

ARCTIC - ICELAND & ARCTIC UNVEILED



INTRODUCTION

Before boarding our exclusive Chimu charter to the Arctic, why not spend 9 days exploring the beautiful landscapes of Iceland. This breathtaking country boasts glaciers, mountains, volcanoes and waterfalls. Start your journey in the world's northernmost capital of Reykjavik where you can find Iceland's main cultural attractions. Travel through picturesque fishing towns, beautiful fjords, sheer mountains, farming villages, idyllic waterfalls and glacial rivers. Although you may be sad to bid farewell to Iceland, a whole new adventure awaits you in the Arctic. As polar specialists, Chimu are well known for Antarctica charters but 2019 will see us take our first charter northbound. On Day 9, you will fly from Reykjavik to the Arctic town of Longyearbyen in Norway. There is the chance to explore this land of the midnight sun before you board the newly refurbished Ocean Atlantic. She will be your passport to this icy wilderness; taking you through some of the most varied scenery imaginable. Picture formidable mountains, azure blue glaciers and jagged cliffs. Wildlife viewing opportunities are also abundant here for the patient observer with myriad seal and bird species, the elusive Arctic fox and hopefully a polar bear. Combining these two stunning locations promises to be the ultimate trip!

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Reykjavik

Arrive in Reykjavik, Iceland's quirky capital, and transfer to your hotel. There are no activities planned until tonight's group meeting, but if you arrive early, take a stroll and acquaint yourself with the world's northernmost capital. Perhaps take a trip to the National Museum to see the permanent exhibition on the history of Iceland from the 9th century to the present. As there is not much time spent in Reykjavik on this trip you may want to consider booking some additional days in the capital before or after your trip



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DAY 2: Thingvellir National Park – Borgarfjordur

Today you'll board your private vehicle and drive to Thingvellir National Park (Parliament Plains), the original location of Iceland's first parliament from 930 AD and a geological phenomenon. From here enter the Borgarfjordur area and visit the stunning waterfalls of Hraunfossar (Lava waterfalls) and Barnafossar (Children's waterfalls). Continue to Deildartunguhver, Europe's hottest water spring. In the afternoon head to your overnight stay in the southern part of the Snaefellsnes Peninsula. Later meet up with the group for dinner.



DAY 3: Snaefellsnes Peninsula - Skagafjordur

Today you will continue around the Snaefellsnes Peninsula and its magnificent glacier Snaefellsjokull, an icecap covering a dormant volcano underneath. Places you'll visit today include basaltic pebble beaches framed by strange lava formations, and Arnarstapi, where a short stroll along the coastal cliffs gives you access to the rich birdlife and other wonders of nature. Continue to the pretty town of Stykkisholmur with its famous modern church overlooking town, before driving to our overnight stay in Saudarkrokur in Iceland's north.



DAY 4: Trollaskagi Peninsula - Akureyri

Drive around the impossibly picturesque Trollaskagi Peninsula and visit the small fishing town of Siglufjordur. Explore the compact town centre, dwarfed by towering mountains on three sides, and opening up to the fjord on its northern side. Continue to the town of Akureyri, Iceland's second town, where you will have the afternoon to enjoy at leisure. Perhaps visit the church or join a whale watching adventure from the town's port.



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DAY 5: Lake Myvatn - Modrudalur Valley - Egilsstadir

Start the day by driving to the waterfall Godafoss, also known as The Waterfall of the Gods. Continue to Lake Myvatn, one of the most interesting geological and geographical areas of the northern hemisphere and in Iceland. Visit a number of geological anomalies lining the lake's shoreline, including the lava labyrinth of Dimmuborgir and the pseudo-crater group at Skutustadir, and the boiling mud pots and sulphuric vents of Namaskard. From Lake Myvatn drive to the magnificent waterfall Dettifoss, Europe's mightiest waterfall. In the Modrudalur Valley, a settlement in Iceland's highlands, a local baker will 'treat' you to a pastry making demonstration. Astarþungur - translated into English this means "love-ball" - is a round donut-like pastry typical to the region. Continue on to the town of Egilsstadir for your overnight stay.



DAY 6: East Fjords - Jokulsarlon - Skaftafell

This morning after breakfast continue along the beautiful coastal region of Iceland's East Fjords, with spectacular landscapes, high mountains and deep fjords. If you are lucky you may spot a seal or two. Drive to the famous Jokulsarlon Glacier Lagoon for an unforgettable boat tour on the milky blue waters and between floating icebergs, originating from Vatnajokull, Europe's largest ice cap. In the afternoon you will arrive at your overnight stop at Skaftafell.



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DAY 7: Skaftafell National Park - Vik - South Coast

Visit Skaftafell National Park and walk to the tongue of the glacier of the same name. Drive over the black sands and lava formations caused by the Laki eruption of 1782-1783 (an event that has shaped Iceland's history and culture) to the village of Vik. From here continue to the beautiful scenery of Iceland's South Shore, with sights including the Solheimajokull glacier and the towering black rocks of Reynisdrangar. If the sky is clear you will be able to see Eyafjallajokull, the volcano that was responsible for grounding flights for several days in 2010. In the afternoon you will visit the waterfalls of Seljarlandsfoss and Skogafoss before arriving at your overnight stop in the Hvolsvollur Valley. Here our local friends will give you an insight into how the eruption of Eyafjallajokull volcano in 2010 has affected the lives of the residents in this area of Iceland. The guesthouse is the leader in responsible tourism and sustainability in Iceland. Since the arrival of the first settlers to Iceland, deforestation has taken place in order to make space for pastures. Overgrazing has then led to soil erosion. With this in mind, the owners had the idea to start a tree planting project on their land to contribute to lowering CO2 and counteract soil erosion. Join the effort and head out into the hills surrounding the property to plant trees yourself.



DAY 8: Golden Circle - Reykjavik

From Hvolsvollur drive to the geyser geothermal area for the spouting hot springs of Geysir (after which all other geysers were named) and Strokkur, the most reliable of the geysers, erupting every 10 minutes on average. Don't stand downwind if you don't want a hot shower. Then it's on to Gullfoss, the Golden Waterfall, where on a sunny day you can see rainbows shimmer in the spray above the waterfall. In the afternoon drive back to Reykjavik for a short city tour before checking into your hotel. The evening is free for you to explore the streets of Iceland's capital. Perhaps join the locals in one of the many cafés aka pubs.



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DAY 9: Reykjavick - Copenhagen

Your Icelandic journey comes to an end after breakfast. This morning you will be transferred to the airport for your onward flight to Copenhagen. On arrival at Copenhagen Airport, you will be met and transferred to your hotel.



DAY 10: Copenhagen - Longyearbyen

This morning you will be collected from your hotel and transferred to Copenhagen Airport to board our chartered flight to Longyearbyen. On arrival at Longyearbyen, you will be met by our representative and transferred to the pier.



DAY 11: Ny Ålesund

Our journey takes us along the west coast, where we hope to arrive in Krossfjorden by mid-morning. Here we board the Zodiacs for a cruise along the face of the 14th of July Glacier. The glacier was named after Bastille Day by Prince Albert I of Monaco, and extends for 16 kilometres. A colourful range of flora is found on the fertile slopes and the nearby cliffs are a breeding ground for Brünnich's guillemots and Arctic puffins. Large numbers of kittiwake are also found here and it is a good place to spot the Arctic fox as it patrols the base of the cliffs in search of prey. Bearded seals can often be seen here cruising the fjord. In the afternoon the ship sails to the small settlement of Ny Ålesund, the world's most northerly permanent settlement. Once a mining village that was served by the world's most northerly railway, Ny Ålesund is now a research centre. It is located on the Brøgger peninsula on the shores of the bay of Kongsfjorden. There is a breeding ground for the barnacle goose, pink-footed goose and the Arctic tern close to the village. If you are interested in the history of Arctic exploration, you should walk to the anchoring mast used by Amundsen and Nobile in the airship Norge in 1926 and by Nobile in the airship Italia in 1928, before their flights to the North Pole.



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DAY 12: Liefdefjorden

If the weather is favourable, the ship will sail to the mouth of Liefdefjorden where we disembark and go ashore for a walk on the tundra island of Andøya. This is a nesting site for the common eider and pink-footed goose. The rarer king eider may also be seen. We also hope to sail into Liefdefjorden, cruising near the 5 kilometre long face of the impressive Monacobreen, formerly known as Monaco Glacier. The waters of the glacier face are a favourite feeding spot for thousands of kittiwake. Polar bears are sometimes seen on the glacier, providing a wonderful photo opportunity.



DAY 13: Hinlopen Strait

Today we plan on sailing into Hinlopen Strait, located between Spitsbergen Island and Nordaustlandet Island. Extending for a length of 150 kilometres and ranging between 10 and 60 kilometres wide, Hinlopen Strait is often inaccessible due to pack ice. The Strait has been known to European whalers since the 17th century, being used extensively for hunting purposes. Hinlopen Strait is home to bearded seals, ringed seals, Polar bears and ivory gulls. We navigate the ice floes of Lomfjordshalvøya in the Zodiacs and explore the bird cliffs of Alkefjellet, home to thousands of Brünnich's guillemot. On the east side of Hinlopen Strait, we will attempt a landing at Palanderbukta on Nordaustlandet, where reindeer, pink-footed geese, breeding ivory gulls and walrus can be seen.



DAY 14: Seven Islands

Today we hope to reach the northernmost islands of Svalbard - the Seven Islands north of Nordaustlandet. We will attempt to land on Phippsøya where you will often find walrus hauled out on land. We will then try to locate the pack ice to take in the spectacular surroundings and to search for wildlife such as Polar bears and maybe even the elusive Ross's gull, named after the great Arctic explorer James Clark Ross. Our aim today is to reach the area of 81 degrees north - just 540 kilometres from the geographic North Pole.



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DAY 15: Retracing our route westwards

As we retrace our route westwards, we visit Raudfjord on the north coast of West Spitsbergen. This beautiful fjord is dominated by spectacular glaciers and frequented by ringed and bearded seals. The cliffs and shoreline of the fjord support thriving seabird colonies as well as a rich vegetation that flourishes in the sheltered areas. We stop at the offshore island of Ytre Norskøya, where we visit a 17th century Dutch whaling site. The large graveyard found here is a poignant reminder of the hardships and dangers of life back in those early days. The island supports a prolific bird life, with accessible colonies of little auk, black guillemot, Brünnich's guillemot, Arctic puffins and Arctic skuas.



DAY 16: Prins Karls Forland

Today sees us making a landing at the northern tip of Prins Karls Forland near Fuglehuken. This is thought to be the site where Barentsz set foot on Spitsbergen for the first time. Seabirds nest on the cliffs here and harbour seals are often sighted along the coast, the only population found in Spitsbergen. We will see evidence of the Polar bear hunting era, with the remains of demolished set guns and bear traps. There is a haul out place for walrus at the opposite site of Forlandsundet at Sarstangen. As an alternative we may sail into St. Johns Fjord or head south to the mouth of Isfjorden to land at Alkhorner. Seabirds nest on the cliffs here and Arctic foxes are often seen as they search the cliff base for fallen eggs and chicks. Spitsbergen reindeer can be seen grazing the relatively lush vegetation. Although the reindeer may seem undisturbed by the presence of humans, this is not the case. The animals must survive the harsh winters, when temperatures plummet and food is scarce and so they preserve what energy they can, fleeing only when it is absolutely necessary. In the afternoon we cruise through Borebukta, a beautiful bay in Oscar II Land on the north western side of Isfjorden. We follow a glacier face before continuing to Longyearbyen.



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DAY 17: Longyearbyen

We disembark in Longyearbyen at the end of our Arctic cruise.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation

Standard

Inclusions

Hotel accommodation in Iceland
Breakfast daily and 6 dinners in Iceland
Transportation by Minibus in Iceland
Airport transfers in Iceland
Flight from Reykjavik to Copenhagen including taxes
Charter flight Copenhagen to Longyearbyen including taxes
1 night accommodation in Copenhagen
Return airport transfer in Copenhagen
Return transfers to pier
Shipboard accommodation
All meals onboard
All scheduled landings/excursions
Guiding and lectures by expedition leader and team
English speaking expedition team

Excluded:
Airtfares to Reykjavick and from Longyearbyen
Visas and passport fees (if applicable)
Travel Insurance
Beverages
Laundry and personal expenses incurred on tour and onboard
Gratuities for the crew (recommend US\$15.00 per person per day)

Difficulty Rating

2 (light adventure)

Single Surcharge

Available upon request

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Notes

Please note that itinerary is subject to change depending on weather and ice conditions

The following activities are available on this voyage, please contact us for more details:

Kayaking (US\$650 per person) and Snowshoeing (US\$150 per person).
Previous kayaking experience is required.

Minimum age for children for this cruise is 8 years accompanied by a responsible guardian.

Price Dependent upon Cabin availability

SUSTAINABILITY

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