

THE ARCTIC - GREENLAND DISKO BAY | OCEAN ALBATROS



INTRODUCTION

Enjoy a grand trip in Greenland to see summer in the Arctic, which includes enormous icebergs, visits to settlements, the breathtaking Egi Glacier, and Greenland in a changing climate.

The greatest way to experience Greenland is still by sea. The locations that are the most worthwhile to visit are found around the spectacular coastline: tiny, colourful homes perched on steep mountain slopes that lead to fjords, massive glaciers that produce large icebergs, and whale and seal play areas in the water. With only a short stroll away, you'll find yourself completely alone in the middle of the forest. Greenlanders reside in small coastal towns and settlements that are, during the summer, only accessible by boat. The severe Arctic environment both enhances and constricts their culture, architecture, and way of life. You can meet friendly Greenlanders and discover more about Inuit culture during our local tours.

Yet, the polar ecosystem of Greenland is changing at a startling rate due to global warming. We follow the paths of scientists and decision-makers on this 8-day voyage to Disko Bay and Uummannaq so that we can view the melting glaciers with our own eyes and shudder at the possibility of losing them. We stop by the Danish Research Station on Disko Island on the third day of the cruise. We will use Zodiacs for beach landings and take advantage of nature hikes to get up close to melting glaciers thanks to the expedition idea. The beautiful village of Uummannaq is where we arrive at our northernmost location. The "Iceberg Capital of the World" is Ilulissat, where we attempt to land a Zodiac at the massive retreating glacier known as Egi Sermia before continuing south. The modest Inuit community of Sarfannguit is the destination of our final trip. We disembark in Kangerlussuaq and travel back to Iceland or Denmark.

Note: Return flights are included from Copenhagen **or** Reykjavik.

ITINERARY

TRIP CODE
ACABGDB
DEPARTURE
16/08/2024
DURATION
8 Days
LOCATIONS
Greenland



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DAY 1: Iceland to Kangerlussuaq Embarkation

We board our charter flight in Iceland or Copenhagen bound for Kangerlussuaq. Welcome to Greenland! Guests not participating in any excursions can take a stroll around the town on their own until embarkation time at the late afternoon. After finishing the day’s excursion, we will transfer to the harbour and board the ship by Zodiacs that ferry us in small groups to the ship anchored about one kilometre out into the fjord. After checking in, there will be a short safety demonstration before dinner is served in the lovely dining room. We will set sail on our voyage after dinner and begin our passage through the 160 km-long fjord and out into the ocean. NB. Your luggage will be transferred to the ship directly from the airport, so please pack any items you might need during the first day, in your carry-on. We suggest that you pack a waterproof jacket to wear as we are ferried to the ship on our Zodiacs, which are open to the elements.



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DAY 2: Sisimiut

After breakfast, we arrive to the colourful town of Sisimiut, where we will get an idea of what modern Greenland looks like. With 5,400 inhabitants, it is considered Greenland’s second ‘city’. People have lived around Sisimiut on and off since 2,500 BC. In 1756, Count Johan Ludvig Holstein, established a colony here and called it “Holsteinsborg”. The oldest part of Sisimiut’s historic quarter features town houses from this “Holsteinsborg” era, and the oldest house in town dates back to 1756. One of the most culturally significant buildings is the Blue Church, built in 1775. Nowadays, Sisimiut is an important place for education and industry, and local factories process the bulk of Royal Greenland's fishing. The fish processing plant is one of the largest of its kind in Greenland, and one of the most modern in the world. Our city tour highlights can include the historic colonial quarter, as well as the museum and the beautiful church. Additionally, we are planning to pay a visit to the busy city centre for a glimpse of what daily life is like in 21st-century Greenland. In the afternoon, our voyage will continue northward. As evening falls, we should pass the Sisimiut Isortuat Fjord, the Nordre Strømfjord settlements of Attu and Ikerasaarsuk, and the small town of Kangaatsiaq. During the course of the bright night, we are set to pass Aasiaat and proceed into the southern waters of Disko Bay. Next, the ship’s heading will be set for Disko Island, known for its distinctive 1,000-metre/3,280 feet layered crags. At this point, we will be north of the Arctic Circle! Here, the nights are bright and early risers can enjoy the sight of the icebergs on Disko Bay as they squeeze out of the Ilulissat Icefjord and dance into the frigid ocean waters.



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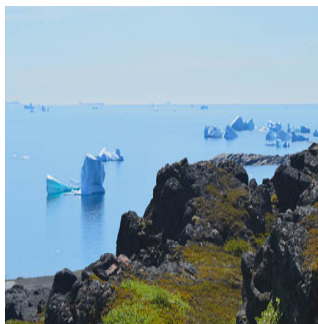
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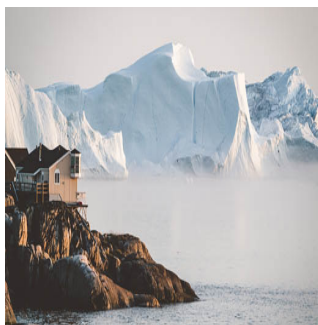
DAY 3: Qeqertarsuaq On Disko Island

Below Disko Island's 1,000-metre tall mountains, we pull into port in a protected natural harbour. The place is aptly named Godhavn ("Good harbour") in Danish, while its Greenlandic name "Qeqertarsuaq" simply means "The Big Island". Up to 1950 Godhavn was the most important town north of Nuuk, the main town of Greenland, solely because of the many whales that the whaling boats towed here from Disko Bay. This bestowed the town with much wealth, starting already in the 16th century. The town is now on its way to oblivion as it gets harder and harder to find work, and because of the infrequent connections to the mainland. We walk through town to the characteristic, octagonal church, nicknamed "the inkpot of God". During our stay in Qeqertarsuaq, we might visit the local community.



DAY 4: Uummannaq

When you wake up this morning, you should find yourself in one of Greenland's most beautiful and sunny regions. The ship is set to reach Uummannaq, situated on a small island. The impressive 1,175 metre heart-shaped mountain has given the town its name - Uummannaq means 'place where the heart is'. There should be enough time to explore the city before heading back to the ship for lunch. Uummannaq was founded as a colony in 1758 on the Nuussuaq mainland, but shortly thereafter, in 1763, it was moved to the nearby island, as seal hunting was more bountiful here. On our walk along the town's steep streets we visit the historic train-oil building, built in 1860. Inside its yellow walls, whale and seal blubber used to be stored. Because of the horrid stench, the blubber was not boiled here, but well outside town! Behind the train-oil storage we will find a peat hut, which was still in use a few years ago. The dry and settled arctic climate has around 2,000 hours of sunshine and 100 millimetres of precipitation per year, giving Uummannaq the right to call itself the Greenlandic Riviera!



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DAY 5: the Calving Eqip Sermia Glacier

In the morning the cruise ship should have reached a magnificent natural highlight - the calving Eqip Sermia glacier. We plan to enjoy lunch on the sun deck with this magnificent natural wonder in the background. Situated approximately 50 nautical miles north of Ilulissat, the Eqip Sermia Glacier is renowned for its jaw-dropping beauty. Legendary arctic explorers selected this location as a base for their studies. One such explorer, the acclaimed Swiss glaciologist, Alfred de Quervain, used the location as a base for his expeditions onto Greenland’s inland ice sheet over a century ago. We will sail as close as possible to the ice’s edge – but at a safe distance to avoid plunging blocks of ice and violent waves that often result from the calving glacier. In the afternoon we will head for Ilulissat, where we berth in the evening and go for a night walk to the Sermermiut plain. If the sea ice is too dense between the Ataa fjord and the Eqi glacier, the captain will have to select a different route today. In this case, the itinerary will be adjusted accordingly and we might, for example, pay a visit to the abandoned coal mine at Qullissat or visit the settlement of Saqqaq.



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DAY 6: Ilulissat

Ilulissat is possibly the most well located town in Greenland. The name simply means ‘icebergs’ in Greenlandic, and the town’s nickname is rightly ‘the Iceberg Capital’. In Disko Bay, which is located just off the coast of Ilulissat, gigantic icebergs linger in the freezing waters. These icebergs come from the Icefjord, which is located a half hour’s hike south of Ilulissat. These impressive frozen structures are born some 70 kilometres/43,5 miles deeper into the fjord by the enormous Sermeq Kujalleq glacier. This 10 kilometre/6 miles-wide glacier is the most productive glacier outside of Antarctica. Whereas most glaciers only calve at a rate of approximately a metre/three feet a day, the Ilulissat glacier calves at a rate of 25 metres/82 feet per day. The icebergs produced by the glacier represent more than 10% of all icebergs in Greenland, corresponding to roughly 20 million tonnes of ice per day! These facts, together with the fjord’s unforgettable scenery, have secured the Icefjord a place on UNESCO’s World Heritage List. During the more than 250 years that have passed since the establishment of Ilulissat, the town has steadily flourished. Today, Ilulissat is Greenland’s third largest town, with more than 4,500 inhabitants. The town is very vibrant, welcoming and lively with a wide range of cultural attractions, according to Greenlandic standards. The legendary polar explorer, Knud Rasmussen, and his good friend, Jørgen Brønlund, were both born in Ilulissat. On this day, you will also have the opportunity to join a boat trip to the Icefjord (price not included). The journey takes about two and a half hours in total. It's a great opportunity to take a closer look at the amazing ice-sculpted scenery. The trip is definitely something out of the ordinary and a great natural experience that you will remember for years to come – but be sure to have warm clothing on! If a hike or a trip by boat does not present enough excitement, there is also an opportunity to arrange a flightseeing ride over the Icefjord (price not included). Please note the boat and flightseeing excursions to the Icefjord are not included in the general tour price. Furthermore, the flightseeing excursion must be booked in advance. Refer to Price Information for more details. In the evening, we will cruise southward from “the Iceberg Capital”, leaving lovely Disko Bay behind us as we part.



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DAY 7: Settlement of Sarfannguit

The settlement of Sarfannguit, which translates to "the place of the little stream" is an appropriate name for a settlement nestled at the foothills of the mountains and glaciers in the distant backcountry. The settlement's slightly more than 100 residents live off hunting, trapping and fishing, most often in pursuit of arctic char, reindeer and musk oxen. Although Sarfannguit is quite remote, it lies within a few hours from Sisimiut, the second-largest town in Greenland. The accessibility to such a large town provides an indispensable economic benefit to a small community like Sarfannguit. The planned stroll through the settlement offers insight into rural life in today's Greenland, where modern conveniences and technological advancements, such as internet and smart phones have become commonplace, yet locals still place great value on important customs and preserving their traditions and their Inuit heritage. We are planning to continue our journey toward the fjord of Kangerlussuaq, also known as Søndre Strømfjord. Especially the first part of the fjord gives a great opportunity to enjoy an impressive passage with panoramic views of high mountains and deep valleys.



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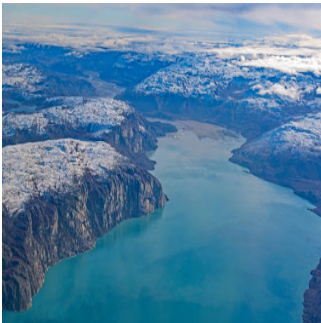
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DAY 8: Kangerlussuaq Disembarkation

During the night, we will have completed our passage through the 160-kilometre/100 mile Kangerlussuaq Fjord. After breakfast aboard the ship, we will bid farewell to the ship's staff and the Zodiac boats will shuttle us to shore. Due to Kangerlussuaq’s military history and present-day role as an important air travel hub, Kangerlussuaq remains fairly isolated from Greenland’s rich cultural traditions, in comparison to other regions. While you still find cultural experiences when visiting Kangerlussuaq, the most impressive attraction is the surrounding nature, which is just beckoning to be explored. It is not difficult for one to see that Kangerlussuaq’s landscape has largely been shaped by the last glaciation period, often known simply as the “Ice Age,” some 18,000 years ago. The mountains are rounded and soft, and many meltwater lakes remain. From the inland ice sheet, best known as the Greenland Ice Sheet, the meltwater cuts its way through the porous moraine landscape and flows into Kangerlussuaq Fjord. Kangerlussuaq’s present-day climate is largely influenced by its well-sheltered location between Greenland’s Ice Sheet, the fjord and mountains. This contributes to its stable conditions, minimal cloud cover and roughly 300 clear nights per year. This close proximity to the Ice Sheet, combined with the continental climate, is also of great significance to the local conditions. The dry climate, combined with warm winds that “fall” from the Ice Sheet, can result in temperatures that jump up to 30°C (86°F) in the summer, but then fall to an extreme -40°C (-40°F) in winter, making it the coldest inhabited area in Greenland. Return by flight from Kangerlussuaq to Iceland or Denmark.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Cabin on board ship
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Inclusions	INCLUSIONS Cabin accommodation on board vessel Charter Flights: Iceland or Denmark – Kangerlussuaq round trip Local transport in Kangerlussuaq on days 1 and 8 City tours in Sisimiut, Qeqertarsuaq, Uummannaq and Ilulissat Museum visits in Sisimiut, Qeqertarsuaq and Ilulissat Church visits in Qeqertarsuaq and Ilulissat 'Kaffemik' visit in Qeqertarsuaq All meals whilst on board Dinner Drinks Package Guiding and lectures by experienced expedition crew All scheduled landings and excursions by zodiac Landing fees Pre and post cruise and ferry transfers Digital visual journal link after the voyage, including voyage log, gallery, species list, and more EXCLUSIONS International Flights (except ones mentioned above) Meals not on board the ship All items of a personal nature Customary gratuities for staff/crew Any pre or post cruise accommodation Any pre or post cruise travel extensions Travel insurance
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)
Single Surcharge	Available on request for some cabin categories. Subject to availability. Contact us for more details.
Notes	Prices are based on per person, twin share* (unless otherwise stated for triple/quad cabins) Prices are correct at time of publishing but are subject to change at any time. Itinerary is subject to change depending on weather and ice conditions
Price Dependent upon	Departure date, fuel surcharges, cabin category, currency fluctuations, seasonality and availability.

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SUSTAINABILITY