NORTH SPITSBERGEN, ARCTIC SPRING ABOARD A THREE-MASTED SCHOONER

At the end of a long Arctic winter, spring is starting to awaken. The climate, however, still clings to the cold: snow-covered mountains, snow-swept shores, temperatures around –4° C (25°F). It’s a good time to experience the last of winter scenery, and with a little luck, also see some polar bears, walruses, and seals.

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. In the evening you sail for Trygghamna, where you see the remains of a 17th-century English whaling station and 18th-century Pomor hunting station, both of which you can visit the next morning.

Day 2: Foxes, seabirds, and grazing reindeer
From Trygghamna you walk to Alkhornet, a large seabird cliff where the birds are scouting out breeding places. Below the cliffs is a common place to spot Arctic foxes, and you may also see reindeer grazing on the lush vegetation if there’s not too much snow.

Day 3 – 4: Earth’s northernmost community
You head north for Kongsfjorden and Krossfjorden. The landscape is likely to show signs of winter, the crags and slopes still blanketed with snow. Here there are rich opportunities for snowshoeing — we provide the snowshoes — and visiting places of historic interest: Ny London, where you can see the remains of early 20th-century marble mining, and Ny Ålesund, the northernmost community in the world. There are also research stations and the famous anchor mast of the dirigible Norge, which took the first flight across the North Pole to Nome, Alaska in 1926. Krossfjorden offers views of colossal glaciers and lofty mountain peaks, but ultimately the extent of fjord ice dictates the itinerary here.

Day 5: Walrus watching, seal seeing
Cutting south between the main island of Spitsbergen and Prins Karls Forland, you may encounter walruses at Poolepynten, a common haul-out site. You also have views of St. Johnsfjorden, near Gaffelbreen. The winter ice may not have loosened its grip on the water here, and seals (ringed and bearded) could be numerous in the area.

Day 6 – 7: Wide tundra, tall mountains
You now double back into Isfjorden and venture to Ymerbukta, possibly embarking on a walk in this mountainous area. Here you find an expansive tundra with its own avifauna, depending on when spring arrives, as well as spectacular geological formations along the coast. Further northeast, near Ekmanfjorden, you have the chance for another hike. Common to this area are numerous glaciers that terminate near or in the sea. In Gipsvika you can go on shore near the cliff of Templet, a mountainous location of eroded sedimentary rock from the Upper Carboniferous period — around 290 million years ago.

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 that will accompany you wherever your next adventure lies.

Please Note:
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This is not guaranteed. The captain decides whether to use the sails or the engine. There is no claim to one or other propulsion method. If sails are used, they are operated by the crew. Guests follow the safety instructions of the team. Average cruising speed for s/v Noorderlicht is 6 knots.
YOUR SHIP: NOORDERLICHT

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VESSEL TYPE: 
LENGTH: 
PASSENGER CAPACITY: 
BUILT/REFURBISHED: 

The Noorderlicht was originally built in 1910 in Flensburg, Germany as a three-masted schooner. For most of her existence she served as a light-vessel on the Baltic. In 1991 the present owners purchased the hull and re-rigged and refitted her thoroughly, under the rules of "Register Holland". The Noorderlicht now has a well-balanced two-masted schooner rig and is capable of sailing the seven seas. The qualified captains have a great experience of the oceans. Together with the rest of the crew, they will do everything possible to ensure that you have a wonderful and unforgettable journey.

Ice class:
The Noorderlicht has no ice class. She was anchored year around near Flensburg (Germany). Due to heavy ice conditions in the winter time, the bow of the Noorderlicht was strengthened. The vessel is not an ice breaker but has a strengthened bow.
INSIDE YOUR SHIP

s/v Noorderlicht deckplan

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