The Orkneys, Shetlands and Norway’s Fjords: Across the Arctic Circle

This mystical expedition cruise of the northern Atlantic, offers a fascinating blend of Scottish and Norse history, and provides rich culture and wildlife experiences, including some rare opportunities that will delight those interested in birding. We’ll explore the medieval art, architecture and archeology of Britain’s northernmost archipelagos of the Orkney and Shetland Islands, and discover contemporary life and Viking history there, before continuing east to the picturesque port of Bergen. Continuing northwards into the Norwegian Sea, we’ll discover the UNESCO-protected Vega Island, a veritable ornithologists’ dream.

Our home for this voyage is the nimble small ship, Ocean Nova, which will afford us the opportunity to get up close and personal with much of the landscape. There will be plenty of time to venture into the fjords on our Zodias, allowing us to get even closer to cascading falls and make shore landings in otherwise inaccessible coves. We’ll conclude the voyage in Tromsø, called the ‘Gateway to the Arctic’, and the largest Norwegian town north of the Arctic Circle.

EXpedition in Brief:

• The Norse and Viking history of the Scottish Isles combined with the exceptional landscape of the Norwegian Fjords
• Orkneys and Shetlands neolithic sites, more than anywhere else in the world
• Enjoy amazing bird life, with thousands of North Atlantic seabirds
• Sail deeper into fjords of Norway and visit islands that larger ships cannot
• An excellent mix of culture and natural history
• Sail north across the Arctic Circle
• Combine this voyage with Tromsø, Bear Island and Spitsbergen: Fjords and Bears

DID YOU KNOW? Norway is regarded as the birth place of modern skiing. The word “ski” is Norwegian and simply means “piece of wood” or “clef piece of wood”.

THE ORKNEYS, SHETLANDS AND NORWAY’S FJORDS: ACROSS THE ARCTIC CIRCLE
Adventure Options

Booking an Adventure Option on your Ocean Nova expedition is a great way to enhance your Polar experience. These options are all subject to availability and fill up quickly, so be sure to book yours early.

**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 10-16 people, multiple times per voyage, kayaking adventures are only done 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 physical requirements and cost of each option is available by contacting your Polar Travel Adviser.*

**INCLUDED OPTIONS**

**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 you can expect prior to each excursion.
We will join the Ocean Nova in Aberdeen in the afternoon, and sail north towards the Scottish Isles. Consider arriving a few days early to explore all that the “Granite City” has to offer. Characterised by its grand and ornate architecture, Aberdeen is a prosperous and cosmopolitan city.

**DAY 2 Kirkwall**

The morning finds us in Orkney, an archipelago of almost 70 islands, with a history dating back 8,500 years to the first Mesolithic tribe that inhabited the area. We will travel back in time here, with visits planned to the Standing Stones of Stenness, the Ring of Brodgar, Skara Brae, Skall House and the Italian Chapel. We will also have a chance to pay our respects to polar explorer John Rae, who rests in the shadow of the impressive St. Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall. We may even have a chance to experience the vibrant and lively culture of today at a local pub.

**DAY 3 Fair Isle, Orkney Islands**

We plan to visit Fair Isle, the most remote inhabited island in the United Kingdom. It is also the best place to find rare birds in Britain with 27 first records. Many of the 70 people who live on the island are artists, painters, writers, musicians and weavers, who are particularly famous for their intricately-knitted sweaters. Here we will also be introduced to the crofting culture. In the afternoon, we will visit the Broch of Mousa, the finest preserved example of Iron Age towers in Scotland.

**DAY 4 Lerwick, Shetland Islands**

The Shetland Islands are known for their archaeological sites, and we will have a chance to visit a few of the most impressive. We visit Jarlshof, the prehistoric Norse settlement which dates back 2,500 years. Here we’ll see the progression of human civilization through the late Bronze and Iron Ages, as well as the Pictish and Norse eras and the Middle Ages. We’ll return back to modern times as we visit Lerwick, the capital and main port of the Shetlands. We return to the Ocean Nova for lunch and set sail for Norway.

**DAY 5 Bergen, Norway**

We arrive at Norway’s second-largest city, Bergen, after crossing the North Sea. Here we’ll have our first taste of Norwegian Culture, with a rich history dating back over 1,000 years. We will have a tour of the city, complete with world heritage sites, medieval houses, and some of the best street art in Norway.

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**WANT TO STAY LONGER, OR ARRIVE EARLIER?**

Contact our Polar Travel Advisers via email, live chat or phone (1.888.892.0073) for seamless, worry-free booking of all trip extensions.
**DAY 6 Alesund**
In the morning we should arrive in Alesund at the mouth of the Geiranger Fjord. We’ll have time today to explore this beautiful city and its Art Nouveau architecture. We’ll also travel up to the top of Mount Aksla for a spectacular view of the town.

**DAY 7 Geiranger Fjord**
Geiranger Fjord is considered to be one of the most beautiful in all of Norway and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. As we enter the fjord system, we’ll want to spend our time on deck, taking in the amazing views en route to the town of Geiranger, including the famous Seven Sisters waterfall. Here we’ll have a chance to visit the quaint town and hike in the nearby hills for spectacular views.

**DAY 8 Trondheim**
In the morning we will call into Trondheim, the historic capital of Norway. We will walk through the quaint historic district, characterised by wooden architecture, where you can visit small, specialist shops and enjoy a coffee at one of the pleasant cafés. We will also visit the cathedral of the national sanctuary of Norway, Nidaros Cathedral, built over the grave of St. Olav. Work began in 1070, but the oldest parts still in existence date from the middle of the 12th century. In the afternoon we will have a chance to visit tiny Munkholmen Island, just off the coast of Trondheim, and learn about its fascinating history. During the Viking age this was the main place for executions for enemies of the state, whose heads would be placed on stakes for all to see. The islet went on to become a monastery and prison, but today is a park with sandy beaches facing the city.

**DAY 9 Vega Island**
Vega is an ornithologist’s dream. Chief among the bird population are eider ducks, raised for their feathers - the houses built for them to nest in can still be seen alongside lighthouses, fishing villages and dramatic landscapes. The archipelago reflects the way fishermen and farmers have, over the past 1,500 years, maintained a sustainable living from eiderdown harvesting.

**DAY 10 Alstahaug**
In the morning we arrive at Alstahaug, in the shadow of the Seven Sisters Mountain range. We’ll find a wonderfully preserved medieval church and some small communities scattered throughout the island.

**DAY 11 Svartisen and Vikingen**
Today we will walk to the Svartisen glacier, which is actually two glaciers that meet in Holandfjord. This is the second largest glacier in Norway and really reinforces how far north we are. The name “Svartisen” comes from “svartis”, an old word which denotes the deep color of blue in this ice and the contrast to the white snow and newer ice on the ice plateau itself.

In the afternoon, we cross the Arctic Circle and arrive at Vikingen, a tiny island with a monument marking the Arctic Circle.

**DAY 12 Lofoten Islands**
We will navigate some of Norway’s northern fjords and take advantage of great hiking opportunities in this unspoiled region. The waters approaching the Lofoten Islands are well known for whale sightings, so your Expedition Team will be at watch on deck. We’re also likely to see sea eagles, cormorants and puffins. We may also visit the Refsvikhula Cave, whose cave paintings found in the 1980s date back 3,000 years. If time allows, we will also stop into Reine on Moskenesøya Island, one of the most beautiful villages in Norway.

**DAY 13 Bleiksøya and Nyksund**
Arriving at Bleiksøya in the morning, we will have a Zodiac cruise around one of the most prolific bird populations in Norway. Here we should find large numbers of puffins, razorbills, sea eagles, cormorants and others in thousands. In the afternoon, we will visit the tiny village of Nyksund which has become a colony for artists.

**DAY 14 Tromsø**
Arriving in Tromsø in the morning, we will enjoy breakfast on the ship before you embark on your flights home. There is also an option to stay on the next voyage which journeys from Tromsø to Spitsbergen.

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Inclusions

**THIS EXPEDITION INCLUDES**

- Shipboard accommodation with daily housekeeping
- All breakfasts, lunches, dinners and snacks on board throughout your voyage
- All shore landings per the daily program
- Leadership throughout the voyage by our experienced Expedition Leader
- A daily program of lectures by noted naturalists, historians and scientists
- All Zodiac transfers and cruising per the daily program
- Formal and informal presentations by our Expedition Team and Special Guests as scheduled
- Photographic Journal on DVD, documenting the voyage
- A pair of 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
- On embarkation day, transfer from our recommend hotel to the ship
- On disembarkation day, group transfer from the ship to our recommended hotel
- Emergency Evacuation Insurance for all passengers to a maximum benefit of US$100,000 per person
- Cruise Passenger Taxes

**THIS EXPEDITION EXCLUDES**

- International airfare
- Passport and any applicable visa expenses
- Government arrival and departure taxes not mentioned above
- Any meals ashore
- Baggage, cancellation, interruption, and medical travel insurance
- Excess baggage charges
- Laundry, bar, beverage and other personal charges unless specified
- Telecommunications charges
- The voluntary gratuity at the end of the voyage for shipboard staff and crew
- Any overnight accommodation required due to flight connections
- Optional kayaking activities
- Pre- and post-expedition hotel accommodation
### Dates & Rates

**THE ORKNEYS, SHETLANDS AND NORWAY’S FJORDS:**

*Across the Arctic Circle*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Emb/Disemb</th>
<th>Quad</th>
<th>Triple</th>
<th>Upper/Lower</th>
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Please note that these prices are guaranteed against fuel price increases. No fuel surcharge will be applied.

### 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
SCOTLAND

POSSIBLE LANDINGS AND WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS

KIRKWALL, ORKNEY ISLANDS

Kirkwall is the biggest town and capital of the Orkney Islands, an archipelago of almost 70 islands, with history dating back 8,500 years. Passengers will also have a chance to pay our respects to polar explorer John Rae, who rests in the shadow of the impressive St. Magnus Cathedral.

FAIR ISLE, ORKNEY ISLANDS

With a population of just 70 people, Fair Isle is the most remote inhabited island in the United Kingdom. It is also the best place to find rare birds in Britain with 27 first records.

JARLSHOF, SHETLAND ISLANDS

Lying at the southern tip of Shetland mainland, Jarlshof settlement has been described as “one of the most remarkable archaeological sites ever excavated in the British Isles”. Remains have been found there dating from 2500BC up to 1600AD.

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

POSSIBLE LANDINGS AND WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS

BERGEN

Norway’s second-largest city, Bergen, offers a rich history dating back over 1,000 years. While here passengers will have a tour of the city, complete with World heritage sites, medieval houses, and the best street art in Norway.

MOUNT AksLA

From the top of Mount Aksla there is a panoramic view of the archipelago, the beautiful town centre of Alesund, and the amazing Sunnmøre Alps. The top can be reached by either by foot or City Train.

GEIRANGER

The quaint town of Geiranger is located on what is considered to be one of the most beautiful fjords in all of Norway and is listed as a World Heritage site.

SEVEN SISTERS WATERFALL

The Seven Sisters Waterfall, also known as Knivsflåfossen, is located along Geiranger Fjord and is part of the Geiranger World Heritage Site. The tallest of the seven falls measures 820 feet.

TRONDHEIM

Trondheim is known as the historic capital of Norway. Walking through the quaint historic district, characterised by wooden architecture, you will find small, specialist shops and small, pleasant cafés. The Nidaros Cathedral, built over the grave of St. Olav, dates back to middle of the 12th century and is also worth a visit when in Trondheim.

MUNKHOLMEN ISLAND

Munkholmen Island is located just off the coast of Trondheim. During the Viking age this was the main place for executions for enemies of the state, whose heads would be placed on stakes for all to see. The islet went on to become a monastery and prison, but today is a park, with sandy beaches facing the city.

VEGA ISLAND

Today we visit the UNESCO-protected Vega Island archipelago as we head north. Vega is an ornithologist’s dream. Chief among the bird population are eider ducks, raised for their feathers—the houses built for them to nest in can still be seen, alongside lighthouses, fishing villages and dramatic landscapes.

ALSTAHUG

Alstahaug lies in the shadow of the Seven Sisters Mountain range. Here you’ll find a wonderfully preserved medieval church and some small communities scattered throughout the island.

TRAENA

Here you are able to hike through a long tunnel cut through the mountain up to a radar station on top. Traena has also been the site of many archaeological discoveries dating back to the Stone Age.

SVARTISEN

Svartisen glacier is actually two glaciers that meet in Holandfjord. The name ‘Svartisen’ comes from ‘svartis’, an old word which denotes the deep colour of blue in this ice and the contrast to the white snow and newer ice on the ice plateau itself.

BLEIKSOYA

In Bleiksøya you can see one of the most prolific bird populations in Norway. Here we should find large numbers of puffins, razorbills, sea eagles, cormorants and others in thousands.