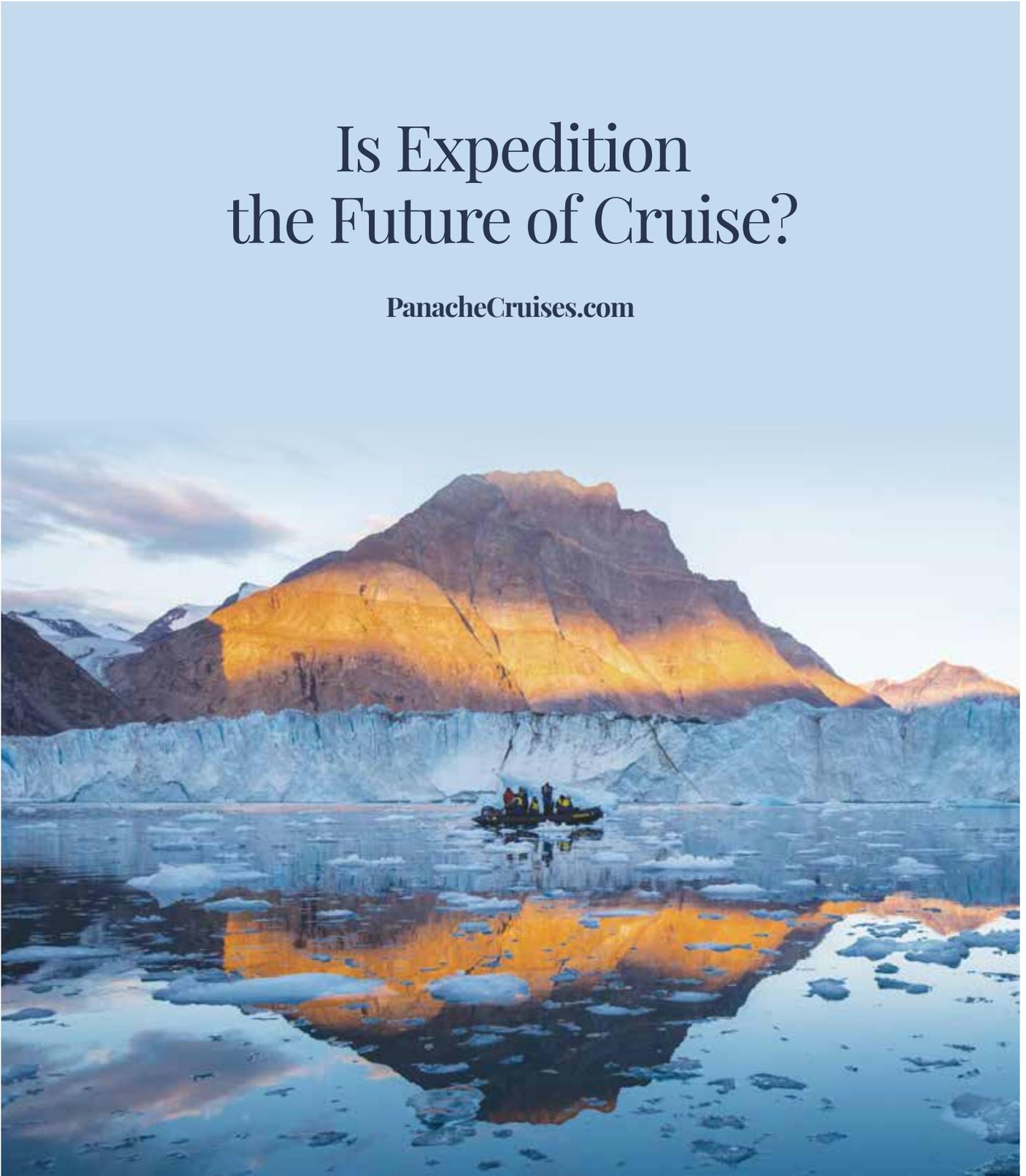




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# Is Expedition the Future of Cruise?

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It's inevitable that the cruise industry will see many changes in the new, post-pandemic world. In an attempt to make travel safer for everyone, countries across the globe are imposing pre-entry health checks while cruise lines are preparing their ships and putting stringent health and safety protocols into place. So, could the aftermath of coronavirus mean that expedition cruising is looking like a brighter option for future travel?

Sailing to less populated destinations of faraway regions, it's no surprise cruise lines are currently focusing on re-launching expedition voyages in the not too distant future. Expedition ships are much smaller than many mainstream cruise ships with fewer passengers on board and a higher space per guest ratio. Expedition cruises rely less on port and bus excursions as they use Zodiacs and submersibles to transport passengers away from crowded places where there is less human contact, and they focus more on nature and wildlife experiences.

With some Arctic and Antarctica cruises sailing from as soon as September, and cruise lines offering generous cancelation policies in light of coronavirus, there is much less risk to booking early.

But it's not just the health and safety that makes expedition cruising more attractive. Out of respect, for the natural environments they visit, expedition ships are designed to leave less of a footprint on the places they visit. Strict environmental factors are taken into consideration during the design and build of the ships so they burn less fuel, and any wastewater is decontaminated in a bid to adhere to eco-friendly travel.

# Antarctica Expeditions

This vast, isolated region is a frozen kingdom where ice-covered peaks pierce the skyline and glaciers creak and calve into the ocean. Barely touched by man, it's the animals that reign supreme here. Penguins, whales, seals, petrels and albatross are some of the endemic wildlife that dwell in this otherworldly landscape.

Made up of the most fantastical destinations, Antarctica expedition cruises sail to far-flung places such as Antarctic Sound, also known as 'Iceberg Alley'; The South Shetland Islands; The Antarctic Peninsula; South Georgia; and the Falkland Islands. A range of excursions take you deeper into the action where you'll come face to face with the region's wildlife as you sail in the wake of great explorers such as Earnest Shackleton. Imagine scuba diving with seals, kayaking between icebergs or exploring the ocean in a submarine. And this is just the tip of the iceberg!

## **Crossing the Drake Passage**

One of the most remote, tempestuous and dramatic areas of water, the Drake Passage lies between South America and the northern shores of Antarctica, and was named after the famous British explorer, Sir Francis

Drake. For those sailing to Antarctica, this is considered one of the highlights of their journey. However, some may prefer to avoid the poor weather and choppy crossing with an itinerary that offers flights to Antarctica.

## **When to Travel**

Depending on what you want to see during your cruise to Antarctica, recommended dates will differ. Between November and March, the ice begins to break, making it accessible for ships to reach Antarctica. During November, the skyline is pierced by huge icebergs, creating an almost surreal backdrop. In December and January, temperatures are milder and there's a chance of spotting seal pups, whales and penguin chicks. Although whales can be seen at this time, the whale watching season is in February and March.

# Arctic Expeditions



The remote and freezing landscape of the Arctic is surprisingly diverse. Majestic fjords plunge into the ocean, towering above icebergs and glaciers, while inland you'll find vast tundra and marshland.

The Arctic fauna is equally as diverse, and much of it is endemic to the region. From Arctic foxes, reindeer and moose to walrus, polar bears and seals, witnessing these great creatures in their natural habitat is just thrilling. The Arctic is hauntingly beautiful and its remoteness and natural wonders such as the Midnight Sun and Northern Lights add to the intrigue and magic. Depending on the itinerary, Arctic cruises sail to places such as Spitsbergen in Northern Norway, Greenland, the North Pole, and Churchill in Canada, which is dubbed the "Polar bear capital of the world".

## **When to Travel**

Between the months of June and October, temperatures in the Arctic are warmer and the landscapes flourish with nature. June and July enjoy 24 hours of daylight and the Midnight Sun graces the sky. You're also more likely to see Arctic wildlife such as walrus, Arctic foxes, whales and seals during the summer months. Places such as Svalbard, Greenland and the Canadian Arctic are only accessible between June and September.

# Expedition Cruise Lines



## Silversea Expeditions

Boasting a rather impressive fleet of expedition ships, including Silver Origin, Silver Cloud, Silver Explorer, and Silver Wind, Silversea has expedition cruising down to a fine art.

Sailing to the ends of the earth to untouched territories, you'll experience travel like never before. Immersive excursions let you delve into unique culture and get up close to indigenous wildlife. Having undergone a recent refurbishment with a new ice-strengthened hull, Silver Wind is set to become one of the best ships in the expedition fleet. Zodiacs and kayaks allow guests to enjoy an even more immersive experience.



# Hurtigruten Expeditions

For more than a century, Hurtigruten ships have been sailing the Norwegian Coast, taking in some of the most dramatic scenery on Earth.

With a fleet of 19 ships, the cruise line has earned itself somewhat of an esteemed reputation. MS Roald Amundsen and MS Fridtjof Nansen are the latest custom-built expedition ships featuring hybrid technology systems for sustainability. MS Fridtjof Nansen also boasts Blue Eye underwater drones, kayaks and expedition boats.





## Aurora Expeditions

Designed purely for expeditions, Aurora's modest fleet of two, including Sylvia Earle and Greg Mortimer, place massive emphasis on immersive experiences.

State-of-the-art Tier 3 engines and X-BOW design combine sustainability and performance to bring you some of the best cutting-edge cruising to the most remote destinations. Guests can experience adventure activities such as kayaking, diving and Zodiac trips.





## Ponant Expeditions

There's plenty in the pipeline for Ponant with several new expedition yachts on the horizon. The fleet of expedition ships are small capacity and feature the latest in technology.

Due to sail in 2021, Le Commandant Charcot is a magnificent hybrid polar icebreaker. It's designed to take you further off the beaten track to places such as the North Pole, Charcot, Peter I Islands and Amundsen Sea where the world's greatest explorers also set foot.



## Seabourn Expeditions

Considered late arrivals to the world of expedition cruising, Seabourn have really upped their game in the last few years.

The purpose-built ships feature ice-strengthened hulls, immersive experiences and guest submarines that steer you closer to lesser discovered places. Seabourn Venture is the most recent addition to the expedition fleet and is expected to launch in 2021. It will feature two submarines, double sea kayaks, 24 Zodiacs and a Bow Lounge.





## Scenic Expeditions

Sailing to Antarctica, the Scenic fleet ventures into untouched territories where you'll have life-changing experiences.

Scenic Eclipse, launched in 2019, is among the greatest Antarctic explorers with its own seven-seater submarine and helicopter on board. And just as much care has gone into the onboard design with state-of-the-art technology, six-star service and all-verandah suites



## Crystal Expeditions

A newbie in the expedition arena, Crystal has raised the bar with its voyages on board Crystal Endeavour to the farthest flung corners of the globe.

Accommodating just 200 guests with a 1:1 staff to guest ratio, this impressive ice-breaker is set to smash boundaries for some unparalleled adventures and remote expeditions. Zodiac landings, kayaking, submersibles and helicopters give you an exceptional vantage point for viewing the scenery.





## Antarctica21

Including three custom-built ships, the Antarctica21 expedition fleet offers modern design, state-of-the-art technology, and immersive experiences.

Launched in 2019, Magellan Explorer was designed for Antarctic air cruises. With a capacity of 73 guests, every moment on board provides intimacy. Purposely built to reach more remote destinations, guests are guaranteed unique experiences along the Antarctic Peninsula, where kayaking, Zodiac trips and snowshoeing is all possible.



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