

# Jewels of the Arctic

**Oslo, Norway, Europe to Reykjavik, Iceland, Europe (GRN)**

## Day 1 Arrive in Oslo

Having made your way to Oslo, check in at our group hotel at Oslo Airport. 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. Accommodation: Radisson Blu Airport Hotel, Oslo Gardermoen



## 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. The charter flight is scheduled to depart 08:05 for Longyearbyen and arrive at 11:15. In Longyearbyen, explore the town on a guided excursion tour. On the drive to Camp Barentz, located in Advent Valley, your guide will give you an introduction to Longyearbyen's fascinating history. Once at Camp Barentz we enjoy a presentation in the large 'lawo' - a traditional building common in northern Norway. You will also have the opportunity to meet the friendly huskies and perhaps pick up some souvenirs. A visit to the Svalbard Museum and the Seed Vault is included back in town before embarking the vessel in the late afternoon. 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. Most memorable are encounters with the majestic polar bear on pack ice. 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 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 7 Jan Mayen**

The approach to Jan Mayen is spectacular. The huge 2,277-metre (7,470 foot) Beerenberg volcano is the northernmost active volcano in the world, and it last erupted in 1985. The northern part of the island is a great place to look for whales and dolphins and contains impressive glaciers, some of which reach the sea. If the weather is favourable, we will try to land at Kvalrossbukta, a relatively sheltered bay on the island's west coast. This is one of the landings used to supply the weather station Olonkinbyen, situated on the eastern side of the island.

## **Days 8 At Sea**

We sail across the Denmark Strait to Ittoqqortoormiit accompanied by sea birds while keeping a close watch for whales. Enjoy informative and entertaining lectures and presentation from our team of experts, get to know your fellow expeditioners or stay active at the gym.

## **Day 9-13 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. Be prepared to experience ice – and lots of it! East Greenland contains some of the Arctic's most impressive scenery. Deep fjords and narrow channels, flanked by sharp ice-clad peaks soaring up to 2,000 metres (6,562 feet), and glaciers birthing gigantic icebergs that drift throughout the fjord system, combine to create breathtaking scenes. The tundra landscape is home to musk oxen, arctic hare and reindeer. Throughout the area there are ancient Thule archaeological sites, historical trappers' huts, and the cabins of present-day Inuit hunters. A highlight is a visit to the Inuit village of Ittoqqortoormiit, the most isolated and northernmost permanent settlement in the region, with approximately 450 inhabitants. The community has an excellent museum, gift shop, an abundance of Greenlandic sled dogs and provides the opportunity to meet the friendly locals. Explore Scoresbysund, the world's largest fjord and a favourite hunting ground of the local Inuit. Massive glaciers flow into this fjord, the birthplace of hundreds of majestic

Greenland icebergs. It is a spectacular place that simply needs to be seen to be believed. North of Scoresbysund lie Kong Oskar and Kaiser Franz Josef fjords, two of the most significant 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. We will attempt to reach Kaiser Franz Josef Fjord, a remote and rarely visited fjord system with countless opportunities for exploration, located within the Northeast Greenland National Park. We hope to cruise through Kong Oskar Fjord, we marvel at the geological beauty of the mountains. We will then head south along the coast of Liverpool Land, with our passage dependent on ice conditions. We stretch our legs on hikes across tundra in search of ancient graveyards and summer villages occupied 3,000 years ago by Inuit. We may see musk ox, arctic hare and reindeer grazing. The maze of calm, interconnecting waterways in this area provides excellent opportunities for sea kayaking. We will see ring seals, perhaps catch a glimpse of the elusive narwhal, and maybe even a polar bear hunting on pack ice.

## **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 in 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 options are as follows: 1. Direct to Keflavik Airport. 2. Direct to The Grand Reykjavik (this option is only available if your hotel was booked by Aurora Expeditions). 3. Bus Stop #12 Höfðatorg (outside the Fosshotel Reykjavik) where you can make your own way to city hotels. 4. For late afternoon and evening airport departures, Bus Stop #12 Höfðatorg (outside the Fosshotel Reykjavik) where we will hold your luggage on the coach until your departure to the airport at 1pm. 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.