

Russia's Far East & Wrangel Island

This extraordinary expedition takes us into the heart of a very remote and little-explored part of the world - right on the edge of the Arctic pack ice.

We sail through the famous Bering Strait, the narrow waterway separating Russia from the United States; look for great whales in some of the richest feeding grounds in the world; hope to see polar bears, Arctic fox and a variety of other Arctic wildlife; visit bustling seabird colonies on remote and rugged islands; explore ancient cultural sites and some of the most northerly communities anywhere; and cross both the International Date Line and the Arctic Circle.



On Deck © Henry Miltenburg

July 7 – Anchorage, Alaska, USA

We arrive in Anchorage and transfer independently to the Millennium Hotel (or a similar centrally located hotel) for an overnight stay. Often referred to as 'only 20 minutes from Alaska', Anchorage is a modern, bustling city just a short hop away from a wilderness of glaciers, mountains and forests.

July 8-9 – Anchorage to Anadyr, Russia

In the morning, we board our flight from Anchorage and head west to Anadyr – crossing the International Date Line en route and therefore losing one day. We transfer by helicopter to the Kapitan Khlebnikov and sail on the evening of July 09.



Ittygram Island © Gerald Czibit

July 10-11 – Chukotka Peninsula

This morning our lecture series begins with presentations on the unique wildlife, geology, glaciology and history of the Far North. We also keep a lookout for seabirds and whales along the way.

Our adventure begins by exploring the remote and beautiful Chukotka Peninsula. This is a naturalist's paradise. High latitude plants such as Arctic poppies and saxifrage will be in flower and we explore the coastal sites and islands packed with nesting Least Auklets, Crested Auklets, Tufted Puffins, Horned Puffins, guillemots and many other seabirds.

We also visit ancient cultural sites – stone rings and ceremonial grounds can be found all along this coast – and learn about some of the early human inhabitants of Russia's Far North. We also hope to explore Whalebone Alley, a sacred place on Ittygran Island once used for religious ceremonies associated with early whaling activities, and wander among the huge 500-year-old bones of bowhead whales.

July 12 – Bering Strait & Cape Dezhnev

Today we sail through the famous Bering Strait, a surprisingly narrow waterway separating Russia from the United States. We all gather on deck as we pass the island of Big Diomedede, a last outpost of Russia located directly next to the International Date Line.

As well as its geographical and political significance, Bering Strait is rich in wildlife and huge numbers of whales and seabirds migrate through here each summer. This area is home to several interesting whales, including bowhead, gray and Minke whales.

Later in the day, we plan to call at Cape Dezhnev – the easternmost extension of the Eurasian continent where the remains of a now-abandoned Chukchi village and weather station stand atop the windswept cliffs. Then we continue north along the Siberian coastline and cross the Arctic Circle.

Expedition In Brief

Cruise Name

Russia's Far East & Wrangel Island



Expedition Dates

July 7 – 20, 2005

Expedition Start/Finish

Anchorage/Anchorage, Alaska, USA

Expedition Highlights

Anadyr, Chukotka Peninsula, Ittygran Island, Bering Strait, Cape Dezhnev, Kolyuchin Island, Wrangel Island, Coast of Siberia

Expedition Rates

Triple cabin	\$8,050	decks 5/8
Twin cabin	\$9,850	decks 5/6/7/8
Twin cabin - Single Occupancy	\$15,695	decks 5/6/7/8
Suite	\$11,850	decks 6/7
Corner suite	\$12,550	decks 6/7

All rates are per person in US dollars based on twin occupancy (except rate for single occupancy). Please ask about our request share program. Triple cabins are identical to twins but with a third pull down berth.

See page 17 for color coded deck plan.

July 13-14 – Kolyuchin Island

As we push our way higher into the Arctic, we begin to encounter the formidable, multi-year pack ice of the Arctic Ocean. Our exact itinerary over these two days will depend on local ice and weather conditions but, when we can tear ourselves away from watching our impressive icebreaker at work, we plan to land at wildlife sanctuaries such as Kolyuchin Island. This is the site of a now-abandoned meteorological station which stands alone in the middle of thousands of nesting cormorants, murres, puffins and other seabirds.



Arctic Poppies © Karl Hebert

July 15-16 – Wrangel Island

In past years, the powerful Kapitan Khlebnikov has had to battle through incredibly thick ice in Long Strait to reach our next goal - Wrangel Island. Our approach should be impressive and, if we are fortunate with the weather, we will all be on deck to watch.

A protected reserve since 1974, Wrangel Island is well known throughout the world for its fabulous wildlife. It is home to the Arctic's largest winter population of denning polar bears and in the summer has a greater concentration of walrus than anywhere else in the world. Musk ox and reindeer both thrive on the island and there are huge numbers of tundra geese. This is also where a record-breaking tooth was found, in 1992, belonging to a mammoth that walked the Wrangel tundra just 3,600 years ago – one of the last known surviving mammoths on the planet.

After exploring the alpine valleys and snow-covered tundra of this rugged and remote island, we visit the Russian science base and only village on the southern coast, Ushakovskoye.

Please note: all excursions on Wrangel Island are dependent on permissions from the local authorities and weather conditions (which can be challenging).

July 17-19 – Coast of Siberia

As we begin to head south, we leave the ice behind us and explore some of the little villages and wilderness areas of Siberia. This is the land of the Chukchi people - one of the last groups to be subdued in the Russian conquest of Siberia - and we hope to visit at least two of their remote communities where they still herd reindeer and hunt. We may also call at Uelen, with its small museum devoted to carving and other traditional crafts and activities.

July 20 – Anadyr

This morning we return to Anadyr, the capital of the Chukotka Province. We transfer by helicopter to the airport and board a flight over the Bering Sea back to Anchorage.

July 19-20 – Anchorage, Alaska, USA

Having crossed the International Date Line again, we gain a day and effectively arrive in Alaska the day before leaving Russia. We transfer to the Millennium Hotel (or a similar centrally-located hotel) for an overnight stay before traveling home independently on July 20.

Note: please read this itinerary as a guide only. Our exact program will depend on local permissions and will vary to take best advantage of local weather and ice conditions and opportunities to experience wildlife. This is an expedition into a very little traveled area and flexibility is the key to the success.

