

# THE ANTARCTICA PACKING LIST

Packing is often the least popular aspect of any holiday – but packing for Antarctica is particularly daunting. Not only is it the most extreme environment you are ever likely to find yourself in, but there are no convenience stores, outdoor clothing specialists or chemists should you forget anything. On top of that, you'll probably be trying to pack light to free up valuable space, especially if you're sharing a smaller

cabin rather than a roomy suite. You'll also need to check the weight allowance for your chosen departure.

We've chatted with our Antarctica experts to find out what you should pack for an Antarctic cruise – as well as what you shouldn't pack.



## Antarctica clothing

Wondering what to wear in Antarctica? Note that during the summer cruise season, Antarctica is not as cold as you might imagine, with temperatures often well above freezing, especially in the warmest months of December and January.

Think windproof and waterproof instead – and layer up so that you can adjust to the right level of warmth. The last thing you want to do in Antarctica is sweat lots; being damp and cold is not only unpleasant, but it can be dangerous. With that in mind, Antarctica gear made from synthetic fibres can be preferable as it'll dry faster.

- ▲▲ A warm, **winter coat** – but don't go overboard with the cold weather gear. It's not going to be -30°C. Some of our partners provide complimentary parkas for passengers as part of the tour package.
- ▲▲▲ **Waterproof overtrousers** are needed for Zodiac landings.
- ▲▲▲ **Winter boots** with good, grippy soles.
- ▲▲▲ Something to cover your face and ears – **earmuffs or earbands** are good, or a good hat with earflaps. Polar fleece facemasks are great for when the wind picks up.
- ▲▲▲ **Gloves.** We recommend one "Thinsulate"-style pair with a thicker pair to wear over the top in case you get really cold. That way, you can still operate your camera and zip up clothing in the thinner pair of gloves.
- ▲▲▲ Warm **wool socks**, plus thinner socks or silk sock liners to wear underneath. It's better to have too many pairs than too few, as they will get wet.
- ▲▲▲ **Comfy shoes for lounging** around onboard – your feet will appreciate it after the thick socks and heavy boots. The easier to slip on the better; you may need to dash out on deck to watch a breaching hump-back.

- ▲▲▲ Thin, warm **base layers**.
- ▲▲▲ A **bathing suit**. Yes, really. Your ship may well have a sauna or plunge pool – and some cruises offer guests the chance for a dip in the Antarctic waters. How can you say no...?
- ▲▲▲ **Gym clothes**, if your ship has an onboard gym and you are planning to use it.
- ▲▲▲ Don't forget to pack **summery clothing** if you're spending a few days in Buenos Aires or Santiago de Chile before or after your Antarctic cruise. It will be the height of summer there.

## Accessories

- ▲▲▲ **Sunglasses.** Polarising is good and a UV filter is essential. You're going to do a lot of squinting through the glare from the ice. Some people also choose to wear ski goggles, especially if they wear contact lenses, as this can stop them from drying out.
- ▲▲▲ **Daypack** for shore excursions. This should be waterproof or water resistant, or have a waterproof cover.
- ▲▲▲ **Binoculars.**
- ▲▲▲ Refillable **water bottle** (s).
- ▲▲▲ Chances are, you'll want a decent **DSLR or Mirrorless camera** with at least two different lenses, although it's always worth packing a neat point-and-shoot camera as well. And don't forget how fast batteries die in cold weather – bring at least two spares and your charger.
- ▲▲▲ Bring your **laptop** for viewing and storing photos.
- ▲▲▲ **Eye mask.** Twenty hours of daylight can be disruptive to sleep – and so can snoring neighbours, so bring earplugs too!
- ▲▲▲ A **book** to read and a **journal** to write in.

## THE ANTARCTICA PACKING LIST CONTINUED

### Toiletries & medicines

- ▲▲▲ Reef-safe **sunscreen**. Don't be fooled by the cold – skiers often get caught out by unexpected sunburn too. A high SPF is essential.
- ▲▲▲ **Moisturiser and lip balm**. Antarctica may be cold but it's also a desert; the combination of dry air, wind and cold will leave your skin and lips parched. Bring oil-based rather than water-based if you can; it won't freeze.
- ▲▲▲ **Something for seasickness**. Ginger is a perennial favourite (stem, candied or pills), while some passengers prefer acupressure wristbands or over-the-counter medication. Your doctor may be able to prescribe something stronger if you know you are prone.
- ▲▲▲ Any **prescription medicines** you require.



## WHAT NOT TO PACK

- ▲▲▲ A huge, thick piece of winter clothing or an all-in-one snowsuit. Layers are the best thing to wear in Antarctica, as it's often warmer than expected, and you'll warm up fast if trekking or snowshoeing.
- ▲▲▲ Formal clothes. There aren't going to be black-tie dinners or ballrooms on board. The mood is decidedly casual and comfortable. However, you may want to pack something a bit smarter if you're extending your trip in South America before or after departure, or if there is a captain's dinner on the first evening – though "formal" on an Antarctic expedition cruise is still relative.
- ▲▲▲ Torch/compass/Swiss Army Knife... Expedition this may be, but you're also on a comfortable cruise with a well-equipped crew. Plus, it's light for around 24 hours a day.