

Polar Bear Encounters

Country(ies): Arctic

Tour type: Private

Transport: Expedition vessel

Group size: Min: 1 | Max: 0

Days: 8 Days

Start location: Longyearbyen, Spitsbergen

End location: Longyearbyen, Spitsbergen

Departs On: Monday, Tuesday & Friday

Meals: Breakfasts - 7, Lunches - 6, Dinners - 7

Highlights:

Unique Arctic wildlife, pristine wilderness landscapes, Zodiac boat trips, chance to see polar bear, spectacular fjord & glaciers

Places Visited: Longyearbyen, Raudfjord, Liefdefjorden & Hinlopen Strait



Itinerary

Day 1: Longyearbyen, evening set sail

Arrive in Longyearbyen, the administrative capital of the Spitsbergen archipelago of which West Spitsbergen is the largest island. Before embarking there is an opportunity to stroll around this former mining town, whose parish church and Polar Museum are well worth visiting, while in the surrounds of Longyearbyen, more than 100 species of plant have been recorded. In the early evening the ship will sail out of Isfjorden.

OVERNIGHT: Expedition vessel

MEALS: Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 2: Sail to Raudfjord

We visit Raudfjord on the north coast of West Spitsbergen, beautiful fjords dominated by spectacular glaciers and favoured by Ringed and Bearded Seal and where we often see Polar Bear. The cliffs and shoreline of the fjord also support thriving seabird colonies and a surprisingly rich vegetation, which flourishes in sheltered spots.

OVERNIGHT: Expedition vessel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 3: Sail into Liefdefjord, Monaco Glacier

Depending on the weather we may sail into Liefdefjord to marvel at the massive, 5km long, face of the Monaco Glacier. This precipitous wall of ice is a favourite feeding place for thousands of kittiwakes, and polar bears can sometimes be seen.

OVERNIGHT: Expedition vessel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 4: Sail into Hinlopen Strait

We push east towards the Hinlopen Strait, which is home to polar bears, ringed & bearded seals, and ivory gulls. You may even spot blue whales here if you're lucky. We'll take to the Zodiacs to cruise amongst the ice floes of Lomfjordshalvoya and explore the cliffs at Alkerfjellet, where thousands of Brunnich's guillemots reside. We may attempt a landing on the east side of the Hinlopen Strait where it is possible to see reindeer, walrus, pink-footed geese and ivory gulls.

OVERNIGHT: Expedition vessel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 5: Sail to Phippsøya in the Seven Islands

Today we will reach our northernmost point at Phippsøya, in the Seven Islands north of Nordaustlandet, if weather permits. Here we will be at 81 degrees north, just 540 miles from the geographic North Pole. Polar Bear inhabit this region, along with Ivory Gull.

OVERNIGHT: Expedition vessel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 6: Sail along the edge of the continental shelf

Retracing our route westwards, our route takes us through and along the pack ice, keeping watch for Polar Bear and the elusive Greenland Whale (Bowhead). About 40 nautical miles west of Spitsbergen we sail along the edge of the continental shelf, where Fin Whale forage in summer in the upwellings along the Spitsbergen banks. At the mouth of the Kongsfjord we have also good chances to see Minke Whale.

OVERNIGHT: Expedition vessel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 7: Sail into St. Johns Fjord or the mouth of Isfjorden

In Forlandsundet at Sarstangen, our next stop, there is a haul out place for Walrus. Alternatively we sail into St. Johns Fjord or south to the mouth of Isfjorden and land at Alkhornet. Seabirds nest on its cliffs and Arctic Fox search the cliff base for fallen eggs and chicks, while Spitsbergen Reindeer graze the relatively luxuriant vegetation. At nighttime we arrive in Longyearbyen.

OVERNIGHT: Expedition vessel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 8: Arrive Longyearbyen, cruise ends

Return to Longyearbyen and disembark ready for flights to Oslo and home.

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Included

- Voyage aboard the indicated vessel as indicated in the itinerary
- All meals throughout the voyage aboard the ship including snacks, coffee and tea
- All transport in private vehicles
- All shore excursions and activities throughout the voyage by Zodiac
- Program of lectures by noted naturalists and leadership by experienced expedition staff
- Free use of rubber boots and snowshoes
- AECO fees and governmental taxes
- All miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the programme
- Comprehensive pre-departure material

Excluded

- International flights (can be arranged on request)
- Visas
- Arrival/departure airport transfers
- Hotel accommodation in Longyearben if required
- Travel insurance (compulsory)
- Optional activities
- Departure taxes
- Tips
- Meals, drinks & snacks not mentioned in the itinerary
- Any other items not mentioned in the itinerary

Notes

Note: This itinerary is for guidance only. Programs may vary depending on local ice and weather conditions, the availability of landing sites and opportunities to see wildlife. The final itinerary will be determined by the Expedition Leader on board. Flexibility is paramount for expedition cruises. The average cruising speed for M/V Ortelius is 10.5 knots.

Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting.

However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements.

Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

1. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

2. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

3. Responsible Tourism

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudice: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

4. Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

www.facebook.com/encounterstravel

www.twitter.com/encounterstravl (yes, without the 'e')

5. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event). [More information...](#)

You may arrange your own insurance, or you can take advantage of a comprehensive policy that we can arrange for you through Endsleigh Insurance which has been designed to be suitable for our tours. The policy is available to travellers of all nationalities and you do not need to live in the UK to take out the policy. For full details of cover provided, prices and to apply for one of our policies, please complete [travel insurance application form](#).

Note: Any country that borders the Mediterranean is considered as 'Europe' for the purposes of travel insurance (including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Morocco). If you are doing a tour that visits one country in 'Europe' and one that is 'Worldwide' (for example, an Egypt and Jordan tour), then you need a 'Worldwide' policy. When completing the form you should enter your travel dates including any extra days involved in overnight flights or connecting travel between your home and the tour. Our policies are not able to cover any extra time or activities other than your tour and options booked with us and your travel to & from home.

Note - to comply with insurance sales regulations, our travel insurance policies are only available to customers booking directly with us. If you have booked through a travel agent you will need to arrange your own insurance.

If your tour includes car hire, or if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.

Covid-19

Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable. Details about our own policies cover levels are given [on our website](#).

6. Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign which provides further useful and invaluable information.



Printed on: Monday 6th of May 2024

Note: Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.
