

# EXPLORE!

**Realm of the Polar Bear in Depth - M/S Spitsbergen**  
12 days

Norway, Spitsbergen - Trip code SPRX



## Realm of the Polar Bear in Depth - M/S Spitsbergen

Arctic Wilderness

A cruise around Spitsbergen gives you ample opportunity to explore all the aspects of this fascinating arctic island. See the great eastern nature reserves and some of the most spectacular highlights of the Arctic. We aim to take you well above the 80th parallel and placing you closer than 600 nautical miles from the Geographical North Pole. The eastern part of Svalbard is more barren and characteristically High Arctic, compared to other places that we visit with the M Spitsbergen

During this extended voyage, you will see some of the most spectacular fjords of Spitsbergen. The eastern part of Svalbard is mainly divided into two large nature reserves and combined, they represent one of the largest and mainly untouched, wildernesses in Europe. Traversing the large fjord east of Spitsbergen will give you spectacular views of the island's east coast, with hundreds of glaciers and mountains. If we are lucky, we'll meet some of Svalbard's marine mammals like seal and walrus and wherever there is ice, there is a great chance of spotting polar bears !

### Trip highlights

- ★ **Exceptional scenery** - Discover the Arctic's dramatic landscapes
- ★ **Wildlife** - Spot sea birds, walruses, seals & polar bears
- ★ **Regular Zodiac landings** - Explore the rugged shorelines of Svalbard
- ★ **Comfortable cabins** - On board a very comfortable expedition ship
- ★ **Expert naturalists** - Learn about Arctic history and wildlife through the informative lectures given by our expedition guides.

#### ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

##### Premium

Our premium accommodation is hand-picked and chosen for its character, location or local importance. These properties have excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service. They provide the perfect wind down after an active day.

#### TRIP PACE:

##### Relaxed

You can enjoy easy-going activities and experiences on these Relaxed pace tours, with opportunities to absorb the sights and immerse yourself in the local surroundings, but still come home feeling relaxed and refreshed.

## Itinerary

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

### DAY 1 - Oslo to Longyearbyen

Your Arctic adventure starts with an evening flight from Norway's capital, Oslo. Before departure, you can spend some time exploring this fjord-side city surrounded by forests, lakes and hills. Oslo offers a varied architecture, top-notch restaurants and endless shopping possibilities. The contrast will be significant when you arrive in Longyearbyen a couple of hours later. On arrival, you will be transferred to your hotel.



**Accommodation: Hotel in Longyearbyen** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

### DAY 2 - Longyearbyen

Spend the morning exploring Longyearbyen and its surroundings, before embarkation in the afternoon. Longyearbyen is a Norwegian settlement often referred to as the capital of Svalbard. This is a lively small town, situated amid some incredible Arctic landscape. Barentsburg is a Russian settlement with an exotic collection of Russian artefacts and architecture and is very different to Longyearbyen. The museum, library and newly opened brewery function as meeting points and a research station is under construction. See a colourful folklore show and visit the hotel and museum. Experience a different side of Svalbard - a little piece of Russia in the Arctic. You will board your expedition vessel in the late afternoon.



**Accommodation: M/S Spitsbergen** (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 3 - Northwest Spitsbergen National Park

The North West Corner is scattered with islands, fjords and beaches. The ocean here is full of drifting ice and the frozen landscape constantly changes. Due to strong winds and currents, the Captain monitors conditions closely before deciding where we can land or sail. This is why all of our itineraries are flexible; we work with the elements, not against them, and safety is our first priority.



**Accommodation: M/S Spitsbergen** (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 4 - Northwest Spitsbergen National Park

Landings enable us to not only enjoy the Arctic scenery and wildlife, but also allow us to explore Svalbard's history. As we sail north, we hope to visit Kongsfjorden, the largest fjord on the northwest coast of Spitsbergen, considered to be one of the most beautiful fjord areas in Spitsbergen with mighty glaciers calving icebergs into the sea - all delightfully framed by the characteristic mountain formations found in these parts. On the shore of Kongfjorden is the former mining settlement of Ny-Ålesund, now an international centre for research, with a picturesque mix of old and new buildings. On our landings, we might also visit Krossfjorden and Mitrahelvøya, where you can see remnants of the old whaling huts. Beautiful alpine flora, bird cliffs and quite often Svalbard reindeer, can also be found here. If conditions allow, why not try crossing a glacier with the Expedition team?



**Accommodation: M/S Spitsbergen** (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 5 - Northwest Spitsbergen National Park

Cruising in the north west corner of Spitsbergen, we hope to stop at Raudfjorden, which offers fantastic hiking opportunities. Later, we continue deep inside the giant Woodfjord system to visit the enormous and fast moving Monaco Glacier. In front of this dramatic glacier, the mixing of fresh and saline water creates an excellent feeding ground for sea birds including kittiwakes, fulmars and glaucous gulls. The icy-blue colours of the glacier, make this an excellent site for photography.



**Accommodation: M/S Spitsbergen** (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available

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Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

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## DAY 6 - Eastern Svalbard Nature Reserves and South Spitsbergen National Park

Eastern Svalbard boasts the highest population of polar bears on the archipelago - we really hope that we'll get the chance to see one on this journey! Today, we aim to explore Sorgfjorden, which borders the North East Spitsbergen Nature Reserve and was the location of a famous 17th-century battle between whalers. Enjoy the view from the deck as we pass the spectacular bird cliff of Alkefjellet, one of the largest of its kind. Storfjorden will offer us spectacular views of the east coast of Spitsbergen, with hundreds of glaciers and mountains in the distance. If we are lucky, we might meet some of the marine mammals of Svalbard, such as walrus and seals.



**Accommodation: M/S Spitsbergen** (or similar)

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Premium Boat

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Single room available

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Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

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## DAY 7 - Eastern Svalbard Nature Reserves and South Spitsbergen National Park

Edgeøya is the third-largest island in the Svalbard archipelago. On its western shores, the landscape is largely un-glaciated, unlike most other places on the east side of Spitsbergen. Kapp Lee is a wonderful site where you will find cultural heritage from all eras of human exploration of Svalbard.



**Accommodation: M/S Spitsbergen** (or similar)

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Premium Boat

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Single room available

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Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

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## DAY 8 - Eastern Svalbard Nature Reserves and South Spitsbergen National Park

There are seven small islands situated in the far north of the Svalbard Archipelago. Rossøya is the northernmost of these islands, less than 620 miles from the North Pole. From here, you can be certain that there are no other humans between yourself and 90 degrees North. The barren landscape is referred to as the high Arctic, with very little vegetation due to the extreme weather conditions suffered here for most of the year. If we are lucky, we may meet some of the marine mammals of Svalbard as we head towards the South Cape Land.




**Accommodation: M/S Spitsbergen** (or similar)


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 Premium Boat

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

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## DAY 9 - Eastern Svalbard Nature Reserves and South Spitsbergen National Park

We continue to the southern cape and the southernmost tip of Spitsbergen, where within a relatively short distance, Hornsund has large variations in its landscape and geology. This is a great place for spotting bears, as ice being pushed into the fjord early in the season, attracts polar bears that hunt on the ice.




**Accommodation: M/S Spitsbergen** (or similar)

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 Premium Boat

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

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## DAY 10 - The Fjords of Southwest Spitsbergen

We will spend the next few days exploring the Isfjord, the most extensive fjord system in Svalbard. We will explore both the outer and the inner parts of the fjord. One of the most striking features of the outer part is the Alkehornet peak, where thousands of Brunnich's guillemots nest during the summer season. In the inner parts of Isfjorden, the landscape changes constantly.




**Accommodation: M/S Spitsbergen** (or similar)

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 Premium Boat

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

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## DAY 11 - The Fjords of Southwest Spitsbergen

The immense U-shaped valleys, carved out of the mountains by the giant glaciers that covered the area some ten thousand years ago, are home to large populations of the endemic Svalbard Reindeer. In the late afternoon, our Expedition team will search for a scenic bay for our farewell dinner - an on-board barbecue in the most beautiful Arctic surroundings.



**Accommodation: M/S Spitsbergen** (or similar)

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 Premium Boat

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 Single room available

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Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 12 - Longyearbyen to Oslo

We call at Longyearbyen after midnight, where our voyage comes to an end. You will be transferred to the airport in the early morning for your onward flight to Oslo.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

# Polar information

## Ship information

Named after the Arctic crown of Norway - the archipelago of Spitsbergen - the MS Spitsbergen was built in 2009 and has recently undergone a complete reconstruction in 2015-16. The ship features high standards throughout and public areas and cabins are comfortable and spacious - offering a peaceful haven at the end of a busy day exploring the Arctic wilderness. There is ample outdoor deck space to view the passing scenery, or you can keep a watchful eye from the bright and airy lounge area with its large picture windows. Cabins are well equipped, all en-suite, and there are a variety of cabin types to choose from. The ship also offers some extra amenities such as a Jacuzzi and fitness room. The Scandinavian design is fresh and modern and the ship's manoeuvrability and optimal size, allows for easy navigation in polar waters.



# What's included?



## Included meals

Breakfast: 11  
Lunch: 10  
Dinner: 10



## Transport

M/S Spitsbergen  
Zodiac



## Trip staff

Expedition Crew  
Naturalist(s)



## Accommodation

10 nights premium boat  
1 nights premium hotel

# Trip information

## 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

+1

#### Plugs

2 Pin Round

#### Religion

Lutheranism

#### Language

Norwegian

### 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

+1

#### Plugs

2 Pin Round

### Clothing

Pack comfortable, casual clothing for all activities. Wind and waterproof outer layers are essential, and a jacket is provided in the cost of the cruise. Beware of tight clothing that leaves no room for trapped air, which is an excellent insulator. Wool, silk and some of the new synthetic fibres, like polar fleece, retain heat better than cotton.

#### Parkas

A wind and waterproof jacket is provided as part of the cost of your holiday.

#### 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

Waterproof boots are available on-board, free of charge. Ensure that you take good walking boots with you and comfortable trainers or grip-type shoes, for relaxing on the ship and for when out on deck.

### 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

Personal toiletries

A refillable water bottle

Books/reading material

Camera and memory cards (and something to protect the camera when out in the elements)

Seasickness remedy

Walking poles

### Tipping

#### Local crew

Tipping is collected at the end of the voyage and is divided among the crew. Tipping is a very personal matter and the amount you wish to give is at your discretion, but as a generally guideline, we suggest US\$12 per person per day.

### Country Information

#### 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

£18.00 - 25.00

### Dinner price

£35.00 - 40.00

### Beer price

£6.00 - 8.00

### Water price

£2.00 - 3.00

## Foreign Exchange

### Local currency

Norwegian Krona

### Recommended Currency For Exchange

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.

## Spitsbergen

### 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.

### Dinner price

£35.00-40.00

### Beer price

£6.00-8.00

### Water price

£2.00-3.00

### Foreign Exchange

## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

M/S Spitsbergen, Zodiac

## Ship description

Named after the Arctic crown of Norway - the archipelago of Spitsbergen - the MS Spitsbergen was built in 2009 and has recently undergone a complete reconstruction in 2015-16. The ship features high standards throughout and public areas and cabins are comfortable and spacious - offering a peaceful haven at the end of a busy day exploring the Arctic wilderness. There is ample outdoor deck space to view the passing scenery, or you can keep a watchful eye from the bright and airy lounge area with its large picture windows. Cabins are well equipped, all en-suite, and there are a variety of cabin types to choose from. The ship also offers some extra amenities such as a Jacuzzi and fitness room. The Scandinavian design is fresh and modern and the ship's manoeuvrability and optimal size, allows for easy navigation in polar waters.

## Cabins

Lead-in prices are based on the use of inside category cabins. Category one cabins are based on twin share, with one upper and one lower bed. They are comfortable with a private toilet, shower and TV. The MS Spitsbergen has a number of different cabin categories, many of which are outside facing, with two beds (apart from superior cabins and suites, which have double beds). Some cabins have portholes and others, larger windows and sitting areas. All cabins are twin share, but we can also offer single occupancy at a supplement, if you are travelling alone. Call us for details on the cabin choice to fit your requirements.

## Ship dining

On-board the ship all meals are included in the price of your expedition; a buffet breakfast and lunch, and set menu dinner; it's free seating for breakfast and lunch, and assigned for dinner. Vegetarians and some special dietary requirements can be accommodated with advance notice, please advise us at time of confirmation. Coffee and tea are provided free of charge. All other beverages, alcoholic and non-alcoholic, are not included and can be purchased in the bar.

## 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

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 transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. 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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## **Spitsbergen**

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