition style cruise. Our adventures and daily program may be influenced by the changeable weather and sea conditions of the region.

Our journey begins at the town of Petropavlovsk on the Kamchatka Peninsula. Journeying into Kamchatka, we experience a spectacular world of turbulent rivers, towering volcanoes, hot springs and snow, taiga and tundra, wild animals and friendly people. The Commander Islands beckons next with a landscape of sea cliffs, arches, sea stacks and Russia’s remaining Aleut community. While paddling Chukotka’s magnificent coastline of glacier carved fjords we keep a watch for brown bears, wolves and beluga whales! Our voyage finishes in Anadyr, Russia’s most easterly town.

Using our ship as a floating base camp, we hope to paddle twice a day, spending as much time on the water as possible. We will normally leave the ship immediately after breakfast for the first paddle of the day. Then, often after lunch, we will have time for a second paddle before returning to the ship for dinner. Most paddles range from two to four hours. We endeavour to have at least one extended paddle where we are away from the ship for most of the day. Landing ashore by kayak, we can stretch our legs and enjoy walks on the lush tundra. The flexibility of kayaking with a small private group ensures our own unique experiences, quite different from those encountered by the other passengers on board. Zodiacs will be available for extended shore excursions for those who do not wish to paddle on any given day.

**EXPERIENCE REQUIRED**

Kayakers should be of an intermediate standard and have paddled before on outings up to 12 km in length. You do not have to be an expert or know how to roll but should have an adventurous spirit and recognise that the weather will influence greatly what we can and can’t do. This is cold water kayaking and should not be your first paddling experience. You need to be comfortable putting spray skirts on, ferry gliding and have practiced support strokes. We have very little opportunity for instruction before we commence paddling, so we highly recommend that you have done some kayaking recently and in a variety of conditions.

We often begin our first paddling session from the shore and after that will be launching directly from the ship so you should be comfortable paddling on seas that could have up to one metre swell and some current. The water surface will vary from calm to wind chop. Your guide will assess your ability on the initial paddle and, if you have insufficient experience, he or she may not allow you to participate in rougher conditions. Our paddling excursions will not involve camping out.

For additional experience, rent a kayak before leaving home and seek out a local operator for some paddling tuition. DO practice paddling in a variety of conditions prior to the trip.

***We’d be happy to talk to you about your level of experience and may be able to advise you how to obtain the necessary skills before your trip.***

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***Please Note: Along with your voyage booking form we require all participants to complete our "Sea Kayak Booking and Experience Form" and return it to us immediately to secure your spot in the sea kayak group.***

**ITINERARY**

**Day 1 – Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy**

Upon your arrival at Petropavlovsk airport you will be transferred to the Akademik Shokalskiy for an evening departure. Set sail down beautiful Avacha Bay.

**Day 2 – Kamchatka coast and Zhupanova River**

Wake to the wild beauty of Kamchatka's east coast. We hope to explore the powerful Zhupanova River by zodiac. Pass salmon and trout fishing farms and look out for brown bears and Steller's sea eagles.

**Day 3 – Kronotskiy Biosphere Reserve**

Covering over one million square hectares, the Kronotsky National Biosphere Reserve is home to a remarkable diversity of flora and fauna. We hope to kayak, explore and soak in the soothing hot springs of the area around Kamenistaya Bay. The coastal lowlands of this large bay are covered in cottongrass, aspens and birch while large volcanic mountain ranges form a perfect backdrop for our explorations. Brown bears, sea lions, salmon-rich rivers and wolverines are some of the rich diversity of wildlife found in the reserve.

**Days 4-6 – Commander Islands**

Lying 175km off the Kamchatka coast, harsh and unstable climatic conditions have shaped the Commander Islands into a breathtaking maze of arches, sea stacks and cliffs. We hope to observe Arctic fox, sea otter, harbour seal, whales and seabirds such as red-legged kittiwake, red-faced cormorant, laysan albatross and parakeet auklet.

We hope to paddle ashore at Commander Bay, home to the shipwrecked survivors of Vitus Bering's Second Kamchatka Expedition of 1741. We pay respect to this great explorer at his gravesite and memorial. Our visit to the Aleut fishing village of Nikolskoe includes a cultural performance and a trip to the small museum, home to a fascinating collection of Bering memorabilia and natural history displays.

**Day 7 – Soldatskaya Bay**

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

**Day 8 – Tymlat Bay**

We hope to paddle the small and narrow harbour of Verkhoturova Island, home to cormorants, gulls, kittiwakes and auklets. Then it's a heartfelt Koryak greeting as we arrive at Tymlat Bay. We experience a cultural feast of dance, games and food with the local community.

**Day 9 – Govena Peninsula**

We spend today in and around the picturesque fjords of Lavrova and Glubokaya Bay. Jagged peaks form a dramatic backdrop to these peaceful bays, remarkably similar to Norwegian fjords. We hope to have the chance to stretch our legs among the tundra, keeping an eye out for brown bears, Arctic hare and mountain sheep. Both fjords have remains of fish processing villages that were abandoned in the 1960's. These eerie ghost towns once supported up to 5,000 seasonal workers who came to Kamchatka each summer to coincide with the salmon spawning season.

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### **Days 10-11 – Koryakskiy Coast**

We spend two days exploring the spectacular inlets and bays around this remote coastline. Nomadic Koryak reindeer herders bring their herds to the coast this time of year and we may have a chance to witness this fascinating remnant of indigenous culture. Stunning scenery awaits at Nataliya Bay and we hope to visit Bogoslov Island, home to tens of thousands of nesting puffins, guillemots and pelagic cormorants ... a stunning spectacle in our kayaks. We hope to land at St Peter Bay, named for one of Vitus Bering's ships and walk among its grand valleys, carved out by ancient glaciers and covered in tundra, birch and alder trees. In Anastasiya Bay are walrus haulouts and birdlife, including the bluethroat and Siberian rubythroat.

### **Day 12 – Gabriela Bay, Chukotka**

Chukotka is Russia's easternmost region and home to the indigenous Chukchi people, believed by anthropologists to be the first to have crossed the Bering Sea to settle in the United States. We hope to encounter some of the locals, who live a traditional lifestyle of subsistence reindeer herding, fishing and hunting. We aim to stop in at Gabriel Bay to paddle the wide river mouth and lagoon and hike among the wetlands that dot the coastline.

### **Day 13 – Anadyr**

An early morning arrival into Anadyr. Farewell fellow adventurers and staff members as you are transferred to the airport.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF “BERING SEA EXPLORER”**

- An in-depth exploration of the spectacular Kamchatka Peninsula, one of the most remote and unexplored regions in the world.
- Wildlife opportunities – prolific birdlife (puffins, auklets, kittiwakes, Steller's sea eagles, rubythroats), dolphins, whales, seals, sea lions, sea otters and the chance to see Kamchatka brown bears.
- Exploring the Commander Islands, a rarely visited group of islands rich in wildlife and blessed with dramatic mountain scenery.
- Visits to traditional villages where welcoming locals offer a glimpse of their traditional lifestyle.
- Fascinating volcanoes and geothermal activity including hot springs-perfect for a soak!

### **THIS VOYAGE INCLUDES**

- Group transfers to and from the ship.
- 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. Basic infirmary on board.
- Port taxes and port charges imposed by government authorities.
- Pre-departure information and briefing.
- The trip price comprises the voyage cost plus a surcharge for the kayaking option. This surcharge covers use of a drysuit, all your paddling and kayak equipment and the services of a professional sea kayak guide.



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**THIS VOYAGE DOES NOT INCLUDE**

- 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.
- Tips on board for crew and service personnel.
- Optional excursions not included in ship cruise itinerary.
- Laundry, postage, personal clothing, medical expenses, personal travel insurance and items of a personal nature such as bar charges, wine and phone calls.
- Emergency evacuation charges.

**SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES**

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### SHIP DETAILS

*Akademik Shokalskiy* was built in Finland in 1985 as an ice-strengthened research vessel. In 1998 she was refurbished to provide comfortable accommodation for 54 passengers.

*Akademik Shokalskiy* is **not a luxury ship, she is homely and strong**, built to be a working vessel and refitted to a comfortable passenger standard. The accommodation is simple yet comfortable and the meals are wholesome and delicious. The mood on board is definitely casual. A favourite pastime on board is to stand on the deck or in the bridge, watching for wildlife and absorbing the dramatic scenery. A small fleet of Zodiacs, (rubber inflatable boats), with outboard motors enable us to travel from ship to shore.

Length-71.6 metres, beam-12.8 metres, draft-4.5 metres, cruising speed-10 knots.

Chef – European, Australian or New Zealand, Captain & Crew – Russian.

General Facilities:- Bar/lounge/library area, sauna, laundry service, medical services, dining area.

There are six classes of cabins on board the *Akademik Shokalskiy*.

**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; video player and private bathroom, with shower, toilet and washbasin.

**The 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 Public:** 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.

