

Antarctica: A Next Holiday Destination

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. Explorer (Noun) /ɪk'splɔːrər/ a person who travels to unknown or unfamiliar places in order to learn more about them
Example: The children's show Dora the Explorer has been turned into a movie showing her travels to unfamiliar lands.
2. on board (Phrase) /ɔːn bɔːrd/ on a ship, train, or plane
Example: The report returned the headcount of 1,500 passengers on board the Boeing 757 flight.
3. Continent (Noun) /'kɒntɪnənt/ any of the earth's main land masses, such as Europe, Asia, etc.
Example: Asia is the largest among the seven continents of the world.
4. Claim (Noun) /kleɪm/ a right to have or get something, such as a title, money, land, etc.
Example: The man filed a claim with his insurance company after the car accident.
5. Destination (Noun) /ˌdɛstəˈneɪʃən/ a place where a person or thing is going or being sent
Example: I am excited to know where our next destination is.



Although there are many places that may feel like the end of the world, few can have as good a claim to that title as Antarctica. But if you thought it was a destination only for scientists, think again. Antarctica may not be a good idea for a weekend away, but more and more tour companies are offering trips to the world's coldest continent.

Around 98% of the land is covered with ice, and it's also drier and windier than any other continent. So why would you want to visit? For one thing, it's a good story — going somewhere not many people have been, following the footsteps of famous explorers like Ernest Shackleton and Roald Amundsen. People who have been there talk of the great mountains of ice, and of the unusual quiet — kilometers of bright, white ice, where the only sounds to be heard might come from penguins or seals.

Many people do not stay on the continent. Instead, they travel on special ships, watching the wildlife, sleeping on board and spending time on the ice — or perhaps on the water, such as in a kayak. The ships usually depart from the south of Argentina or from New Zealand, and the trip can last a few days or a few weeks. They only travel from November to March, when the ice breaks up and the ships can move through.

Flights to Antarctica are available too. Australian airline Qantas also offers one-day sightseeing flights, some even going as far as the South Pole. It is also possible to stay in Antarctica in camps for tourists, joining the thousands of scientists on the continent.

DISCUSSION

1. Would you be interested in visiting Antarctica at some point in your life?
2. What would you say are the top places on your bucket list?
3. Do you think you'd enjoy spending a few weeks on a cruise ship?
4. Are there any places you'd like to visit to see the local wildlife in person?
5. Would you rather visit Argentina, New Zealand, Australia or Antarctica?