

Arctic Adventure

Travel to the White Island of Spitsbergen, in the Svalbard Archipelago, and experience the midnight sun



Introduction

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Your Arctic Adventure takes place in and around the town of Longyearbyen, Spitsbergen. Situated exactly half way between the Arctic Circle and the Geographic North Pole, Longyearbyen is the principal town of Svalbard and the starting point for those wishing to further explore the Arctic.

Here in Longyearbyen you will face challenges comparable to those encountered by the earliest polar explorers, as you take part in a series of polar activities. You will snowmobile across hundreds of miles of frozen fjords to see the glaciers; sledge-haul expedition supplies through the white valleys of Spitsbergen; and mush a team of huskies as you sled across the frozen tundra. The arctic conditions will be incredibly tough throughout, and the group will need to be well-prepared to face them.

Between the above-mentioned adventure activities, the group will have plenty of time to explore Longyearbyen. Students will be able to visit and learn more about the Svalbard global seed bank, the University Centre, and the local mining operations. Longyearbyen is a small but busy town, and entirely safe. Polar bears are not encountered close to town, though reindeer and arctic fox occasionally are.

Your Financial Protection

All monies paid by you for the air holiday package shown [or flights if appropriate] are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3145.

For more information see our booking terms and conditions.

Itinerary

Day 1: Depart for Oslo

Depart London Heathrow to arrive Longyearbyen same day (it is also possible to overnight in Oslo, and fly Longyearbyen the following day).

On arrival in Longyearbyen this evening, meet with your driver and transfer to the Miners Cabins, on the edge of town. After check-in, hot drinks and snacks will be served in the communal kitchen.

NB: The guesthouse accommodation is simple, warm and perfectly-positioned on the edge of town near the icefields. Excellent breakfasts are served here. You will also have use of a communal kitchen for making hot drinks and snacks. The walk to the town centre takes around 15 minutes.

Day 2: Safety briefing - Training walk on the icefields

After breakfast, there will be a thorough safety brief by your chief guide, following which the students will be asked to help check over the stores and pack the sledges.

Late morning, head out onto the ice for your first training walk. Today's training is vital, as it will teach you about basic safety on the icefields.

Following the afternoon's activity, return to guesthouse for a wash and brush up, then walk to town for pizza at the famous Kroa Restaurant.

Return to the guesthouse for hot drinks and overnight.



Day 3: Arctic wilderness training, Camp Barentz

After breakfast (8am) assemble in reception at 9:30am wearing cold weather gear and transfer by bus (12kms) to Camp Barentz.

At Camp Barentz you will be given basic polar training, including the setting up of tents, use of stoves, avalanche training, and skiing with sleds. You will also learn snow hole building techniques. We shall bring equipment for the training, including polar tents and cooking equipment, allowing the students to practice preparing lunch in tough Arctic conditions. Depending on the size of the group, it may be necessary to split into teams – some with skis. For some of the group, it will be possible to load, fit to harnesses and pull sledges as we do on our North Pole expeditions.

Throughout the day, we ensure that the activities are varied and engaging, and that students have plenty of support and help. It will be a long day, with approx. 6-7 hours on the ice. Camp Barentz has heated huts in case of emergency and for the group to take warm refreshments.

17:30pm board the bus to return from Camp Barentz to your hostel for dinner and overnight.

Day 4: Longyear Glacier, Ice Cave & Dog Sledding

Set off early on the Bandvagen (Caterpillar Tractor) to the famous Longyear glacier. This is usually a scheduled departure at 9am.

Morning ice cave visit

On reaching the glacier, there will be a chance to descend into the amazing Ice Cave. Equipped with headlamps, we explore the passages formed by the melted water under the glacier. You'll see fascinating formations of ice and stone – a breathtaking experience. We supply headlamps, helmets and you will be accompanied by experienced Ice Cave guides. The ice cave tour lasts approx 3 hours, after which you'll be transferred back to town for lunch at the cabins. Following lunch, you embark on your dog sledding expedition.

Evening dog sledding

Drive to Nybyen, where the group will be equipped with clothing and boots for the trip. Then drive out to the dog kennels, located on the border of the snowmobile-free area, approximately 12km outside Longyearbyen. Here you meet the dog sled team and prepare for your expedition on to the ice. You will receive an introduction to dog sledding, before harnessing the dogs and heading out into Bolterdalen. You drive 2-and-2 on each sled, and alternate between driving and sitting in the passenger seat. No prior experience is necessary. The experience lasts approx. 2-3 hours, after which you'll be returned to the lodge for dinner and overnight.

Day 5: Snowmobile Expedition, Templefjord

Breakfast at the cabins, then meet outside for the start of the Snowmobile Expedition, your final adventure on the ice. Prepare for the tour with an introduction to snowmobile driving and fitting for clothing and equipment. Then head out of Longyearbyen on our expedition to the beautiful Templefjord. Common routes are to drive east through Adventdalen and Eskerdalen before joining Sassendalen, or to drive through Helvetiadalen and De Geerdalen down towards Sassenfjorden.

In Templefjorden, you'll drive in towards the shattered fronts of the Tuna and Von Post glaciers, which are frozen into the sea ice. During the trip snack lunch and warm drink will be served. If the weather permits, you can take a different route on the return trip. Duration: 7-9 hours.

Please note: to drive you should have a valid car or motorcycle driver's licence, and this must be kept on you during the trip, meaning that students must be accompanied by an adult. Two persons to each snowmobile.



Day 6: Departure

Morning free for shopping or perhaps a visit to Longyearbyen Museum. Then airport transfer to connect with 14:45 afternoon flight home via Oslo, arriving London the same evening. It is possible to add an additional day (or more) in Longyearbyen if the group wish to further explore the town.

Key Points

Location

Our Arctic challenges take place on the island of Spitsbergen in Svalbard, Norway. Spitsbergen is located between 78 and 81 degrees north, and is the northernmost inhabited region of the earth. The Svalbard archipelago is located in the Arctic Circle midway between Norway and the North Pole. It is from here that most expeditions to the North Pole begin.

Geology

Glaciated mountains and valleys typify Svalbard. "Even if most of the land is glacier covered, Svalbard provides one of the few locations in the world where an excellent view into most of the periods of the developmental history of the earth. Taken together, this makes Svalbard a unique place to study geological processes – it is a natural geological archive and a laboratory where the geological processes of the past and present are being demonstrated." - Norwegian polar Institute.

Climate & Geography

Despite being so close to the North Pole, the Svalbard archipelago has a relatively mild climate compared to other areas at the same latitude. In Longyearbyen, the average temperature ranges from -14°C in winter to 6°C in summer. In winter Svalbard often has long periods with temperatures between -20°C and -30°C; add to that a wind-chill factor that usually seriously compounds the cooling effect of the low temperatures. In summer, fog is not uncommon. In terms of precipitation, Svalbard may be described as an "arctic desert" with annual rain and snowfall at a mere 200 - 300 millimetres. The weather on Svalbard can shift very quickly and local variations are often considerable.

Wildlife

The wildlife is sparse but stunning, and much of it endemic. Polar bears, Arctic foxes and reindeer as well as around thirty species of birds inhabit or visit the islands of Svalbard.

Educational Opportunities

There is great potential for geology, geography, and Arctic wildlife study. Contact us for further details.

Contact

Jeremy Gane, Gane and Marshall

Tel: 01822-600-600, email: jeremy@ganeandmarshall.com



Gane and Marshall

Tel: +44 (0)1822-600-600

e-mail: info@ganeandmarshall.com website: www.ganeandmarshall.com

