



QUARK
EXPEDITIONS

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The Antarctic Travel Season

We are often asked to explain why our expedition rates are lower for departures during the beginning and end of the Antarctic travel season. Rates are lower because traditionally demand for these departures tends to be weaker.

Many clients who travel to Antarctica make their plans based the breeding pattern of penguins and general potential for wildlife viewing. For clients who wish to see penguin chicks and an overabundance of wildlife, late December, January and early February departures are ideal. However, when assisting a client selecting a departure date, keep in mind that penguin viewing is not necessarily every traveler's main priority. Each month of the travel season offers its own special features and rewards.

The month of **November** (late Austral spring and early Austral summer) undoubtedly offers the most adventurous time to visit the Peninsula. Temperatures tend to be colder, offering impressive icescapes, pristine snow and breathtaking scenery. Many clients travel to Antarctica to push the limit. They want to feel the adventure and experience the ship expedition format to the fullest. For many of these clients, the excitement of a Zodiac cruise among towering icebergs outweighs the benefit of witnessing penguin chicks. The immense expanses of ice will remain in their memory as powerful symbols of their Antarctic experience. While not in the same concentration as later in the season, of course wildlife can still be seen in November. For instance, there are fascinating courtship displays in the penguin rookeries and travelers can see the penguins at work building their nests. Intriguing stone-stealing rituals add excitement to this process.

During **late February** and **early March** (late Austral summer) the weather remains very good and the wildlife is still very active. Most importantly, these late departures offer the best whale watching opportunities of the season. The ice recedes and our Captains and Expedition Leaders can usually push the exploration further south along the Antarctic Peninsula, occasionally reaching the Antarctic Circle. At this time, just before the penguin chicks begin to fledge, the rookeries are at their busiest, with the adult birds fetching krill and feeding their chicks.