

Northern Lights Adventure

Country(ies): Arctic

Tour type: Private

Transport: Expedition vessel

Group size: Min: 8 | Max: 20

Days: 8 Days

Start location: Longyearbyen, Spitsbergen

End location: Longyearbyen, Spitsbergen

Departs On: Sunday

Meals: Breakfasts - 8, Lunches - 6, Dinners - 7

Highlights:

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

Places Visited: Longyearbyen, Trygghamna, Fridtjovhamna, Recherche fjord & Barentsburg



Itinerary

Day 1: The largest town on the largest island

After landing at the airport in Longyearbyen, if you have booked the group flight, one of our staff members will meet you to start your Northern Lights adventure. If you have booked your own flight, airport arrival and departure transfers are available on request. The small, mining town of Longyearbyen is the administrative center of Spitsbergen and the largest island of the Svalbard archipelago.

Today you'll have the chance to explore this former mining town, a parish church and the Svalbard Museum. As the evening comes along, we'll take to the water and sail towards the bay of Trygghamna, visiting the remains of a 17th century English whaling station and 18th century Pomor hunting station.

We'll overnight in Trygghamna, its name which literally means safe harbour in English.

OVERNIGHT: Expedition vessel

MEALS: Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 2: Glacial Fjords, historical finds

Your day starts early as we say goodbye to Trygghamna and set sail to the north side of Bellsund, a 20-kilometre long sound situated on the west coast of Spitsbergen and forms part of the Svalbard Archipelago.

Bellsund is home to a fjord system with two major branches: Van Mijenfjord and Van Keulenfjord - and one smaller side bay, Recherchefjord - which is named after the French cruiser La Recherche, which visited Spitsbergen in 1838 and 1839.

The geology has created particularly unique landscapes here, such as the long and narrow island of Akseløya, which blocks Van Mijenfjord almost completely.

OVERNIGHT: Expedition vessel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 3: Exploring Fridtjovhamna and the largest glacier north of Nordenskiöld

Today you'll sail to Fridtjovhamna, to explore a calving glacier called Fridtjovbreen in the Nordenskiöld Land at Spitsbergen. Stretching for about 14 kilometres, Fridtjovbreen is the largest glacier north of Nordenskiöld and gets its name from a hunting vessel used during the Torell expedition to Spitsbergen. The rich wildlife of this area has attracted hunters throughout the centuries.

OVERNIGHT: Expedition vessel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 4: Journeying through Ahlstrandhalvøya

Today you'll explore Ahlstrandhalvøya, which forms a series of small peninsulas with adjacent islets on the southern

side of Van Keulenfjord.

Here at Ahlstrandhalvøya, you can walk in the hunters' footsteps, examining the remains of their huts. You'll find large piles of Beluga whale bones on its beach, the consequences summer-hunting of yesteryear.

Ahlstrandhalvøya is also a great place for birdwatching, boast a rich diversity of birdlife. It's also an important feeding area for barnacle geese and female common eider. Other species of birds that you can find here include waders, ruddy turnstones, purple sandpipers, sanderling and grey phalaropes.

Recherchefjord has one of the highest concentration of historical sites in all of Spitsbergen, ranging from 17th century whaling culture to the mining period of the early 20th century.

OVERNIGHT: Expedition vessel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 5: Beluga whales and polar bears

Let's explore the Recherchebreen glacier, which is about 16 kilometres long and ends at a lagoon, nestled between the Martinfjella and Observatoriefjellet Mountains.

You have the opportunity to spot polar bears here, which are commonly sighted all over Bellsund, as well as Beluga whales, which are frequent visitors in its waters.

OVERNIGHT: Expedition vessel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 6: Russian waypoints

Our next stop is a visit to Barentsburg, the only Russian inhabited settlement in Spitsbergen. It's about 60 kilometres from Longyearbyen, and is the home of the Barentsburg Pomor Museum, created by the Dutch in the 1920's features the history of Pomor trade with mainland Russia, Russian mining and history of Svalbard.

You also have the option of visiting Colesbukta, an abandoned Russian coal mining settlement located at the at the southern side of Isfjorden, in Nordensköld.

OVERNIGHT: Expedition vessel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 7: Chasing the Arctic chill

Today we'll set sail to the inner reaches of the Isfjord fjord system in Svalbard. Here, you'll see new ice forming on the heads of the fjords.

It can get quite chilly though, so dress warmly. Temperatures can drop to as low as -10° C (14° F), depending on how clear the sky is.

OVERNIGHT: Expedition vessel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 8: Bon Voyage!

Unfortunately, all good things come to an end. You'll say goodbye to Longyearbyen and, if you have booked the group flight, we'll transfer you to the airport for your flight back home. The memories of your Northern Lights Adventure will stay with you forever though!

OVERNIGHT: Expedition vessel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

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 (will be included if booking the group flight into and out of Longyearbyen)
- Hotel accommodation in Longyearbyen 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

The autumn Spitsbergen voyages, just at the onset of winter, are ideal for observing the northern lights.

The itinerary above is a typical example of how this tour works but is given for guidance only. The final schedule may vary depending on current weather and ice conditions, availability of landing sites, and the location and recent sightings of important wildlife. This kind of flexibility is essential for expedition cruises and the final itinerary will be decided by the Expedition Leader on board the boat.

Willingness to compromise on comfort is a basic requirement on board a historic sailing vessel.

Important information about the sailing program: The boat is equipped with sails to be used in good conditions (based on open sea, water depth, wind, and time). This is not guaranteed. The captain decides whether to use the sails or the engine. There is no claim to one or the other propulsion method. If sails are used, the crew operates them. Guests follow the safety instructions of the team. Average cruising speed for s/v Noorderlicht is 6 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. Expedition Vessel - s/v Noordelicht

Specifications

Passengers: 20 in 10 cabins

Staff & crew: 5

Length: 46 meters (153 ft)

Breadth: 6.5 meters (22 ft)

Draft: 3.2 meters (11 ft)

Ice class: Strengthened bow

Displacement: 300 Ts

Propulsion: 360 hp diesel

Speed: 6 knots average cruising speed

Noorderlicht: [download pdf](#)

History of S/V Noorderlicht

The 'Noorderlicht' was originally built in 1910 in Flensburg, Germany as a three-masted schooner. For most of her existence she served as a light-vessel on the Baltic. In 1991 the present owners purchased the hull and re-rigged and refitted her thoroughly, under the rules of "Register Holland".

Perfect for expedition cruising among small islands

The Noorderlicht now has a well-balanced two-masted schooner rig and is capable of sailing the seven seas, and is therefor well suited for expedition cruising among small islands and offer good open deck viewing areas, also when under sail. The 2 inflatable rubber crafts (zodiacs) enable landing and wildlife viewing opportunities in otherwise inaccessible areas. The qualified captains have a great experience of the oceans. Together with the rest of the crew, they will do everything possible to ensure that you have a wonderful and unforgettable journey. Flexibility is paramount for expedition cruises. Willingness to compromise on comfort is a basic requirement on board of a historic traditional sailing vessel.

2. Cabin accommodation

The Noorderlicht provides accommodation for 20 travellers in small twin cabins. All cabins have upper and lower berths, a cupboard and wash basin with hot and cold water. Shared shower (4) and toilet (5) facilities are conveniently located. All cabins have a small hatch in the ceiling which vary in size, except cabin 6 which has a small, locked porthole in the ceiling but ventilation slots in the door. On occasion and depending on weather situation those hatches will be opened by the crew to allow fresh air ventilation of the complete lower deck (including cabin 6) while passengers go ashore.

An optional supplement is available for solo travellers who would like to enjoy private occupancy of their cabin. If you are a solo traveller and are happy to share a cabin with another traveller of the same sex, this will be arranged and you will not need to pay this supplement.

3. Life on board

Age and Nationality

Passengers on a typical voyage range from their 30s to their 80s - with a majority usually from 45 - 65, but a little younger on the Noorderlicht. Our expeditions attract independent-minded travellers from around the world. They are characterised by a strong interest in exploring remote regions. The camaraderie and spirit that develops aboard is an important part of the expedition experience. Many departures have several nationalities on board.

Catering

Three meals of international cuisine per day are served in the mess room and prepared by our cook.

Dress code

In keeping with our expeditions atmosphere, dress on board is informal. Bring casual and comfortable clothing for all activities. Keep in mind that much of the spectacular scenery can be appreciated from deck, which can be slippery. Bring sturdy shoes with no-slip soles and make sure the parka is never far away in case of the call "Whales!" comes over the loudspeaker and you have to dash outside. Wear layers since it is comfortably warm aboard the ship - and often cold on deck.

Excursions & Landings

Every day there will be excursions on land, weather and ice permitting. The landings will take three to six hours per day over untracked area. According to circumstances (the weather, the ice-situation or the passengers' wishes) the program can sometimes be adjusted. Ample time will be devoted to wildlife, vegetation, geography and history.

Gratuities

The customary gratuity to the ship's crew and expedition leader is made as a blanket contribution at the end of the voyage. You will receive detailed guidelines aboard. Tipping is a very personal matter and the amount you wish to give is at your discretion.

We suggest to give cash Euros or Norwegian Crowns.

Non-smoking policy

On board our vessel we have a non-smoking policy. It is prohibited to smoke inside the ship. Please respect the wishes of non-smokers.

The crew

The crew of the Noorderlicht consists of three expert Dutch sailors, a cook and an expedition leader. The sailors are in charge during sailing and will bring us ashore. Whilst sailing the assistance of the passengers is appreciated for handling the sails and taking the helm. This includes being on watch during nightly sailing.

4. Transfers

Arrival and departure transfers are included in Longyearben to connect with the shared group flights. If you are arriving by other means, transfers are not included.

5. Health and Fitness

You must be in good general health and you should be able to walk several hours per day. The expedition is ship-based and physically not very demanding. Although we spend as much time as possible ashore, you are welcome to remain aboard the ship if you like. To join most excursions, you must be able to get up and down the steep gangway from the ship to the water level to board the Zodiacs. Staff will assist you in and out of the boats. This will become progressively easier with practice. Ashore it can be slippery and rocky. You are travelling in remote areas without access to sophisticated medical facilities, so you must not join this expedition if you have a life-threatening condition, or need daily medical treatment.

6. Voltage

The electrical supply aboard the ship is 220 volt 50hz. Electrical outlets are standard European with two thick round pins. U.S. passengers may need a 220v/110v converter.

7. 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.

8. 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](#).

9. 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.

10. 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 prejudge: 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).

11. 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](https://twitter.com/encounterstravl) (yes, without the 'e')

12. 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.



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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.
