



East Spitsbergen: Summer Solstice in the land of the Polar Bear

Discover the highest peaks, largest seabird colonies, and best places to spot Polar Bears along the eastern shores of Spitsbergen



Dates: 17 – 24 June, 2024

Duration: 7 nights

Ship: Hondius

Embarkation: Longyearbyen

Disembarkation: Longyearbyen

Language: English speaking voyage

ITINERARY

This 'Summer Solstice expedition' aims to visit some of the top sites in Eastern Spitsbergen with the goal being to experience amazing glaciers, fascinating historical sites, vast seabird colonies and a sprawling fjord system where we hope to find whales, seals and Polar Bears.

Summer Solstice: midnight sun and 24-hour day

The midnight sun is a phenomenon that occurs during the Arctic summer when the sun is visible for a full 24 hours in fair weather and the 2024 summer solstice falls on 21 June so in the middle of this special cruise.

Join us in experiencing this fascinating phenomenon during this voyage through the Arctic wilderness of Svalbard.

Day 1: Longyearbyen, largest town, biggest island

Your voyage begins in Longyearbyen, the administrative centre of Spitsbergen and on the largest island of the Svalbard archipelago. Enjoy strolling around this former mining town with the option to visit the parish church and Svalbard Museum.

Included in this voyage:

- All meals throughout the voyage aboard the ship including snacks, coffee and tea.
- All shore excursions and activities throughout the voyage by Zodiac.
- Programme of lectures by noted naturalists and leadership by experienced expedition staff.
- Free use of rubber boots and snowshoes.
- Transfers and baggage handling between the airport, hotels and ship only for those passengers on the group flights to and from Longyearbyen.
- All miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the programme.
- AECO fees and governmental taxes.
- Comprehensive pre-departure material.

Though the countryside appears stark, more than a hundred species of plant have been recorded. In the early evening the ship sails out of Isfjorden and we hope to see the first Minke Whale of the voyage.

Day 2: Spectacular Hornsund

We start the day by quietly cruising the side fjords of the spectacular Hornsund area in southern Spitsbergen, enjoying the scenery of towering mountain peaks. The mountain of Hornsundtind rises to 1,431 metres (4,695 feet), while the peak of Bautaen testifies to why early Dutch explorers gave this island the name Spitsbergen, meaning “pointed mountains.”

There are 14 magnificent glaciers in the area, and we have a fair chance of encountering seals and Polar Bears.

The nearby cliffs of Sofiakammen are also home to thousands of nesting Kittiwakes and Little Auks, and in the evening we may see Harp Seals on ice floes at Sørkapp.

Day 3: Long excursion at Diskobukta

After navigating the drift ice of Storfjorden, where there are chances for more Harp Seals, we plan to land in northwest Edgeøya at the northern bank of Rosenberdalriver where we have the opportunity of walking to Rosenbergdalen, which is often teeming with grazing Reindeer.

Afterwards we plan to walk to a cliff where Black Guillemots nest on our way to Stretahamna, where we often find Walruses on the beach near an octagonal trapper’s cabin built in 1905.

We may also visit the remains of a 19th-century Pomor house as well as seeing the bones of Walruses hunted in previous centuries.

Day 4: Trappers’ history in Freemansundet

Sailing into the waterway of Freemansundet, we plan to land at the tundra lowland of Sundneset (on the island of Barentsøya) where we will visit the hut of an old German scientific expedition, before a brisk walk across the tundra in search of Reindeer and Barnacle Geese. After this, we plan to go on a Zodiac cruise near Freeman Glacier and visit a Kittiwake colony.

Should there be heavy ice in Freemansundet, we may sail to Negribreen, one of the most extensive glacier fronts on the east side of Spitsbergen where we can take a Zodiac cruise and land on Walrus Island.

Excluded from this voyage:

- Any airfare, whether on scheduled or charter flights
- Pre- and post- land arrangements.
- Transfers to and from the vessel outside of Spitsbergen.
- Passport and visa expenses.
- Government arrival and departure taxes.
- Meals ashore.
- Baggage, cancellation and personal insurance (which is strongly recommended).
- Excess baggage charges and all items of a personal nature such as laundry, bar, beverage charges and telecommunication charges.
- The customary gratuity at the end of the voyages for stewards and other service personnel aboard (guidelines will be provided).



Day 5: Ivory Gulls in Agardhfjellet

We plan to sail to the east side of west Spitsbergen (west side of Storfjorden) where there is the chance to walk to a breeding site for Ivory Gulls at Agardhfjellet, which is at an altitude of about 300 metres (980 feet) high.

The valley which leads to the outcrops where the birds nest is littered with fossils of belemnites and ammonites.



Day 6: South Spitsbergen

We aim to land at the mountain of Stellingfjellet, near the largest colony of Brünnich's Guillemots in Spitsbergen. Later in the day, we will hope to land in the rarely visited bay of Isbukta on the coast of south Spitsbergen.



Day 7: Bell Sund's flora, fauna and haunting history

We continue our voyage in Bell Sund, one of the largest fjord systems in Svalbard. The ocean currents make this area slightly warmer than other areas in the archipelago, which shows in the relatively lush vegetation.

Here there are excellent opportunities to enjoy both history and wildlife.

A possibility is Ahlstrandhalvøya, at the mouth of Van Keulenfjorden, where piles of Beluga skeletons can be found. These remains which date from the 19th-century whale slaughter are a haunting reminder of the consequences of rampant exploitation. Fortunately, Belugas were not hunted to extinction and we have a good chance of coming across a pod.

Alternately, while cruising the side fjords of Bellsund, we may explore tundra where Reindeer like to feed, as well as rocky slopes where Little Auks breed.



Day 8: There and back again

Every adventure must eventually come to an end and after breakfast you will disembark in Longyearbyen.

PLEASE NOTE:

All itineraries are for guidance only. Programmes may vary depending on ice, weather and wildlife conditions. Landings are subject to site availabilities, permissions, and environmental concerns per AECO Regulations. Official sailing plans and landing slots are scheduled with AECO prior to the start of the season but the Expedition Leader determines the final plan. Flexibility is paramount for expedition cruises. The average cruising speed of our vessel is 10.5 knots.



Quadruple Porthole



- 4 people
- 2 portholes
- 2 upper and lower berths
- Small sofa
- Private shower and toilet
- Flatscreen TV
- Desk and chair
- Telephone and WiFi (additional cost)
- Hair dryer
- Cabinet
- Wardrobe

This cabin is suitable for families traveling with children or passengers who do not require a twin or more luxurious cabin.

Triple Porthole



- 3 people
- 2 portholes
- 1 upper berth and 2 lower berths
- Small sofa
- Private shower and toilet
- Flatscreen TV
- Desk and chair
- Telephone and WiFi (additional cost)
- Hair dryer
- Cabinet
- Wardrobe

This cabin is suitable for families traveling with children or passengers who do not require a twin or more luxurious cabin.

Twin Porthole



- 2 people
- 2 portholes
- 2 single beds
- Small sofa
- Private shower and toilet
- Flatscreen TV
- Desk and chair
- Telephone and WiFi (additional cost)
- Hair dryer
- Cabinet
- Wardrobe

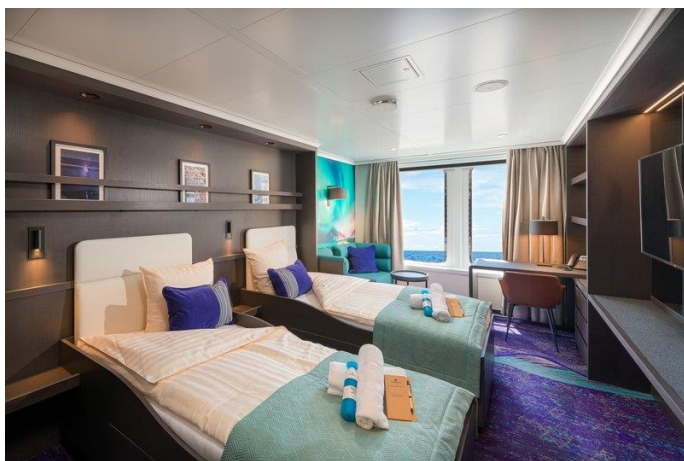
Twin Window



- 2 people
- 1 window
- 2 single beds
- Small sofa
- Private shower and toilet
- Flatscreen TV
- Desk and chair
- Telephone and WiFi (additional cost)
- Hair dryer
- Cabinet
- Wardrobe

Please be aware that the view from some windows might be partially obstructed due to the design of the ship.

Twin Deluxe



- 2 people
- 2 windows
- 2 single beds
- Sofa
- Private shower, toilet and hair dryer
- Flatscreen TV
- Desk and chair
- Telephone and WiFi (additional cost)
- Refrigerator
- Coffee and tea maker
- Cabinet and wardrobe

Superior



- 2 people
- 2 windows
- 1 double bed
- Sofa
- Private shower, toilet and hair dryer
- Flatscreen TV
- Desk and chair
- Telephone and WiFi (additional cost)
- Refrigerator
- Coffee and tea maker
- Cabinet and Wardrobe

Junior Suite



- 2 people
- 1 double window
- 1 double bed
- Private shower, toilet and hair dryer
- Flatscreen TV
- Desk and chair
- Telephone and WiFi (supplemented)
- Refrigerator
- Coffee and tea maker
- Cabinet and wardrobe

Grand Suite with private balcony



- 2 people
- 1 double window
- 1 double bed
- Private balcony
- Private shower, toilet and hair dryer
- Flatscreen TV
- Sofa, Desk and chair
- Telephone and WiFi (supplemented)
- Refrigerator
- Coffee and tea maker
- Cabinet and Wardrobe

Cabin Prices

Anyone booking our “Spitsbergen and the Ice Edge” trip in June 2024 can exclusively benefit from the prices in red when also booking the “Eastern Spitsbergen cruise” (subject to terms, conditions and availability):

- **Quadruple Porthole** ~~£3,475~~ **now £2,085**
- **Triple Porthole** ~~£4,300~~ **now £2,580**
- **Twin Porthole** ~~£4,825~~ **now £2,895**
- **Single Porthole** ~~£8,225~~ **now £4,935**
- **Twin Window** ~~£5,200~~ **now £3,120**
- **Single Window** ~~£8,850~~ **now £5,310**
- **Twin Deluxe** ~~£5,525~~ **now £3,315**
- **Single Deluxe** ~~£9,400~~ **now £5,640**
- **Superior** ~~£6,275~~ **now £3,765**
- **Single Superior** ~~£10,675~~ **now £6,405**
- **Junior Suite** ~~£7,150~~ **now £4,290**
- **Grand Suite** ~~£7,775~~ **now £4,665**

Please note that all prices are per person.