



POSEIDON
EXPEDITIONS

SVALBARD

— TRAVEL GUIDE —



MAP OF SVALBARD



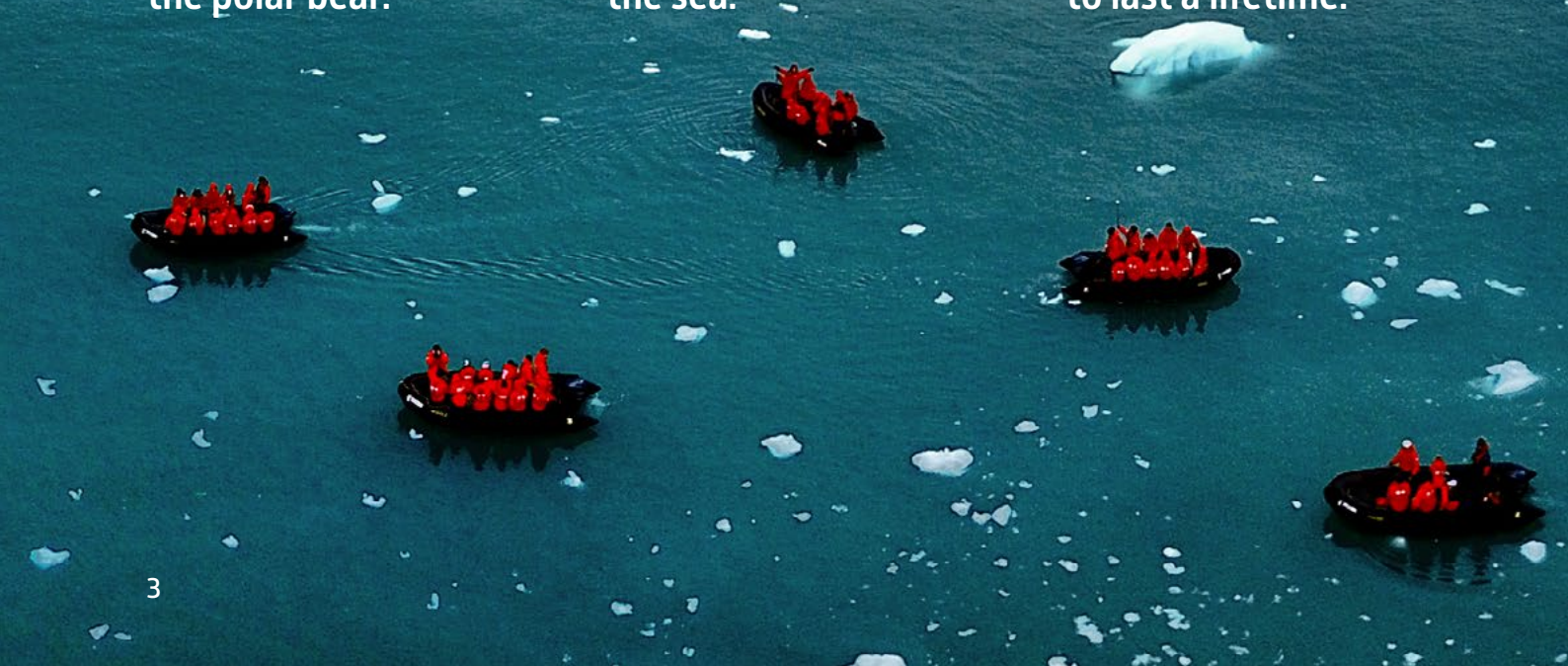
Map is not to scale

Nature	Fauna	Culture	Legend
Icebergs	Whale	Settlement	City
Fjords	Polar bear	Church	Nature landing
Rocks	Seal	Museum	
	Walrus	Historical remains	
	Arctic fox	Post office	
	Reindeer		
	Arctic birds		



THINGS TO DO IN SVALBARD

- Hike flowering Arctic tundra fields and rugged terrain to snowy mountain peaks.
- Search for the legendary symbol of the North, the polar bear.
- Go kayaking through fjords and among icebergs.
- Join our experienced guides and take Zodiac landing craft ashore or to view immense glacial fronts meeting the sea.
- Learn about the history of polar exploration with our expert expedition team.
- Capture unique Arctic wildlife and stunning landscapes on film, creating memories to last a lifetime.



ARCTIC FOX



When the seasons change, the fox's coat adopts a grey or brown appearance that provides cover among the summer tundra.

SVALBARD WILDLIFE



SVALBARD REINDEER

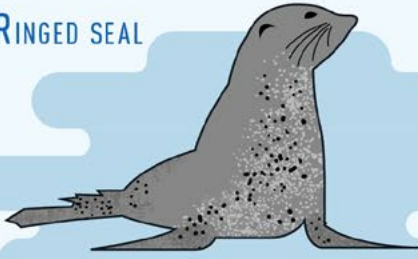
Svalbard Reindeer have no natural predators. Starvation is the most significant factor that keeps the population in balance.

HUMPBACK WHALE



Look out for beluga, humpback, blue and bowhead whales on your Svalbard cruise, as well as narwhals and orcas.

RINGED SEAL



Arctic seals prefer to rest on sea ice. Some of the species you'll see in Svalbard are bearded, harp, and ringed seals.

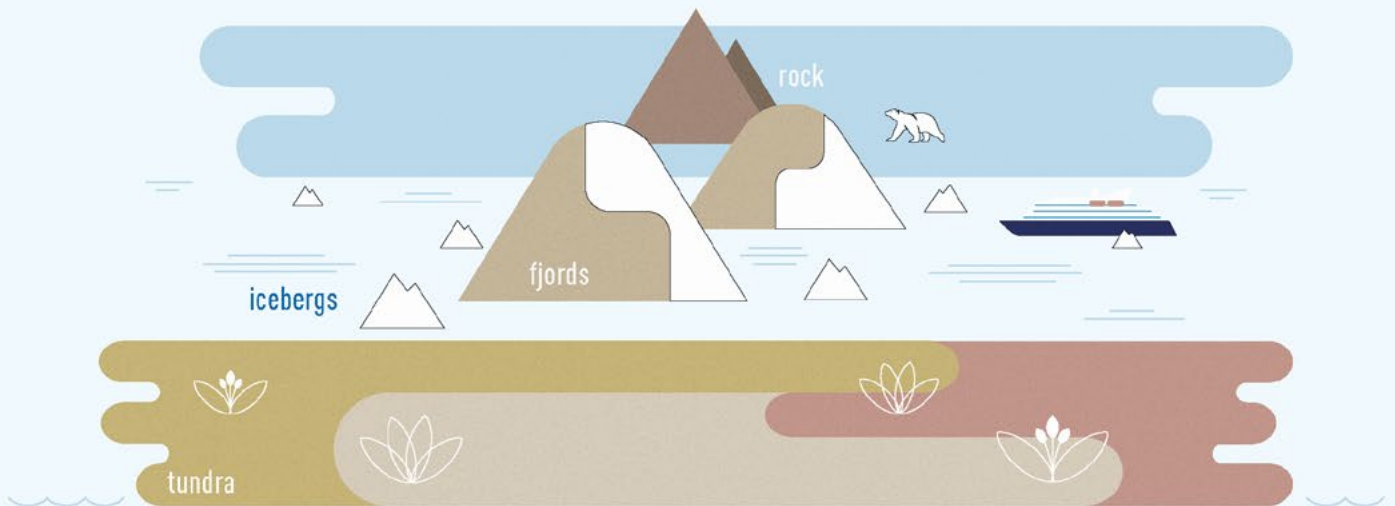
WALRUS



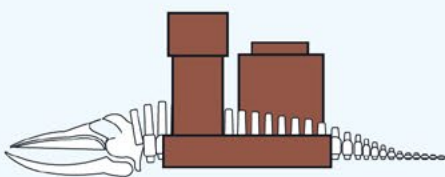
Walruses use their iconic tusks to haul their enormous bodies out of the water and to break breathing holes into ice from below.

SVALBARD LANDSCAPES

Svalbard is a "snow globe" of the Arctic, generously sheltering several ecosystems: from flowering tundra to dramatic mountains and maze-like fjord systems.



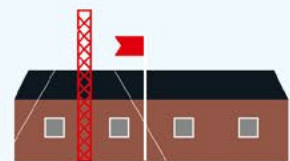
HUMAN ENDEAVOR



The whaling camps were abandoned in 1986 after the commercial whaling ban



Trapper's cabins act as a reminder of the everyday life of pioneer Arctic explorers



Svalbard has 10 polar research stations by different countries



Spitsbergen or Svalbard?

Spitsbergen (sometimes spelled Spitzbergen) is the largest island in the Norwegian High Arctic territory of Svalbard. Though one is technically a part of the other, the names Spitsbergen and Svalbard are often used interchangeably. Apart from Longyearbyen and a handful of other small settlements, the island is completely pristine and characteristic of a true polar wilderness.

Spitsbergen is a great place to start your discovery of the Arctic.

Whereas attractions in most of the Arctic are usually spread far and wide across impossibly vast landscapes, a diversity of the Arctic's most iconic wildlife and historical treasures can be found in Spitsbergen with relative ease on a comfortable cruise without long sea crossings.



Human endeavor

In addition to world-class wildlife viewing, there are many fascinating historical sites to be explored. This includes early whaling camps, trappers' cabins, deserted coal mining operations, and an abandoned polar research station. It also contains the staging areas for many historic expeditions to the North Pole, including those of Roald Amundsen and Walter Wellman.

Modern human endeavor in this area can be experienced at Ny Ålesund, a former mining town that is now home to a multinational community of Arctic researchers. In addition to a museum, gift shop, and post office, visitors to this extreme northern settlement find a famous bust of Amundsen and a historic airship mast.

High Arctic settlement

Longyearbyen, the most accessible northern settlement and the administrative center of Svalbard, is served by a commercial airport. You can easily book your flight online in a few minutes. Virtually all Svalbard cruises use the port of Longyearbyen for embarkation, disembarkation, or both. So, it's convenient that the port is located in Isfjorden, on the west side of the island of Spitsbergen.

Despite its name meaning "the ice fjord", Isfjorden is ice-free throughout the summer, thanks to warm ocean currents from the south. Nevertheless, travelers looking for icy polar vistas and local wildlife won't be disappointed, as plenty of ice can still be found nearby in other parts of the archipelago.



Polar bear & diverse Arctic wildlife

Svalbard is arguably the best place to observe polar bears in the wild and boasts one of the Arctic's highest concentrations of this species, even outnumbering the permanent residents of the archipelago. Polar bears are the world's largest land carnivores and have become a symbol of the imperiled Arctic wilderness.

The territory is also home to other iconic mammal species such as reindeer, Arctic fox, and walrus. In addition, 203 bird species have been recorded in Svalbard and adjacent waters. Arctic seabirds breed here in very large colonies

during the summer months, sometimes representing significant percentages of overall global populations.

FACTS & NUMBERS

1002 kg was the weight of the largest polar bear on record.

3.39 m was its height when standing on its hind legs.



Whales and seals of Svalbard

Svalbard is also home to a huge number of seals. Unlike their Antarctic relatives, Arctic seals are hunted relentlessly by a fearsome predator—the polar bear. Arctic seals are occasionally spotted hauled out on land, but they prefer to rest on sea ice, always wary of their nemesis. Some of the species you'll see are bearded, harp, and ringed seals.

Now enjoying protection after centuries of relentless hunting, whales are returning to the waters of Svalbard. Whales feeding in the beautiful fjords and rich polar seas around Spitsbergen provide some of the best whale-watching to be had anywhere. The species include belugas, humpbacks, blue and bowhead whales.



Of course, Svalbard is not the only place to see Arctic animals. For example, if your primary goal is to get close-up photos of polar bears playing in the tundra (and doing only that) then you might consider going to Churchill, Manitoba. And if you only want to see reindeer, probably it would be more convenient to see them on game farms in Norway or Finland.

However, if you want to see polar bears, reindeer, walrus and other Arctic animals behaving naturally in a truly wild and remote environment, then Svalbard is clearly the best choice of destination.

FACTS & NUMBERS

80 km/h is the sprint speed of a Svalbard reindeer. However, they are generally quite sedentary and stick to a leisurely vegetarian diet.

4-8 kg of vegetation is the average daily ration of an adult reindeer.

Spitsbergen

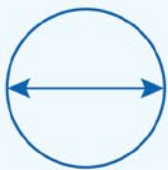
POLAR BEAR REALM

THE PREMIER DESTINATION FOR ANYONE EAGER TO WITNESS
THE ARCTIC REGION AND ALL ITS AMAZING WILD INHABITANTS

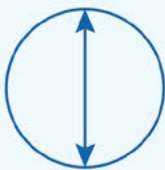


The polar bear is a true monarch of the Arctic, more numerous than humans in and around the Svalbard archipelago. They can be spotted stalking the ice and hunting for seals in the pack ice, swimming in the coastal waters, playing with their cubs or resting in the mountains.

SIZE



up to 3 m



up to 1.5 m

SPEED



in water
up to 6.5 km/h



on land
up to 30 km/h

REPRODUCTION



The female gives birth
to 1-3 cubs every two years

3052

is the polar bear
population of Svalbard

800

kg is the average
weight of an adult
male polar bear

25-30

years is the average
lifespan of a polar bear
in nature



POLAR BEAR SAFETY IN SVALBARD

The High Arctic: kingdom of polar bears

To see a polar bear in the wild is at the top of many people's must-do lists. Svalbard is one of the very best places to find polar bears in their natural habitat. In the High Arctic territories, polar bears can be seen engaging in natural behaviors such as stalking seals on sea ice, caring for their cubs, roaming across the vast tundra wilderness, and perhaps devouring a whale or walrus carcass.

Polar bear safety will be paramount on your cruise to Svalbard. First, when

the ship approaches a possible landing site, the area is thoroughly scanned by crew and staff with binoculars and spotting scopes. **If there are any polar bears spotted**, they will be observed and enjoyed from the safety of the ship. Or, if the situation warrants, perhaps the Zodiacs will be readied for a cruise. **If no bears are spotted**, then a scouting party will go ashore first to make sure no polar bears are hiding in the folds of the landscape or behind rocks.



Once the area is cleared, disembarkation the landing of passengers via Zodiac may commence. From vantage points on shore and on the ship, staff and crew continue to keep a constant lookout for approaching bears. Shore staff are armed with high-powered rifles, for which they have been trained, but which are rarely needed.

You will usually have freedom to explore the area within a certain “perimeter”, marked by the armed staff and/or rangers.

In the event a polar bear is spotted in the vicinity of a landing in progress, decisive action will be taken immediately. Every situation is unique and decisions will be made on the spot by your experienced expedition leader and team.

Your responsibilities will be simply to follow any orders given to you, without hesitation, in an orderly and calm manner.



VIEWS OF SVALBARD

Glaciers

Incredibly, about 60% of Svalbard's landmass is covered by glaciers. In the surrounding areas with slightly lower overall temperatures than Spitsbergen, evaporation from the Barents Sea allows for sufficient snow precipitation on the archipelago, and the majestic ice landforms are born and maintained.

The glaciers made such a lasting impression on the first Prince Albert of Monaco during his 1906 Svalbard expedition that he personally named one of them, the 14th July Glacier, after the French Bastille Day. It is 16

km long and reaches more than 30 m above sea level. Later, the Monacobreen glacier was named after the pioneering oceanographer himself.

Landscape

With a varied landscape including snow-capped mountain ranges, flowering tundra, polar deserts, tidewater glaciers and huge ice sheets, Svalbard is undoubtedly one of the world's premier destinations for nature photography.



ACTIVITIES

Kayaking

The protected and picturesque waters of Spitsbergen offer some of the best paddling adventures in the Arctic. The fjords of Spitsbergen closely guard some of the world's most magical locales. The pristine Arctic wilderness rewards kayakers with spectacular scenery, unique marine animals, and a range of locations. Spitsbergen also offers the possibility of kayaking in the vicinity of tidewater glaciers and icebergs.

Photography

Spitsbergen is the ultimate destination for photographers interested in capturing incredible images of Arctic animals and scenery. Snowcapped mountains and blue glaciers provide a dramatic background for portraits of the charismatic wildlife residents. Given the around-the-clock daylight, your photo opportunities are seemingly endless.



ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

How to Get There

Most travelers arrive in Spitsbergen on a commercial flight to Longyearbyen (LYR), the administrative center and largest settlement in Svalbard. Scandinavian Airlines (SAS) and Norwegian operate daily flights from Oslo. SAS also flies from Tromsø, in the north of Norway. Roundtrip cruises depart Longyearbyen and return after

10 or 12 days of exploration around Spitsbergen. Poseidon Expeditions also offers longer cruises from Longyearbyen that include neighboring Franz Josef Land in the Russian High Arctic. Alternatively, you can arrive in Spitsbergen on a cruise from Scotland via the Faroes and Jan Mayen.



When to Go

The cruising season in Spitsbergen is from late May to late August. In the early part of the season, bays and fjords still have “fast ice” (sea ice that is fastened to the shore), which is a great place to look for bears hunting for seals. But this advantage can be offset by increased difficulties in navigation due to higher concentrations of sea ice.

In this way, chances of seeing polar bears and other Arctic wildlife are equally good anytime during the summer cruising season. For walking ashore, the earlier part of the season

offers a snowier landscape and the later part of the season offers drier ground underfoot.

Essential documents

If you are a citizen of a signatory state of the Spitsbergen Treaty (most EU countries and the USA), then you do not need a visa to visit Spitsbergen. However, it is practically impossible to travel to Spitsbergen without a passport, even for EU citizens, because Svalbard is not in the Schengen area.



PACKING TIPS

Whenever you go to Spitsbergen, you can expect a variety of weather conditions such as rain, wind, snow and sunshine. Our recommendation is to bring “Arctic quality” clothes designed for cold-weather activities that will fit into a layered clothing scheme.

Why is being layered so important?

During the day, temperatures may be warmer than you expect, which can cause perspiration. This can make for a cold feeling and once you get wet, your

body will lose its natural temperature at a higher rate than before. If you are dressed appropriately, you can remove a lightweight layer and carry it with you in a backpack.

Being waterproof is also essential

Although summer temperatures are generally mild, you should expect wind, clouds and precipitation. It is also possible that water will spray up on passengers during Zodiac cruising.

CLOTHING CHECKLIST

- Rubber boots (no need to pack them, as we provide them on board)
- Lightweight thermal underwear and thin socks
- Thermal and thick woolen socks
- Waterproof pants (Gore-Tex)
- Warm hat
- Winter gloves or mittens x2 (to rotate when wet)
- Glove liners (great for taking photos)
- Expedition parka or outer shell
(we provide Poseidon Expeditions parka for our passengers)
- Fleece jumper

Other essentials:

- Casual clothing to wear on board, optional – something a little more formal for the cocktail parties
- Walking shoes
- Sunglasses (polarized, close-fitting are best)
- Sunblock
- Lip balm with sun protection
- Waterproof backpack
- Bathing suit (for the ship's hot tub or a polar plunge for the daring!)
- Binoculars
- Camera (don't forget extra batteries and memory cards!)
- Medications (be sure to bring enough of your prescription and over-the-counter medicine)
- An extra pair of prescription glasses or contact lenses



FOR RESERVATIONS:

USA & Canada

+1 347 801 2610

salesUSA@poseidonexpeditions.com

Germany

+49 40 756 68 555

anfrage@poseidonexpeditions.com

UK & WORLDWIDE

+44 20 3369 0020

sales@poseidonexpeditions.com

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John Bozinov, Filip Kulisev, Dietmar Denger, Tobias Gelston

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