

A group of people in a zodiac boat on a glacier-filled sea. The boat is filled with people wearing winter gear, some waving. The background shows large icebergs and a cloudy sky.

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## NORTHERN LIGHTS EXPLORER

Shorter days in the high latitudes means darkening evening skies, so on this voyage we stay close to the coastlines of the Arctic Circle, skirting around the Norwegian and Greenland seas, and exploring remote islands and villages of the region. As night falls, we look skywards hoping to catch the magic of the northern lights. Scientifically known as the aurora borealis, this spectacular natural phenomenon offers a surreal light display as vibrant hues of blue, green, pink and violet dance across the night sky. Places located near the Arctic Circle such as northern Norway, Iceland and Greenland, are some of the best places in the world to witness this stunning light show.

### Day 1 Arrive Kirkenes

Having made your way to Kirkenes airport, you will be met by a representative of Aurora Expeditions and transferred to our pre-voyage hotel. Please visit the Aurora Expeditions hospitality desk, located in the lobby. Our team will run through your embarkation day, answer your questions, and give advice on the local area. They will also provide you with cabin tags for your luggage. Please clearly label the tags with your name and ship cabin number. Enjoy free time, and in the evening, dine at your leisure (dinner not included). Accommodation: Thon Hotel Kirkenes (or similar)

### Day 2 Embarkation, Kirkenes

This morning, please ensure your cabin luggage is fitted with cabin tags clearly labelled with your name and cabin number. Your luggage will be collected from your hotel and transferred directly to the port for clearance and delivered to your cabin ahead of your arrival on board. Please keep any valuables or personal items with you throughout the day. After a leisurely breakfast, check-out of your room before commencing an excursion of Kirkenes and surrounds. We'll hear stories of the city's destruction in World War 2, when we visit the Andersgrotta bomb shelter, and step back in time when we learn about the Sami people and their culture. Transfer to the pier for embarkation in the late afternoon, when you will have time to settle into your cabin before attending our mandatory safety briefings and enjoy the thrill of departure as we 'throw the lines' and set sail. This evening, get to know your fellow expeditioners, friendly expedition team and crew at the Captain's Welcome Dinner to celebrate the start of a thrilling adventure.

## ITINERARY



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### Day 3-6 Norwegian Coast

Over the next few days we explore parts of Norway's remarkable 1,000-kilometre (600-mile) coastline. Starting in North Cape, in the very north of the country, we make our way south, stopping in the Lofoten Islands and visiting mesmerising Mount Torghatten, famous for the hole through its centre. The spectacular northern lights is a natural phenomenon that is most commonly seen in the sky above the Arctic Circle, between late autumn and early spring. As we are near North Cape in northern Norway, keep a close watch in hope of witnessing this dazzling spectacle in the night sky. The North Cape is located at a latitude of 71° 10' 21" and is Europe's northernmost point. Here we enjoy a short walk, visit the North Cape Hall and perhaps sample some local treats. Enjoy a Zodiac cruise through spectacular Trollfjord, a gorge flanked by steep mountains and so narrow that it can only be accessed by small ships. In the Lofoten Islands, voted by National Geographic as one of the most beautiful destinations in the world, we stroll through picturesque villages dotted with red and white fishers' huts, surrounded by soaring granite peaks. Visit the Lofoten Seafood Center and learn about the impressive cod fisheries and perhaps sample some local seafood. Crossing south of the Arctic Circle, we visit the Vega archipelago, which became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2014. Vega Island is fantastic for birdwatching and here eider ducks are the main attraction, where they are raised for their down, which at one point accounted for one third of the islanders' income. The islanders still make houses for the birds to nest in and in return, the ducks provide valuable down when they and their chicks leave the nests to continue their lives at sea. The archipelago reflects a traditional way of life that has not changed for more than 1,500 years. On nearby Torget Island, we plan to land and hike to

Torghatten, a fascinating rock formation with an equally interesting legend describing the hole in the mountain as having been created by a troll's arrow.

### Day 7 At Sea

Enjoy the crossing to Jan Mayen, accompanied by seabirds as we search for whales. Enjoy informative talks from our team of experts, get to know your fellow expeditioners, stay active in the gym or treat yourself to a massage in the wellness centre. Remember to look to the skies at night and hope for sightings of the northern lights.

### Day 8 Jan Mayen, Norway

The approach to Jan Mayen is spectacular. The huge Beerenberg volcano is the world's northernmost active volcano, last erupting in 1985. The northern part of the island is a great place to look for whales and dolphins, and contains impressive glaciers, some of which reach the sea. If the weather is friendly, we will try to land at Kvalrossbukta, a relatively sheltered bay on the island's west coast. This is one of the landings used to supply the Norwegian weather station at Olonkinbyen, a settlement situated on the eastern side of the island. We hope to land in front of the station at Olonkinbyen, so as to visit before embarking on a three-hour hike (weather permitting) back across the island to where the Greg Mortimer will be waiting for us in Kvalrossbukta, and our trusty Zodiacs will transport us back to the ship.

### Day 9 At Sea

Our series of onboard lectures continue as sail towards the wild coast of East Greenland. You will learn about sea ice, glaciers, the unique geology found in East Greenland and daring tales of European exploration. We are also in the prime zone to view the

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northern lights, so glance up to the skies and you might just see more than shimmering stars.

### Days 10-13 East Greenland

In the coming days, a host of choices are available to us, and depending on ice and weather conditions, the east coast of Greenland is ours to explore. The members of our experienced Expedition Team, who have made countless journeys to this area, will use their expertise to tailor our voyage to suit the day-to-day conditions. This allows us to make best use of the prevailing weather, ice conditions and any opportunities for wildlife encounters. We generally attempt up to two landings or Zodiac excursions per day, including cruising along spectacular ice cliffs, following whales feeding near the surface. Be prepared to experience ice – and lots of it! East Greenland contains some of the Arctic's most impressive scenery. Deep fjords and narrow channels, flanked by sharp ice-clad peaks soaring up to 2,000 metres (6,562 feet), and glaciers birthing gigantic icebergs that drift throughout the fjord system, combine to create breathtaking scenes. The tundra landscape is home to musk oxen, arctic hares and reindeer. Throughout the area there are ancient Thule archaeological sites, historical trappers' huts, and the cabins of present-day Inuit hunters. A highlight is a visit to the Inuit village of Ittoqqortoormiit, the most isolated and northernmost permanent settlement in the region, with approximately 450 inhabitants. The community has an excellent museum, gift shop, an abundance of Greenlandic sled dogs and provides the opportunity to meet the friendly locals. Explore Scoresbysund, the world's largest fjord system and a favourite hunting ground of the local Inuit. Massive glaciers flow into this fjord, the birthplace of hundreds of majestic Greenland icebergs. It is a spectacular place that simply needs to be seen to be believed.

North of Scoresbysund lie Kong Oskar and Kaiser Franz Josef fjords, two of the most significant fjord systems in Greenland, each one encompassing several smaller fjords and sounds. Thanks to the fertile volcanic soil and the surrounding mountains offering protection from strong winds, the area is rich in wildlife. You may spot everything from musk oxen and arctic foxes to mountain hares, and even reindeer, near the fjord. Look skyward and you could catch a glimpse of birds, including the glaucous gull, black-legged kittiwake, northern fulmar, common raven and common eider. We will attempt to enter Kaiser Franz Josef Fjord, a remote and rarely visited fjord system with countless opportunities for exploration, located within the Northeast Greenland National Park. Cruising through Kong Oskar Fjord, we marvel at the geological beauty of the mountains. We will then head south along the coast of Liverpool Land, with our passage dependent on ice conditions. We stretch our legs on hikes across tundra in search of ancient graveyards and summer villages occupied 3,000 years ago by Inuit. We may see musk oxen, arctic hares and reindeer grazing. The maze of calm, interconnecting waterways in this area provides excellent opportunities for sea kayaking. We will see ring seals, perhaps catch a glimpse of the elusive narwhal, and maybe even a polar bear hunting on pack ice.

### Day 14 At sea

Crossing the Denmark Strait to Iceland, search for whale blows and photograph the many seabirds that trail our ship in the ever-present arctic winds. The dark night skies promise more opportunities to experience the northern lights.

### Days 15-17 Iceland

Over the coming days, we explore the Westfjords region, which features outstanding landscapes with jaw-dropping views of

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dramatic fjords carved by ancient glaciers, sheer, table-top mountains that plunge into the sea, and pristine north Atlantic vegetation. The region features attractive towns such as as Isafjordur, the famous Dynjandi waterfall, and spectacular fjords that are ideal for kayaking, hiking and birdwatching. In genuine expeditionary style, we keep our itinerary flexible to allow for spontaneity. We plan to visit Hornstrandir peninsula, one of Iceland's remotest and most pristine regions, which is filled with deep and dramatic fjords, towering bird cliffs, stunning natural beauty and opportunities for wildlife encounters. Enjoy the bountiful silence and magnificent landscapes seen by the few adventurers that make their way here. In Húsavík, we hope to have magical encounters with the many whales that visit this part of Iceland, known as the country's whale-watching capital.

### Day 18 At sea

Sea days are great for editing photos, catching up on stories with fellow expeditioners or enjoying the many facilities available to you on board.

### Days 19-20 Faroe Islands

In the middle of the north Atlantic and barely visible on most maps, are the Faroe Islands, an archipelago of 18 islands with a population of only 50,000 people. The Faroes were formed from layers of volcanic basalt and are tilted, with the eastern shores sloping into the sea and the western coasts soaring into spectacular cliffs. With their breathtaking beauty, steep mountains covered in soft green grass, deep fjords, long summer nights, unique culture, and a humble, friendly and welcoming people, the islands are the perfect destination for travellers wanting something dramatically different from the mainstream. Discover a few of the gems of the Faroe Islands including Tórshavn, Kirkjubøur and Vestmanna. In Tórshavn,

possibly the smallest capital in the world, wander the narrow streets of this windswept town, built on a hillside, with its colourful contemporary houses, and old, traditional red-painted timber dwellings with characteristic grass roofs, white-framed windows. You may see the oddest array of sheep lining the steep hillsides – black, brown and even piebald sheep! Perhaps catch a glimpse of Faroese ponies with their spectacular flaxen manes and coats, varying in colour from palomino to rich chestnut. The town's history can be traced back to around 900 EC when the first Viking settlers arrived here by longboat from Norway. One of the highlights in the Faroe Islands is Vestmanna sea cliffs. The majestic cliffs that rise hundreds of metres from the sea are alive with nesting seabirds and you may see kittiwakes and fulmars overhead, with razorbills and guillemots sitting on nests high above us, and puffins bobbing on the waves at sea.

### Day 21 At sea

As we sail towards Bergen, Norway's second largest city, located in the southwest of the country, enjoy final presentations from our Expedition Team and celebrate a memorable journey at the Captain's Farewell Dinner.

### Day 22 Disembark in Bergen

During the early morning, we cruise into Bergen and disembark at approximately 8.00 am. Farewell your Expedition Team and fellow passengers as you continue your onward journey. Transfer to Bergen airport or to your centrally located hotel. NOTE: We do not recommend booking flights departing prior to 12.00 pm on the day of disembarkation, as we may experience delays at the conclusion of the voyage.

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We operate in remote and challenging environments, and in the spirit of expedition travel, we encourage you to be flexible and to adopt an adventurous attitude when joining our voyages. This itinerary is a guide only and is subject to change due to weather, sea state and other conditions beyond our control.



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## YOUR SHIP: GREG MORTIMER

**YOUR SHIP:**

**Greg Mortimer**

**VESSEL TYPE:**

**LENGTH:**

**PASSENGER CAPACITY:**

**BUILT/REFURBISHED:**

Capable of negotiating the strongest winds and waves, the Greg Mortimer is built to world-class polar standards - designed in close consultation with our expedition specialists, taking advantage of our more than 25 years of experience. The Greg Mortimer redefines expedition cruising for the future, with just 132 passengers on board in the polar regions. Not only is the ship bigger to contend with adverse weather conditions, its added creature comforts make for a more enjoyable journey out on the open ocean. The Greg Mortimer remains true to our ethos and focus on multiple landings, flexible itineraries and family atmosphere - just with an improved home base! As a modern and custom-designed ship, the Greg Mortimer is at the cutting edge of nautical technology. Robust, powerful and built with our guests in mind, this ship marks a significant investment in our fleet's capabilities. From the European Arctic to the depths of Antarctica, and other far-flung destinations in-between, the Greg Mortimer will make your journey a breeze! Greg Mortimer X-BOW™ Our expeditions face some of the worst Mother Nature can throw at us. However, this won't be problem on the Greg Mortimer with the introduction of the patented X-BOW™, created by Norwegian ship designer ULSTEIN. As one of the

leaders in marine engineering, ULSTEIN's X-BOW™ is an inverted bow concept that's been built on over 100 vessels in the shipping industry. Excitingly, we are the first expedition cruise operator to utilise this technology for the challenging open ocean waves! Hydraulic viewing platforms Although there is no doubt that you'll love the aesthetics of the Greg Mortimer, we are all here to admire the spectacular landscape and spot the elusive wildlife in their natural habitat. To ensure you get the best views possible, the new ship features unique viewing platforms, custom-built for the Greg Mortimer. Accessed from Deck 5, the two platforms fold out hydraulically for unobstructed views of passing marine life and seabirds - make sure your camera is locked and loaded! Zodiac launching platform Zodiacs are a vital part of getting up close and personal on your adventure - sneaking into areas that the Greg Mortimer can't reach. On this new ship, there are specially designed launching platforms that enables us to load Zodiacs easily and quickly, allowing you to spend more time exploring on the two to three daily landings. There are 15 Zodiacs that are boarded from either side of Deck 3 (sea level), perfect for when there is a group of fluffy cute penguin chicks that we need a photo of! Activity Platform Regardless of your destination, we offer a number of additional activities to allow you to see more of the environment. From kayaking and diving to climbing and ski touring, it's these optional activities that often leave the biggest impression on your trip as a whole. Onboard the Greg Mortimer, there is a spacious prep and loading platform for these activities and more - designed in consultation with our expert activity guides. Environmentally friendly Climate change and carbon

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emissions continue to be major issues that everyone needs to be aware of and actively managing. This includes reduced emissions into the air and sea, lower energy consumption, high fuel efficiency, reduced light pollution for minimal wildlife disruption and lower on-board plastic use. It's vital to also mention the state-of-the-art virtual anchoring technology of the X-BOW™, which means the ship can float anchorless while launching Zodiacs, kayaks etc, without disturbing delicate sea floor areas. Safety features This starts with the return-to-port equipment - not compulsory on a ship of this size - which duplicates the propulsion system. This enables the ship to maintain operating systems and comfort in the event of engine failure. Furthermore, the Greg Mortimer is Polar Code 6 compliant, holds BV class and is fully compliant with the latest SOLAS requirements. It's also built with a Rolls Royce stabiliser system. If there's an incident or accident during your adventure, the ship has an on-board, fully-stocked medical centre - where our trained medical team can provide necessary treatment in a timely fashion. Safety continues to be an issue that our team takes very serious and the Greg Mortimer allows us to create an environment where you can concentrate on the brilliant landscape and wildlife, without worrying about your wellbeing. Ship Life Greg Mortimer is designed to serve your every need. It's your bedroom, bathroom, lounge, dining room and even your observatory. Make yourself at home, the Greg Mortimer is yours to enjoy! Observation Points Let's face it - you don't want windowless rooms when travelling around some of the most beautiful locations around the world. This is why the Greg Mortimer is designed with plenty of dedicated observation spaces - ideal for keen bird spotters, wildlife watchers and those wanting to watch the scenery go past. From the indoor 180-degree lounge and outdoor 360-degree open deck, both

on deck 8, to the 270-degree open sundeck on level 7, there are plenty of observation points to share around the ship! If these are full, then you can take up a spot on one of the two hydraulic viewing platforms on deck 5. Aurora Expeditions also has an open bridge policy, which means at any point you can come up to the bridge and check out what the captain and officers are up to. From watching navigational practices to observing mapping techniques, you can get a firsthand look at the inner workings of the Greg Mortimer. Shore excursions Although the ship is fun, the real enjoyment comes from the many shore excursions that are available. Depending on the weather and itinerary, it's possible to take two to three landings daily, taking a look at everything from rock formations and ancient ruins to cute groups of penguins. We know time is of the essence in these wild locations, so the Greg Mortimer has been designed with 15 Zodiacs, which means you can maximise your time on shore. From four dedicated sea level launching platforms, transfers are quicker, safer and enable you to get closer to the action for a longer period of time. Just remember to charge your camera before you step onto the Zodiac! Activity options From kayaking and skiing to diving and climbing, these are one-in-a-lifetime opportunities that you need to take advantage of. Aboard the Greg Mortimer there is a specially designed launching platform for all activities, a concept overseen by our activity experts. This area also includes individual lockers in the expansive mudroom and rapid drying areas for wetsuits so you can quickly get warm after exploring in the elements! Dining From the moment you step onto the Greg Mortimer, we aim to give you the best hospitality service possible. Starting with the official Captain's welcome, as our guests, you're welcome to 24 hours complimentary coffee, tea and snack facilities in addition to the range of different menu

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options and courses for each meal. Meals are served in large dining room/restaurant with family style dining, perfect to swap stories with your new expedition family. Enjoy the range of house wine, beers and soft drinks included with dinner after a long day in the wild, preparing yourself for another exciting day to follow. On the last day of your trip, the team on the Greg Mortimer put on a special farewell four-course dinner and cocktails - a perfect way to reflect on your time on the ship and consolidate lifelong friendships with the people you've met on-board. On-board entertainment When you're relaxing during a sea day or you have a little downtime on the ship between excursions, what is there to do onboard the Greg Mortimer? Plenty! On all our expeditions, there are experts who lead presentations in the spacious lecture room so you can understand the region a little better. These often include topics as broad as history and culture to biology and climate change, these presentations aim to educate and entertain. If you're keen to just watch the surroundings and keep your eyes peeled for wildlife, you have access to two bars/lounges where the stunning floor to ceiling windows offer a special perspective on the landscape. The Greg Mortimer is also decked out with other facilities for your enjoyment. There is a library on Deck 5 with books and maps and a Wellness Centre complete with gym equipment, sauna and spa. Feeling a little sore after walking around all day? Treat yourself to a massage at the Wellness Centre and feels the aches disappear! Keen photographers and artists will revel in the multimedia room



on Deck 5.

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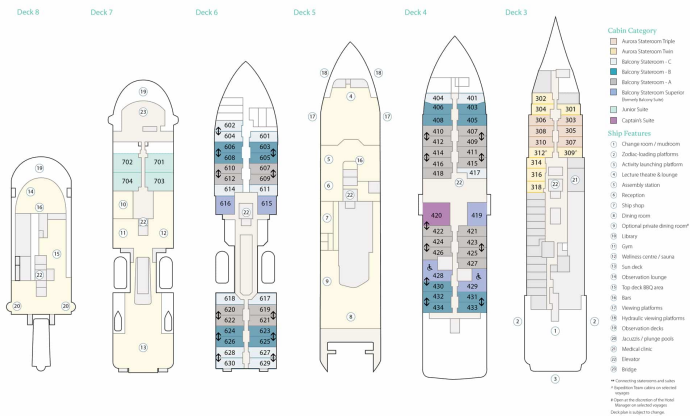


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## INSIDE YOUR SHIP

The Greg Mortimer Deck Plan



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