

# EXPLORE!



## Spitsbergen, Greenland and Iceland - M/V Polar Pioneer

GREENLAND, ICELAND - TRIP CODE PPGI

POLAR

### Why book this trip?

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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.



**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.

### DAY 1 - Arrive Longyearbyen

Today we will be met at the airport in Longyearbyen and taken on a sightseeing tour to explore the remote outskirts and village of Longyearbyen, the capital of Spitsbergen. After our tour, we will be transferred to the port in the late afternoon and board our ship, the M/V Polar Pioneer. Our voyage commences, cruising out of the beautiful Isfjorden, escorted by gliding fulmars and perhaps the occasional puffin.



**ACCOMMODATION:**

M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)

**Grade: Premium Boat**



**MEALS PROVIDED: DINNER**

### DAY 2 - West Coast of Spitsbergen

Depending on conditions, we may cruise either north or south along the west coast of Spitsbergen, in search of the mighty polar bear. Along Spitsbergen's north coast we may explore places such as Woodfjorden and Leifdefjorden, where from our Zodiacs, we can enjoy magnificent views of sweeping glaciers tumbling into the sea. We may walk on smooth raised beach terraces to magnificent viewpoints, hike on flowering tundra where reindeer graze or visit trappers' huts of yesteryear - all the while remaining alert for wandering polar bears.



ACCOMMODATION:  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



**Grade: Premium Boat**



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 3 - West Coast of Spitsbergen**

We hope to enter the spectacular Hornsund Fjord in the south where we may take an early morning Zodiac cruise to admire the beautiful ice walls of the Samarin Glacier, or take a stroll beneath the towering seabird cliffs at Sofiebogen. In Bellsund Fjord we are always on the lookout for beluga whales. We may visit the remnants of a Norwegian beluga whaling station from the 1930's. Across the fjord at Våraolbukta is a lush and stunning landscape where reindeer roam, Arctic flowers bloom in abundance and

Arctic fox may be seen patrolling the little auk colony, where several thousand birds nest amongst the boulders - coming and going in huge flocks. This is a beautiful place where we can stretch our legs before heading on a south-westerly course towards the East Greenland pack ice belt.



ACCOMMODATION:  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)



**Grade: Premium Boat**



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 4 - 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 early explorers such as Nansen, Andrée and Scoresby.



ACCOMMODATION:  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)

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**Grade: Premium Boat**



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 5 - 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)

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**Grade: Premium Boat**



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 6 - 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)

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**Grade: Premium Boat**



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### **DAY 7 - Greenland Wildlife**

We will attempt to enter Kaiser Franz Josef Fjord, a remote and rarely visited fjord system with countless opportunities for exploration that lies within the North East Greenland National Park. 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 found in this area.



ACCOMMODATION:  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)

Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 8 - Greenland Wildlife

Landing sites may include Cape Humboldt, a beautiful bay on Ymer Island. There is a good chance to take a tundra walk and witness musk oxen graze. We

will also keep a lookout for Arctic fox and ptarmigan. Cruising through Kong Oskar Fjord, we will marvel at the geological beauty of the mountains. We will then head south

along the coast of Liverpool Land, with our passage dependent on ice conditions.



ACCOMMODATION:  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)

Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 9 - Scoresbysund

In Scoresbysund, the world's biggest fjord, the vast Greenland icecap sweeps down in massive glaciers that calve explosively, creating giant icebergs. Sydkap in Scoresby Sund offers good walking and delightful views across the sound.



ACCOMMODATION:  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)

**Grade: Premium Boat**



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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**DAY 10 - Scoresbysund**

Near Rode Island, 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)

**Grade: Premium Boat**



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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**DAY 11 - Volquart Boon Coast**

These days will be expeditionary days, exploring the East Greenland coast. Much of the region is uncharted territory and depending on weather and timing we'll venture south exploring the bays and fjords, looking for new points of interest and places to land.



ACCOMMODATION:  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)

**Grade: Premium Boat**



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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**DAY 12 - Volquart Boon Coast**

We will have the morning to explore further before heading into the Denmark Strait mid-afternoon.



ACCOMMODATION:  
M/V Polar Pioneer (or similar)

Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 13 - Denmark Strait towards Iceland

As we sail across the Denmark Strait towards Iceland, there's time to reflect on our rich experiences, enjoy 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)

Grade: Premium Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

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### DAY 14 - Reykjavik

During the early morning we will arrive into Keflavik. After breakfast, you will be transferred to Reykjavik by coach, with drop-off points at both the airport and downtown hotels. We recommend booking some extra time in Reykjavik at the end of your trip. There will be an optional walking tour available for those who are staying on in the city.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## Trip information

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### Country information

## Greenland

### Climate

Greenland has an Arctic climate with average temperatures in the North that do not exceed 10° C in the warmest summer months. In the southern part of the country and the innermost parts of the long fjords, the temperature can, however, rise to more than 20° C (68° F) in June, July and August.

### Time difference to GMT

UTC±00:00 to UTC-04:00

### Religion

Church of Denmark

### Language

Greenlandic however, Danish and English are recognised languages.

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## 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

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### Plugs

2 Pin Round

### Religion

National Church of iceland

### Language

Icelandic

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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

## 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

#### Local currency

Danish krone (DKK)

## 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.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£12.00-16.00	£18.00 - 24.00	£4.00 - 6.00	£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.

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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 be able to apply 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.

## **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.

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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

