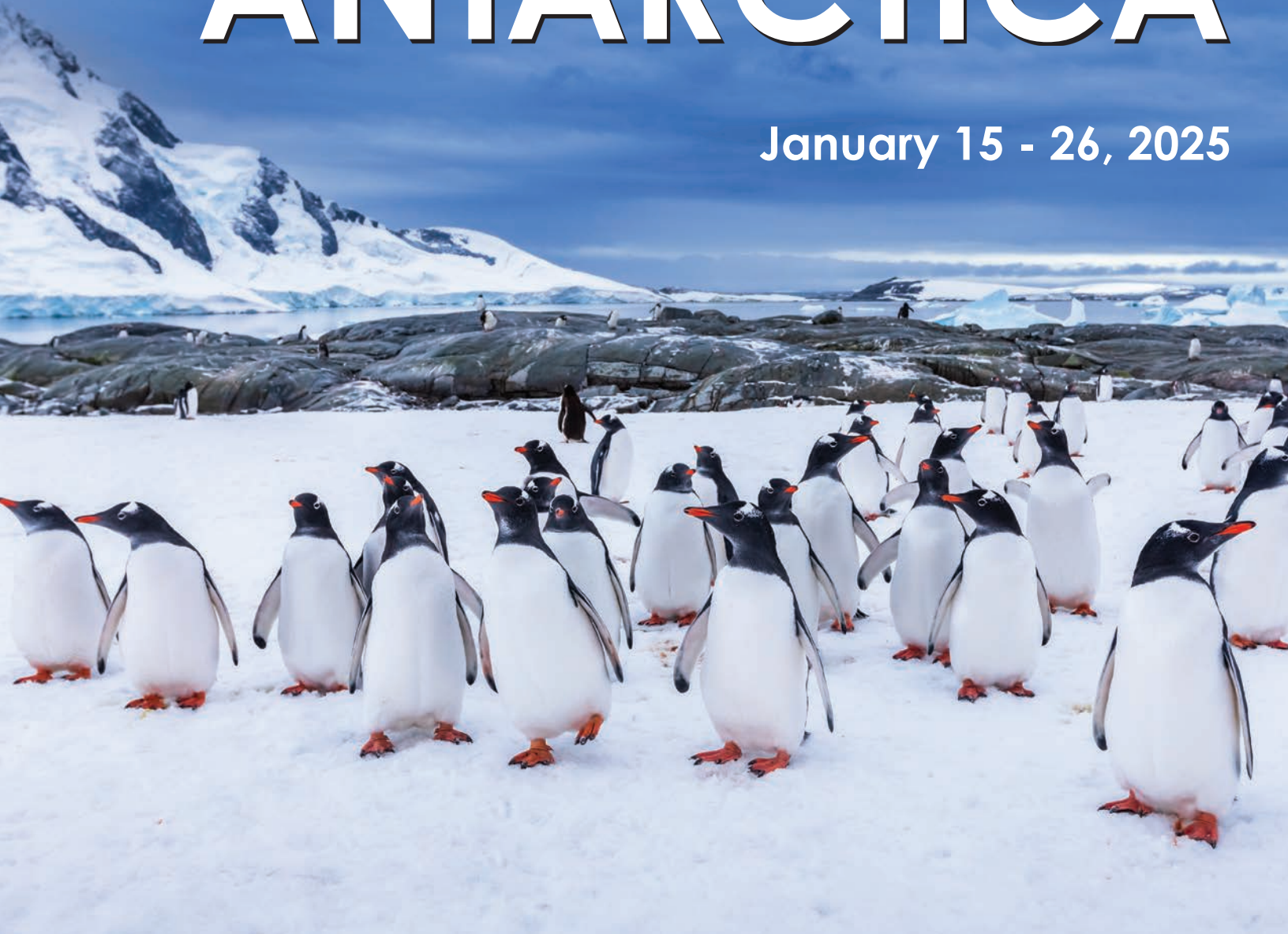


SKEPTIC

With distinguished Guest
Lecturer, **RICHARD DAWKINS**

EXPEDITION TO ANTARCTICA

January 15 - 26, 2025



Aboard the New Expedition Cruise Ship VEGA

SKEPTIC

DISTINGUISHED GUEST LECTURER

RICHARD DAWKINS



Dear Friends,

Visiting Antarctica is almost like stepping back in time, to an era when the world was new. There are no human sounds, only the wild cries of birds, seals, and whales echoing across a vast expanse of land and sea.

During the long days of the austral summer you will explore the Antarctic Peninsula and the islands that line its coast. You will have endless opportunities to observe seals, whales and seabirds in their natural habitat, to witness hillsides and shorelines teeming with penguins, and to cruise through the blue Antarctic waters while admiring the dramatic play of light on icebergs, glaciers, and towering mountains.

During this voyage, you will be joined by scientist **Richard Dawkins** and our onboard expedition team of naturalists who will bring their experience and expertise to bear in a series of lectures and discussions.

Your vessel for this journey will be a state-of-the-art expedition ship, Swan Hellenic's *Vega*, designed specifically for polar exploration. The ship's limited guest capacity, advanced technical and mechanical systems, and experienced officers and crew, make it the vessel of choice for exploring Antarctica in safety and comfort.

We hope you will join Richard Dawkins and the Skeptics Society on this once-in-a-lifetime travel adventure.

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.



Cover photo: Gentoo Penguins in Antarctica

Richard Dawkins is one of the world's most respected scientists, writers and thinkers. His books on science have significantly impacted his own field of evolutionary biology, and his critiques of religion, culminating in his best-selling book *The God Delusion*, have made him a leading advocate for secularism and evidence-based thinking. From 1995 to 2008 Richard Dawkins was the Charles Simonyi Professor of the Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University. He is an internationally best-selling author. Among his books are *The Ancestor's Tale*, *The Selfish Gene*, *The Blind Watchmaker*, *Climbing Mount Improbable*, *Unweaving the Rainbow*, *A Devil's Chaplain*, *The God Delusion*, *The Greatest Show on Earth*, *The Magic of Reality*, *An Appetite for Wonder*, *Outgrowing God*, and *Flights of Fancy*. Dawkins is a Fellow of the Royal Society and of the Royal Society of Literature. He is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including the 1990 Michael Faraday Award of the Royal Society, the 1994 Nakayama Prize, the 1997 International Cosmos Prize for Achievement in Human Science, the Kistler Prize in 2001, the Shakespeare Prize in 2005, the 2006 Lewis Thomas Prize for Writing about Science, and he was named Author of the Year at the 2007 Galaxy British book Awards. His around-the-world speaking tour is the focus of a 2013 documentary *The Unbelievers* which also features appearances by Woody Allen, Stephen Colbert, Cameron Diaz, Ian McEwan, Ricky Gervais, Stephen Hawking, Eddie Izzard, Bill Pullman, and Sarah Silverman. Dawkins was named the top "World Thinker" by a 2013 Prospect Magazine poll of 10,000 readers from over 100 countries. He coined the term "meme" in his book *The Selfish Gene*, a term that has gained significant prominence in the online world. In 2006 he founded the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason & Science (www.richarddawkins.net) to promote a more scientifically literate and secular world. His American foundation merged with the Center for Inquiry in 2016 with the mission to foster a secular society based on reason, science, freedom of inquiry and humanist values.

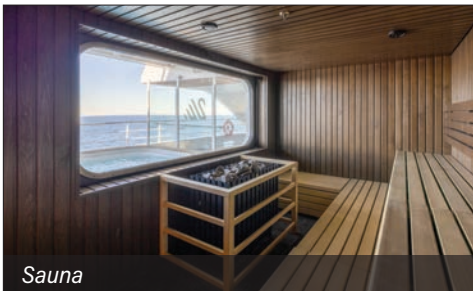
THE **NEW** 152-GUEST EXPEDITION CRUISE SHIP **VEGA**



Oceanview Stateroom



Balcony Suite



Sauna



Observation Lounge



Outdoor Café/Bar with swimming pool

Built in Finland and launched in July 2022, Swan Hellenic's *Vega* is a new-generation expedition cruise ship. Although at 10,250 tons the ship is large enough to accommodate more than 250 passengers, *Vega* 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.

Featuring the latest advances in technology and engineering, *Vega* is among the world's first environmentally responsible ships. Equipped with hybrid engines and a unique water filtration system, *Vega* leaves a minimal footprint. For cruising in Polar regions, the ship meets the stringent requirements of the new Polar Code with its high PC5 Category A ice-strengthened hull and other advanced features. 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, *Vega* will

carry a fleet of Zodiacs, versatile landing boats, and kayaks. Powerful stabilizers provide a smooth ride.

Vega's interior spaces exude sophisticated elegance, with most rooms opening to panoramic views of the sea. All staterooms and suites face outside and are equipped with private facilities, climate control, TV, Wi-Fi and USB connections, and other amenities. Of the ship's 76 staterooms, 60 have balconies. Public areas include a spacious observation lounge 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 with an adjoining outdoor jacuzzi; library; beauty salon; and an infirmary that is attended by a full-time doctor and nurse. The ship also features expansive open-deck areas. Two elevators connect all decks. Attentive service is provided on a 24-hour basis. The outstanding cuisine is complemented by fine wines at lunch and dinner.

ITINERARY



Wednesday, January 15, 2025

DEPART THE UNITED STATES

Depart from home to Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Thursday, January 16

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina

Arrive in Buenos Aires and transfer to the *Sofitel Buenos Aires Recoleta*. In the evening, meet fellow travelers and Richard Dawkins for a welcome dinner. (D)

Friday, January 17

BUENOS AIRES/USHUAIA/EMBARKATION

Following our charter flight to Ushuaia, embark *Vega* in the afternoon



Gentoo penguins



Adelie penguins, Antarctica

and sail through the magnificent scenery of the Beagle Channel. (B, D)

Saturday, January 18

AT SEA

Attend lectures and briefings on what lies ahead with Richard Dawkins and enjoy the ship's facilities as *Vega* navigates the Drake Passage to Antarctica. Keep a lookout for the Albatrosses, Cape petrels, and whales that may accompany the ship as we make our way to the White Continent. (B, L, D)

Sunday, January 19 – Thursday, January 23

EXPLORING ANTARCTICA: ANTARCTIC PENINSULA AND SOUTH SHETLAND ISLANDS

During these days, we will explore the pristine wilderness of the



Vega in Antarctica



Get close to the scenery and wildlife with the ship's fleet of Zodiacs.

Antarctic Peninsula and its surrounding islands. The Peninsula is a narrow finger of land that separates the Bellingshausen and Weddell Seas. As *Vega* cruises through scenic waterways, witness breathtaking panoramas of blue glaciers and jagged, snow-capped mountains. Aboard the ship's Zodiacs, we cruise among ice floes and explore penguin rookeries. The exact nature of our daily activities will depend on ice and wind conditions, but we expect to make landings at such places as Paradise Harbor, where humpback and minke whales are often sighted offshore; Petermann Island, the habitat of Gentoo and Adélie penguins; and Deception Island, known for its volcanically-heated hot springs and for the remains of abandoned whaling huts and extraordinary wildlife, including the largest colony of Chinstrap penguins on the Antarctic Peninsula. Navigating through the magnificent Lemaire, Neumayer and other protected channels

is also planned. Also attend lectures and discussions with Richard Dawkins and attend briefings with the ship's expedition staff. (B, L, D)

Friday, January 24 - Saturday, January 25

AT SEA

As *Vega* makes her way back across the Drake Passage toward Ushuaia, treat yourself to the amenities aboard and attend final lectures with Richard Dawkins. (B, L, D)

Sunday, January 26

USHUAIA/USA

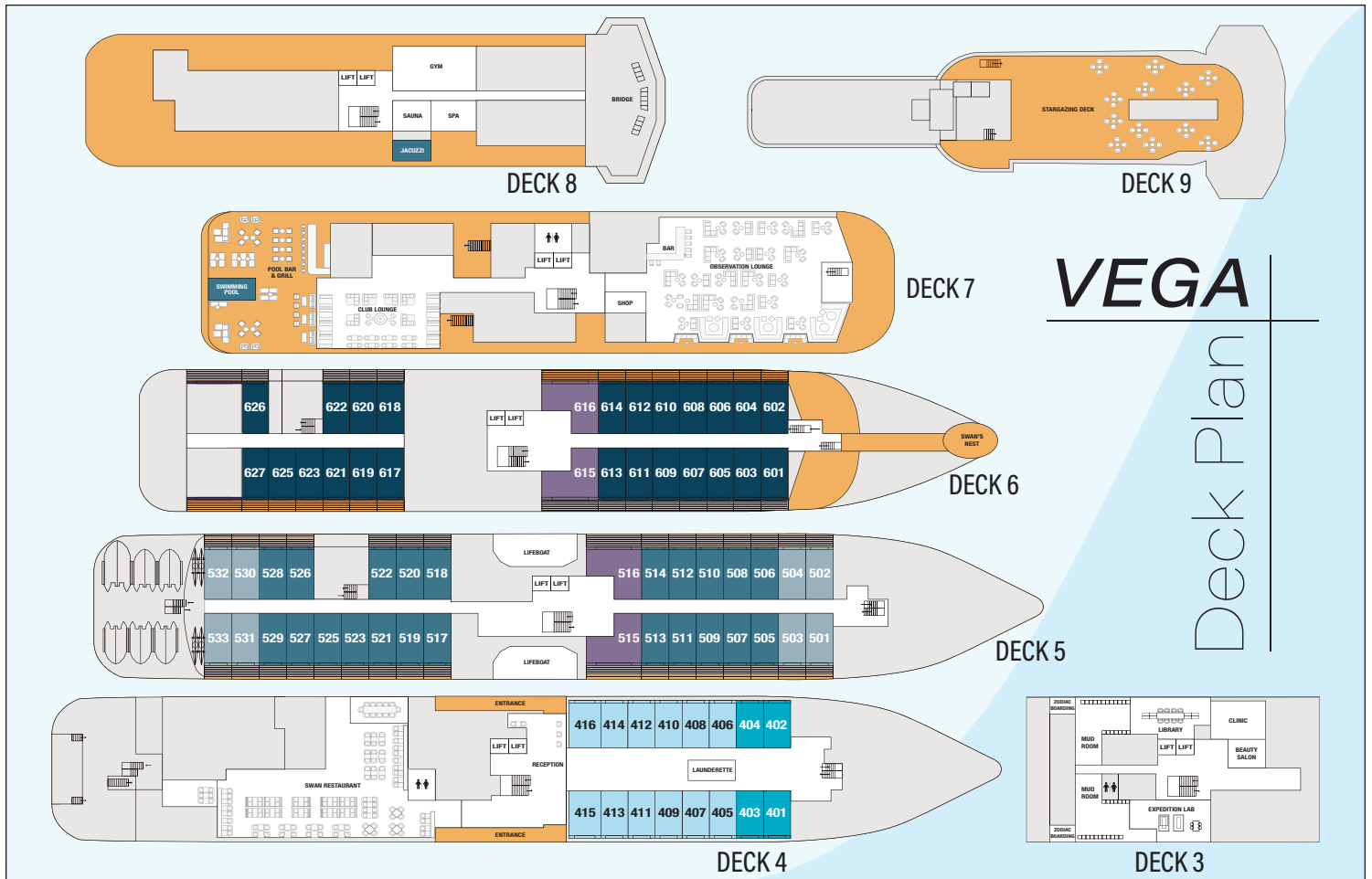
After breakfast aboard ship, transfer to the airport in Ushuaia for our charter flight to Buenos Aires, where we connect to flights homeward. (B)



Humpback whale



Lemaire Channel



VEGA

Deck Plan

All accommodations aboard Vega 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 spacious bathroom, mini-refrigerator, safe, ample closet space, climate control, telephone, TV, Wi-Fi, and USB connections, as well as other amenities.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	RATES PER PERSON / DOUBLE OCCUPANCY
E	Oceanview staterooms with two large oval windows. 206 sq. ft. Deck 4. Staterooms 401–404.	\$11,990
D	Oceanview staterooms with two large oval windows. 206 sq. ft. Deck 4. Staterooms 405–416.	\$12,490
C	Suites with balcony & living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 5. Suites 501–504, 530–533.	\$13,990
B	Suites with balcony & living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 5. Suites 505–514, 517–529.	\$14,590
A	Suites with balcony and living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 6. Suites 601–614, 617–627.	\$15,590
AA	Suites with large balcony, separate bedroom & living room. 440 sq. ft. Decks 5 & 6. Suites 515, 516, 615 & 616.	\$18,790

FOR SOLO TRAVELER | A limited number of cabins are available for single occupants in Category D at 120% of the per-person, double occupancy rate, and in Categories C, B, and A at 150% of the per-person, double occupancy rate.

LOYALTY REWARD PROGRAM

Travel on this cruise program and enjoy savings of **\$400 to \$900** per person on your next voyage with **THE SKEPTICS SOCIETY and THALASSA JOURNEYS** aboard a Swan Hellenic ship. Savings are determined by the stateroom category booked and is applicable when you reserve your trip within 30 days of the completion date of **EXPEDITION TO ANTARCTICA**

This saving cannot be combined with other offers and is subject to change.

PROGRAM INCLUSIONS

The rates are all-inclusive. There are no hidden costs and no additional charges such as shore excursions and 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 *Sofitel Buenos Aires Recoleta* in Buenos Aires.
- Welcome dinner at the hotel.
- Round trip group flight between Buenos Aires and Ushuaia.
- Cruise aboard the *Vega*, as described in the itinerary.
- Private lectures by Richard Dawkins.
- Lectures and briefings by expert shipboard expedition leaders and naturalists.
- Airport/hotel/pier transfers and handling of luggage on arrival and departure dates.
- Complete program of shore landings and activities 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.
- Basic Wi-Fi aboard the ship.
- The services of an experienced Thalassa Journeys trip director.
- All local taxes and service charges, including port and embarkation taxes.
- Use of rubber boots for shore landings.
- Complementary expedition parka for you to use and keep.
- 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.



Antarctic icescape



Crabeater seals, Antarctic Peninsula



Admiring the Antarctic scenery

GENERAL INFORMATION

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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 71-90 days prior to departure will be assessed a penalty equal to 50% of the total program cost per person. Cancellations received within 70 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 our 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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SKEPTIC

EXPEDITION TO ANTARCTICA

With **Richard Dawkins**



Vega in Weddell Sea

FOR RESERVATIONS AND INFORMATION

PLEASE CALL

THALASSA JOURNEYS AT

866-633-3611

or email

reservations@thalassajourneys.com