



Realm of the Polar Bear In Depth - M/V Greg Mortimer

ARCTIC, SPITSBERGEN - TRIP CODE GMSO

POLAR

Why book this trip?

Revel in the diversity of the Svalbard Island and sail into the kingdom of the polar bear. We explore the coastline, with no open sea crossings, against a backdrop of spectacular glacier-covered peaks. We discover deep fjords in the west; mysterious, fossil-rich desert plains in the east and best of all, seal and whale in the Arctic pack ice. This voyage offers the best chance for seeing reindeer and polar bear and features wildflower walks across sweeping tundra, trapper camps and historic sites. On foot and by Zodiac, we visit abandoned whaling settlements, search for walrus, Arctic fox and reindeer and observe millions of migratory birds, including little auk, guillemot and puffin.

- See the mighty polar bear - the King of the Arctic
- Visit the bird cliffs of Alkfejlet - where thousands of Brunnich's guillemot swirl around

- See walrus - lounging around on ice floes
- Get up close to the wildlife - as you cruise by Zodiac

				
INCLUDED MEALS Breakfast: 10 Lunch: 9 Dinner: 10	TRIP STAFF Expedition Crew Naturalist(s)	TRANSPORT M/V Greg Mortimer Zodiac	ACCOMMODATION 10 nights premium boat	TRIP PACE: Relaxed

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Depart Longyearbyen

Enjoy a guided tour of colourful Spitsbergen's capital, Longyearbyen. You will be warmly welcomed aboard your ship in the late afternoon. After settling into your cabin, we will depart Longyearbyen in the evening, under the Midnight Sun.



ACCOMMODATION:
M/V Greg Mortimer (or similar)

Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: DINNER

DAY 2 - Visit Magdalenefjorden

Wake up to spectacular alpine peaks and glacier valleys of Spitsbergen's rugged west coast. Over the next

two days, we hope to visit Magdalenefjorden, where we will Zodiac cruise at a safe distance from the aqua-blue ice cliffs of the 14th July Glacier. Moving onto Waggonway Glacier, we'll take long walks among summer flowers, keeping alert for reindeer and Arctic fox. Thanks to the nutrient-rich Gulf Stream and relatively mild temperatures, Atlantic puffins and guillemots fill the cliffs.



ACCOMMODATION:
M/V Greg Mortimer (or similar)

Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 3 - Explore Spitsbergen's Northwest Coast

Look out for bearded seals, with their precious curled whiskers. If conditions allow, we may visit the remains of a 350-year old Dutch whaling settlement on Amsterdam Island and learn of an ill-fated ballooning attempt over the North Pole. Our itinerary depends on weather, snow and ice conditions and of course, the presence of wildlife.



ACCOMMODATION:
M/V Greg Mortimer (or similar)

Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 4 - Explore Spitsbergen's Northwest Coast

Rounding Spitsbergen's northwest coast, we enter the Arctic Ocean and the world of pack ice. Ghostly beluga whales rise up in open leads and polar bears stalk ringed, bearded and harp seals. Offshore, walrus feed on clams or haul out onto beaches, especially on Moffen Island - a walrus sanctuary. We visit trapper huts and stay alert for reindeer and Arctic fox. Delightful walks reveal delicious berries and some of the tundra's 164 exquisite flowering plants including purple saxifrage, yellow spider plants and Svalbard poppies. If ice conditions allow, we attempt to cross latitude 80° north before turning south to Woodfjorden.



ACCOMMODATION:
M/V Greg Mortimer (or similar)



Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 5 - Explore Spitsbergen's Northwest Coast

In Leifdefjorden, you can enjoy an abundance of birdlife ;- breeding eider ducks, terns, skuas, glaucous gulls and black-legged kittiwakes, attract polar bears and their cubs.



ACCOMMODATION:
M/V Greg Mortimer (or similar)



Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 6 - Explore Spitsbergen's Northwest Coast

With 24-hour daylight, there's plenty of time to admire many of the tundra's 164 species of flowering plants, including purple saxifrage, exquisite yellow spider plants and Svalbard poppies.



ACCOMMODATION:
M/V Greg Mortimer (or similar)



Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 7 - Discover Hinlopen Strait and Alkefjell

We attempt to pass through narrow Hinlopen Strait, a channel flanked by austere, cream-coloured slopes, rich in fossils between Spitsbergen and ice-capped Nordaustlandet. This polar desert is a

landscape eroded by severe frost. Even in summer, pack ice could bar our way, but there is much to strive for. We Zodiac cruise beneath Alkefjellet, sheer basalt cliffs rising at more than 250 metres - literally buzzing with some 200,000 nests of Brunnich's guillemots.



ACCOMMODATION:
M/V Greg Mortimer (or similar)

Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 8 - Discover Hinlopen Strait and Alkefjell

During shore excursions, we hope to spot eider ducks, Arctic foxes and the elusive Svalbard ptarmigan. As we pass Barentsøya and Edgeøya islands, we cross polar bear migration routes and hopefully have a chance to spot polar bears.



ACCOMMODATION:
M/V Greg Mortimer (or similar)

Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 9 - Cruising around South Cape

This is true expedition cruising, where plans are dictated by ice conditions and our desire to explore. If pack ice allows, we round South Cape, returning to the world of open water and rugged coastal mountains and sail north toward Hornsund and Bellsund, deep fjords with remarkable glaciers and wildlife.



ACCOMMODATION:
M/V Greg Mortimer (or similar)

Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 10 - Sail towards Hornsund and Bellsund Fjords

If ice stops us on the east side, we will adjust our itinerary, backtrack and delve deeper into the wonders of Spitsbergen's north and west coasts, including a visit to colonies where hundreds of thousands of little auks nest, darkening the sky as they commute to their fishing grounds.



ACCOMMODATION:
M/V Greg Mortimer (or similar)

Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 11 - Arrive Longyearbyen

A midnight cruise of glorious Isfjorden returns us to Longyearbyen where we end our voyage.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Climate and country information

Arctic

Spitsbergen

Climate

Between May and September is the best time to visit this region, with summer temperatures reaching a maximum of 5 degrees centigrade. 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
+1	2 Pin Round

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 MV Greg Mortimer 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

Walking poles

Tipping

Local crew

Gratuities are included in your voyage cost.

Arctic

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.

Foreign Exchange

Spitsbergen

Food and drink

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

Foreign Exchange

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

M/V Greg Mortimer, Zodiac

Ship description

The MV Greg Mortimer is a 104-metre ship, purpose-built in 2019 for expedition travel. Capable of negotiating the strongest winds and waves, the vessel is being built to world-class polar standards and has been designed in close consultation with expedition specialists. The MV Greg Mortimer is limited to just 138 passengers and guests can enjoy some added comforts such as spacious stateroom cabins, a large mud room with easy boarding access and a hydraulic viewing platform, offering unobstructed views of the wildlife. Other features include a library, Wellness Centre with a gym, sauna and spa and a multimedia room for keen photographers wishing to edit their photos after a day of exploration. As a modern and custom-designed ship, this vessel is at the cutting edge of nautical technology and will ensure a comfortable and safe passage through polar waters.

Cabins

The lead-in prices on our website are based on triple outward facing, Stateroom cabins. All staterooms have private bathrooms, ample storage, with twin beds. Many of the stateroom categories, have floor to ceiling windows that offer prime observation opportunities around the clock. Additionally, there are private balconies in most of the staterooms, allowing you to watch the world float past and take in the salty air of the open ocean. A full layout of the deck plan can be found under the Polar Ships section on our website. Your confirmed cabin type will appear on your Booking Confirmation, which will be sent on receipt of your deposit payment.

Ship dining

Meals are served in the large, spacious dining room with an open seating arrangement, perfect for swapping stories with your extended expedition family. A range of courses is offered at each meal time and you can enjoy a variety of house wines, beers and soft drinks which are included with your evening meal. Complimentary coffee, tea and snacks are available throughout the day and any additional drinks can be purchased at the fully-stocked bar.

On the last day of your trip, the team on the MV Greg Mortimer will provide a special farewell four-course dinner with cocktails - a perfect way to end your voyage and reflect on your magnificent time on-board.

Essential Information

Government Travel Safety 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, Commonwealth & Development 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 be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See 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 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.

Arctic

Spitsbergen

Polar information



GMSO_2020 KIRK

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Additional Information



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Reviews

