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Planning to Visit Antarctica? These Are The Top 5 Things to Ask When Booking a Trip *Plus, what's new for the 2025-26 season, and dates, rates, and changes coming in 2026-27*

TRUCKEE, Calif. (April 29, 2025) - Traveling to Antarctica is a bucket list trip, so it's important to ask the right questions when booking to ensure the experience matches expectations. From understanding what different ships, trips, and operators offer to knowing what's included versus excluded in the price, AdventureSmith Explorations' travel experts are well versed in matching travelers with their dream trip to the White Continent. In fact, AdventureSmith has good reason for only booking Antarctic ships under 200 guests, and can look at trip details with an eye for increased efficiency and the overall experience if off-ship time is important to the traveler.

"Capacity on Antarctica expeditions is increasing in some cases, but coveted space on the top ships, routes, and activities is going fast for the 2025-26 sailing season," said Todd Smith, AdventureSmith Explorations founder and president. "Not all trips are created equal, so it's essential to ask, or be asked, the right questions."

Five of the most important questions to ask a travel agent when booking an [Antarctica cruise](#) include:

1. "Have you been to Antarctica? And if so, how?"

This seems simple, but many travel agents have not been to Antarctica. An Antarctica sales agent cannot possibly anticipate all the questions and needs of their client if they have not been themselves. Even when booking directly with Antarctica cruise lines, many of the reservation agents have never experienced their own cruise product. All of AdventureSmith's travel specialists have been to Antarctica and regularly visit each season. And not just on classic routes. They have been to South Georgia; crossed the Polar Circle; flown over the Drake Passage instead of sailing it; taken luxury expeditions; skied, camped & kayaked; and sailed aboard ships ranging from 67 to 1,300 guests. This shared knowledge around the full spectrum of experiences available across all operators traveling to the continent is critical.

2. "How big is the ship, and does it match the experience I want?"

Antarctica cruise ships range in size from 60 guests to thousands of passengers. Ship size matters if travelers want to spend time ashore or have access to specific experiences that aren't offered on all ship sizes. For example, ships with under 100 guests can get everyone ashore at the same time. Larger ships have to rotate guests with scenic Zodiac cruises or other non-land activities like kayaking. Ships carrying more than 500 guests are prohibited from conducting any landing activities at all.

3. "What is included in the cost?"

Different cruises include different things, so deciding based on advertised cabin price alone does not always offer an accurate comparison. Ask if things like adventure activities, alcohol, a pre-cruise overnight, and emergency medical evacuation insurance (which is often required) are included. Understanding what is included – and what is excluded – will help to more effectively compare trip costs. ([Read more](#) about how AdventureSmith's experts might dive into considerations with a first-time traveler to Antarctica.)

4. "Is a landing on the Antarctic Continent included?"

On shore is where travelers enjoy sweeping views of glaciers and closer views and interactions with penguin colonies, but not all ships or trips include landing activities. Be wary of any itinerary that's less than a week's time and ask if a landing on the Antarctic Continent itself is included. Some shorter trips may only visit peripheral islands like the South Shetland Islands.

5. "What activities, whether included or available as add-ons, should not be missed?"

Activities offered vary by ship and trip, but travelers on all of AdventureSmith's trips will go off ship to experience walks and Zodiac cruises. Kayaking in Antarctica is considered "the ultimate paddling experience," and camping on the White Continent is unlike anything else on Earth. Taking a flightseeing excursion is the best way to see vast expanses of ice and snow, so ask about helicopter options to experience an aerial view. For the more adventurous, skiing, mountaineering, longer treks and scuba diving are options on this once-in-a-lifetime trip.

What to Know About Antarctica Travel in 2025-26

- Helicopter flightseeing and landings are increasing, but space is limited to just a few departures; booking early is essential to secure a spot.
- A new ship launching in December 2025 will add capacity to a number of activities on select departures, including sea kayaking, one-time paddling, camping, snowshoeing, snorkeling, diving, ski and snowboard touring, stand-up paddleboarding, mountaineering, and rock climbing.
- There's an increase in Patagonia/Antarctica combo cruises starting in 2025, including the [Antarctica & Patagonia cruise](#) and [Active & Wild Antarctica Air Cruise](#), along with the [Spirit of Antarctica Expedition](#), which offers seamless Patagonia group tour extensions.
- Read on for more on [Antarctica 2025-26 new ships and itineraries](#).

Here's What's Coming in 2026-27

AdventureSmith's travel experts are already adding 2026-27 season dates, rates, and [Antarctica cruise deals](#) to their booking schedule. Trending topics include additional new ships, more camping options than ever before, more fly-in cruise options, and a new guided point-to-point trek option with up to six hours of hiking on the [Antarctica Discovery & Learning Voyage](#). But, increased pricing across the board makes booking during the coming 2025-26 season even more enticing.

Learn more about AdventureSmith Explorations and book an expedition at adventuresmithexplorations.com.

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About AdventureSmith Explorations

Founded in 2003, AdventureSmith Explorations is the global leader in small ship, adventure cruise vacations. Pioneering sustainable travel practices, AdventureSmith founder Todd Smith has been recognized among *Condé Nast Traveler's* prestigious Top Travel Specialists for 12 consecutive years. The company has also been awarded a *Condé Nast Traveler* World Savers Award, recognized as one of the "Best Adventure Travel Companies on Earth" by *National Geographic Adventure*, named among *Outside's* Best Places to Work in 2024, and is *Sunset Magazine's* "Best Transportation and Tours" 2024 Travel Award winner. Learn more and book an expedition at adventuresmithexplorations.com or by calling 866-575-2875.