

Svalbard Expedition – Cruise to the edge & beyond



**SOUTHERN SEA
VENTURES**



In 1998, Southern Sea Ventures, SSV, became the first company to conduct commercial sea kayaking trips in Antarctica. Since this time, experiencing the polar regions by expedition ship has been a passion of ours that we have been able to share with many like-minded adventurers.

We are proud to announce that in 2026 we are heading back to the polar regions under our own steam. Our chosen vessel is a small, 50-person expedition ship, the M/S Quest, she is agile and nimble, allowing us to access areas often not possible with larger cruise lines. For these select trips aboard the M/S Quest, we have increased the activities available to include not only the general cruising experience but also adventurous hiking and our normal kayaking program. Our motto at SSV is 'there for the adventure', every trip we take is about ensuring we maximise the wild outdoor experience for our groups. We can retreat to the comfort of the ship whenever it is required but each day is focused on what's outside the ship not inside, and we promise it is truly spectacular.

These notes will provide you with an overview of what to expect on the trip, the highlights, activities offered and getting to your destination. It's important to remember that every trip is unique, from ice conditions to weather and wildlife encounters and we have to adjust accordingly each time. Therefore, these notes are a guide to help you understand the type of experience on offer and our knowledgeable office team are available to answer any further questions you have. Once you have reserved your place we will send out additional arrival details including a detailed gear list.

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Office hours are 9.30am-5pm Mon-Fri (Australian Eastern Standard Time). Closed weekends and public holidays.

SVALBARD-NORWEGIAN ARCHIPELAGO

Join SSV as we explore the raw and unspoilt wilderness of Svalbard. With a population of only 3000, Svalbard is still virtually an untouched, pristine wilderness. The largest island in the Svalbard Archipelago is Spitsbergen, which we intend to circumnavigate, ice and weather conditions permitting. Our start and finish point is Longyearbyen, the world's most northern permanent settlement, where you may just bump into a Svalbard Reindeer taking a stroll around town!

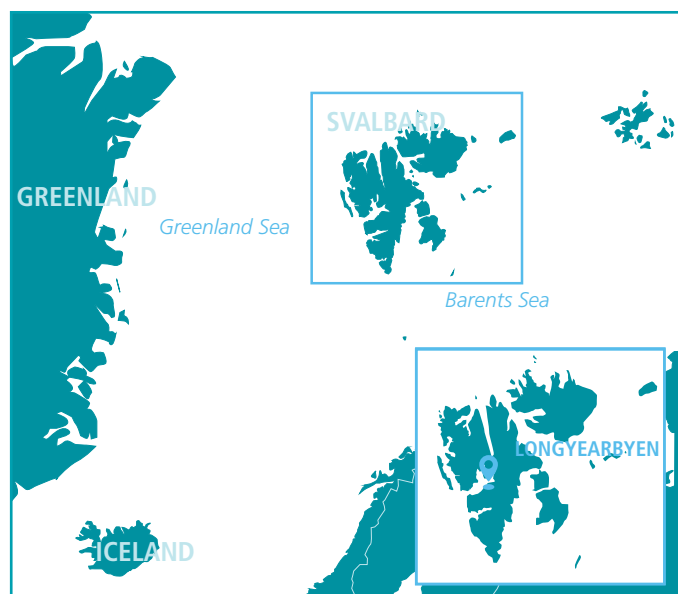
TRIP DETAILS

Length: 10 day trip

Dates: 27 Jul - 5 Aug 2026

Destination: Spitsbergen

Vessel: M/S Quest



Trip Notes - Svalbard Expedition

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Arctic wonderland- glaciers, sea ice, mountain peaks rising from the sea.
- Nature based experiences including kayaking, hiking and zodiac excursions.
- Polar bears, walrus, seals, whales, reindeer, sea birds - a nature lover's nirvana!
- Land of the midnight sun.
- Calm fjords to explore by kayak or zodiac.
- A rich history of human exploration and survival.
- Fossils to discover (but not keep!)
- Delicate Arctic flora.
- 74 degrees north- only 900 kms from the North Pole.

ITINERARY AT A GLANCE

- 27 July** Overnight at the group hotel in Longyearbyen.
- 28 July** Embark *M/S Quest* at 4pm.
- 29 July - 4 Aug** Explore the Svalbard Archipelago.
- 5 Aug** Disembark Longyearbyen at 9am.

GENERAL CRUISE ACTIVITIES FOR ALL

Explore at your own pace with gentle strolls or active hikes led by our expert naturalists and historians. Take in the sights on a zodiac cruise or simply sit and admire the magnificent surroundings. Whether you prefer to move through the landscape at a slower pace or take a fast paced hike, join our regular shore landings and take advantage of the knowledge of our expert guides. All zodiac cruises and regular shore excursions are included in the trip cost.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY - KAYAKING IN THE ARCTIC OCEAN

We intend to use the ship as a comfortable floating base camp, paddling at every opportunity and returning to the comfort of meals and our cozy cabins. We hope to paddle one to two times a day, with most paddles ranging from two and a half to four hours. We aim to have at least one extended paddle where we will be away from the ship for most of the day and generally meet the ship at a different location. Landing ashore by kayak, we can stretch our legs and enjoy walks on the lush tundra among summer flowers. Zodiacs will be available for extended shore excursions for those who do not wish to paddle on any given day. The flexibility of kayaking with a small private group ensures your own unique experiences, the quiet dip of your paddle perfectly suited to our awe-inspiring surroundings.

Your kayak package covers use of a drysuit, all your paddling and kayak equipment and the services of a professional polar sea kayak guide.

We'd be happy to talk to you about your level of experience and may be able to advise you on how to obtain the necessary skills before your trip.



ITINERARY

The following itinerary should be seen as an approximate guide only. Please note that weather, ice conditions, logistics and unforeseen delays can cause alterations to our itinerary.

27 JUL ARRIVE LONGYEARBYEN

You will be met at the airport and transferred to the group hotel for your overnight stay. This evening you'll meet your expedition leaders and other members of the group for a trip briefing.

28 JUL EMBARK LONGYEARBYEN

Today is yours to explore Longyearbyen. Recommendations include The North Pole Expedition Museum, the local brewery and a reindeer burger in one of the local restaurants. Board the *M/S Quest* in the late afternoon. Cruising out of the beautiful Isfjorden, we'll be escorted by gliding fulmars and perhaps the occasional puffin. The sea kayakers will attend a briefing to distribute dry suits, poggies (paddling mitts for your hands), lifejackets and dry bags.

29 JUL - 4 AUG EXPLORING SVALBARD

Over the next 7 days we will explore the amazing wilderness of Svalbard. Our aim is to experience as much time as possible outside, be it zodiac cruising, paddling, hiking or wildlife viewing or all four! Our experienced Arctic team will use their know-how to design a day-to-day itinerary that makes the best use of the weather, ice conditions and wildlife opportunities.

Following are locations we'll potentially visit.

WEST COAST OF SPITSBERGEN

We'll spend hours out and about in the wild Arctic scenery exploring the glacier filled Kongsfjorden or Magdallenefjorden, either zodiac cruising or kayaking along the coastline or walking the lush tundra, where we take extra care not to disturb delicate wildflowers. We may visit an old Dutch whaling station settled in the early 1600's, aptly named Smeerenberg (blubber town).

HEADING NORTH

We'll encounter amazing vistas in places such as Woodfjorden and Leifdefjorden, where magnificent glaciers end their journey to the sea. Paddlers and zodiac cruisers will wind their way through ice floes while walkers will take to the mountains looking out for herds of reindeer and discovering old Russian trapper huts. We'll be on alert for polar bear sightings! On board the *M/S Quest*, we may experience the pack ice of the Arctic Ocean, a favourite occupation is to stand at the bow and look below at the ice being parted by our sturdy ship. A highlight for all on board is the sight of a bobbing walrus feeding on clams or wallowing, slug like, on shore.

THE EAST COAST

We experience the variety of Svalbard along the east coast of Spitsbergen which can be described as a polar desert. If ice conditions allow, we pass south through the narrow Hinlopen Strait, flanked by rock slabs that are rich in fossils. A highlight for any amateur geologist is to discover these fossils when we go ashore. Wildlife viewing is at a premium at Alkafjellet, where one-hundred-metre-high dolerite towers are home to millions of Brunnich's guillemots. On the ship and on land, eyes are peeled for an Arctic fox and birdlife such as Eider and beautiful ivory gulls. As *M/S Quest* passes between Spitsbergen and the smaller islands of Barentsoya and Edgeoya, we cross the main polar bear migration routes. The beautiful fertile plain of Sundeneset is richly covered with bright green mosses, a variety of delicate and colourful flowers, various fungi, clear bubbling streams and small tarns. We explore this beautiful terrain by kayak, zodiac and on foot, marvelling at the contrast between the colourful soft ground and the barren, rocky terrain from further north.

Trip Notes - Svalbard Expedition

SOUTH AND THEN NORTH-WEST AGAIN

We round South Cape, Spitsbergen's most southerly point, before continuing northwards. Hornsund, 23km long and 8 -10 km wide, is the southernmost of the large fjords on Spitsbergen's west coast. Towers of rock pierce the clouds, lush green slopes run down to the sea and crumbling glaciers surround us. It is a beautiful place. Bellsund, which we may visit on the west coast of Spitsbergen, is divided into two large fjords. The northernmost - Van Mijenfjorden - is separated from the main fjord by a long narrow island, Akseloya, which extends almost across the fjord. There are many different zodiac cruising, paddling and walking options available to us. We may be fortunate to spot Beluga whales in this area and in the skies, we'll be treated to thousands of birds, including little auk colonies.

5 AUG DISEMBARK LONGYEARBYEN

During the early morning we cruise back into Isfjorden before docking in Longyearbyen. Say your farewells to the crew and expedition leaders before a transfer to the airport.

THIS TRIP INCLUDES

- Transfer from the airport to your group hotel.
- Hotel accommodation (twin share) in Longyearbyen.
- Transfer from hotel to ship.
- Transfer from ship to airport in Longyearbyen.
- 8 nights ship accommodation. All public areas are open to all passengers.
- All meals on board ship.
- A welcome toast and captains drinks.
- All shore excursions from the ship including Zodiacs.
- Lectures, videos, slide and film shows.
- Expedition guide services.
- Port taxes and port charges imposed by government authorities.
- Medical services. There is a resident doctor and well-equipped clinic on board.

THIS TRIP EXCLUDES

- Any flights unless listed in the itinerary.
- Single supplements.
- Visa, passport and vaccination charges and airport departure taxes.
- Hotels and meals not included in the voyage itinerary.
- Optional excursions not included in voyage itinerary.
- Laundry, personal clothing, medical expenses, personal travel insurance and items of a personal nature such as bar charges and phone/email charges.
- Emergency evacuation charges.
- Alcohol unless specified.
- Optional activities such as kayaking or skiing unless the activity supplement has been paid.
- Tips on board for crew and service personnel.

DESTINATION ADVICE

Our start and finish place is the small town of Longyearbyen. Longyearbyen has a population of around 1,000 and has a good supply of cafés, restaurants and other attractions. Norwegian and Scandinavian Airlines have daily scheduled flights from Oslo and Tromsø (and return) during the summer months with a flight time of approximately forty five minutes.



Trip Notes - Svalbard Expedition

IS THIS TRIP FOR YOU

RECOMMENDED FITNESS

While we have a range of activities available from easy shore landings and zodiac cruises to active hikes and paddles, it is most important that you have an adventurous disposition, are in good health and are relatively fit and active to participate in this trip. Our shore landings and zodiac cruises are suitable for all those with the ability to descend and ascend our gangway (a steep set of stairs with a handrail) and enter the zodiac with assistance from the expedition team. Our active hikes will often be over several miles/kilometres of varied terrain from gentle tundra to steep slopes on a mix of uneven, rocky ground and may involve some scrambling. Our paddling program is focussed on those looking for active outings. If you have any questions or concerns please contact our team to discuss.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

If you would like to take the worry out of your adventure, we offer flights out of Australia for an additional cost. For Australian guests we can also provide travel insurance. If you are planning additional travel, we may be able to assist with reserving additional tours or other activities. Please contact our office with any requests and we will do our best to assist.

