



JUST TWO MORE GLACIERS
TO GO: Descending the Crean Glacier on Shackleton's historic route

RELIVE AN EPIC
Shackleton Crossing
SOUTH GEORGIA ISLAND

In 1915 Weddell Sea ice crushed explorer Ernest Shackleton's ship, the *Endurance*, leaving him and his 27 men in lifeboats afloat on the frozen South Atlantic for 18 agonizing months. After making landfall on a bleak, uninhabited island, Shackleton set out again with five crew members to find help. Sixteen days later they landed at South Georgia Island, a hundred-mile chain of glacier-draped mountains rising 9,000 feet from the sea. Shackleton led his men across the island's unmapped ranges to find help at a Norwegian whaling station called Stromness.

The ordeal of the *Endurance's* men remains one of the most

gripping survival tales of the 20th century, and Shackleton's historic 28-mile crossing of South Georgia Island has become a classic backcountry adventure. The island is a place of unparalleled beauty and solitude, and while the crossing itself is no more physically challenging than a four-day winter ski trip or snowshoe adventure, its remoteness dissuades crowds and reinforces wilderness character. King Haakon Bay, Shackleton's (and your) starting point, is astonishingly rugged, with nine glaciers flowing into it from the surrounding mountains. The scenery on the island's stormy south side is jaw-dropping, but just reaching South Georgia is one of the most

impressive (and occasionally trying) parts of the journey. The relentless storms of the South Atlantic Ocean are enough to make a seasoned Himalayan climber quiver with fear, or at least a little seasick.

INSIDER ADVICE: Pick up a copy of Alfred Lansing's book *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage* (\$14, Carroll & Graf), the first modern account of Shackleton's ordeal, at the Boutique del Libro Antartida y Patagonia (www.boutiquedelibro.com.ar) in Ushuaia before embarking for South Georgia.

WHEN TO GO: December
LOGISTICS: The Antarctic cruise industry is based in Ushuaia,

STAGING AREA:
Ushuaia, Argentina

RECOMMENDED DISTANCE:

28
MILES

TRAIL TIME:

3-5
DAYS

TOTAL TRIP:
24 days

DIFFICULTY
(SCALE OF 1 TO 5, 5 MOST DIFFICULT):

3

GUIDED COST
(INCLUDING AIRFARE):
\$11,000-\$13,000



Argentina, at the southern tip of Tierra del Fuego. Afternoon flights daily from Buenos Aires to Ushuaia (\$422; www.aerolineas.com.ar) make it possible to fly with just one stop from North America to the very tip of South America. From Ushuaia, you'll board a ship bound for South Georgia Island (20 days round-trip). Because South Georgia is so remote, there is no hope of outside rescue in the event of medical emergency. It is imperative that you be a competent wilderness traveler and that you go with a skilled outfitter like Geographic Expeditions (www.geox.com), which offers departures for this once-in-a-lifetime trip every few years (inquire for details). ▲