SPITSBERGEN - SVALBARD: NORTH TO THE MIDNIGHT SUN | OCEAN ALBATROS



TRIP CODE

ACABLSNP

DEPARTURE

18/05/2027, 01/06/2027, 03/07/2027, 15/08/2027, 22/08/2027, 19/05/2028, 26/05/2028, 02/06/2028, 09/06/2028, 16/06/2028, 23/06/2028, 30/06/2028, 07/07/2028

DURATION

8 Days

LOCATIONS

Svalbard

INTRODUCTION

On this Svalbard expedition, cruise amid whales, walruses, polar bears, and millions of seabirds to witness the breathtaking beauty of high summer in the Arctic. Our objective is to have a close-up look at the Arctic by going on land explorations, and to sail as close as possible to the pack ice north of Svalbard, which is the polar bear's preferred summer home. The state of the ice will determine our specific path and how far north we go. We will also travel to a number of amazing spots on Svalbard's west coast, many of which are made accessible by the warm Gulf Stream.

Wildlife like arctic foxes and reindeer are busy storing energy for the harsh polar winter throughout the brief summer. A new generation of Arctic sea birds is about to leave its nests in a few months, and the cliffs are alive with the innumerable birds that cling to every surface. You can see razorbills, black guillemots, and Arctic guillemots fishing in the wake of our ship. Huge walruses bask in the brief Arctic summer on the sandy coastlines, while numerous whales and seals feed along the pack ice's edge and the coasts. We have a fleet of durable Zodiac boats that allow us to see wildlife up close. With no place off limits, the Zodiacs let us to make numerous shore landings and go on exploratory mini-cruises around the fjords and glacier vistas. Our excursion's precise path will depend on the wind, sea, and ice conditions in the area, but your experienced expedition leader will make every effort to design the most advantageous schedule. Come along on a genuine Arctic adventure with us!

Please be aware that the precise course of the journey could alter depending on the wind, sea, and ice conditions.

ITINERARY

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DAY 1: Longyearbyen, Spitsbergen. Embarkation

Arrive in Longyearbyen, Svalbard - the world's northernmost... everything! This remarkable little city is not only the northernmost town in the world (if one excludes the tiny research community of Ny-Ålesund, slightly further north on Svalbard), but also hosts the world's northernmost civilian airport, schools, bank and supermarket. The town's rugged frontier edge belies a core of warm Nordic hospitality and coziness - hyggligt, as we say in Denmark! Immediately after landing in Longyearbyen, you find yourself in a different world. The chilly Arctic breeze can be felt as soon as you step onto the tarmac, and the famous signpost outside the terminal reminds visitors how far north they really are; as well as to keep watch for bears! The snow-capped mountain Hjorthfjellet looms over the airport on the far side of Adventfjorden, and off in the distance can be seen the saw-toothed peaks and languid glaciers of northern Spitsbergen. After arrival, you will board the awaiting Ocean Albatros. After our mandatory safety briefing and lifeboat drill, head onto the outer decks to enjoy a glass of champagne while watching your expedition vessel leave civilisation behind... And set a course for adventure!



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DAY 2: Northwest Spitsbergen - Days 2 & 3

One of the largest protected wilderness areas in Europe, North West Svalbard was declared a national park in 1973. The area is famed for its history, which documents some of the earliest human arrivals on Svalbard. While Norse explorers may have sighted these icy shores during the Viking Age, the first definite arrival was the expedition of William Barents, the legendary Dutch explorer for whom the Barents Sea is named. While now protected from human distruption, when Barents arrived in 1596, he noted the vast numbers of whales and seals which were soon prey to English and Dutch whalers, who arrived within a decade of Barents to pillage the area's wildlife. The area occupied the triple point between land, sea and ice, and as such was the perfect location from which to harvest the gentle giants of the oceans. Sites used to dismember whale carcasses and render them for their precious oil include the Dutch settlement of Smeerenburg, where the remains of 16th Century blubber ovens and building foundations can still be seen. Other sites such as nearby Ytre Norskøya record the darker side of this industrialised slaughter, where hundreds of young men who hoped to make their fortunes are buried thousands of miles from home. Today, all that remains from this period of history are bones and the scant remnants of human habitation. Slowly reclaimed by creeping Arctic nature, the region is now a nature lovers paradise. Tiny Arctic poppies and purple saxifrage defy the brutal conditions to flower in the brief summer, while geese, eider ducks and other seabirds return to the island to raise their young. Walrus can be found hauled out on beaches, and we must always be on careful lookout for wandering polar bears in this now again wild region.



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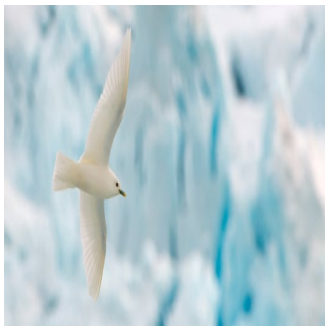
DAY 4: Northeast Svalbard

In the morning we cruise into the vast icy wilderness of northeastern Svalbard. This region does not receive the ocean currents which keep western Svalbard warm and wet, and thus the environment is radicaly different, with rocky polar desert landscapes. Vast glaciers flow from the mountains into the sea, which is often choked with ice, even in summer. While it may appear barren, the truth is it is anything but. Hardy animals such as Arctic foxes eke out a living on these chilly shores, constantly on the lookout for prey. In the cliffs above the sea, hundreds of thousands of seabirds crowd on rocky ledges, carefully tending their precious eggs. While the coastal waters of the area are cold, they are incredibly productive; shellfish grown in abundance, and these in turn are preyed upon by walrus, which are common in the area. The exact locations we visit will depend on the sea, wind and ice conditions in the area, which vary year on year, and can change rapidly even in summer - this is the essence of polar exploration, moving with the rhythms of Mother Nature, and taking the opportunities to explore which she provides!



DAY 5: North Svalbard

Now we reach some of the northernmost pieces of land on Earth - the northerly coasts of Svalbard, barren landscapes almost permanently beset by ice. With luck we may reach the island of Nordaustlandet and hopefully the seven (or nine, depending on how you count) smaller islands of Sjuøyane in the far north of Svalbard. The almost vegetation-free, rocky islands are located around 1000 km more northernly than mainland Norway's famous Nordkapp. Weather permitting, we will land and walk upon these most northern landmasses. The high Arctic islands are quite barren, and only moss and lichens cover the stones. The birdlife is rich in this area, with flocks of grazing geese and some of the rarer gulls frequently seen on these islands. Definitely bring your binoculars! At the end of the day, we will start cruising towards the Arctic ice pack which stretches from Svalbard to the North Pole.



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DAY 6: Into The Ice

An icy breeze touches your exposed cheeks. The scent of snow and sea fills your nostrils. Sunlight reflects off the floating ice, illuminating the clouds overhead. Enter an environment like no other, the vast shape-shifting realm of floating ice which crowns our planet. The vast ever-changing ice pack to the north of Svalbard stretches from this already isolated archipelago to the North Pole, and onwards across the Arctic Ocean towards the northern shores of Chukotka and Alaska. The Arctic ice pack is one of Earth's largest habitats, although unlike most it varies hugely year on year, expanding in winter and retreating in summer. The location of the sea ice around Svalbard can also vary wildly - however, your Expedition Leader will work hard to maximise our chances of finding and exploring this impossibly remote environment. At first glance, this stark white wilderness seems barren, empty and lifeless. This icy wilderness holds on to its mysteries, and of course wildlife sightings are at the whims of Mother NatureWith a little perseverance however, the ice reveals its secrets. As Ocean Albatros pushes through the narrow channels in the ice, tiny cod-like fish can be seen silhouetted against the ice in the clear water. Kittiwakes and Gloucous Gulls follow the vessel as it distrubs the water. Further out on the ice, black dots appear; moving closer, they resolve into seals, basking on the ice. A plume of water reflects the sunshine - a pod of belugas perhaps, or maybe even the vast gentle bowhead whale crushing the ice from below as its massive body surfaces. There, beyond the banks of rucked ice - a yellowish dot pads along the ice, the head swinging from side to side: the King of the Arctic continues his never-ending quest for prey. This is the kingdom of the polar bear, the vast icy wastes at the top of the world.



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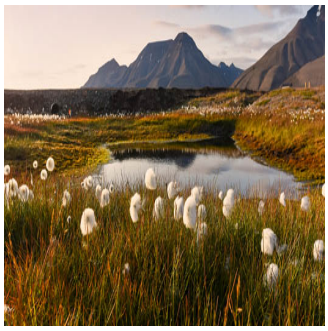
DAY 7: Kongsfjorden Area

During the 'night' (what is night, when the sun never sets?), Ocean Albatros will have repositioned past the saw-toothed mountains of Prins Karls Forland and arrived in magnificent Kongsfjord. Surrounded by craggy mountains, bounded by the magnificent Kongsbreen and Kongvegen Glaciers, and crowned by the Three Crowns (a set of pyramidal mountains said to represent the monarchies of Norway, Sweden and Denmark), this is surely one of the most beautiful and tranquil corners anywhere in the world. Our first landing will be at the small settlement of Ny Ålesund. Situated further north than Longyearbyen, Ny-Ålesund is Earth's northernmost settlement, if a group of scientific stations, a post office and a single shop open for a few hours can be described as such... You will have to judge for yourself! These islands' geographical location has made them the staging post for exploratory and scientific expeditions for centuries - a proud legacy which continues to this day. The setting is spectacular, and the scientific projects are as fascinating as the history of the town, which has hosted the Nobile, the Norge and the Fram, Amundsen, Nansen and Nordenskiöld, all legends of polar exploration who passed this lonely outpost seeking to push the boundaries of humanity. The remnants of these expeditions (such as the mooring mast of the Norge) can still be seen today.



DAY 8: Longyearbyen, Spitsbergen. Disembarkation

During the evening, the Discoverer will reposition to return to the port of Longyearbyen. Even this small town will feel like a metropolis after days of isolation in the wilderness of the Arctic! After enjoying exploring Longyearbyen and a fond farewell to the crew and fellow guests of Discoverer, return to Svalbard Airport with memories to last a lifetime. Please note: Cruise itinerary is subject to change depending on weather conditions, ice conditions and other factors.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

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Accommodation	Cabin on board a ship
Inclusions	**INCLUSIONS** Cabin accommodation on board vessel All meals whilst on board Dinner Drinks Package Guiding and lectures by experienced expedition crew All scheduled landings and excursions by zodiac* Outer Expedition Parka 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** **Mandatory Flight Transfer Package:** Flights between Oslo - Longyearbyen - Oslo and Group Transfer between Longyearbyen Airport and the vessel. The cost is $1,000 USD p/p, approx $1,540 AUD) **at extra cost** Extra excursions and activities not mentioned in the itinerary International Flights (except ones mentioned above) Meals not on board the ship Beverages (other than coffee and tea and dinner-drink package) 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 Parkas are not included
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)
Single Surcharge	Contact Us for details. Single occupancy cabins are available with a surcharge or for those willing to share you can be matched with someone of the same gender in selected cabins and pay the twin share price. Subject to availability.

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Notes	Prices are based on per person, and may be based on quad/triple/twin share. 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. **Mandatory Flight Transfer Package:** Flights between Oslo - Longyearbyen - Oslo and Group Transfer between Longyearbyen Airport and the vessel. To be booked 11 months prior departure. Flights between Oslo - Longyearbyen - Oslo & Group Transfer between Longyearbyen Airport & the vessel, The cost is $1,000 USD p/p, approx $1,540 AUD) **is payable on top of the cost of the cruise in your chosen cabin.** No Discount applies to Mandatory Transfer Package In rare and unforeseen situations, an operator may apply a fuel surcharge after your booking has been confirmed and paid. This is outside our control and uncommon, but transparency with our travelers is important to us.
Price Dependent upon	Departure Date, Fuel Surcharges, Cabin Category, Currency Fluctuations, Seasonality & Availability.

SUSTAINABILITY

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