



GLOBE TREKKER SERIES 14

Antarctica X '52 Synopsis

Its frozen rivers, subglacial lakes, desolate plateaux, and majestic mountains, make it a continent like no other. It holds 90% of all the ice on the planet and approximately 70% of all fresh water. The sheer immensity of its ice sheet is staggering and sufficient to deform the planet – should it melt, sea levels will rise above major cities. Welcome to: **Antarctica**.

Across the centuries this "*terra australis nondum cognita*" has captured the imagination of navigators, polar explorers, and aviators from **Captain Cook, Robert Falcon Scott, Ernest Shackleton, Roald Amundsen, and Douglas Mawson, to Robert Byrd**. Their perilous journeys to the ends of the earth brought back stunning scientific discoveries and showed the danger and utter cruelty of this extreme environment. Retracing their footsteps, Globe Trekker **Zay Harding** sets sail aboard a yacht charter, on a quest to explore the ultimate symbol of the natural world and last true remaining wilderness.

His adventure begins on the **Antarctic Peninsula** where he drops anchor at **Paradise Bay** and kayaks down the **Errera Channel** to **Skonthorpe** and **Jonathan Island**. The scenery is truly breathtaking: towering cliffs, spectacular iceberg sculptures, cathedral-sized glaciers and an abundance of wildlife from **Humpback, Minke, and Orca Whales**, to seal-covered beaches, and huge rookeries of **Adélie Penguins** whose fledgling chicks dodge **Sea Leopards** basking, menacingly. That evening Zay and the ship's crew enjoy their first Antarctic BBQ.

His voyage continues across the **Gerlache Strait** to the **Neuymayer Channel** – where it's literally whale soup with dozens of Humpbacks are bubble net feeding, consuming approximately 4 tons of krill each per day during the summer season. Anchoring at **Port Lockroy**, Zay pays a visit to historic **Bransfield House**, home to the **Antarctic Museum**, and a post office. He learns all about the quirky history of this former WWII British scientific base from Rick the curator, a regular "winterover", and also gets introduced to the noisy neighbourhood **Gentoo Penguin** population.

Motoring on around the **Dorian Bay**, Zay and the crew find a suitable hill for toboggan championships and vantage point to watch the spectacular colours of the sunset over the **Fife Mountains**. Bedding down in a historic refuge, they spend their first night on the Peninsula, accompanied by the noise of local wildlife and eery creaking, of nearby glaciers.

Setting sail for **Cape Reynard**, Zay's voyage continues down to **Lemaire Channel**, - aka **Kodak Gap** because no one can't resist taking 100s of photos whilst passing through. Along the way they crew keep a careful eye out for stray icebergs and ice floes whilst seek out a suitable place for a spot of diving. Below the water, Zay explores an alternative universe, teeming with colourful fauna and flora from **Sea Anemones, Snake Stars, Shrimps, Sponges, and Soft Coral**, to massive swathes of **Kelp**. The combination of sunlight, sea water and the surreal ice formations, create an overwhelming, ever-changing colour spectrum, with a fantastic kaleidoscope of shades and brilliance. It's an unforgettable experience.

Cruising on towards the **Penola Straits**, our intrepid explorers land and can't resist the challenge of an afternoon snow climb up **Mount Scott**. Their conquest calls for celebration so they drop in on the Ukrainian science base at **Vernadsky**. Here they visit the amazing time warp that is **Wordie House**, site of the original **British Faraday Base** where the hole in the ozone layer was first confirmed. After an instructive tour of the base, their Ukrainian hosts invite them to round off the day with guitar-playing and a home-made vodka session in their very own English 'pub'. In fact, the one pound note they paid the British for the base is proudly cast in resin in the bar.

That evening Zay and the crew prepare for their return and hope for a good weather window. Their homeward voyage traverses the **Antarctic Convergence**, and takes them up into **Drake Passage** where the stormy oceans of the Atlantic and the Pacific meet and create havoc! Accompanied by **Arnoux Beaked Whales**, and soaring **Albatrosses**, they get the distinct feeling they are not alone.

Rounding **Cape Horn** safely, they make landfall to visit the islands monument and pay a visit to what has to be the loneliest lighthouse in the world. The keeper fills Zay in on the history of whalers, sealers, and 100s of shipwrecks around the **Fuegian Archipelago**.

Unperturbed, the crew continue their trip, overnighing at **Puerto Williams** on **Isla Navarino** where they tie up the yacht at **The Micalvi** a crumbling shipwrecked vessel and the world's most southern yacht club. Here, they watch the sunset over the **Beagle Channel** and celebrate their safe return from the **White Continent** with a delicious gaucho style *asado* and refreshing *Pisco Sour*.

Next day, they complete the last leg of their icy voyage and arrive at their final port of call on the Argentinean mainland: **Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego** the *Land of Fire*.