

THE ARCTIC - ACROSS THE ARCTIC CIRCLE | GREG MORTIMER




INTRODUCTION

On this unforgettable 15 day expedition, combines three unique worlds into one unforgettable journey as we explore Scotland, Norway, and Svalbard. From Stone Age villages to Iron Age forts, the Orkney and Shetland Islands reveal a proud Scottish heritage, while Vikings, fjords and fishing folk feature along the sublime Norwegian coastline, which includes a visit to famous Lofoten Islands. Crossing the Arctic Circle to Svalbard, discover a landscape of towering cliffs alive with breeding birds; a frozen wonderland of gleaming glaciers and one where the mighty polar bear reigns supreme. Departing from Aberdeen and returning to Longyearbyen, this epic adventure also takes in the charm of the windswept Orkney Islands, the archaeological sites of the Shetland Islands, and serene Norwegian fishing villages. Keep your eyes peeled for humpbacks, sea otters, and dolphins in the bountiful waters of the Arctic Circle.

25% Earlybird discount on the 2024 Arctic season valid for new bookings until 30 Sep 2023. Discount is valid only on selected cabin categories on selected departures.
 *Not combinable with any other promotion. Offers apply to new bookings only. Cabins are subject to availability and currency fluctuations. Further conditions apply, please [contact us](#) for more information.

PLEASE NOTE: Pricing is subject to change and availability at the time of booking. Contact us for more information.

ITINERARY

TRIP CODE
ACAUAAC
DEPARTURE
06/06/2024
DURATION
15 Days
LOCATIONS
Scotland, Norway, Svalbard


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DAY 1: Arrive in Aberdeen

Welcome to Aberdeen, you will be met by a representative at the airport and transferred to our group hotel. Upon arrival, please remind hotel check-in staff to provide you with Aurora Expeditions cabin tags for your luggage. Then please clearly label the tags with your name and ship cabin number. This evening you will meet your fellow expeditioners at a Welcome Reception and Pre-Embarkation Briefing while enjoy a light refreshment.



DAY 2: Embark Aberdeen

This morning, your luggage will be collected from the hotel and transferred directly to the port for sanitisation, clearance and delivered to your cabin ahead of your arrival on board. Please ensure that your luggage is fitted with cabin tags clearly labelled with your name and cabin number. Any valuables or personal items should be kept on you throughout the day. Final, mandatory pre-embarkation health screening and COVID (rapid antigen) testing will be completed before enjoying a city tour of Aberdeen followed by a transfer to the pier for embarkation in the late afternoon. Settle into your cabin before attending important safety briefings and enjoy the thrill of departure as we ‘throw the lines’ and set sail. This evening, get to know your fellow expeditioners and our friendly Expedition Team and crew at the Captain’s Welcome Dinner to celebrate the start of a thrilling adventure.



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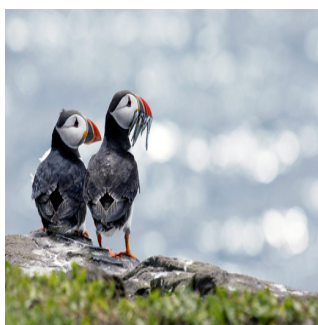
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DAY 3: Orkney Islands: Days 3-4

Among Orkney's archipelago of 70 windswept islands, nine kilometres (six miles) north of the Scottish mainland, a rich tapestry of archaeology, history and wildlife awaits. We follow the passage of time – from 5,000-year-old World Heritage Neolithic sites, past relics from wandering Vikings and reminders of World War II occupation – to present-day crofting communities. Imposing sea cliffs teem with seabirds, and clifftop paths and bleak moors beckon the keen hikers among us, while our kayakers use paddle-power to explore sections of Orkney's fascinating coastline. Midway between Orkney and Shetland is Fair Isle, home to quaint croft houses and famous for its knitwear and historical shipwrecks. The 70 or so islanders mostly live in traditional crofts on the more fertile low-lying southern part of the island. A bird watcher's paradise and boasting a major European bird observatory, Fair Isle lies on the intersection of major bird flight paths from Scandinavia, Iceland and Faroe. It attracts common species and also eastern rarities such as the lanceolated warbler. In summer, the cliffs teem with breeding fulmars, kittiwakes, guillemots, gannets, shags and puffins. Fair Isle is an excellent place to view seabirds at close range – especially puffins. The island also has more than 250 species of flowering plants, including rare orchids, alpine and wetland species and common wildflowers. We will be welcomed by the hospitable villagers, and may take a hike or visit the museum.



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DAY 5: Shetland Islands

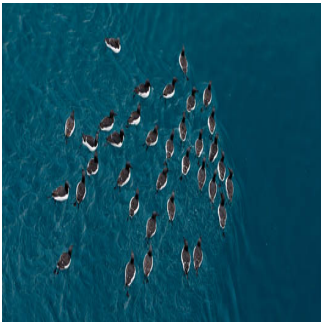
Britain's most northerly islands lie almost 160 kilometres (100 miles) north of the Scottish mainland, at a similar latitude to the southern tip of Greenland, or Bergen in Norway. Kept relatively warm by the Gulf Stream, Shetland's 100 islands experience almost 24 hours of daylight in summer. They abound with nature reserves and archaeological sites, and offer a taste of traditional island life. We plan to visit some of Shetland's best preserved and most complex archaeological sites, brochs – fortified Iron Age towers.



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DAY 6: At Sea

As we sail towards the Norwegian coastline, the bridge or the outer decks offer an excellent and warm vantage point for birdwatching. Our historian and naturalists will delight us with their informative talks.



DAY 7: Norwegian Coast: Days 7-10

We spend three days exploring the superb Norwegian coastline, cruising the intricate maze of seldom-visited inlets and outer islands. The cod-fishing island of Sør Gjeslingan welcomes us with its delightful wooden houses and cheerful inhabitants. Here, we search for nesting kittiwakes and reclusive sea otters. Delight in the hunt for fabled trolls, passing through Torghatten – meaning ‘mountain with a hole’ – said to have been caused by a troll’s arrow. Crossing the Arctic Circle, we make our way to the stunning Lofoten – meaning puma’s foot – Islands. This is a land scoured by ice and legend, the towering crags with their sharp edges, standing in silent protection of the villages below. As we travel north, the days are noticeably longer and we search for blue whales, humpbacks, orca, minke whales, pilot whales and dolphins in the deep, squid-rich ocean trenches off Andenes.



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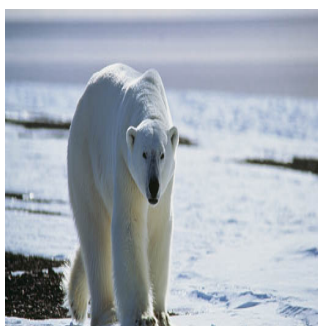
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DAY 11: Bear Island & Svalbard: Days 11-14

We approach Spitsbergen at its most southerly point, South Cape or Sørkapp, and explore the coastline, entering a different world – that of the polar desert. Enormous peaks and deeply gouged fjords make our visit to Hornsund a powerful experience. As Hornsund is the southernmost fjord in Svalbard, we keep a lookout for polar bears, and Zodiac-cruise along glacial fronts that are home to bearded and ring seals, kittiwakes and guillemots. Here in Svalbard we continue our exploration into human history dating back 400 years, encompassing trapping and hunting, whaling and mining. If the skies are clear we may catch a glimpse of the dramatic Hornsundtind, peaking at 1,430 metres (4,695 feet). Dramatic folds characterise the geological landscape of Bellsund and here we will enjoy magnificent vistas, steep bird cliffs and lush vegetation, always an open invitation to arctic fox and polar bears. Little auks, guillemots, northern fulmar and pink-footed geese make this their breeding home. Reindeer graze the slopes peacefully and as the fjord branches, there are numerous places to explore. Polar bears pass through the area on their way to the west coast, and if we are lucky, we may encounter the elusive and alluring white beluga whale.



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DAY 15: Disembark in Longyearbyen


During the early morning, we cruise into the port of the remote village, Longyearbyen, the ‘capital’ of Spitsbergen. After bidding farewell to newfound friends, we are transferred into town, where there is time to explore and shop before transferring to the airport in the afternoon. 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. Important note: In the spirit of expedition travel, we encourage exploration and adventure offering flexibility in challenging environments. This itinerary is only a guide and is subject to change due to weather, sea and other conditions beyond our control.



INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

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Accommodation	Cabin on board ship
Inclusions	<p>Inclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer from airport to our group hotel on day 1 • Welcome reception/pre-embarkation briefing on day 1 • One night's hotel accommodation in Aberdeen on day 1 including breakfast • Mandatory pre-embarkation health screening and COVID test on day 2 • Half-day city tour of Aberdeen prior to embarkation on day 2 • Transfer from pier to airport or hotel on day 15 • Onboard accommodation during voyage including daily cabin service • All meals, snacks, tea and coffee during voyage • Beer, house wine and soft drinks with dinner • Captain's Welcome and Farewell reception including four-course dinner, house cocktails, house beer and wine, non-alcoholic beverages • Transfer from pier to airport or pier to hotel in Aberdeen upon disembarkation • All shore excursions and Zodiac cruises • Educational lectures and guiding services from expedition team • Complimentary access to onboard expedition doctor and medical clinic (initial consult) • 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 • Gratuities for ship crew <p>Exclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International or domestic flights, unless specified • Transfers not mentioned in the itinerary • Airport arrival or departure taxes • Passport, visa, reciprocity fees 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, Wi-Fi, email or phone charges.
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)
Single Surcharge	Available upon request, contact us for more details.
Notes	Itinerary subject to change depending on weather and ice conditions.

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Price Dependent upon Departure date, season and availability.

SUSTAINABILITY

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