



OCEAN ENDEAVOUR KAYAKING PREPARATION NOTES

The Kayaking Program is an optional enhancement to our expedition program on board the Ocean Endeavour.

Participants are offered a unique opportunity to experience Antarctica by kayak during selected excursions from the Ocean Endeavour. The Kayaking Program is designed for kayakers who want to challenge themselves in an extreme environment under the close supervision of our qualified and experienced Expedition Kayak Guides.

All participants involved in the Kayaking Program will need to complete an Ocean Endeavour Kayaking Program Waiver prior to participation.

ABOUT THE KAYAKING PROGRAM

Kayaking in Antarctica is truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and a chance to get even closer to the ice and some of the animals that call Antarctica home. Our Kayaking Program is available season-round and is an optional extra for guests when booking their voyage on the Ocean Endeavour. While our Kayaking Program boasts a large team of dedicated Expedition Kayak Guides and accommodates most skill levels, it is important that participants are aware of the requirements as well as the risks involved with kayaking in an environment that is cold and prone to sudden weather changes.

This is a tandem sea kayaking program. If you are traveling with a partner and both join the kayaking program, you can paddle together. If you are traveling solo, we will pair you with a suitable paddling partner. We often switch paddling partners around as needed, desired, or requested.

The number of kayaking opportunities on any given voyage depends on the itinerary and the weather conditions of each departure. Our Expedition Kayak Guides assess each kayaking excursion to determine whether the sea state and ice conditions are suitable for a safe kayaking excursion. In instances where weather or other unforeseen circumstances have the potential to adversely impact a kayaking excursion, kayaking participants will be encouraged to join our land or Zodiac excursion instead.

Kayaking excursions are offered concurrently with other activities, such as Zodiac cruising and shore landings. When offered, kayaking excursions are optional, giving program participants the flexibility to kayak or to opt instead for the planned landing or Zodiac cruise.



Each Kayak Program space is for one place only. Guests are unable to share these place as kayaks and dry suits are customised for each individual at the beginning of each voyage. Additionally, the Kayaking Program participants will learn to kayak together and progress through more exciting and challenging excursions as the program progresses, and our Expedition Kayak Guides learn the experience and capabilities of each individual.

Before each kayaking excursion, your Expedition Kayak Guides will hold a pre-excursion briefing to provide more information about the proposed site and the current or expected weather and ice conditions, allowing you to make an informed decision about whether or not to join the kayaking excursion. Participants of the Kayaking Program are encouraged to kayak as often or as little as they like during the times that the activity is scheduled to operate during the expedition.

Please note: The feasibility of any kayaking excursion is always dependent on suitable weather, sea and ice conditions and is ultimately at the discretion of the Expedition Leader and/or Captain determining the activity to be safe to undertake. The Expedition Leader and/or Captain maintain the right to cancel or shorten any kayaking excursion at any time.

CANCELLATION BY US

If an insufficient number of guests opt in to participate in the Kayaking Program, we reserve the right to cancel the Kayaking Program prior to your expedition and we will advise you accordingly. If we do cancel the Kayaking Program prior to your expedition, we will refund any monies received from you as payment towards the Kayaking Program.

CANCELLATION BY YOU

Please refer to the Ocean Endeavour Booking Conditions for our policy on cancellation fees for the Kayaking Program.

PREVIOUS KAYAKING EXPERIENCE

To participate in the Kayaking Program, you must be physically fit and have previous kayaking experience. This is for the safety and enjoyment of yourself and the other participants. The inherent risks of paddling in Antarctica can only be managed if everyone participating can be relied upon to react confidently and competently to sudden adverse conditions, as well as to any instructions given by the Expedition Kayak Guides.

Participants in the Kayaking Program must be able to demonstrate a number of abilities in order to be qualified to join our Kayaking Program. All attendees will be expected to execute basic paddling strokes in coordination with your paddling partner. You should also be comfortable getting in and out of a kayak, using a rudder, and performing forward and backward strokes as well as an emergency “wet exit” if the need arises. Previous experience and confidence (specifically in a tandem sea kayak with rudder steering) will enable you to get the most out of your time on the water with us. Polar region paddling experience is not required and you do not need to know how to perform a kayak roll or a self-rescue.



Your Expedition Kayak Guides are responsible for ensuring that all participants meet the above experience, ability, and fitness requirements. Please be aware that we reserve the right to refuse your participation in the Kayaking Program, for reasons of safety, at any time.

SAFE KAYAKING

Safety is our top priority. You will have experienced and qualified Expedition Kayak Guides leading your group, who will help you in and out of the kayaks at all times. The Expedition Kayak Guide-to-kayak participant ratio will always be at least 1:10. In addition, there will always be a dedicated safety Zodiac and driver accompanying the kayak group on the water. Safety gear is carried in the Zodiac to ensure a speedy recovery in the unlikely event that a kayaker capsizes. The safety of the group is also enhanced by our policy to admit only experienced kayakers into the Kayaking Program.

In the interests of your safety and comfort, and that of the other participants, it is very important that you listen to, understand, and comply with any and all instructions given by your Expedition Leader and the Expedition Kayak Guide. As instructions will be given in English, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have knowledge of the language so that you are fully able to understand instructions given in English.

If you do not understand any of the instructions, we reserve the right to refuse your participation based on safety concerns surrounding communication during an emergency. Your Expedition Kayak Guides will give a comprehensive Kayaking Program orientation before your first paddle, as well as safety briefings throughout the Kayaking Program. These briefings will include detailed instructions and minimum standards for adherence to the IAATO wildlife viewing guidelines and a review of the threats posed to kayakers by icebergs, glaciers and sea ice. It is the kayakers' responsibility to ensure that they are present during these briefings if they wish to paddle and to ensure that they are clear on all instructions given by the Expedition Kayak Guides. Expedition Kayak Guides always reserve the right to remove a kayaker from participation in a kayak excursion should they be found to be consciously ignoring the rules and regulations for wildlife viewing and ice safety.

FITNESS LEVEL

To take part in the Kayaking Program, you must be an efficient swimmer, physically fit and have previous kayaking experience. For the safety of yourself and the other kayakers, the Expedition Kayak Guide may for any reason refuse your participation in the Kayaking Program or ask you to undertake a practical test to demonstrate your fitness and/or kayaking ability. If we refuse your permission, we shall refund any money you paid to us for the Kayaking Program.

MINIMUM AGE

We recommend a minimum age of at least 16 years. For passengers 12 - 15 years old, an application for Kayaking must be made **before voyage departure**, as participation requires pre-approval by our Medical Team to ensure it is deemed safe. Please contact your booking agent for more information. Passengers aged under 18 years must be accompanied by a Parent/Legal Guardian and share a tandem kayak. Passengers under 12 years cannot participate. All participants must also meet the fitness and experience requirements outlined in this Kayaking Preparation Form.



KAYAK OUTINGS

All kayak outings are guided and supervised by professional Expedition Kayak Guides with experience in cold-water regions paddling near ice and marine animals. The Expedition Kayak Guides have previous experience in Antarctica, are certified in advanced wilderness first aid and are responsible for accompanying and supervising all kayak operations.

The normal duration of a kayaking excursion outing is approximately 1 to 2.5 hours with an aim to paddle up to 10 kilometers. Kayakers will not be expected to perform a surf landing. Your Expedition Kayak Guides will discuss anticipated times and distances prior to each paddling excursion; however, your kayaking excursion may also be unscripted and spontaneous, depending on ice, weather, and wildlife. The deployment of all kayaks and paddlers will be done from Zodiacs, operated by our Expedition Team.

It is very likely that paddling conditions over the course of your voyage will vary considerably. Calm conditions will likely exist in some of the protected bays we visit. However, it is also normal to encounter strong winds and seas with a moderate chop and significant swell. Water and air temperatures will both be around 0°C (32°F). Kayaking will not be initiated if weather conditions pose undue risk, but there will always be the possibility of sudden rough weather or extreme weather while on the water. Kayaking Program participants should always keep in mind that the polar regions are some of the most remote and inhospitable environments on Earth, and that kayaking is an inherently risky activity.

GROUP SIZE

On the water, you will experience the Polar wilderness as part of your guided kayaking excursion. You will always have one or two experienced Expedition Kayak Guides with you on the water, depending on the group size. You will be required to stay with your paddling group, which will have the freedom to explore a wide area to take advantage of better kayaking locations and conditions that may exist away from the Ocean Endeavour.

SAFETY

In the interests of your safety and comfort, and that of the other participants, it is very important that you must listen to, understand, and comply with all and any instructions given by the Expedition Team. Instructions will be given in English only. If you do not understand any of the instructions, we reserve the right to refuse your participation in the Kayaking Program based on safety concerns for communicating during an emergency.

YOUR EQUIPMENT

To take part in the Kayaking Program you must be appropriately dressed. You are reminded that in Antarctica, the weather conditions can change rapidly with little, or no warning and it is therefore important that you are adequately dressed for the worst possible conditions. In addition to the items outlined in our Antarctica Travellers Guide, the following items are required for all participants of the Kayaking Program.



EQUIPMENT: WHAT IS PROVIDED

We provide you with all the specialised kayaking gear you will need to have a safe and enjoyable time in the Antarctic environment. All kayaks and gear are top-quality and are maintained in excellent condition. We carry sufficient quantities of kayaks of all sizes to ensure that everyone feels safe and comfortable in their gear. This equipment includes:

- Kayaks: We will use tandem sea kayaks with rudder steering and adjustable foot braces. These tough, stable kayaks are perfect for rough conditions and paddling through brash ice
- Personal Flotation Devices (PFD's)
- Paddles
- Neoprene booties (available sizes 4-14)
- Full body dry suit (sizes available: XS-XXL) with waterproof socks
- Spray Skirt
- Pogies (insulated mittens that attach to your paddle)
- 10-litre dry bag
- Safety equipment

We have done our utmost to choose equipment that will accommodate most guests, however, as is the case with most sports' equipment, it may not accommodate everyone. If you have concerns about sizing, please reach out to your booking agent prior to departure. Please note that the maximum hip width accommodated by our kayaks is 40cm (15.75 inches).

Please take a horizontal measurement at the widest point of your hips to determine your suitability prior to submitting your Kayaking Program Waiver. Please note that kayak equipment may not be suitable for passengers under 18 years of age.

Please contact your booking agent should you have any concerns or require more information. Although we regularly maintain and check this equipment before you start kayaking you must, before the commencement of each kayaking excursion, carry out your own safety check to ensure that all equipment used by you is in good working order. You must confirm to the Expedition Kayak Guide that you have checked your equipment properly and that it is in good condition. Please note: if you bring your own dry suit, it must be checked by the kayaking guide before the activity begins to ensure it is safe and meets our standards.

EQUIPMENT: WHAT TO BRING

- Gloves: two pairs, one thin and one thick
- Socks: Heavy thermal socks (2 pairs)
- Headgear: Warm cap, beanie or balaclava
- Hat: To provide shade from the sun
- Waterproof sunscreen and lip balm
- Sunglasses with side visors and tie or string for attaching them to prevent loss
- Water bottle: 1 litre capacity
- Waterproof binoculars (optional): Recommended for wildlife viewing from your kayak
- Dry bags, waterproof bag or Pelicase for camera/phone

You will also be required to bring your own clothing to wear underneath the provided dry suit.



We also recommend:

- Thermal top and bottoms: one lightweight and one medium to heavy weight. Wool is excellent.
- Two pairs of pile or polar fleece pants and jumper

KAYAKING AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Kayaking offers a unique perspective from which to capture incredible photos of Antarctica and its wildlife. However, there are some considerations that should be kept in mind when considering whether to bring your camera with you on a kayaking excursion:

1. Our kayaks do not have truly waterproof compartments so waterproofing your camera is critical. For this and other reasons, compact cameras are more suitable than SLRs when kayaking. Waterproof still or video cameras are ideal. Otherwise, bring a small dry bag or even a Ziploc bag for your compact camera, and you can stow it in your PFD zipper pocket, spray skirt mesh pocket, or in the small deck compartment of the kayak.
2. If you want to use your waterproof camera underwater, you should consider getting a pole attachment that allows you to operate your camera while keeping your hands out of the water. Your hands will not tolerate being submerged in sub-freezing water for more than a few seconds. The pole or selfie stick must be able to be secured to your wrist and must be able to be stowed away if weather deteriorates.
3. For safety reasons, controlling your kayak is of utmost importance and priority. There could be circumstances where you will not be able to take photos while paddling. Your guides will advise you on this. The bow of the tandem can be better for taking photos, as the stern person can maintain directional control of the vessel. There will be times when you will need to put your camera down or away so that you are fully aware and alert of your environment and maintain control of your kayak.
4. You will have many chances to take photos from your kayak, but please keep in mind that there will be plenty of time to arrange professional photo opportunities while you are on shore or in a Zodiac.

Please note:

Our Photography Program and Kayaking Program occur simultaneously. Therefore, we advise against booking both programs to ensure you can fully enjoy and participate in each activity.