

KAYAK EXPEDITION NOTES AND ITINERARY

“Never have I seen a landscape of more savage beauty, or nature in wilder confusion, than here – a landscape of sharp peaks, ice and snow.”

The First Crossing of Greenland by Fridtjof Nansen (on sighting land).

SEA KAYAKING

The Arctic summer provides twenty four hours of daylight and wonderful paddling opportunities. We offer three sea kayaking adventures in the Arctic from the mothership Polar Pioneer, working in conjunction with Aurora Expeditions. Spitsbergen, Greenland, and the Arctic Dreams voyage which combines the highlights from Iceland, Greenland, Spitsbergen and Norway in one ultimate adventure. These notes detail our Arctic Dreams trips which exploring some of the most remote and scenic parts above and below the Arctic Circle. The trip offer great wildlife viewing, stunning scenery, and kayaking through protected and often ice choked fjords.

We intend to use the ship as a floating base camp, and paddle at every opportunity. Our paddling excursions will not involve camping out. The Zodiacs will be available for extended shore excursions for those who do not wish to paddle on any given day.

We hope to paddle one to two times a day, (except when at sea) spending as much time on the water as possible. We can get ashore by kayak where we can walk on the lush tundra amongst the summer flowers. For our paddling excursions we will normally leave the ship immediately after breakfast for the first paddle of the day and then often after lunch, will have time for a 2nd paddle before returning to the ship for dinner. Most paddles range from two and a half to four hours. We endeavour to have at least one extended paddle where we will be away from the ship for most of the day and generally meet the ship at a different location. The flexibility of kayaking with a small private group ensures our own unique experiences, quite different from those encountered by the other passengers on board, and additionally we have the option to forego paddling and join the others in zodiacs, on any given day.

Kayakers should be an intermediate standard and have paddled before on outings up to 12 km in length. You do not have to be an expert or know how to roll but should have an adventurous spirit and recognize that the weather will influence greatly what we can and can't do. It is cold water kayaking so this should not be your first paddling experience. Try to rent a kayak locally before leaving home if you would like some additional experience, or seek out a local operator for some paddling tuition. We could be paddling in winds and have little opportunity to instruct before our first paddle. We often begin our first paddling session from the shore and after that will be launching directly from the ship so you should also practise paddling on seas that could have a little swell. Generally the water surface ranges from glassy calm to a small wind chop.

We'd be happy to talk to you about your level of experience, and may be able to advise you how to obtain the necessary experience before your trip.

Please Note: Along with your voyage booking form we require all participants to complete our “Sea Kayak Booking and Experience Form” and return it to us immediately to secure your spot in the sea kayaking group.

EXPEDITION NOTES

This voyage offers wonderful opportunities for tundra and sometimes glacier walking, exploring fjords by ship, kayak, and Zodiac, and viewing dramatic landscapes and Arctic wildlife. Iceland, where we begin, is one of the world's youngest islands. Forged by fire and honed by ice, it is a geological treasure trove. Reykjavik, the capital, is a clean, sophisticated and progressive city. Venturing further afield provides a glimpse of life in times gone by - quaint fishing villages, turf houses and sturdy Icelandic ponies.

ARCTIC DREAMS – ICELAND, GREENLAND, SPITSBERGEN, NORWAY

20 DAYS 5 – 24 August 2009

Greenland is the world's largest island, almost totally covered by the second largest icecap on earth, and boasts the world's largest national park. Its east coast is sparsely settled by small communities of Inuit hunters who eke out a living in one of the harshest environments on earth.

The island of Spitsbergen lies half way between northern Norway and the North Pole, with a population of 3500 residents in five settlements. It is still virtually an unspoiled wilderness. Greenland is the world's largest island, almost totally covered by the second largest icecap on earth, and boasts the world's largest national park. Its east coast is sparsely settled by small communities of Inuit hunters who eke out a living in one of the harshest environments on earth.

North of the Arctic Circle is the land of the midnight sun. At Longyearbyen in Spitsbergen the sun doesn't set for four months of summer. In winter it is dark except for starlight, moonlight and the elegant curtains of the northern lights.

The warming influence of the Gulf Stream around Spitsbergen creates an environment where a prolific variety of tundra vegetation (mosses and lichens, fungi, species of ferns and many flowering plants) thrive on the sharp contrasts in temperature of the High Arctic.

We hope to visit Bear Island with its wild coastline and prolific birdlife before crossing the Arctic Circle and sailing along Norway's mountainous coastline

These notes will give you a brief idea of what you may experience on this voyage. Our emphasis is on wildlife encounters, experience of the harsh and stunning environments, and visiting remote communities and sites of historical interest. However we stress that this is an expedition-style cruise. Our actual program will vary to take best advantage of local conditions, spontaneous opportunities and wildlife. No two voyages are the same; there is always an element of the unexpected.

ITINERARY

Day 1 - Embark Longyearbyen

We board Polar Pioneer in the Icelandic port of Keflavik in mid afternoon, settle ourselves in and set sail in the evening, escorted by gliding fulmars, and perhaps the occasional puffin. The sea kayakers will attend a briefing to distribute dry suits, pogies (paddling mitts for your hands), lifejackets, and dry bags.

Polar Pioneer is not a luxury ship, she is homely and strong, built to be a working vessel and refitted to a comfortable passenger standard. The mood on board is definitely casual. At sea we are totally self-sufficient. The days flow by while we travel snugly in our cocoon. A favourite pastime on board is to stand on deck or on the bridge, watching for seabirds and absorbing the dramatic scenery.

Days 2 – At Sea crossing the Denmark Strait

We will be at sea all day making our way across Denmark Strait and passing over submarine canyons that enrich the whale feeding grounds off Greenland's southeast coast.

Day 3 – East Greenland Coast

We explore the east Greenland coast, along the flanks of Knud Rasmussen Land, where old volcanic lavas, thousands of metres thick, plunge into the frozen sea. We hope to have our first kayak outing in this humbling scenery. We may visit Romer Fjord, a small fjord scattered with ice debris and surrounded by tall black mountain peaks. Waterfalls stream off the steep sides and there may be an opportunity to visit a natural hot springs.

ARCTIC DREAMS – ICELAND, GREENLAND, SPITSBERGEN, NORWAY

20 DAYS 5 – 24 August 2009

Days 4-7 –East Greenland - Kaiser Franz Josef Fjord & Scoresby Sund

If the pack ice allows, we'll attempt to reach the breathtaking Scoresby Sound and Kaiser Franz Josef Fjord, the world's largest fjords. Massive glaciers that calve here form the birthplace of Greenland's renowned giant icebergs. We hope to visit remote Inuit communities like the unpronounceable Ittoqqortoormiit (Scoresby Town) and to hike across the tundra in search of ancient graveyards or summer villages occupied 3000 years ago by Eskimos. This area provides excellent opportunities for sea kayaking in its maze of calm, interconnecting waterways.

If we are lucky we may see musk oxen and seals, and maybe even polar bears or narwhal, although due to the relentless pursuit of the local hunters, these sightings are very rare.

Kayaking in these massive fjords among the bergs is a highlight.

Days 8-9 At Sea

We will enjoy informative talks as we cruise northeast across the Greenland Sea - the main outlet of the Arctic Ocean – AND where we may encounter pack ice. The strong icy currents have isolated East Greenland from the rest of the world for millennia. These currents carry nutrients from the Polar Basin, attracting large numbers of fish, seals and whales. Climatic conditions and the concentration of ice in the vicinity often create thick morning fog that vanishes with the onset of the midday sun.

Places we may visit in Kaiser Franz Josef Fjord and Scoresby Sund include:

Cape Humboldt – Ymer Island

One of the many possibilities on Ymer Island is Cap Humboldt, where a lone trappers' hut built on an ancient beach looks out across a magnificent bay dotted with huge icebergs. Water-worn birch logs washed up on pebbly beaches and a steep hillside behind the hut offer walking opportunities and the possibility of seeing Musk oxen grazing on the hardy foliage. Keep a lookout for Arctic fox, snowy owls and ptarmigan.

Sefstrom Glacier – Alpefjord

A narrow waterway between peaks of up to 2200 metres – serrated brown eroded mountains with hanging glaciers clinging like limpets to stony gullies. The snout of the Sefstrom Glacier juts out almost blocking Alpefjord, allowing Zodiac access and the opportunity to walk on the glacier. Clumps of Arctic flora in its autumn glory are visible as we cruise through the still water.

Ittoqqortoormiit – Scoresby Sund

A colourful Inuit community of about 1500 residents, the majority of whom still depend largely on hunting. Explore the village and meet parents pushing latest model prams with cute round faced babies peeping out from Arctic fox fur jackets. Avoid speedy 4-wheel motor cycles that hurtle along rough dirt roads, listen to the crescendo of howling emerging from lines of huskies secured to chains. Visit the modern Supermarket or sit spellbound in the beautiful Lutheran Church serenaded by the local organist.

Sydkap – Scoresby Sund

A small promontory jutting out from Scoresby Land which offers good walking and delightful views across the sound. There are great opportunities for kayaking past lonely beaches where 3000-year-old gravesites can be visited on shore. Nests of grounded giant bergs the size of 10 story buildings with green tunnels and aquamarine lakes offer hours of endless enjoyment for kayakers and Zodiacers alike.

Days 10-14 - Spitsbergen

We hope to spend two days sampling the delights of Spitsbergen's mountainous

ARCTIC DREAMS – ICELAND, GREENLAND, SPITSBERGEN, NORWAY

20 DAYS 5 – 24 August 2009

west coast before setting out around the north coast. Our exact point of landfall will depend on the pack ice we encounter crossing the Greenland Sea. We'll paddle underneath towering cliffs and take long walks on spongy permafrost amid dramatic mountain scenery.

Along the north coast we push into the Arctic Ocean pack ice, where we'll search for walrus and seals, always alert for polar bears. East Spitsbergen is a different world – a polar desert. If ice conditions allow we will try to pass south through the narrow Hinlopen Strait, a channel flanked by austere, cream-coloured slopes rich in fossils. On our paddles we'll seek eider ducks, Arctic foxes and beautiful ivory gulls.

Day 15 – At Sea, approach Bear Island

We'll be at sea this morning, and then hope to explore remote and mysterious Bear Island where we hope to paddle around lofty sea stacks, hike amid tundra wildflowers and encounter Arctic fox.

Days 16-20 – Norwegian coastline

Our aim is to spend the next four days exploring the the superb Norwegian coastline. We may stop at Alta to view 6,000 year old petroglyphs, then sail south to cod fishing villages nestled against towering mountains in the Lofoten Islands. Watch for passing whales as we paddle beneath steep bird cliffs alive with razorbills and guillemots and explore narrow fjords.

Sailing south, we hope to land at Torget Island to inspect the bizarre rock formation Torghatten, a legendary hole in the mountain created by a troll's arrow. We may visit the charming fishing village of Sor-Gjaeslingan and visit the boisterous bird cliffs of Runde. We finish our adventure in the historic waterfront town of Bergen. As our journey draws to an end, we will have time to reflect on the amazing experiences we have shared, before we bid each other farewell. Visits to remote islands and fishing villages of coastal Norway

Please see our Scandinavian Options leaflet if you'd like to spend time exploring Iceland, the "Land of Ice and Fire", before beginning the voyage.

"Not only as a first impression but as a permanent memory, after several, long visits to Northeast Greenland. For me, everyday life in the Arctic is filled with peaceful serenity, the magnificent grandeur of the scenery and an almost sacred atmosphere."

Quiet days in the Arctic by Magnus Elander

GENERAL INFORMATION

HIGHLIGHTS OF SPITSBERGEN, GREENLAND & ICELAND

- Spectacular scenery
- The largest Island in the world (Greenland), and world's largest National Park (NE Greenland)
- Historic sites & Inuit culture
- Wildlife opportunities - polar bears, walrus, seals, fox, reindeer, musk ox and sea birds.
- Great variety of terrain over short distances
- Sea ice, active glaciers and icebergs
- 24 hours of sunshine (Spitsbergen)
- Above the Arctic Circle
- Rumbling volcanoes, rugged lava fields, hot springs, cascading waterfalls - Iceland's landscape is unique.
- Exploring some of the most amazing fjords on earth, including Geirangerfjord and Trollfjorden
- The chance to step ashore at Bear Island, a rarely visited speck of land in the Atlantic Ocean

ARCTIC DREAMS – ICELAND, GREENLAND, SPITSBERGEN, NORWAY

20 DAYS 5 – 24 August 2009

THIS TOUR INCLUDES

- Group airport transfers to and from the ship.
- Ship's accommodation. All public areas are open to all passengers.
- All meals on board ship.
- All shore excursions from the ship including Zodiacs.
- Lectures, videos, slide and film shows and guide services.
- Medical services. There is a resident medical officer and infirmary on board.
- Port taxes and port charges imposed by government authorities.
- Pre-departure information and briefing.
- The trip price comprises the voyage cost plus a surcharge for the kayaking option. This surcharge covers use of a drysuit, all your paddling and kayak equipment, and the services of a professional sea kayak guide.

THIS TOUR DOES NOT INCLUDE

- Air transport to and from the ship.
- Excess baggage on any air flights.
- Visa, passport and vaccination charges and airport departure taxes.
- Hotels and meals not included in ship cruise itinerary.
- Tips on board for crew and service personnel.
- Optional excursions not included in ship cruise itinerary.
- Laundry, postage, personal clothing, medical expenses, personal travel insurance and items of a personal nature such as bar charges, wine and phone calls.
- Emergency evacuation charges.

SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES

HEAD OFFICE – SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

PO Box 641, St Ives, NSW 2075

Ph: (02) 8901 3287 Fx: (02) 8901 3297

International phone or fax inquiries: 61 2 8901 and the last four digits

Email: ssvtrips@southernseaventures.com

Website: www.southernseaventures.com

Amended AB 30/9/08



ARCTIC DREAMS – ICELAND, GREENLAND, SPITSBERGEN, NORWAY

20 DAYS 5 – 24 August 2009

SHIP DETAILS

Polar Pioneer

Polar Pioneer was built in Finland in 1985 as an ice-strengthened research vessel. In 2001 she was refurbished in St Petersburg to provide comfortable accommodation for 54 passengers.

Polar Pioneer is not a luxury ship; she is homely and strong. The accommodation is simple yet comfortable and the meals are wholesome and uncomplicated. The mood on board is definitely casual. A small fleet of Zodiacs (rubber inflatable boats) with outboard motors enable us to travel from ship to shore.

Length - 71.6 metres, Beam - 12.8 metres, Draft - 4.5 metres, Displacement - 2140 tonnes, Cruise speed - 10-12 knots, Powered by - 2 x 1560 HP diesel engines, Chef – European, Australian or New Zealand, Captain & Crew – Russian.

General Facilities:- Bar/lounge/library area, Sauna, Laundry Service, Medical Clinic staffed by a doctor, Dining area, TV/Video (NTSC & PAL systems), Lecture room.

There are five classes of cabins on board the *Polar Pioneer*

- **Triple Cabins** have two lower bunks and one upper bunk, porthole, wash basin, desk, storage. Shower and toilet facilities located conveniently just outside the cabins.
- **Twin Share Cabins** have two lower bunks, porthole, wash basin, desk, storage. Shower and toilet facilities located conveniently just outside the cabins.
- **Twin Private Cabins** have two lower berths, two have upper & lower berths. All cabins have private bathroom (shower and toilet), window, desk, ample storage.
- **Mini-Suites** have one double bed and one fold down couch in separate sleeping areas, private bathroom, (shower & toilet), windows, desk, sitting area, refrigerator, TV and video facilities, electric jug. Two only.
- The **Captain's Suite** features a double bed in separate sleeping area, private bathroom (shower & toilet) forward and port windows, desk, large lounge and table area, refrigerator, TV and video facilities, electric jug. One only.

