

Full Itinerary

ICELAND & GREENLAND ARCTIC EXPEDITION CRUISE



TALK TO OUR WELL TRAVELLED TEAM OF EXPERTS

0844 3350 197

Monday to Friday 09:00 - 18:00 GMT



JOURNEY SNAPSHOT

ACTIVITY LEVEL:

Level 2

DESTINATION:

Iceland & Greenland
Arctic Expedition Cruise

DURATION:

12 days / 11 nights

FLIGHT INFORMATION:

Return economy flights from London Heathrow Airport [LHR] to Reykjavik International Airport, Iceland [KEF] to arrive on Day 1 and depart to London Heathrow Airport [LHR] on Day 12

PICKUP LOCATION:

Reykjavik Airport, Iceland [KEF]

OVERVIEW

13 - 24 Aug, 2023

Experience a summer in the Far North aboard our Arctic Expedition Cruise in Iceland and Greenland, where sunset merges into sunrise. A real adventure awaits you when we explore the wild and frozen regions of Iceland and Greenland.

Embark on a journey that starts in Iceland, 'the Land of Fire and Ice' where we stay in trendy Reykjavik, tour the Golden Circle and relax in the Blue Lagoon's milky blue geothermal water. We continue our journey and fly on to Greenland, where we board our Arctic Expedition Cruise. Here you will experience long days and a cooler temperatures when we explore the world's largest island complete with gigantic icebergs, settlement visits, the stunning Eqi Glacier, Disko Bay and Uummannaq. A majestic adventure of our frozen planet awaits you!

ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAY 1 - Welcome to Reykjavik!

DAY 2 - Iceland's Golden Circle Tour

DAY 3 - Welcome to Greenland

DAY 4 - Sisimut - Explore Greenland's second largest City

DAY 5 - Qeqertarsuaq on Disko Island & Kaffemik

DAY 6 - Visit Uummannaq

DAY 7 - Calving Eqip Sermia Glacier and evening walk on the Sermermiut Plain

DAY 8 - Illulissat - the Iceberg Capital

DAY 9 - Visit the settlement of Sarfannguit

DAY 10 - Kangerlussuaq and farewell to Greenland

DAY 11 - Blue Lagoon & Farewell dinner

DAY 12 - Goodbye Iceland

FULL ITINERARY

DAY 1 - WELCOME TO REYKJAVIK!

Arrive in Reykjavik, Iceland, where a warm welcome awaits you. You will be met from your flight and taken to your hotel to check in.

Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure and in the evening, you have the chance to meet your fellow adventurers and Tour Director as we join for a Welcome Dinner.

Included meals: Welcome Dinner

Accommodation: Reykjavik

DAY 2 - ICELAND'S GOLDEN CIRCLE TOUR

After breakfast, you'll soon realise why Iceland is called the 'Land of Ice and Fire'.

We set off today on a 'Golden Circle' excursion, during which we'll visit many highlights including geysers, glaciers, waterfalls and Thingvellir, the oldest parliament in the world!

First we visit the Geysir geothermal area, located in the southwest of the island, which hosts many colorful hot springs, mud pools, fumaroles, algal deposits and geysers. One of Iceland's most famous geysers is Strokkur, a fountain-type geyser, which erupts every 6-10 minutes, sometimes reaching 35m high! It was named after Geysir, the original erupting hot spring, that gave all the geysers in the world their name.

We continue to the famous Gullfoss Waterfall. In volume the largest waterfall in Europe, it has two tiers of falls. The melting water from Iceland's second biggest glacier, Langjökull, falls into a deep canyon forming the majestic Golden Falls. On a sunny day, you can see the glacier in the distance and, if you're lucky, you may see a rainbow in the mist of the waterfall. It's the perfect photo opportunity waiting to happen!

We will stop at a local restaurant to have lunch before we visit Thingvellir National Park. Here two tectonic plates, the North American plate and the Eurasian plate, slowly move away from each other - Few places in the world offer a better and clearer view of this massive geographic activity. The biggest natural lake in Iceland is also located at Thingvellir National Park, playing host to a great variety of fish and bird life.

Thingvellir is an important place for Icelandic national history. It is here in 930AD that the Vikings founded their Parliament, the Althing, and hieftains held their annual meeting every summer.

The evening is free for you to dine in one of Reykjavik's many restaurants.

Included meals: Breakfast & Lunch

Accommodation: Reykjavik

DAY 3 - WELCOME TO GREENLAND

After breakfast, you will be transferred as a group to Reykjavik Airport for your flight to Greenland.

Landing in Kangerlussuaq, Greenland, you will be met by the Albatros Arctic Circle staff. On arrival, there will be some free time to take a stroll around the town on your own until it's time to board the ship this afternoon.

Alternatively, you may wish to purchase the optional **Reindeer Glacier excursion**.

Zodiacs will ferry you in small groups to the ship, which will be anchored about one kilometer in the fjord and after check-in, there will be a short safety demonstration before dinner is served. We set sail after dinner, beginning our passage through the 160 km-long fjord to the ocean.

With a total of 95 comfortable staterooms and suites, all with unobstructed sea views, most with their own balcony, the Ocean Albatros is definitely one of the most popular vessels to see Greenland. It offers two restaurants, a wellness area, bar, an open deck dining facility, a modern lecture lounge, a unique panorama sauna and other amenities.

Full board is included – breakfast, lunch, dinner, and afternoon snacks. There is also free 24h tea and coffee as well as a welcome and farewell cocktail. Other beverages will be charged to your cabin. Cabins for double occupancy are based on a Category C balcony state cabin and single porthole cabins for people travelling on their own are available on request.

There are a few pre-bookable activities (not included) during your cruise, subject to availability, so it is best to book soon if you wish to add to your reservation to avoid disappointment.

Included meals: Breakfast & Dinner

Accommodation: Ocean Albatros Exploration Ship

Optional extras: Reindeer Glacier excursion - £108 per person. Reindeer Glacier stands tall like an ice wall – in some places up to 60m high and is named due to the frequent sight of reindeers. But even without the presence of the animals, this location is a world-class spectacle. The journey will be made in a tundra coach, a 4WD vehicle, designed to take on the rocky, changeable terrain and gravel roads, passing wildlife like musk oxen as you go. You can walk parallel to the glacier edge up from the waterfall, where there is the opportunity to photograph the scenery from many different angles, or just enjoy the greatness and silence, interrupted only by the roaring sound of the melting ice water.

DAY 4 - SISIMIUT - EXPLORE GREENLAND'S SECOND LARGEST CITY

After breakfast, we arrive at the colourful town of Sisimiut, where we'll get an idea of what modern Greenland is like.

With 5,400 inhabitants, it's considered Greenland's second 'city'. People have lived around Sisimiut since 2,500 BC. In 1756, Count Johan Ludvig Holstein established a colony here, "Holsteinsborg". Today, Sisimiut is a centre of education and industry, local factories processing the bulk of Royal Greenland's fishing catch. The fish processing plant is one of the largest of its kind in Greenland and one of the most modern in the world.

During our city tour you will visit the historic colonial quarter, which dates from 1756, as well as the museum and the Blue Church, built in 1775. We will also visit the busy city centre for a glimpse of daily 21st century life in Greenland.

In the afternoon, our voyage continues due north. As evening falls, we pass the Sisimiut Isortuat Fjord, the Nordre Strømfjord settlements of Attu and Ikerasaarsuk, and the small town of Kangaatsiaq. During the bright night, we will pass Aasiaat and proceed into the southern waters of Disko Bay. We head for Disko Island, known for its distinctive 3,280ft layered crags.

From here on, we will be north of the Arctic Circle! The nights are bright and early risers can enjoy the sight of the icebergs in Disko Bay as they squeeze out of the Ilulissat Icefjord and dance into the frigid ocean waters.

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: Ocean Albatros Exploration Ship

DAY 5 - QEQTARSUAQ ON DISKO ISLAND & KAFFEMIK

At our next stopover - Godhavn (Good Harbour) in Danish, or Qeqertarsuaq (the Big Island) in Greenlandic - lies on the southern tip of Disko Island, we anchor in a protected natural harbour on the southern tip of Disko Island.

Although topographically quite different from mainland Greenland due to the basalt characteristics of Disko Island's mountains, Qeqertarsuaq maintains a long history and once served as one of Greenland's important economic centres and was the most important town north of Nuuk until the mid-1900s, due in part to the area's sizeable whale hunting population.

During our visit, we will wander through town and visit the characteristic octagonal church, nicknamed "God's Inkpot". We also stop at the local community center where they will be hosting a traditional Greenlandic "Kaffemik", which can be best described as a friendly gathering with coffee and cake, traditional dances and music.

Musicians from Greenland originally played on a drum (qilaat) made from an oval wooden frame covered with the bladder of a polar bear. Unlike other drums, the qilaat is played by hitting the frame with a stick, not the skin itself. This modest instrument was used for a variety of purposes: entertainment, exorcism and witchcraft. After the missionaries arrived, drum dancing was prohibited and later replaced by part-singing of psalms and choral works, which today are renowned for their particular Greenlandic sound. Today, drum dance is used as entertainment during cultural events and festive occasions.

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: Ocean Albatros Exploration Ship

DAY 6 - VISIT UUMMANNAQ

When you awake this morning, you will be almost 600km north of the Arctic Circle in one of Greenland's most beautiful and sunny regions -

Uummannaq, meaning 'Place where the heart is'. Located on an island, the impressive 1,170m high heart-shaped mountain that gave the small town its name, dominates the view. The dry and settled Arctic climate offers around 2,000hrs of sunshine and just 100mm of precipitation per year, giving Uummannaq the right to call itself the Greenlandic Riviera!

From the town there is an extraordinary vista comprising the island's tall rock faces, the snow-covered peaks on Nuussuaq peninsula, and out across the fjord where icebergs float by. As much as five active glaciers at the bottom of the fjord ensure that iceberg sightings are common.

Uummannaq was founded as a colony in 1758 on the Nuussuaq mainland, but shortly after, in 1763, it was moved to a nearby island, as seal hunting was more bountiful here.

We enjoy a walk through the town's steep streets and we visit the historic train-oil building, which was built in 1860. Inside its yellow walls, they used to store whale and seal blubber. Because of the horrid stench, the blubber was not boiled there, but well outside the town! Behind the train-oil storage we will find a peat hut, which was still in use a few years ago. After exploring the town, we head back to the ship for lunch and continue our journey aboard.

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: Ocean Albatros Exploration Ship

DAY 7 - CALVING EQIP SERMIA GLACIER AND EVENING WALK ON THE SERMERMIUT PLAIN

This morning our ship will have reached a magnificent natural highlight - the calving Eqip Sermia glacier!

Situated approximately 50 nautical miles north of Ilulissat, the Eqip Sermia Glacier is renowned for its jaw-dropping beauty. It attracted many legendary Arctic explorers and one of them, the acclaimed Swiss glaciologist, Alfred de Quervain, used the location as a base for his expeditions onto Greenland's inland ice sheet over a century ago.

We will sail as close as possible to the ice sheet's edge whilst keeping a safe distance to avoid plunging blocks of ice and violent waves that often result from the calving glacier. We enjoy lunch on the sun deck with this magnificent natural wonder in the background.

In the afternoon, we set sail for Ilulissat, where we berth and go for an evening walk on the Sermermiut Plain.

Depending on the density of the sea ice between the Ataa Fjord and the Eqi Glacier, the captain may have to select a different sailing route. In this case, the itinerary will be adjusted accordingly and visits might instead include the abandoned coal mine at Qullissat or the settlement of Saqqaq.

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: Ocean Albatros Exploration Ship

DAY 8 - ILLULISSAT - THE ICEBERG CAPITAL

Ilulissat - 'Icebergs' in Greenlandic - is Greenland's most popular tourist destination. The town's nickname is rightly 'the Iceberg Capital' but it is also home to almost as many sled-dogs as people.

In Disko Bay, located just off the coast of Ilulissat, gigantic icebergs linger in the freezing waters, floating in from the icefjord a half hour's hike south of Ilulissat.

These impressive frozen structures are born some 70km deeper into the fjord from the enormous Sermeq Kujalleq glacier. At 10km wide, this glacier is the most productive outside of Antarctica - whereas most glaciers calve at a rate of approximately 1m per day, the Ilulissat glacier calves at a rate of 25 metres per day, producing 10% of all icebergs in Greenland, some 20 million tonnes of ice per day! These facts, together with the fjord's unforgettable scenery, have secured the Icefjord a place on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Since it was established, more than 250 years ago, the town of Ilulissat has steadily flourished and is now Greenland's third largest town, with more than 4,500 inhabitants. The legendary polar explorer, Knud Rasmussen was born in Ilulissat

Today, there are two pre-bookable activities you can add to your package (not included). As they take place at different times of the day, you are able to book both optional excursions.

On the **Icefjord flight sightseeing excursion**, board a small aircraft for a birdseye view of the spectacular landscape. You will be able to see huge icebergs pushing towards the mouth of the Kangia Icefjord, and breaching their way into the Disko Bay. You'll also get a closer look of the very small settlement of Ilimanaq just south of the icefjord, and if you are lucky, you might glimpse the many whales in the bay on your way back to Ilulissat. Duration: approx. 40 min.

Alternatively, on the **Icefjord boat trip** you have the opportunity to get a closer look at the amazing ice-sculpted scenery. You'll get the chance to get close to the icebergs of Disko Bay and should offer great photographic shots. It's definitely something out of the ordinary and a great natural experience that you will remember for years to come! Duration: approx. 2.5hrs hours

In the evening, you will cruise southward from the Iceberg Capital, leaving lovely Disko Bay behind.

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: Ocean Albatros Exploration Ship

Optional extras: Icefjord Flight - £388 per person; Icefjord boat excursion - £110 per person

DAY 9 - VISIT THE SETTLEMENT OF SARFANNGUIT

Sarfannuit, which translates as 'the place of the little stream' is an appropriate name for a settlement nestled at the foothills of the mountains and glaciers in the distant backcountry. The approximately 100 residents live from hunting, trapping and fishing, most often in pursuit of arctic char, reindeer and musk oxen.

Although quite remote, Sarfannuit lies just a few hours from Sisimiut, Greenland's second-largest town, whose accessibility provides an indispensable economic benefit to a small community like Sarfannuit.

A stroll through the settlement offers an insight into modern rural life Greenland, where conveniences and technological advancements, such as internet and smart phones are commonplace, yet locals still place great value on preserving customs, traditions and their Inuit heritage.

Continue your journey towards the Kangerlussuaq fjord, also known as Sondre Stromfjord. The first part of the fjord gives a great opportunity to enjoy an impressive passage with panoramic views of high mountains and deep valleys.

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: Ocean Albatros Exploration Ship

DAY 10 - KANGERLUSSUAQ AND FAREWELL TO GREENLAND

During the night, we will have completed our passage through the 160km long Kangerlussuaq Fjord. After breakfast aboard the ship, we will bid farewell to the ship's staff as zodiac boats shuttle us back to Kangerlussuaq.

It is not difficult for one to see that Kangerlussuaq's landscape was largely shaped by the last Ice Age, some 18,000 years ago. The mountains are rounded and soft, and many meltwater lakes remain. From the Greenland Ice Sheet, the meltwater cuts its way through the porous moraine landscape and flows into Kangerlussuaq Fjord.

Kangerlussuaq's present-day climate is largely influenced by its well-sheltered location between Greenland's Ice Sheet, the fjord and mountains, contributing to its stable conditions and roughly 300 clear nights per year.

This close proximity to the Ice Sheet, combined with the continental climate great influences to the local weather conditions. The dry climate, combined with warm winds that "fall" from the Ice Sheet, can result in summer temperatures up to 30°C, but then fall to an extreme -40°C in winter, making it the coldest inhabited area in Greenland.

Your final excursion in Greenland will be the Tundra Safari. Travel in tough, off-road 4WD coaches adapted to the Arctic's summer and winter terrain. Drive through the beautiful tundra landscape, maybe spotting musk oxen roaming freely in their natural habitat. As they can be aggressive and charge without warning, we can't get too close to them, so your binoculars will come in handy here.

Learn about the tundra's vegetation as well as any of the flowering plants, including the dense scrub that grows on the south-facing rocky slopes and the wooded thickets of arctic willow that thrive along the rivers and streams.

On this excursion, we often drive up to the mountain of Tacan. It is a mountain south of Kangerlussuaq that offers fantastic panoramic views of the valleys, rivers, Kangerlussuaq and even parts of the Greenland Ice Sheet. We will take a few breaks during the excursion, so you can

stretch your legs while enjoying the peacefulness, the fresh air and views of the distant horizon.

You will have some time to explore Kangerlussuaq on your own, until it's time to bid farewell 'Ajunnginniarna' in Greenlandic and fly back to Reykjavik, where on arrival you will be met and taken to your hotel. Tonight we have included dinner together at the hotel.

Included meals: Breakfast & Dinner

Accommodation: Reykjavik

DAY 11 - BLUE LAGOON & FAREWELL DINNER

After breakfast you will spend the morning at leisure until it's time for a sightseeing tour of Reykjavik. Make sure you pack your swimming gear as we'll head to the Blue Lagoon straight after the tour.

As the world's northernmost capital, Reykjavik has a population of around 123,000. What the town lacks in terms of population, it makes up for in culture and excitement. Reykjavik has a vibrant cultural and design scene, with plenty of interesting museums, galleries, shops and bars for you to explore. Its town center is relatively small, making it easy to explore on foot. Laugavegur and Skólavörðustígur are the city's main shopping areas, with the latter being ultra-trendy and increasingly popular. This area is decorated with very cool and alternative street art and leads up to Hallgrímskirkja Church. The church itself is one of the most iconic and instantly recognizable buildings in Iceland and reminiscent of something you might see in Lord of the Rings. Inside, modern art furberishes the foyer, iPads offer a wealth of additional information and an elevator takes you to the top of the building, where you can enjoy awe-inspiring panoramic views of the city.

After our tour we spend the late afternoon and early evening at the Blue Lagoon. Here you can relax in a blend of seawater and geothermally heated water, which is rich in silica, minerals, and algae, surrounded by a lunar lava landscape. The water is exceptionally good for your skin and an amazing treat for the mind, body, and soul. Plus, you will be given an iconic white silica mud face mask, to make you look even more radiant for dinner. A towel and a first drink of your choice is also included in the package.

After a relaxing afternoon, we have our Farewell Dinner at the Blue Lagoon's Lava Restaurant. We return to the hotel after dinner.

Included meals: Breakfast & Dinner

Accommodation: Reykjavik

DAY 12 - GOODBYE ICELAND

All good things must come to an end and unfortunately it's time to say 'Kveðjum', Farewell in Icelandic. You will be transferred back to the airport for your onward flight home.

Included meals: Breakfast

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ATOL Protection
- Return economy flights from London Heathrow Airport [LHR] to Reykjavik International Airport [KEF]
- Return economy flights - Reykjavik, Iceland [KEF] - Kangerlussuaq, Greenland [SFJ]
- Meet & Greet at Reykjavik International Airport on arrival
- Transfers as detailed in the itinerary
- Accommodation as detailed in the itinerary
- Meals as detailed in the itinerary
- Arctic Expedition Cruise (8 days / 7 nights) in a Balcony State Cabin Category C for double/twin occupancy and a Porthole Cabin Category G for single occupancy
 - Full board on the ship
 - Unlimited coffee, tea and water on the ship
 - Mandatory taxes
 - Guiding and lectures by an experienced expedition leader and team
 - Welcome and farewell cocktails
- All activities, visits and excursions as detailed in the itinerary
- Tour Director from The Big Journey Company

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Transfers outside of tour dates
- Drinks
- Gratuities
- All entrance fees to non-stipulated attractions
- Internet connection on board the ship
- Visas, travel insurance
- Any personal items and anything not mentioned under included in price above
- Any meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Any optional activities offered (Reindeer Glacier excursion, Icefjord flight sightseeing & Icefjord boat excursion)
- Any entry or exit requirements e.g. COVID tests

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- All travellers are required to complete a participation declaration and contact information form. Click [HERE](#).
- If you have a medical condition then you have to submit a medical form. Click [HERE](#).
- Albatros Expedition's full terms and conditions apply and can be viewed in full [HERE](#).
- Please arrange your flights to arrive into Reykjavik Airport, Iceland [KEF] on Day 1 and to depart from Reykjavik Airport [KEF] on Day 12.
- The Big Journey Company reserves the right to withdraw any offer prior to accepting a reservation request. This does not affect your statutory rights. This offer is subject to availability and space is limited.
- Please consult your doctor letting them know your travel plans so that they can advise you about any vaccinations/medications you may need to take.
- Prices are based on two people sharing. There are also limited single cabins (4 x) available. Please note that these do not include increases in government taxes or fuel surcharges.
- Cruise itinerary subject to change depending on weather conditions.

BOOK YOUR JOURNEY

Choose from the list of dates below

Call to Book

0844 3350 197

Monday to Friday 09:00 - 18:00 GMT