

# Jewels of the Arctic: Greenland Solar Eclipse

**Oslo, Norway, Europe    Reykjavik, Iceland, Europe**

## Day 1 Arrive in Oslo

Having made your way to Oslo, you will be met by a representative of Aurora Expeditions and transferred to our group hotel. Upon arrival at your included hotel, please visit the Aurora Expeditions hospitality desk to collect your luggage cabin tags and to speak with our ground operations team, who may have information to share with you about pre-embarkation or to provide you with information about where to dine, withdraw cash or purchase last minute items from a local pharmacy or supermarket. The remainder of your time is at leisure. All meals today are at your own expense.



## Day 2 Fly to Longyearbyen, embarkation

This morning, please ensure your cabin luggage is fitted with cabin tags clearly labelled with your name and cabin number. Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before transferring to the airport for our charter flight to Longyearbyen for embarkation. Any valuables or personal items should be kept on you throughout the day. In Longyearbyen, explore the town on a guided tour. After the tour, you will be transferred directly to the pier to embark in the late afternoon. Settle into your cabin before attending important safety briefings and enjoy the thrill of departure as we 'throw the lines' and set sail. Note: the excursion is contingent on the arrival time of our charter flight to Longyearbyen.

## Days 3–5 Svalbard

Svalbard offers arctic wilderness at its best. The members of our experienced Expedition Team, who have made countless journeys to this area, will use their expertise to tailor our itinerary, choosing the best options based on the prevailing weather, sea-ice conditions and opportunities for wildlife encounters. Phenomenal fjords, magnificent mountains ranges, and a polar desert rich in fossils set the stage for heroic tales of early exploration. See walrus hauled-out on sea ice or on beaches. On land, we stretch our legs on walks across tundra carpeted in brightly coloured wildflowers. We visit towering cliffs noisy with nesting guillemots and puffins, and scree slopes that hold Svalbard's largest little auk colonies. If you have chosen an optional activity such as kayaking, you will have an opportunity to enjoy that activity when conditions allow. For those who are enthusiastic to participate in a polar plunge, as soon as conditions are suitable, you will hear the announcement to prepare for an exhilarating dip – a memory you will savour for years to come.

## Days 6-7 At Sea

As we sail towards the coast of East Greenland, we may encounter whales feeding in the rich waters of the north. As we approach East Greenland, be prepared to encounter more pack ice and perhaps spot seals and a variety of seabirds, including the northern fulmar and Brünnich's guillemot. The strong, icy currents have isolated East Greenland from the Polar Basin, attracting large numbers of fish, seals and whales. Climatic conditions and the concentration of ice in the vicinity often create thick morning fog that only vanishes in presence of the midday sun. Our experts will inform and entertain us with fascinating discussions on plants, animals, ice and heroic tales of exploration.

## Days 8-13 East Greenland

In the coming days, a host of choices are available to us, and depending on ice and weather conditions, the east coast of Greenland is ours to explore. Our experienced Expedition Team, who have made countless journeys to this area, will use their expertise to tailor our itinerary on a day-to-day basis. This allows us to make best use of the prevailing weather, ice conditions and encounters with wildlife. We generally attempt up to two landings or Zodiac excursions per day, including cruising along

spectacular ice cliffs, following whales feeding near the surface. East Greenland contains some of the Arctic's most impressive scenery. Deep fjords and narrow channels, flanked by sharp ice-clad peaks up to 2,000 m (6,562 ft) high. Gigantic icebergs calved from glaciers drift throughout the fjord system creating breathtaking scenery. The landscape is filled with multi-coloured tundra home to musk oxen and arctic hare. Throughout the area are ancient Thule archaeological sites, historical trappers' huts, and modern Inuit hunters' cabins. A highlight is a visit to the Inuit village of Iltoqqortoormiit, the most isolated and northernmost permanent settlement in the region, with approximately 500 inhabitants. Here you can explore the village, the fascinating museum or sit in the beautiful Lutheran Church. The locals are friendly, and from underneath their Arctic fox-fur jackets, the shy young children are keen to say hello and practice their English. The community boasts an excellent museum, gift shop, an abundance of Greenlandic sled dogs, and the opportunity to meet Inuit people. Thanks to the fertile volcanic soil mountains that protect areas from the strong winds, the area is rich in wildlife. You may spot everything from muskox and arctic foxes to mountain hares and even reindeer near the fjord. Look skyward and you could catch a glimpse of birds including common eider, glaucous gull, black-legged kittiwake, northern fulmar, and arctic terns gracefully gliding or plunging into icy bays for zooplankton. The voyage builds with excitement as we set sail towards our prime viewing position within the totality path. Enjoy lunch onboard while our crew expertly navigates the ship towards the perfect spot to witness the eclipse. As anticipation mounts, gather on deck with fellow eclipse chasers in preparation for the celestial event. The drama unfolds as the moon starts to take a bite out of the sun, slowly plunging the landscape into an ethereal twilight. Then, the grand finale arrives. Totality transforms the day into night for a breathtaking 2 minutes and 18 seconds. As totality recedes, the sun peeks through, creating a stunning diamond ring effect. Relax and relive this unforgettable experience with your fellow travellers over a celebratory dinner. \*Note: subject to weather, cloud cover, sea state, ice and other conditions beyond our control. Continue to explore the fjord systems in Greenland, each one encompassing several smaller fjords and sounds. Thanks to the fertile volcanic soil and the surrounding mountains offering protection from strong winds, the area is rich in wildlife. You may spot everything from musk ox and arctic foxes to mountain hares, and even reindeer, near the fjord. Look skyward and you could catch a glimpse of birds, including the glaucous gull, black-legged kittiwake, northern fulmar, common raven and common eider. There are great hiking options in the area, where flowering tundra plants, scattered bones of whales and muskox from centuries of hunting by the Inuit and fumaroles can be found. These are areas where heated groundwater boil to the surface creating bubbling pools and mineral

formations as the water reacts with the atmosphere. The area also boasts some of the most striking sedimentary sandstone, shale, and siltstone formations imaginable. The layers of sediment here are estimated to have taken about 4,000 years to be laid down, and the alternating colours and patterns in the layers of rocks are stunningly beautiful.

## **Days 11 Solar Eclipse**

The day builds with excitement as we set sail towards our prime viewing position within the totality path. Enjoy lunch onboard while our crew expertly navigates the ship towards the perfect spot to witness the eclipse. As anticipation mounts, gather on deck with fellow eclipse chasers in preparation for the celestial event. The drama unfolds as the moon starts to take a bite out of the sun, slowly plunging the landscape into an ethereal twilight. Then, the grand finale arrives. Totality transforms the day into night for a breathtaking 2 minutes and 18 seconds. As totality recedes, the sun peeks through, creating a stunning diamond ring effect. Relax and relive this unforgettable experience with your fellow travellers over a celebratory dinner. Note: subject to weather, cloud cover, sea state, ice and other conditions beyond our control.

## **Day 12-13 East Greenland**

Continue to explore the fjord systems in Greenland, each one encompassing several smaller fjords and sounds. Thanks to the fertile volcanic soil and the surrounding mountains offering protection from strong winds, the area is rich in wildlife. You may spot everything from musk ox and arctic foxes to mountain hares, and even reindeer, near the fjord. Look skyward and you could catch a glimpse of birds, including the glaucous gull, black-legged kittiwake, northern fulmar, common raven and common eider. There are great hiking options in the area, where flowering tundra plants, scattered bones of whales and muskox from centuries of hunting by the Inuit and fumaroles can be found. These are areas where heated groundwater boil to the surface creating bubbling pools and mineral formations as the water reacts with the atmosphere. The area also boasts some of the most striking sedimentary sandstone, shale, and siltstone formations imaginable. The layers of sediment here are estimated to have taken about 4,000 years to be laid down, and the alternating colours and patterns in the layers of rocks are stunningly beautiful.

## **Day 14 Denmark Strait**

Crossing the Denmark Strait to Iceland, search for whale blows and photograph the many seabirds that trail our ship in the ever-present arctic winds.

## **Day 15 Disembark Reykjavik**

During the early morning, we cruise into Reykjavik and disembark at approximately 8.00 am. Farewell your Expedition Team and fellow passengers as we all continue our onward journeys. Transfer to Keflavik airport. Note: At the conclusion of the voyage, we recommend booking flights departing after 12.00 pm on the day of disembarkation in case there are delays.