

VOYAGE INFORMATION

Voyage Name	Arctic Complete
Voyage Code	ACC05G
Dates	21 August-12 September, 2021
Duration	23 days / 22 nights
Embark	Reykjavik, Iceland
Disembark	Longyearbyen, Spitsbergen
Ship	Greg Mortimer
Forms Due	21 May, 2021

Welcome!

Thank you for joining Aurora Expeditions on our *Arctic Complete* expedition.

A combination of our popular *Jewels of the Arctic* and *Svalbard Odyssey* voyages, *Arctic Complete* offers a complete exploration of the European Arctic's west side. From Reykjavik, embark on a voyage to Svalbard, scanning the sea for whales, majestic polar bear and walrus on pack ice. East Greenland dazzles with its iridescent icebergs and deep exploration in Scoresbysund – the world's largest fjord system. Witness spectacularly colourful patterns in the sandstone rocks, visit remarkable Palaeolithic sites and perhaps encounter musk oxen and arctic hare.

ITINERARY OVERVIEW

Day 1	Embark the <i>Greg Mortimer</i>
Day 2	Denmark Strait
Days 3-9	East Coast of Greenland
Days 10-11	Greenland Sea
Days 12-22	Svalbard Archipelago
Day 23	Disembark Longyearbyen

VOYAGE HIGHLIGHTS

- Sail past Spitsbergen's narrow sheltered waterways and fjords
- Venture close to 80° north looking for polar bears on the pack ice
- Listen to the orchestra of Greenland's famous ice singing as it pops, hiss, cracks and calves
- Delight in a variety of diverse terrain: ice caps, tundra, polar desert and alpine ranges

EXPEDITION INCLUSIONS

- Group transfer to airport in Longyearbyen on Day 23
- 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
- Free access to our onboard doctor for consultations relating to sea-sickness. A standard fee of US \$60.00 (reclaimable through your travel insurance provider) applies for medical consultations not related to seasickness
- A 3-in-1 waterproof polar expedition jacket
- Complimentary use of muck boots during the voyage
- Comprehensive pre-departure information
- 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, Wi-Fi, email or phone charges.

Note: A \$15 USD per person per day gratuity for the crew is automatically added to your onboard account. It is at your discretion if you would like to remove the tip (or increase/decrease the amount) when you settle your bill. It is not necessary to tip the expedition team members. This gratuity amount is included for suites as part of their 'Suite Benefits'.

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 Reykjavik

After making your own way to Reykjavik pier, embark the *Greg Mortimer* in the late afternoon from 4.00 pm. You'll have time to settle into your cabin before our important briefings.

Day 2 Denmark Strait

In the Denmark Strait, we cruise towards Greenland. We will be on the lookout for whale blows and the many seabirds that trail our ship in the constant winds. In our lecture theatre, enjoy informative and entertaining presentations from our experts on topics such as seabirds, wildlife, and ice, or catch up on some rest after busy days of travel.

Days 3-9 East Greenland

As we approach East Greenland, we may encounter more pack ice where we may see seals and a variety of seabirds, including northern fulmar and migratory Brunnichs guillemots. 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.

Our experienced expedition team, who have made countless journeys to this area, will use their expertise to design our voyage from day to day. This allows us to make best use of the prevailing weather, ice conditions and wildlife opportunities. We will generally make up to two landings or Zodiac excursions per day; cruising along spectacular ice cliffs, following whales that are feeding near the surface.

Over the coming days, be prepared to experience ice, 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 up to 2,000 m / 6,562 ft high. Glaciers create gigantic icebergs that drift throughout the fjord system creating breath-taking scenes. The landscape is filled with multi-coloured tundra home to musk oxen and arctic hare. Throughout the area are ancient Thule archaeological sites, historical trappers' huts, and modern Inuit hunters' cabins. 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 boasts an excellent museum, gift shop, an abundance of Greenlandic sled dogs, and the opportunity to meet Inuit people.

Explore Scoresbysund, the largest fjord system in the world – a spectacular place that simply needs to be seen to be believed. North of Scoresbysund are, Kong Oscar and Kaizer Franz Josef fjords, two of the most significant fjord systems in all of Greenland, each one encompassing several smaller fjords and sounds. Thanks to the fertile volcanic soil mountains that protects areas from the strong winds, the area is rich in wildlife. You may spot everything from muskox and arctic foxes to mountain hares and even reindeer near the fjord. Look skyward and you could catch a glimpse of birds including glaucous gull, black-legged kittiwake, northern fulmar, common raven and common eider.

We will attempt to enter Kaiser Franz Josef Fjord, a remote and rarely visited fjord system with countless opportunities for exploration within the Northeast 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 biggest fjord and a favourite hunting ground of the local Inuit. Massive glaciers dump into this fjord, the birthplace of hundreds of spectacular Greenland icebergs.

We plan 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 3,000 years ago by Eskimos. This area provides excellent opportunities for sea kayaking in its maze of calm, interconnecting waterways. We may see musk oxen, arctic hare and seals, and maybe if we are extremely lucky even a polar bear or narwhal, although due to the local hunting traditions, these sightings are often very rare.

Places we may land along the east coast include:

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

Sefstrom Glacier adorns the narrow-peaked waterway in Alpefjord. Enjoy Zodiac cruising and kayaking in this pretty area, where colourful Arctic flora adorns the tundra ground.

Ittoqqortoormiit is Scoresbysund's colourful Inuit community of approximately 500 people. Here you can explore the village, the fascinating museum or sit in the beautiful Lutheran Church. The locals are friendly and from underneath their Arctic fox-fur jackets, the shy young children are keen to say hello and practice their English.

Sydkap in Scoresbysund offers good walking and delightful views across the sound. Kayakers will have good opportunities to explore the lonely beaches. We may explore the ancient gravesites on the island, or the lakes with green tunnels and giant icebergs offer hours of enjoyment for kayak and Zodiac rides.

Rømerfjord

Rømer Fjord with its narrow channels and towering peaks is simply stunning, and lies roughly 167 km / 104 mi south of Scoresbysund. There are great hiking options in the fjord where flowering tundra plants, scattered bones of whales and muskox from centuries of hunting by the Inuit, and fumaroles can be found. These are areas where heated groundwater boil to the surface creating bubbling pools and mineral formations as the water reacts with the atmosphere.

Rode Ø

Rode Ø Island is a glorious place for Zodiac cruising, hiking and kayaking, with its rich red Devonian sandstone geology. Discover the impressive mafic dyke that runs through the east side of Rode Ø. Glaucous gulls find perfect perches and nesting sites along the top of the basalt extrusions. Kayak along the maze of icebergs - pillars and arches, caves and peaks that look as though an artist had sculpted them.

Hare Fjord

The scenery here is breathtaking. Walk across the tundra alongside a ravine or Zodiac cruise where you might find musk ox, along with flitting shore birds, seals and a variety of colours in the lush Arctic tundra. Kayakers can enjoy sublime paddling in one of the most remote fjords in the world. Nearby is the spectacular and impressive Ø Fjord, a perfect place for small ship cruising.

Nordvest Fjord

If mountains rising 1,200 m / 3,937 ft straight out of the water wasn't enough, how about the fjord itself, descending to 1,500 metres? There are also countless icebergs pouring out of the Daugård-Gensen Glacier. A great place for

kayaking and Zodiac cruising with plenty of gorgeous bergs while the glacier itself, seemingly small from a distance, proved to be a formidable river of ice snaking down the valley.

Eskimobugt

No one can state the exact age of the neo-Eskimo site at Eskimobugt, but it may only be a few hundred years old. Subterranean winter houses designed with a tunnel that faces the sea where occupants would crawl through to the stand-up living chamber; at the opposite end is the sleeping platform. The walls were erected with carefully laid stones while the roof structure would be built from whatever material was available - driftwood, walrus bone, and available skin covering. Fire hearths were created by laying rocks in a circle with a bed of white quartzite stones. Learn from our historian about the incredible resourcefulness of the Inuit people whose men travelled formidable distances by kayak to hunt, and whose women crafted sophisticated garments from animal skins and fur – a people for whom survival in such extremes was paramount. Hiking here offers panoramic views, sightings musk ox and, occasionally Arctic hare.

Skipperdalen

See some of the most striking sedimentary sandstone, shale and siltstone formations imaginable. The alternating colours and patterns in the layers of rocks defied belief, and the layers of sediment here are estimated to have taken about 4,000 years to be laid down. You can also find the remains of a simple but highly effective wooden fox trap in use by Norwegian trappers in both Greenland and Svalbard from the early 1900s to 1960s. Skipperdalen is also a marvellous place to hike and paddle in kayaks.

Other possible landing points in the area include:

- Rypefjord
- Nordenskjöld glacier & Blomsterbugten
- Alpenfjorden
- FjordFonfjord
- Bjorn Oya
- Milne Land
- Hekla Havn
- Denmark Island

Days 10-11 Greenland Sea

We head out to sea bound for Spitsbergen. As we cruise northeast across the Greenland Sea – the main outlet of the Arctic Ocean – we may encounter pack ice, and if we're lucky we will see polar bears hunting on the ice. The strong icy sea currents have isolated East Greenland from the rest of the world for millennia. These currents carry nutrients 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 talks on plants, animals and early explorers like Nansen, Andree and Scoresby.

Days 12 – 22 Svalbard Archipelago

Svalbard offers unspoiled, raw arctic wilderness at its best. With majestic mountains of jagged peaks, iridescent sea ice, countless glaciers and superb wildlife-viewing opportunities. Our experienced expedition team, who have made countless journeys to this area, will use their expertise to design our voyage from day to day, choosing the best options based on the prevailing weather, ice conditions and wildlife opportunities.

Cruise along phenomenal fjords stretching towards magnificent mountain ranges, discover a polar desert with creamy coloured slabs of rock, rich in fossils, hear heroic tales of early explorers contrasted with visits to cultural remains from the time of European whaling mainly Russian and Norwegian, witness walrus colonies hauled-out on sea ice or on beaches. While ashore we aim to stretch our legs, hiking on lush tundra where brightly-coloured summer wildflowers and lichen grow, and where reindeer graze, observe the towering cliffs alive with nesting sea birds, including Svalbard's largest little auk colony. Without a doubt, our goal is to encounter the majestic polar bear on pack ice, and the expedition team are just as keen as you to find them — they are on constant watch to spot these dazzling creatures.

If you have chosen an optional activity such as kayaking, you'll have the option to enjoy the activity whenever conditions allow, and of course keen polar plungers will have the chance to fully immerse themselves in polar waters - conditions permitting!

Day 23 Disembark Longyearbyen

During the early morning we cruise back into Longyearbyen. Farewell your expedition team and enjoy a town tour, where you will visit Svalbard Museum and Galleri Svalbard, and take in the main sights of Longyearbyen including Office of the Governor, Svalbard Church, Nybyen (new town), a few of the town's mines such as Santa Claus Mine, and a quick photo stop at the famous beware of polar bear street sign. Afterwards, transfer to the airport for your onward journeys.

NOTE: At the conclusion of the voyage, we do not recommend booking flights departing prior to 12.00 pm on the day of disembarkation in case there are delays.