

ARCTIC 2026

Spitsbergen Circumnavigation: A Rite of Passage

 **ULTRAMARINE
& OCEAN EXPLORER**



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Expedition Overview

Spitsbergen Circumnavigation: A Rite of Passage

This 15-day journey offers the most extensive exploration of Spitsbergen, the largest island in the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard. Look for iconic Arctic wildlife such as walrus, reindeer and polar bears; explore remnants of 16th-century maritime history; and experience two remarkable birdwatching utopias: 14th of July Glacier and Alkefjellet. If conditions permit, we will also attempt a full circumnavigation of Spitsbergen—a rite of passage for many Arctic enthusiasts. Shore excursions by Zodiac will allow you to land in places where few humans have ever set foot.

HIGHLIGHTS



Spot iconic Arctic wildlife, such as polar bears, walruses and reindeer



View numerous Arctic bird species, like puffins, Arctic terns and purple sandpipers



Anticipate a full circumnavigation of Spitsbergen



Explore glaciers, fjords, icebergs and more with included Zodiac cruising



Immerse yourself in the icy realm of the Arctic with optional kayaking adventures



Hike the tundra and polar desert.



Itinerary

DAY 1 | ARRIVE IN HELSINKI, FINLAND

Your Arctic adventure begins in Helsinki, renowned for its extraordinary architecture and influences, including Finnish saunas and the vibrant Design District. Arrive any time on Day 1. Your group hotel, included in the Charter Flight & Hotel Package, is located at the airport so no transfer is required. An agent will be in the lobby that evening to answer any questions about the charter flights scheduled for the following morning.

DAY 2 | FLY TO LONGYEARBYEN, SVALBARD AND EMBARK

This morning, the group will transfer to the airport and board our private charter flight to Longyearbyen, Spitsbergen's largest settlement. As your ship sets sail, enjoy your first view of the island's rugged, glacier-topped mountains rising majestically from frigid waters.

DAYS 3-13 | EXPLORING SPITSBERGEN

Expect a new adventure every day as we begin our journey by heading north and around the island of Spitsbergen, exploring smaller, outlying islands. We plan to circumnavigate Spitsbergen, but if conditions are favorable, we will also attempt a larger circumnavigation of the archipelago, including many of the outer islands in the Svalbard archipelago. Every expedition will be different, depending on the weather and ice, but some of the places we may visit include the 14th of July Glacier, Ny-London, Phippsøya, Alkefjellet and the seldom-visited Kvitøya.

These names may seem strange to you, but each site has its own unique appeal. There is no shortage of natural beauty in Spitsbergen, where colorful tundra meadows are complemented by immense glaciers. For birders, 14th of July Bay is home to puffins, purple



SPITSBERGEN CIRCUMNAVIGATION: A Rite of Passage

Onboard *Ultramarine* and *Ocean Explorer* ———
Flights to/from Helsinki - - -

sandpipers, black-legged kittiwakes, pink-footed geese, and barnacle geese, while Alkefjellet's cliffs are teeming with nesting Brünnich's guillemots (thick-billed murre).

Always on the lookout for wildlife, be sure to have your camera ready to capture reindeer when we visit sites like Ny-London, Sundneset and Alkhornet. Phippsøya and Isbukta are often home to sea ice, the polar bear's preferred habitat for hunting, which translates into great potential for you to view and capture them in action.

A big part of appreciating Spitsbergen comes from understanding the history—not just how people live today, but also how this land was first explored. Whaling was a key industry, and you will

see remains of outposts from the 16th century, plus other evidence of whaling at landing sites such as Smeerenburg.

DAY 14 | DISEMBARK IN LONGYEARBYEN AND FLY TO HELSINKI

Your adventure ends in the frontier-style settlement of Longyearbyen. From here, we'll transfer you to the airport for your return group charter flight to Helsinki, included in the Charter Flight & Hotel Package. Upon arrival in Helsinki, you'll transfer to your included hotel for the night.

DAY 15 | ONWARD FLIGHT HOME

After breakfast, you can make your way to the airport for your onward flight home, or stay to explore Finland's culturally-rich capital on your own if you've made prior arrangements.

EXPEDITION SPIRIT

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Shot with a telephoto lens.





Arrival and Departure Details, and International Flight Planning



* Arrive anytime on Day 1 or earlier. Day 1 includes an optional briefing.
 International flights are not included in the cost of the voyage.

As you prepare for your journey, you may be interested in your arrival and departure details. Since international air transportation is not included in the cost of your expedition, you have some flexibility in planning your flights.

Arrival Day and Embarkation

DAY 1 — ARRIVING AND HOTEL NIGHT IN HELSINKI

You may arrive in Helsinki at any time during Day 1 of the itinerary. Your included accommodation will be at the airport hotel, so arrival transfers are not necessary. Please keep in mind that your hotel room may not be ready for check in until 3pm. On arrival at the hotel, you will receive a welcome letter outlining the departure information for the following day's flight. Final details and check-in procedures can be found in your final documents. An agent representing Quark Expeditions® will be available in the lobby of the hotel that evening to answer any questions about the charter flight(s) scheduled for the following morning.

DAY 2 — CHARTER FLIGHT AND EMBARKATION IN LONGYEARBYEN

After a well rested night at your hotel you will join your flight up to Longyearbyen. Upon arrival in Longyearbyen, you will be transferred from the airport to a drop off point and your luggage will be taken directly to the ship. Details of ship transfer times will be provided during your arrival transfer. Due to port logistics, it is possible that you may need to board the vessel by Zodiac, rather than from the pier.

PLEASE NOTE

There is a strict luggage weight limit on checked luggage and cabin baggage on the flights between Helsinki and Longyearbyen. Should you have additional luggage, it can be stored at the hotel in Helsinki. There is NO option to pay for additional luggage.

You will find in your final documents:

- › Luggage weight restrictions on charter flights
- › Hotel information and check in time
- › Charter flight time to embarkation point
- › Embarkation plan
- › Departure charter flight time

Final Day and Departure

DISEMBARKATION IN LONGYEARBYEN AND CHARTER FLIGHT TO HELSINKI

Your voyage is scheduled to end back in Longyearbyen where you will disembark after breakfast. The process takes about an hour and due to port logistics, may involve one last Zodiac ride to the pier. You can spend the day exploring Longyearbyen before being transferred to the airport for your charter flight to Helsinki.

DEPARTING FROM HELSINKI

Arrival times back to Helsinki will not be available until 30 days prior to voyage. Scheduled charter flight times will appear in your final documents, and any additional updates will be communicated on board prior to disembarkation. Upon arrival in Helsinki, you'll be transferred to your included hotel for the night. In the morning, make your way to the airport to catch your flight onward.

Arrival and Departure Transfers

HELSINKI AIRPORT TRANSFERS

Arrival and departure transfers in Helsinki are not included in the expedition. Your first and final nights included accommodation will be provided at the airport hotel, so please make your way to the lobby for check-in when you arrive. The voyage concludes the morning after your included hotel night in Helsinki.

PLEASE NOTE

Included Hotel Accommodations:

Your included accommodation begins on Day 1 of your itinerary, and the specific hotel(s) will be indicated in your final voyage confirmation. If you are arriving prior to Day 1 of your expedition or are staying after the disembarkation day and would like to extend your stay, you can book directly with the hotel or through a third party. Included hotel accommodation is also provided for your last night in Helsinki.





Ocean Explorer

Ocean Explorer, the newest addition to our fleet, is modern, elegant and purpose-built for polar exploration. The 138-passenger vessel has been designed with the latest in expedition ship technology. One of the ship's key features is the ULSTEIN X-BOW®, a marine engineering innovation that ensures a comfortable and smooth sailing experience thanks to the inverted bow. Located at the bow is the two-story, light-filled library, which introduces a welcome airiness to the expedition ship. Spacious cabins feature a modern, bespoke Scandinavian design and almost all have verandas. Guests can relax and find comfort in the spacious gym, sauna with large windows, and two outdoor Jacuzzis. *Ocean Explorer* features ample outdoor viewing areas and multi-height outer decks, which are ideal for long-view photography and wildlife viewing. The vessel is equipped with a fleet of 15 Zodiacs that enable guests to get off the ship quickly and safely for off-ship adventures. In addition to the well-appointed and spacious public areas, *Ocean Explorer* has an industry-leading mix of sustainability systems, including fuel-efficient Rolls Royce engines.

SHIP SPECIFICATIONS:

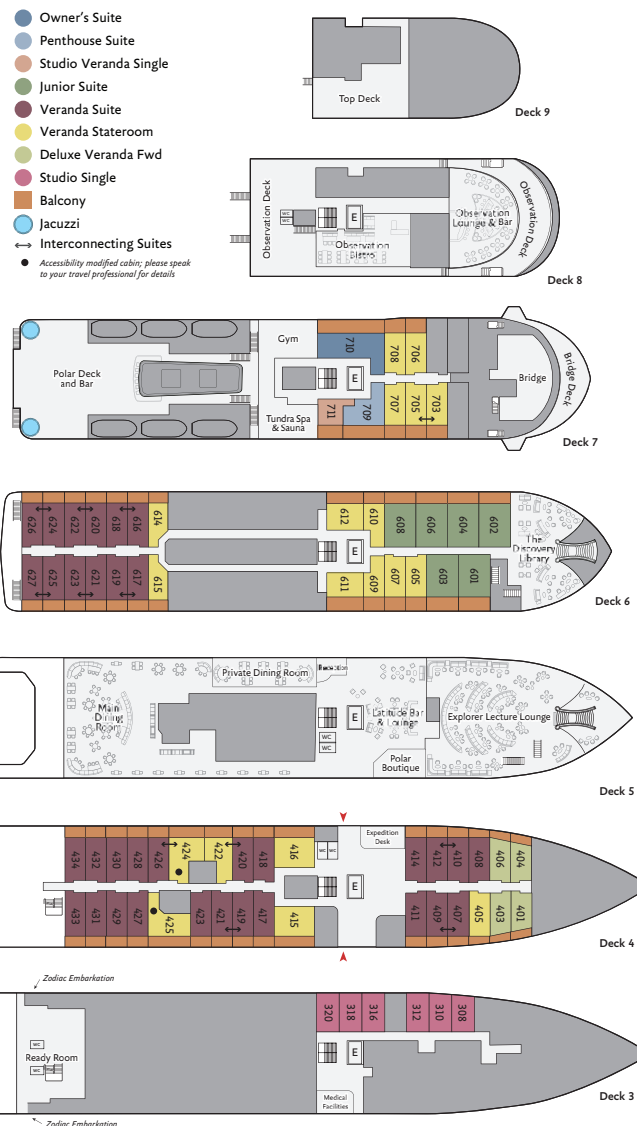
Staff and Crew: 105

Guests: 138

Lifeboats: 2

Ice Class: 1A, PC6

Visit QuarkExpeditions.com to view deck plan details.





Included Activities

All of these activities are included in the price of your trip.

Ready for a little adventure beyond your ship? Each Quark Expeditions® voyage offers a variety of recreational activities to enhance your polar experience.

ZODIAC CRUISING

Zodiacs are the workhorses of polar expeditions, taking you to places the ships can't access, allowing you to reach remote shorelines, explore shallow inlets and spot wildlife. Expedition staff make stepping in and out of them safe and comfortable, and your Zodiac drivers will provide active interpretation, making the landscape come even more alive.

HIKING

Led by experienced staff, exploring on foot is one of the best ways to appreciate the polar landscapes. Our guides are able to accommodate a range of skill levels to suit every guest.

PRESENTATIONS

Enjoy daily chats with and presentations by our world-class onboard polar experts—expedition guides, specialists, photography guides and other special guests who will introduce you to the fascinating history, biology, ornithology, glaciology and geology of the region, and much, much more.

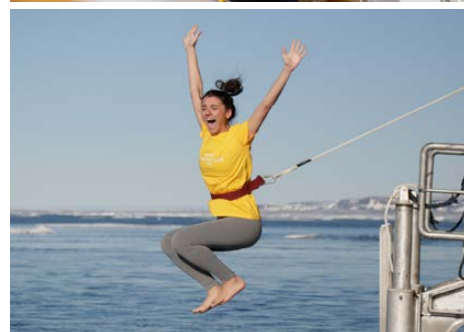
POLAR PLUNGE

This rite of passage, scheduled only once per expedition, gives you the chance to jump safely into the bracing Arctic waters under the watchful eye of our staff—and just about every single camera on board.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Documenting your voyage so you can take the memories home is a rewarding experience. Our photography guide will help you hone your skills to capture the beauty of the polar regions.

Contact your Polar Travel Adviser or your Travel Professional for more information about your Included Activities and Adventure Options, including the necessary experience, physical requirements and cost.





Adventure Options

All of these activities cost extra and should be booked in advance of your trip.



PLEASE NOTE

For all paid activities pre-booking is required. We recommend booking early as spaces fill quickly.

SEA KAYAKING

Imagine gliding across the surface of a bay in the presence of icebergs and glaciers. Our Sea Kayaking program is a great way to intimately explore your surroundings. A small group of kayakers will plan to go out multiple times per voyage as an alternative to shore landings or Zodiac cruises.

The number of opportunities to kayak is weather dependent, and will be conducted only during calm conditions. Prior kayaking experience is required, and you must be able to do a wet exit to participate. Beginners interested in kayaking should consider participating in the Paddling Excursion.

PADDLING EXCURSION

If you're interested in kayaking but would like to try something a bit less demanding than Sea Kayaking, you're the perfect candidate to sign up for a one-time paddle on our stable sit-on-top kayaks—perfect for anyone with minimal or no kayaking experience. Small groups of passengers will be taken out on calm days, with our expert guides always present to provide instruction and help you connect with the polar sea. Two groups of 10 will be pre-booked, and once successfully completed, any subsequent outings will be offered via lottery on board.



Departure Dates

Spitsbergen Circumnavigation: A Rite of Passage

ULTRAMARINE

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Days</i>	<i>Start / End</i>	 Sea Kayaking	 Paddling Excursion
ARCTIC 2026				
JUN 30 - JUL 14, 2026	15	Helsinki	\$	\$

OCEAN EXPLORER

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Days</i>	<i>Start / End</i>	 Sea Kayaking	 Paddling Excursion
ARCTIC 2026				
JUL 9 - 23, 2026	15	Helsinki	\$	\$

\$ Paid Activities



Inclusions and Exclusions

Inclusions

RATES INCLUDE:

- An official Quark Expeditions® parka to keep
- Leadership throughout your voyage by our experienced Expedition Leaders, including shore landings and other activities
- All Zodiac transfers and cruising as per the daily program
- All shore landings as per the daily program
- Shipboard accommodation with daily housekeeping
- All meals, snacks, soft drinks and juices on board throughout your voyage. Please inform us of any dietary requirements as far in advance as possible.
- Complimentary select beer, wines and cocktails during bar service hours and dinner
- Complimentary coffee, tea and cocoa available around the clock
- Formal and informal presentations by our Expedition Team and guest speakers as scheduled
- A photographic journal documenting the expedition
- A pair of waterproof expedition boots on loan for landings and Zodiac cruising excursions
- Hair dryer and bathrobes in every cabin
- Complimentary Wi-Fi service on one device permitting basic Internet browsing, email, posting on social media and voice applications. (Premium packages are available for more data-intensive applications.) Internet access in the polar regions is subject to geography, climate, and other factors beyond our control.
- All miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the program
- All luggage handling aboard the ship
- Transfers between Longyearbyen town center and port on embarkation and disembarkation day

Exclusions

RATES SPECIFICALLY

DO NOT INCLUDE:

- Charter Flight & Hotel Package*
- International airfare
- Arrival and departure transfers in Helsinki
- 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 and domestic flights
- Mandatory waterproof pants for Zodiac cruising, or any other gear not mentioned
- Laundry, bar, spa and other personal charges unless specified
- Phone charges may vary by location
- Voluntary gratuity at the end of the voyage for shipboard staff and crew
- Additional overnight accommodation
- Adventure Options not listed in Included Activities

*CHARTER FLIGHT & HOTEL PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- Pre- and post-expedition hotel nights at Helsinki airport hotel, with breakfast
- Charter flight from Helsinki to Longyearbyen
- Arrival and departure transfers in Longyearbyen
- Charter flight from Longyearbyen to Helsinki



Your Expedition Team

Our Expedition Leaders and their teams bring diverse expertise in subjects as varied as polar history, marine biology, glaciology, ornithology and photography. Their knowledge and enthusiasm will greatly enhance your immersion into the polar environment and further deepen your connection to the Arctic.

With over 30 years of experience bringing passengers to remote polar regions and an industry-leading staff-to-guest ratio, we know how to safely handle the unexpected. Ensuring this hard earned experience is passed on, our expedition staff receive comprehensive training in Quark Academy, which provides hands-on polar expedition training prior as part of our onboarding process as well as ongoing training for experienced staff.



Raise a Glass and Stay Connected

See below for specifics on our complimentary Wi-Fi and bar service.



Meals on Board

If there is one constant on board, it is that you'll enjoy delicious meals daily. While meal times may change due to landings and wildlife sightings, you'll always be served three well-prepared meals per day. Most dietary restrictions can be accommodated by letting us know prior to your expedition.

Breakfasts and lunches are normally served buffet style, while dinners are served plated. À la carte meals are made at the time of your order, allowing our chefs to prepare each dish to your individual needs, ensuring you receive top-quality meals during the course of your expedition.

Complimentary coffee, tea, cocoa and water stations are available around the clock, while soft drinks and juices are available during meals and when the bar is open—all included in the cost of your package.

Enjoy complimentary select beer, wines and select cocktails during bar service hours and dinner as part of our “Raise a Glass and Stay Connected Free” program. Premium wines and champagne are available at extra cost and can be billed to your shipboard account. The well-stocked bars on the ship are open late morning, afternoon and evening, though hours may occasionally change to accommodate the expedition schedule.





Possible Excursions

When traveling in extremely remote regions, your Expedition Team must consider the sea, ice and weather to guide the route and itinerary details. The following sites are a sample of what you may experience on your expedition, whether by ship, Zodiac cruise, or shore landing.

Spitsbergen

ALKEFJELLET

This cliff is a seabird colony, where Brünnich's guillemots (thick-billed murres) raise their young. An estimated 60,000 breeding pairs reside on the basalt cliffs. The birds do not build nests; rather, they lay eggs on the bare ledges of the cliff. Witness the spectacle of thousands of birds flying to and from their cliff edge, speckling the sky and water, like a beehive on a much grander scale.

DISKOBUKTA

This bay on the west shore of Edgeøya affords a landing site with a box canyon where black-legged kittiwakes raise their young. Arctic foxes have been seen combing the canyon floor to feed on scraps that have fallen from the nests above. Watch for the bones of ancient North Atlantic right whales—evidence that the land is rebounding since the last major glaciation.

ISBUKTA

On the eastern shore of the southern tip of Svalbard is Isbukta, which means 'Ice Bay.' Arctic terns, skuas and bearded seals inhabit the bay. Polar bears are known to patrol the area as well.



KVITØYA

The western part of this island is only 39 miles (62 km) from Victoria Island in Franz Josef Land, which is part of the Russian Arctic. By this definition, this remote outpost is technically closer to the Russian Arctic than it is to Nordaustlandet (50 miles/81 km), though Victoria Island is geologically and geographically part of the Svalbard archipelago, but was omitted by mistake in the Spitsbergen Treaty.

LILLIEHÖÖK GLACIER

In 2005, nearly 100 years after his great-great-grandfather conducted scientific investigations here, Prince Albert II of Monaco returned to Lilliehöök Glacier to honor his ancestor's memory. Here, you can take a Zodiac cruise amid labyrinths of sparkling icebergs, and witness breathtaking panoramas of ice. You may even spot bearded seals hauled out on the floes.

LONGYEARBYEN

Home to 2,400 people, the administrative capital of Svalbard is situated on the southern side of Adventfjorden. The settlement was founded in 1905 by John Munroe Longyear, the majority owner of the Arctic Coal Company of Boston. Today as much as ever, this is a true frontier town.

MOFFEN ISLAND

This island is designated as a protected sanctuary for walrus, which are only viewed from the ship—have your binoculars ready.

MONACO GLACIER

Prince Albert I of Monaco, a pioneer of oceanography, led an expedition to Svalbard in 1906. His team used sophisticated photographic techniques to understand the shape and position of several glacier fronts. Monaco Glacier honors the expedition, the prince and the principality over which he reigned. While touring the glacier front by Zodiac cruise,



listen to the crackle and pop of the brash ice, search for seals and have a chance to admire a natural sculpture gallery.

NORDAUSTLANDET ISLAND

This is the second-largest island in the entire Svalbard archipelago, and home to the polar desert. Featured here is Bråsvellbreen, an ice cap connected to the larger Austfonna, which together form a 112-mile- (180 km) long ice cliff. Bråsvellbreen's glacier face makes for an impressive sight during a Zodiac cruise, stretching all the way to the horizon.

HORNSUND

The most southerly fjord in Svalbard offers some of the most spectacular scenery, with dramatic calving glaciers, drifting pack ice and majestic peaks (the highest of which are often shrouded in mist). A Polish research station has operated on the northern shore of Hornsund since 1957. Part of Sør-

Spitsbergen National Park, this pristine area is rich in wildlife—reindeer, Arctic fox and polar bears can be spotted hunting for food, while seals bask on floating ice.

PHIPPSØYA AND MARTENSØYA, SEVEN ISLANDS

This small archipelago is the northernmost land in Svalbard. Englishmen left their mark following key expeditions in 1773 and 1827. The islands are named after naval officers that took part, with the smallest and least significant island being named Nelsonøya, after the lowly midshipman who was promoted over the years to the rank and title of Vice Admiral Horatio Lord Nelson. Featuring austere polar desert landscapes, and often shrouded in pack ice, these islands are closer to the North Pole than anywhere else in Svalbard.

EXPEDITION SPIRIT

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Shot with a telephoto lens.

What to pack on your Arctic expedition

BY SEA

All transfers ship to shore and Zodiac/ship cruising.

- ☐ Waterproof pants (mandatory for every Zodiac ride)
- ☐ Base-layer wool or synthetic top*
- ☐ Base-layer wool or synthetic bottom*
- ☐ Mid-layer warm or fleece top*
- ☐ Mid-layer warm or fleece bottom*
- ☐ Warm hat that covers ears (bring an extra)
- ☐ Scarf, buff, or other face protection
- ☐ Warm wool or synthetic socks (keep a dry pair in your bag, and bring extras for layering)
- ☐ Waterproof gloves or mitts (bring an extra, lighter pair for hiking)
- ☐ Glove liners*
- ☐ Hand and feet warmers*
- ☐ Binoculars
- ☐ Polarized sunglasses with UV protection (consider bringing an eyewear retainer: string/clip etc.)
- ☐ Ski goggles (for Zodiac cruising on snowy or windy days)
- ☐ Waterproof, lightweight backpack or dry sack and/or rain sleeve for camera or a waterproof phone case (to keep camera & gear dry)

*recommended layering depending on the conditions of the day and reflecting your personal thermo-regulation comfort levels.

BY LAND (Shore Excursions and Hiking)

In addition to the gear requirements (as above) mandatory for the transit from ship to shore, it is recommended to bring:

- ☐ Hat, buff or scarf (for wind and weather protection)
- ☐ UV protection (sun hat, polarized sun glasses, sun block, lip balm etc.)
- ☐ Collapsible walking sticks for hikes (if required)
Quantities are available to borrow on every vessel
- ☐ Additional reusable (thermos-regulating) water bottle (in addition to the reusable collapsible water bottle provided)

WHAT TO BRING Packing for the Polar Regions doesn't have to be daunting, and to make it easier for you, all Quark Expeditions voyages include a Quark parka to keep, and a loan of insulated waterproof boots. Additional suggested items include:

TO WEAR ON BOARD

- ☐ The complimentary Quark 3-in-1 Parka provided on board is designed with a waterproof shell that can be worn out on deck, and a removable liner that you can wear to stay comfortable indoors)
- ☐ Comfortable casual clothing like lighter shirts, pants or jeans, etc. (in case the ship gets warm)
- ☐ Comfortable non-slip closed-toed, heelless shoes (flip flops, sandals or slip-on shoes should not be worn on board due to safety concerns)
- ☐ Workout attire (for the fitness center and other indoor activities)
- ☐ Swimsuit for the Polar Plunge. Some vessels may also have a pool, hot tub, sauna and/or steam room. See your ship book for details.

Just a reminder: No formal evening wear required on our voyages but if you would like to bring something a little more dressy for the Captain's welcome and farewell cocktails you may certainly do so.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

- ☐ Passport, visas, immunization records, travel documents, etc. as required
- ☐ Camera gear—complete with charger, storage medium, transport and cleaning kit (lens cloth etc.) and extra batteries
- ☐ Reusable waterproof bags or plastic bags with zippers (to keep small items organized and cameras dry)
- ☐ Voltage converters and plug adapters (see ship book for details)
- ☐ Seasickness, indigestion, headache, or other medications
- ☐ Earplugs and eye masks for sleeping
- ☐ Moisturizer for face and hands (skin dryness due to wind and temperature changes)
- ☐ Credit card and small amount of local currency (see pre-departure book for more details)

- › To view our packing checklist online, visit: QuarkExpeditions.com/What-to-Pack/Arctic
- › Related topics are covered on our Frequently Asked Questions page: QuarkExpeditions.com/Frequently-Asked-Questions



Scan this QR code or [click here](#) to watch our video on what to pack before you go.

WEATHER CONDITIONS & TEMPERATURES

Polar weather is extremely variable; temperatures may hover around the freezing mark and winds can be strong. The extended daylight warms sheltered areas so that you may sometimes find it warm enough for t-shirts. However, you may encounter rain, snow squalls, fog and white-outs during an expedition and should be ready for any conditions.



Polar-Obsessed Since 1991

TO BOOK YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE

Contact your Travel Professional
or a Quark Expeditions® Polar Travel Adviser

TOLL FREE AND LOCAL NUMBERS:

North America (Toll Free) **1 888 332 0008**

U.K. Tel **+44 203 514 2712**

U.K. (Toll Free) **0 808 120 2333**

Australia Tel **+61 2 72580333**

Australia (Toll Free) **+61 1800 953518**

France Tel **+33-1 80 14 01 05**

France (Toll Free) **08 05 08 66 46**

QuarkExpeditions.com

Photos captured with a telephoto lens from a responsible distance, following regulatory/AECO guidelines.

PHOTO CREDITS: (over all Expedition Brochures for the Arctic 2026 season):

Acacia Johnson; David Merron; Nicky Souness; Samantha Crimmin; Sam Edmonds; Michelle Sole; Cindy Miller Hopkins; Sue Flood; Hugo Perrin; Peter Lindstrom; Visit Greenland; Nicolas Singh; Rogelio Espinosa; Grange Productions; Fokus Productions; Adobe Stock; iStock

EXPEDITION BROCHURE
November 4, 2025