

# TREASURES OF THE RUSSIAN FAR EAST CHUKOTKA AND KAMCHATKA 19-31 July 2012

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## KAYAK EXPEDITION NOTES AND ITINERARY

“Treasures of the Russian Far East” is a ship-based exploration of the rugged wilderness coast of Chukotka and northern Kamchatka. 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 voyage. Our adventures and daily program will be influenced by the changeable weather and sea conditions of the region. We’ll delight in taking advantage of these spontaneous opportunities and there is always an element of the unexpected. We ask you to join us in the spirit of expedition cruising as we discover this extraordinary region with you.

Our journey begins in Anadyr, Russia’s most easterly town, situated at the mouth of the Anadyr River. We sail into the Bering Sea and along the coastline of Chukotka. We’ll paddle Chukotka’s magnificent coastline of glacier carved fjords on the watch for brown bears, wolves and beluga whales. Northern Kamchatka’s deep fjords, lagoons and bays offer superb paddling. We search for walrus haul outs and paddle beneath sea cliffs where puffins, kittiwakes and cormorants breed. We hope to meet Chukchi reindeer herders and fisherman living a traditional lifestyle. Join us for an amazing mix of spectacular landscapes, wildlife and traditional cultures.

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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## CHUKOTKA AND KAMCHATKA

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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 – 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 – Chukotka Coast**

We journey south along Chukotka’s coast, where shallow bays, wide beaches and low hills are reminders of former ice sheets. An expedition day, the weather and sea determine our first landing.

##### **Day 3 – Mainapilgino**

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 visit the small Chukchi fishing village of Mainapilgino, set on a long spit of land along the Bering Sea. Taste local caviar and salmon and glimpse local life infused with time old traditions.

##### **Day 4 – Dezhneva Bay**

As we paddle Dezhneva Bay we’ll listen out for the blow of grey whales. Stretching our legs, we can hike to a shallow coastal lagoon keeping a look out for nesting white-fronted bean geese and whooper swans. We’ll enjoy beautiful vistas as rolling tundra gives way to spectacular snow-covered hills.

##### **Days 5-7 – Ekspeditsiya and Machevnaya Bays**

Over three days we explore the areas around Ekspeditsiya and Machevnaya bays and Amayan Lagoon. We explore big rivers and freshwater lagoons, hike across tundra and keep an eye out for bears fishing for salmon. Nomadic 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. When paddling we’ll keep watch for a variety of whales.

##### **Days 8-10 – St Peter Bay, Natalya Bay and Anastasiya Bay**

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. Stunning scenery awaits at Natalya Bay and we hope to visit Bogoslov Island, home to tens of thousands of nesting puffins, guillemots and pelagic cormorants ...quite a spectacle from our kayaks. In Anastasiya Bay are walrus haulouts and birdlife, including the bluethroat and Siberian rubythroat.

##### **Day 11 – Khatyrka village**

Travelling north, we hope to visit Khatyrka village, set between a vast river and freshwater lagoon. Here the Chukchi people fall into two separate sub-cultures-reindeer herders and fisherman. We spend time with the villagers before exploring the surrounds.

##### **Day 12 – Gabriel Bay**

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. Wildflowers such as forget-me-not and dwarf azaleas carpet the tundra. Keep watch for brown bears and beluga whales!

##### **Day 13 – Return to Anadyr**

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With the Bering Sea behind us, we arrive into Anadyr in the early morning. We say our goodbyes to the staff and crew and transfer to the airport for onward flights.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**HIGHLIGHTS OF “TREASURES OF THE RUSSIAN FAR EAST”**

- Explore Chukotka and northern Kamchatka-remote, vast and unexplored.
- Meet nomadic reindeer herders.
- Wildlife opportunities – prolific birdlife (puffins, auklets, kittiwakes, Steller’s sea eagles, rubythroats), walrus, whales and the chance to see Kamchatka brown bears.
- Visits to traditional villages where welcoming locals offer a glimpse of their traditional lifestyle.
- Paddle fjords, bays and rivers with a backdrop of breathtaking alpine scenery.

**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.
- 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**

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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.

