

## CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT

You will need comfortable and practical clothing, always casual. There are no formal dinners, although you may wish to bring a nice sweater for the “Welcome” and “Farewell” dinners, but even this is not necessary. Dresses for ladies are decidedly out of place! **Some clothing and equipment is essential, and you will not be able to participate in Zodiac landings if you do not have it.** Careful preparation for your voyage will greatly enhance your enjoyment! Please read this list thoroughly.

- **Parka-** is **REQUIRED, waterproof**, and not red! Natural colors blend well with the environment—black, brown, blue, green. A **hooded** parka is best.

- **Waterproof rainpants are REQUIRED** for protection against precipitation, ocean spray during Zodiac landings and cruising. Your rainpants should fit over your boots, not inside of your boots. Wear your rainpants on every single Zodiac trip. Some folks like to wear them while on deck for added warmth and wind protection. Some folks find that Gore-Tex is very good as it “breathes.”

- **Waterproof boots are MANDATORY for all landings** which will be wet, stepping straight out of the Zodiac into the Antarctic water. Pull-on type boots that are knee-high, with strong, rubber-ridged, nonskid soles that fit comfortably are recommended. Avoid imitation “rubber boots” made from PVC. These are unyielding and more prone to slipping. Ideal boots are “Wellies” or “Muck Boots.” Sailing boots sold at marine stores have good non-skid soles that are good for slick decks and wet rocks, but they lack traction on snow, mud, or ice. In places, you may hike some distance in your boots, if you are a hiker. So, they need to be comfortable. Once you acquire your boots, fill a bucket with water at home, and step into it! Waterproof lightweight boot coverings that can be worn over hiking boots or shoes, such as NEOS Performance Overshoes, are preferred by some. However, I have known of brand new NEOS coming out of the box and leaking! Step into that bucket.

**Your boots are probably the most important item you need to bring, so if you have questions or just need some further advise please do not hesitate to contact Debra.**

What do I use? I have a \$350 pair of leather-lined Le Chameau’s that zip up the side. One disadvantage is that they are very heavy, but I have very hefty calf muscles (from 30+ years at sea), and they are the only boots that work for me. They are entirely waterproof, and even when water comes completely over my knees, it cannot get inside of my boots because the fit is so tight. Don uses a pair of cheap boots, \$20, with heavy duty socks. Others that I know have had great luck with Muck boots that come up to the knee. Your rainpants go **outside** of your boots!

- **Other footwear:** I always bring a pair of **flipflops** wherever I travel. For shared baths they are great, and just knocking around the inside of the boat. *Do not wear them outside on slippery decks.* **Slip on shoes** are great for making a fast escape out on the deck when whales or exciting wildlife is encountered. Shoes with tread are good. Merrill is one brand.

## CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT

- **Regular pants**- I prefer the newer micro-fabrics which dry out quickly, such as Ex Officio brand, but anything is acceptable.
- **Hats & neck gaiters**- these are very helpful, especially when riding in the Zodiacs, where it tends to be cooler with the wind. Once on shore, I remove my neck gaiter, if I am too hot. (It really happens!). A knit hat for warmth and a baseball type hat with a visor for warmer, sunny days is great.
- **Gloves that are warm and waterproof are REQUIRED** for almost all circumstances. Windstopper gloves are good on shore, but waterproof gloves are best for riding in the Zodiacs. I typically bring at least four pairs of gloves, and always carry a spare pair in my backpack on landings. One pair is almost always drying out!
- **Warm socks such as SmartWool** brand are excellent. Bring several pairs, in case one is wet. I bring a knee high pair, which I wear along with a short ankle pair. The shorter pair gives added warmth, and cushion without taking more calf space.
- **Long underwear** is highly recommended! The newer polypropylene fabrics are very good, thin without adding bulk. If you get very cold, you might want fleece pants under your rainpants. Remember, layers.
- **Turtlenecks** are excellent for layering under fleece jackets.
- **Windstopper jacket or fleece type jackets** offer excellent insulation.
- **Other shirts** for wearing inside the ship, and other personal items.
- **Cotton handkerchief**- a large handkerchief to wipe down your glasses, and whatever cleaning fabrics you use for your camera and optics. Avoid the use of tissues which can quickly become litter on windy days.

Most of the items above can be purchased at outdoor stores that specialize in clothing such as Cabela's, L.L. Bean, Rocky Boots, etc.

**Laundry service** is provided on the ship. However, North Americans should bear in mind that charges are in Euros, and watch the exchange rate. It is easy to rack up a big laundry bill.

### EQUIPMENT:

- **Backpack or day pack**, at the least for landings and protecting your optics, and camera equipment. It should be as **waterproof** as possible. Thin nylon packs do not work well. Often, the bottom of the Zodiac has a small amount of water in it.
- **Ziploc bags** are indispensable. Cameras, even large ones, can be zipped into the largest ziploc bags, providing lots of protection from water. Always remember to zip up your backpack, lest your optics and cameras fall out during the movements of getting in and out of the Zodiacs. (I've seen it happen. Oh, so sad to have cameras in the salt water).

## CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT

- **Sunglasses** of good quality are very important. Glare from the snow and ice can be quite penetrating. If you wear prescription lenses, but sure to bring spares.
- **Sunscreen, lip balm, and lotions.**
- **Personal toiletries, including ear plugs.**
- **Cameras of any type.** You are going to be very close to the wildlife. Point and shoot cameras are fine. Bring plenty of film (if you are still using it), **memory cards, extra batteries, camera charger, etc.** **Memory sticks or travel drives** are very helpful in trading pics with others on board. Trust me, you will take far more photographs than you ever imaged! Something in the order of 5-7,000 images is not at all unusual. I've seen folks run out of memory cards, and I once found a 4g card on a beach in South Georgia that belonged to a passenger from a previous ship! Ouch! Zip up your bags!
- **Binoculars-** are necessary for on board birding and wildlife watching. If you are signed on to this voyage, remember that Debra Shearwater has secured a special deal for you. If you have lost information about this, please contact Debra. Bring the best pair of optics that you can afford. Mini binoculars are not very helpful while as sea, as their light gathering ability is very low. Although, everyone is different, I no longer take binoculars on landings, as the wildlife is so close that it is not necessary to carry them!
- **Hand-held "family radio"** if you would like to be informed of additional sightings that are not broadcast over the public address system. We will need to check about radios for those folks who are coming from Canada, Australia, and England to see if radios sold in those countries are compatible with those from the USA. Radios can be very helpful on the ship for communication.
- **Laptop computers-** many folks bring their laptops to download and view photographs while on the voyage, and to share images with others. This is strictly a personal decision. As with all electronics, you will want to pack this in your carry-on luggage. Be sure to bring power cords, and card readers, if needed.
- **Collapsible walking stick-** can be useful at times.
- **Field guides-** you may prefer your personal field guide, although all of the leaders will have field guides, and there is an excellent reference library on board in the bar. The single best field guide for this area is: *A Complete Guide to Antarctic Wildlife: The Birds and Marine Mammals of the Antarctic Continent and the Southern Ocean* by Hadoram Shirihai, second edition. This comprehensive book covers birds, marine mammals, as well as touching on history, and more. In addition to all of the species descriptions, illustrated with both photographs and drawings, I would draw your attention to the sections titled, "Synopsis of the region" (pp. 8-35) and "Regional descriptions" (pp. 415-436, and p. 526). If you are participating in the Chile pre-trip, Alvaro Jaramillo's, *Birds of Chile* is great, and also great for the voyage. Birding in the Ushuaia area is best covered by one of two books by Enrique Couve & Claudio Vidal, *Birds of the Beagle Channel and Cape Horn* which is compact and lightweight, or *Birds of Tierra del Fuego & Antarctic Peninsula, The Falkland Islands & South Georgia*

## **CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT**

which is bigger and heavy. Claudio will be leading the Chile pre-trip, along with Debra. You may want to purchase these books for study prior to the trip, and not bring all of them on board, remembering that baggage weight restrictions are tough these days. A complete reading list will be forthcoming, but these are the important books for study.