

# **SKEPTIC**

## The Skeptics Society

Presents

# **EXPEDITION TO ANTARCTICA**

**Aboard the New 152 – Guest *Minerva***

**LED BY DR. NIGELLA HILLGARTH**

*December 10 – 21, 2021*

**EARLY BOOKING  
SAVINGS**  
(See inside  
brochure)

### **EARLY BOOKING BONUS**

**Book By June 11th  
and pay only  
\$399 per person  
for the round-trip  
airfare to  
Buenos Aires!**

**The airfare  
is applicable from  
major US gateways.**



Dear Friends,

I am pleased to announce this opportunity for Skeptics Society members and friends to explore Antarctica, undoubtedly one of the most magnificent and significant places on earth.

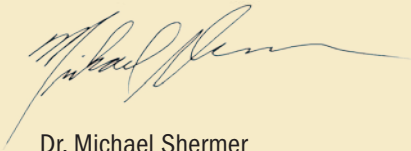
Only about one hundred years ago have legendary explorers like Sir Ernest Shackleton opened up Antarctica, the world's last frontier. It's still as far off the grid as you can go without leaving the planet. Blue Antarctic waters, the dramatic play of light on fields of ice, crystalline glaciers, magnificent ice mountains soaring above an untamed wilderness, pods of whales, and hillsides of penguins – you won't soon forget seeing these breathtaking vistas rarely witnessed by the human eye. As Sir Ernest Shackleton once mused about humanity's attraction to adventure, "Some have the keen thirst for knowledge, and others are drawn away from the trodden path by the 'lure of little voices', the mysterious fascination of the unknown."

We are pleased to present this rare adventure far away from the world we know aboard the new next-generation expedition ship *Minerva*. Under construction in Finland and launching in October 2021, *Minerva* is designed specifically for Polar exploration. Even though the ship's size is large enough to accommodate around 250 passengers, in fact, *Minerva* features only 76 superb staterooms and suites for 152 guests. The ship's size, limited guest capacity, superb accommodations, facilities and services, advanced technical and mechanical systems, and a complement of experienced officers and crew make *Minerva* the ship of choice for exploring Antarctica in safety and comfort. A seasoned team of expedition leaders and naturalists will share with our travelers their love and firsthand knowledge of Antarctica. A fleet of Zodiac landing craft will bring you into intimate contact with this incredible continent.

Joining us on this expedition as Guest Lecturer is **Dr. Nigella Hillgarth**, accomplished scientist and conservationist. Proust wrote that "The real voyage of discovery consists not seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes." On this expedition, we will accomplish both: We will discover new landscapes, while Dr. Hillgarth's lectures and discussions will enable us to see Antarctica with new eyes.

We hope you will join us on this once-in-a-lifetime travel adventure.

With warm regards,



Dr. Michael Shermer  
Executive Director  
The Skeptics Society

P.S. 8% of your cruise fee will be a tax-deductible donation to The Skeptics Society – a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization.

## EXPEDITION GUEST LECTURER DR. NIGELLA HILLGARTH



**Dr. Nigella Hillgarth** is a biologist who served as the Executive Director of the Birch Aquarium, the outreach arm of Scripps Institution of Oceanography, from 2002 to 2014. Among other achievements, during her tenure, Dr. Hillgarth developed one of the first major exhibits on climate change in the US. Prior to her work at Birch Aquarium, she served as Executive Director of the Tracy Aviary in Salt Lake City, the largest bird sanctuary in the country, where she collaborated on conservation efforts for marine birds in the Galapagos islands, Peru and Argentina.

From 2014 to 2017, Dr. Hillgarth served as President and Chief Executive Officer of the New England Aquarium, where she raised the profile of the Aquarium's global conservation and research work by founding the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life, as well as developing a vision for the future of the Aquarium and the surrounding Boston waterfront.

In 2019, Dr. Hillgarth was the Climate Art Fellow for the Climate Science Alliance, and worked on visualizations of ocean-atmosphere interactions and climate with the National Science Foundation Center for Aerosol Impacts on Chemistry of the Environment at Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

An avid photographer of the natural world, Dr. Hillgarth received a Bachelor's degree in Zoology from Oxford University in the UK, as well as a PhD in Evolutionary Biology. She has conducted research on behavioral ecology and evolution of birds, including penguins, in many parts of the world, including Britain, India, Thailand, the Arctic, South America, and the United States.

Dr. Hillgarth looks forward to returning to Antarctica for the fourth visit, and to sharing her love for and knowledge of the white continent with members and friends of The Skeptic Society.



## ITINERARY

*Friday, December 10, 2021*

### **DEPART THE US**

Depart the United States for Buenos Aires, Argentina.

*Saturday, December 11*

### **BUENOS AIRES, Argentina**

Arrive in Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina. Transfer to the Hotel Hilton Buenos Aires (or similar). In the evening, meet fellow travelers, the guest lecturer and trip director at an evening cocktail reception.

*Sunday, December 12*

### **BUENOS AIRES/USHUAIA/ SHIP EMBARKATION**

Transfer to the airport for the flight to Ushuaia, claimed to be the world's southernmost city, located in Argentina's Tierra del Fuego, between the famed Beagle Channel and the mountains. On arrival, transfer to the pier to embark on the *Minerva*, which will begin cruising early that evening. As the ship sails the Beagle Channel, enjoy a spectacular vista of glaciers and misted mountains.

*Monday, December 13*

### **AT SEA**

Attend lectures and enjoy the ship's facilities as the *Minerva* sails through the Drake Passage to

Antarctica. Look for Albatross, Cape Petrels, and whales that may accompany the ship on its passage.

*Tuesday, December 14 to*

*Saturday, December 18*

### **EXPLORING ANTARCTICA**

Explore the pristine wilderness of the Antarctic Peninsula and its surrounding islands. The Peninsula is a narrow finger of land that separates the ice-choked waters of the Weddell and Bellingshausen Seas. As *Minerva* sails through scenic waterways, witness a breathtaking panorama of icebergs, blue glaciers, and jagged snow-capped mountains. Aboard the ship's Zodiacs, cruise among ice floes and explore penguin rookeries. Although the itinerary varies according to local ice and wind conditions, we plan to land at such places as Paradise Harbor, where humpback and minke whales are often sighted offshore; Petermann Island, the habitat of Gentoo and Adelie penguins; and Deception Island, known for its volcanically-heated hot springs. Navigating through the magnificent Lemaire, Errera, Neumayer, and other protected channels is also planned.

*Sunday, December 19 & Monday, December 20*

### **AT SEA**

Watch for whales and seabirds - and enjoy onboard lectures and the ship's amenities - as *Minerva* sails back to Ushuaia.

*Tuesday, December 21*

### **USHUAIA/BUENOS AIRES/USA**

Disembark in Ushuaia. Transfer to the airport for the flight to Buenos to connect with flights to the United States.

**FOR RESERVATIONS  
AND INFORMATION,  
PLEASE CALL**

**THALASSA JOURNEYS**

**TOLL-FREE**

**866-633-3611**

or

**download a PDF at**

**[skeptic.com/Antarctica2021](http://skeptic.com/Antarctica2021)**



## EXPLORE WITH A TEAM OF EXPEDITION LEADERS & NATURALISTS

In addition to traveling with Guest Lecturer Dr. Nigella Hillgarth, our activities in Antarctica are planned and conducted by a team of resident expedition leaders and naturalists who are among the most experienced in the field, with several years of leading small-ship cruise expeditions to this incredible region of the world. Members of the team comprise a truly astonishing assortment of expertise and intellect. Onboard, ashore, and in our Zodiac boats, through talks and presentations that will complement Dr. Hillgarth's lectures, they will create a comprehensive understanding of the flora and fauna, sea life, geology, glaciology, effects of climate change, history of exploration, and other topics that relate to Antarctica. The experience we will provide is not just one of awe-inspiring sightseeing, but a complete learning adventure as well.

## THE AUSTRAL SUMMER

Our voyage to Antarctica will take place during the Austral Summer. The season is short, but the days are long, stretching to midnight and beyond. And they are surprisingly warm, too, with highs in the 30s and 40s F – just the right temperature for exploring on foot and by Zodiac boats. Dolphins might see our ship out from Ushuaia. Petrels, albatrosses and skuas follow our wake to the Antarctic Convergence. On the Antarctic Peninsula, Gentoo, Chinstrap and Adelle penguins nest by the thousands, waddling, slipping, diving and crying in mass cacophony. Sheathbills, Kelp Gulls and shags fight for space on the cliffs. Elephant Seals wallow and growl on the shore. Leopard Seals cruise between ice floes. Humpback and minke whales breach and skim the surface. They are not shy. They do not hide. Whales will often come right up to our Zodiac boats. We also land right onto the pebble beaches and igneous shores to observe the incredible wildlife.

**FOR RESERVATIONS AND INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL THALASSA JOURNEYS TOLL-FREE 866-633-3611  
OR DOWNLOAD A PDF AT [SKEPTIC.COM/ANTARCTICA2021](http://SKEPTIC.COM/ANTARCTICA2021)**

# THE NEW EXPEDITION CRUISE SHIP MINERVA



*Oceanview Stateroom*



*Balcony Suite*



*Observation Lounge*



*Sauna*



*Club*



*Café/Bar with swimming pool*

Currently under construction in Finland, and scheduled to be delivered in October 2021, Swan Hellenic's *Minerva* is a new-generation expedition cruise ship. Although at 10,500 tons the ship is large enough to accommodate more than 250 passengers, *Minerva* will accommodate a maximum of 152 guests in 76 spacious staterooms and balcony suites. The low guest density results in one of the most generous indoor and outdoor space-to-guest ratios among cruise ships.

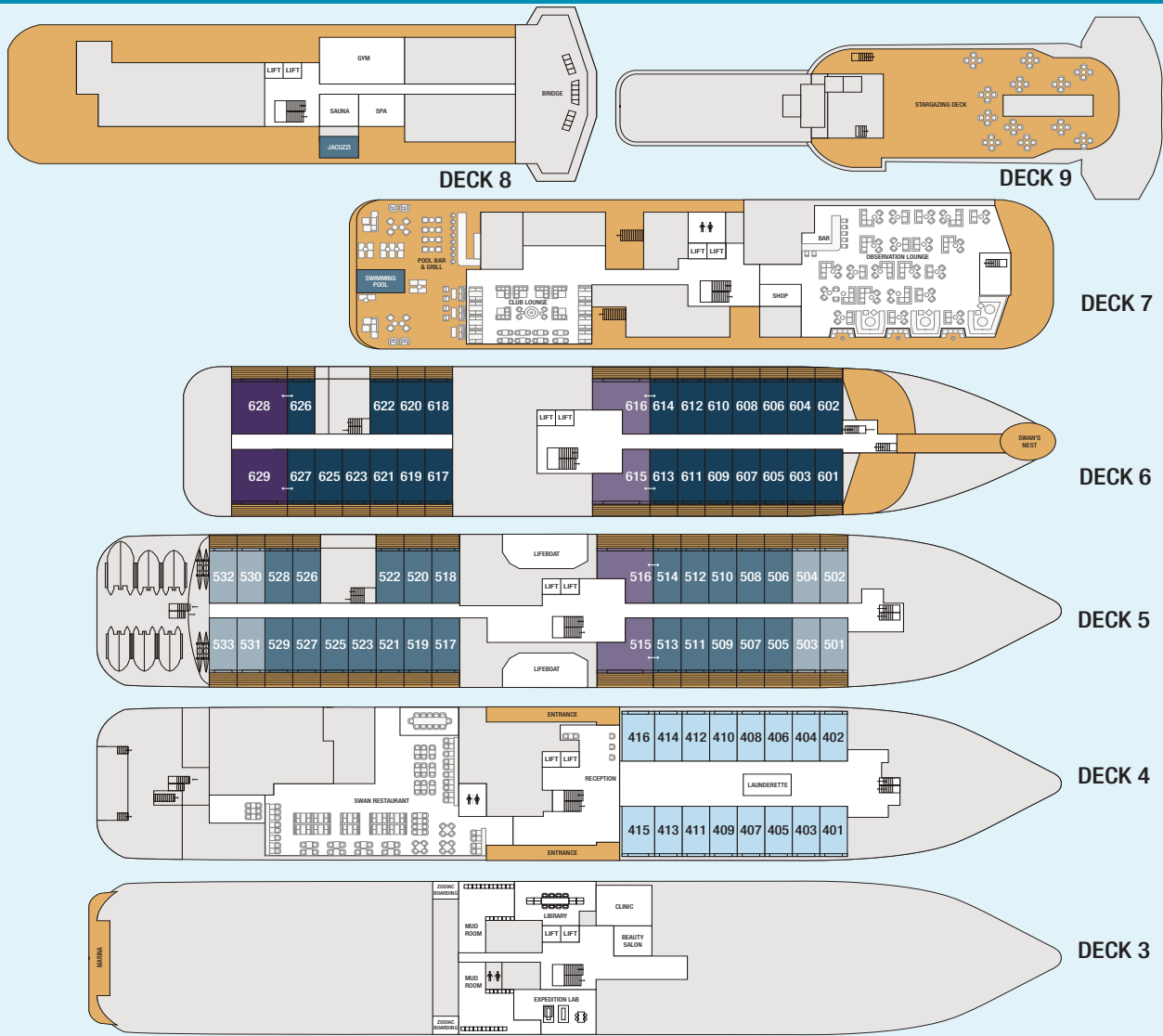
*Minerva* has been designed to meet the stringent requirements of the new Polar Code for ships navigating in Polar regions. Its high PC5 Category A ice-strengthened hull, and other technical and mechanical features allow the ship to cruise the

world's remote regions in safety and utmost comfort. Technologically advanced hybrid engines and a system of powerful batteries make it possible for the ship to cruise in ecologically sensitive areas, leaving minimal footprint, while a computer-controlled Dynamic Positioning System allows the ship to maintain position without anchoring. Operated by a complement of 120 experienced European officers and international crew members, *Minerva* will carry a fleet of Zodiacs, versatile landing boats, kayaks, and a Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) that will reveal marine life in the deep. Powerful stabilizers provide a smooth ride.

All staterooms and suites face outside and are equipped with private facilities, climate control, TV,

Wi-Fi and USB connections as well as other amenities. Of the ship's 76 staterooms, 60 have balconies. Public areas include a spacious observation lounge that is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities for lectures and presentations; a club lounge; a restaurant that accommodates all guests at one seating; an outdoor café/bar that surrounds the heated swimming pool; a wellness area with gym, spa and sauna that includes an adjoining outdoor jacuzzi; library; beauty salon; a "mud room" with lockers for storing expedition gear; and an infirmary that is attended by a full-time doctor. The ship also features expansive open-deck areas. Two elevators connect all decks. Attentive service is provided on a 24-hour basis.

# DECK PLAN



## RATES

All accommodations aboard *Minerva* are spacious staterooms and balcony suites. They are elegantly decorated, face outside, affording sea views, and include a queen-size bed that can be arranged as two twin beds, a luxurious spacious bathroom, mini-refrigerator, safe, ample closet space, climate control, telephone, TV, Wi-Fi and USB connections as well as other amenities.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	PER PERSON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY*
E	Oceanview staterooms with two large oval portholes. Deck 4. 206 sq. ft. Staterooms 401 - 416.	\$ 10,490
D	Suites with balcony & living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 5. Suites 501 - 504, 530 - 533.	\$ 11,290
C	Suites with balcony & living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 5. Suites 505 - 514, 517 - 529.	\$ 11,890
B	Suites with balcony and living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 6. Suites 601 - 614, 617 - 627.	\$ 12,390
A	Suites with large balcony, separate bedroom & living room. 440 sq. ft. Suites 515, 516, 615 & 616.	\$ 13,590

### EARLY BOOKING BONUS

**Book By June 11<sup>th</sup> and pay only \$399 per person for the round-trip airfare to Buenos Aires!**

**The airfare is applicable from major US gateways.**

### SAVINGS FOR SOLO TRAVELERS

**A limited number of cabins are available for single occupancy at no additional charge. Additional cabins are available at a supplement of 40% of the per person double occupancy rate, instead of the normal 70% supplement.**

## RATES ARE AII-INCLUSIVE

The rates are all-inclusive. There are no hidden costs and no additional charges such as embarkation and port charges. Other than the international airfare and expenses of a personal nature, all else is included. Specifically, the rates include the following:

- One night at the *Hotel Hilton Buenos Aires* (or similar).
- Cocktail reception at the hotel.
- Round trip group flight from Buenos Aires to Ushuaia.
- Cruise aboard the *Minerva*, as described in the itinerary.
- Airport/hotel/pier transfers and handling of luggage.
- Complete program of shore landings and activities in Antarctica organized by the expedition leaders and naturalists.
- All meals aboard the ship, with a selection of wines, beer and soft drinks during lunch and dinner.
- Welcome and farewell cocktail receptions aboard the ship hosted by the captain.
- Open bar with select alcoholic beverages.
- Coffee, including espresso and cappuccino, tea and soft drinks throughout the day and night.
- 24-hour room service.
- Gratuities to the ship's crew, porters and drivers.
- Basis Wi-Fi aboard the ship.
- The services of an experienced trip director.
- All local taxes and service charges, including port and embarkation taxes.
- Lectures by the guest lecturer, expedition leaders and naturalists.
- Expedition parka yours to keep.
- Use of rubber boots for shore landings.
- Complete pre departure material.

**NOT INCLUDED:** International airfare; travel insurance; expenses of a personal nature; any items not mentioned in the itinerary or the above inclusions.

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### GENERAL INFORMATION

**PAYMENT SCHEDULE:** A deposit of \$1,500 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure. Payment can be made by personal check or charged to a credit card.

**CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS:** All cancellations are subject to a \$300 per person administrative fee. Cancellations received 61-90 days prior to departure will be assessed a penalty equal to 50% of the total program cost per person. Cancellations received within 60 days of departure are subject to 100% cancellation penalties. Requests for cancellations must be made in writing. No refunds will be made for any part of this program in which you choose not to participate.

**INSURANCE:** We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance, which is available for coverage of expenses in conjunction with cancellation due to illness or accident. Baggage insurance is also recommended. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement.

**ITINERARY:** The itinerary, accommodations and arrangements are subject to change at the discretion of Thalassa Journeys.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Please read carefully the following terms and conditions, which constitute the sole, legally enforceable agreements between the traveler and Thalassa Journeys. Thalassa Journeys acts solely as agents for the traveler with respect to all transportation, hotel and other tour arrangements. In that capacity, we exercise all reasonable care possible to ensure the traveler's safety and satisfaction, but, we neither assume nor bear any responsibility or liability for any injury, death, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity arising in connection with the services of any ship, airplane, train, automobile, motor coach, carriage or other conveyance, or the actions of any third-party, involved in carrying the traveler or in affecting these tours. We are not responsible for damages, additional expenses, or any other losses due to cancellation, delay or other changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, civil disturbances, acts or threats of terrorism, travel warnings or bans, termination or suspension of war risks or other carrier insurance, quarantine, acts of God or other causes beyond our control. All such losses must be borne by the traveler, and tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. In the event of cancellation, delay or rescheduling mandated by any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall have the option of accepting in lieu of the original tour such rescheduled tour or other substituted tour(s) as may be offered by us, or else, receiving a refund of as much of such advance tour expenditures as we are able to recover on the traveler's behalf from carriers, third-party tour vendors, etc., but, we shall not have any obligation or liability to the traveler beyond the foregoing. We reserve the right to make alterations to the tour's itinerary and to substitute hotels, transportation methods, or lecturers if this is required. We reserve the right to cancel, delay, or reschedule any tour prior to departure, and, so long as this is not due to any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall be entitled to a full refund of all monies paid to that point if he/she so desires. No refund shall be made for any unused portion of any tour. By forwarding their deposit(s), the traveler certifies that he/she and/or their dependents, minors or others covered thereby do not have any mental, physical or other condition of disability that could create a hazard for them or other travelers. We reserve the right to decline to accept or to decline to retain any person as a member of any tour should such person's health, condition or actions adversely affect or threaten the welfare or safety of other travelers or impede the tour. Baggage or valuables brought on the tour shall be transported, handled or stored at the traveler's risk entirely, and, we shall bear no liability or responsibility for any damage or other loss thereto. Resolution of any disputes arising hereunder shall be affected exclusively in the state or federal courts presiding in Florida, pursuant to applicable Florida law.

**RATES:** Tour costs are based upon current airfares, tariffs, and currency values. While we do everything possible to maintain the listed prices, they are subject to change.

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