

# Antarctica tourism case study

## Nine facts about tourism in Antarctica

### 1. No one lives there

No one lives permanently on Antarctica so there are no towns, hotels or facilities. Most tourists visit Antarctica on cruise ships that depart from South America.

### 2. Anxious animals

Scientists believe that wildlife could be made anxious by human visitors. The voluntary rule is that no human should stand within 5m of an Antarctic animal. Penguins and seals can usually be seen on glaciers and sea ice.

### 3. Accidents and spills

Tourist ships have hit rocks in uncharted water or have spilt oil into the sea, even though shipping regulations in Antarctica are strict.

### 4. Limited landing

Landing on Antarctica is very difficult so tourists generally visit the same few places. Most visit the Antarctic Peninsula but a few private expeditions go inland, visiting Vinson Massif and the geographic South Pole.

### 5. Shipping ban

Large ships carrying over 500 passengers have been banned from Antarctica since 2008 due to concerns about the potential risk of an oil spill and the difficulty of rescuing people if there was an incident.

### 6. An expensive trip

Visiting Antarctica is very expensive so only a limited number of tourists can afford to make the journey.

### 7. Midnight Sun

The season when people can visit Antarctica is short, between the summer months of November and March. At this time of year, the Sun stays above the horizon 24 hours a day and some sea ice melts.

### 8. Strict rules

Visitors to Antarctica follow strict rules to stop them bringing the seeds from invasive plant species on their boots or in clothing that could begin to grow and affect the native species of plants or animals.

### 9. Unique landscape

The polar landscape is a vast desert with mountain ranges covered in snow and ice. There are glaciers and ice fields. Icebergs calve off glaciers or ice shelves and float in the polar ocean.

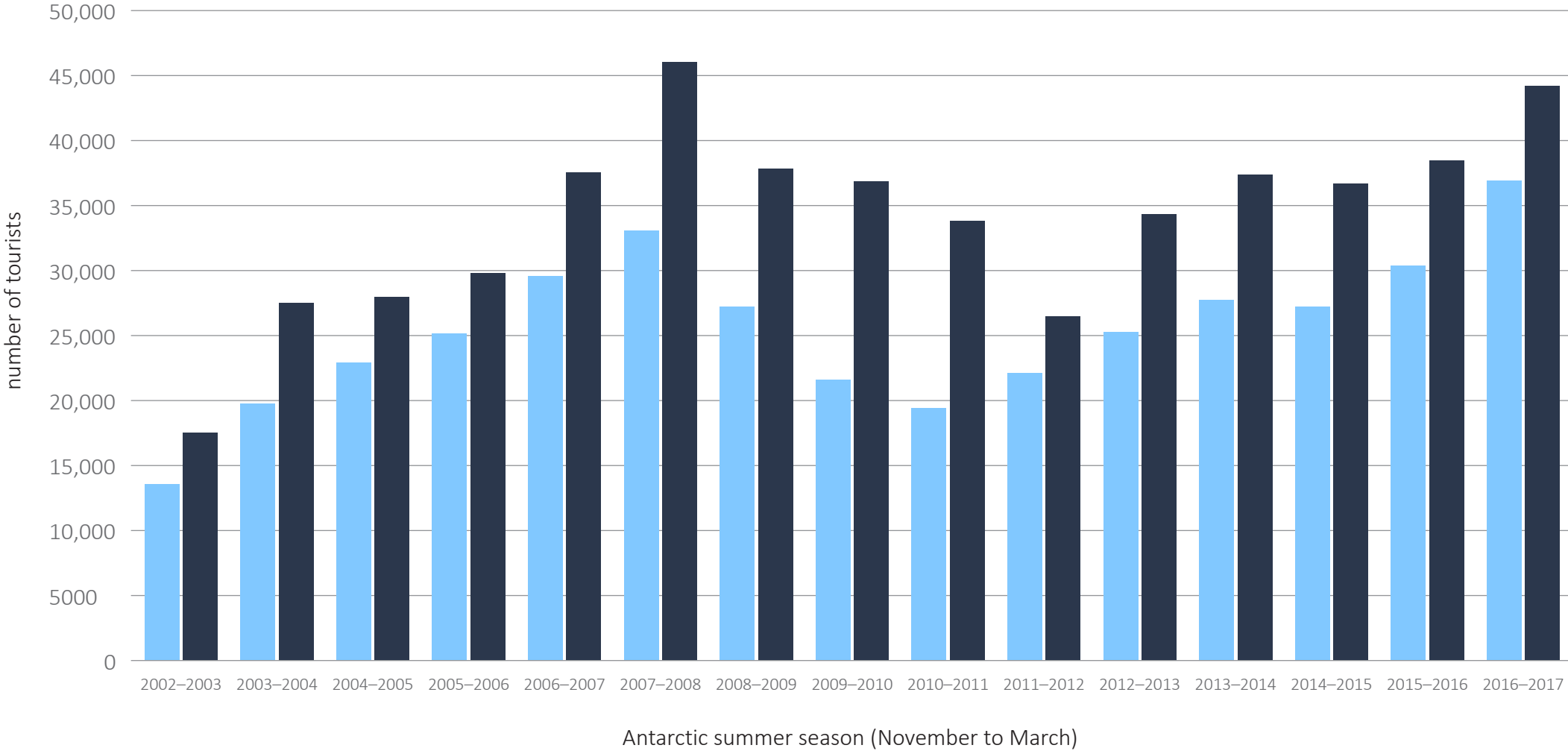


# Antarctica tourism graph

This graph shows the number of tourists visiting Antarctica over a 15 year period between 2002 and 2017.

**Key:**

- tourists who set foot on Antarctica
- all tourists visiting Antarctica



## Antarctica tourism guidelines

Dear customer,

These rules are based on the Antarctic Treaty (1959) and are supported by IAATO, the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators, a voluntary association which lays out guidelines for tourism in Antarctica. We hope you will follow these guidelines carefully and encourage your fellow passengers to be environmentally conscious too. This will help to ensure that Antarctica will remain pristine for generations to come.

### Protect Antarctic Wildlife

- Do not use aircraft, vessels, small boats, or other means of transport in ways that disturb wildlife, either at sea or on land.
- Do not feed, touch, or handle birds or seals, or approach or photograph them in ways that cause them to alter their behaviour. Special care is needed when animals are breeding or moulting.
- Do not damage plants by walking, driving, or landing on extensive moss beds or lichen-covered scree slopes.
- Do not use guns or explosives. Keep noise to a minimum to avoid frightening wildlife.
- Do not bring non-native plants or animals into the Antarctic, such as live poultry, pet dogs and cats, or house plants.

### Respect Protected Areas

- A variety of areas in the Antarctic have been afforded special protection because of their particular ecological, scientific, historic, or other values.
- Know the location of areas that have been granted special protection and any restrictions regarding entry and activities that can be carried out in and near them.
- Observe applicable restrictions.
- Do not damage, remove, or destroy historic sites or monuments or any artefacts associated with them.

### Respect Scientific Research

- Do not interfere with scientific research, facilities, or equipment.
- Obtain permission before visiting Antarctic science and support facilities, reconfirm arrangements 24–72 hours before arrival, and comply with the rules regarding such visits.
- Do not interfere with or remove scientific equipment or marker posts, and do not disturb experimental study sites, field camps or supplies.



### Be safe

- Be prepared for severe and changeable weather and ensure that your equipment and clothing meet Antarctic standards. Remember that the Antarctic environment is inhospitable, unpredictable, and potentially dangerous.
- Know your capabilities, the dangers posed by the Antarctic environment, and act accordingly. Plan activities with safety in mind at all times.
- Keep a safe distance from all wildlife, both on land and at sea.
- Take note of, and act on, the advice and instructions from your leaders; do not stray from your group.
- Do not walk onto glaciers or large snow fields without the proper equipment and experience; there is a real danger of falling into hidden crevasses.
- Do not expect a rescue service. Self-sufficiency is increased and risks reduced by sound planning, quality equipment and trained personnel.
- Do not enter emergency refuges (except in emergencies). If you use equipment or food from a refuge, inform the nearest research station or national authority once the emergency is over.
- Respect any smoking restrictions, particularly around buildings, and take great care to safeguard against the danger of fire. This is a real hazard in the dry environment of Antarctica.

### Keep Antarctica pristine

- Antarctica remains relatively pristine, the largest wilderness area on Earth. It has not yet been subjected to large scale human perturbations. Please keep it that way.
- Do not dispose of litter on land. Open burning is prohibited.
- Do not disturb or pollute lakes or streams. Any materials discarded at sea must be disposed of properly.
- Do not paint or engrave names or graffiti on rocks or buildings.
- Do not collect or take away biological or geological specimens or man-made artefacts as souvenirs, including rocks, bones, eggs, fossils, and parts or contents of buildings.
- Do not deface or vandalise buildings, whether occupied, abandoned, or unoccupied, or emergency refuges.

Thank you for your cooperation. we look forward to welcoming you to Antarctica,

*Scott Edwards*

Tour leader at Antarctica Icescapes



# Statements from Antarctica visitors

*Visiting Antarctica was awe-inspiring. It is one of the most beautiful places on Earth. It has certainly made me think carefully about how we look after our planet and I will be doing more for conservation in the future.*

**Mr G Roberts, tourist**



*This trip has been hugely expensive and now I am here there are so many rules and regulations in place that I cannot see all the wildlife that I want to. It's one thing trying to protect the environment but when people are asked to pay enormous amounts we need to get our money's worth.*

**Mrs E Hazeldene-Smith, tourist**



*The more people who visit Antarctica the more money we get in our research budgets. So, on the one hand we want to encourage tourism, on the other hand, more tourists means a higher likelihood of contamination. We collect data and specimens in many locations across Antarctica and any human interference would be detrimental to our research.*

**Dr L Hawker, Antarctic research scientist**



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*Antarctica is one of the last almost untouched landscapes on Earth. We have already seen the devastation caused by oil spillages from tourist ships. There are birds and animals who breed here and nowhere else, so anything that might disturb their natural habitat could be extremely serious.*

**Ms T Kershaw, environmentalist**

