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SVALBARD WITH LOFOTEN & BEAR ISLAND

Join us on an expedition cruise along the dramatic coastline and magnificent fjords of northern Norway, via the legendary and seldom visited Bear Island to the realm of the polar bear: Svalbard. It is a busy time of the year in Lofoten and Bear Island as the sea eagles' eggs hatch and the cliffs are teeming with tens of thousands of birds. Svalbard greets us with glittering ice, snow covered mountain tops, midnight sun and magnificent wildlife. During the six days we spend in this High Arctic archipelago we have plenty of opportunities to explore its impressive nature and unique wildlife.



ITINERARY

Day 1: Bodø

We arrive in Bodø, and board M/S Quest. Once installed in our cabins, we are welcomed by the guides and crew and get to know our comfortable expedition ship. During the afternoon we begin our voyage towards the dramatic Lofoten Islands.

Day 2: Vedøya - Reine

After breakfast we make a first trip in our sturdy Zodiac crafts around the spectacular island of Vedøya with its tens of



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thousands of nesting sea birds. Vedøya is also often frequented by eagles. We sail along the southern side of Lofoten, a vast collection of rocky islands rising from the sea, towards Reine. This charming fishing village, with characteristic wooden houses, is overlooking Kirkefjord with high mountaintops in the background. It is not difficult to see how it has been voted Norway's most beautiful place.

Day 3: Nusfjord – Trollfjorden

Today we visit Nusfjord. This is one of the most preserved and picturesque fishing communities in the area, included on UNESCO's World Heritage list of unique wooden structures. We go ashore and explore this historic little village with its distinct atmosphere and cod fisheries. We continue our cruise along the Lofoten wall and later arrive at the magically beautiful Trollfjorden. In the afternoon we head out to sea and set course for Bear Island. After a few hours we reach a well-known whale watching area that stretches along the continental shelf. During our journey we have a good chance to spot whales, so we keep our eyes open for these marvellous creatures.

Day 4: Barents Sea

Our sea journey continues further north. Interesting lectures on board introduce us to Bear Island's exciting history.

Day 5: Bear Island

With our solid Zodiacs we explore this fascinating rocky island in the middle of the Barents Sea. Because of the remoteness only the odd ship can stop by for a visit. Vertical 400-meter cliffs rise in the distance as we approach, and here we find one of the largest seabird colonies in the North Atlantic. Tens of thousands of guillemots nest here, as well as puffins, razorbills, kittiwakes and glaucous gulls. Our main goal is to go ashore and explore

Bear Island by foot. We continue our journey into the Arctic waters and our next destination is Svalbard – one of the world's most magnificent wildernesses. This vast glaciated archipelago welcomes with a mix of midnight sun, pack ice and dramatic mountain chains. Not to mention the extraordinary wildlife!

Day 6 – 11: Svalbard

It is early in the season so our route the following days will depend on the weather and ice conditions. These are examples of places we might visit. Edgeøya. Our plan is to explore the island of Edgeøya. There are remnants here of the first Pomors who came to the area in the 1600s. These Russian trappers came here to hunt polar bears, seals and reindeer. Later, Edgeøya became the most important hunting ground for Norwegian trappers, who came here solely to hunt polar bears. Edgeøya offers a landscape of Arctic tundra, where we also have a good chance of seeing walrus, Arctic fox and Svalbard reindeer. Storfjorden. During this time of the year there is often ice in the vast Storfjorden between the islands of Edgeøya and Spitsbergen. We try to get as far north as possible along Spitsbergen's east coast. And of course we keep our eyes peeled for polar bears! Isbukta & Vasil'evbreen. In the southern part of Spitsbergen lies Isbukta. In this spectacular bay we head out in our Zodiacs to enjoy the stunning views of the snow covered mountain peaks and the front of the impressive glacier Vasil'evbreen. The bay is also a popular spot for Sabine's gulls, Arctic skuas and bearded seals. And where there are seals, there is also a good chance of spotting bear. Hornsund. The majestic Hornsund consists of several magnificent fjords along the west coast of Spitsbergen, where enormous glaciers calve out shimmering blue ice. On the southern side of the fjord we pass one of the highest mountains in Svalbard,

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Hornsundstinden. This is one of the favourite haunts for some of Svalbard's many polar bears. Bellsund. At the beautiful Vårsolbukta in Bellsund little auks nest by the tens of thousands. We go ashore and walk across the tundra to take a closer look at the mountain where barnacle geese and Brünnich's guillemots are nesting. Isfjorden. At the entrance of Isfjorden is the giant cliff Alkhornet, which is several hundred meters high. We go ashore to enjoy the beautiful tundra and its birdlife with barnacle geese, Brünnich's guillemots, glaucous gulls, snow buntings and tens of thousands of kittiwakes. Some Arctic foxes live in the rock crevices around the mountain and with some luck we might see these lovely little animals scurrying around, frantically looking for food.

Day 12: Longyearbyen

Early in the morning we arrive in the high Arctic capital of Longyearbyen. This is where we leave the ship and begin our journey home.

Please note:

Our exact route will depend on ice, weather conditions and wildlife. We always strive to maximise your experience. Please keep in mind that flexibility is the key to a successful expedition!

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YOUR SHIP: QUEST

YOUR SHIP:

Quest

VESSEL TYPE:

Expedition

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

M/S Quest was built in Denmark in 1992 to serve as a ferry on Greenland`s west-coast. In 2004/2005 she was redesigned as an expedition ship and has now a career as a small and comfortable expedition vessel. She was extensively renovated in 2018. Quest takes 53 passengers in 26 cabins, all with sea-view and private facilities. The triple cabins on deck 3 have upper and lower berths. All other cabins have two lower berths or a double bed. In your cabin you also find a desk with chair and ample storage space for clothes and equipment. The superior cabins on deck 3 and 4 are spacious and have a separate sitting area and TV/DVD. The Owner`s cabin, next to the Captain`s cabin, on deck 4 has a double bed, two large picture windows, a sitting area and TV/DVD. In the dining room you are treated to delicious meals in between landings and in the panorama lounge you can enjoy a breathtaking view of the surrounding polar landscape. Here you can listen to entertaining lectures on the area`s flora, fauna, history and glaciology. In the lounge you also find a well-stocked bar and a small library. The ship has spacious observation decks where you can enjoy the beautiful vistas and search for seabirds, whales and polar bears. The ship has a European Captain and there is a friendly

and informal atmosphere on board. Travelling with this small expedition ship offers an entirely different experience and perspective than you get on a larger and more conventional cruise ship. It is always possible to share a cabin on board M/S Quest. All cabins have windows and private



facilities.



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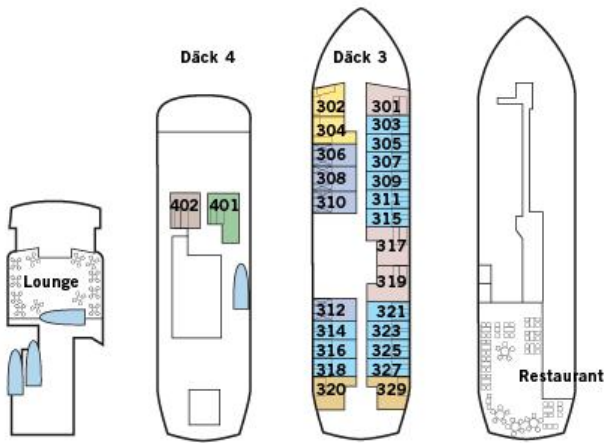
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