

EXPLORE!

Spitsbergen, Greenland and Iceland - M/V Polar Pioneer
14 days

Greenland, Iceland - Trip code PPGI

Spitsbergen, Greenland and Iceland - M/V Polar Pioneer

This voyage combines the best of Spitsbergen and Greenland, with a taste of Iceland. Enjoy Spitsbergen's rugged northwest coast which comprises of mountains, tundra and fjords. While crossing the icy waters of the Greenland Sea, our onboard experts will share their knowledge of the region's plants, animals and history, preparing you for your landings. Greenland's remote east coast shows off the immensity of the icecap, fantastic icebergs and a fairytale landscape of granite spires rising 1000 m above exquisite fjords. Enjoy the local culture and look forward to a warm welcome as we visit remote Inuit settlements along the way.

Trip highlights

- ★ Experience complete wilderness - in remote Northeast Greenland
- ★ Arctic highlights - experience three Arctic regions in one voyage
- ★ Sail to the Land of Ice and Fire - Iceland
- ★ Discover prolific birdlife - ivory gulls, guillamots and puffins to name a few
- ★ Photography - fantastic opportunities for photography in the light of the Midnight Sun

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 - Isafjordur

We board the Polar Pioneer in Isafjordur in the late afternoon, after arriving on our flight from Reykjavik.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Dinner

DAY 2 - Sail across the Denmark Strait

Sail across the Denmark Strait, enjoying the flying antics of northern fulmars and black-backed gulls, and spot dolphins, orcas and other whales in their feeding grounds.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 3 - Blosseville Coast

Sailing north along the Blosseville Coast, searching for musk ox and narwhals and marvel at the mountain scenery that dominates the skyline. If weather permits, we head for Rømer Fjord, a deep waterway with stunning mountain views.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 4 - Scoresbysund

In Scoresbysund, the world's biggest fjord, the vast Greenland icecap sweeps down in massive glaciers that calve explosively, creating giant icebergs.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 5 - Scoresbysund

Near Sydkap, our Zodiacs weave through a maze of grounded icebergs, some more than 30-metres high, sculpted with deep green tunnels and aquamarine lakes.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 6 - Scoresbysund

Enjoy a warm Ittoqqortoormiit welcome, from Inuit happy to share their culture and explain the challenges of Arctic life.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 7 - Greenland Wildlife

Ice is often the overwhelming first impression of Greenland. An ice cap covers 81 per cent of the island and pack ice, even in summer, may fill northern bays.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 8 - Greenland Wildlife

Ashore, cosy trappers' huts beckon from across the tundra, where musk ox, Arctic fox and eider ducks roam. These are just some of the delights in Kaiser Franz Josef Fjord.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 9 - Greenland Wildlife

Lively cascades at Kap Humboldt provide a microclimate for spectacular hanging gardens. Kong Oskar Fjord offers spectacular glacier-carved mountains.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 10 - Greenland Sea

Crossing the Greenland Sea, we sail through the Polar Basin's nutrient-rich waters, searching for fin and beluga whales, encroaching pack ice and seabirds. Our expert naturalists and guest lecturers entertain us with fascinating, illustrated talks on

European Arctic plants and animals, and epic tales of such early explorers as Nansen, Andrée and Scoresby.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 11 - Greenland Sea

These are relaxed days, wonderful for getting to know fellow expeditioners and preparing for a landing, if conditions permit, in the world's largest national park - Greenland's northeast coast. The region is home to polar bear, walrus, Arctic hare and musk ox. Watch for ringed, bearded, harp and hooded seals from the Zodiacs.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 12 - Explore Spitsbergen

Spitsbergen's northwest coast features calving icebergs, historic whaling stations and trappers' camps. Brunnich's guillemots, little auks and kittiwakes nest in their thousands. Reindeer roam the tundra and so can you, photographing wildflowers like saxifrage, moss campion, bell-heather and hairy lousewort.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



Premium Boat



Single room available




Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner


DAY 13 - Explore Spitsbergen

From our Zodiacs, gain fantastic views of ice cliffs, including Monacobreen, one of Spitsbergen's largest glaciers. In the north, there's a good chance of seeing walrus - and possibly even polar bears on the pack ice.



Accommodation: M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)

 Premium Boat

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 14 - Longyearbyen

Arrive early morning in Longyearbyen and after breakfast, bid farewell to the Polar Pioneer.

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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.



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 13
Lunch: 12
Dinner: 13



Transport

M/V Polar Pioneer
Zodiac



Trip staff

Expedition Crew
Naturalist(s)



Accommodation

13 nights premium boat

Trip information

Country information

Greenland

Iceland

Climate

Iceland has a cool and temperate climate and, despite its location just south of the Arctic Circle, its northerly latitude is counteracted by the warm waters of the North Atlantic Drift which encircles the island. Temperatures in winter can fluctuate between about 10°C and -10°C and precipitation in the form of rain, sleet or snow is to be expected at any time. Days will be short, with daylight often only guaranteed between about 11 am and 4 pm in December. The best time for seeing the Aurora Borealis is October to March. Summer is generally cool with average temperatures for June and July around 12 - 15 degree centigrade in Reykjavik, although is known to be warmer in other parts of the country. In June and July you can enjoy continuous daylight and see the Midnight Sun, whilst late spring and early autumn offer long twilights.

Time difference to GMT

0

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

National Church of iceland

Language

Icelandic

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

Country Information

Greenland

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

Iceland

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
£18.00 - 24.00

Beer price
£4.00 - 6.00

Water price
£2

Foreign Exchange

Local currency
Icelandic Krona (ISK).

Recommended Currency For Exchange
Both GBP and USD are readily exchanged at banks and post offices.

Where To Exchange
Both GBP and USD are readily exchanged at banks and post offices

ATM Availability
Cash can be drawn on credit cards from ATM's in Reykjavik and at the airport.

Credit Card Acceptance
Most shops and restaurants take credit cards.

Travellers Cheques
Can be exchanged at banks and post offices.

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

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 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.

Greenland

Iceland

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory; tetanus recommended. 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.
