



# SEA KAYAK CLUB

Sea Kayaking in the Polar Regions with *Sea Spirit*

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is Sea Kayak Club?

Sea Kayak Club is the name of the sea kayaking option offered on selected *Sea Spirit* voyages with Poseidon Expeditions. Participants have the opportunity to experience the thrill and tranquility of sea kayaking in the Polar Regions as part of a guided paddling group. Sea Kayak Club is a genuine small-group experience and a memorable adventure in a unique and stunning wilderness setting.

### How amazing is sea kayaking in the Polar Regions?

Totally amazing. Words are insufficient to describe it. The Polar Regions offer some of the most interesting, demanding, and rewarding sea kayaking opportunities on the planet. If you enjoy sea kayaking, then sea kayaking in the Polar Regions is an experience not to be missed. However, contrary to what some people say, it is not “the only way to experience the Polar Regions”. Whatever way you choose to experience these incredible places, it will be totally amazing.

### Is Sea Kayak Club right for me?

Sea Kayak Club is designed for recreational sea kayakers who are ready to challenge themselves in an extreme environment under the supervision of our professional sea kayak guides. With adequate preparation, just about anyone possessing a reasonable level of fitness and coordination, a positive and flexible attitude, and a passion for real adventure will find value in the program.

### How many people can join?

Sea Kayak Club is limited to 8 participants per voyage in the Arctic and 16 participants in Antarctica.

### When should I sign up?

Space in the program is limited, so to secure your spot we recommend that you sign up at the time of booking your voyage. The option can be added after booking your voyage, but there is the chance it will already be sold out by then.

### Is sea kayaking in the Polar Regions safe?

Safety is our top priority. We have a comprehensive Risk Management Strategy that exceeds industry standards. An important component of this strategy is our policy requiring that kayakers meet certain fitness, health, experience, age, and language requirements. However, we would be remiss not to mention that the Polar Regions are some of the most remote and inhospitable environments on Earth, and that sea kayaking is an inherently risky activity.



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### What is the fitness requirement?

Sea kayaking is a physical activity that requires strength and stamina. Therefore, Sea Kayak Club participants are expected to be reasonably fit. As a general rule, anyone who engages regularly in physical outdoor activities, such as hiking and paddling, will meet the requirement. As a practical test, make sure you have the strength and agility to lunge yourself out of a pool without the use of a ladder. You must also be able to swim.

### What is the health requirement?

Good health is necessary for your safety and enjoyment in Sea Kayak Club. If you have any of the medical conditions or problems listed in our “Medical Information Form”, please get a statement from your doctor indicating that you are able safely to engage in sea kayaking activities.

### How much previous kayaking experience do I need?

All participants are expected to come with at least some relevant kayaking experience. By “relevant” we do not necessarily mean experience kayaking on the sea. Rather we simply mean experience in a sea kayak, even if it was in fresh water. A “sea kayak” is a sit-inside kayak where you wear a spray skirt to prevent water from entering your cockpit—as opposed to a “sit-on-top” kayak or canoe. You do not necessarily need to have experience on coastal waters or in rough conditions. We simply expect you to be familiar and confident with paddling a sea kayak. If you feel safe and confident in a sea kayak, and you genuinely enjoy paddling for its own sake, then you are ready for Sea Kayak Club. Even still, it cannot hurt to get more experience. The more skill and experience you have, the more you will get out of your adventure with us. We recommend, regardless of your previous experience, that you refresh and improve your skills by taking sea kayaking lessons appropriate to your level. Practice basic paddle strokes and make sure you can perform an emergency “wet exit” if the need arises. Learning self-rescue techniques will boost your confidence, but we do not require you to have these skills. You do not need to know how to perform a roll.

### What if I have no previous kayaking experience?

If you have no kayaking experience at the time of your booking, you will need to acquire some before you join us. If you are reasonably fit and in good health, then you should be able to meet the experience requirement quickly. The quickest and most effective way to gain experience and skills is to take sea kayaking lessons. Be sure to learn basic paddle strokes and how to perform an emergency “wet exit”. We then recommend you rent a sea kayak occasionally to practice your skills. The more practice you get beforehand, the more you will enjoy your time with us.

### What is the minimum age allowed?

Sea Kayak Club participants must be at least 18 years old at the time of their voyage.



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## What is the language of Sea Kayak Club?

Sea Kayak Club is conducted in English only. For the safety and enjoyment of the entire group, it is required that all participants be able to understand and respond to kayaking instructions in English.

## How often will we go kayaking?

The number of kayaking opportunities on your voyage will depend on the itinerary, as well as weather and ice conditions. Your expedition leader and kayak guides will determine which excursions are appropriate for kayaking based on observed and expected conditions, site suitability, and other factors. A reasonable expectation would be around three to five opportunities during your voyage, but there are no guarantees.

## How long will we typically be out on the water?

Paddling times and distances vary between voyages and between excursions. On any given kayaking session you will be on the water for between one and three hours and you may paddle as many as six nautical miles (10 kilometers). Our purpose will not be to paddle a marathon, but the more we paddle the more we will see and experience. Your kayak guides will discuss anticipated times and distances prior to each paddling excursion. However, your kayak adventures may end up being unscripted and spontaneous, depending on ice, weather, and wildlife.

## Will I get the chance to experience ice from a kayak?

Sea kayaking is a great way to experience ice in the Polar Regions. On most of our polar voyages ice is encountered as a matter of course, especially in Antarctica. However, be aware that ice is not encountered in the Falkland Islands and only rarely around South Georgia Island. If you are interested in seeing large icebergs, then the Antarctic Peninsula, as well as Greenland, will likely have what you are looking for. Spitsbergen does not have many large icebergs but it is a place where you may see calving glaciers and sea ice.

## Will I be able to get close to icebergs and glaciers?

Icebergs and glaciers are spellbinding natural features of incredible beauty. They can also be deceptively enormous and highly unstable. Despite their apparent serenity and repose, they present the most formidable hazard encountered by sea kayakers in the Polar Regions. Therefore, there will be strict limits on how close you are allowed to approach icebergs and glaciers. Staying safe around ice is a matter of careful judgment which will be the responsibility of your kayak guides. You will be required to stay with your paddling group and to obey all instructions given by your kayak guides. All that being said, you do not have to be very close to these features to appreciate their immensity and otherworldly beauty. You will get plenty close enough.



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### Will I have close encounters with whales and other wildlife in a kayak?

One of the objectives of Sea Kayak Club is to encounter unique Polar Regions wildlife in its natural habitat. Seeing a whale or other marine mammal from a kayak is an unforgettable experience. However, kayakers do not necessarily get closer to wildlife than do other cruise passengers. The chances of having a close encounter with a whale or seal are about the same whether you are in a kayak or in a Zodiac. Kayakers simply tend to have more intimate and personal experiences. Kayakers are required to follow IAATO / AECO guidelines concerning distances to wildlife. Under no circumstances will we approach a Polar Bear in the water.

### Will I be able to paddle off on my own?

You will be required to stay with your paddling group. Together you will have the freedom to explore a wide area and to take advantage of good kayaking locations and conditions that may exist away from the ship. We realize that solitude and quietude are important aspects of the paddling experience for many kayakers. When deemed safe and appropriate by your guides, you may be given leave to venture farther away from the group. In addition, on various other occasions, “quiet time” will be established so that everyone can appreciate the remarkable peace and quiet of the polar wilderness.

### Will I have to choose between landings and kayaking?

Sea kayaking is offered at the same time as other activities, such as Zodiac cruising and shore landings. Occasionally kayaking can be combined with these activities; other times you will have a choice to make. On excursions where it is offered, kayaking is optional to each participant individually. Your kayak guides will hold pre-excursion meetings to help you choose your activity, with the aim that over the course of the voyage you will achieve your preferred balance of shore landings, Zodiac cruises, and kayaking sessions.

### What kind of paddling conditions might we face?

Paddling conditions will vary. Calm conditions are likely to exist in some of the protected bays and fjords we visit. However, it is also possible to encounter strong winds and seas with moderate chop and swell. Water and air temperatures will both be around 0°C (32°F). Kayaking will not be initiated if conditions seem to pose an unacceptable risk, but in the Polar Regions there is always the possibility of rough weather developing suddenly and without warning while you are out on the water.

### What kind of kayaks will we use?

Participants use Prijon Excursion EVO double sea kayaks with rudder steering. These tough, stable kayaks are ideal for occasional rough conditions and paddling through brash ice.



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### Will I be able to take photos from my kayak?

Sea kayaking will give you a unique perspective from which to capture incredible photos of Polar Regions scenery and wildlife. You will be provided with a small waterproof dry bag so you can take your compact digital camera with you kayaking. Large SLR cameras are cumbersome to carry and difficult to keep dry inside a kayak, and are therefore not recommended for use while kayaking. If you have a small waterproof camera, consider bringing a pole attachment that allows you to operate your camera underwater while keeping your hands dry. You will have many chances to take photos from your kayak, but please keep in mind that the best use of your camera will be to record the adventure and to capture magnificent moments as they come. There will be plenty of time to organize professional photo opportunities during your voyage while on the ship, on shore, or on a Zodiac cruise.

### What is the best time to go kayaking in Antarctica?

Each part of the Antarctica season has something special to offer kayakers. The early summer months (November and December) see the most ice. The late summer months (January and February) are the best months to see whales. Inclement weather in March can make for less frequent kayaking, but the whale watching is at its prime. Seals and penguins can be encountered all season.

### What is the best time to go kayaking in the Arctic?

Sea kayaking in the Arctic is equally amazing all season long (May through September).

### Do I need to get special evacuation insurance to join Sea Kayak Club?

All passengers on *Sea Spirit* voyages to Antarctica must purchase travel medical insurance which should include emergency evacuation and repatriation. We recommend coverage of at least USD 200,000 for voyages to Antarctica. Passengers participating in Sea Kayak Club must ensure that their policy does not exclude kayaking. Travel medical insurance including emergency evacuation and repatriation that covers kayaking is included for passengers on *Sea Spirit* voyages to the Arctic. If you wish to purchase your own insurance for your Arctic voyage, we recommend a coverage of at least USD 150,000 and you must ensure that it does not exclude kayaking.