

ARCTIC

# Iceland and Greenland Kayak Expedition

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*Arctic Kayaking Adventure*

12 day trip



# Iceland & Greenland: Sail and Kayak



## 12 day trip 9 days kayaking

Join us on a wild and remote expedition that combines the magic of Iceland with the raw wilderness of Greenland. Explore both regions by kayak, on foot, Stand Up Paddle Boards and from the simple comfort of our 'base camp', a 25 metre sailboat. The yacht provides the best option to access remote bays and fjords in which to launch kayaks and explore areas few have visited. Expect amazing wildlife encounters, breathtaking landscapes and new and inspiring adventures.

## A Quick Itinerary

B = Breakfast • L = Lunch • D = Dinner

**Day 1:** Meet in Ísafjörður (north-west coast of Iceland). Boat departs at 7pm.

**Day 2:** Explore Hornstrandir Nature Reserve (Iceland). B • L • D

**Day 3:** Crossing Denmark Strait. B • L • D

**Days 4-11:** Exploring Greenland's east coast. B • L • D

**Day 12:** Morning arrival in Kulusuk (Greenland). Trip concludes. B

## Meeting Place and Time

We meet in Ísafjörður on the north-west coast of Iceland. Departure time from Ísafjörður harbour is around 7pm. Please arrive at the harbour ahead of the 7pm sailing time to meet the crew, stow your gear aboard the yacht and pick up any last minute supplies. Dinner is not included and we recommend you eat a light meal before departure.

## How to Get There (and Back Again)

There are several airlines with scheduled flights into Iceland. Keflavik International Airport is about 40 minutes from the capital, Reykjavik. Check airline websites or consult a travel agent for details.

There are two to three daily 40-minute flights from Reykjavik (domestic airport) to Ísafjörður.

Depending on international flight arrivals and domestic flight departures, it may be possible to fly to Ísafjörður on the same day of arrival into Iceland. The domestic carrier to Ísafjörður is Air Iceland ([www.airiceland.is](http://www.airiceland.is)).

You can also rent a car and drive to Ísafjörður. The drive is 450km on sealed roads and normally takes about six hours. We strongly recommend spending a few extra days visiting the West Fjords near Ísafjörður as well as other parts of Iceland.

We finish the trip in Kulusuk, a small settlement on the east coast of Greenland. Kulusuk has a population of around 300, largely made up of hunters and fishers. It's a level walk from the harbour to the airport but you will need to carry your luggage. Air Iceland has daily scheduled flights from Kulusuk to Reykjavik domestic airport during the summer months. Flight time is approximately one hour and forty minutes.

## Paddling Experience

Kayakers should be of an intermediate standard and have paddled before on outings up to 12km in length. You do not have to be an expert or know how to roll but should have an adventurous spirit and recognise that the weather will influence greatly what we can and can't do. This is cold water kayaking and should not be your first paddling experience. For additional experience, rent a kayak before leaving home and seek out a local operator for some paddling tuition. You should be comfortable on day one to paddle in some swell and wind if we encounter it.

DO practice paddling in a variety of conditions prior to the trip. Generally the water surface ranges from 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 on how to obtain the necessary skills before your trip.

**Please Note: Along with your booking form we require all participants to complete our "Sea Kayak Experience Form" and return it to us immediately to secure your spot.**

As with most activities, the fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the paddling. It's a good idea to take some regular exercise like paddling, walking, jogging, cycling, aerobics or swimming ahead of the trip. We generally limit our group to a maximum of eight clients, plus the guide.

## Proposed Itinerary

The following itinerary should be seen as an approximate guide only. Our itinerary will be determined by the weather and sea-ice conditions. The final itinerary is only decided after setting sail from Ísafjörður harbour. Our program may change to take advantage of opportunities as they arise, to suit local conditions and according to the preferences of the group. Our aim is to experience an amazing Arctic adventure!

**Day 1:** We start our journey departing from Ísafjörður harbour around 7pm. We sail to Seyðisfjörður Fjord, a journey of about one to two hours. Our evening anchorage will be either at Eyri or Fofafótur. We'll enjoy an evening onshore walk with the opportunity to observe the many different species of birds found here such as puffin, black guillemot, whooper swan, eider, fulmar, oystercatcher, ringed plover, golden plover, common snipe, common redshank, glaucous gull, great black-backed gull, arctic tern, pied wagtail, redwing and many others. We return to the Arktika and enjoy our first night on board.

MEALS NOT INCLUDED / AT ANCHORAGE

**Day 2:** We'll enter Hornstrandir Nature Reserve, where flora and fauna rule unchallenged and unspoiled. The last permanent residents moved away in 1952, with only summer houses remaining. There are no roads in this area and the only access is by boat. The vegetation is surprisingly lush; over two metre high Angelica grows down to the coast and the lowlands and slopes are decorated by spreading patches of wildflowers. During the morning we paddle to the ruins of the old whaling station where Norwegians processed around 12,000 barrels of whale-oil between 1894 and 1915 before the Icelandic government passed a law on the protection of whales in Icelandic waters. Subsequently, Icelandic companies processed herring in the same plant until it was finally shut around 1940. In the afternoon, we'll prepare to depart for Greenland, looking out for a good weather window.

B • L • D / AT SEA (WEATHER DEPENDENT)

**Day 3:** Crossing the Denmark Strait. During the afternoon, we should start glimpsing the mountains of Greenland. We'll keep watch for icebergs that are always present in this area. Dolphins and whales are likely to be riding our bow wake.

B • L • D / AT SEA

**Days 4-6:** We continue our journey to the great Kangerlugssuaq Fjord ('big fjord'). The yacht will anchor in Suhaili Bugt. This is a very sheltered anchorage where Sir Robin Knox-Johnston (first man to perform a single-handed non-stop circumnavigation of the globe) and Sir Chris Bonington (Britain's best-known mountaineer and one of the most successful expedition leaders in history) anchored their vessel, the Suhaili, during their attempt to climb the Cathedral Peak in 1991. This will be our 'base camp' for the following few days.

In Kangerlugssuaq Fjord we have plenty of options for paddles and hikes. We can paddle over to the abandoned Skærgård Inuit settlement and explore the Uttendal Sound towards the ice-filled Watkins Fjord. We can also hike in the hills of Kræmer Island where there are fantastic vistas of the surrounding fjords, mountains and glaciers.

To the Ammassalik people, Kangerlugssuaq has always been regarded as an especially rich hunting ground, a kind of Arctic Shangri-La! Modern-day attempts to colonise Kangerdlugssuaq date from 1966, when several families from Tasiilaq over-wintered in the remains of an abandoned American weather station and its expedition houses, constructed in the 1930s. The families reported a very good hunting season: 35 polar bears, 62 narwhals and some 2100 seals. But, because of the daunting access to the area, colonisation attempts were abandoned and Kangerdlugssuaq was left to revert once again to an exceptional wilderness.

The Kangerdlugssuaq Fjord is the wildest coastal landscape in Greenland. The Lemon Mountain Range—one of Greenland's highest—lies just north of the fjord. The compact alpine peaks of this vast mountain range offers endless opportunities for mountaineering, with many unclimbed peaks towering to 2,600 meters. To the northeast are the Watkins Mountains and Gunnbjørnsfjeld (3,694m), the highest peak in the Arctic. In all, this range consists of the 10 tallest mountains in the High Arctic—a stunning collection of peaks virtually unknown to the outside world.

**B • L • D / AT ANCHORAGE**

**Day 7:** We will leave Kangerlugssuaq Fjord and make our passage south, exploring new areas. This area is spectacular, with mountains rising from the sea scarred with rifts through which active glaciers discharge quantities of ice.

**B • L • D / AT ANCHORAGE**

**Day 8:** This morning, we enter Nigertuluk Fjord, with its two spectacular calving glaciers, a sandy beach and a tranquil mountain lake. All in all, this is a fantastic playground for hiking and kayaking!

**B • L • D / AT ANCHORAGE**

**Day 9:** Today we sail across to Kangerigtivatsiaq Fjord, which was described by Frederick Spencer Chapman, of the British Arctic Air Route expedition of 1930-1931, as follows: 'The scenery here was magnificent. A short branch fjord to the N terminated in a huge glacier, while the longer main fjord was flanked by great needle-peaked mountains, between 1800 – 2000 m high. There are hanging glaciers precariously balanced on the steep hillsides and other glaciers coming right down to the sea. At the head of the fjord, away in the distance, was a superb pinnacled mountain, reminiscent of St. Paul's Cathedral; this was Ingolfsfjeld.' Kayakers will enjoy their own Arctic adventures and experience paddling this amazing wilderness.

**B • L • D / AT ANCHORAGE**

**Day 10:** Our journey continues as we sail further south into the remote and little-explored territory of Depot Sound. We will pass the Idrac Glacier, Fladøerne Island and Smalsund, and will anchor overnight in Sermiligaq.

**B • L • D / AT ANCHORAGE**

**Day 11:** We will sail further into Sermiligaq Fjord and enter the stunning Ikasaq Sound. We will make a short stop at the abandoned WW2 military base of Bluie East 2. From here we will continue our passage to Ammassalik Fjord and anchor adjacent to Kulusuk village in the afternoon.

**B • L • D / AT ANCHORAGE**

**Day 12:** We dock at Kulusuk harbour in the morning and come ashore where our expedition concludes. It is possible to depart on a late morning flight.

**B / ACCOMMODATION NOT INCLUDED**



## Climate

Iceland is a land of very mixed weather. Usually the spring and summer brings higher pressure and settled weather but be prepared from everything from dead calm and warm sunny days to cold and horizontal rain and fog! July/early August is the warmest period with an average maximum temperature of 10 degrees C and five hours a day of sunshine. Winds are generally light to moderate in strength.

In eastern Greenland, June, July and August are the warmest months in the region although the temps are highly variable. It rarely dips below 2 deg C and can get as warm as 15 deg C. The average maximum temperature in August is 10 deg C with an average of eight days of precipitation. You should prepare for sunshine as well as showers. Wind is generally light to moderate but can shift quickly.

Given that we will be close to the Arctic Circle, it may be possible to see the Northern Lights at night, although it may be too early in the season.

## The Yacht

Our floating base camp is a 25-metre yacht built to withstand the harsh Arctic conditions, but still retaining many home comforts. The Arktika's large deck ensures passengers can comfortably move around and enjoy the fantastic surroundings. The enclosed and heated pilot house provides a refuge from the cold, with huge windows ensuring those that like to warm up won't miss a thing. Below deck accommodation is comfortable yet seamanlike. With two double cabins and two four-person cabins, the Arktika can cater to couples and single travellers who don't mind cabin sharing. There are two wash rooms, each with a hot water shower, a full galley and a spacious eating area.

The power is 220 V, batteries and other devices may be re-charged. The yacht has all the necessary safety and emergency equipment. There is no laundry service on the boat, but given the hot water on board, you can wash clothes occasionally.

## The Captain

The Captain of the Arktika is Sigurdur "Siggi" Jonsson, a native of Ísafjörður. Siggi is quite the character who is happy to regale you with stories of his adventures, the history of his land and people. He has led numerous expeditions through Iceland and Greenland and through work and play has explored some of the most remote regions in the world. He's also a fantastic cook who is always coming up with new recipes from local delicacies.

## Meals

Meals are hearty and local produce/ ingredients are used as much as possible. Arctic char (similar to salmon), cod and lamb are commonly the ingredients used for dinners, quite often followed by berries and rhubarb pies for dessert.

**We are happy to cater for vegetarians and other special dietary requirements.** Please let us know at the time of booking.

It's a good idea to bring along some of your own dietary substitutes if you have a specialist diet.

## **Expedition Staff**

There will be a dedicated kayak guide as well as the boat's crew.

## **Stand Up Paddle Boards**

We offer the use of Stand UP Paddle Boards, a fantastic way to explore the calm bays and inlets.

## **Wildlife in Greenland**

East Greenland is the homeland of Polar bears. We will take measures to stay away from these beautiful animals and view them from a safe distance if spotted.

The waters are home to various species of seals and whales. On land we meet the Arctic fox and Arctic hare as well as a huge variety of birds.

## **Communication**

There is good (but expensive) mobile phone coverage and internet service in Greenland's local villages, but normally coverage is poor while on the Arktika. There is a satellite phone on board the Arktika that can be used for urgent calls or emails.

## **Conservation**

It has always been our motto that "we take only photographs and leave only footprints". We are keenly aware of the ecology of the areas we visit and try to limit our impact on them. We ask that each person takes out everything they bring in including sweet wrappers, batteries, etc.

## **Photography**

We are paddling in a salt-water environment and the delicate electronics in digital or film cameras can be damaged. You might consider a waterproof camera or a small plastic waterproof case or dry-bag with a supply of silicon packs. Ensure you have sufficient memory storage and batteries for a digital camera. If you are using a film camera it is wise to keep lenses to a minimum. One variable lens will reduce your load and the amount of your equipment that can be damaged. If you are buying a new camera, consider a waterproof one and get it well before departure so you can practice, as it is inconvenient to find fault with the camera during a trip.

## **Travel Arrangements**

Should you voluntarily decide to alter your travel arrangements after commencement of your trip, Southern Sea Ventures is not responsible for any additional charges involved. Our staff will assist you if possible but you are



responsible for organising these arrangements yourself. Delays may occur due to weather or transport difficulties and Southern Sea Ventures will do its best to rectify the situation. Please understand that in this part of the world, delays and waiting are commonplace and whilst we do our best to keep to schedule, it is not always possible.

## Travel Insurance

It is necessary to take out a personal insurance policy to cover yourself against sickness, accident, loss of baggage, trip cancellation due to weather or other reasons, and in the unlikely event that you need emergency, evacuation by plane or helicopter due to illness or accident. Ensure you have read the policy thoroughly and are familiar with the claim process in case it becomes necessary to make an emergency claim. We will require proof of your insurance prior to departure.

## Money Matters

### **Your tour cost includes:**

- Eleven nights on the yacht.
- All meals from breakfast on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 12.
- Expedition kayaks, paddles, life jackets and safety equipment.
- Dedicated kayak guide.
- Sailing instruction.
- Use of Stand Up Paddle Boards.
- Guided walks and land excursions.
- Use of wet weather sailing clothing.
- Bed linen including duvets and bath towels.
- Use of a dry suit.

### **Your tour cost *does not* include:**

- Any flights.
- Airport transfers.
- Accommodation in Ísafjörður or Kulusuk pre and post trip.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Dinner on Day 1.
- Travel insurance.



## Currency

Iceland=Icelandic Krona

1USD = approx 105 Icelandic Krona

Greenland=Danish Krone

1USD= approx 7 Danish Krone.

## Language

Icelandic is the official language of Iceland. It's a north Germanic language whose grammar is comparable to Latin or Ancient Greek. Most citizens of Iceland speak fluent English.

The language of east Greenland is Greenlandic, but it's substantially different from that of west Greenland both in its pronunciation and its vocabulary.

Greenland's first foreign language is Danish and the second is English.

Approximately 3,500 people in the world speak East Greenlandic.

In school the children of East Greenland have to learn West Greenlandic (which is the official language) Danish and English.

## Passport

Make sure that you have a current passport and that its validity will extend to six months after the date of your return.

## Visas

Citizens from most western countries are not required to obtain a visa to enter Iceland or Greenland. However, it's always best to check the latest requirements.

## Security

Before leaving home, photocopy your passport, airline voucher and make a note of your credit card and ATM card numbers in case you lose or misplace them.

## Medical Matters

All participants are required to provide us with a medical questionnaire filled out completely and accurately.

Please check with your doctor or medical centre whether you require any vaccinations or boosters.

We strongly recommend that you bring with you any required medicines and a small first aid kit for your own personal use. Due to the remoteness of the trip it is advisable to have a dental checkup before departure.

Please advise us of any side effects of any medication you take and of any dietary requirements related to the medication. Be sure to let your guide know

of any drugs to which you are allergic as well as noting this on your medical form. You will be isolated from modern medical facilities, so attention to medical matters is vital.

## Equipment & Clothing: What You Need to Bring

The following checklist is a guideline for your trip. Contact us if you have any questions.

### Essential Items:

- Thermal underwear, at least two sets.
- Wool or fleece thermal mid layer, take a few thin layers instead of thick ones.
- Hiking pants. No cotton.
- Thermal jacket (down or synthetic), optional.
- Waterproof and breathable pants and jacket.
- Wool/fleece hat.
- Two pairs of gloves and one pair of mittens.
- Three to four pairs of thick wool/synthetic socks and two-three pairs of thinner socks.
- Casual clothes for happy hour!
- Paddle booties (a size larger than normally worn).
- Comfortable and sturdy shoes for on the boat.
- Hiking boots for shore excursions.
- Soft travel bag (no hard suitcases).
- Dark sunglasses with a cord to prevent them from falling into the water.
- Sunscreen and sun hat.
- Swim suit and towels.
- Small backpack (30-40 litres).
- Medical kit to include personal medications, bandaids, throat lozenges, lip salves and sea sickness tablets. Don't forget your regular medication, for example, asthma inhalers (even if you only occasionally use one).
- One litre water bottle and/or thermos.
- Camera.

### Recommended:

- For women- a 'She-Wee' enables women to go to the loo without taking their drysuit off. It's a good idea to practice with it before coming on the trip. <http://shewee.com.au>
- Sleeping bag. Duvets are provided but a sleeping bag is handy for warmth when sitting out on the deck.
- Hiking poles, should be telescopic.

## **Delays or Problems**

Your guide's contact number will be advised closer to the trip. In case of last minute delays or problems, contact Southern Sea Ventures in Australia on +61 2 8901 3287.

### **SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES**

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