



ECHO
SOUTH POLE & EMPERORS
2023 - 2024

WHITE DESERT & ANTARCTICA

Almost 2 decades ago, we dreamed of sharing this extraordinary continent, so rarely visited, with people other than scientists and explorers. We wanted to guide people on a personal journey to the last true wilderness and most remote place on Earth – Antarctica.

Each year we have the privilege of bringing just 250 guests from our home in Cape Town to the Seventh Continent. We want people to experience this breath-taking place in luxury and to hopefully go home changed in the most positive of ways.

With rare access to the interior of Antarctica and the support of our extraordinary guides, you will encounter a pristine glacial landscape of immeasurable splendour. Here icebergs tower like carved cathedrals, wildlife thrives in the harshest of conditions, glistening ice sheets stretch to the skyline and shards of rock pierce through pristine snowfields. The end of the world is unimaginably beautiful.

To see the Emperor penguins and their newly born chicks existing in this unforgiving environment is humbling; we bear witness to their fight for survival against seemingly insurmountable odds. Standing on the South Pole is a feat experienced by fewer than 500 people each year! Once here, there is no more East, West or South – only North...

The Continent has had a deep and lasting impact on all of us at White Desert and we look forward to sharing it with you.

Patrick Woodhead
Co-founder and CEO

“The mountains are the most impressive I have seen across Earth, Venus and Mars.”

~ Colonel Terry Virts



SUSTAINABILITY

White Desert believes that responsible tourism is a genuine force for good. We support Sir David Attenborough's stance on the transformative power of first-hand travel/knowledge: "No one will protect what they don't care about, and no one will care about what they have never experienced".

Mindful of the delicate Antarctic environment, our experiences are designed to leave no trace on the glacial landscape. Sustainable practices are implemented across every aspect of our operation. There are few places on earth that can provide such potential for personal growth and a change in perspective - simply through visiting. Our guests often leave Antarctica forever changed, returning home as ambassadors for our planet.



SAF - We are the first operator in Antarctica to use Sustainable Aviation Fuel in our fleet. White Desert aims to replace all fuel used in Antarctica to SAF over a 3-5 year period.



Carbon neutral - White Desert was the first aviation operator in Antarctica to be entirely Carbon Neutral, a status the company has held since 2007. Your entire trip with us is fully offset.



Waste management - we minimise waste by repackaging all consumables before bringing them to Antarctica. At season's end, all solid waste is shipped back to South Africa for recycling or responsible disposal.

SAMPLE ITINERARY

DAY BEFORE DEPARTURE

White Desert hosts a mandatory safety briefing in Cape Town.

Our Guest Experience team will personally check your kit & polar clothing to prepare for your flight south.



Our activities are entirely subject to weather conditions in Antarctica and this itinerary is only a guide to what guests may expect day by day. The exact sequence of excursions and the types of aircraft mentioned in this brochure may vary. Antarctica is a bucket list trip for a reason - Mother Nature reigns supreme here, that's what makes it a true adventure.

DAY 1

We fly over miles of icebergs on our 5-hour flight from Cape Town to Antarctica. During the flight, we enter the Polar Circle and encounter the continuous daylight of the Antarctic summer.

After landing on our blue ice runway, you will transfer to Echo where cocktails made with 10,000-year-old ice await.

DAY 2

Do as much or as little as you like each day. Activities range from massages, yoga and gentle hikes to exploring incredible mountains and glaciers, summiting a nunatak, ice climbing and even abseiling!

On quieter days, you'll hear talks from our polar explorer team members about some of the lesser-known history of Antarctica and their world record-breaking expeditions.

DAY 3

Today, you could visit the Emperor penguin colony at Atka Bay.

We fly 2.5 hours across Antarctica, enjoying beautiful views of the nearby mountain ranges and coastline, before landing at the colony. You will be among the very few who have ever witnessed this incredibly resilient species in their natural habitat.

DAY 4

We can spend the day exploring the nearby mountains and enjoy a gentle hike overlooking the endless ice sheet, followed by a champagne picnic.

Then you'll head off with your guide, winding your way through the snow and ice to an incredible vantage point with panoramic views over the mountains that you have just explored.

DAY 5

The South Pole trip is a highlight! We leave early in the morning in our Basler BT-67 aircraft, flying over stunning mountain ranges before landing at Dixie's camp to refuel.

After stretching your legs on the High Polar Plateau we continue to the South Pole, where you will have plenty of time for photos and a chance to stamp your passport before flying back to Dixie's Camp and overnighting just like the original explorers.

DAY 6

After a night under canvas, you'll enjoy breakfast before boarding the plane once again for the flight back to Echo.

The flight is the perfect chance to appreciate the immense scale of Antarctica, before you return to camp for a three-course champagne dinner to celebrate your achievements.

DAY 7

An adventurous hike along a winding cliff face affords guests stunning views over the last pristine wilderness on Earth.

Our specialist UIAGM mountain guides will lead you on this challenging hike, ensuring your safety at all times.

DAY 8

The flight out of Antarctica will be the last of your enduring memories of the great White Continent before you dive back into the vibrant energy of Africa. You will be transferred to your hotel where you will have a chance to relax and reflect on your Antarctic adventure!

TRAVEL

CPT
South Africa

WFR
Antarctica

The journey to the Continent is aboard one of our aircraft; a 'heavy' such as an Airbus A340 or private jet. You are joining a select group of like-minded explorers journeying across the mighty Southern Ocean.

During the **five-hour flight**, we cross the Polar Circle and soar over thousands of icebergs and pass into 24 hours of continuous sunshine. Destination: Wolf's Fang Runway.



FLIGHTS

CPT Cape Town	5 hrs	WFR Wolf's Fang Runway
WFR Wolf's Fang Runway	2.5 hrs	ATK Atka Bay, Emperor penguin colony
WFR Wolf's Fang Runway	5 hrs	GSP Geographic South Pole
	2 hrs	
	Dixie's camp	





WOLF’S FANG RUNWAY

Wolf’s Fang is one of the only privately managed blue ice runways in the world. The three-kilometre stretch stands in the shadow of one of the continent’s most iconic mountains - named Ulvetanna or ‘Wolf’s Fang’ by the early Norwegian explorers. It stands like a primeval sentinel surrounded by staggering spires of rock that pierce the icebound landscape.

On arrival, that first glacial breath charges through your body with lightning speed. Underfoot the ice crackles – sound heightened by the overwhelming sense of stillness. In every direction the timeless landscape envelops you and the magnitude of where you are becomes a visceral reality.



Wolf’s Fang Runway

Echo Base



ECHO

Inspired by astronauts. Used by explorers.



[CLICK TO DISCOVER ECHO](#)



Echo feels like stepping off planet Earth and entering a galaxy far, far away...



Sky pod facts:

- Each bedroom has an ensuite wash area and toilet
- Crafted from composite materials to withstand the harsh environment
- All individually heated
- Two private guest shower rooms



Surrounded by some of the planet's most spectacular scenery, Echo's distinctive 'Sky Pods' look more suited to a colony on Mars.

Inspired by astronauts and used by explorers, each of the six heated sleeping pods feature floor to ceiling windows and have been designed for two guests. There is no more dramatic landscape to wake up to; each room overlooking the lunar-like vistas beyond.





The 'Cosmos', our central lounge area, comprises the reception, lounge, library and dining rooms as well as your shower rooms. These form the ideal space to enjoy sumptuous meals and cocktails losing yourself within the infinite space of an Anthony James art installation. Here, our experienced team of chefs, hosts and guides will take care of every detail for you, allowing you to focus on enjoying your adventure with us.



*"My childhood dream was
to be an astronaut,
Echo has made that happen."*

~ Ian Pringle, South Africa



FINE DINING



Despite the remoteness of the destination, guests will enjoy artfully crafted cuisine throughout their stay at Echo. Meals are prepared to the highest culinary standards and use the freshest ingredients from locally sourced South African vendors.



Award-winning wines are procured from the Cape Vineyards, the ideal complement to elegant 3 course dinners. Our chef will ensure the menu is crafted to each guests' dietary requirements where necessary.

TRAVEL WITHIN ANTARCTICA

Our Basler BT-67s are upgraded conversions of the DC-3, specially equipped with the latest avionics for Antarctic operations and specially designed skis for landing on snow and ice.



“Flights by a ski-plane to a massive Emperor penguin colony and the Geographic South Pole make for lifetime memories.”

~ Robb Report

EMPEROR PENGUIN COLONY





CLICK TO SEE EMPEROR PENGUIN VIDEO



NOVEMBER

Thousands of fluffy chicks begin to step off parents' feet

DECEMBER

As they grow chicks begin to lose their down feathers

JANUARY

Late in the month the colony begins to return to the sea



Your visit to the penguins begins with a 2.5-hour flight to Atka Bay. At the colony's height in November/December, you'll see over 14,000 breeding pairs and their newly hatched chicks - a spectacle full of noise and energy that is a favourite with wildlife watchers and photographers.

There are so few visitors to this colony that the chicks are unafraid of humans and often waddle close by. Mindful of our responsibility to the wildlife and of IAATO guidelines, we keep at least 5m (16.4ft) from the Penguins. Looking in every direction, all you'll see is a vast icy expanse contrasting the penguins' shimmering feathers.



THE SOUTH POLE



At the heart of the Great White Continent lies the South Pole, one of only two stationary points on this rotating Earth!

At exactly 90 degrees of latitude, you can walk around the world in only a few paces and marvel that there is no more East, West or South...the only direction is North!

Reaching the South Pole rates as one of the greatest feats of human exploration. Still today, fewer than 500 people a year reach the destination.



“Dixie’s Camp is so remote, that their nearest neighbour was the International Space Station (ISS) orbiting over 400km overhead!”



It is a total of 2,400km (1,500mi) from our main camps to the South Pole. The first part of the journey is a 5-hour flight to Dixie’s Camp, our expedition camp. Flying 3,000m (10,000ft) above the ice, your view is sensational as we cross the High Polar Plateau.

We stop to refuel and then continue on another 2 hours to the South Pole itself - the very lowest point on the Earth. Setting foot at 90°S still remains the holy grail for many explorers.

After a few hours at the Pole, we fly back to Dixie’s Camp at 83°S, to rest overnight and to join the very few who have ever spent a night in the beauty of the High Polar Plateau. There is a true sense of remoteness at Dixie’s where, for an uninterrupted 360 degrees the white horizon meets the pure blue sky.

Enjoy a warm meal reflecting on the day and fall asleep knowing you’re in one of the wildest places on Earth, a place rarely visited and still vastly unexplored.



ACTIVITIES AT ECHO

- Rock-climbing and abseiling
- Hiking multiple nunataks
- Fat biking
- Cross country skiing
- Exploring ice caves

Every trip to Antarctica is unique. With your group, choose to embark on ice-climbing, hikes to summit a nearby nunatak or abseiling under the expert guidance of our award-winning UIAGM mountain guides.



[CLICK TO VIEW ACTIVITIES AT ECHO](#)



“White Desert is a marvel of vision and logistics, like something out of a James Bond film. You can’t believe someone actually made this happen; it seems so far-fetched.”

~ Vogue





YOUR SAFETY, OUR PRIORITY

Across Antarctica's icebound terrain, nature reigns supreme.

For all its beauty, Antarctica can be a challenging environment, with low temperatures, strong winds and high altitudes. We know the best way to protect you is with specialist staff. We have over 100 team members on ice, and we are uncompromising about the experience and expertise of our people. You can trust them to keep you safe on every step of your journey.

All our mountain guides have completed the strenuous 5-year UIAGM qualification, while each camp has its own fully qualified trauma doctor and accompanying medical kits. Our chief pilot has over 10 years of experience flying in Antarctica with over 18,000 hours of logged flight time.

Tracking, satellite communications and mutual Search & Rescue agreements are all part of White Desert's comprehensive safety policies.

Furthermore, by operating our own aircraft, we also have the speed and flexibility to arrange an evacuation back to Cape Town in the unlikely event that one should become necessary.



INCLUSIONS / EXCLUSIONS

GUESTS: 12 MAXIMUM

PRICE: \$104,000 PP

FITNESS: ★★☆☆☆

INCLUDED

- Safety briefing (return transfers provided)
- Return transfers for Antarctica flights
- Return flight to Antarctica (inc. 23kg for hold luggage and 7kg for hand luggage)
- All accommodation, food and drinks (including all alcohol) in Antarctica
- All guiding fees, support of field guides and logistics staff
- The use of certain items of polar clothing, as denoted on equipment list
- Payment by White Desert Ltd of a 'Carbon Tax' for offsetting emissions created by all logistics associated with Antarctic travel

EXCLUDED

- Commercial flights to and from Cape Town, South Africa
- Accommodation and meals whilst in Cape Town
- Polar clothing (you will be sent a tailored kit list in advance of your trip to help you purchase the necessary items)
- Comprehensive insurance cover (White Desert staff can advise you as to the appropriate cover required)
- Additional expenses incurred in Cape Town due to any delay
- Additional baggage costs over the agreed amount
- Use of a satellite phone whilst in Antarctica

FLIGHT TO ANTARCTICA: 5HRS

FLIGHT TO SOUTH POLE: 7HRS



“White Desert is also keenly mindful of the environment: not only has the company been carbon neutral since 2007, it supports scientific research in cooperation with various nations’ bases around its camps. It’s somehow as human yet as unusual an experience as one can imagine.”

~ Vogue





COME EXPLORE.

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