THE ARCTIC - IN THE HEART OF THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE | L'AUSTRAL



TRIP CODE
ACPOASNW
DEPARTURE
28/08/2027
DURATION
20 Days
LOCATIONS
Canadian Arctic & Greenland

INTRODUCTION

Embark on a 20-day expedition cruise aboard L'Austral, exploring Baffin Bay and the historic Northwest Passage. Departing from Kangerlussuaq, you'll first visit Greenland's western coast, marveling at Disko Bay's UNESCO World Heritage icebergs and vibrant settlements. This leg offers a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in Inuit culture.

Sailing towards Nunavut in Northern Canada, you'll trace the Franklin expedition's route, stopping at Beechey Island and Fury Beach. The journey includes majestic fjords, ice floes, and the chance to spot polar bears and beluga whales. You'll also visit an Inuit settlement in Arctic Bay, forming special connections. This voyage, enriched by naturalists on board, promises unforgettable moments, blending arctic history, stunning landscapes, and wildlife discovery.

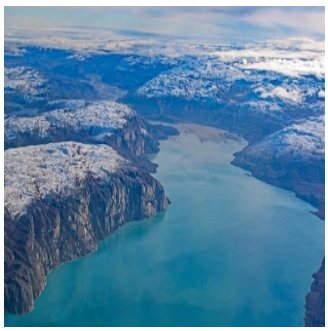
ITINERARY

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DAY 1: Fly to Kangerlussuaq & Embarkation

Today, you will fly from Paris to Kangerlussuaq. Our team of experts will be waiting to assist you with embarkation. 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.



DAY 2: Nooralak

Located a few kilometres away from the Arctic Circle, the Nooralaq peninsula features raw and untamed beauty. Nature reigns supreme here, with the tundra stretching as far as the eye can see, decked out in various forms of flora and inhabited by Greenland's emblematic fauna — snow buntings, common ravens, reindeer, musk oxen, and the discreet Arctic fox. The heights of Nooralaq afford sublime panoramas over the Itteleq fjord, whose water reflects the moving skies of the Far North.



DAY 3: Disko Bay - Day 3 & 4

To the east of Baffin Bay, discover Disko Bay, scattered with countless icebergs produced by the Ilulissat Icefjord, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. From your ship, admire the majestic ballet of these ice giants as they slowly drift across the dark waters. This site is a natural marvel of Greenland, and is also renowned as an observation point for the region's many humpback whales. The encounters with wild fauna and stunning landscapes in the heart of this spectacular and fragile nature will be pure moments of wonder for you.



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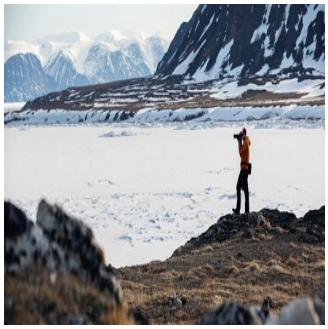
DAY 5: At Sea

During your journey at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This journey without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, depending on the activities offered, or to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.



DAY 6: Pond Inlet, Nunavut

On Baffin Island, located in northern Canada at the mouth of the famous NorthWest Passage, there is a small Inuit settlement at the very bounds of infinity. To get there, cross the Arctic Circle, the imaginary line that separates man from lands of mystery and wonder. It's not so much the way of life that sets Pond Inlet's inhabitants apart, so much as the setting. Snow-capped mountains, fjords and glaciers combine in a dazzling natural environment that fills space and expands time. Some discoveries change you forever: this is one of them.



DAY 7: Philpots Island, Nunavut

Located off the eastern coast of Devon Island, in Nunavut, Philpots Island is an ideal stop for admiring the raw beauty of the Canadian High Arctic. In this remote place, the retreat of the glaciers has given way to small beaches alternating with majestic ice fronts, which you may see from the inflatable dinghies if conditions allow. The site is also a refuge for polar bears, which you may spot in the distance, while drifting icebergs provide resting places for seals and birds.



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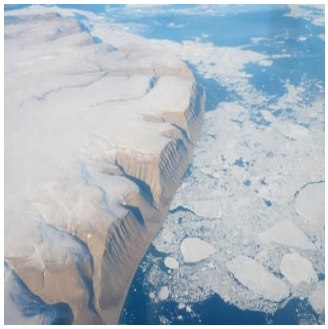
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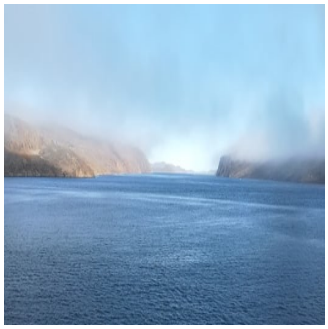
DAY 8: Devon Island, Nunavut

Located in Baffin Bay, Devon Island is part of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. Robert Bylot and William Baffin were the first Europeans to sight Devon Island in 1616 but it would only be mapped two centuries later by the British sailor William E. Parry, who named it after the eponymous English region. Around 1920, the Hudson's Bay Company set up a fur-trading outpost there, until the departure of the Inuits in 1936. A new attempt to populate it was made at the beginning of the 1950s. Only a few buildings in ruins, vestiges of that time, remain today. In the heart of these Far North landscapes, keep your eyes peeled for the Arctic wildlife that populates these shores, including the Lord of the Kingdom, the polar bear, that you may be lucky enough to spot.



DAY 10: Somerset Island, Nunavut

The Canadian Arctic Circle is home to one of the planet’s best preserved natural sanctuaries: Somerset Island. This immaculate northern desert is renowned for its phenomenal landscapes, its midnight sun and its huge tundra, where musk oxen roam. Covering 24,786 square kilometres (15,400 square miles), it is the Arctic archipelago’s ninth-largest island. Vegetation is rare except in some hollows and lowlands, where Peary caribou are common.



DAY 11: Bellot Strait

A key stage in the North West Passage, the Bellot Strait, crossed by strong currents, promises you an unforgettable sailing experience. The entrance to the strait is dominated by the Ross Cairn. The buildings of Fort Ross also stand not far from here. Separating Somerset Island from the Boothia Peninsula, this 2-km-wide strait was discovered in 1852 by Captain William Kennedy of the Royal Navy, and the Frenchman Joseph-René Bellot, during an expedition in search of Sir John Franklin. Discover a magnificent décor covered in snow, fragmented by large ice floes. As you sail between them, your ship will perhaps be accompanied by a few polar bears.



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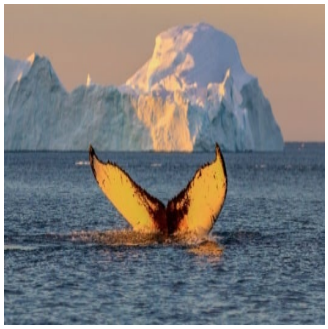
DAY 12: Prescott Island

Prescott Island is located between Somerset Island and Prince of Wales Island, in the heart of Peel Sound, and its shorelines provide a perfect playground for belugas. However, the opportunity to observe and listen to these 'sea canaries" is not the only reason to scan the horizon: here, between the icebergs and the dramatic landscapes, you may also be able to spot polar bears, as well as summon up memories of Sir John Franklin, who was the first to cross Peel Sound in 1846 during his expedition in search of the Northwest Passage, followed in 1903 by Roald Amundsen, who was the first to find a route through that passage!



DAY 13: Lancaster Sound

Between Devon Island and Baffin Island, in the Canadian territory of Nunavut, Lancaster Sound forms part of the Northwest Passage, a shipping route crossing the Canadian Arctic Archipelago, along the northern coast of North America. Coveted for almost 300 years, it saw several expeditions including the fatal one led by John Franklin, seen for the last time near Lancaster Sound in August 1845. Many colonies of cetaceans, polar bears and seabirds have taken up residence in or near these nourishing waters at the confluence of the currents. Situated in Inuit territory, the Sound is the subject of plans to create a marine conservation area intended to protect this rich ecosystem and its inhabitants.



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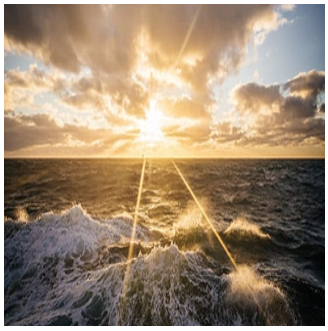
DAY 14: Beechey Island & Devon Island

Beechey Island, at the eastern end of Resolute Bay, will call to mind some of the most important moments of Franklin’s expedition. Sir John set off in 1845 in search of the mythical Northwest Passage and was forced to take shelter in Erebus Harbour for two long years, while he waited for the ice floes to recede and allow him a way through. It is a spectacular location; seeing the three wooden grave markers, bleached by the sun (indicating the burial places of at least three of Captain Franklin’s men) and visiting the memorial that has been erected in memory of Franklin and his men can only reinforce the hushed sense of reverence. If the surrounding wilderness impresses us, the ochre and yellows of the rocky desert soften the landscape. Located in Baffin Bay, Devon Island is part of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. Anchored on the Arctic Cordillera, its rocky surface, similar to that of Mars, is of great interest to scientists. Robert Bylot and William Baffin were the first Europeans to sight Devon Island in 1616 but it would be mapped two centuries later by the British sailor William E. Parry, who named it after the eponymous English region. Around 1920, the Hudson's Bay Company set up a fur-trading outpost there, until the departure of the Inuits in 1936. A new attempt to populate it was made at the beginning of the 1950s. Only a few buildings in ruins, vestiges of that time, remain today.



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DAY 17: Svartenhavn

Nestled at the heart of a silent fjord, the small bay of Svartenhavn opens onto a wild Arctic landscape where rocky hills dotted with tundra meet calm waters. As you walk across this unspoilt land, you will be captivated by its treasures: a historic hut dating from 1920 and a wide array of wildlife, with the area providing a potential refuge for many species, including wild geese, eider ducks, musk oxen and Arctic foxes.



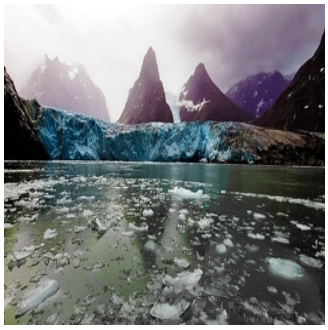
DAY 18: Qeqertarsuaq

On the southern coast of Disko Island, Qeqertarsuaq is one of just two small villages on this island the size of Corsica. Its isolation makes it an observation post popular among naturalists since the beginning of polar exploration and the set-up, in 1906, of the Arctic Centre research facility. During a zodiac cruise you will have the chance to explore the natural wonders of Greenland, meet its wildlife such as the humpback whale and contemplate the basaltic organ landscapes that offer pure moments of wonder for you. In the heart of this spectacular and fragile nature, enjoy the breath-taking views of the grandiose and varied landscapes of Disko Island and Disko Bay.



DAY 19: Evighedsfjorden

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 20: Disembark in Nuuk

Bid farewell to your guides and fellow expedition members before disembarking in Nuuk. When Erik Le Rouge, the exiled Norse chief, landed on the coast of Nuuk, he found a fertile and welcoming land dotted with fjords. He settled there with a group of his former countrymen, and the Norse remained the principal inhabitants until, over a period of 500 years, their population declined and gave way to the Inuit. Nuuk is situated at the mouth of one of the largest networks of fjords in the world, where the waters never freeze. The town spreads gently out towards the Davis Strait and enjoys an historic center that is particularly rich in national heritage. The vivid reds, blues, greens and yellows of the houses are a lively contrast to the somber waters of Greenland and serve to lift the spirits of the locals during the Winter months.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Cabin on board a ship
Inclusions	**INCLUSIONS** Cabin accommodation on board ship All meals whilst on board Charter flight Paris/Kangerlussuaq on Embarkation Day Charter flight Kangerlussuaq/Paris on Disembarkation Day Transfers to/from airport to vessel Guiding and lectures by experienced expedition crew Unlimited Open bar & included Mini bar Free WiFi on board **EXCLUSIONS** International flights Pre and post land arrangements and accommodation in Paris Any optional activities not mentioned in itinerary Visa and reciprocity fees (if applicable) Travel Insurance Any Personal Expenses Optional tipping/gratuities
Difficulty Rating	2 (Light Adventure)

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Single Surcharge	Available upon request, a supplement surcharge applies and is subject to availability. Please contact us for more information.
Notes	Prices are based on per person, and vary from twin share cabins. Prices are correct at time of publishing but are subject to change at any time. All entrance fees are subject to change without prior notice. Please note this itinerary is subject to change depending on weather and ice conditions.* 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 and availability.

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SUSTAINABILITY

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