



MS Fridtjof Nansen

2024.12.28 - 2025.01.07



Day 1 - Embarkation in Ushuaia

The alarm pierced the morning silence in our room, awakening us for the next stage of the adventure. It only seems like we just arrived, and now we are on the move again. With heightened anticipation, we boarded the buses for our flights to Ushuaia. The sun shone brightly as we broke through the clouds and commenced our descent into

Ushuaia. Those on the left-hand side of the aircraft managed to catch a fleeting glimpse of our home for the next ten days, pulling at the mooring lines of the pier like a stallion wanting to break free and head back to the ice.





Tierra del Fuego

Rio Grande

Ushuaia

Drake Passage

Drake Passage

Drake Passage

Drake Passage

*Drake
Passage*

Legend



— HX Expedition

100 km

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Day 2 - Drake Passage

What a morning! The Drake gave us a small glimpse of its well-earned reputation. With movement in the ship, we moved around like the proverbial drunken sailors. The amazing ship's team continued to prepare us for the adventure ahead with briefings, gear issuance, and

biosecurity. The evening was rounded out by our Captain, Raymond Martinsen, introducing his officers, and our effervescent Expedition Leader, Torstein Gaustad, introduced his sturdy band of expedition team members. We feel we are in truly safe and experienced hands.

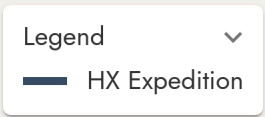


Day 3 - Drake Passage

Today, the Drake started to be kinder as our excitement grew. More preparatory arrangements took place, including mandatory IAATO briefings on acceptable behaviour ashore and tender boat briefings to

ensure the safety of both our guests and crew. In the late afternoon, a buzz of excitement rippled through the ship as we spotted our first iceberg—a majestic tabular berg slowly making its way north.





© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Day 4 - Damoy Point

The sound of ice scraping along the hull was our first indication that something was different. Brilliant blue skies and snow-capped peaks painted the views outside. What a way to end the year—putting on our outdoor equipment, the muck boots, and heading down to the Expedition Launch. The zodiacs whisked us ashore for our first footsteps in Antarctica. Entertaining penguins eagerly awaited to greet

us and watch our ungainly attempts at walking in the snow. The Argentine refuge hut and the British transit hut were the only remnants of previous occupation of the site. Penguins had taken the opportunity to nest in the shelter of the huts. A brave number of our cohorts took advantage of the opportunity to explore the island further on snowshoes.



Day 4 - Port Lockroy

During the afternoon, we moved just around the corner for a small boat cruise around the famous Port Lockroy. The zodiac glided silently through Port Lockroy's waters, surrounded by jagged peaks. The historic hut stood proudly against the snow, with penguins bustling around it in endless activity. Cameras clicked, laughter filled the air, and the magic of Antarctica wrapped around us like the chill of the wind—a fleeting moment of pure wonder.

In the evening, we were entertained by a member of the Expedition Team performing "Dinner for One" - Miss Sophie's 90th birthday dinner. Her butler, James, must fill in for her four departed friends, and that includes lots of drinks before every course, with a curious expedition twist. The evening was rounded out with a countdown to midnight led by our captain.



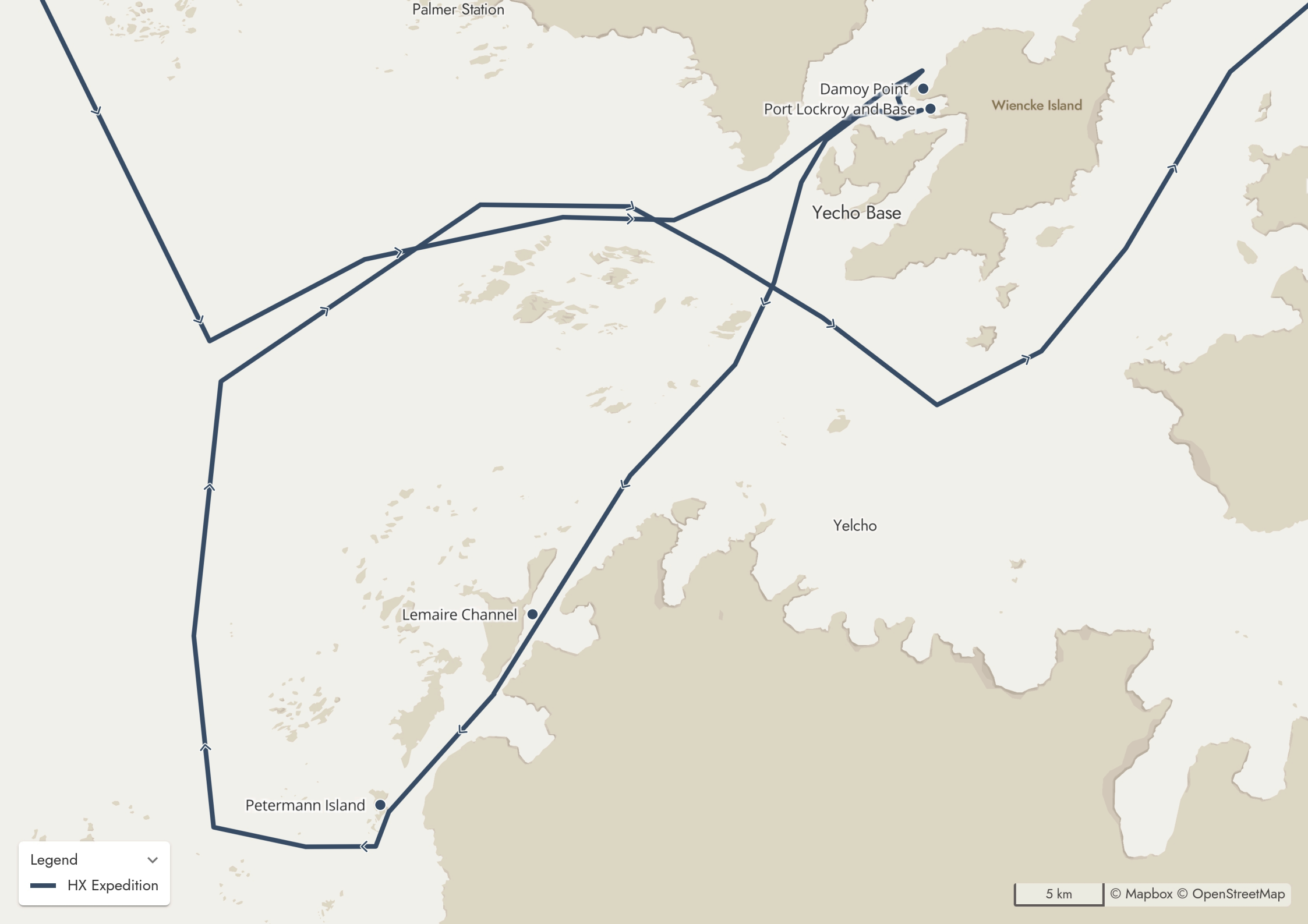


Day 5 - Lemaire Channel

The new year started out slowly with a gentle morning and a traverse through the Lemaire Channel. Named after a Belgian explorer of the Congo, the channel separates Booth Island from the peninsula and is

often called "Kodak Crack" for the number of images taken in it. The towering cliffs added to the drama of our voyage of discovery along the peninsula.





Legend

HX Expedition

Day 5 - Petermann Island

In the afternoon, we made land again, this time at Petermann Island. The expedition team was waiting ashore to help us out of the zodiacs and guide us between Gentoo and Adélie penguins. How can a black-faced penguin be so expressive and condescending? Imperial Cormorants nested at the northern end of the island, trying to feed

their demanding and fast-growing chicks. The landing was fantastic, but given the changing weather conditions, we were unable to conduct on-water activities such as kayaking and science boat — safety first!







Gonzalez Videla
Antarctic Base

Neko Harbour

Leith Cove (Camping Spot)

Bryde Island

Brown

Legend

— HX Expedition

3 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Day 6 - Neko Harbour

How do they do it — each day gets better and better. Today, the expedition team pulled a rabbit out of the hat and managed to get us ashore on the continent of Antarctica at Neko Harbour. Walking up beside the penguin highways, we reached a viewpoint over the rookery and a formidable glacier behind. For those needing a greater

workout to burn off our chefs' amazing meals, we could climb up to a higher viewpoint for spectacular views of the ice-filled Andvord Bay, where whale blows could be glimpsed amongst the ice. During the evening, we moved further south, and a hardy plan ventured out to spend an evening camping on the ice at Leith Cove.







Melchior Islands

Drabant Island

Legend
HX Expedition

5 km © Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Leith Cove (Camping Spot) - Jan 2, 2025

Melchior Islands - Jan 3, 2025

Day 7 - Melchior Islands

After remembering to pick up our friends who camped overnight and listening with envy to the stories of the amazing evening's activities, we steamed our way to today's activities. We were able to go zodiac

cruising around the Melchior Islands and visit another Argentine station, Melchior. Argentina has established stations and refuge huts along the peninsula in an attempt to strengthen their claim to the area.







Whalers Bay

Legend
— HX Expedition

5 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Day 8 - Whalers Bay

We crossed the stormy Bransfield Strait between the Antarctic Peninsula and the South Shetland Islands, a forewarning of the Drake Passage to come. We sailed into an active volcano through the narrow Neptune's Bellows of Deception Island. The calm, wide waters of Port Foster greeted us as we prepared to explore the industrial archaeological ruins of Whalers Bay. The scale of the ruins reminded us of the industrial-scale slaughter and exploitation of the Southern Oceans and strengthened our resolve to do more to actively protect

Antarctica. We retraced Captain Nathaniel Palmer's steps of the US sealing ship Hero, along the volcanic sand beach to Neptune's Window, a gap in the wall of the caldera. It is from here that Nathaniel Palmer looked to the southeast and could see the Antarctic Peninsula, and he was the first to record this event in the ship's log. To celebrate our last landing on this voyage, filled with highlights, we decided to take a polar plunge into the waters of Port Foster. Despite being an active volcano, the heat has not transferred to the waters of the bay.







Days 9 & 10 - Drake Passage

Day 9 – We awoke to the familiar movement of the ship as we re-entered the Drake Passage and began the long sail back to Ushuaia. The day was spent in reflection and continued learning, with lectures and presentations by the tireless, friendly, and enthusiastic expedition team who have cared for us throughout this adventure. Sadly, we realised that the adventure was coming to an end when we had to return and clean our boots – to protect and preserve Antarctica for future generations – a task we undertook with pleasure.

Day 10 – Our last day at sea. The Drake showed us her kinder side. It was a day of continued learning, sharing conversations, feelings, and emotions with newfound friends and adventurers as we reflected upon the impact that this visit to Antarctica had upon us. We slowly came to realise why the expedition team is so passionate about what they do, and the need they have to return year after year to experience the wonders of Antarctica.

Day 11 - Disembarking in Ushuaia

The adventure comes to an end as we say goodbye to our ship and newfound friends. We make our way back from Fin del Mundo – the city at the end of the world and the beginning of everything. As we fly north, our thoughts, hearts, and emotions remain in the south, and we

reflect on the adventures that await our friends in the crew of MS Fridtjof Nansen – we wish them calm skies and a following sea. I hear the white wastes calling across a restless sea; civilisation is palling the wanderer's disease



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