



## Arctic Discovery (ARD001G)

**Tour Code:** ARD001G

**Dates:** 31 August to 20 September 2020

**Duration:** Duration

**Start:** Longyearbyen, Svalbard

**Finish:** Bergen, Norway

**Ship:** Greg Mortimer

**TERMS & CONDITIONS:** Please remember that the enclosed itinerary is merely a guide. While every effort will be made to follow the itinerary provided, in the event of political problems or natural disturbances that are beyond our control, and which prevent travel to a particular area, Aurora Expeditions reserves the right to make necessary changes to the itinerary and affected activities for that section of the voyage.

## Itinerary Overview



- **Day 1** Longyearbyen. Embark the Greg Mortimer.
- **Days 2-3** Northwest coast of Spitsbergen
- **Days 4-5** Greenland Sea
- **Days 6-12** East Greenland National Park
- **Day 13** At Sea
- **Day 14** Jan Mayen
- **Day 15** At Sea
- **Days 16-20** Norwegian Coast
- **Day 21** Disembark Bergen

## Expedition Highlights

- Cruise through Spitsbergen's narrow sheltered waterways and fjords such as Kongsfjorden (Kings Bay)
- Wildlife-rich Arctic – polar bears, walrus, seals, reindeer, sea birds, musk oxen, Arctic fox and



- whales
- Be one of few people in the world to visit remote Jan Mayen Island
- Sail within 600 miles of the North Pole
- Visit the world's largest National Park in North East Greenland, and the world's largest fjord system, Scoresbysund
- Visit Norway's majestic Lofoten Islands and sail through narrow Trollfjorden, accessible only by smallships

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## Expedition Inclusions & Exclusions

### EXPEDITION INCLUSIONS

- Group arrival transfer from airport to the ship on Day 1 Group
- sightseeing tour of Longyearbyen on arrival pre-voyage Group
- transfer from ship to airport or downtown Bergen on Day 21
- On-board accommodation during voyage including daily cabin service
- All meals, snacks, tea and coffee during voyage
- Beer, house wine and soft drinks with dinner
- All shore excursions and Zodiac cruises
- Educational lectures and guiding services from expedition team
- Access to our onboard doctor and basic medical services
- A 3-in-1 waterproof polar expedition jacket
- Complimentary use of gumboots during the voyage
- Comprehensive pre-departure information
- A printed photo book produced with photos from your voyage
- Port surcharges, permits, and landing fees

### EXPEDITION EXCLUSIONS

- International or domestic flights, unless specified
- Transfers not mentioned in the itinerary
- Airport arrival or departure taxes
- Passport, visa, and vaccination charges
- Travel insurance or emergency evacuation charges
- Hotels and meals not included in itinerary
- Optional excursions not included in the itinerary
- Optional activity surcharges
- All items of a personal nature including but not limited to: alcoholic beverages and soft drinks (outside of dinner service), laundry services, personal clothing, medical expenses, gratuities, and email or phone charges

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## Detailed Itinerary

Please refer to this itinerary as a guide only, as changes may occur due to unpredictable sea and weather conditions. Flexibility is key when joining us on our expeditions.

### DAY 1 EMBARK LONGYEARBYEN

Arrive in Longyearbyen, where you will be met by a representative of Aurora Expeditions and taken on a sightseeing tour to explore the remote outskirts and 'Capital' of Spitsbergen, including a stop at the local museum. After the tour, you will be transferred to the port in the late afternoon to embark the *Greg Mortimer*. Your voyage commences, cruising out of the beautiful Isfjorden, escorted by gliding fulmars and perhaps the occasional puffin. Find a spot on one of the observation areas watching for seabirds, including graceful ivory gulls, kittiwakes and guillemots.

**NOTE:** Sometimes our ship is unable to dock in Longyearbyen port due to space and capacity. In these instances, we reach the ship by Zodiac. Please ensure that you keep your wet weather gear in your hand luggage to use in the Zodiacs if the situation arises. Our crew will transport your luggage separately and leave it in your cabin. Please ensure all your luggage has your cabin tag/number attached.

### DAYS 2-3 WEST COAST OF SPITSBERGEN

Cruise northwards along the west coast of Spitsbergen, stopping at intriguing places like Kongsfjorden or

Magdalenefjorden. Kongsfjorden (Kings Bay) is incredibly scenic, the fjord is headed by two giant glaciers. There's ample time ashore for hiking on the lush tundra amongst the summer flowers and observing the remarkable bird cliffs near the 14th July Glacier, where even a few puffins nest between the cracks in the cliffs.

We keep watch for polar bears and Arctic fox and feel a sense of history at the 350-year-old remains of a Dutch whaling settlement, Smeerenberg on Amsterdamøya. The name Smeerenberg literally means blubber town in Dutch. It is a place of extraordinary legends, of thousands of men living there during the 1630s, a town complete with shops, gambling dens and the like. However, in reality, only 400 men and fifteen ships visited Smeerenberg during its peak in the 1630s for whaling purposes.

#### **DAYS 4-5 GREENLAND SEA**

As we cruise southwest across the Greenland Sea – the main outlet of the Arctic Ocean – we may encounter pack ice where, and if we are lucky we will see polar bears hunting for prey. 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 vanishes with the onset of the midday sun. Our experts will inform and entertain us with fascinating discussions on plants, animals, ice, and early explorers like Nansen, Andree and Scoresby.

As we approach East Greenland we may encounter more pack ice where we may see seals and a variety of seabirds, including northern fulmars and migratory Brünnich's guillemots. Conditions permitting, there will be a good chance for kayakers to launch their sea kayaks today. The rest of the group may have the opportunity to make our first landing on the Greenland coast, weather permitting. This stretch of coastline is ripe for exploration, with its many secrets locked in place by drift ice for up to eight months each year. Home to polar bear, snowy owl and musk ox, it's the world's largest national park, covering 972,000 square kilometres; most of which is inland ice and the rest a composite fjord landscape.

#### **DAYS 6-12 EAST COAST OF GREENLAND INCLUDING VOLQUART BOONS COAST**

As we approach the East Coast of Greenland, we will undoubtedly encounter some of the sea ice that streams down the coast from the north. We'll keep a sharp eye out for polar bears who frequent the drifting ice. Weather and sea ice conditions permitting we may enter Northeast Greenland National Park as far north as Dove Bay, a beautiful, remote and seldom visited location along the coast. If so we may search for the evidence of a Paleo-Eskimo settlement near Haystack Mountain. Or perhaps we will make our landfall on Clavering Island where we may visit Eskimonaes, the original headquarters of the famous Sirius Patrol.

We will attempt to enter Kaiser Franz Josef Fjord, a remote and rarely-visited fjord system with countless opportunities for exploration that lies within the North East Greenland National Park. Cruising through Kong Oskar Fjord we will 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 aim to reach Scoresbysund, the world's largest fjord and a favourite hunting ground of the local Inuit. Massive glaciers dump into this fjord, the birthplace of the famous big Greenland icebergs. We hope to visit the remote Inuit community of Ittoqqortoormiit (Scoresby Town) and to hike across the tundra in search of ancient graveyards and summer villages occupied 1,500 years ago by Paleo-Eskimos. This area provides excellent opportunities for sea kayaking in its maze of calm, interconnecting waterways. If we are lucky we may see musk oxen, Arctic hare and seals, and maybe if we are extremely lucky even a polar bear or narwhal. Other landings along the coast may include:

**Cape Humboldt**, a beautiful bay on Ymer Island. There is a good chance to take a tundra walk and witness musk oxen graze. We will also keep a lookout for Arctic fox and ptarmigan and the elusive Gyrfalcon. A lone trapper's hut looks over the bay and magnificent icebergs.

**Sefstrom Glacier** fans out and blocks nearly half of the rugged Alpefjord. Zodiac access allows us to observe the dynamics of a glacier face and to cruise the beautiful hanging gardens with Arctic flora growing in the autumn light.

**Ittoqqortoormiit** is Scoresbysund's colourful Inuit community of approximately 500 people. You are free to explore the village, the fascinating museum or sit quietly in the beautiful Lutheran Church. The people are friendly, and the young children vie for our attention from underneath their Arctic seal skin and fox-fur jackets.

**Sydkap** in Scoresbysund offers good walking and delightful views across the sound. Kayakers will have good opportunities to explore the lonely beaches. It has always been an important hunting site for the indigenous people and it contains many ancient gravesites.

**Røde Ø** (Red Island) has one of the best iceberg cruises you can find at either pole. We will cruise among the beautifully carved blue icebergs with a fantastic contrasting red island as a background.

Other possible landing points in the area include:

- Rypefjord
- Nordvestfjord

- Fonfjord
- Bjorn Oya
- Milne Land
- Øfjord
- Denmark Island

#### **DAY 13 AT SEA**

During our sea crossing to Jan Mayen Island, our experts will offer informative and entertaining talks and presentations about Arctic exploration and to prepare you for your visit to Jan Mayen, one of the world's most remote and fascinating volcanic islands. You may wish to enjoy a remedial massage in the wellness centre, soak in the hot tub, or organise your photos freeing space on your memory card for the coming days.

#### **DAY 14 JAN MAYEN**

The approach to Jan Mayen is spectacular. The huge volcano (2277m altitude) is the world's northernmost active volcano, and 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 friendly, 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. If conditions allows, we may walk from Kvalrossbukta to Olonkinbyen (approximately three hours walk to visit the station). Our Zodiacs will be waiting for us at a small bay to transport us back to the ship.

#### **DAY 15 AT SEA**

We continue our voyage east, sailing to the Norwegian coast. Our expedition team will share their knowledge of Norwegian maritime history and fascinating Norse culture through informative talks and lectures.

#### **DAYS 16-20 NORWEGIAN COAST**

Lofoten is a Norwegian archipelago known for its dramatic scenery, with mountain peaks such as the Svolveargeita rising from the sea and reaching up into the sky. The archipelago offers superb opportunities for kayaking excursions through the fjords to spot seals, sea eagles and even whales. Leknes and Svolvær are the two main ports - wildly beautiful places of marsh and rock, green fields and still lakes, dramatic mountains and white sandy beaches by crystal-clear seas. Lofoten is dotted with picturesque villages and fish-drying racks, as stockfish-dried cod has been the main export since the Middle Ages.

Learn about Norway's oldest export produce at the Lofoten Stockfish Museum, enjoy a Zodiac cruise through spectacular Trollfjord, a two kilometre-long, 100-metre-wide gorge with steep mountains of up to 1000 metres surrounding the fjord, perhaps visit Norway's oldest and best-preserved fishing village at Nusfjord.

Sailing south, we hope to stop at Reine, one of the most picturesque fishing villages in Lofoten, with red and white fishermen's huts dotting the shoreline surrounded by soaring granite peaks rising out of Reinefjorden. Further south, we may land at Torget Island to inspect the bizarre rock formation - Torghatten, a legendary hole in the mountain supposedly created by a troll's arrow. En route to Bergen, we may also visit the charming fishing villages of Sor-Gjaeslingan.

As we head farther down the coast, we may visit the beautiful and historic stave church at Kvernes or the scenic former fishing village of Grip along the outer coast. The island of Runde is one of Norway's premier seabird nesting islands and is home to several sea eagles as well.

#### **DAY 21 DISEMBARK BERGEN**

Disembark in historic Bergen, located in the heart of the Fjord Norway region in the southwest coast. It's the country's second-largest city and is surrounded by mountains and fjords including Sognefjord, the country's longest and deepest. Bergen is also rated as a UNESCO City of Gastronomy and is therefore an ideal place to relax after your voyage. Bid a fond farewell to your fellow expeditioners as we all continue our onward journeys. Your voyage includes a transfer to Bergen airport.

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### **Optional Activities**



#### **SEA KAYAKING – US\$1,080**

Exploration by sea kayak is an ideal way to surround yourself in the sights and sounds of the Arctic – paddling among icebergs and brash ice, observing wildlife in an unobtrusive manner. Paddlers will have the option to kayak as often as possible during the voyage (weather conditions permitting), or join fellow expeditioners on shore landings. Some kayak excursions may be

long in duration and on choppy water, so a reasonable level of kayaking experience is required to participate in this activity. Up to 20 paddlers will have the option to kayak as often as possible during the voyage. If you are interested in our Sea Kayaking activity, please contact our team on +61 2 9252 1033 or email your Reservations Consultant.

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#### **PHOTOGRAPHY – FREE**

All our voyages offer fantastic opportunities for photography and videography, but on selected trips highly-experienced guides run formal programs to improve your skills. Whether a beginner or experienced, you'll find our workshops help capture that perfect moment.