

# ARCTIC - HIGH ARCTIC EXPLORER



TRIP CODE
ACTSHAE
DURATION
10 Days
LOCATIONS
Arctic


## INTRODUCTION

The great appeal of this voyage is the immediate immersion into the Arctic wilderness from the very first day. We achieve this by commencing in Resolute, one of the most northern outposts in the Canadian Arctic. This stunning 10-day journey is the perfect blend of wildlife, history, culture and scenery. The long hours of daylight give us maximum time to explore known wildlife hot spots including one of the largest migratory bird sanctuaries in the world, at Prince Leopold Island. History is a key focus and we plan visiting numerous Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) outposts such as Grise Fjord, Craig Harbour and Dundas Harbour. A highlight for many will be a visit to remote Beechey Island, the final resting place of several men from Sir John Franklin's ill-fated expedition in the 1840's. Along the ice floe edge we encounter beluga and bowhead whales and hope to encounter the mythical narwhal. Sightings of polar bear can be expected at numerous locations throughout the voyage.

## ITINERARY

### DAY 1: Embarkation

We depart Edmonton on our charter flight to Resolute, a remote outpost above the Arctic Circle. Located on the southern shores of Cornwallis Island, the town is named after the British ship HMS Resolute which was trapped in ice and abandoned here in 1850 while searching for the lost Franklin Expedition. A weather station and airstrip made it a strategic outpost during the Cold War. On arrival, we meet our expedition team and prepare for our zodiac ride to the ship. After a welcome cocktail, we weigh anchor and depart Resolute in the early evening.



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## DAY 2: Devon Island

A large bay on the south coast of Devon Island, Maxwell Bay offers wonderful hiking ashore and wildlife watching from the water. Muskox and caribou can be found here, as well as polar bears. Harp seals, ringed seals, bearded seals and even walrus have been spotted in the coves and inlets of the bay.



## DAY 3: Lancaster Sound

Our voyage continues east through Lancaster Sound along the southern coastline of Devon Island. Lancaster Sound, which separates Devon and Baffin Island, has been named the wildlife ‘super highway’ of the Arctic. Waters from the Atlantic Ocean, Arctic Ocean, and the northern archipelago of islands meet here, combining to create a rich source of nutrients and food for an abundance of Arctic wildlife. Croker Bay is home to a healthy population of muskox and we will look for these prehistoric looking creatures as we hike ashore. Crocker Bay features particularly dramatic scenery, with deep blue icebergs set against a backdrop of richly colored peaks. The immense Croker Glacier descends into the steely waters and is a great location for a zodiac cruise. In the afternoon we will plan to visit the abandoned Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) outpost at Dundas Harbour which was established in 1924. The old buildings make great photography subjects in this wild and remote location.



## DAY 4: Nirjutiqavvik National Wildlife Area

Nirjutiqavvik National Wildlife Area is home to almost 400,000 seabirds, including a significant number of Canada’s population of thick-billed murres and Northern fulmars. As we zodiac cruise along the bird cliffs, expect to be awestruck by the sheer number of birds in the skies above. We often encounter marine mammals when exploring these waters, including beluga whales.



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### DAY 5: Grise Fiord

Grise Fiord is the northernmost community in Canada and one of the most isolated communities in the world. Settled in 1953 by the Canadian government as a sovereignty exercise during the Cold War, the fewer than 100 people living in Grise Fiord are mostly descended from eight Inuit families who were relocated there from Northern Quebec. The scenery is stunning, the wildlife is abundant and we are warmly welcomed by the community. Nearby Craig Harbour is the site of an abandoned RCMP outpost, established in 1922 as the RCMP sought to patrol the north and provide services to the Inuit. We will visit and learn about the history of this site as we hike and explore the bay and hillsides of Craig Harbour.



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### DAY 6: Sirmilik National Park

Located on the northern coast of Bylot Island and within the boundary of Sirmilik National Park, the bird cliffs of Cape Hay are home to thick-billed murres and black guillemots, along with black-legged kittiwakes. This superb location is a prime nesting spot for several hundred thousand birds. The scenery here will take your breath away as your eyes gaze beyond the tundra, towards the soaring mountain ranges in the distance.



### DAY 7: Elwin Inlet

We navigate the ship into nearby Elwin Inlet, a breathtaking fjord which is well protected and great for a zodiac cruise or hike onshore. Cape Charles Yorke offers several great walking opportunities. We will keep our eyes peeled for polar bears, which are plentiful along this coastline.



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## DAY 8: Prince Leopold Island

Having crossed Prince Regent Inlet overnight, we approach the towering bird cliffs of Prince Leopold Island in the morning. This is an important migratory bird sanctuary, home to thick-billed murres, black guillemots, northern fulmars and black-legged kittiwakes. The sea ice around Prince Leopold Island is a great place for spotting ringed seals - and wherever we find ringed seals, we usually find polar bears. Nearby Port Leopold is where English explorer, James Clark Ross, wintered over in 1848 during the search for the missing Franklin expedition. In addition to Port Leopold's historical attraction, the shallow gravel beds along the shoreline are attractive to the beluga whales who come here to moult in the summer.



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## DAY 9: Beechey Island

Beechey Island holds great historic importance in the story of the Northwest Passage. It is here that Sir John Franklin's ill-fated expedition spent its last 'comfortable' winter in 1845 before disappearing into the icy vastness, sparking an incredible series of search expeditions. The mystery of what happened to Franklin was partially solved in September 2014, when a joint Parks Canada and Royal Canadian Geographic Society expedition found the HMS Erebus in the Victoria Strait. One Ocean Expeditions played a vital role in the discovery by carrying underwater search equipment on our ship as well as scientists, historians, researchers, dignitaries and sponsors. A trip ashore at Beechey Island to visit the grave markers on a remote windswept beach is a thrilling location for history buffs. We return to the ship and this evening enjoy a special dinner attended by the Captain and the chance to reflect on the wildlife, history and dramatic scenery of this pristine Arctic wilderness.



## DAY 10: Disembarkation

By morning, we are at anchor in Resolute - from where we commenced our expedition a week ago. We make our way ashore by zodiac and bid farewell to our crew. A charter flight returns us to Edmonton where our journey comes to an end.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS	
Accommodation	Standard
Inclusions	<p>           Arrival/Departure Transfers            Shipboard accommodation            All meals onboard            All scheduled landings/excursions            Guiding and lectures by expedition leader and team            English-speaking expedition team            Services of English speaking medical officer            Windproof / waterproof jacket and bib pants            Comfortable insulated rubber boots            Water resistant binoculars            Waterproof backpack            Trekking poles available on shore            All port fees         </p> <p> <b>Exclusions;</b>            Charter Flights - Additional USD\$1,995 per person            Edmonton to Resolute and Resolute to Edmonton              Airfares to/from embarkation and disembarkation city            Visa and passport fees (if applicable)            Travel insurance            Beverages (other than coffee and tea)            Laundry and personal expenses incurred on board            Gratuities         </p>
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)
Single Surcharge	Available upon request

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Notes	<p><b>Exclusions;</b> Charter Flights - Additional USD\$1,995 per person Edmonton to Resolute and Resolute to Edmonton</p>
	<p>Polar exploration can be unpredictable, which regularly causes variations to our itineraries. Specific sites visited will depend on prevailing weather and ice conditions at the time of sailing. The above itinerary should be read as a 'guide only' and may change. The ship's Captain in conjunction with the Expedition Leader continually review the sailing plan throughout the voyage, making adjustments to the itinerary along the way to take advantage of optimal weather and ice conditions or to maximize our encounters with wildlife. Decades of experience spent exploring these waterways mean we have a large number of outstanding landing sites and zodiac cruising locations to consider, even when the weather conditions may not be ideal or when heavy ice may block out a planned route. A flexible approach is something we encourage you to bring to the ship. Contact us for more details</p>
	<p><b>Price Dependent upon</b>      Season and availability</p>

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## SUSTAINABILITY