



## East Greenland

### Arctic Sights and Northern Lights

04 Sep - 15 Sep 2023

12 days

Embarkation: Reykjavik (Iceland)

Disembarkation: Reykjavik (Iceland)

M/v Sea Spirit

Activities:



# Itinerary



## Day 1: Arrival in Reykjavík, Iceland (hotel night)

Welcome to Reykjavík, the capital of Iceland and starting point of our Arctic expedition! The drive from the Keflavik International Airport to the city center takes around 45 minutes by airport shuttle or taxi. After checking into your hotel, which has been arranged by us and is included in the price of the itinerary, you will be free to explore this attractive, friendly and quintessentially Nordic city.

For an excellent overview of Iceland's history and culture, we recommend starting at the superb National Museum and Culture House. You will also want to visit the iconic Hallgrímskirkja church, Reykjavík's most famous landmark. For those interested in natural history, we recommend the Whales of Iceland museum, which houses full-sized models of the 23 species of whale found around Iceland. For

dinner, Reykjavík offers countless options for an authentic Icelandic meal.



## Day 2: Welcome Aboard!

After breakfast at your hotel, the morning is yours to enjoy Reykjavík. Take a leisurely stroll through a peaceful garden or a relaxing soak in a thermal bath. Nature lovers will appreciate the abundant birdlife at Tjörnin, a placid lake in the heart of the city. You can also take advantage of shopping for souvenirs or some last-minute necessities such as cold-weather gear. Just remember, you will soon receive your very own parka to keep and waterproof boots to borrow on board the ship.

In the afternoon, you will be transferred to the pier where we will warmly welcome you aboard the deluxe expedition vessel M/V Sea Spirit. Get settled in your spacious suite and explore the ship that will be your comfortable home during the extraordinary adventure to

come. After getting underway, a full schedule of events kicks off with informative briefings and introductions from your expedition staff. After the first of many delicious dinners on board, step out onto the open decks to admire the views as we sail through Faxaflói, where it is possible to encounter our first whales.



## Day 3: Across Denmark Strait

As we sail north across the Denmark Strait to East Greenland, we celebrate our crossing of the Arctic Circle. We keep a continuous lookout for great whales and flocks of seabirds feeding in the productive waters near the sharp rise of Greenland's continental shelf. After nightfall, we have our first of many opportunities to see the aurora borealis overhead.



## Day 4-9: Scoresby Sund, East Greenland

The itinerary for this part of our voyage focuses on the spectacular fjords, coasts and islands of Scoresby Sund, also known as Kangerittivaq in the Greenlandic language. This area contains some of the world's most impressive scenery and Greenland's best wildlife viewing. As with any true polar expedition, our exact schedule and route will be shaped by weather and ice. At this late stage of the season, we expect our explorations will be minimally affected by sea ice. However, we will be alert for icebergs from surging glaciers, which can present interesting navigational challenges. Our experienced captain and expedition leader will continually adjust plans as conditions and opportunities warrant in this wild and remote corner of the Arctic.

Scoresby Sund is one of the longest and most visually stunning fjord systems in the world. Almost totally devoid of human habitation, it is also one of the most pristine natural environments on Earth. In this epic wilderness, the forces of nature have shaped a landscape of incomparable grandeur. Deep fjords and narrow passages are framed by sheer rock walls up to 2,000 meters high. Colossal icebergs—calved by immense glaciers and sculpted by wind and water into fantastic shapes—drift throughout the intricate fjord system in striking contrast to sparkling blue waters and polychromatic mountains capped with fresh snow. From verdant coastal plains to ice-clad peaks all the way to the glaciated heart of Greenland, a trip through Scoresby Sund sets a new standard for “scenic”.

Our area of exploration includes part of Northeast Greenland National Park, the largest and most northerly national park in the world. This vast Arctic landscape is a paradise for hikers who appreciate astounding views of untouched tundra wilderness. Across hillsides emblazoned with autumnal red and yellow, a flash of white reveals the flight of a snowy owl or a startled mountain hare. Tufts of the finest fleece ensnared in polar willows underfoot point the way to a nearby herd of shaggy musk oxen. You may hear the crack of horns colliding as bulls engage in fearsome battles of strength. Boreal fowl of every description are preparing to migrate south with their newly fledged chicks. All throughout the waterways of Scoresby Sund, we are on constant watch for polar bears and other marine mammals, including a variety of seals, walrus and narwhal, which can be spotted at any time.

Ancient Thule archeological sites remind us of humankind's age-old relationship with this austere yet life-sustaining environment. For a look at how this tradition has been carried forward, we plan to visit the modern Inuit village of Ittoqqortoormiit, the only permanent settlement in the region and one of the most remote communities in the world. The village boasts a wonderful museum, a bookstore, handmade crafts for sale, a post office, and an abundance of Greenlandic sled dogs.

In September, at the equinox, day and night are given equal opportunities to astound you. As night falls, the darkening sky becomes a stage for nature's greatest celestial performance: the Northern Lights. East Greenland is one of the very best places in the Arctic to view this otherworldly natural phenomenon. In addition to being at the perfect latitude for strong aurora displays, the skies above Scoresby Sund are often cleared by katabatic winds rolling down from the nearby Greenland Ice Sheet. Lights dancing from horizon to horizon are mirrored in calm waters while the silhouettes of gigantic icebergs and serrated mountains add to the romantic splendor of the experience.

This itinerary offers a deep dive into one of the Arctic's most scenic and soulful environments. From dawn to dusk and beyond, your days will be filled with incredible shore excursions, world-class Zodiac cruising, and enough stunning scenery to fill your camera and overwhelm your emotions. Hikers will live their wilderness dreams and sea kayakers will be rewarded with some of the finest paddling on the planet.



### **Day 10: Back to Iceland**

After our amazing time in Scoresby Sund, we head back across the Denmark Strait toward Iceland. Presentations and workshops by our expert staff, as well as our range of onboard recreation facilities, ensure that this day at sea is not idly spent. Seabird viewing and whale sightings can be enjoyed from panoramic open decks and balconies.



### **Day 11: Westfjords, Iceland**

Our last expedition day is spent in the beautiful Vestfirðir (Westfjords) of Iceland. This remote and sparsely populated region of crenulated coastlines, voluminous waterfalls and rugged mountains sees only 10% of Iceland's visitors. Deep fjords are home to whales while estuaries abound with seals and birdlife.



### **Day 12: Disembarkation in Reykjavík, Iceland**

After filling up with one last buffet breakfast on board, we bid you a fond farewell in Reykjavík. We provide transfers to Keflavik international airport or to the city center in case you plan to extend your stay in Iceland.