



THE GUIDE TO EXPEDITION CRUISING

Extraordinary places. Extraordinary possibilities. Confidence by design.

The extraordinary planet. Your way.

Imagine waking to the sight of Antarctica's sculpted icebergs, watching polar bears from the safety of a ship in the Arctic, or discovering the wildlife of the Galápagos. Expedition cruising takes us to places where nature is immense, distances are extraordinary and the journey itself is part of the adventure.

For travellers with mobility or other individual requirements, these voyages can be both profoundly exciting and unusually complex. A beautifully designed ship may offer accessible accommodation and generous public spaces, yet the way guests reach the shore may still depend on small inflatable boats, wet landings, uneven ground or conditions that cannot be controlled.

A ship may be accessible. The expedition may not be.

At Inclu Travel, we explore the possibilities without confusing aspiration with assurance. We begin with what you want to experience, then examine what can genuinely be achieved, where and with whom.

01 | What Makes an Expedition Cruise Different?

Beyond a conventional cruise

An expedition voyage places discovery at its centre. Ships may be smaller, itineraries more flexible and days shaped by weather, wildlife and the decisions of an experienced expedition team. Lectures, specialist guides, observation decks and close encounters with remote landscapes are often as important as dining and entertainment.

A changing itinerary

An expedition itinerary is not a fixed promise of every landing or excursion. Sea state, ice, weather, wildlife protection rules and local permissions can change the programme. This flexibility is part of responsible expedition travel, but it matters when a particular landing or activity is central to someone's dream.

02 | Antarctica — The White Continent

A world unlike any other

Antarctica offers immense ice formations, dramatic mountain ranges, penguin colonies and an extraordinary sense of remoteness. Many voyages begin in South America, commonly Ushuaia, and cross the Drake Passage; others use a fly-cruise arrangement, which introduces separate aircraft and equipment considerations.

The critical distinction

For many guests, expedition days revolve around Zodiac outings and landings on snow, rock or ice. Guests who cannot safely board, sit in or disembark from a Zodiac may have to experience Antarctica entirely from the ship. Ship-based viewing can be magnificent, but it is not equivalent to stepping ashore. We establish that distinction before choosing a voyage.

03 | The Arctic & Svalbard

The High Arctic

Svalbard offers glaciers, immense fjords, seabirds and the possibility of seeing polar bears from a safe distance. Greenland combines vast landscapes, icebergs and communities with distinctive cultural histories.

Different destinations, different access

Arctic voyages frequently rely on Zodiac excursions and may involve beaches, rocks, steep surfaces and unpredictable conditions. Ports with a pier can sometimes provide better opportunities, but a published port call is not proof of step-free access. Polar-bear safety procedures can also affect whether and where anyone may land.

04 | Galápagos — Wildlife at Close Quarters

A living natural laboratory

The Galápagos Islands offer remarkable wildlife and landscapes, from giant tortoises and marine iguanas to sea lions and distinctive birdlife. Expedition-style small ships and yachts often visit protected sites with tightly managed visitor routes.

An individual assessment is essential

Small vessels, boarding arrangements, inflatable boats, wet landings, sand and volcanic paths can make the traditional expedition programme inaccessible to some travellers. We look at the exact vessel, approved landing sites and whether an alternative experience can genuinely deliver what matters most to the guest.

05 | Alaska, the Kimberley & Other Expedition Frontiers

Alaska

Alaska combines glaciers, wildlife, coastal communities and spectacular scenery. Larger ships may offer more accessible shipboard infrastructure and conventional port facilities, while small expedition vessels can reach quieter locations but may rely heavily on Zodiac operations.

The Kimberley

Australia's remote Kimberley coast offers dramatic gorges, tidal phenomena and ancient landscapes. Many signature excursions involve tenders or smaller craft, with additional challenges around heat, remoteness and shore access.

The wider world

Expedition itineraries also explore the Northwest Passage, South Pacific, remote Atlantic islands and parts of Africa and South America. The name of the destination is only the beginning of a suitability assessment.

06 | The Expedition Operators Worth Exploring

Scenic Eclipse

Scenic's ultra-luxury discovery yachts combine refined accommodation with ambitious expedition programmes. Certain itineraries may offer helicopters or submersibles, but those activities have their own eligibility, boarding and operational restrictions. An accessible suite does not establish access to these experiences.

PONANT

PONANT operates luxury expedition vessels, including Le Commandant Charcot for polar journeys. Selected accessible accommodation may be available, but Zodiac use, shore landings and other off-ship activities require separate assessment.

Silversea Expeditions

Ships such as Silver Endeavour, Silver Cloud and Silver Wind bring luxury service to remote destinations. Accessible accommodation and shipboard facilities vary by vessel, while Zodiac operations and shore access may be restrictive.

Quark Expeditions

Quark specialises in polar exploration, with vessels including Ultramarine. Modified accommodation may be offered on particular ships, but the central expedition programme often depends on Zodiac transfers and terrain that may not be suitable for all guests.

National Geographic–Lindblad Expeditions

Lindblad combines naturalist-led exploration, education and remote access. Some ships and programmes impose strict restrictions on mobility equipment or small-boat participation. Individual written confirmation is indispensable.

HX Expeditions

HX offers expedition voyages including on Roald Amundsen and Fridtjof Nansen. Modern shipboard design can be appealing, but participation in off-ship activities depends on the exact programme, conditions and safety policies.

Aurora Expeditions

Vessels such as Greg Mortimer and Douglas Mawson focus on active expedition experiences. Selected adapted cabins do not necessarily enable Zodiac landings, and the guest's priorities must be assessed accordingly.

Our approach to choosing

This is a starting shortlist, not an endorsement of any vessel for a particular traveller. Fleet configurations, published policies and itineraries change; we verify the ship, cabin, activities and operator's written decisions before booking.

07 | Ship Accessibility Is Not Expedition Accessibility

Two separate questions

First, can the guest live comfortably and safely aboard? Second, can they take part in the experiences that define the voyage? The answers can be very different.

What we verify aboard

We examine entrance widths, turning space, bed height, transfer arrangements, bathroom layout, lift access, deck routes, dining, observation areas, emergency procedures and equipment storage. A nominally accessible cabin is not enough.

What we verify beyond the ship

We separately examine gangways, Zodiac access, shore landing methods, surfaces, gradients, transport, activity requirements and alternative ways to experience each destination.

08 | Understanding Zodiac Boats & Shore Landings

Why Zodiacs matter

Expedition vessels often anchor offshore and use rigid inflatable boats to reach land or explore close to glaciers and wildlife. Boarding may involve stepping down from a platform, crossing moving surfaces, maintaining a seated position and disembarking onto rocks, sand, snow or a beach.

Wet and dry landings

A dry landing may involve stepping from a Zodiac onto a jetty or rock; a wet landing may require stepping into shallow water. Neither term establishes wheelchair access. Conditions and operator rules can change even on the day.

No assumptions about lifting

Staff assistance or manual lifting should never be presumed permissible, safe or available. Transfer methods, weight restrictions, evacuation procedures and consent must be confirmed directly with the operator.

09 | What If You Cannot Go Ashore?

The value of the ship-based experience

For some travellers, being surrounded by polar scenery, seeing wildlife from the decks and enjoying the interpretation of specialist guides is extraordinary in itself. Panoramic lounges, observation decks and onboard learning can make the voyage deeply rewarding.

The question that matters

Would that be enough for you? If your dream is to walk among penguins or reach a particular island, a voyage where you cannot land may not be the right choice. We would rather establish this candidly than sell a beautiful ship that cannot deliver the experience you imagined.

Designing a better alternative

Sometimes a different vessel, season, destination or style of journey provides more meaningful access. Alaska, for example, may offer a wider choice of shore-based experiences than a small-ship polar expedition.

10 | Mobility Equipment & Essential Practicalities

Equipment is personal infrastructure

Powered wheelchairs, manual chairs, powered attachments, mobility scooters, mobile hoists and shower chairs must be considered individually. Dimensions, weight, battery specifications, charging, turning space and secure storage can all affect suitability.

The remote environment

Remote destinations bring additional risk if equipment fails. We consider spare parts, repair options, backup arrangements, battery performance, transport handling and whether essential support can realistically be provided throughout the journey.

Beyond the cabin

We also assess access to viewing decks, lectures, dining, lounges and embarkation points. The ability to enjoy the ship matters just as much as the ability to sleep comfortably aboard.

11 | Beyond Mobility

Individual requirements

Hearing, vision, communication, sensory and neurodivergent requirements can all influence the choice of expedition. Smaller ships may offer calmer environments but may have fewer alternative spaces and more demanding emergency procedures.

The realities of expedition travel

Remote voyages may involve rough seas, schedule changes, cold, long daylight hours, physical activity and limited connectivity. We consider the individual's preferences, stamina and support needs, without making assumptions about what they can or should enjoy.

12 | Reaching the Expedition Ship

The journey before the journey

Antarctica and the Arctic often require long-distance flights, regional connections and ground transfers before embarkation. The practical risks of transporting powered mobility equipment through multiple airports can be significant.

Our end-to-end assessment

We examine airline procedures, aircraft types, wheelchair loading and battery rules, accessible accommodation, suitable transfers, port embarkation, assistance arrangements and contingencies for delayed or damaged equipment.

A complete journey

The experience must work from the front door to the ship, throughout the expedition and safely home again. A successful voyage cannot depend on the assumption that every connection will somehow work out.

13 | Safety, Support & Remote Contingencies

The distance from ordinary services

Expedition cruising takes place in regions where specialist medical support, repair facilities and evacuation options may be limited or delayed. Operators may require passengers to meet particular mobility or self-evacuation criteria.

What must be confirmed

We establish the operator's written policies on emergency evacuation, personal care, medical support, equipment use, onboard assistance and eligibility for off-ship activities. Crew members are not a substitute for a traveller's own personal-care arrangements.

Preparation is part of luxury

Good planning should not diminish the spirit of adventure. It is what allows the traveller to enjoy it with greater confidence.

14 | Choosing the Right Expedition for You

Begin with the dream

Is it Antarctica's wildlife, the silence of the Arctic, the Galápagos' unique species or the grandeur of Alaska? Which experience is non-negotiable: the landscape from the ship, a small-boat excursion or physically going ashore?

Then test the reality

We compare ships, cabin layouts, activity policies, embarkation logistics, sea conditions, itinerary design and the proportion of meaningful experiences the traveller can actually enjoy.

Consider everyone travelling

A partner or family member may want active landings while another guest prefers the ship. We seek journeys that respect the greatest requirements while preserving opportunities for the whole party to be delighted and fulfilled.

15 | The Inclu Cruise Club Difference

People first, always

We are not interested in describing an expedition as accessible because a ship has an adapted suite. We want to know what the traveller will actually experience.

Personally designed

We bring together the right ship, suitable accommodation, specialist equipment, appropriate transfers, private pre- and post-cruise arrangements and realistic alternatives where a particular activity is not possible.

Human expertise

Technology can present an itinerary. Only people can understand the significance of a particular experience, investigate its practical realities and design a journey around the people taking it.

16 | Confidence by Design™

Possibility, with clarity

Expedition cruising can open extraordinary worlds. It can also present limitations that should never be disguised by beautiful photography or reassuring but imprecise descriptions.

A better question

Rather than simply asking whether an expedition ship is accessible, we ask: what do you want to experience, what does that experience require, and how can it genuinely work for you?

The extraordinary planet. Your way.

Exploration is not defined by how far you can walk, how high you can climb or whether you can step into a Zodiac. It is defined by what you experience.

THE EXTRAORDINARY PLANET. YOUR WAY.

From the icebound reaches of Antarctica to the extraordinary wildlife of the Galápagos, expedition cruising offers a different relationship with the world: closer to nature, more curious and often more adventurous.

At Inclu Travel, our ambition is to make those possibilities meaningful for the people who wish to discover them, with a clear understanding of what is achievable, what is not and what alternatives may create an even more rewarding journey.

Oceans of inclusive discovery. The Luxury of Possibility.

Editorial note: Ships, accessible accommodation, operator rules and expedition activities can change. Every proposed voyage, including landing and Zodiac eligibility, must be verified directly with the operator for the specific traveller and departure. No off-ship activity should be represented as guaranteed.

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