

**ARCTIC OCEAN DISCOVERER**  
**WRANGEL ISLAND**  
**31 JULY-13 AUGUST 2012**

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**KAYAK EXPEDITION NOTES AND ITINERARY**

The “Arctic Ocean Discoverer” is a ship-based exploration of the rugged wilderness of Wrangel Island, Bering Strait and the Chukotka coast. 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 are influenced by the changeable weather and sea conditions of the region.

Wrangel Island, Russia’s treasured wildlife sanctuary, features some 400 plant species, polar bears and cubs, vast walrus breeding grounds, reindeer, seals and multitudes of migratory birds. Almost 24 hours’ daylight and retreating pack ice make this the ideal time of year to attempt reaching Wrangel Island. We pass through Bering Strait, watch for beluga whales, experience traditional Chukchi life and explore the Chukotka coast west along the North East Passage. We return through the Diomedes Islands, a Cold War hotspot.

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. 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 on how to obtain the necessary skills before your trip.***

***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.***



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**ITINERARY**

**Day 1 – Anadyr**

Upon your arrival at Anadyr airport you will be transferred to the Akademik Shokalskiy. In the evening we set sail across the Gulf of Anadyr and into the Bering Sea.

**Day 2 – Arakamchechen Archipelago**

Walrus and grey whales stir the waters as we journey along the Arakamchechen Archipelago. Weather will dictate our landings but we hope to visit Itygran Island where Whalebone Alley is an avenue of raised bowhead and grey whale ribs and jawbones, believed to be an ancient ceremonial site of Chukchi hunters. At Yanrakinnot, we meet modern day Chukchis who still live a traditional lifestyle of herding reindeer, fishing and hunting.

**Day 3 – Bering Strait**

We'll pass through Bering Strait, where Russia and North America are but 100 kilometres apart. If conditions allow, we will land at Cape Dezhnev, easternmost point of Eurasia. We can visit an abandoned polar research station and indigenous settlement. Late afternoon we cross the Arctic Circle on the international dateline, the chance to straddle two continents, two time zones and two oceans at once!

**Day 4 – Kolyuchinskaya Estuary**

Wild and untouched, the Kolyuchinskaya Estuary is ancient tundra between the Amguena and Vankarem rivers along Chukotka's north coast. As we paddle, we'll search for ringed seals and whales. We can stretch our legs and hike among tundra flowers and watch for yellow-billed loons, tufted puffins and emperor geese. Our Russian crew and expedition leader will assess the pack ice to determine our chances of visiting Wrangel Island.

**Days 5-7 – Wrangel Island**

We thread our way among ice floes, searching for a route to Wrangel Island. Weather and ice pose challenges, but we've timed our run to give us the best possible chance. If conditions allow, we land and meet local scientists, who guide us into the world's most northern World Heritage Site. 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 and countless animals to observe on the ground and from our kayaks, including walrus, grey whale, reindeer, musk ox and Arctic fox. Fossilised remains of woolly mammoth may be found on our hikes across alpine valleys.

**Days 8-12 – Chukotka Coast**

Returning to the rugged Chukotka Coast, we first head toward the port of Pevek to explore the celebrated North East Passage for a few days. This is expedition cruising at its best, searching for new paddle routes, tundra walks and zodiac trips. Rhinoceros and woolly mammoth roamed this coastline when it was part of the Great Arctic Plain. We'll search for megafauna bones and tusks under the vast east Siberian sky. Our return through the Chukchi Sea promises fresh discoveries and a visit to Cape Vankarem, one of north eastern Russia's largest walrus haulouts.

**Day 13 – Diomedes Islands**

We pass through Bering Strait on the lookout for orca and beluga whales, setting a course through the Diomedes Islands. Little Diomedes belongs to the U.S.A and Big Diomedes is Russian. At the closest distance between Little Diomedes and Big Diomedes, the two islands are about 3.8 km apart. We hope to visit Arakamchechen Island, home to murrelets, tufted puffins and crested auklets.

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**Day 14 – Anadyr**

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

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**HIGHLIGHTS OF “ARCTIC OCEAN DISCOVERER”**

- Explore Wrangel Island, Russia’s treasured wildlife sanctuary.
- Wildlife opportunities – prolific bird and sea life including polar bear, walrus and whales.
- Paddle where few have paddled before.
- Whalebone Alley and Chukchi villages.
- Bering Strait, beluga whales and woolly mammoth tusks!

**THIS VOYAGE INCLUDES**

- Airport transfers to/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.
- 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.

**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**

**HEAD OFFICE – SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA**

PO Box 641, St Ives, NSW 2075

Ph: (02) 8901 3287 Fx: (02) 8901 3297

International phone or fax inquiries: 61 2 8901 and the last four digits

Email: [ssvtrips@southernseaventures.com](mailto:ssvtrips@southernseaventures.com)

Website: [www.southernseaventures.com](http://www.southernseaventures.com)

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## WRANGEL ISLAND

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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.

