

Around Spitsbergen - In the realm of Polar Bear & Ice

Full Spitsbergen Circumnavigation



Title:	Around Spitsbergen - In the realm of Polar Bear & Ice
Dates:	6 Jul - 15 Jul, 2023
Tripcode:	PLA07-23
Duration:	9 nights
Ship:	m/v Plancius
Embarkation:	Longyearbyen
Disembarkation:	Longyearbyen
Language:	English speaking voyage

ITINERARY

PLEASE NOTE:

N.B. The chances that we can complete a full Spitsbergen circumnavigation (based on our experiences from 1992 – 2019) are about 30% in the first half of July, 70% in the second half, 90% in the first half of August, and 95% in the second half. In case we cannot complete a full circumnavigation, we may devise a program in northeast or southeast Spitsbergen. All itineraries are for guidance only. Programs may vary depending on ice, weather, and wildlife conditions. Landings are subject to site availabilities, permissions, and environmental concerns per AECO regulations. Official sailing plans and landing slots are scheduled with AECO prior to the start of the season, but the expedition leader determines the final plan. Flexibility is paramount for expedition cruises. The average cruising speed of our vessel is 10.5 knots.

Take a cruise around Spitsbergen and explore the icy waters of the North Atlantic. This special expedition offers you the chance to catch site of whales, reindeer, Arctic foxes, walruses, seals, and the star attraction, the polar bear.

Day 1: Largest town, biggest island

You touch down in Longyearbyen, the administrative center of Spitsbergen, the largest island of the Svalbard archipelago. Enjoy strolling around this former mining town, whose parish church and Svalbard Museum make for fascinating attractions. Though the countryside appears stark, more than a hundred species of plant have been recorded in it. In the early evening the ship sails out of Isfjorden, where you might spot the first minke whale of your voyage.

Day 2: Cruising Krossfjorden

Heading north along the west coast, you arrive by morning in Krossfjorden. Here you might board the Zodiacs for a cruise near the towering blue-white face of the Fourteenth of July Glacier. On the green slopes near the glacier, colorful flowers bloom while flocks of kittiwakes and Brünnich's guillemots nest on the cliffs. You have a good chance of spotting an Arctic fox scouting for fallen chicks, or a bearded seal paddling through the fjord.

In the afternoon you sail to Ny Ålesund, the northernmost settlement on Earth. Once a mining village served by the world's most northerly railway – you can still see its tracks – Ny Ålesund is now a research center. Close to the community is a breeding ground for barnacle geese, pink-footed geese, and Arctic terns. And if you're interested in the history of Arctic exploration, visit the anchoring mast used by polar explorers Amundsen and Nobile in their airships, *Norge* (1926) and *Italia* (1928).

Day 3: The massive Monaco Glacier

Depending on the weather, you could sail into Liefdefjorden and cruise within sight of the 5-kilometer-long (3.1 miles) face of the precipitous Monaco Glacier. The waters in front of this glacier are a favorite feeding spot for thousands of kittiwakes, and the base of the ice is a popular polar bear hunting ground. If ice conditions prevent sailing here early in the season, an alternate route along the west coast of Spitsbergen can be implemented.

Day 4 – 5: Stop at the Seven Islands

The northernmost point of your voyage may be north of Nordaustlandet, in the Seven Islands. Here you reach 80° north, just 870 km (540 miles) from the geographic North Pole. Polar bears inhabit this region, so the ship may park for several hours among the pack ice before wheeling around west again.

When the edge of this sea ice is tens of miles north of the Seven Islands (mostly in August), you can spend a second day in this area. Alternatively (mostly in July) you may turn to Sorgfjord, where you have the chance to find a herd of walrus not far from the graves of 17th-century whalers. A nature walk here can bring you close to families of ptarmigans, and the opposite side of the fjord is also a beautiful area for an excursion.

Day 6: Highlights of Hinlopen

Today you sail into Hinlopen Strait, home to bearded and ringed seals as well as polar bears. At the entrance there is even the possibility to spot blue whales. As with Liefdefjorden, you can take an alternate west Spitsbergen route if ice prevents entry into Hinlopen. After cruising among the ice floes of Lomfjordshalvøya in the Zodiacs, you then view the bird cliffs of Alkefjellet with their thousands of Brünnich's guillemots. On the east side of Hinlopen Strait, you may attempt a landing where reindeer, pink-footed geese, and walrus are likely sights. Near Torrelneset you can also visit the polar desert of Nordaustlandet, next to the world's third-largest ice cap. Here you may encounter walrus during a coastline hike over the area's raised beaches.

Day 7: Barentsøya's many bounties

The plan is to make landings in Freemansundet, though polar bears sometimes make this impossible. Potential stops on Barentsøya include Sundneset (for an old trapper's hut), Kapp Waldburg (for its kittiwake colony), and Rindedalen (for a walk across the tundra). You might also cruise south to Diskobukta, though Kapp Lee is more likely your destination. On Kapp Lee is a walrus haul-out, Pomor ruins, and the chance for hikes along Edgeøya.

Day 8: Land of the Pointed Mountains

You start the day by cruising the side fjords of the Hornsund area of southern Spitsbergen, taking in the spire-like peaks: Hornsundtind rises 1,431 meters (4,695 feet), and Bautaen is a perfect illustration of why early Dutch explorers named this island Spitsbergen, meaning "pointed mountains." There are 14 sizable glaciers in this area as well as opportunities for spotting seals, beluga whales, and polar bears.

Day 9: Bell Sund's flora, fauna, and haunting history

Today you find yourself in Bell Sund, one of the largest fjord systems in Svalbard. The ocean currents make this area slightly warmer than other areas in the archipelago, which shows in the relatively lush vegetation. Here there are excellent opportunities to enjoy both history and wildlife. A possibility is Ahlstrandhalvøya, at the mouth of Van Keulenfjorden, where piles of beluga skeletons can be found. These remains of 19th-century whale slaughter are a

haunting reminder of the consequences of rampant exploitation. Fortunately, belugas were not hunted into extinction, and you have a good chance of coming across a pod. Alternately, while cruising the side fjords of Bellsund, you can explore tundra where reindeer like to feed as well as rock slopes where little auks are breeding.

Day 10: There and back again

Every adventure, no matter how grand, must eventually come to an end. You disembark in Longyearbyen, taking home memories that will accompany you wherever your next adventure lies.

CABINS & PRICES



Quadruple Porthole

- 1 porthole
- 2 upper & lower berths
- Private shower & toilet
- Desk & chair
- Flatscreen TV
- Telephone & WiFi (supplemented)
- Hair dryer
- Ample storage space
- Safe deposit box
- This cabin is suitable for families traveling with children, or passengers who do not require a twin or more luxurious cabin



Complete cabin

Price for the complete cabin, fully occupied.

21600 USD



Sharing berth

Share your cabin with others for the best price

5400 USD



Triple Porthole

- 1 porthole
- 1 upper berth & 2 lower berths
- Private shower & toilet
- Desk & chair
- Flatscreen TV
- Telephone & WiFi (supplemented)
- Hair dryer
- Safe deposit box
- Ample storage space
- This cabin is suitable for families traveling with children, or passengers who do not require a twin or more luxurious cabin



Complete cabin

Price for the complete cabin, fully occupied.

23100 USD



Sharing berth

Share your cabin with others for the best price

7700 USD



Twin Porthole

- 1 porthole
- 2 lower berths
- Private shower & toilet
- Desk & chair
- Flatscreen TV
- Telephone & WiFi (supplemented)
- Hair dryer
- Safe deposit box
- Ample storage space



Complete cabin

Price for the complete cabin, fully occupied.

15400 USD



Single cabin

Price for the complete cabin occupied by 1 person (1.7x the shared rate).

13090 USD



Sharing berth

Share your cabin with others for the best price

7700 USD



Twin Window

- 1 window
- 2 lower berths
- Private shower & toilet
- Desk & chair
- Flatscreen TV
- Telephone & WiFi (supplemented)
- Hair dryer
- Safe deposit box
- Ample storage space



Complete cabin

Price for the complete cabin, fully occupied.

16600 USD



Single cabin

Price for the complete cabin occupied by 1 person (1.7x the shared rate).

14110 USD



Sharing berth

Share your cabin with others for the best price

8300 USD



Twin Deluxe

- 2 windows
 - 2 lower berths
 - Private shower & toilet
 - Desk & chair
 - Flatscreen TV
 - Telephone & WiFi (supplemented)
 - Hair dryer
 - Ample storage space
 - Safe deposit box
- These cabins are corner cabins and are slightly more spacious than the normal twin porthole/window cabins



Complete cabin

18000 USD

Price for the complete cabin, fully occupied.



Single cabin

15300 USD

Price for the complete cabin occupied by 1 person (1.7x the shared rate).



Sharing berth

9000 USD

Share your cabin with others for the best price



Superior

- 2 windows
- 1 double bed
- 1 sofa bed
- Private shower & toilet
- Desk & chair
- Flatscreen TV
- Telephone & WiFi (supplemented)
- Refrigerator
- Coffee & tea maker
- Hair dryer
- Safe deposit box
- Ample storage space



Complete cabin

20000 USD

Price for the complete cabin, fully occupied.



Single cabin

17000 USD

Price for the complete cabin occupied by 1 person (1.7x the shared rate).