



Top 10 Facts about... Animals on the SS Great Britain

1) The SS Great Britain carried live animals including pigs, sheep, cows, and poultry. The animals would be killed throughout the voyage to provide the passengers with fresh meat.

2) On a voyage to Australia in 1860, the ship carried 38 pigs, 2 bullocks, 1 cow (for milk), 133 sheep and over 1,100 chickens, ducks, and geese.

3) Animals were kept on the top deck in pens and crates, but with that number of animals the smell wasn't great. One passenger described it as "offensive and sickening"!



4) In 1863, to cause mischief, sailors deliberately put a sheep in first-class. An anonymous female passenger wrote in her diary that it kept passengers awake with "its continued bleating"! In the end a steward had to carry it back upstairs to the top deck.

5) Passengers could buy a £5 ticket to bring their pet cat or dog with them on the journey. The SS Great Britain also carried a ship's cat, whose job it was to catch the rats!



6) Some passengers brought birds such as larks and thrushes with them so they could sell them in Australia.

7) On the first voyage to Australia in 1852, while the ship was stopped in South Africa, 3 monkeys were brought onto the ship. They then stayed onboard for the rest of the voyage and caused a lot of mischief!

8) While taking soldiers to the Crimean War, the SS Great Britain also carried up to 30 horses on each trip.

9) In 1860 on a voyage from Australia to the United Kingdom the ship carried 20 live snakes!



10) Rats were a problem from first class to steerage. They snuck on board and ate anything they could get their teeth into - including people's toenails!

