



# ANTARCTICA CAMPING

Camping on the White Continent with *Sea Spirit*

## Preparation Notes

Antarctica Camping is unlike other camping experiences you may have had. Certainly the location—a seemingly endless expanse of snow and ice all around as well as underfoot—sets it apart from your local holiday park. There is no need to bring your cooler (cool box, Esky, chilly-bin) because you're not allowed to bring food and beverages ashore—and you can be sure that none of it would be at risk of getting too warm anyway. Don't worry about bringing your bug-spray either; it's far too cold for flying insects to survive where you'll be. Yes, it will be cold. But don't worry: we provide quality, modern, high-performance gear so you will be a lot drier, warmer, and more comfortable than the early Antarctic explorers were. You'll be glad you did it. The memories will last a lifetime.

### *What we provide*

Our quality synthetic mummy-shaped **sleeping bags** are rated for temperatures down to  $-18^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $0^{\circ}\text{F}$ ). They are comfortable, roomy, water-repellent, connectable, and can accommodate body lengths up to 198 cm (6 ½ feet). For added warmth and comfort you will also be issued a freshly laundered cotton **sleeping bag liner**, as well as a full-length insulating foam **sleeping pad**.

You will sleep comfortably inside a single-person **bivy sack** that slips over your sleeping bag. This non-complicated arrangement allows you the utmost connection to the beautiful polar environment without sacrificing warmth and protection from the elements. Our waterproof, breathable nylon bivy sacks feature contour hoods and provide an additional  $5^{\circ}$  to  $10^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $9^{\circ}$  to  $18^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) of insulation.

### *How it works*

Prior to camping night, you and your fellow campers will receive a comprehensive orientation briefing. Here you will be shown how to use your camping gear, you will get detailed information about safety and logistics, and you will learn the camping rules and regulations.

Neither the date nor the location of camping will be known more than a few hours in advance. Any potential camping site must be scouted and the weather conditions assessed before camping can be declared a "go". On the evening that camping is set to go, you will have your dinner on board as usual. After dinner you will get properly dressed and equipped for camping before being taken by Zodiac to the camping site. You will not be allowed to take any food (other than what may be medically necessary) or drinks (other than water) with you ashore. If you take medication, you must bring at least twice as much as you expect to use while camping.



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The area for camping will be established and marked out by your camping guides. You will be expected to prepare your individual campsite by digging a pit in the snow up to one meter deep for your bivy sack. Meanwhile, your camping guides will assemble camp toilets in areas of relative privacy, clearly marked and within easy walking distance of the camping area. You will be required to use the provided toilets when nature calls. Environmental guidelines prescribe that the staff carry all waste products back to the ship, so it will be a good idea to take advantage of the ship's facilities before going ashore. Guide bivys will be clearly marked in case you need assistance during the night. Quiet time will be established after a certain hour.

Temperatures normally hover around freezing (0°C / 32°F) and will often go a few degrees below freezing overnight. Snow that is of a wet consistency in the evening will usually be frozen solid by morning. Fresh snowfall is always a possibility. Depending on the time of year, it may not get completely dark during the night (early season) or it may get quite dark shortly after you arrive at the camping area (late season). In any case, you will want to bring a flashlight.

The ship will stay close by during the night. However, there is no shuttle to take you back to the ship except in an emergency. You will be expected to stay out the whole time, but you will also need to be prepared to pack up and leave at any time in case an emergency evacuation is necessary.

If you sleep perfectly soundly all night, you'll be a rare individual. Chances are you will have the privilege of being awake for much of this remarkable experience. Either way, you will get a wake-up call early in the morning. You will then pack up your gear—making sure to take everything with you and to erase any trace that you were ever there—before taking a Zodiac back to the ship where you will enjoy a well-deserved hot breakfast to begin another full expedition day.

### *How to pack*

On camping night you should dress similarly to how you would dress for a regular shore landing or Zodiac excursion. Nylon, polyester (fleece), polypropylene, and merino wool are the preferred fabrics for camping. Cotton is not appropriate due to poor heat retention when damp (e.g., from perspiration). Be sure to bring a warm hat, scarf or balaclava, thick socks, snow gloves, and waterproof outer gear such as snow pants along with your parka. Plan to bring at least a change of long thermal underwear (your base layer) separately in your daypack, because you may perspire while setting up your campsite or exploring. You will want to change out of any damp clothes before going to sleep, otherwise you may become very cold.