West Greenland: Disko Bay

This 10-day voyage focuses on Disko Bay, an area as rich in history and legend as it is famous for icebergs and whales. Your arctic expedition explores the natural wonders of northwest Greenland in all their glory, from the impressive Ilulissat Icefjord (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) and breathtaking Eqip Sermia glacier to the red heart-shaped mountain of Uummannaq and the incredible volcanic rock formations of Qeqertarsuaq. Traditional Inuit villages, each with its own character, are found along the coast, their brightly colored wooden houses dotting the rugged landscape. Vast stretches of unspoiled wilderness await modern-day adventurers in this magical realm, home to some of the best whale watching in the country.

EXpedition in brief

- Visit traditional communities on the western coast of Greenland
- Explore the Ilulissat Icefjord, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- View arctic wildlife, such as whales, birds and seals
- Cruise in a Zodiac to get up close to glaciers, fjords, icebergs and more
- Take advantage of kayaking opportunities

DID YOU KNOW? Qeqertarsuaq (Disko Island) has legendary origins. According to the tale, two hunters out searching for seals in South Greenland were so annoyed that the island was in their way, they towed it from its southern locale, using only their kayaks and a strand of hair from an infant. Spying the approaching island, a witch in Ilulissat cast a spell, causing it to run aground in Disko Bay.
Adventures Options

Booking an Adventure Option as part of your expedition is a great way to enhance your polar experience. These options are subject to availability and fill up quickly, so be sure to book yours early. Please note that Adventure Options are weather dependent.

**KAYAKING**

Imagine gliding along the surface of a bay in the presence of icebergs and glaciers! Our kayaking adventures are the best way to feel at one with the sea. Taken by small groups of 10 people, multiple times per voyage, kayaking adventures are only conducted during calm weather conditions. We recommend you have some prior kayaking experience, including the capability to do a wet exit.

More information about your Adventure Options, including the necessary experience, physical requirements and cost, is available by contacting your Polar Travel Adviser.

**INCLUDED ACTIVITIES (VARY BY DEPARTURE)**

**HIKING**

Hiking is a great way to appreciate the immense windswept landscapes of the Arctic. The tundra comes alive during the brief arctic summer, with bursts of color from shrubs and plants that live in this polar environment. You’ll find that each hike is different: you’ll explore communities, shorelines or glaciated landscapes, often on the lookout for wildlife. Hiking participation is optional, and your Expedition Team will advise you of what levels of activity you can expect prior to each excursion.
DAY 1 Arrive in Reykjavik, Iceland

Your journey begins in Reykjavik, where you can explore the Icelandic capital on your own before spending the night at your included hotel.

DAY 2 Fly to Kangerlussuaq, Greenland and Embark

After breakfast, board your charter flight to Kangerlussuaq. You’ll have some time to wander this small seaside town, situated in one of Greenland’s longest fjords, before being transferred by Zodiac from shore to ship.

DAY 3 Itilleq

Today, you’ll visit a typical Greenlandic village, the picturesque Itilleq. Delightfully situated in a hollow (which is the meaning of “Itilleq” in Greenlandic), it’s surrounded by sea, mountains and fjords, on an island with no freshwater source. The small fishing and hunting community will welcome us and show us their way of life. Nearby, Itilleq Fjord is the perfect place to explore, as the colorful tundra bursting with wildflowers offers a vibrant contrast to the stark, soaring cliffs.

DAY 4 Ilulissat

Adventure awaits you in Ilulissat (meaning “iceberg” in Greenlandic), a gateway to another world. Just south of this town is the beautiful Ilulissat Icefjord, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and home of one of the most actively calving glaciers in the world, Sermeq Kujalleq. We’ll cruise in a Zodiac at the mouth of the fjord, and if you’re lucky, you may witness the spectacle of calving ice. These young bergs float down the fjord to enter Baffin Bay and, years later, end up farther south, off the coast of Newfoundland. The town itself, founded in 1741, is so traditional that sled dogs outnumber the people and still have the right of way. Hiking trails offer stunning vistas of the bergs as they approach the bay.

DAY 5 Eqip Sermia

Sailing toward the glacier Eqip Sermia rewards with breathtaking views one of the most photographed places in Greenland. We hope to Zodiac
cruise from a safe distance, tracing the spectacular jagged, gleaming-blue glacier front. We may also stop nearby for a shore landing.

**DAY 6 Uummannaq and Qilaqitsoq**

Have your camera ready and be out on deck as the ship approaches Uummannaq (which means “heart-like”), named for the heart-shaped mountain that towers over the town. It’s a breathtaking vista you won’t want to miss. Founded as a Danish colony in 1758 on the mainland, the settlement was moved five years later to this nearby island, where seal hunting was more plentiful. Marvel at the traditional colorful houses perched atop the rugged terrain as you wander through the town.

Nearby Qilaqitsoq (also known as Qilakitsoq) is where the remains of eight fully dressed mummies were discovered in 1972 under a rock outcrop by two brothers out hunting for grouse. The ruins of several buildings can be found not far from the graves. The world-famous mummies, which date back to 1475 AD, can now be viewed at the Greenland National Museum in Nuuk.

**DAY 7 Qeqertarsuaq (Disko Island)**

The town of Qeqertarsuaq (also the name of the island it’s on) is one of Greenland’s oldest, founded in 1773 as a whaling station. Today, although whaling still occurs, sealing and fishing are more predominant. Particularly rich with marine life, the waters around the island play host to humpback, fin, and minke whales. Coupled with the abundance of icebergs the area boasts, whale watching here is especially awe inspiring. Just as mesmerizing is the varied volcanic landscape, a combination of lush hilltops, red-tinged basalt mountains, hot springs and incredible rock figures.

**DAY 8 Sisimiut**

Today, you’ll have time to explore the 18th-century colonial buildings of Sisimiut and also watch a demonstration of traditional kayaking. Be sure to wander the historic area, where you can pass under the large arch formed by a pair of bowhead whale bones. There will also be an opportunity to hike amongst the soaring mountains that surround the town.

**DAY 9 Disembarkation in Kangerlussuaq**

After bidding goodbye to your Expedition Team, you’ll take a direct charter flight back to Reykjavik, Iceland, where we will transfer you to your included hotel.

**DAY 10 Depart Reykjavik, Iceland**

You can make your way home at your leisure or spend some more time exploring Reykjavik.
Arrival & Departure Details

Welcome! As you prepare for your journey, you may be interested to know the details of your arrival and departure. Since air transportation to and from your voyage is not included in the cost of your expedition, you will need to arrange flights from your home to the starting point, and home again from the finishing point. Quark Expeditions® can assist you with booking air arrangements on an individual basis, or feel free to contact your preferred travel agent or airline. Here are the details for your expedition.

Arrival Day and Embarkation

ARRIVING IN REYKJAVIK
You may arrive in Reykjavik at any time during Day 1 of the itinerary, and make your own way to the included hotel.

On arrival at the hotel, you will receive a welcome letter outlining the departure information for the following day’s flight. An agent representing Quark Expeditions® will be available in the lobby of the hotel this evening to answer any questions about the charter flight(s) scheduled for the following morning.

Please note: There is a strict luggage limit of 33 lbs (15 kg) checked luggage and 11 lbs (5 kg) cabin baggage on the flights between Reykjavik and Kangerlussuaq, where the ship is docked. Should you have additional luggage, it can be stored at the hotel in Reykjavik. There is NO option to pay for additional luggage.

KANGERLUSSUAQ AND EMBARKATION
Your flight to the Arctic is expected to depart from Reykjavik to Kangerlussuaq on Day 2 of the itinerary, after breakfast. Although the scheduled flight time will be communicated in your welcome letter, there is significant variability based on weather conditions. You should be prepared to depart the hotel for the airport on our group transfer at any time.

Final Day and Departure

DISEMBARKATION IN KANGERLUSSUAQ
Your ship is scheduled to arrive back at the pier in Kangerlussuaq, between 7 am and 8 am local time. After breakfast, and once the ship has docked, you will have time to bid farewell to your Expedition Team and shipmates before completing your disembarkation. The process takes about an hour. After disembarkation, you will transfer to the airport for the return charter flight to Reykjavik.

DEPARTING FROM REYKJAVIK
Upon arrival in Reykjavik, there will be a group transfer to your included post-expedition hotel. After breakfast the following morning, you may make your way to the airport to connect with your homeward flight, or stay longer if you have booked additional accommodation.

Please note: Weather conditions can always delay our arrival, and airline schedule changes have also been known to occur. Booking flexible tickets is always encouraged, as we cannot be held responsible for delays due to unforeseen circumstances.

LET US HELP YOU BOOK YOUR FLIGHTS!
To book flights to complement your expedition, contact a Polar Travel Adviser (1.888.892.0073) for seamless, worry-free booking of all flights.
Included Hotel Accommodations

Your included accommodation begins on Day 1 of your itinerary, and the specific hotel(s) will be indicated on your final voyage confirmation. If you are arriving prior to Day 1 of your expedition or are staying after the disembarkation day, please contact your Polar Travel Adviser for hotel options. Since accommodation space is limited, you are encouraged to request any extra nights as early as possible.

Arrival and Departure Transfers

REYKJAVIK AIRPORT TRANSFERS
Arrival and departure transfers in Reykjavik are not included; however, your Polar Travel Adviser can arrange them for you.

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Inclusions

THIS EXPEDITION INCLUDES

• Shipboard accommodation with daily housekeeping
• All breakfasts, lunches, dinners and snacks on board
• All shore landings per the daily program
• Leadership throughout the voyage by our experienced Expedition Leader
• All Zodiac transfers and cruising per the daily program
• Formal and informal presentations by our Expedition Team and special guests as scheduled
• Photographic journal documenting the expedition
• Waterproof expedition boots on loan for shore landings
• Official Quark Expeditions® parka to keep
• Coffee, tea and cocoa available around the clock
• Hair dryer and bathrobe in every cabin
• Comprehensive predeparture materials, including a map and an informative Arctic Reader
• All miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the program
• All luggage handling aboard the ship
• Emergency evacuation insurance to a maximum benefit of US$500,000 per person
• Greenland voyages cruise passenger tax

THIS EXPEDITION EXCLUDES

• Mandatory transfer package*
• International airfare
• Passport and visa expenses
• Government arrival and departure taxes not mentioned above
• Meals ashore unless otherwise specified
• Baggage, cancellation, interruption and medical travel insurance—strongly recommended
• Excess-baggage fees on international flights
• Mandatory waterproof pants for Zodiac cruising, or any other gear not mentioned
• Laundry, bar, beverage and other personal charges unless specified
• Phone and Internet charges
• Voluntary gratuity at the end of the voyage for shipboard staff and crew
• Additional overnight accommodation
• Arrival and departure transfers in Reykjavik
• Optional kayaking activities

Mandatory Transfer Package Includes:

• One night’s pre- and post-expedition hotel accommodation in Reykjavik with breakfast
• Transfers to and from the charter flights in Reykjavik
• Round trip charter flights between Reykjavik and Kangerlussuaq
• Transfers to and from the ship

Package cost: $1,695

Note: Baggage allowance on charter flight is 33 lbs (15 kg) checked and 11 lbs (5 kg) carry-on.

EXTEND YOUR STAY

Contact our Polar Travel Advisers via email, live chat or phone (1.888.892.0073) for seamless, worry-free booking of all trip extensions.
HOW TO BOOK YOUR EXPEDITION & ADVENTURE OPTIONS
To book your cabin or inquire about the availability of Adventure Options, contact a Polar Travel Adviser 1.888.892.0073 (+1.203.803.2666).

1-888-892-0073
West Greenland

POSSIBLE LANDINGS AND WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS

DISKO BAY

Erik the Red started a settlement on the shores of Disko Bay in 985 CE. By the 15th century, the community had been deserted, as a climate change made the bay impassable during the summer months.

EQIP SERMIA

With an ice front of just under 2.5 miles (4 km), Eqip Sermia is a truly massive glacier, with huge chunks of ice seen—and heard—calving into the water below. Navigating the narrow sound on the way to the glacier requires traversing ice-clogged water, which produces an eerie sound as the bergs grind against the ship’s hull.

ILULISSAT ICEFJORD

North of the Arctic Circle, this ice fjord is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Recognized as one of the fastest moving glaciers in the world, the Sermeq Kujalleq glacier located here moves at 62 feet (19 m) per day. More glacial ice is calved into the ocean here than anywhere else, except for Antarctica.

ITILLEQ

Itilleq in Greenlandic means “a hollow” which is where this village is situated, on an island without any fresh water. The village has approximately 130 inhabitants and offers picturesque views of colorful Greenlandic houses along the tundra.

KANGERLUSSUAQ

Kangerlussuaq and the Kangerlussuaq Fjord in Western Greenland present colorful buildings and potential for glimpses of Arctic wildlife such as musk oxen and caribou. Lush mountainous landscapes provide a great backdrop at this port of disembarkation, while whales may be spotted at sea.

SISIMIUT

A village town, the second largest in Greenland, Sisimiut is a place to stretch the legs. Inhabited for more than 4,000 years, the history here is a mix of Saqqaq, Dorset and Thule cultures. The colorful wooden houses here are typical of Greenlandic communities today. Nasaasaaq, an impressive mountain, provides a scenic backdrop to this settlement, and the nearby Amerloq Fjord is another worthwhile landing site.

UUMMANNAAQ

Uummannaq was founded as a Danish colony in 1758 on the Nuussuaq mainland, but in 1763 it was moved to the nearby island, as seal hunting was more plentiful there. Within sight of the Greenland Ice Cap, this town and the island of the same name are a study in contrasts.

IMPORTANT REMINDER
Embracing the unexpected is part of the legacy—and excitement—of expedition travel. When traveling in extremely remote regions, your expedition staff must allow the sea, the ice and the weather to guide route and itinerary details. This itinerary is a tentative outline of what you’ll experience on this voyage; please be aware that no specific itinerary can be guaranteed.

Last updated January 6, 2017