

2016 Polar Bear Specials

Spitsbergen 8 days from £1,699 per person* ex flights, 20% extra for single supplement

An itinerary spending more time in north Spitsbergen increasing the chances to see the King of the Arctic



POLAR BEAR ITINERARY - Longyearbyen – Longyearbyen - 8 DAYS

DEPARTURES: 01-08 June, 15-22 June, 29 June-08 July 2016 on M/V Ortelius 299 feet long- 100 passengers
16-23 June and 23-30 June 2016 on M/V Plancius 292 feet long – 114 passengers

Day 1 – Embarkation and departure from Longyearbyen. 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 surrounding area of Longyearbyen, more than 100 species of plants have been recorded. In the early evening the ship will sail out of Isfjorden, where we may see our first Minke Whale in the mouth of the fjord..

Day 2 – Sail to Raudfjord on the north coast of West Spitsbergen. We sail to Raudfjord on the north coast of West Spitsbergen, a beautiful fjord dominated by spectacular glaciers and favoured by Ringed and Bearded seals. The cliffs and shoreline of the fjord also support thriving seabird colonies and a surprisingly rich vegetation, which flourishes in sheltered spots. Polar bear are often seen here.

Day 3 – Cruising near the 5 km face of the impressive Monaco Glacier. Depending on the weather we may now sail to the mouth of Liefdefjorden, cruising near the 5 km long face of the impressive Monaco glacier. The waters of the glacier front are a favourite breeding spot for thousands of kittiwakes. As well, Polar bear may be seen on the glacier, providing wonderful opportunities for photography.

Day 4 – Sail into Hinlopen Strait, home to Bearded seals. Today we will sail into Hinlopen Strait, home to Bearded Seals, Ringed Seals, Polar Bears, and Ivory Gulls. We'll navigate the ice floes of Lomfjordshalvøya in our zodiacs and explore the bird cliffs of Alkefjellet with thousands of Brünnich's guillemots. On the east side of Hinlopenstrait, we'll attempt a landing at Palanderbukta on Nordaustlandet, home to Reindeer, Pink-footed Geese, breeding Ivory Gulls, and Walruses.

Day 5 – At Seven Islands north of Nordaustlandet – just 540 miles from the geographic North Pole. We will try and reach our northern most point at Phippsøya, in the Seven Islands north of Nordaustlandet. Here we will be at 81 degrees north, just 540 miles from the geographic North Pole. Polar Bears inhabit this region, along with Ivory Gulls. We may sit for several hours in the pack ice, before we turn west again.

Day 6 – We will retrace our route westwards to keep watch for the Polar Bear. We will retrace our route westwards and sail all the time through and along the pack-ice, on the watch for Polar bears 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 a good chance to see Minke whale. .

Day 7 – Sail to St John's Fjord or south to the mouth of Isfjorden. In Forlandsundet at Sarstangen is a haul out place for walrus. Alternatively we sail into St. John's Fjord or south to the mouth of Isfjorden and land at Alkhomet. 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. We arrive at Longyearbyen at night

Day 8 – We disembark at Longyearbyen. Disembark for flights south to Oslo and onward home

Prices include all meals, snacks, tea and coffee and all excursions and airport/boat transfers in Longyearbyen. Prices do **not** include flights, insurance or land services before or after the cruise. We can quote flights for you.

***The above price is based on 2 sharing a cabin but is substantially cheaper for triple or quadruple cabins. Singles pay only 20% surcharge for a cabin to themselves !**