

# EXPLORE!



## Across the Arctic Circle - M/V Polar Pioneer

NORWAY, UNITED KINGDOM - TRIP CODE PPAA

POLAR

### Why book this trip?

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Follow the Vikings' route from northeast Scotland to the land of the midnight sun. Our enthusiastic historian and expert naturalists, guide you through the Orkney and Shetland islands; from Stone Age villages and Viking relics, to world class distilleries and spectacular birdlife. We follow migrating whales along Norway's dramatic coast, visit picturesque fishing villages and toast our Arctic Circle crossing. In Spitsbergen, we enter a polar wonderland, where delicate wildflowers adorn tundra and the summer sun never sets. This spectacular wilderness is the breeding ground of walruses, reindeers, incredible birdlife and polar bears.



**INCLUDED MEALS**  
Breakfast: 13  
Lunch: 12  
Dinner: 13



**TRIP STAFF**  
Expedition  
Crew  
Naturalist(s)



**TRANSPORT**  
M/V Polar  
Pioneer  
Zodiac



**ACCOMMODATION**  
13 nights premium  
boat



**TRIP PACE:**  
Relaxed

## Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

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### DAY 1 - Aberdeen

We board the Polar Pioneer in Aberdeen mid afternoon and set sail northwards, towards the Orkneys.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



**Grade: Premium Boat**



**MEALS PROVIDED: DINNER**

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### DAY 2 - Orkney Archipelago

Among Orkney's archipelago of 70 windswept islands, a treasure trove of archaeology, history and wildlife awaits. We follow the passage of time - from 5000-year-old, World Heritage-listed, Neolithic sites to Viking relics, from reminders of World War II occupation to present-day crofting communities.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



**Grade: Premium Boat**



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 3 - Orkney Archipelago**

Imposing sea cliffs teem with seabirds, inviting our Zodiacs to explore coastlines. At Fair Isle we visit traditional crofts to admire local knitwear and nearby colonies of fulmars, kittiwakes, guillemots, gannets, shags and puffins.



ACCOMMODATION:  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



**Grade: Premium Boat**



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 4 - Shetland Isles**

Warmed by Gulf Stream currents and near 24-hours' daylight, the Shetland's 100 islands are peppered with nature reserves and archaeological sites. These include the complex Stone, Bronze and Iron Age settlement of Jarlshof, the World's best preserved broch - fortified Iron Age tower- on Mousa, and remnants of Viking conquest along the coast.



ACCOMMODATION:  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



**Grade: Premium Boat**



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 5 - North Sea**

As we sail towards Norway, our historian and naturalist delight us with fascinating talks and inspire our birdwatching.



ACCOMMODATION:  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



**Grade: Premium Boat**



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 6 - Norway**

Our presentation program continues, preparing us for our landings in Norway. An intricate maze of islands protects Norway's coastline and over the next few days, we will spend time exploring them.



ACCOMMODATION:  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



**Grade: Premium Boat**



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 7 - Norway**

We celebrate crossing the Arctic Circle and visit special places, like Sør Gjaeslingan, once home to a busy cod-fishing fleet. Today it provides fantastic birdlife, including kittiwakes, terns and skuas that migrate here each summer.



ACCOMMODATION:  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



**Grade: Premium Boat**



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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## DAY 8 - Norway

Continuing north, we pass by Torghatten, a mountain with a distinctive hole through it, and learn the fable of lost love and a troll's arrow.



ACCOMMODATION:  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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## DAY 9 - Norway

Majestic scenery delights in the Lofoten Islands, from romantic beaches to narrow fjords hemmed by granite walls. Here we may share the water with orcas and the skies with puffins, so keep a lookout for the variety of wildlife that can be found here.



ACCOMMODATION:  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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## DAY 10 - Bear Island and Spitsbergen

We cross the Barents Sea, past often fog-shrouded Bear Island, a favourite nesting ground for fulmars, kittiwakes, guillemots and gulls.



ACCOMMODATION:  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 11 - Southern Spitsbergen**

Beyond Spitsbergen's South Cape, we explore South Spitsbergen National Park, a sanctuary for barnacle geese and eider ducks, before entering the iceberg-laden waters of Hornsund. Surrounded by polar desert on a grand scale, we search for reindeer, ringed and bearded seals and the mighty polar bear.



ACCOMMODATION:  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 12 - Southern Spitsbergen**

In between landings, we will have time for more informative talks on Spitsbergen. Learn of human history dating back 400 years and about the incredible wildlife found here - if we're lucky, we'll encounter the elusive beluga whale.



ACCOMMODATION:  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 13 - Southern Spitsbergen**

From our Zodiacs, gain fantastic views of ice cliffs and glaciers. We'll have a full day for landings, where we can enjoy walking over the scenic tundra and enjoying the prolific birdlife of Spitsbergen.





ACCOMMODATION:  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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## DAY 14 - Longyearbyen

We disembark in Longyearbyen after breakfast and bid farewell to our expedition staff, before being transferred to the airport for our onward journey.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## Trip information

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### Country information

#### Norway

##### Climate

Seasonal Climate Despite the northern latitudes the climate in Norway is not extreme, due to the affects of the North Atlantic Drift. Between May and September is the best time to visit this region, with summer temperatures reaching the high teens and rain a regular feature year round along the coast. North of the Arctic Circle the sun does not set between the middle of May and the end of July, so you can expect to encounter the midnight sun during this period.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+1	2 Pin Round	Lutheranism	Norwegian

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#### United Kingdom

##### Climate

The UK has a temperate but very variable climate. In general the summers are warm with July and August being the warmest. The winters are cool and the lowest temperatures are recorded during January and February. Whatever the season it is advisable to be prepared for rain!

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
0	3 Pin Flat	Christian	English

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## Budgeting and packing

### Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Whilst landings are included in the cost of your trip as per the outline itinerary, some departures aboard the Polar Pioneer have additional optional excursions which can be pre-booked with the ship operator directly. These will be charged at an additional fee, depending on the excursion and we recommend booking these in advance, to ensure availability. Please speak to a member of our Polar team who will advise you on the booking process.

### Clothing

#### Parkas

A complimentary parka is provided for you on board the ship and is yours to keep after the voyage. It has a comfortable wind-resistant inner jacket, which is detachable from the waterproof outer shell, and is designed to be worn over your essential base layers.

#### Gloves

Keeping your hands warm and dry can be a challenge. Thin polypropylene gloves can be worn underneath warm outergloves. This allows you some protection from the cold when removing your gloves to operate your camera etc. We strongly recommend that you bring more than one pair of gloves, in case one gets wet (or lost).

#### Hat/Cap

Warm, woollen hat/cap to protect your ears, as well as a scarf, neck gaiter or other face protection, such as a balaclava.

#### Trousers

Water-resistant trousers of coated nylon or, even better, Gore-Tex® are essential for your comfort. They can be worn over your regular clothes to keep you warm and dry. We suggest that you purchase trousers a few sizes larger than you normally wear as you will be wearing them over other clothing. Gore-Tex® or similar fabrics are excellent for keeping out wind and water without trapping excess heat. Rain gear and Gore-Tex® products can be found in any outdoor sport clothing store. In addition to your waterproof trousers, warm ski pants are suggested if you have them. Warm trousers such as jeans, corduroys etc are also good.

#### Socks

Warm wool socks worn over a thin pair of silk, polypropylene socks should provide enough warmth and insulation for your feet. Bring several pairs of socks, since you will inevitably get your feet wet.

Outer Clothing Woollen, knit or cotton sweaters/tops, polar fleece tops (medium weight), several cotton turtlenecks and T-shirts for layering on and off the ship.



## Underclothing

Thermal underwear is highly recommended as it will keep you warm without adding bulk. Most polar travellers prefer a lightweight version.

## Footwear

Complimentary waterproof boots will be supplied on-board. However, if you have extra small or large feet, you are advised to bring your own.

Also ensure you take good walking boots and trainers for relaxing.

## Luggage

20kg

## Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

## Equipment

Sunglasses and sun cream

Insect repellent

Personal toiletries

A refillable water bottle

Books/reading material

Camera and memory cards

Seasickness remedy

## Tipping

### Local crew

Tipping is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. It is an expression of satisfaction. The suggested amount is USD \$10 - 12 per person per day spent on board. Of course, tipping is a personal choice and the suggested amount is set only as a guideline.

## Norway

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£18.00 - 25.00	£35.00 - 40.00	£6.00 - 8.00	£2.00 - 3.00

## Foreign Exchange

### Local currency      Recommended Currency For Exchange

Norwegian Krona      Take Norwegian Krona with you

### Where To Exchange

Recommend you buy some Norwegian Krona before departing the UK (or whilst in transit in Oslo).

### ATM Availability

ATMs are available in Myre and at Oslo and Evenes Airports.

### Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are generally accepted at many hotels and optional excursions may be paid for by credit card.

### Travellers Cheques

Not recommended.

## United Kingdom

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£10	£18	£4	£0.8

## Foreign Exchange

### Local currency      Recommended Currency For Exchange

Pounds Sterling.      Carry a combination of UK Sterling cash, ATM and credit cards.

### Where To Exchange

Your tour leader will advise you on arrival.

### ATM Availability

ATM's are widely available in main towns.

### Credit Card Acceptance

Widely accepted.

### Travellers Cheques

Can be exchanged at most banks and post offices.

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## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

## Transport Information

M/V Polar Pioneer, Zodiac

## Ship description

The MV Polar Pioneer is a Finnish ex-research vessel, refurbished to provide an adventurous journey in the polar regions; its ice class means it has excellent manoeuvrability. The vessel accommodates only 54 passengers, meaning more time with the experts and a friendly on-board experience. Informed crew and experts will ensure you learn about how a polar expedition runs, your unique surroundings and the wildlife; Zodiacs will take you to shore for close encounters.

## Cabins

Prices are based on the use of outward facing, category one cabins on the main deck. Category one cabins are based on triple share. They are comfortable, with two lower bunks and one upper bunk. The cabin has a desk, a small washbasin, a sofa and a porthole. Showers and toilets are close by and shared with other main deck cabins. The Polar Pioneer has a number of different cabin categories, all are outside facing and most cabins have two beds (suites have double beds.) Most cabins have en suite facilities and some have larger windows, rather than portholes. Single occupancy is an option on board, subject to availability. Call us for details on the cabin choice to fit your requirements.

## Ship dining

Onboard the expedition ship you'll find a diversity of international cuisines prepared and catered by professional chefs; all meals are included in the price of your expedition. Dining is casual in one of two dining rooms. There is always a selection of different meals available, and vegetarians will find plenty of options. Special dietary requirements can be accommodated with advance notice, please advise us at time of confirmation. Coffee, tea and water are all provided free of charge. All other beverages, alcoholic and non-alcoholic, are not included and can be purchased in the bar.

## Food and drink

Here are the average costs of drinks, in USD, on board the Polar Pioneer - bear in mind, they may change:

Bottle of wine - from \$12

Bottle of beer - from \$3

Spirits (gin, whisky, vodka, port, rum) - from \$5

Cocktails - from \$5.50

Soft drinks (fizzy, fruit juice and water) - from \$2.50

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## Essential Information

### FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

### Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under

18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

## **Price Guarantee**

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information.Booking Conditions

## **Visa and Passport Information**

Norway: Entry visas NOT required by UK, AUS, NZ, USA, CAN Citizens. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

## **Booking conditions**

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

## **Transfers**

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

### **Booking a land only package with Explore**

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### **Joining Tour Abroad**

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers. If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

## **Insurance**

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## **Flight information**

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them [here](#).

### **Flight Information**

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### **Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore**

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## **Norway**

### **Vaccinations**

Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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## **United Kingdom**

## Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis A. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

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## Polar information

### Ship information

The MV Polar Pioneer is a Finnish ex-research vessel, refurbished to provide an adventurous journey in the polar regions; its ice class means it has excellent manoeuvrability. The vessel accommodates only 54 passengers, meaning more time with the experts and a friendly on-board experience. Informed crew and experts will ensure you learn about how a polar expedition runs, your unique surroundings and the wildlife; Zodiacs will take you to shore for close encounters.

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## Additional Information

