Arctic Archipelagos: Spitsbergen and Franz Josef Land

In the far north of Russia is the icy realm of Franz Josef Land, one of the most remote and raw archipelagos in the world. Discovered less than 150 years ago, it is comprised of about 191 islands and home to the walrus, polar bear, seal, arctic fox and beluga whale, as well as rich birdlife. Now considered a nature reserve within the Russian Arctic National Park administration, it is visited by few people, and the landscapes of the islands are still dotted with relics from famous explorers of the past.

EXPEDITION IN BRIEF:

- Zodiac landings provide access to seldom visited sites
- Birds-eye views of the archipelagos
- Experience quintessential arctic wildlife, including walrus, whales and polar bears
- On board lecturers and educational presentations from Quark Expeditions®’ polar experts
- Opportunities to spot polar wildlife, including some of the 50 species of seabirds such as the little auk, the Arctic’s ‘penguin of the north’

DID YOU KNOW? An archipelago is a group of islands. Franz Josef Land is Eurasia’s northernmost archipelago, consisting of 191 islands. These islands have no native inhabitants and their official discovery wasn’t until 1873 – more than half a century after the discovery of Antarctica!
Adventure Options

Booking an Adventure Option on 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, 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 in 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 Adventure Options, including necessary experience, physical requirements and cost available by contacting your Polar Travel Adviser.

**INCLUDED OPTIONS (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 eke out a living in this polar environment. You’ll find each hike is different - exploring 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.
Itinerary

**DAY 1 Longyearbyen, Norway**

Your adventure begins in Longyearbyen, Spitsbergen, the island’s largest settlement and part of the Svalbard archipelago in northern Norway. Enjoy your first view of Spitsbergen’s rugged glacier-topped mountains, rising majestically from icy Arctic waters.

Today you’ll find your sea legs as we set sail for Franz Josef Land. During your first day at sea there will be presentation and lectures by the Quark Expeditions® team on the history of the archipelago’s discovery and its fascinating wildlife. You’ll also get acquainted with the ship, your fellow shipmates and safety procedures.

**DAY 2 Ny-Ålesund and 14th of July Glacier**

As we head north, we’ll leave the ship via Zodiac and cruise past the spectacular ice cliffs of the 14th of July Glacier, keeping an eye out for birdlife such as purple sandpipers, common eiders, barnacle geese, arctic terns and more. Later, we’ll also visit Ny London which was once a remote marble-mining town. This is good opportunity to spot the Svalbard ptarmigan and the indigenous Svalbard reindeer, so keep your cameras handy!

**DAY 3 Torellneset and Alkefjellet**

We’ll begin in Torellneset, where we may find ourselves in the presence of one of the Arctic’s most iconic animals: the walrus! We’ll likely see the males who often haul themselves out onto the beach. There may also be a great opportunity to snowshoe here. Afterward we plan to sail over to Alkefjellet - roughly translated to ‘bird mountain’ - an immensely beautiful place of towering cliffs, home to thousands of nesting auks, Brünnich’s guillemots and kitiwakes. Zodiac cruising along these sheer rock faces, you’ll be immersed in the sights and sounds of this awesome birdlife display. Keep an eye out for arctic fox and polar bears scavenging for eggs below.

**DAY 4 Andreeneset and Kraemerpynten**

Now sailing to the easternmost part of the Svalbard archipelago, we hope to reach the rarely visited island of Kvitoya, close to Russian territory. The island is dominated by an ice cap. We will attempt to land at Andreeneset, where a Swedish explorer bearing the name Andre and his companions perished in the late 1800s. We will also hope to see walrus hauled out farther east in Kraemerpynten.

**DAY 5 Alexander Land**

World War II history, with the remains of Germany’s Schatsgräber station is found here. There is also a large air landing strip and the frontier Russian station Nagurskaya, which was abandoned in 1996.

**DAY 6 Cape Fligley and Cape Norway**

Cape Fligley is at the most northern point of the archipelago and is marked with a copper plaque and memorial cross. This is also the most northern part of Europe, reaching further north than Spitsbergen. The island is almost entirely ice-covered and temperatures only rise above freezing for a few short weeks each summer.
Itinerary

Sometimes unreachable, even to icebreakers, weather is always a factor at Cape Norway, in this northern part of the archipelago. A variety of arctic flora is found in this area, making it particularly interesting for botanists. From 1895-1896 explorers Nansen and Johansen wintered here for over seven months after a failed attempt to conquer the North Pole. You’ll see the remains of their primitive hut and also be on the lookout for polar bears, belugas and narwhals. If conditions permit, you will visit the most northern island of Franz Josef Land, Rudolf Island.

**DAY 7 Champ Island and Alger Island**

Today our goal is the picturesque Champ Island, whose ice and snow-capped mountains provide a different landscape for your photographic pursuits. In addition to the highest peaks in the entire archipelago, the Cape Fiume landing site offers unique photo opportunities. Here you’ll find perfectly spherical stones of up to 10 ft (3 m) in diameter dotting the landscapes.

This afternoon, we’ll visit Alger Island on whose shore lie the disintegrating remains of an important Arctic expedition base, Camp Ziegler.

**DAY 8 Hooker Island**

When you reach Tikhaya Bay (or “Calm Bay”) on Hooker Island you’ll approach Rubini Rock, home to thousands of sea birds such as nesting kittiwakes. Have your binoculars and cameras ready for this impressive sight. You’ll also visit a derelict polar station in the bay. Be on the watch for bowhead whales in this area too!

**DAY 9 Cape Flora and Bell Island**

Exploration history in this part of the Arctic is full of failed attempts to reach the North Pole and navigate these icy waters. An example is your landing site for today, Cape Flora on Northbrook Island. It was discovered by the Lee Smith expedition in 1880, but cost them their steam yacht *Aira*, which sunk on the coast. You’ll also visit remnants of the Jackson expedition whose extensive settlement is still largely intact.

Today land at Bell Island, where we will hike to the remarkably well-preserved house built by the Lee Smith expedition of 1881.

**DAY 10 Vibebukta**

At Vibebukta, we’ll hike through a polar desert - a landscape completely different from any we may have encountered previously during this voyage. You’ll discover the skeleton of a whale 0.6 miles (1 km) from shore.

**DAY 11 Sundneset and Dolerittneset**

You’ll notice the landscape changing once again here, as we take you ashore to hike, observe birds, and learn of the life cycle of polar ponds and flowers. With luck, we’ll encounter more walrus.

**DAY 12 Gashamna, Isbjornhamna and Brepollen**

We’ll ask for permission to visit Polish Polar Station Hornshund, and depending on the research being conducted, we may be granted access. First established in 1957 as part of Poland’s contribution to International Polar Year, the base was modernized in 1978 to permit year-round research. Current studies contribute to understanding the magnitude of the Earth’s electric field, glacier dynamics and the detection of climate change.

**DAY 13 Depart Longyearbyen**

In the morning you’ll arrive in Longyearbyen and disembark. Say goodbye to the Expedition Team before transferring to the airport for your homeward bound flight.
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
- An official Quark Expeditions® parka to keep
- Coffee, tea and cocoa available around the clock
- Hair dryer and bathrobe in every cabin
- Comprehensive pre-departure materials, including a map and an informative Arctic Reader
- All miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the program
- All luggage handling aboard ship
- Emergency evacuation insurance to a maximum benefit of US$100,000 per person
- Russian invitation letter for visa application provided after final payment
- Arrival transfer from Longyearbyen airport to your hotel if you arrive one day prior to embarkation

THIS EXPEDITION EXCLUDES

- International airfare
- Passport and applicable visa expenses
- Government arrival and departure taxes not mentioned above
- Meals ashore unless otherwise specified
- Baggage, cancellation, interruption, and medical travel insurance
- Excess baggage charges
- Mandatory waterproof pants for Zodiac cruising
- 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
- Optional kayaking activities

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.

IMPORTANT

Russian visas are required for tourists of most countries. See your country’s Russian consulate or embassy for details.
**ARCTIC ARCHIPELAGOS: Spitsbergen and Franz Josef Land**

*Expedition Aboard the Adventure Ship SEA ADVENTURER*

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<th>Dates</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Start/End</th>
<th>Triple</th>
<th>Lower Deck</th>
<th>Main Deck Porthole</th>
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All rates per person in USD.

**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
Franz Josef Land

POSSIBLE LANDINGS AND WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS

TEPLITZ BAY, RUDOLF ISLAND

With a long history of arctic exploration this bay was first explored during Julius Payer’s 1874 expedition. Once a base for long-distance arctic flights, the bay is also home to an abandoned polar station. Ships have sunk in these icy waters, a wrecked aircraft lies on the icecap and monuments and graves pay homage to the early explorers who died here. For wildlife, both narwhal and beluga whales have been seen.

ALEXANDER LAND

World War II history, including the remains of Germany’s Schatsgräber station can be found. There is also a large air landing strip and the frontier Russian station Nagurskaya, which was abandoned in 1996.

WILCZEK ISLAND

The Austro-Hungarian Tegetthof expedition left their mark here after being trapped in ice in 1872. Sites include a grave of one of their team members, located high up on a ridge. The island is half ice-covered and is among the most southerly islands of the archipelago.

VICTORIA ISLAND

The westernmost island of the archipelago, this very small island is actually geographically closer to Svalbard than Franz Josef Land. The icecap here reaches almost 328 feet (100 m) thick and is an impressive sight from a distance. Walrus, polar bear and ivory gulls are most commonly spotted here, with the island being a large gull breeding ground.

POSSIBLE LANDINGS AND WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS

TEPLITZ BAY, RUDOLF ISLAND

CALM BAY, HOOKER ISLAND

Sporadically in use today, this is the site of the first ever polar station in the archipelago, built in 1929. Memorials to Georgiy Sedov’s wintering in 1913-14 are built here and the remains of a glaciologist hut are also found.

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POSSIBLE LANDINGS AND WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS

ALKEFJELLET

This cliff is a seabird center, where Brünnich’s guillemots (thick-billed murres) raise their young. An estimated 100,000 breeding pairs reside in the basalt cliffs. The birds do not build nests, rather they lay an egg on the bare ledge.

LONGYEARBYEN

Eighteen hundred people inhabit the administrative capital of Svalbard, which is situated on the shore of Isfjorden. The settlement was founded in 1905 by John Munroe Longyear, the majority owner of the Arctic Coal Company of Boston.

NORDAUSTLANDET ISLAND

This is the second-largest island in the entire Svalbard Archipelago. The largest glacier in Europe is located on the island, which is a known habitat for reindeer and walrus.

LILLIEHÖÖK GLACIER

In 1906, His Serene Highness Prince Albert I of Monaco visited Lilliehöök Glacier to conduct scientific investigations. His great-great-grandson visited the glacier 100 years later. He, too, was part of a scientific investigation, this time to further our understanding of the arctic clam, a species that lives for more than a century. The growth rings of a single clam’s shell contain evidence of the chemicals encountered by the clam. Scientists can determine the variations of the water’s temperature and pollutant content by studying the shell.

VIBEBUKTA

This polar desert may seem barren, but traces of life can be found here, including fossils and whalebones that are 9,500 years old. The bones provide nutrients for microenvironments that leach from the ancient bones.

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