



EAST SPITSBERGEN, HOME OF THE POLAR BEAR - SUMMER SOLSTICE

Experience the high Arctic summer solstice with an expedition that visits some of the top sites of eastern Spitsbergen. Our goal is to take you to amazing glaciers, fascinating historical sites, bountiful seabird colonies, and sprawling fjord systems in which there is a good chance of spotting whales, seals, and possibly even polar bears. Summer solstice: midnight sun, and 24-hour day The midnight sun is a phenomenon that occurs during the Arctic summer, when the sun is visible for a full 24 hours in fair weather. The summer solstice in Longyearbyen falls on 21 June, The term solstice (Latin solstitium) means “sun-stopping” and describes the point on the horizon at which the sun appears to rise and set, stopping and reversing directions after this day. On the solstice, the sun does not rise precisely in the east but rather north of east, then later sets to the north of west, making the sun visible for a longer period of time. It will not be until late August that the sun fully goes down again, and then only for a few minutes. Join us in experiencing this fascinating phenomenon during this voyage through the Arctic wilderness of Svalbard.



ITINERARY

Day 1: Largest town, biggest island

You touch down in Longyearbyen, the administrative center of Spitsbergen, the largest island of the Svalbard archipelago. Enjoy strolling around this former mining town, whose parish church and Svalbard Museum make for fascinating attractions. Though the countryside appears stark, more than a hundred species of plant have been recorded in it. In the early evening the ship sails out of Isfjorden, where you might spot the first minke whale of your voyage.

Day 2: Spectacular Hornsund

We start the day by quietly cruising the side fjords of the spectacular Hornsund area in southern Spitsbergen, enjoying the scenery of towering mountain peaks. The mountain of



Hornsundtind rises to 1,431 meters (4,695 feet), while the peak of Bautaen testifies to why early Dutch explorers gave this island the name Spitsbergen, meaning “pointed mountains.” There are 14 magnificent glaciers in the area, and we have a fair chance of encountering seals and polar bears. The nearby cliffs of Sofiakammen are also home to thousands of pairs of nesting kittiwakes and little auks, and in the evening, we might see thousands of harp seals rutting on ice floes at Sørkapp.

[Day 3: Long excursion at Diskobukta](#)

After navigating the drift ice of Storfjorden, where we sometimes see harp seals, we land in northwest Edgeøya at the northern bank of Rosenberdalriver. Here on the raised beach, we have the opportunity of walking to Rosenbergdalen, which is teeming with grazing reindeer. Afterward we plan to walk by a cliff with nesting black guillemots on our way to Strehamna, where we often find a herd of walruses on the beach near an octagonal trapper’s cabin built in 1905. We can also see the remains of a 19th-century Pomor house as well as the bones of walruses hunted in previous centuries.

[Day 4: Trapper’s history in Freemansundet](#)

Sailing into the waterway of Freemansundet, we plan to land at the tundra lowland of Sundneset, on the island of Barentsøya. Here we will visit the hut of a German scientific expedition (Würzbugerhütte) from sixty years ago, then take a brisk walk across the tundra in search of Spitsbergen reindeer and barnacle geese. After that, we plan to go on a Zodiac cruise near Freeman Glacier and visit a kittiwake colony in a canyon close by. In case of heavy ice in Freemansundet, however, we will instead sail to Negribreen, one of the most extensive glacier fronts on the east side of Spitsbergen. Here we can take a Zodiac cruise and land on Walrus Island, which became ice-free

at the end of last century.

[Day 5: Ivory gulls in Agardhfjellet](#)

Today we sail to the east side of west Spitsbergen (west side of Storfjorden). Here we plan to walk to breeding places for ivory gulls in Agardhfjellet, which stands about 300 meters (980 feet) high. The valley leading to the outcrops that house the nests is littered with fossils of belemnites and ammonites.

[Day 6: South Spitsbergen](#)

Today we aim to land at the mountain of Stellingfjellet, near the largest colony of Brünnich’s guillemots in Spitsbergen. Later in the day, we will make landings at the rarely visited coast of south Spitsbergen, at the bay of Isbukta.

[Day 7: Bell Sund’s flora, fauna, and haunting history](#)

We continue our voyage in Bell Sund, one of the largest fjord systems in Svalbard. The ocean currents make this area slightly warmer than other areas in the archipelago, which shows in the relatively lush vegetation. Here there are excellent opportunities to enjoy both history and wildlife. A possibility is Ahlstrandhalvøya, at the mouth of Van Keulenfjorden, where piles of beluga skeletons can be found. These remains of 19th-century whale slaughter are a haunting reminder of the consequences of rampant exploitation. Fortunately, belugas were not hunted into extinction, and you have a good chance of coming across a pod. Alternately, while cruising the side fjords of Bellsund, we can explore tundra where reindeer like to feed as well as rock slopes where little auks are breeding.

[Day 8: There and back again](#)

Every adventure, no matter how grand, must eventually come to an end. You disembark in Longyearbyen, taking home memories



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YOUR SHIP: PLACIUS

YOUR SHIP:	Plancius
VESSEL TYPE:	Expedition
LENGTH:	
PASSENGER CAPACITY:	
BUILT/REFURBISHED:	

M/V "Plancius" was built in 1976 as an oceanographic research vessel for the Royal Dutch Navy and was named "Hr. Ms. Tydeman". The ship sailed for the Dutch Navy until June 2004 when she was converted into an expedition cruise ship..The vessel was completely rebuilt as a 114-passenger vessel in 2009 and complies with the latest SOLAS-regulations (Safety Of Life At Sea). M/v "Plancius" is classed by Lloyd's Register in London and flies the Dutch flag. "Plancius" accommodates 114 passengers in 53 passenger cabins with private toilet and shower in 4 quadruple private cabins, 39 twin private cabins (ca. 15 square meters) and 10 twin superior cabins (ca. 21 square meters).All cabins offer lower berths (either two single beds or one queen-size bed), except for the 4 quadruple cabins (for 4 persons in 2x upper and lower beds).The vessel offers a restaurant/lecture room on deck 3 and a spacious observation lounge (with bar) on deck 5 with large windows, offering full panorama view. Plancius has large open deck spaces (with full walk-around possibilities on deck 3), giving excellent opportunities to enjoy the scenery and wildlife. She is furthermore equipped with 10 Mark V zodiacs, including 40 HP 4-stroke outboard engines and 2 gangways on the starboard

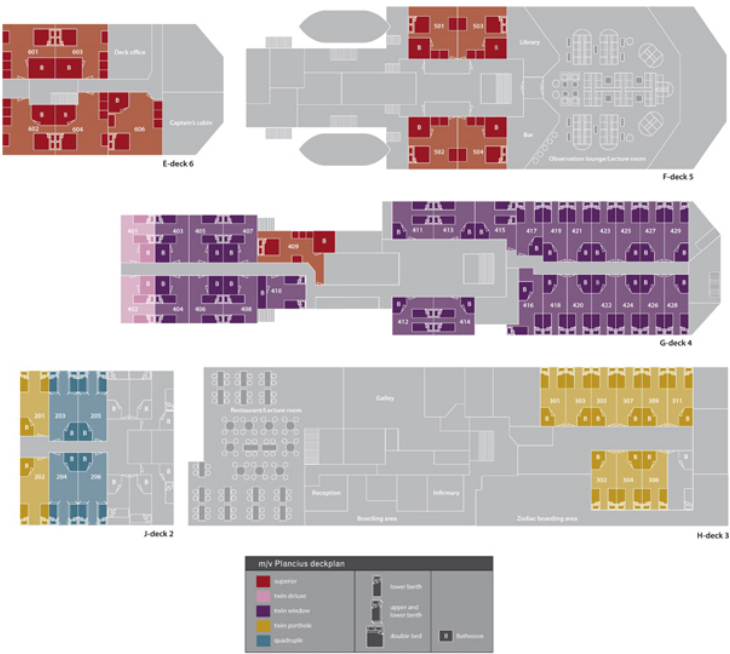
side, guaranteeing a swift zodiac operation.M/v "Plancius" is comfortable and nicely decorated, but is not a luxury vessel. Our voyages in the Arctic and Antarctic regions are and will still be primarily defined by an exploratory educational travel programme, spending as much time ashore as possible. The vessel is equipped with a diesel-electric propulsion system which reduces the noise and vibration of the engines considerably. The 3 diesel engines generate 1.230 horse-power each, giving the vessel a speed of 10 - 12 knots. The vessel is ice-strengthened and was specially built for oceanographic voyages.M/v "Plancius" is manned by 17 nautical crew, 19 hotel staff (6 chefs, 1 hotel manager, 1 steward-barman and 11 stewards / cabin cleaners), 8 expedition staff (1 expedition leader and 7 guides-lecturers)



and 1 doctor.



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