

# Spitsbergen: In Search of Polar Bear & Pack Ice With Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures

**June 11 – 18, 2021**

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The Norwegian territory of Svalbard and the islands that make up the archipelago offer a tremendous wildlife and birdlife experience, as well as a fascinating lesson in glaciology. The islands were first used as a whaling base in the 17th and 18th Centuries and are now celebrated as a breeding ground for many seabirds, along with lots of marine mammals.

Start your North Spitsbergen cruise with a trek around historic Longyearbyen, then join our expedition to the north of the island to take in the fantastically beautiful landscapes, the thousands of seabirds, and of course the star of the show, the Polar Bear. Nothing can prepare you for your first sighting of a wild Polar Bear, the undisputed king of the Arctic.

The Svalbard archipelago is one of the most dramatic places on earth. Just 600 miles south of the North Pole, warmed by the most northerly waters of the Gulf Stream, this is a spectacular land of rugged mountains, extensive Arctic pack-ice drifting offshore, and the blue ice of ancient, awe-inspiring glaciers. Experience the majesty of these North Atlantic islands as we explore one of the last great wildernesses on earth.

Our voyage focuses on the western and northern coast of Spitsbergen, and as far north as the permanent pack ice. This area has the highest concentration of wildlife and places of historic and scenic interest in the archipelago.

## Tour Highlights

- Take advantage of long daylight hours, coinciding with the height of the breeding season for most birds
- Watch for Purple Sandpiper, Red-throated Diver, Ptarmigan, Great and Arctic Skua, Long-tailed Duck, and Common Eider
- Witness wild Polar Bear hunting to sustain themselves through the long winter.
- Watch for the rare and beautiful Ivory Gull and endearing Dovekie
- Learn the natural history of this fabled archipelago
- Visit fascinating historic locations of early industry and exploration

## Tour Summary

8-Day / 7-Night Svalbard Wildlife Cruise

Starting at \$3950 based on cabin type, from Longyearbyen  
Airport is Svalbard (LYR)





## Itinerary

### **Fri., June 11 Arrivals in Spitsbergen**

Welcome to Spitsbergen! We touch down today in Longyearbyen, the administrative center of the island of Spitsbergen, the largest of the Svalbard archipelago. Depending on your time of arrival, enjoy strolling around this former mining town, whose parish church and Svalbard Museum make for fascinating attractions. In the afternoon, we board our ship for the trip, the *m/v Plancius*. In the early evening, the ship sails out of Isfjorden, where we see plenty of Dovekie, and we might even spot the first Minke Whale of the trip. (B,L,D)

### **Sat., June 12 Route to Raudfjorden**

Sailing to Raudfjorden, on the north coast of Spitsbergen, we take in an expansive fjord spilling with glaciers – and maybe even visited by Ringed and Bearded Seal. There are opportunities of Beluga Whale sightings as there are estimated to be around five to ten thousand Belugas in the Svalbard population. The Beluga has no dorsal fin; a diagnostic feature of whale species that live in the High Arctic such as the Narwhal and Bowhead. It has been postulated that the Beluga's lack of dorsal fin is an adaptation to living in waters that are frequently covered by ice. The cliffs and shoreline of this fjord also support thriving seabird colonies, rich vegetation, and the possibility of Polar Bear and maybe Red-throated Diver! (B,L,D)

### **Sun., June 13 The Monaco Glacier**

Today we sail into Liefdefjorden, and cruise within sight of the 5-kilometer-long (3.1 miles) face of the precipitous Monaco Glacier – a truly magnificent sight and experience. The waters in front of this glacier are a favorite feeding spot for thousands of kittiwakes, and the base of the ice is a popular spot for Polar Bear. (B,L,D)

### **Mon., June 14 Highlights of Hinlopen**

Today we cruise into Hinlopen Strait, home to Bearded Seal, Ringed Seal, and Polar Bear. At the entrance, there is the likely possibility of spotting Blue Whales. After cruising among the ice floes of Lomfjordshalvøya in the Zodiacs, you can view the bird cliffs of Alkefjellet with their thousands of Brünnich's guillemots. On the east side of Hinlopen Strait, we may attempt a landing on Nordaustlandet. Here Reindeer, Pink-footed Goose, and Walrus are likely sights. Nearby Murchison Fjord is a wonderful place to kayak or Zodiac cruise between the islands. There are some excellent hiking routes here, affording us breathtaking views. (B,L,D)

### **Tues., June 15 Stop at the Seven Islands**

The northernmost point of your voyage may be north of Nordaustlandet, in the Seven Islands. Here you reach 80° north, just 870 km (540 miles) from the geographic North Pole. Be sure to get up to the ship's bridge and take a picture of the GPS showing your latitude or, better yet, take your own handheld GPS with you and mark in





the waypoint as we are so close to the North Pole! Polar Bear inhabit this region, so the ship may park for several hours among the pack ice before wheeling around west again. (B,L,D)

### **Wed., June 16 Sailing the Continental Shelf**

While retracing our route west, keep watch for more Polar Bear and the elusive Greenland (bowhead) Whale. About 40 nautical miles west of Spitsbergen, we sail the edge of the continental shelf. Here, Fin Whale forage during the summer in the upwelling zones (where cold, nutrient-rich water wells up from below the sea's surface) that run along the Spitsbergen banks. At the mouth of Kongsfjorden, there are great chances of sighting more Minke Whales. (B,L,D)

### **Thurs., June 17 Forlandsundet | Alkhornet**

The sight and sound of a Walrus haul-out spells Arctic like nothing else can. We visit the Walrus colony on Prince Charles Island and hope to see these odd-looking animals ashore.

Approaching from downwind can often confirm that Walrus are ashore—the smell of a Walrus-haul out is quite...unique! Alternatively, we might sail into St. Johns Fjord or south to the mouth of Isfjorden, landing at Alkhornet. Seabirds nest on these cliffs, Arctic Fox search below for fallen eggs and chicks, and Reindeer graze the sparse vegetation. We arrive in Longyearbyen later for our final night—it's a great time to reflect on a wonderful voyage in this wild and remote place. (B,L,D)

### **Fri., June 18 Longyearbyen | Departures**

We disembark in Longyearbyen this morning and we have some time to explore the town, taking home memories that will accompany you wherever your next adventure lies. (B)



## Ship Details: The *m/v Plancius*



M/v *Plancius* accommodates 116 passengers in 53 passenger cabins (108 passengers as of season Arctic 2020) with private toilet and shower in 4 quadruple porthole cabins, 2 triple porthole cabins, 9 twin porthole cabins, 26 twin cabins with window and 2 twin deluxe cabins, all (ca. 12.5 square meters) and 10 twin superior cabins (ca. 21 square meters). All cabins offer lower berths (one queen-size bed in the superior cabins and two single beds in the twin cabins), except for the 4 quadruple cabins (for 4 persons in 2x upper and lower beds), and 2 triple cabins (1 bunk bed plus 1 lower bed).

The vessel offers a restaurant/lecture room on deck 3 and a spacious observation lounge (with bar) on deck 5 with large windows, offering full panorama view. M/v *Plancius* has large open deck spaces (with full walk-around possibilities on deck 4), giving excellent opportunities to enjoy the scenery and wildlife. She is furthermore equipped with 10 Mark V zodiacs, including 40 HP 4-stroke outboard engines and 2 gangways on the starboard side, guaranteeing a swift zodiac operation. M/v *Plancius* is comfortable and nicely decorated but is not a luxury vessel. Our voyages in the Arctic and Antarctic regions are primarily defined by an exploratory educational travel program, spending as much time ashore as possible. *Plancius* fully meets our demands to achieve this.

The vessel is equipped with a diesel-electric propulsion system which reduces the noise and vibration of the vessel considerably. The 3 diesel engines generate 1.230 horse-power each, giving the vessel a speed of 10 – 12 knots. The vessel is ice-strengthened and was specially built for oceanographic voyages. M/v *Plancius* is manned by an international crew of 37 (18 nautical crew and 19 hotel crew), 8 expedition staff (1 expedition leader, 1 assistant expedition leader and 6 guides/lecturers), and 1 doctor.



## The Rooms

### Superior | \$7150

Max: 2 Persons

- 2 windows
- 1 double bed/1 sofa bed
- Private shower & toilet
- Desk & chair
- Flatscreen TV
- Telephone & WiFi (supplemented)
- Refrigerator
- Coffee & tea maker
- Hair dryer
- Ample storage space



### Twin Window | \$5950

Max: 2 Persons

- 1 window
- 2 lower berths
- Private shower & toilet
- Desk & chair
- Flatscreen TV
- Telephone & WiFi (supplemented)
- Hair dryer
- Ample storage space



### Twin Porthole | \$5500

Max: 2 Persons

- 1 porthole
- 2 lower berths
- Private shower & toilet
- Desk & chair
- Flatscreen TV
- Telephone & WiFi (supplemented)
- Hair dryer
- Ample storage space



### Quadruple Porthole | \$3950

Max: 4 Persons | 1 Porthole

- 2 upper & lower berths
- Private shower & toilet
- Desk & chair
- Flatscreen TV
- Telephone & WiFi (supplemented)
- Hair dryer
- Ample storage space



## Cost of the Journey

### Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with Allianz Travel Insurance. Their website will show a grid of tour cost and your age category for you to make selections. As of January 2017, Naturalist Journeys pays 100% of your flight carbon offset.

### Travel Information

To make sure your flight syncs well with the tour start and end times, please discuss your flight details with us, *before* you confirm your flight booking. Once we know your flight details, we will book your airport transfer and any extra accommodation you may need before or after the tour. These are not included in the tour cost and you can pay them directly at the hotel's reception.

### Arrival Flights

Please plan to arrive in Longyearbyen at your convenience on June 10; you will need to overnight in Longyearbyen on June 10; we can recommend hotels. The tour starts with a briefing at **19h00**. Please plan departures in the afternoon on June 18; please double check all flights with us before you finalize them.

### Photo Credits

Old trapper's hut on Blomstrandhalvoya by Leica Akademie (LA) courtesy of Oceanwide Expeditions (OE); Bearded Seal by Erwin Vermeulen (EV), OE; Swimming Polar Bear, EV; Arctic Tern, EV; Arctic Fox, EV; Zodiac Cruising, by Arjen Drost; Ship images courtesy of OE; Blue Iceberg, LA.

### Cost of the Journey

Pricing is by cabin, per person, based on double occupancy. Please note that many cabin levels sell quickly—this is a VERY popular cruise

**Superior:** \$7150

**Twin Window:** \$5950

**Twin Porthole:** \$5500

**Quadruple Porthole:** \$3950

There are also **Triples** for \$5500, and **Twin Deluxe rooms** for \$6300 on the ship. Please ask us about availability

**Tour price includes:** Voyage aboard the indicated vessel as indicated in the itinerary; All meals throughout the voyage aboard the ship including snacks, coffee and tea; All shore excursions and activities throughout the voyage by Zodiac; Program of lectures by noted naturalists and leadership by experienced expedition staff; Free use of rubber boots and snowshoes; Luggage transfer from pick-up point to the vessel on the day of embarkation, in Longyearbyen; Pre-scheduled group transfer from the vessel to the airport in Longyearbyen (directly after disembarkation); All miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the program; Comprehensive pre-departure material.

**Tour price does not include:** Any airfare, whether on scheduled or charter flights; Pre- and post- land arrangements; Passport and visa expenses; Government arrival and departure taxes; Meals ashore; Baggage, cancellation and personal insurance (which is strongly recommended); Excess baggage charges and all items of a personal nature such as laundry, bar, beverage charges and telecommunication charges; The customary gratuity at the end of the voyages for stewards and other service personnel aboard (guidelines will be provided).



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