Realm of the Polar Bear

Trip Code: PRP

Version:

POLAR	GUIDED GROUP	1 LEISURELY



HIGHLIGHTS

- Fantastic zodiac and shore excursions around Spitsbergen
- Spectacular wildlife viewing including Polar Bears and Whales around Svalbard
- Expert team of expedition polar leaders onboard
- Travel on the Expedition, one of the best polar cruise ships

AT A GLANCE

- 7 days Arctic Cruise
- Zodiac boat trips
- Join at Longyearbyen

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

Introduction

This exciting 8-day cruise to the Arctic waters of the Svalbard archipelago is a once in a life time opportunity to see polar bears and other arctic wildlife in their natural habitat while cruising along some of the most remote coastlines in the world. Our home for this incredible holiday is the very comfortable Expedition, a recently refitted and refurbished vessel, uniquely equipped to meet the demands of cruising in polar regions. We board the boat in the world's most northerly town of Longyearbyen on the island of Spitsbergen. From here we explore up and down the west coast of the island investigating the its many fjords and bays. From close-up encounters with icebergs and glaciers to the region's plentiful wildlife, this is a voyage of nonstop highlights. Always on the lookout for wildlife we will explore Svalbard not only by ship but also up close from small Zodiac boats and on foot.

Roaming polar bears, lounging seals, grazing reindeer and colonies of birds all co-exist in this harsh land which is only accessible for just a couple months of the year. Each day of our cruise there are presentations and informative talks from the expert expedition staff on the wildlife, history and environment of the area and these are followed up with excursions in the Zodiacs guided by the expedition staff. There are also opportunities for exploration on foot in the company of polar experts. Outfitted as a cruise ship, the Expedition provides an excellent base for polar exploration. With dining areas, presentation rooms, good sized cabins, and viewing decks, we will have plenty of space and entertainment whilst onboard. After our 8 day cruise through the Arctic waters of Svalbard, we dock at Longyearbyen and disembark with some very special memories.

Is this holiday for you?

This is principally a touring, sightseeing and wildlife viewing holiday, with minimal exertion required. If you choose to go ashore, you will need to make the transfers from the ship to a Zodiac and onto land. Short walks on the island of Spitsbergen are optional and weather dependent. You should also consider that some of the classes of accommodation involve the use of bunk-beds. Whilst on deck or during excursions, you need to be prepared for cold temperatures. The itinerary remains flexible, according to the variability of the weather and sea conditions and the locations of wildlife, particularly of polar bears. On certain departures you can book kayaking, experience is essential for these kayaking excursions. All equipment is provided. Early booking is essential. Cabin upgrades are also available.

The day to day itinerary is for guidance only. Programs may vary depending on local ice and weather conditions and in order to take advantage of opportunities to see wildlife. No two voyages are alike and flexibility is paramount on expedition cruises.

Please see our online Polar Guide for the differences between our departures, ships and more Polar information.

Itinerary

Version:

Extensions

When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.

Holiday Information

What's Included

- Expert Expedition staff
- Single timed airport transfers on arrival and departure days
- All meals whilst on the Expedition
- All Zodiac cruises on Svalbard with expert leaders
- Waterproof boots supplied (different sizes available)
- Lecture and guidance programs during the expedition

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Tips for staff
- Longyearbyen airport transfers (except for single timed transfer)
- Cost of optional kayaking (must be booked in advance - very limited spaces)
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

You will meet at the group hotel in Longyearbyen from where you are transferred to the ship at 4pm on day 1 of the land only itinerary.

Complimentary airport transfers to the group hotel are provided if you are arriving on Day 1 or have booked pre-night accommodation as part of your package through KE Adventure Travel. We recommend that you book an extra night in Longyearbyen prior to departure in case of flight delays. The very latest that you should arrive in Longyearbyen Airport is at 2pm on day 1 of the land only itinerary.

Otherwise the airport shuttle bus, which meets all flights, will drop off at all hotels. The fare is approximately 60 NOK and tickets can be purchased on board.

You need to bring your luggage to the 'group hotel' luggage store between 9am and 12 midday on the day you set sail. This is available for all passengers already in Longyearbyen. A representative of the MS Expedition will be available to check in your bag which will be transferred to the ship.

It is important that you keep your passport with you and you should dress for changeable weather. You will be reunited with your luggage when you reach your cabin. The passenger transfer from the group hotel to the ship will depart at 4pm.

At the end of the trip (the last day of the land only itinerary) Longyearbyen Airport transfers are provided for everyone scheduled to depart on that day.

Clients MUST provide the KE office with full details of their flights. Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals whilst on board the M/S Expedition are included.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your meals with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Food & Water

Water from the taps is perfectly drinkable on this holiday - please use this to fill your personal bottles for your daily activities. We do not encourage the purchase of single-use plastic bottles.

Onboard the ship a diverse range of international dishes is available. Meals are prepared and catered by professional chefs and all meals are included in the trip price. Dining is casual, tables are unassigned and the dining room is capable of seating the entire passenger compliment at one time. There is always a selection of different meals available with plenty of options for vegetarians. Special dietary requirements can be accommodated with advance notice (please advise us at time of booking). Coffee, tea and water are all provided free of charge. All other beverages, alcoholic and non-alcoholic are not included and can be purchased in the dining room, pub or the lounge.

Accommodation

During this trip the group will spend 7 nights on board the fantastic Expedition Polar Cruise Ship.

The Expedition has multiple large public areas to enjoy during sea crossings and in between land excursions. Amenities include:

All cabins with private en suite and outside view,
Library,
Medical clinic with licensed doctor,
Lounge area,
Dining Room - serving international cuisine and large enough to accommodate all passengers in one sitting,
BBQ area,
Forward deck viewing platforms,
Gym,
Gift shop,
Laundry service (for a small additional charge),
Wi-Fi - not guaranteed (for an additional charge),

Accommodation on board is based on a triple cabin with porthole. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired up with other single clients of the same sex. Cabin upgrades to twins and cabins with larger windows are possible (depending on availablity) on the Expedition. Single cabins are also available for an additional cost. Additional hotel nights (before or arrive) in Longyearbyen are available for a supplementary cost.

Group Leader & Support Staff

A carefully chosen team will lead your voyage. The MS Expedition ships boast an international team of professional naturalists and lecturers. Their goal is to provide an informed and balanced interpretation of the destination, accomplished through stimulating lectures, day-to-day briefings, and informal discussions. Your lecturers and Expedition Leader will cover all aspects of the voyage including ornithology, marine biology, geography, geology, history and the environment, as well as practical things like photography. The expedition staff work conscientiously with you on deck and in the field, improving your observational skills to allow you to experience all that the destination has to offer. Their strong sense of ethics and ecological knowledge make for stimulating and mindful conversation whether onshore or at the dinner table. The Expedition Staff will pilot the Zodiac landing craft used for shore landings and Zodiac cruises; they are experienced drivers who operate the Zodiacs in a responsible manner.

Altitude

This holiday does not involve any significant ascent to altitude and we would not expect any altitude issues with this trip.

Spending Money

It is not practical to set a recommended amount for personal spending money on a holiday like this. All meals while on board and the daily Zodiac excursions, are included in the trip price. The main extra spend on board will be on drinks and this will vary greatly from person to person. On board ship, bar bills can be put on a tab and paid at the end of the cruise by credit or debit card or in cash US dollars. You will also need some money for any meals taken in Longyearbyen and for tips. As a guide, we recommend you allow $10 - 15 per day for tips to your crew and expedition staff. It is possible to withdraw cash in Norwegian Kroner from ATM's in Longyearbyen, but we recommend that you bring a minimum of US$200 in cash for emergency situations where you are unable to withdraw money from ATMs. On board all prices are in $ USD.

Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to the staff who have assisted you on your expedition. Tips do not form any part of the wages of the staff but they are very much appreciated. It is important to remember that tipping is voluntary and should be dependent on good service. Normally tips are collected by the Hotel Manager at the end of the voyage and distributed amongst the crew and Expedition Staff. The Officers in charge of the ship choose not to participate in the tipping pool. As a guide, we recommend that each group member contributes around $70-110 to these tips.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a daypack. Luggage with wheels is useful for this holiday. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline (the baggage limit on the domestic flight between Oslo and Longyearbyen is 23kg). Please note that you should be able to carry your own luggage.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the ‘Dates and Prices’ table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

Group Members

As this holiday is run with G Adventures, the minimum age is 10 yrs (anyone under 18 must be travelling with a parent or guardian).

The holiday will be conducted in English. Generally on these trips there will be a mix of nationalities but it is not possible to guarantee this.

General Information

Passport & Visas

Europe

Your passport must meet 2 requirements. It must be:

- less than 10 years old on the day you enter (check the 'date of issue')
- valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date')

For the latest details on visiting countries within the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA), please check the UK Government website

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders.

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required**,** and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates *(see Health & Vaccinations below),* **and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check the FCDO for the latest advice for **each country visited** before travel.

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations:

You should be up to date with the routine vaccinations recommended in the UK for overseas travel.

You must also contact your doctor or travel clinic to check if there are specific vaccinations or other preventive measures that you need for the area you are visiting, in good time before you are due to depart.

Please ensure you are looking at the recommendations for all countries visited on your holiday plus recommendations for any borders you cross.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dental check-up.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates.

Please check the FCDO and Travel Health Pro. For all of your intended destinations for up-to-date advice.

Severe Allergies:

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips.

Currency

The currency for part or all of this holiday is the Euro.

When on the ship everything is priced is US$. If you are paying in cash you will need US$, if you are paying by card your bank will use their exchange rate.

Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on an active holiday getting some additional exercise. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. Although this is principally a cruise holiday you will have the opportunity for walks on Spitzbergen and a basic level of fitness is required to get in and out of the Zodiacs.

Climate

Svalbard's location within the Arctic circle is the biggest factor on climate but temperatures especially around the coast are moderated by the influence of the warm North Atlantic Current which keeps the waters navigable for most of the year and average summer temperatures at around 4 to 6°C. However, on deck with a sea breeze, the wind chill can bring the real feel temperature below freezing. Precipitation is frequent, but falls in small quantities, typically less than 400 millimetres in western Spitsbergen.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's **'Travel Aware'** campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. All other nationalities should check their government websites for relevant information.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- Spitsbergen. Andreas Umbreit - Bradt Guides
- The Arctic, A Guide to Coastal Wildlife. Tony Soper
- A Naturalist's Guide to the Arctic. E.C. Pielou
- Flora of Svalbard. Olaf I Ronning
- Birds and Mammals of Svalbard. Norsk Polarinstitutt
- Ice Bears and Kotick. Ranulph Fiennes
- Arctic Dreams. Barry Lopez
- Polar Bear. Ian Stirling

Maps

Spitsbergen Explorer Ocean Explorer 1:1,100.000

The Svalbard archipelago, at 1:1,000,000 approx. on a tourist map with extensive additional information. On one side is a map of the whole Svalbard group showing settlements and various topographic features. The reverse side has biographies of 27 polar explorers plus colour photos and descriptions of several species of fauna and flora.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our Travel Insurance page for further information and to get a quote.

Explore International

This holiday is part of our Explore International range. Participants on these trips can book through KE or through our international partner. This helps us to gather together sufficient numbers of like-minded adventurers to get your holiday up and running quickly. Led by an English-speaking guide, the cosmopolitan nature of these groups can be an important part of the experience!

Equipment Information

Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum. Dress on board is informal. Beware of tight clothing that leaves no room for trapped air, which is an excellent insulator. Wool, silk and some of the new synthetic fibers, like polar fleece, retain heat better than cotton.

You must bring the following items:

- Casual shoes / Trainers or similar for onboard
- Rubber boots (Wellington boots)*
- Walking shoes*

- Socks (Warm, high wool or similar socks worn over a thin pair of silk, polypropylene socks should provide enough warmth and insulation for your feet. Bring several pairs of socks, since you will inevitably get your feet wet)
- Waterproof jacket
- Trekking trousers
- Waterproof trousers
- Thermal baselayer - leggings
- Underwear
- Baselayer shirts
- Casual shirt and/or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper/sweater
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Scarf and/or buff
- Sunglasses
- Gloves or mittens (Thin polypropylene gloves under warm and waterproof gloves is a good combination)
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottles 1 Litre x1 (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash

- Small towel
- Selection of dry bags (to keep rucksack contents dry)
- Small daypack
- Warm jacket (down)
- Basic First Aid Kit including: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, and plasters. Glucose tablets and multi-vitamin tablets are also a good idea

The following items are optional:

- Warm Ski pants
- Shorts
- Spare gloves
- Travel clothes
- Camera (in a dry bag)
- Binoculars
- Pen-knife (remember to pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Seasickness remedy
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Notes

***Rubber boots / Wellington boots -** Complimentary waterproof boots are supplied for the following sizes:

- Men's USA size 8-14 / UK size 7 to 13½ / Europe 41 to 48½
- Women's USA size 3 to 9 / UK size 1 to 6½ / Europe 33 to 40

If you have different feet sizes to these you should bring your own rubber boots. These should be rubber, waterproof boots that are just below your knee with a strong, ridged non-skid sole.

Kayak Excursion (pre-booking essential) - If you choose the optional Kayak Excursion please ensure you have enough layers with you to keep you warm. You will need thermal underwear and vest (note that cotton is not acceptable), polypropylene/ pile (polar fleece) trousers and non bulky jacket, a fleece or tight knit wool cap (X2), a neck tube or balaclava, mid weight fleece gloves. You should also take dry bags for personal gear/camera. You will be supplied with: Kokatat Supernova Paddling suits, paddles, floatation vest, spray skirt, neoprene pogies (paddling mittens) and neoprene booties. You will be required to have with you thermal layers suitable for temperatures ranging between -5°C (23°F) to +7°C (45°F)

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary joining in Longyearbyen. For clients making their own flight arrangements, Longyearbyen Airport is the most convenient for transfers to the group hotel. Please refer to 'Joining Arrangements and Transfers' for further details.

Flights SHOULD NOT be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

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Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London (Heathrow) to Longyearbyen airport with Scandinavian Airlines via Oslo. Outbound flights will depart from the UK at lunchtime, arriving in the afternoon of the following day (day 1 of the itinerary), this requires an overnight in Norway (Oslo) which is included in the flight inclusive price. Return flights will depart Longyearbyen after lunch of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK in the same evening. Due to flight schedules, on certain departures it is also required to overnight in Oslo on the return. Regional departures and/or alternative carriers are available on request. Please note that the Oslo Hotel will be based at the airport. If you want to stay at an alternative hotel in the city, then these arrangements must be made by yourself. Please let our staff know when booking.

Please be aware that there are often only a limited number of seats available at the advertised price. To avoid paying flight supplements, we recommend that you book as early as possible, especially during peak times. If we are unable to secure seats at the price shown, or you have requested regional departures, we will contact you with an alternative quote. Please note that you may be asked to pay for your flights in advance of your final holiday balance. Note that if you book a package including flights with KE you will benefit from full financial protection.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London Heathrow to Longyearbyen airport with SAS via Oslo. Outbound flights will depart from the UK in the evening arriving in the morning of the following day (Day 1 of the itinerary), this requires an overnight in Norway (Oslo) which is included in the flight inclusive price. Return flights will depart Longyearbyen after lunch of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK in the same evening. Due to flight schedules, on certain departures it is also required to overnight in Oslo on the return. Regional departures and/or alternative carriers are available on request. Please note that the Oslo hotel will be based at the airport. If you want to stay at an alternative hotel in the city, then these arrangements must be made independently. Please let our staff know when booking.

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Why Choose KE

Why KE

KE's very own Chloë has travelled on this fantastic holiday - get in touch with the KE office to chat through the trip. No surprise costs.All zodiac excursions, landings and all meals on board are included in the price

Please Note This document was downloaded on 11/11/2026 and the trip is subject to change