

Making Your Own Way Home: 2019/20

Your Gateway from Antarctica would usually be either Falkland Islands (FI), Punta Arenas or Cape Town.

At the end of your work in Antarctica, BAS will transport you from Antarctica to a Gateway and will also make arrangements from the Gateway directly to the UK. However, you do have the option of making your own way home from the Gateway.

The following gives some practical advice and guidance for staff on making your own travel arrangements when you have finished working in Antarctica.

Q1. I am thinking of making my own way home. Will BAS give me any financial help?

BAS has a responsibility to provide you with the means to return home from a Gateway. Gateways can and do change due to operational requirements. Please be aware of this. Check whether the ticket we issued to you for the outward journey also covers your return journey.

Return Tickets

This season we will be booking return tickets wherever possible. If your ticket DOES cover return travel, then you will be able to arrange with the travel agent to change the dates of travel to suit your plans (*details in page 2*). Please note that you will be responsible for funding any difference between the cost of the ticket provided by BAS and the actual cost of your return; you will not be entitled to further financial assistance from BAS.

If you are routed out through the Falkland Islands and are planning on making your own way home, you will need to cover the cost of the air bridge from FI to Punta Arenas yourself. You can then change your return leg from Punta Arenas with the travel agents (*See page 2*).

Single Tickets

If you were NOT given a return ticket and wish to make your own arrangements for your return journey, you will be entitled to reimbursement from your outbound Gateway. Rates for 2019/20 season are:

Falkland Islands (FI) to UK	£803
Punta Arenas to UK	£803
Cape Town to UK	£555

If you are an external visitor and your travel is being funded by your institution / organization, it is not possible to claim a reimbursement for Northbound travel. Please contact Polar Operations Support Team if you have any questions about this.

Other Gateways

If you leave Antarctica by a different Gateway, you can also make your own arrangements to travel home. Rates for other routes will be confirmed on application to the Polar Operations Support Team.

Please remember to request this reimbursement by email when you contact the Polar Operations Support Team. This will be paid into your BAS Personal Account (or your bank account if you request it), normally after your journey has begun so please be aware that the money will not be available when you pay for your travel arrangements.

Q2. When do I have to decide if I want to make my own way home and who do I inform?

A minimum of **SIX WEEKS (before your scheduled northbound travel date)** notice to Polar Operations Support Team is required.

Things to Consider before confirming

- Check that you have sufficient funds to cover costs of travel, accommodation, etc. You are advised that if possible, you should arrange to carry travellers' cheques or credit/debit cards rather than cash when making your way through South America/South Africa.
- Investigate the route you intend to take to confirm rates, insurance and flexibility of travel.
- Once you are satisfied that the deal suits you, book it and inform the Polar Operations Support Team that you are making your own way home.

Q3a. What travel agencies are there in the Falkland Islands to help me make my bookings from Falkland Islands/South America?

You may use a travel agent of your choosing. BAS uses the following:

International Tours and Travel (IT&T)
PO Box 408
Stanley, Falkland Islands
FIQQ 1ZZ

Tel: +500-22041
Fax: +500-22042
E-mail: se.itt@horizon.co.fk
Web address: www.falklandstravel.com

Please ensure that you have any relevant visas, health & travel insurance, etc prior to departing to your countries of choice. The travel agent can assist.

If you are altering a commercial ticket previously booked by BAS (Punta Arenas – UK), please contact IT&T using the above email / phone numbers.

Q3b. What travel agencies are there in Cape Town to help me make my bookings through South Africa?

BAS does not use a travel agent in Cape Town. Please use the Internet to identify a reputable ABTA approved travel agent, offering the travel in which you are interested.

You will need to ensure that you have any relevant visas, health insurance, etc prior to travelling to your countries of choice. Remember to take out travel insurance. The travel agent can assist.

If you are altering a ticket previously booked by BAS (through from Cape Town – UK), please email North.Air@travelctm.com with your request. With Ian.Taylor@redfern-travel.com and Megh@bas.ac.uk cc'd.

Please ensure you attach a copy of your current ticket or include the booking reference and state that you are now making your own arrangements and will be paying via credit/debit

card. If there are multiple names on your ticket please specify that you only wish to change **your** travel.

Q4. On completion of my contract in Antarctica, I want to travel independently before I go home, but I'm worried about arriving at the Gateway with no accommodation. What should I do, and can you help?

You will be accommodated by BAS from arrival at your Gateway until the date on which BAS would have flown you home. This is a minimum of one night (sometimes longer); this will give you sufficient time to find alternative accommodation. Before arriving at your gateway, please check with the Support Team how many days accommodation will be provided.

The accommodation provided at your Gateway will be at BAS' discretion and may be on board a BAS ship. If you choose to use other accommodation from the time of your arrival at the Gateway, please note that you will be responsible for the cost of that accommodation and will need to organise this yourself.

Q5. Who can help/advise me on accommodation after BAS has stopped providing it for me?

You can either decide to find your own accommodation after arrival in Stanley/Punta Arenas/Cape Town or you can request the travel agent to do it for you.

Q6. I'm travelling independently from the Gateway. How do I get to the airport?

In the Falkland Islands, you can ask Falkland Islands Tours and Travel (admin@fitt.co.fk) or Penguin Travel (penguin.travel@fic.co.fk) to arrange transport to the airport or use a local taxi company. In Punta Arenas, the receptionists at your hotel should be able to assist you with booking a taxi. Please note that taxis can be expensive, therefore we would recommend checking the price before travelling. Transport to the airport will be at your own expense.

Q7. I thought I was going to travel independently, but now I've changed my mind and want to go straight back to the UK. What can you do to help?

Have you previously contacted the Polar Operations Support Team to confirm that you are making your own way home? Please check the SOUTH travel database to see if your return travel is marked as Own Arrangements/Private Travel.

- If the answer is "No" you need do nothing. You had not declared an intention to travel independently, so BAS will continue to book your flight.
- If the answer is "Yes", then tell the Support Team immediately of your change of plan.
 - As long as you do this before the date on which BAS responsibility has ended (i.e. the day on which BAS would have flown you home), then we will book your travel to the UK. **Please note that the date of your onward travel will be dependent on the availability of suitable economy seats on the aircraft.**

- If you had already paid for your independent travel before changing your arrangements, you will be responsible for meeting the costs of cancelling that ticket. You will also cease to be eligible for a cash reimbursement.
- BAS will not compensate you if you change your mind about travelling independently, so you should take out travel insurance against cancellation.
- If your travel arrangements alter as a result of a change to your contract with BAS, please contact Human Resources to discuss the situation.

Q8. My passage from Antarctica was delayed, which means I cannot meet my intended independent travel plans. What is the position?

When booking your ticket (or changing the return portion of a ticket issued by BAS) you are strongly advised to ensure that all travel is *fully flexible* and that you take out insurance to cover cancellation and changes. BAS has no responsibility for compensating you if a delay in your passage from Antarctica affects your independent travel plans.

If, as a result of delays in return from Antarctica, you have to cancel your independent travel, you can ask the Support Team to book you a flight to the UK on the most direct route. BAS will cover the cost of the direct flight to UK but has no responsibility for compensating you for the cancellation of your independent travel plans.

Q9. I have equipment to transport home from Antarctica and wish to take it on my flight. Will you pay for it? Is there an alternative?

BAS will not pay for personal equipment to be transported from Antarctica by air.

You will normally be expected to consign it to a BAS ship. It must be accompanied by the appropriate documentation for transportation by sea to UK.

If your equipment is work-related, then contact your line manager who may agree to pay airfreight charges. You or your line manager will be required to contact Kath Nicholson (BAS Cargo) for details on how to consign the cargo, Kath's details can be provided by the Station Leader. If your line manager does not agree to fund the airfreight, then it must be consigned to the ship.

Please note that you will be required to collect sea freight from BAS Cambridge normally in mid to late May. If you will not be back in UK to collect it, you must make arrangements for someone else to do so for you. You will be required to inform Kath Nicholson in the cargo team of that person's details so that he/she can be contacted on your behalf.

Q10. Why does the amount of cash reimbursed to those making their own way home vary depending on where you travel from?

As far as possible, flexible return tickets are issued, so only those who were issued with a single ticket will be entitled to a reimbursement for the return journey.

Reimbursement amounts are published in September each year in advance of the season to which they apply. This allows you to assess well in advance whether you can afford to travel independently.

The MoD rates for seats on flights from the Falklands to the UK are normally set at the beginning of the financial year. This is the amount used as the reimbursement figure if you choose to make your own way home from the Falklands or Punta Arenas.

The cash equivalents from other Gateways (e.g. Cape Town, New Zealand, etc) are calculated by averaging the costs from at least 3 x different sources.

Q11. My passport runs out shortly after completion of my visit to Antarctica. Does this prevent me from travelling? Can BAS help me get it renewed?

If your passport runs out shortly after completion of your visit to Antarctica, you will not be able to go travelling.

You will need to have a passport with validity of at least 6 months from the date you are due to **ARRIVE BACK** in UK, including any independent travel time (so if you are leaving Station on 1 April and going travelling until 1 June, then your passport must be valid until at least 1 December).

It is not possible to renew a full passport outside the country of origin of the passport (e.g. a UK full passport can only be renewed in UK). It is sometimes possible to obtain a temporary passport in FI for UK citizens, but this will only be valid on a flight directly to the UK on an MOD flight. It will not be valid for travel elsewhere.

Do not send your passport from Antarctica to BAS or to your home for renewal; it is illegal to attempt to renew a passport whilst you are out of the country.

To cover any possible contract extensions that may happen once you are in the Antarctic and avoid problems with Immigration in other countries, you should ensure that when you travel **TO** Antarctica your passport is at least:

- **Winterers:** Valid for 3 years before its expiry date.
- **Summer Staff:** Valid for 6 months from the date you are due to start your return journey.

BAS Contacts for Travel in 2019/20:

Polar Operations Support Team

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