

SVALBARD

MAY - SEPTEMBER 2015


PolarQuest

THE PEARL OF THE ARCTIC

Halfway between mainland Norway and the North Pole lies Svalbard – one of the world’s most magnificent wildernesses. This vast glaciated archipelago invites to midnight sun, pack ice and dramatic mountain chains. Not to mention the extraordinary wildlife! Unlike many other places in the Arctic you will find that the animals in Svalbard are fairly fearless of humans and even curious at times. There are around 3 000 polar bears in the area and during an expedition cruise with PolarQuest the chances of seeing them, as well as walrus, whales, Arctic foxes and Svalbard reindeers, are very good.

Established in 1999, PolarQuest is a world leading operator of small ship expedition cruises in Svalbard. When travelling with us you will experience a unique expedition and our aim is that each passenger will have the trip of a lifetime!

Travelling with PolarQuest allows you to enjoy the amazing Arctic wilderness without having to undertake a scientific expedition or become an explorer with a beard full of ice. A curious mind and a desire for wildlife adventure are all that you need!

Our small expedition ships are built for Arctic

waters. A smaller ship offers you an entirely different experience than you get on a larger and more conventional cruise ship. Nimble and flexible, they allow us to make landfalls each day with our sturdy Zodiacs, explore the polar wilderness and encounter some of its magnificent wildlife.

The exact route depends on weather, ice conditions and wildlife. Naturally delicious meals and comfortable cabins are also parts of our trademark.

As an expedition member you are on standby at all times. Sometimes you are woken up in the

early morning as we sail past a glorious iceberg on a smooth sea – a sight not to be missed. Or sometimes we might wake you in the middle of the bright night because a polar bear has been spotted on the ice.

Booking. When you call our office you will speak to staff that have all been to Svalbard themselves. Our enthusiastic travel consultants can answer all of your questions prior to the trip. According to Swedish law, PolarQuest places all revenue in a bond with the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency until the completion of your expedition.



SEASONS IN SVALBARD – MAY TO SEPTEMBER

Svalbard has a mild climate compared to other areas on the same latitude thanks to the Gulf Current. The average temperature in Longyearbyen in July is +6°C.

During winter thick ice and snow covers the archipelago, but when the warmer weather arrives, the ice loses its grip and the rugged coasts become accessible by ship. Millions of seabirds arrive to their annual nesting sites and the archipelago teems with life.

The beginning of the season (May-June) is characterised by a lot of snow and a wonderful purity. It is still spring in the Arctic and polar bear cubs and seals can sometimes be seen on the ice of the fjords in front of the glaciers.

Summer arrives in the middle of July. The ice thaws

around the islands and this makes it possible to get further east. Whales are more frequently seen in the waters and more and more snow-free areas become accessible for longer walks. Colourful flowers are in bloom.

Autumn arrives in Svalbard late August and it is now that the snow free landscape can be seen most clearly. The tundra is shifting in autumn colours and the midnight sun is getting closer and closer to the horizon, which offers wonderful red and pink skies at sunset, as well as a warm and soft light, perfect for anyone interested in photography. After mid-August you may be able to see the Ivory Gull's chicks, while some birds are preparing to migrate. The ice has pulled further away and it may be possible to circumnavigate Spitsbergen. Harp seals can be seen and encounters with female walrus with cubs are not uncommon.



OUR EXPEDITION SHIPS

We strongly believe that small ship expedition cruises are the best way to explore Svalbard's icy wonderland and enjoy close wildlife encounters. Our small expedition ships make it possible for us to reach some of the most inaccessible areas, and it is in a small group that you get the best experience of the archipelago's magnificent nature and wildlife. In between landings we are treated to delicious meals, enjoy breathtaking views of the

surrounding landscape and listen to interesting talks on Svalbard's flora, fauna and history.

One of the secrets behind a successful expedition cruise is the Zodiacs. With these safe and sturdy rubber boats we navigate among icebergs, cruise along glaciers and go ashore to get unique nature experiences. Each Zodiac carries up to 12 passengers.



M/S QUEST

A COMFORTABLE EXPEDITION SHIP WITH A WONDERFUL ATMOSPHERE

The ship was built in Denmark in 1992 to serve as a ferry on Greenland's west coast. In 2004/2005 she was completely refurbished and now has a career as a small and comfortable expedition ship. *M/S Quest* takes 53 passengers and all 26 cabins are outside cabins with private facilities. The triple cabins have upper and lower berths. All other cabins have two lower berths or a double bed. In your cabin you find a desk with a chair and a cupboard for storage. The superior cabins are spacious and have armchairs and TV/DVD. The Owner's cabin has a double bed, two large picture windows, a separate seating area and TV/DVD.

In the dining room you are treated to delicious meals in between landings and in the panorama lounge you can enjoy breathtaking views of the surrounding polar landscape. Here you can listen to entertaining talks on the area's flora, fauna and history. In the lounge you also find a well-stocked bar and a small library. The ship has spacious observation decks, where you can enjoy the beautiful vistas and search for seabirds, whales and polar bears. Passengers are welcome on the bridge around the clock and there is always something to see or search for! The crew on board is English-speaking and on a trip with 53 passengers you will also be accompanied by five knowledgeable guides. The atmosphere on board *M/S Quest* is relaxed and very friendly.



Double Cabin Superior.



Triple Cabin.



The Zodiacs are very easy to access from M/S Quest.



M/S STOCKHOLM

A CLASSIC SHIP LOVED BY MANY WITH BRASS DETAILS AND WOODEN DECKS

The *M/S Stockholm* is a classic ship built in 1953 for the Swedish National Maritime Administration. In 1999 she was totally refitted and started her career as a comfortable polar passenger ship. The *M/S Stockholm* carries a maximum of 12 passengers in twin cabins with bunk beds. All cabins have private facilities and small windows (portholes).

M/S Stockholm is a marvellous piece of maritime history with beautiful brass details and wooden decks. There is no wonder she is loved by so many! On board the ship you will enjoy delicious meals in the company of likeminded travellers, who are all fascinated by the Arctic nature. The food on board is of high standard and all beverages are included in the price. With such a small party on board, this is like travelling on a private yacht!

The crew on board *M/S Stockholm* is also great enthusiasts of the unique wildlife and unspoiled nature. The genuine curiosity of the crew is a prerequisite for expedition cruises of this kind. A trip on board *M/S Stockholm* in these northern waters, with its unique wildlife and pristine nature, is an experience of a lifetime!



Comfortable cabins with bunk beds.



The service on board is outstanding.



It is with a small expedition ship that you get the most extraordinary experiences.





POLAR BEAR QUEST WITH M/S STOCKHOLM OR M/S QUEST

We visit Svalbard early in the season, when the midnight sun reigns supreme. The bird colonies are teeming with life and the peaks of the dramatic mountain ranges are snow-covered. The ice still keeps the islands in its grip and we can admire the ever-changing ice formations while searching for walrus, whales, foxes and polar bears.

Day 1: Longyearbyen

We arrive in Longyearbyen and transfer to our hotel.

Day 2 - 8: Svalbard

We start our adventure in Svalbard by exploring the High Arctic capital of Longyearbyen. In the afternoon we embark our expedition ship and sail out through the spectacular Ice Fjord. We are now in a part of the world where we are totally dependent on the ice and weather conditions.

Our exact itinerary depends on these factors and on the wildlife we encounter. Our ambition is to make landings or cruises every day with our rigid Zodiacs. Here are some examples of places we may visit:

Prins Karls Forland

This narrow strip of land is covered by a magnificent and snow-covered mountain chain. The island is also home to many seabirds and harbour seals.

Northwest Svalbard

On the islands of Danskøya, Amsterdamøya and Ytre Norskøya there are still visible remnants from the bustling activity during the 17th century's whaling period. Two of the most courageous attempts to reach the North Pole started on Danskøya. Swedish balloonist Andrée made an attempt with a hydrogen balloon and American journalist Wellman started with an airship. There are still interesting remnants from these expeditions left on this site.

Fantastic fjords

Svalbard offers the visitor countless spectacular fjords. During our journey we will explore a few of them such as:

Liefdefjorden, meaning "the fjord of love", is lined





with snow-covered mountain peaks and here we hope to cruise along the face of the spectacular Monaco Glacier. Many common eiders and pink-footed geese nest in the area and if lucky we can see the rare king eider. In *Krossfjorden* we revel in the beautifully sculptured front of the 14th of July Glacier to the raucous greeting of the large numbers of kittiwakes and Brünnich's guillemots nesting on the nearby cliffs. *Raudfjorden* is an area of immense natural beauty – dominated by beautiful glaciers it is also a favourite spot for seals and the bird cliffs are bursting with activity.

North Spitsbergen and Hinlopen

North of Spitsbergen we might meet the edge of the pack ice. Not many ships venture here and we can marvel at the silence and grandeur of this icy landscape. Chances of meeting polar bears increase as we sail along the ice floes. If the ice allows we may enter Hinlopen Strait. Here lies Alkefjellet, a sheer, basaltic cliff, which is the home to an estimated 200 000 Brünnich's guillemots.

Day 9: Longyearbyen

We reach Longyearbyen in the early morning and begin our journey home.

Please note:

Our exact route will depend on ice, weather conditions and wildlife. The places mentioned above are just examples of some of the many sites Svalbard has to offer. We always strive to maximise your experience. Please remember that flexibility is the key to a successful expedition!

DATES & PRICES

POLAR BEAR QUEST WITH M/S STOCKHOLM

Duration: 9 days.

Dates: 31 May - 8 June, 7 - 15 June, 14 - 22 June, 21 - 29 June, 2015.

Group Size: Maximum 12 passengers.

Accommodation: Cabin on board *M/S Stockholm*, hotel.

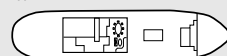
Transport: Expedition ship, Zodiacs.

Price: USD 8 990 per person.

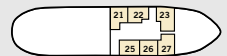
RATE INCLUDES: 7 nights on board the *M/S Stockholm*, 1 night in a hotel in Longyearbyen · All meals · All beverages · An experienced Expedition Leader · Guiding ashore and talks on board · All excursions and activities · The customary gratuity to the ship's crew · Comprehensive information material before the expedition · An illustrated post-expedition log

NOT INCLUDED: Flight to/from Longyearbyen · Travel and cancellation insurance · Personal expenses

Upper Deck



Main deck



Cabin category

Price per person in USD

■ Twin Cabin (bunk beds & private facilities) 8 990

DATES & PRICES

POLAR BEAR QUEST WITH M/S QUEST

Duration: 9 days.

Dates: 24 May - 1 June, 31 May - 8 June, 7 - 15 June, 14 - 22 June, 21 - 29 June, 28 June - 6 July, 2015.

Group Size: Maximum 53 passengers.

Accommodation: Cabin on board *M/S Quest*, hotel.

Transport: Expedition ship, Zodiacs.

Price: From USD 5 690 per person.

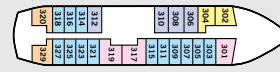
RATE INCLUDES: 7 nights on board the *M/S Quest* · 1 night in a hotel in Longyearbyen · All meals · An experienced Expedition Leader and knowledgeable guides · Guiding ashore and talks on board · All excursions and activities · Comprehensive information material before the expedition · An illustrated post-expedition log

NOT INCLUDED: Flight to/from Longyearbyen · Travel and cancellation insurance · The customary gratuity to the ship's crew · Personal expenses such as bar and shop charges

Deck 4



Deck 3



Cabin category

Price per person in USD

■ F: Triple cabin (upper/lower beds) 5 690
 ■ E: Twin cabin (2 twin beds) 6 490
 ■ D: Twin cabin Plus (2 twin beds) 7 090
 ■ C: Double cabin (double bed) 7 090
 ■ B: Double cabin Superior (large double bed) 8 490
 ■ A: Owner's cabin (large double bed) 9 290
 ■ E: Twin cabin for single use 10 690

“We have just come back from Svalbard and have had the most wonderful time! It passed our wildest dreams. Thank you to everyone who helped us to organise it.”

/David & Jackie March



EXPLORATION OF SVALBARD WITH M/S STOCKHOLM OR M/S QUEST

During the second half of the season, the ice is slowly starting to loosen its grip, which offers good opportunities to explore the seldom visited eastern parts. During this expedition we explore the archipelago, searching for wildlife such as polar bears, walrus and whales. If lucky, we will be able to circumnavigate Spitsbergen or explore the spectacular Nordaustlandet.



Day 1: Longyearbyen

We arrive in Longyearbyen, embark our expedition ship in the afternoon and sail out through the spectacular Ice Fjord.

Day 2 - 10: Svalbard

We are now in a part of the world where we are totally dependent on ice and weather conditions. Our exact itinerary depends on these factors and on the wildlife we encounter. The goal is to make daily landings with our Zodiacs. Here are some examples of places we may visit:

Northwest Svalbard

In the scientific village of Ny-Ålesund, Arctic terns nest along the main street. It was from here that Amundsen and Nobile started their heroic expeditions to the North Pole. On the islands of Danskøya, Amsterdamøya and Ytre Norskøya we find remnants from the bustling activity during the 17th century's whaling period. Two of the most courageous attempts to reach the North Pole started on Danskøya. Swedish balloonist Andrée made an attempt with a hydrogen balloon and American journalist Wellman started out with an airship. There are still interesting remnants from these expeditions left on this site.

Fantastic fjords

Svalbard offers countless spectacular fjords. During our journey we will explore a few of them such as:

Liefdefjorden, meaning "the fjord of love", is lined with snow-covered mountain peaks and at its base we hope to cruise along the face of the spectacular Monaco Glacier. Many common eiders and pink-footed geese nest in the area and if lucky we can see the rare king eider. In *Krossfjorden* we revel in the beautifully sculptured front of the 14th of July Glacier to the raucous greeting of the large numbers of kittiwakes and Brännich's guillemots nesting on the nearby cliffs. *Raudfjorden* is an area of immense natural beauty – dominated by beautiful glaciers. It is also a favourite spot for seals.

Hinlopen and Alkefjellet

If the ice allows we may enter Hinlopen Strait. Here is Alkefjellet, an impressive, basaltic cliff,





which is the home to an estimated 200 000 Brünnich's guillemots. We may also continue into the beautiful bay Palanderbukta on Nordaustlandet.

Eastern Svalbard

The island of Nordaustlandet is covered by an enormous ice cap and fascinates naturalists as well as historians. There are huge glacier fronts here, intersected by hundreds of waterfalls. Even further east is Kvitøya (White Island). In very favourable ice and weather conditions, we may land on this ice-capped island where few people have set foot. Here Andréé and his men were found 33 years after their unsuccessful attempt to reach the North Pole. Barentsøya and Edgeøya offer magnificent landscapes and vast tundra. Chances to encounter walrus, Arctic fox and Svalbard reindeer are good here.

Southwest Svalbard

The grand fjords of Hornsund offer spectacular glaciers and a breathtaking landscape of towering mountain peaks. This is a favourite haunt for some of Svalbard's polar bears.

Day 11: Longyearbyen

We arrive in the early morning, disembark and begin our journey back home.

Please note:

Our exact route will depend on ice, weather conditions and wildlife. The places mentioned above are just examples of some of the many sites Svalbard has to offer. We always strive to maximise your experience. Please remember that flexibility is the key to a successful expedition!

DATES & PRICES

EXPLORATION OF SVALBARD WITH M/S STOCKHOLM

Duration: 11 days.

Dates: 29 June - 9 July, 9 - 19 July, 19 - 29 July, 18 - 28 Aug, 7 - 17 Sept, 2015.

Group Size: Maximum 12 passengers.

Accommodation: Cabin on board *M/S Stockholm*.

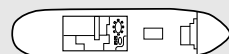
Transport: Expedition ship, Zodiacs.

Price: USD 11 490 per person.

RATE INCLUDES: 10 nights on board the *M/S Stockholm* · All meals · All beverages · An experienced Expedition Leader · Guiding ashore and talks on board · All excursions and activities · The customary gratuity to the ship's crew · Comprehensive information material before the expedition · An illustrated post-expedition log

NOT INCLUDED: Flight to/from Longyearbyen · Travel and cancellation insurance · Personal expenses

Upper Deck



Main deck



Cabin category

Price per person in USD

□ Twin Cabin (bunk beds & private facilities) 11 490

“The guides were exceptional. Their co-ordination of activities, staff, and guests interests was faultless! Presentations and re-caps were informative and entertaining”

/Marita Robson

DATES & PRICES

EXPLORATION OF SVALBARD WITH M/S QUEST

Duration: 11 days.

Dates: 6-16 July, 16-26 July, 26 July-5 Aug, 5-15 Aug, 15-25 Aug, 25 Aug-4 Sept, 4-14 Sept, 2015.

Group Size: Maximum 53 passengers.

Accommodation: Cabin on board *M/S Quest*.

Transport: Expedition ship, Zodiacs.

Price: From USD 7 490 per person.

RATE INCLUDES: 10 nights on board the *M/S Quest* · All meals · An experienced Expedition Leader and knowledgeable guides · Guiding ashore and talks on board · All excursions and activities · Comprehensive information material before the expedition · An illustrated post expedition log

NOT INCLUDED: Flight to and from Longyearbyen · travel and cancellation insurance · The customary gratuity to the ship's crew · Personal expenses such as bar and shop charges

Deck 4



Deck 3



Cabin category

Price per person in USD

□ F: Triple cabin (upper/lower beds) 7 490
 □ E: Twin cabin (2 twin beds) 9 090
 □ D: Twin cabin Plus (2 twin beds) 9 890
 □ C: Double cabin (double bed) 9 890
 □ B: Double cabin Superior (large double bed) 10 790
 □ A: Owner's cabin (large double bed) 12 290
 □ E: Twin cabin for single use 15 590

GUIDES

Knowledgeable and enthusiastic guides are the key to a successful expedition. On our expeditions you will meet guides with long experience of the Polar Regions and a genuine love for the Arctic.

Several of them have been commuting between the Arctic and the Antarctic for many years. PolarQuest has highly qualified guides when it comes to safety. Three out of four guides have completed a course in STCW 95 Basic Safety (safety at sea) and all guides carrying weapons in Svalbard have legitimate certificates and training.

Few passengers per guide increase the flexibility on board as well as enable a smooth Zodiac operation. PolarQuest has one of the best guide ratios in the industry. Our on board specialists also entertain and educate you with interesting talks in between landings, where you learn more about the flora, fauna and history of Svalbard.

“ I want to thank you for the fabulous trip to Svalbard. Your company has a wonderful staff on the ship and a wonderful group of knowledgeable and helpful guides/leaders. It far exceeded my expectations of this polar region. We had wonderful sightings of polar bear, reindeer, walruses, an Arctic fox, harp seals, bearded seals, humpback whales, many sea birds and Arctic flowers. The food was delicious, the weather was great and some of the glaciers were calving, so the trip could not have been better. I came home with wonderful memories and great photos. ”

/ Peggy Gerick





SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT

The weather is stable during the summer months even if fog, rain and snowfall may occur. Rainfall is very limited as parts of Svalbard are considered to be Arctic desert. There is midnight sun from April to the end of August. To participate in our expeditions you need to bring warm thermal underwear, warm middle layers, wind and waterproof jacket/trousers and a pair of solid Wellington boots. A

pair of good binoculars are also highly recommended. When you book a trip with us, you will receive an equipment checklist with suggestions on what to bring on the expedition.

AWARENESS

We travel carefully through ecologically sensitive places, striving to have minimal impact on its environment and animals. PolarQuest is a proud member of AECO, an organisation promoting sustainable tourism in the Arctic. Travelling with PolarQuest, we hope that you will experience many memorable moments, that you will have fun, feel curious and act respectfully. Back home again, we encourage you to become a good ambassador for the Polar Regions. If you tell others about your experience, hopefully an increased awareness of the Arctic's unique and fragile environment will lead to a greater commitment and a lifestyle that contributes to maintain this natural wonderland for many generations to come.



PolarQuest

P.O. Box 180

SE- 401 23 Göteborg, Sweden

Phone: +46 31 333 17 30

Fax: +46 31 333 17 31

e-mail: info@polar-quest.com

www.polar-quest.com

PolarQuest is a proud member of AECO (Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators). The organisation actively governs the tourism in Spitsbergen and promotes sustainable travels in the area.

Association of
Arctic Expedition Cruise
Operators **AECO** 

PHOTO: ADAM RHEBORG (FRONT COVER, P. 2, P. 4 LOWER SMALL, P. 5 LOWER SMALL & P. 8 UPPER NO. 4), ADRIAN NORDENBORG (P. 3 & P. 8 UPPER NO. 1), ANNICA LARSSON (P. 11 BACKGROUND), ELKE LINDNER (P. 7 UPPER NO. 4), ERIK EDVARDSSON (P. 7 UPPER NO. 1), HELBILD.SE (P. 4 BACKGROUND), HENRIK LÖVENDAHL (P. 7 UPPER NO. 2 & P. 10), JONAS SUNDQUIST (P. 4 UPPER LEFT) J-P LAHALL (P. 4 UPPER RIGHT & P. 5 UPPER LEFT), KATHARINA MILLER (P. 5 UPPER RIGHT), LISA STRÖM (P. 6 UPPER NO. 3 & P. 11 UPPER LEFT), MAGNUS LUNDRÉN (P. 7 UPPER NO. 3), MARIA NORDVALL (P. 9 UPPER NO. 3), MATTIAS HENNINGSSON (P. 9 UPPER NO. 4), PÅR SKOG (P. 6 UPPER NO. 2) RONALD VISSER (BACK COVER & P. 9 UPPER NO. 1), ULRICH KÖHN (P. 5 BACKGROUND, P. 6 LOWER LEFT & P. 8 LOWER LEFT)

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