

ADVICE WHEN PURCHASING AIRLINE TICKETS



Antarctica is a unique destination and travelers must adapt their plans to allow for a flexible return date. Delays of days or weeks are possible given the unpredictable conditions in this extreme environment. Additionally, you will be traveling to and from Chile during high season and possibly over the holidays when seat availability is extremely limited. We recognize making airline reservations given these circumstances is challenging and have prepared these recommendations to assist you.

How to Book Your Ticket

Recommended: Travel Agent

We recommend that you work with a full service travel agent, who can advise you on the most suitable fare and be available to make changes to your reservation on short notice (4 hours).

Many of our guests have used this US based agent who is experienced in the nuances of Antarctic travel:

CTT Destinations
Pirjo de Hart
+1 800 909 6647
+1 425 831 0367
pirjo.dehart@cttdestinations.com

No matter which agent you choose, make sure they are aware of the likelihood of delays and prepared to assist you in changing your ticket while you are in Antarctica. Please give us your travel agent's contact details so we can advise them when your return flight to Punta Arenas is confirmed and they can proceed with changes to your return ticket. Keep in mind that flights may be dispatched late at night and/or your agent may be in a different time zone than our Chile office. We will need a 24-hour contact number for your agent. Tickets that are subject to change fees may require payment at the time the reservation is changed. Make sure your agent has your payment details and your authorization to make changes while you are in Antarctica.

Alternative: On Your Own

Be aware that making your own reservation changes from Antarctica can be very expensive and time consuming. Iridium is the only phone network that services Antarctica and airtime costs are high. ALE sells pre-paid phone cards at \$40 for 30 minutes (US cash). We do not want the end of your Antarctic experience to be hindered by you having to make difficult changes to your commercial flights from the ice. If you do not choose to use a travel agent, please have a friend or family member on call that can make flight changes for you and give our office the contact details for this person.

Please note, ALE staff members are unable to make ticket changes on your behalf directly with the airline.

What Type of Ticket to Book

Ensure you purchase a full-fare, completely flexible ticket of sufficient duration.

Check the restrictions BEFORE you buy. Airline restrictions get more difficult every year and you or your agent can only make changes within the rules that apply to the fare that you purchase. There are some types of tickets that are only valid for a specified period, others that do not permit changes, and many that only permit changes by the ticket holder on payment of a penalty. Some fares do not even permit you to fly stand-by. Make sure the rules of the ticket are included on your itinerary and easily accessible to you and whoever will be making the changes to your reservation.

In our experience, **the cheaper the ticket you purchase, the more difficult it is to change a reservation on short notice.** Travelers often do not think about the implications of buying a discount fare through a consolidator or a ticket using air miles or frequent flyer points. These types of tickets are usually heavily restricted and have limited space availability. Also, keep in mind that change penalties and the cost of additional hotel nights may end up being more expensive than buying a higher-priced more flexible ticket to begin with.

Choosing an Arrival Date

Required: 3 Nights Before Your Antarctic Flight

We ask you to arrive in Punta Arenas, Chile three nights prior to your scheduled Antarctic flight in order to fully prepare you for your upcoming Antarctic experience, e.g. for a scheduled departure to Antarctica of December 18, select a flight that arrives sometime on December 15. These days also allow a buffer for flight and luggage delays should your travels to Chile not go as scheduled. We do not hold Antarctic flights for delayed passengers or luggage.

Choosing a Return Date

Recommended: 7 Days After Your Return Antarctic Flight

We recommend you book a return date that is 7 days beyond your scheduled return to Punta Arenas (e.g. for a scheduled return from Antarctica of December 20, select a flight home on December 27). With this option, you or your agent will be able to make changes to your return date without the risk of losing your ticket due to a "no show" or other difficulties. If your ticket is subject to change fees, you will only pay for one change to move your reservation to the date that you want to fly.

Alternative: 3-4 Days After Your Return Antarctic Flight

You may opt to choose a return date that is "likely," say 3-4 days after your scheduled return to Punta Arenas, but this is a gamble and can be expensive if your ticket incurs a penalty for each change to the reservation. Keep in mind that some airlines and types of tickets do not permit "no shows" so if you are delayed, you are committed to making changes to your ticket while in Antarctica or risk losing your ticket altogether.

About LAN

LAN Chile is the main airline that flies to Punta Arenas. Purchasing a ticket through LAN Chile or a LAN Chile partner can ease the ticket changing process. Ticket changes can no longer be made in person at the LAN Chile office in Punta Arenas. Changes must now be made online or over the phone.