



Experience. The Difference.

In Search of the *Polar Bear*

***11 day Escorted Expedition Cruise
31 May-10 June 2022***





Your expedition host, Ian Collier, has an undeniable passion for “The Ice” and his experience in this region includes several visits to both the Arctic and Antarctica.

This expedition cruise takes you deep inside the Arctic Circle, within 470 nautical miles of the North Pole.

The magnificence of nature, encapsulated by sea ice, huge icebergs and enormous glacier fronts advancing into the sea, is only surpassed by the deafening silence as we go in search of the King of the Arctic, the mighty polar bear.

Join Ian in Norway’s capital, Oslo, the starting point for this epic adventure. The following day we’ll fly to Longyearbyen - the principal town on the island of Spitsbergen in the Svalbard archipelago. The dazzling landscape makes for a stunning backdrop to your Arctic expedition cruise.

The voyage focuses on the western and northern coast of Spitsbergen and as far north as the permanent pack ice, an area with the highest concentration of wildlife and places of historic and scenic interest in the archipelago. Not only does this polar region offer tremendous wildlife and birdlife experiences, but fascinating lessons in glaciology as well. The islands are the northernmost inhabited places on the planet and would be permanently locked in ice were it not for the moderating influence of the Atlantic Gulf Stream current. First used as a whaling base in the 17th and 18th centuries, the islands are now celebrated as a breeding ground for many seabirds, marine mammals and the elusive star of the show - the polar bear - the world’s largest species of bear and land predator.

Ending after breakfast in Oslo, this expedition cruise itinerary compliments Discover Travel’s “Back to the USSR” escorted tour, which starts in Vilnius and highlights the Baltic state capitals and Russia’s iconic cities of St Petersburg and Moscow.

Polar Class 6

m/v Hondius is the first vessel to be built to class “LR PC6”, meeting the latest and highest demands of Lloyd’s Register demands “**Polar Class 6**” vessels, the **highest Polar Class notation** for ice-strengthened vessels. The vessel also fully complies with, and exceeds, the mandatory requirements of the Polar Code, adopted by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), for safe ship operation and the **protection of the Polar environment**. It is designed for exploratory voyages that provide first-hand contact with polar regions, and is equipped with stabilisers making it very suitable for advanced, innovative and quality voyages in the Arctic.



Your Tour Itinerary

DAY 1: 31 May Arrive in Oslo

Make your way to our centrally-located Oslo hotel where you'll join your host and fellow Arctic adventurers for dinner this evening. (D)

DAY 2: 01 June Fly to Longyearbyen

After breakfast we make our way to Oslo Airport to board our flight to Longyearbyen - administrative centre of Spitsbergen and largest island of the Svalbard archipelago. On arrival we'll head to our polar hotel, where the remainder of the day is at leisure. Longyearbyen is the gateway to nature-



based experiences and the starting point for most adventures in Svalbard and offers the independent traveller an insight into its history. Places that are worth a visit include Gallery Svalbard, Svalbard Church, The North Pole Expedition Museum, Svalbard Museum and WildPhoto Gallery. Dinner will be at our hotel, this evening. (B,D)

DAY 3: 02 June Longyearbyen - Largest town, biggest island

Your day is free to enjoy strolling around this former mining town. Got a taste for craft beer? Longyearbyen has a few notable pubs serving locally brewed beer. Nature lovers may marvel at the stark countryside, but it boasts more than a hundred species of plants which have been recorded in it. Later, we'll board our vessel in the afternoon and prepare for the departure of our voyage in the early evening, as our ship sails out of Isfjorden, where you might spot the first minke whale of your voyage. (B, D)

DAY 4: 03 June Route to Raudfjorden

Sailing to Raudfjorden, on the north coast of



Spitsbergen, you take in an expansive fjord spilling with glaciers – and maybe even visited by ringed and bearded seals. The cliffs and shoreline of this fjord also support thriving seabird colonies, rich vegetation, and the possibility of polar bears. (B, L, D)

DAY 5: 04 June The massive Monaco Glacier

Depending on the weather, we could sail into Liefdefjorden and cruise within sight of the 5-kilometre-long face of the precipitous Monaco Glacier. The waters in front of this glacier are a favourite feeding spot for thousands of kittiwakes, and the base of the ice is a popular polar bear hunting ground. If ice conditions prevent sailing here early in the season, an alternate route along the west coast of Spitsbergen can be implemented. (B, L, D)

DAY 6: 05 June Highlights of Hinlopen

Today we sail into Hinlopen Strait, home to bearded seals, ringed seals, and polar bears. At the entrance there is even the possibility to spot blue whales. After cruising among the ice floes of Lomfjordshalvøya in the Zodiacs, you can view the bird cliffs of Alkefjellet with their thousands of Brünnich's guillemots. On the east side of Hinlopen Strait, you may attempt a landing on Nordaustlandet. Here reindeer, pink-footed geese, and walrus are likely sights. We can take an

Superior cabin, m/v Hondius



alternate route if ice prevents entry into Hinlopen. (B, L, D)

DAY 7: 06 June Stop at the Seven Islands

The northernmost point of our voyage may be north of Nordaustlandet, in the Seven Islands. Here you reach 80° north, just 870 km from the geographic North Pole. Polar bears inhabit this region, so the ship may park for several hours among the pack ice before wheeling around west again. (B, L, D)

DAY 8: 07 June Sailing the continental shelf

While retracing our route west, keep watch for polar bears and elusive Greenland (bowhead) whales. About 40 nautical miles west of Spitsbergen, we sail the edge of the continental shelf. Here fin whales forage during the summer in the upwelling zones (where cold, nutrient-rich water wells up from below the sea's surface) that run along the Spitsbergen banks. At the mouth of Kongsfjorden, we have a good chance of sighting minke whales. (B, L, D)

DAY 9: 08 June Reindeer, foxes, and so many seabirds

Walrus sometimes haul out in Forlandsundet, our next stop. Alternatively, we might sail into St. Johns Fjord or south to the mouth of Isfjorden, landing at Alkhorner. Seabirds nest on these cliffs, Arctic foxes search below for fallen eggs and chicks, and reindeer graze the sparse vegetation. We arrive in Longyearbyen later at night. (B, L, D)

DAY 10: 09 June There and back again

Every adventure, no matter how grand, must eventually come to an end. We disembark in Longyearbyen and head to the airport for our flight to Oslo. On arrival at Oslo, we'll check into the airport hotel, meeting up for dinner where no doubt the conversation will be centred around the many memories that will accompany us on our next adventure. (B, D)

DAY 11: 10 June

After breakfast, your cruise tour ends.

m/v Hondius features

Hotel comfort, expedition class: Built in 2019, carrying 174 passengers in its range of 82 spacious suites and cabins, the Hondius is Oceanwide Expedition's newest, and most advanced, vessel. The passengers' certificate is for 196 persons. One deck has been entirely dedicated to a large observation lounge and separate lecture room, which are reserved for a wide variety of interactive workshops, exhibitions, and performances, particular to Hondius. Though elegantly designed in stylish mid-century modern décor, this vessel holds true to Oceanwide's distinctive cosy and informal atmosphere.

Featuring a variety of deluxe accommodations, each cabin is equipped with **its own private shower and toilet**, and comfortable amenities which include a flat screen TV, desk & chair, telephone and Wi-Fi (supplemented), hair dryer, cabinet and wardrobe.

This expedition vessel holds various types of hotel-styled cabins, including the spacious Hondius suite, grand suites with balcony and junior suites. Our itinerary offers you a choice of twin porthole cabins, twin window, twin deluxe or superior cabins. There is also a limited number of triple and quadruple-porthole cabins, ideal for solos travellers looking for value.

Swift & safe ship-to-shore operations: Oceanwide Expeditions employs a tough fleet of rigid-hull inflatable Zodiac boats that guarantee swift and safe landing operations. The vessel has two separate gangways and a sheltered indoor Zodiac embarkation platform that can also be used for special outdoor activities, such as kayaking.

The fast, flexible, friendly heart of the polar regions: The vessel is equipped with advanced stabilisers and two main engines capable of powering the vessel up to 15 knots, enabling a rapid response to wildlife-spotting opportunities, while a crew of 72 expedition and hotel staff, sacrifice no warmth in achieving its keen polar edge, ensuring that what little time you do spend on the ship, will be hospitable and comfortable.

Travellers from around the globe: A typical voyage may include passengers from the age of 30 to 80, although usually between 45 and 65, characterised by their strong interest in exploring remote regions. Oceanwide Expeditions fosters a camaraderie which develops with ease on board, across the many nationalities sharing in their common interest.

Informal, relaxed ambience on board: While you'll need the essential layers for outdoor activities and appreciating the opportunity to spot a whale from the deck, in keeping with the spirit of expedition, dress on board is informal. Inside the vessel a no-smoking policy prevails.



Your Physical Condition

You must be in good overall health and be able to walk several hours per day. The expedition is ship-based and physically not very demanding, but we spend as much time as possible on shore. You are, however, welcome to remain aboard the ship if you prefer. To join most excursions you must be able to get up and down the steep gangway - from the ship to the water level - to board the Zodiacs. Staff will assist you in and out of the boats, and boarding will become progressively easier with practice, but conditions on shore can be slippery and rocky. Remember, you will be travelling in remote areas without access to sophisticated medical facilities, so you must not join this expedition if you have a life-threatening condition or need daily medical treatment.

Tour Map



Tour price from \$12,595

per person twin share
Twin with Porthole Cabin*

Other cabin options:

Twin Window NZ\$13,375 per person

Twin Deluxe NZ\$13,995 per person

Superior NZ\$15,325 per person

Quad-share NZ\$10,095 per person

Triple-share NZ\$11,580 per person

Price includes:

- 3-4 star overnight hotels in Oslo, Longyearbyen and Oslo airport
- Transport Oslo hotel-Oslo airport / Longyearbyen airport-hotel-vessel-airport
- Meals as shown (B=Breakfast / L=Lunch / D=Dinner)
- Voyage aboard the vessel as indicated
- 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
- All miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the programme
- AECO fees and governmental taxes.
- Comprehensive pre-departure material
- Gratuities/tipping
- Tour escort.

Not included: International airfares, drinks, laundry, insurance (compulsory), city taxes, passport and /or visa fees, portorage and items of a personal nature are not included.

To secure your place:

Send your \$4,000 non-refundable deposit per person with completed Booking Form to Discover Travel.

For more details and to book:

Phone: 03 364 3400 or 0800 747 737

Email: ideas@discovertravel.co.nz

Mail: PO Box 2477, Christchurch.



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***CONDITIONS: Price** - The price of \$12,595.00 per person is based on twin-share porthole cabin. **Single Supplement** - available on request for those travellers wanting their own room, please discuss with your Discover Travel Consultant. **Payments** - The price quoted is for payment by cash, cheque or direct bank transfer. Cheques: Should be made payable to 'Discover Travel'. Our postal address is PO Box 2477, Christchurch. **Bank Transfer:** 06 0801 0495605 02 - Discover Travel Worldwide Ltd, using 'Spitsbergen2' as a reference. **VISA or Mastercard** payments will incur a 2% convenience fee and American Express a 3% fee. In order to confirm your booking, a non-refundable deposit of \$4,000 per person is required. Final payment will be due no later than 17 March 2022. Prices are based on a minimum group size of 5, maximum of 16 (excluding tour escort).