The Historic Sportsman's Route to Svalbard - Northbound

→ Tromsø, Norway - Longyearbyen, Svalbard

If you are thinking of a traditional summer holiday with packed beaches, this is not the voyage for you! An expedition to Svalbard takes you to extreme latitudes, where summer can feel almost like winter. But there will be sun, in fact 24 hours of it, and you can enjoy the Midnight Sun in a wintry landscape. This is a memorable experience that is completely out of the ordinary.

Travel Period: 7 June 2018

Duration: 9 Days

Ship: MS Spitsbergen
Explore Tromsø, North Cape, Bjørnøya and Svalbard

Take part in Expedition days in Svalbard

Chance of seeing polar bears

Enjoy 24 hours of daylight with the Midnight Sun

The historic Sportsman's route from 1896

In 1896, Hurtigruten's founder and tourism entrepreneur Captain Richard With, opened a hotel on Svalbard. Because he wanted to make the hotel available for pioneer tourists and trappers, he also started the Sportsman's route the same year. DS Lofoten sailed this stretch between Hammerfest and Svalbard. The captain on these sailings was Otto Sverdrup, who had been on several polar expeditions with explorer Fridtjof Nansen and later did expeditions on the original explorer vessel Fram. This Sportsman's route was basically the start of our Explorer-expeditions
Appreciate the midnight sun and cool summers north of the Arctic Circle

This Arctic summer an expedition starts in Tromsø. The city is called the Gateway to the Arctic, because many expeditions used it as a starting point for exploration of the High North. Today Tromsø is a lively, colourful town that boasts rich Arctic and Polar history.

The fabled North Cape

North Cape is the northernmost point of the European mainland. The mountain cliff rises 307 metres above the Arctic Ocean. The feeling of walking on to the cliff is extraordinary - like being at the end of the world. After that, we head for Gjesværstappan, a bird cliff that will be teeming with breeding arctic species in a cacophony of sound.

Then we cross the Arctic Ocean to Bjørnøya, situated about halfway between Svalbard and the Norwegian mainland. Our goal is to go ashore, where an almost astronomical number of breeding birds spend their summer.

The best of the Arctic summer

We start in Longyearbyen, and then concentrate our efforts on exploring some of the most scenic fjords along the west coast of Svalbard, all the way up to the northwest corner of Spitsbergen. We plan to make several nature landings and also visit Ny-Ålesund, the northernmost community on earth and site for Arctic Research. The Arctic summer holds a lot of opportunities. The nights are bright and spending time outdoors, be it on shore or on open decks, you can really take in the landscape and wildlife. The sea ice is melting, allowing us to navigate the still icy fjords, while looking for seals and other mammals.

The female polar bears that denned early winter have begun to appear with their offspring – clumsy cubs that have no cares in the world – except getting more of their mothers' fatty milk. If we are exceptionally lucky we might spot a polar bear family. As well as marine wildlife, seabirds populate the bird cliffs that are abandoned during winter.

Price includes:

- Hurtigruten Expedition in cabin grade of your choice on a full board basis
- Wind- and water-resistant jacket
- Landings with small boats and activities on board and ashore
- Professional English-speaking Expedition team that give lectures as well as accompany landings and activities
- Free tea and coffee
- Transfer ship to airport in Longyearbyen
- Economy flight Longyearbyen to Oslo
Not included:

- International flights
- Travel insurance
- Luggage handling
- Optional Excursions and Gratuities
The Itinerary

This is an expedition where the elements rule, and the weather, wind and ice conditions will determine our final schedule. Safety is paramount and the captain will decide the sailing itinerary during the voyage. Therefore, this itinerary is just an indication of what you can experience, and why every expedition with Hurtigruten is unique.

07 June 2018
Departs From:
Tromsø

DAY 1

The Gateway to the Arctic

Location: Tromsø
Tromsø is called the Gateway to the Arctic. When polar explorer Roald Amundsen recruited crew for his famous expeditions more than 100 years ago, he went to Tromsø. This was the only place he could find men (yes – it was mostly men back in those Days) with navigational experience from Polar seas. He needed men that knew how to survive with minimal means in the Arctic, men that had survived an overwintering in Svalbard by trapping and hunting. Today Tromsø is home to polar operations experts and the academics investigating global warming the in Arctic. It is a melting pot with indigenous people, locals and Europeans.
In brief, Tromsø is still the Gateway to the Arctic and a natural starting point for expeditions heading north – just like the one you are about to join.

DAY 2

At 71° N

**Location: North Cape**

In the early morning hours we sail past the spectacular North Cape cliff, offering you a stunning view of this famous landmark. In Hornvika we drop off hikers before continuing to Skarsvåg, a small village that lies along the northern coast of the island of Magerøya. It claims the distinction of being the world's northernmost fishing village. Join the optional excursion to the North Cape and get a feeling what it's like to stand at the end of the Earth. There is a combined museum and restaurant at the plateau, where you can learn more on the early expeditions to North Cape and watch a panoramic film that takes you through four seasons in a landscape full of contrasts, light and breath-taking scenery. North Cape is a spectacular place for experiencing the Midnight Sun.
**In the middle of the Arctic Ocean**

*Location: Bjørnøya*

Bjørnøya, with a population of 9 persons, is the southernmost island of the Svalbard Archipelago. It is an isolated spot in the middle of the Arctic Ocean, known for hosting “the largest concentration of sea birds on the Northern Hemisphere”. This is where the cold waters from the Arctic Ocean meets warm Gulf Stream currents. When these water masses collide, nutrient-rich water is pushed up to the surface, making it an "all-you-can-eat" buffet for 126 different bird species. If conditions allow, we will land here.
Summer fun in the Arctic

Location: Exploring Svalbard
Cruising northbound from Bjørnøya we will take advantage of the conditions at hand, focusing on the ice edge. We will attempt to enter fjords where we can expect fast, or landlocked ice. Within the Svalbard Archipelago there are about 3,000 polar bears, probably the largest concentration on Earth. Polar bears are solitary animals with no set colony or living area. We are most likely to observe this marine mammal on the drift ice, close to the ocean or even in the water. We often observe polar bears on this itinerary – although not every Day and seldom at very close range. Like most things in a true wilderness, there are no absolute guarantees. But the more eyes scouting through binoculars, the better our chances of observing the King of the Arctic. The North West Corner of Spitsbergen offers the largest concentration of graves, blubber ovens and other cultural treasures from when men first started to inhabit Svalbard. Raudfjorden offers plenty of opportunities for great hikes. Hamiltonbukta is too shallow for our ship to navigate, but it’s perfect to explore by kayak. We might also see the enormous Monaco Glacier in Liefdefjord, and if the conditions allow it you can try what the Norwegians call brevandring – this means traversing a glacier. Don’t mistake this for ice climbing. Our brevandring is on relatively “even ice” – but on some occasions we will have to negotiate small crevasses. There are some exceptional experiences waiting for you “on the ice”, as 60 % of the landmass of Svalbard is covered by glaciers. Setting foot on ice is almost obligatory to complete your Svalbard experience.
At 78º 55' N

Location: Ny-Ålesund
As we sail into the Kongsfjord, we come across one of only four permanent settlements on Svalbard: the old coal-mining town of Ny-Ålesund, one of the northernmost settlements in the world. Ny-Ålesund was the starting point for many expeditions to the North Pole. Names like Amundsen, Ellsworth and Nobile are strongly linked to this place. Even today, you can see the mast that the airship ‘Norge’ was moored to before her departure on the very first trans-polar flight. A number of countries run national research stations here, and there is always plenty of scientific activity during the summer months.
The "capital" of Svalbard

Location: Longyearbyen
The Isfjord is the most extensive fjord system on Svalbard. We will spend the morning in the heart of the fjord, as we sail towards Longyearbyen. The landscape changes constantly – marvel at the immense U-shaped valleys, carved out of the mountains by the giant glaciers that covered the area some ten thousand years ago. When you disembark in Longyearbyen, you will feel like a polar hero. Seeing hotels, museums, restaurants and shops again will be a great contrast to the remote expedition you have just experienced.

Flight to Oslo after disembarking is included.

15 June 2018
Location:

Longyearbyen/Oslo