



The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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AROUND SPITSBERGEN - KVITØYA, IN THE REALM OF POLAR BEAR & ICE

This cruise around Spitsbergen gives you a great chance to see whales, foxes, reindeer, seals, and polar bears. The expedition will make a landing on the island of Kvitøya, a site of historical significance, and home of a large walrus population. PLEASE NOTE: N.B. The chances that we can reach Kvitøya and complete a full Svalbard circumnavigation (based on our experiences from 2013--2019) are about 70%. In case we cannot complete a full circumnavigation, we may make a circumnavigation of Spitsbergen through Hinlopen Strait. All itineraries are for guidance only. Programs may vary depending on ice, weather, and wildlife conditions. Landings are subject to site availabilities, permissions, and environmental concerns per AECO regulations. Official sailing plans and landing slots are scheduled with AECO prior to the start of the season, but the expedition leader determines the final plan. Flexibility is paramount for expedition cruises. The average cruising speed of our vessel is 10.5 knots.

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: Cruising Krossfjorden

Heading north along the west coast, you arrive by morning in Krossfjorden. Here you might board the Zodiacs for a cruise near the towering blue-white face of the Fourteenth of July Glacier. On the green slopes near the glacier, colorful flowers bloom while flocks of kittiwakes and Brunnich's guillemots nest on the cliffs. You have a good chance of spotting an Arctic fox scouting for fallen chicks, or a bearded seal paddling through the fjord. In the afternoon you sail to Ny Ålesund, the northernmost settlement on Earth. Once a mining village served by the world's most northerly railway - you can still see its tracks - Ny Ålesund is now a research center. Close to the community is a breeding ground for barnacle geese, pink-footed geese, and Arctic terns. And if you're interested in the history of Arctic exploration, visit the anchoring mast used by polar explorers Amundsen and Nobile in their airships, Norge (1926) and Italia (1928).

Day 3: Stop at the Seven Islands

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The image shows a group of about ten people in a zodiac boat on a body of water filled with icebergs. The background features large, jagged ice formations under a cloudy sky. The boat is in the foreground, and the people are looking towards the camera or the ice.

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The northernmost point of your voyage may be north of Nordaustlandet, in the Seven Islands. Here you reach 80° north, just 870 km (540 miles) from the geographic North Pole. Polar bears and walrus inhabit this stark desolate landscape. Later in the day the ship may roam for several hours among the pack ice in search of wildlife.

Day 4: The great glacier front of Schweigaardbreen

Pushing east to Nordaustlandet, you reach the area where the Italian captain Sora tried to rescue the Nobile Expedition in 1928. The focus here is the great glacier front of Schweigaardbreen, though you may also land at Firkantbukta, getting the chance to gain some altitude and take a few higher-elevation photos. Alternately, you could make a Zodiac cruise near Storøya, where you might encounter walruses.

Day 5: Ice cap at Kvitøya

Today you try to reach the rarely visited Kvitøya, far to the east and close to Russian territory. The enormous ice cap covering this island leaves only a small area bare. You land at the western tip of Andreeneset, where the Swedish explorer S. A. Andree and his companions perished in 1897. Another objective for the day is Kraemerpynten, where a sizable group of walruses reside.

Day 6: The longest glacier in Spitsbergen

South of Nordaustlandet you may land on Isisøya, formerly a Nunatak area surrounded by glaciers but now an island surrounded by the sea. You then may pass by Braswellbreen, part of the largest ice cap in Europe and famed for its meltwater waterfalls.

Day 7: Barentsøya's many bounties

The plan is to make landings in Freemansundet, though polar bears sometimes make this impossible. Potential stops on Barentsøya include Sundneset (for an old trapper's hut), Kapp Waldburg (for its kittiwake colony), and Rindedalen (for a walk across the tundra). You might also cruise south to Diskobukta, though Kapp Lee is more likely your destination. On Kapp Lee is a walrus haul-out, Pomor ruins, and the chance for hikes along Edgeøya.

Day 8: Land of the pointed mountains

You start the day by cruising the side fjords of the Hornsund area of southern Spitsbergen, taking in the spire-like peaks: Hornsundtind rises 1,431 meters (4,695 feet), and Bautaen is a perfect illustration of why early Dutch explorers named this island Spitsbergen, meaning "pointed mountains." There are 14 sizable glaciers in this area as well as opportunities for spotting seals, beluga whales, and polar bears.

Day 9: Bell Sund's flora, fauna, and haunting history

Today you find yourself 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, you can explore tundra where reindeer like to feed as well as rock slopes where little auks are breeding.

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Day 10: There and back again

Every adventure, no matter how grand, must eventually come to an end. You disembark in Longyearbyen, taking home memories that will accompany you wherever your next adventure lies.

Please Note:
Itineraries are subject to change.



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YOUR SHIP: PLANCIUS

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)

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