

SPITSBERGEN - EXTENDED NORTH & EAST SPITSBERGEN & BEAR ISLAND | ORTELIUS



INTRODUCTION

Why take one polar expedition when you can combine two into an action-packed, wildlife-focused adventure? We've combined our East Spitsbergen cruise (which focuses on polar bears and pack ice) with our North Spitsbergen Basecamp cruise (which includes a variety of free activities) to create an epic tour of an incredible Arctic island.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Largest town, biggest island

You touch down in Longyearbyen, the administrative center of Spitsbergen, the largest island of the Svalbard archipelago. Enjoy strolling around this former mining town, whose parish church and Svalbard Museum make for fascinating attractions. Though the countryside appears stark, more than a hundred species of plant have been recorded in it. In the early evening the ship sails out of Isfjorden, where you might spot the first minke whale of your voyage.



TRIP CODE

ACOWONS

DEPARTURE

25/06/2024

DURATION

16 Days

LOCATIONS

Arctic, Spitsbergen, Bear Island



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DAY 2: Kongsfjorden & Blomstrandhalvøya

Sailing to Raudfjorden, on the north coast of Spitsbergen, you take in an expansive fjord spilling with glaciers – and maybe even visited by ringed and bearded seals. The cliffs and shoreline of this fjord also support thriving seabird colonies, rich vegetation, and the possibility of polar bears.



DAY 3: Exploring the North West

Depending on the weather, you could sail into Liefdefjorden and cruise within sight of the 5-kilometer-long (3.1 miles) face of the precipitous Monaco Glacier. The waters in front of this glacier are a favorite feeding spot for thousands of kittiwakes, and the base of the ice is a popular polar bear hunting ground. If ice conditions prevent sailing here early in the season, an alternate route along the west coast of Spitsbergen can be implemented.



DAY 4: Rugged Raudfjorden

Today you sail into Hinlopen Strait, home to bearded seals, ringed seals, and polar bears. At the entrance there is even the possibility to spot blue whales. After cruising among the ice floes of Lomfjordshalvøya in the Zodiacs, you can view the bird cliffs of Alkefjellet with their thousands of Brünnich's guillemots. On the east side of Hinlopen Strait, you may attempt a landing on Nordaustlandet. Here reindeer, pink-footed geese, and walruses are likely sights. You can take an alternate route if ice prevents entry into Hinlopen.



DAY 5: The stunning sights of Liefdefjorden

The northernmost point of your voyage may be north of Nordaustlandet, in the Seven Islands. Here you reach 80° north, just 870 km (540 miles) from the geographic North Pole. Polar bears inhabit this region, so the ship may park for several hours among the pack ice before wheeling around west again.



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DAY 6: North Spitsbergen splendors

While retracing your route west, keep watch for polar bears and elusive Greenland (bowhead) whales. About 40 nautical miles west of Spitsbergen, you sail the edge of the continental shelf. Here fin whales forage during the summer in the upwelling zones (where cold, nutrient-rich water wells up from below the sea’s surface) that run along the Spitsbergen banks. At the mouth of Kongsfjorden, you have a good chance of sighting minke whales.



DAY 7: Forlandsundet or St. Johns Fjord

Walrus sometimes haul out in Forlandsundet, your next stop. Alternatively, you might sail into St. Johns Fjord or south to the mouth of Isfjorden, landing at Alkhornet. Seabirds nest on these cliffs, Arctic foxes search below for fallen eggs and chicks, and reindeer graze the sparse vegetation. You arrive in Longyearbyen later at night.



DAY 8: Farewell to some, hello to others

Today we arrive in Longyearbyen, typically the endpoint for our Svalbard voyages. But while some passengers will be disembarking, others will have just arrived to join the expedition. Expect to see many new and enthusiastic faces on board.



DAY 9: Spectacular Hornsund

We start the day by quietly cruising the side fjords of the spectacular Hornsund area in southern Spitsbergen, enjoying the scenery of towering mountain peaks. The mountain of Hornsundtind rises to 1,431 meters (4,695 feet), while the peak of Bautaen testifies to why early Dutch explorers gave this island the name Spitsbergen, meaning “pointed mountains.” There are 14 magnificent glaciers in the area, and we have a fair chance of encountering seals and polar bears. The nearby cliffs of Sofiakammen are also home to thousands of pairs of nesting kittiwakes and little auks, and in the evening, we might see thousands of harp seals rutting on ice floes at Sørkapp.



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DAY 10: The seabird colonies of Bear Island

We arrive at the southeastern end of Bear Island, a great place for viewing large seabird colonies. The nearby nesting cliffs are part of an extensive nature reserve where large ships are not allowed to bring passengers on shore. Afterward we'll sail northeast into Sorhamna, where we can get closer to the seabird cliffs. Chiefly Brünnichs guillemots, kittiwakes, and fulmars nest here. Just north of this, in Kvalrossbukta, we will land and see the remains of a whaling station from early in the previous century. We might also make a landing in a shallow valley, such as Rendalen, and look for (at a safe distance) great skuas, large seabirds known to be fiercely territorial. As we continue north along the east side of Bear Island, we may still encounter dazzling shoals of drift ice.



DAY 11: Rarely visited Hopen Island

On the way to Hopen, we may encounter sea ice with rutting harp seals. We land at the southern end of Hopen Island, at Koefoetodden, where you can see the remains of 17th-century whaling sites. Through nearby Bekkeskaret is an easy route to Kvasstoppen (190 meters, 620 feet) and the remains of a plane from World War II. Hopen Radio station is the most remote manned weather station in all of Svalbard.



DAY 12: Kittiwakes, canyons, and south Edgeøya

Sailing along the western side of the Tusenöyane (where we're not allowed to land in summer), you may see polar bears and walruses as we approach Risetreppen. This beautiful canyon features an accessible kittiwake colony. During our walk, we may encounter reindeer on the lush tundra.



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DAY 13: Pomor trappers at Russebukta

At Ardalstangen, we go on shore in an area with lakes and different species of waterfowl. Nearby in Habenichtbukta, we can look from some distance to a wintering site of 18th-century Pomor trappers, who often stayed for years in the same place. Later in the afternoon, we land at the south side of Russebukta, near a tundra with reindeer and great walking opportunities.



DAY 14: Guillemot colony and south Spitsbergen

Today we aim to land at the mountain of Stellingfjellet, near the largest colony of Brünnich's guillemots in Spitsbergen. Later in the day, we will make landings at the rarely visited coast of south Spitsbergen, at the bay of Isbukta.



DAY 15: Bell Sund's flora, fauna, and haunting history

We continue our voyage in Bell Sund, one of the largest fjord systems in Svalbard. The ocean currents make this area slightly warmer than other areas in the archipelago, which shows in the relatively lush vegetation. Here there are excellent opportunities to enjoy both history and wildlife. One possibility is Ahlstrandhalvøya, at the mouth of Van Keulenfjorden, where piles of beluga skeletons can be found. These remains of 19th-century whale slaughter are a haunting reminder of the consequences of rampant exploitation. Fortunately, belugas were not hunted into extinction, and you might even see one here. Alternately, we may land at Millarodden at north side of Bell Sund. Here we can see a walrus haul-out site and possibly make an excursion on the tundra of Ingeborgfjellet, with its thousands of little auks.



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DAY 16: There and back again

Our adventure comes to an end exactly where it started. Today you disembark in Longyearbyen, taking away memories that will accompany you wherever your next journey lies.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Cabin on board ship
Inclusions	<p>Inclusions</p> <p>Voyage aboard the indicated vessel as indicated in the itinerary</p> <p>All meals throughout the voyage aboard the ship including snacks, coffee and tea.</p> <p>All shore excursions and activities throughout the voyage by Zodiac.</p> <p>Program of lectures by noted naturalists and leadership by experienced expedition staff.</p> <p>Free use of rubber boots and snowshoes.</p> <p>Transfers and baggage handling between the airport, hotels and ship only for those passengers on the group flights to and from Longyearbyen.</p> <p>All miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the programme.</p> <p>AECO fees and governmental taxes.</p> <p>Comprehensive pre-departure material.</p> <p>Exclusions</p> <p>Any airfares other than specified</p> <p>Pre & post cruise land arrangements.</p> <p>Passport and visa expenses.</p> <p>Government arrival and departure taxes.</p> <p>Meals ashore unless otherwise specified.</p> <p>Baggage, cancellation and personal insurance (which is strongly recommended).</p> <p>Excess baggage charges and all items of a personal nature such as laundry, bar, beverage charges and telecommunication charges.</p> <p>The customary gratuity at the end of the voyages for stewards and other service personnel aboard (guidelines will be provided).</p> <p>Adventure Options other than specified.</p>
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)

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Single Surcharge	A single supplement surcharge applies and is subject to availability. Please contact us for more information.
Notes	<p>Background on Basecamp cruises: Our Basecamp voyages focus on land and near-shore activities that cause the least amount of disruption to local wildlife. If time and conditions allow, the expedition team will also look for wildlife opportunities.</p> <p>Kayaking and scuba diving are optional extras.</p> <p>Experience in cold-water diving and dry-suit diving (at least 30 dives) is required for diving.</p> <p>Prices are per person, and vary depending on cabin type. Quad, triple, and twin cabins are available.</p> <p>Prices are correct at time of publishing but are subject to change at any time.</p> <p>All entrance fees are subject to change without prior notice.</p> <p>Please note this itinerary is subject to change depending on weather and ice conditions.</p>
Price Dependent upon	Seasonality, currency fluctuation and availability.

SUSTAINABILITY

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