Spitsbergen and Polar Bears - An Arctic Adventure (A)

→ Longyearbyen, Svalbard - Longyearbyen, Svalbard

This adventure voyage on MS Nordstjernen is the essential Spitsbergen experience. You spend one night on land and the rest at sea sailing along the west coast of Spitsbergen. Explore the extraordinary Arctic landscape, glaciers, fjords and magnificent Arctic Wildlife. If we are really lucky we might just see the King of the Arctic; the polar bear.

Travel Period: May - September 2018

Duration: 6 Days

Ship: MS Nordstjernen
Chance of seeing polar bears

Cross 80° N and come ashore to explore the Arctic wilderness

Experience the Midnight Sun (until 23 August), giving you 24 hours of daylight to discover Svalbard

Expedition on board the nostalgic MS Nordstjernen

Spitsbergen is the crown of Arctic Norway; an island forged by wind, ocean, ice and snow. Because of its location it is a biological hot spot. This is where the frigid Arctic Ocean meets the warmer currents of the Gulf Stream.

Longyearbyen and Barentsburg

The fascinating settlements of Spitsbergen have their own distinct atmosphere. A common aspect
is the rough and tumble pioneering spirit on which they were founded. This adventure starts in the Norwegian settlement often referred to as the capital of Svalbard. Here you’ll find all the amenities of a modern small town – situated in a fantastic Arctic landscape. The history of Longyearbyen is rich with a tradition of coal mining, and remnants from the early mining ventures can be seen everywhere. In the Russian settlement of Barentsburg, there will be opportunities to visit the Pomor Museum (optional) and see a lively folklore show. After this visit we will continue out of Isfjorden and head north along Prins Karls Forland.

Crossing 80° N

We sail into Magdalenefjorden and the North West corner. Here you’ll cultural heritage; a whaling station from the 16th century. We will make a tender boat landing here. Moffen is a high latitude islet, set above the 80th parallel. It is popular with walrus, and we will try to reach this far north if wind and ice conditions allow.

Striking fjords and Ny-Ålesund

Woodfjorden and Liefdefjorden are large fjords in North Spitsbergen that offer a strikingly varied landscape – from large plains to remnants of extinct volcanoes and even the northernmost hot spring on earth. When we are cruising towards the Monaco glacier, we might get lucky and spot a polar bear searching for seals or bird eggs. Kongsfjorden is the largest fjord on the northwest coast of Spitsbergen. The landscape varies from large tundra plains to alpine peaks with dramatic glaciers tumbling into the ocean. At the end of the fjord, you will find the majestic Kongsbreen (King’s Glacier). At 78° 55’ N, Ny-Ålesund is one of the world’s northernmost year-round communities. Previously a coal mining community, Ny-Ålesund is now an advanced High Arctic research station. A number of countries run their own national research stations here, and there is a lot of activity here in the summer. On our way back to Longyearbyen, we will sail into the most prominent fjord system on Svalbard. Marvel at the large U-shaped valleys, carved out of the mountains by giant glaciers that covered the area ten thousand years ago.

The grand dame of Hurtigruten

Explore this extraordinary natural world from MS Nordstjernen, a ship that is rich in character with an aura of nostalgia. She was built for the Hurtigruten fleet in 1956, but has been extensively modernized. Her classic wooden interior fittings combined with more modern comfort creates an extraordinary atmosphere. Because MS Nordstjernen is a small vessel, she will take us to the less accessible pearls of these beautiful coastlines, making your voyage one-of-a-kind and truly unforgettable.

During the entire adventure, our programme of shore excursions will take you close to both Arctic wildlife and the cultural reminders of the early whaling era.
Price includes:

- Hurtigruten Expedition in cabin grade of your choice on a full board basis
- Transfer airport to hotel in Longyearbyen
- One hotel night before and one hotel night after the voyage in Longyearbyen including breakfast and lunch
- 3 hours sightseeing including Camp Barentz and Museum ending at the pier for embarking
- Transfer ship to airport in Longyearbyen
- Landings with small boats and activities on board and ashore
- Professional English-speaking Expedition team that gives lectures on shore as well as accompany landings and activities
- Free tea and coffee

Not included:

- International flights
- Travel insurance
- Luggage handling
- Optional Gratuities
The Itinerary

This is an expedition where the elements rule, and the weather, wind and ice conditions will determine our final schedule. Safety is paramount and the captain will decide the sailing itinerary during the voyage. Therefore, this itinerary is just an indication of what you can experience, and why every expedition with Hurtigruten is unique.

May - September 2018

Departs From:

*Longyearbyen*

DAY 1

**Coal mining history and Arctic nature**

*Location: Longyearbyen*

Your adventure starts with an overnight stay in Longyearbyen. This Norwegian settlement is a unique little town. While the arctic environment is dominant, it is also a surprisingly cosmopolitan place, with art galleries, pubs, long wine lists at restaurants, stores and a mini-mall. Longyearbyen is often called an antidote to the stress of modern day life and is a prime destination for adventure travellers. Reminders of the history and heritage of early coal miners can be seen everywhere. When Coal Mine number 1 was opened in the 1930’ s, the miners moved into flimsy two-story barracks. When World War II ravaged Europe,
Svalbard was also impacted when Nybyen was set on fire in 1943. After the war, the miners moved back and into the newly built barracks. These “barracks” have been completely renovated to offer our guests a high standard of comfort. Spitsbergen Hotel was originally built as an accommodation and dining area for employees of Store Norske Spitsbergen Coal Company. It was also the company’s official representational building. Its interior and architecture made it Longyearbyen’s grandest construction. The hotel is preserved and decorated using its history. It's well worth walking through the corridors and public areas to look at the historical photographs and pictures, old maps and newspaper stories. Situated on "The Hill", it gives you great views of Longyearbyen, the Lars- and Longyear glacier. The hotel was constructed in 1947, but has been extensively refurbished over the years. You spend the night in one of these hotels.

DAY 2

Discover two very different settlements

**Location: Longyearbyen and Barentsburg**

After breakfast, you are invited to a guided sightseeing tour in Longyearbyen that includes visits to the Svalbard Museum and Gallery Svalbard. This fantastic museum is really worth a visit, as it will provide you with a great deal of background information on all that you will come to experience on your expedition. Then its time to embark on the adventure and MS Nordstjernen. We sail south in Isfjorden until we reach the Russian settlement Barentsburg. This “company coal mining town” has been Russian since 1932, and is still home to about 500 people. Here you can explore the exotic collection of old Russian
artefacts and architecture, join a folklore show or soak up the real Russian atmosphere in the local pub.

DAY 3

Chances of seeing polar bears

Location: Woodfjorden, Liefdefjorden, Moffen and 80°North
The North West Spitsbergen National Park is a rich environment, with islands, fjords and beaches, all with a long history of exploration. When Willhelm Barentz first sighted Svalbard in 1596, this was the land he first saw. The name he gave to this new land was ‘Spitzbergen’, reflecting the sharp and steep mountains in the area. Look forward to exploring some of the most spectacular fjords of Northern Spitsbergen. Deep inside the giant Woodfjord system you will find the enormous and fast moving Monaco Glacier. In front of this crevassed glacier front there is always brash ice as well as larger pieces that have “calved off”. Sometimes we also visit the Jotunkjeldane thermal springs, the northernmost documented thermal springs on Earth. These large fjords offer a strikingly varied landscape – from the largest flat plain on Svalbard; Reinsdyrflya (the reindeer plain), to the red stone of Devonian geology, to remnants of volcanoes. The day will be spent cruising towards the Monaco glacier, passing a number of small islets where eider ducks nest during the summer. If we are lucky, we may spot a polar bear searching for eggs here. Be on the lookout for the arched back of the occasional minke whale and bearded seals sunbathing on ice floes close to the glacier front. If the ice conditions are favourable, we will sail past 80° North and towards Moffen, an island which is often host to walrus.
Location: Kongsfjorden and Ny-Ålesund
Kongsfjorden is the largest fjord in the Northwest coast of Spitsbergen. It is also known as King’s Bay. There is also a very good chance that we will cruise into a large side fjord called Krossfjorden. The landscape varies from large tundra plains to alpine peaks with dramatic glaciers tumbling into the ocean. Be sure to sight for the mountain Mitra – named for a ‘Mitre’ or a catholic bishop’s hat – located on the northern shore of the entrance to Kongsfjorden. At the end of the fjord you will see the majestic Kongsbreen (King’s Glacier) with the three characteristic nunataks: Nora, Dana and Svea –named after the three Scandinavian countries. Later we dock at Ny-Ålesund. Situated at 78° 55’ N, this is one of the world’s northernmost year-round communities. Previously a coal mining centre, it is now an advanced High Arctic research station. A number of countries run their own national research stations here, and the activity is particularly high in the summer.
Cruising into Isfjorden

Location: Isfjorden and Longyearbyen
Located in central Spitsbergen, Isfjorden is the most prominent fjord system on Svalbard. We will spend the morning sailing towards Longyearbyen. One of the most noticeable mountains in this area is Alkhornet, where thousands of brünnich’s guillemots nest during the summer season. As we sail into the outer parts of the fjord, the landscape changes. Marvel at the large U-shaped valleys, carved out of the mountains by the giant glaciers that covered the area some ten thousand years ago. After disembarkation in Longyearbyen you have the rest of the day at your disposal. Then there will be a farewell dinner in the hotel in the evening.
DAY 6

Flying home from the Arctic

Location: Longyearbyen
Your Spitsbergen adventure is over. After transfer to the airport it's time for the flight back home.

May - September 2018
Location

Longyearbyen