



SVALBARD ADVENTURE MINI-CRUISE



LOGBOOK

2nd to 6th of July 2026



SVALBARD

Longyearbyen

Storöfjord

Hornsund

Isfjord

Magdalenefjord

Møllen

Woodfjord

Hornsundfjord

60 North

Liefdefjord

Krassfjord

Kongsfjord

Ry-Jesund

Hopen

Drone

Chari

Thursday, July 2nd 16:30, 78°44'N



Ship cruise in Isfjorden

Longyearbyen is a Norwegian settlement and the "capital" of Svalbard. It was originally a mining community, but now science and tourism have taken over. It is named after the American John Munroe Longyear who started the first coal mine in 1906. The industry was furthermore bought by a Norwegian coal mine company in 1916. Today, Longyearbyen is a modern town with almost every facility you can imagine. The population is approximately 2500 people and the settlement is filled with kids, youths, students and adults.

In the afternoon we embarked MV Serenissima, and our Arctic adventure started. The ship sailed out of Adventfjorden and north across Isfjorden towards the beautiful glacier front of Borebreen. The weather was cloudy, but we enjoyed our time out on the front deck. This glacier has recently been doing a phenomenon called surging, which is an unstable phase where ice shifts from a slow crawl to moving tens of meters per day. It occurs when a glacier accumulates heavy mass at high elevations, becoming very unstable, and then starting to move much faster than usual, dumping huge amounts of ice into the fjord. After a good look at Borebreen, we sailed into Trygghamna where we got to see many Atlantic puffins (*Fratercula arctica*) and Brünnich's guillemots (*Uria lomvia*), before we continued our way out of Isfjorden and on the outside of Prins Karls Forland.



The glacier front of Borebreen - photo by Martin



The atlantic puffin and the common eiders - photos by Martin



The northern fulmar and the brunnich guillemot - photos by Martin

Friday, July 3rd 09:00, 79°56'N



Magdalenefjorden & Gravneset

This morning we entered Magdalenefjorden which is one of the best known and most beautiful fjords on Spitsbergen with its jagged mountains. It is also said to be one of the first mountains Wilhelm Barents first saw when he discovered Svalbard in 1596. He named the biggest island Spitsbergen after them (Spitsbergen = pointy mountains). After breakfast we were ready for the first landing of the day, the peninsula Gravneset. We started the walk among graves and blubber ovens, and the guides talked about the discovery of Svalbard, and the whaling history that took place at Gravneset in the early 1600s. Since the arctic terns (*Sterna paradisaea*) had started to lay their eggs, we decided to go for a hike up on the hill behind Governors cabin. The terns are fiercely protective parents that dive-bomb and peck the heads of anything that approaches their nesting grounds. Up on the hill, while listening to the little auks (*Alle alle*) chatting in the bird cliff, we spotted some walruses (*Odobenus rosmarus*) that were laying on the other side of Gullybukta, before we continued our way down to the beach for a refreshing arctic dip!



The view over Magdalenefjorden and the Governors cabin - photo by Marte



Wagonwaybreen in the innermost part of Magdaleneffjorden and the arctic terns - photos by Martin

Friday, July 3rd 15:00, 79°66'N



Zodiac cruising at Smeerenburgreen

At the innermost part of Bjørnfjorden we find the beautiful glacier front of Smeerenburgreen. We went in the zodiacs together with our guide, and had an amazing sight over this enormous glacier front, and the sun was now trying to get through the clouds. Some of us picked up some floating ice from the glacier, that we brought back to the ship and gave to the bar manager so he could prepare real arctic drinks for us! The guides told us that 57% of Svalbard is still covered by glaciers, and that they are retreating fast. This part of the world is warming 5 times faster than any other place on the planet. In front of the glacier we could observe black-legged kittiwakes (*Rissa tridactyla*), black guillemots (*Cephus grylle*) and the glaucous gull (*Larus hyperboreus*). We also got to see many calving's from the glacier front! Sailing north, we passed by the the old Dutch whaling town Smeerenburg, and here we could observe more than 100 walrus taking a siesta on the beach. Furthermore, we passed the islands in the north and there Sigrid spotted two polar bears quite high up in the terrain on Ytre Norskøya. We all gathered out on the front deck to get a good look at these majestic animals. The two polar bears were most likely a male and a female. Some minutes later, Andreas could tell us that he had spotted another polar bear on Indre Norskøya. Furthermore, we sailed into Raudfjorden for a nice ship cruise in the evening sun among the steep-hanging glaciers.



The black-legged kittiwakes - photo by Martin



The view over Smeerenburgbreen - photo by Martin



The view over Smeerenburgreen - photos by Martin



The view over Smeerenburgbreen - photo by Martin



The view over Smeerenburgreen - photos by Martin



Bjørnfjorden and Smeerenburgreen and the whalruses at Smeerenburg - photos by Martin



The two polar bears at Ytre Norskøya - photos by Martin



The two polar bears at Ytre Norskøya - photos by Martin



The two polar bears at Ytre Norskøya - photos by Martin



The two polar bears at Ytre Norskøya and the single polar bear at Indre Norskøya - photos by Martin



The two polar bears at Ytre Norskøya and Raudfjorden - photos by Martin



The view over Raudfjorden - photos by Martin



The view over Raudfjorden - photos by Martin

Saturday, July 4th 09:00, 79°61'N



Liefdefjorden & Texas bar

After spending some time out on deck to get a good look at the beautiful glacier front of Idabreen, we lifted the anchor and started to sail towards Monacobreen. Monacobreen is named after Prince Albert 1st of Monaco, after sponsoring several scientific expeditions to Svalbard in the beginning of the 1900's. We got to see this stunning 5 kilometer wide glacier front while eating breakfast before we continued our way towards the first landing of the day, the trapper cabin Texas bar. The cabin was built by Hilmar Nøis in 1927 and it was used as a secondary station, meaning that the cabin was only used for short stays. Today, it is occasionally used by permanent residents from Longyearbyen who make the long trip to Liefdefjorden, either by boat or snowmobiles.

We went on land together with our guide and had a nice walk among the moss campion (*Silene acaulis*) and mountain avens (*Dryas octopetala*). On the walk we got to peak inside the trapper cabin, and the guides talked about the trappers that went north with dreams of many furs, of freedom, and of adventures in magnificent surroundings. We can just imagine how this extreme lifestyle defined by isolation and complete darkness or endless daylight would be. From a distance, we could see the highly visible orange patches in the bird-cliff. This is the Elegant sunburst lichen (*Xanthoria elegans*) which are nitrogen lovers, and thrives in areas heavily fertilized by bird droppings.



The trapper cabin Texas Bar - photo by Marte



The moss campion, tufted saxifrage, polar willow and purple saxifrage - photos by Marte

Saturday, July 4th 14:30, 79°61'N



Zodiac cruising at Monacobreen

Due to foggy conditions we decided to cancel the landing in Bockfjorden, and go for the safe alternative which was zodiac cruising in front of Monacobreen. We went in the zodiac together with our guide and started the cruise in front of this massive glacier front. Since it was cloudy and slightly foggy, we really got to see the vibrant blue color of the glacier ice. Glacier ice appears blue because the dense, compressed ice acts as a natural light filter. It absorbs the long, red wavelengths of the light spectrum and scatters and transmits the short, blue wavelengths. The thicker and purer the ice, the bluer it looks. During the zodiac cruise we got to see the arctic skua chasing the black-legged kittiwakes in front of the glacier. The Arctic Skua (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) is famous for its "kleptomaniac" feeding habit, known scientifically as kleptoparasitism. Instead of hunting or fishing for themselves, these "avian pirates" aggressively chase smaller seabirds in mid-air and force them to drop or regurgitate their catch. Finished with the zodiac cruise, the ship sailed towards Worsleyhamna where we dropped off Amelie that was going to spend two weeks at two different cabins, Villa Oxford and Fiske bay, both built by Hilmar Nøis, respectively in 1924 and 1958.



Zodiac cruising in front of Monacobreen - photo by Marte



The black-legged kittiwakes and the glaucous gull - photos by Marte



Monacobreen and the arctic skua chasing the kittiwake - photos by Marte



Monacobreen and MV Serenissima in the fog - photos by Marte



Zodiac cruising, the northern fulmar and the glaucous gull - photos by Marte



Zodiac cruising and the black-legged kittiwake - photos by Marte



Zodiac cruising - photos by Marte



Zodiac cruising - photo by Marte

Saturday, July 4th 21:00, 80°00'N



80 degrees North & Moffen

Close to 80 degrees North and Moffen, we all gathered out on the front deck for a small celebration. Our expedition leader, Martin, had a speech about reaching the 80 degree parallel, and we all gave a toast for most likely being the northern most people in the world! The inhabitants living on this island is a walrus colony, and today we could count more than 200 walruses on the island. The walruses are massive, highly social marine mammals known for their iconic long tusks and thick blubber. Both the female and male have tusks, but the male's tusks are bigger and heavier and can be up to 1 meter long and weight 5 kg each! With calm sea and good conditions we started to sail south towards Kongsfjorden where we were going to wake up the next morning.



Celebration at 80 degrees North - photo by Martin



The walruses at Moffen - photos by Martin



The walruses at Moffen - photos by Martin

Sunday, July 5th 09:00, 78°98'N



Blomstrandhalvøya & Ny-London

We woke up close to Blomstrandbreen, and enjoyed a good breakfast before we started to sail to the south side of Blomstrandhalvøya in order to visit the remains of the former marble quarry in Ny-London. We anchored in Kongsfjorden and started the walk towards Ny-London. The guides were telling that it has been activity here since 1911, started by the ambitious man Ernest Mansfield. Mansfield was looking for gold, but instead he found a whole island full of marble. He went back to England and started gathering investors for his "marble marvel". Being a quick minded sweet-talked man, he quickly raised a lot of money, and headed north with several shiploads of equipment and materials. When the small town was raised and everything was set in place, even with a locomobile (portable generator), they started mining. After the first ship was filled with marble, it headed south into warmer areas, and to their surprise the marble crumbled into small pieces. It turned out that the "marble" was only dust and crumbles being held together by ice. Mansfield was fired in 1913, but the company carried on until 1928, before most of the buildings and equipment was moved to Ny-Ålesund.

On the walk we could see the red throated diver (*Gavia stellata*), ruddy turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*), grey phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) and many other bird species! Sailing further into Kongsfjorden we got to see the fully-booked bird cliff of Ossian sars before we continued our way towards Kronebreen and Kongsvegen. In front of the glaciers, we got to see three bearded seals (*Erignathus barbatus*) on small ice flows.



The purple sandpiper - photo by Martin



The snow bunting and Martin scouting for birds - photos by Martin & Marte



The arctic bell heather and the moss campion - photos by Martin



The drooping saxifraga and the mountain avens - photos by Martin



The arctic skua and the purple sandpiper - photos by Martin



Camp Mansfield and the ruddy turnstone - photos by Martin



The bird cliff Ossian sars and the views over Kongsfjorden - photos by Martin



The fully-booked bird cliff and the bearded seal - photos by Martin



The bearded seal and the skua chasing the kittiwake - photos by Martin



The three crowns (Svea, Nora and Dana) and the bearded seal - photos by Martin



The bearded seal and the common eiders - photos by Martin

Sunday, July 5th 15:00, 78°92'N



Kongsfjorden & Ny-Ålesund

Ny-Ålesund is the world's northernmost community. As we came onshore we went on a guided tour in town. Ny-Ålesund is a former mining village which has become an important international research centre - mainly on the atmosphere and ozone layer but also geological, biological and glacial research is carried out here. Downtown Ny-Ålesund has a small centre with a shop, a post office and a museum.

Ny-Ålesund was the focal point for the world's attention several times during the 1920's. In 1925 Roald Amundsen attempted to reach the North Pole from Ny-Ålesund with the seaplanes N24 and N25, but this expedition was not a success. In 1926 Amundsen returned to Ny-Ålesund, accompanied by the American Lincoln Ellsworth and the Italian Umberto Nobile, to set out on an expedition with the airship "Norge". This expedition was a success, and the airship flew over the North Pole the 12th of May 1926, and landed in Alaska the next day.

From 1945 until 1962, Ny-Ålesund experienced a second mining period. The coal layers in Ny-Ålesund are below sea level, so to avoid methane gas explosions, it was important with good ventilation in the mines. 70 miners have lost their life in the mines in Ny-Ålesund and the worst accident of them all happened November 5th 1962. It was a big explosion in the Esther Mine and 21 miners lost their life. A committee made an investigation and they concluded that the Norwegian state should have been more concerned about the safety. Since Kings Bay was owned by the state, the public blamed the government. In August 1963, Prime Minister Gerhardsen and his government resigned as a result of this tragedy and all coal mining activity stopped in Ny-Ålesund.



Ny-Ålesund - photo by Martin



The Svalbard reindeer and the harbour seal - photos by Martin



RO, RO, RO! Norway - Brasil (2-1) - photos by Marte

Sunday, July 5th 18:30, 78°92'N



We gathered with the ship's crew and guides for a farewell ceremony. Certificates were handed out to the true heroes among us that took a swim in the cold Arctic water and all of us who crossed the 80th Parallel. And that was the end of the Svalbard summer experience for this time.

Best regards from your guides,

Martin, Stephane, Sigrid, Andreas, Tommaso, Svenja & Marte

Experience the Polar Night

Are you sad to leave Svalbard? Are you curious about what it is like in the winter? Visit www.hurtigrutensvalbard.com and explore Svalbard's other seasons. We hope to see you back again for another Arctic adventure.

