

THE ARCTIC - PONANT: ULTIMA THULE, THE HORIZONTAL EVEREST



TRIP CODE

ACTSUT

DURATION

17 Days

LOCATIONS

Canadian Arctic,
Greenland



INTRODUCTION

EARLY BIRDS ON SALE - Book and save up to 25% OFF* Arctic 2021 voyages with PONANT.

This incredible 17-day expedition cruise takes you to the far reaches of the planet to discover the raw landscapes and natural beauty of the Arctic and its rich fauna. Witness some of the polar region's most spectacular scenery as you set off from Greenland's Kangerlussuaq to explore Baffin Island and sail as far north as the Geomagnetic North Pole and Hans Island. Visit Sam Ford Fjord where rock walls plunge into the water and Beatrice Point at the entrance to the Canadian High Arctic, where ice floes descend from the North Pole. Visit ancient Inuit hunting camps and whaler's graves and discover the mythical northern kingdom of Ultima Thule. See the spectacular Humboldt Glacier that calves ice cathedrals, marvel at the surreal beauty of UNESCO Disko Bay and hike along magnificent tundra at Feachem Bay.


ITINERARY

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DAY 1: Paris - Kangerlussuaq

Flight from Paris to Kangerlussuaq is included in your cruise package and it is highly recommended to arrive in Paris the day before this flight. On arrival at Kangerlussuaq, you will be met and transferred to the pier. Embarkation time is between 4.00pm and 5.00pm, at which time cabins and suites will be ready to check in to. The vessel will depart at 6.00pm. From 1941 to 1992, the town of Kangerlussuaq in Greenland was home to an American military base. Nowadays, thanks to its international airport, it has become a transit point for travellers seeking adventure in the Far North. Located to the north of the Arctic Circle, this town is the starting point of magnificent discoveries surrounded by unspoiled nature. Indeed, just a few dozen kilometres from there it is possible to get close to the Greenland ice sheet, the largest body of ice in the Northern Hemisphere. From Kangerlussuaq, admire also the superb landscapes of tundra in autumnal colours, where Arctic hares, musk oxen, Arctic foxes, reindeer, falcons and eagles live.



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DAY 2: Sisimiut

During your cruise, we invite you to discover Sisimiut, founded in 1756 and the second largest town in Greenland. This small town is typical of Greenland, boasting bewitching panoramas: here and there, colourful stilt houses dot the undulating landscape, and the small fishing port stands as the gateway to an icy realm. As for the town centre, it is home to a number of historic buildings, a small church and a museum which retraces the history of the Inuit people, as well as many craft shops. When your ship drops anchor here, you will set out to meet the locals in a typically arctic atmosphere.



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DAY 3: Qikiqtarjuaq & Kivitoo

The small hamlet of Qikiqtarjuaq is on the east coast of Baffin Island, in the heart of Nunavut territory. Bounded by the Davis Strait, the island of Qikiqtarjuaq, formerly known as Broughton Island, is marked by the history of whale hunting. During the 19th century, European whalers travelled around the region and began trading with the Inuits. Later on, the installation of a military post and a landing strip facilitated access to this part of the world. Located very close to the Auyuittuq National Park, Qikiqtarjuaq has very beautiful landscapes of mountains, hills and ice, and is home to many emblematic Arctic animals: whales, seals, walruses, narwhals and polar bears. Located on the east coast of Baffin Island, in Nunavut, Kivitoo is a simultaneously calm and unsettling place that you will explore with your naturalist-guides. This former Inuit camp lying in the heart of a heathland landscape was abandoned in 1923. Here you will pass before a broken-down cabin surrounded by metal tanks that stored whale oil at the time when cetacean hunting was in full swing. You will see walrus skulls and the graves of Inuits, revealing their past presence. Kivitoo had its days of technological glory in the 1950s, with the installation of an American radar station on top of the mountain overlooking the area.



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DAY 4: Arctic Harbor & Isabella Bay, Ninginganiq

Arctic Harbor is on the small island of Aulitiving, barely 15 km long and 5 km wide, at the entrance to Isabella Bay. A major whale hunting site, this small natural harbour still has remnants from those times, notably some whaler graves. This port of call will be the opportunity to go for a lovely hike in the heart of the Arctic tundra, and perhaps to reach the highest point of the island, located at an altitude of 410 metres. Welcome to the kingdom of the cetaceans! Here, those who love the giants of the Arctic won't know where to look. Isabella Bay is in fact part of the Ninginganiq National Wildlife Area, one of the finest places to observe bowhead whales. From your ship, watch the sumptuous ballet performed by these impressive mammals. With undersea faults over 300 metres deep, Isabella Bay, located on the north-east coast of Baffin Island, attracts cetaceans which come here to feed. In addition to the bowhead whales, the uncontested stars of these parts, the Ninginganiq Wildlife Area is also home to ringed seals, narwhals, polar bears, king eiders, little auks and northern fulmars.



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DAY 5: Sam Ford Fjord

All around you is a raw landscape of spectacular beauty. Nothing seems to want to disturb the silence. You are in the Sam Ford Fjord, on the east coast of Baffin Island. Located only a few kilometres away from the Inuit community of Clyde River, this fjord has the kind of world's end appearance that only the Arctic lands can offer. From your ship, allow yourself to be dazzled by the series of vertiginous cliffs plunging into the waters of the fjord. These impressively high walls of rock, known worldwide to climbing enthusiasts, are reflected in the waters of the fjord, as though to completely shift perspectives and blur the lines between land and sea.




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DAY 6: Arm fjord & Feachem Bay

The east coast of Baffin Island is a real lacework of fjords. Among them, in the north, is the spectacular Icy Arm fjord. As you sail these parts, you'll be dazzled by the immense cliffs that are sometimes over 1,000 metres high. This is a paradise for base jumping (parachute jumping from the top of the cliffs). During your stop here, you will have the opportunity to hike at the feet of these mountains and within the glacial valleys. Keep your eyes open when you get back on your boat: you'll probably get the chance to observe marine mammals, such as whales, orcas and even narwhals. After sailing the Buchan Gulf, where you may well be joined by orcas and narwhals, you will disembark in Feachem Bay. From a small beach, home to the ruins of sod houses, set off on a hike into the heart of very beautiful landscapes. The main part of the walk will be along magnificent tundra, fairly humid, full of colourful lichens, minuscule Arctic willows, Arctic poppies, cotton-grass and soft mosses, which will make feel like you're walking on a mattress. Arriving at the top of a ridge, enjoy this very beautiful viewpoint over the glacier below. Frequented by polar bears, Feachem Bay also provides refuge for a great many birds



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DAY 7: Beatrice Point & Coburg Island

Located at the entrance to the Canadian High Arctic, completely to the east of Devon Island, this surprising peninsular will provide an opportunity to discover a specific ecosystem and observe the glaciers coming from the Devon ice cap. During your port of call in these parts, you will perhaps also have the chance to encounter the ice floes descending directly from the North Pole, as well as the wildlife often found here. A real paradise for ornithologists lies to the north of Baffin Bay, very close to Ellesmere Island. Indeed, the small Coburg Island is one of the most important sea bird nesting areas in the Canadian Arctic; Tridactyl gulls, thick-billed murre and northern fulmars have all made it their favourite spot. 60% of the island is covered with ice fields and glaciers, giving a very rugged mountainous relief. In addition to the birds, it is also home to polar bears, walruses, beluga whales, narwhals, ringed seals and bearded seals. The Nirjutiqavik National Wildlife Area, created in 1995 with the goal of preserving these species, entirely encompasses Coburg as well as its surrounding waters.



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DAY 8: Pim Island & Alexander Bay


Pim Island, also known as Skraeling Island, is of quite exceptional historic interest. In fact, in 1978 and 1979, artefacts of European origins (Viking) were discovered here, including around sixty remnants from the Dorset and Thule cultures: pieces of chainmail, rivets, chain links... These artefacts, dating from 1270, are perhaps the result of the bartering practised by the Inuits, which would prove that the Vikings had been as far as the Smith Strait. Pim Island is also known for having been home to the members of the Greely expedition, during the 1883-1884 winter. They took refuge here in a makeshift shelter: Camp Clay, near Cape Sabine. Alexander Bay is a narrow passage located on Johan Peninsula, on Ellesmere Island. From 1953 to 1963, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police built a police station here, considered to be the world's northernmost. Still in place, it is now occasionally used by scientists.



DAY 9: Geomagnetic Pole

There are three kinds of pole: magnetic, geographic and geomagnetic. The Geomagnetic North Pole, the least well-known of all, comes from a mathematic model supposing that the Earth behaves like a perfect magnetic dipole, which is not in reality exact, since the Magnetic North and South Poles and the centre of the Earth are not aligned. This model enables scientists to better apply the physics concepts that we know. The position of the Geomagnetic North Pole is therefore defined by calculations and changes constantly, following the movements of the Magnetic North Pole. In 1951, then located in Greenland at 78° 29' N. and 68° 54' W, it was reached by Jean Malaurie. It can currently be found on Ellesmere Island.




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DAY 10: Hans Island & Humboldt Glacier

Welcome to a rather particular island. Located between Greenland (part of Denmark) and Ellesmere Island (Canada), its sovereignty has in fact been controversial since 1973, when the maritime boundaries of the Nares Strait were drawn out. Today, Denmark and Canada are still fighting over the possession of this islet, although it is hardly an El Dorado. This tiny piece of uninhabited land, covered with ice for most of the year, is not the most hospitable of places. To protect the island, which could be subject to oil drilling in the future, a collective has been set up so that everyone can declare themselves an “inhabitant” of Hans, thus putting the ecological stakes before the financial interests. Greenland is naturally the land of eternal ice. The ice cap that covers the majority of this boreal island extends right down to the Arctic Ocean via vast glaciers that are each as majestic as the next. The most well-known and spectacular of these is without a doubt the Humboldt glacier. It is the vastest coastal glacier in the Northern Hemisphere, with a glacier terminus that reaches 110 km in width. Advancing inexorably towards the sea, it regularly calves veritable ice cathedrals – gigantic icebergs that detach themselves from the glacier before toppling and crashing into the frozen ocean.



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DAY 11: Etah & Siorapaluk

To the north of the region of Thule, in Inglefield Land, there is an ancient Inuit hunting camp known for having been the departure point of many European expeditions to conquer the North Pole. Here, in Etah, you will have the possibility of discovering peat house vestiges from the Thule civilisation and making your way up the valley for a gorgeous walk in Greenland's high Arctic. Today, this region is still a favourite hunting spot for Greenlanders. It is not unusual to see musk oxen here. Small colourful houses, a few small motorboats resting on the shore, a school, a grocery store, sled dogs: here you are in Siorapaluk, Greenland's northernmost native settlement. With some fifty inhabitants, this tranquil village made famous by Jean Malaurie in his novel *The Last Kings of Thule*, lives in harmony with nature's cycles. Here, hunting, fishing and skin tanning are part of everyday life, just like in many other Inuit villages. This is an authentic and typical port of call where you will probably be greeted by a joyous group of children, who are always happy to welcome visitors.



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DAY 12: Cape York & Savissivik

A few kilometres to the west of Savissivik, in Greenland, your ship will pass Cape York, a place that is brimming with history and marked by the conquest of the North Pole. Indeed, it is here, at the end of the 19th century, that the American explorer Robert Peary discovered fragments of one of the biggest meteorites ever found to this day. Despite Robert Peary’s disputed achievements and his sometimes controversial attitude towards the Inuit populations, a memorial was erected in his honour at Cape York. Constructed in the 1930s, the memorial still stands today. Some places in this world are so magical that their beauty cannot be described in words. Savissivik, a small Inuit village with less than a hundred inhabitants, is one such place. Rightly considered to be the biggest iceberg graveyard in Greenland, it is a stunning sight to behold. During your Zodiac® outing, you will sail between these icy giants. Once on land, you can hike to a viewpoint from which to enjoy breathtaking views over these icebergs, which come in an incredibly diverse range of shapes and colours. Photographers will love it. Savissivik Bay attracts many bears and is also known for having been the home of one of the world’s biggest meteorites, but the latter has now been moved to a museum in New York.



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DAY 13: Kullorsuaq

Well beyond the Arctic Circle, in the majestic landscapes of Greenland’s Northwest, you will find the village of Kullorsuaq, the last bastion of Greenland’s traditional hunters. Here is where you will find Greenland’s true character... Vast mineral expanses, sumptuous mountains, impressive glaciers and, above all, the local population which still lives off fishing and seal or bear hunting. Hospitality and respect for nature are essential elements in the daily lives of these men, who live an austere life. When we drop anchor in this remote part of the world, set off to discover these friendly people who are also talented craftsmen, deftly sewing the furs and skins of marine mammals. This will be a unique and authentic experience.



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DAY 14: Nuliarfik

This small island, lost north of Uummannaq Bay where two fjords meet, is often an opportunity for sumptuous sailing along the vertical cliffs, surrounded by drifting icebergs. Situated not far from Nugatsiaq, one of the small villages attached to the town of Uummannaq, Nuliarfik is an ancient village of the Thule civilisation. When your ship calls here, you will have the opportunity to visit the vestiges of peat houses. Then, take a walk up to higher ground and, from a magnificent panoramic viewpoint, you will be able to observe this beautiful network of iceberg-filled fjords.



DAY 15: Ilulissat


At the heart of Disko Bay - a UNESCO World Heritage Site - the Ilulissat Icefjord provides an extraordinary spectacle of almost surreal beauty, with the largest icebergs of the northern hemisphere. The sculptural icebergs continue their timeless journey, shimmering with their eternal light. Vast pieces of ice break off from the bergs and rejoin the inexorable movement of the sea. Close by lies the town of Ilulissat, the region's principal destination. Encircled by icebergs, it has retained a unique mix of traditional Arctic life, with multicoloured wooden houses, huskies and the leather tanners who still work today using the ancient methods of their ancestors.



DAY 16: Evighedsfjorden Kangerlussuaq

Your ship glides slowly along the water towards the west coast of Greenland, to enter Evighedsfjorden, just a few kilometres south of Kangerlussuaq. Evighedsfjorden means “the fjord of Eternity”, and for good reason: just when you think you’ve reached the end of this stretch of sea measuring over 100 kilometres in length, it seems to go on forever, as though to bring even more pleasure to those sailing in it. The spectacular scenery ranges from glaciers to tundra with an abundant flora, and jagged cliffs where numerous bird species have taken up residence. Take the time to observe the white-tailed eagles and the colonies of seagulls and black-legged kittiwakes flying overhead in the area.



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DAY 17: Kangerlussuaq

Disembarkation is scheduled for 7.00am. You will be transferred to the airport for your onward flight to Paris which is included in your cruise package. It is highly recommended that you schedule your departure from Paris for the next day.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS	
Accommodation	Cabin on board ship
Inclusions	<p>Cabin accommodation on board L'Austral All meals whilst on board including snacks All scheduled landings and excursions Expedition jacket provided (yours to keep) Pair of expedition boots for use during your voyage Group transfer to/from pier Guiding by experienced expedition leader and team All port fees All landing fees Open bar (excluding premium brands) Flight from Paris to Kangerlussuaq on embarkation day Flight from Kangerlussuaq to Paris on disembarkation day</p> <p>Exclusions Airtfares from disembarkation city Visa fees (if applicable) Travel insurance Personal expenses, such as laundry, onboard communication (telephone calls, faxes and email service) Gratuities for the crew Pre or post cruise travel expenses Optional activities, refer to optional activities section for details.</p>
Difficulty Rating	2 Light Adventure
Single Surcharge	Available upon request, contact us for more details.
Notes	<p>Return charter flights from Paris are included in cruise cost. Highly recommend to arrive in Paris one day prior to commencement of itinerary.</p> <p>Itinerary is subject to change depending on weather and ice conditions.</p>

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Price Dependent upon Departure date, season and availability

SUSTAINABILITY

Being environmentally accountable is a crucial part of our organisation. Chimu is currently striving towards using less paper, taking several initiatives to do so and tracking our progress along the way. Our goal: A paperless organisation. For this reason, all information given to you will be sent electronically. We encourage those who choose to travel with us to support our aspirations and actions and ask that you reconsider printing out documentation. To view these documents, you can download them to your iPad or portable computer before and during your trip.

Chimu is passionate and dedicated to sustainability measures and understands the crucial part sustainability plays within the tourism industry.

We use local guides and office staff to both maximise local employment opportunities and minimise carbon footprint. Local guides also ensure you benefit from the intimate knowledge, passion and culture of the country you're visiting. Our guides are all highly qualified (most with university degrees) or equip with many years of experience and are paid above the standard wage. Whether it be our knowledgeable local guides, locally produced meals or the transport on tour, we do not use imported goods when local products are available. We aim to minimise our impact on the environment and give as much back as possible to the communities we work in.

. While visiting the many national parks, heritage sites, museums and landmarks our travellers are encouraged to explore whilst remaining culturally aware and sensitive. We further encourage you to buy appropriate souvenirs and discourage the buying of anything wrongfully made or taken from the environment i.e. shells and endangered species products. Information on how you can be environmentally conscious, and travel responsibly will be made available in our Travellers Guides and provided during your travels by guides and staff.

For more information on our sustainability policies, including how we are striving towards being a paperless organisation, click [HERE](#)

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