

THE WILDERNESS OF ANTARCTICA: THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME



When considering the Antarctic environment, one could say that this is the last place for tourists to visit. It doesn't belong to any state, the temperatures are extremely low, and the whole area is uninhabited except for several scientific research bases run by "official" environment protectors. However, since the end of the 1980s, tourists seeking a challenging adventure have been coming to Antarctica to experience its rough character. Nowadays, there are several tour operators that take their clients to the vast icy deserts and offer many thrilling activities.

So far, cruises have been the most common way to see Antarctica. Cruise-liners operate from Argentina, Australia, New Zealand, or Chile. Their capacity varies, but none exceed 100 passengers.

A typical trip lasts about ten days, and the most common destination is the remote Ross Sea and East Antarctica. There are lots of activities for tourists such as observing seal and bird colonies, and the spectacular glaciers. Short visits to the actual land are also possible; however the visitors have to respect several very strict rules protecting the environment.

The Canadian company Adventure Network International offers yet another travel package. It specializes in land-based Antarctic adventure travel. Professional and experienced guides will take their clients to the Vinson Massif, the highest mountain in Antarctica. The climb is very demanding, yet extremely exciting. This quest for the South Pole was designed for adventurers who have time to spare. It lasts sixty days and is very challenging. Another possibility is the shorter version where tourists are flown closer to the Pole and reach it on ski, their adventure lasting only ten days.

If skiing seems too dull or old-fashioned, sport-lovers have an opportunity to try kayaking or even scuba diving. Lately, companies have started offering special tourist packages that include hot-air balloon trips or even biking on adjusted bicycles - which is another great way of exploring the uninhabited wilderness of Antarctica.

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