

# Svalbard in Summer

## Tundra, Whales and the Midnight Sun

Onboard Ultramarine & Ocean Explorer



# Expedition Overview



Photos captured with a telephoto lens from a responsible distance, following regulatory/AECO guidelines.

## Embrace the Wild Arctic Summer

Our 11-day **Svalbard in Summer: Tundra, Whales and the Midnight Sun** is a rare chance to explore the Arctic as it comes fully alive when plant life and wildflowers are at their maximum numbers. It's also possible during the Arctic summer to observe polar bears, walruses, Arctic foxes, and potentially belugas. With warmer temperatures, endless daylight, and snow cover receding, you'll have plenty of chances to explore onshore by foot and by Zodiac to completely immerse yourself in the Arctic environment.

- Spot iconic Arctic wildlife—walruses, reindeer, Arctic foxes, and the elusive polar bear
- Hike the tundra
- Witness tens of thousands of cliff-dwelling birds
- Spot baleen whales
- Zodiac cruise tidewater glaciers
- Explore Svalbard on ice-class polar vessels.

# Day by Day Itinerary



— Onboard *Ultramarine* and *Ocean Explorer*  
- - - Flights to/from Helsinki

## Day 1

### Arrive in Helsinki, Finland

Arrive in the Finnish capital and make your way to the group hotel located right at Helsinki airport—included in your Charter Flight & Hotel Package. You will have the rest of the day to explore the many museums, galleries and restaurants, relax at a Finnish sauna or wander the vibrant Design District. If you do plan to visit Helsinki city center, take advantage of the convenient 40-minute rail service from the airport.

## Day 2

### Fly to Longyearbyen, Svalbard, and Embark

After breakfast, the group will transfer to the Helsinki airport and board our private charter flight to Longyearbyen, part of your Charter Flight & Hotel Package. Our journey to the High Arctic now truly begins. You will see the coastal and birch forests of southern Scandinavia give way to taiga and tundra environments, the mountains of Norway and northern Sweden, and the convergence of the Norwegian and Barents seas. Approaching Svalbard, you may get your first views of a pure, snow-capped wilderness, complete with ridgelines, glaciers, and perhaps even sea ice in the distance. We land in Longyearbyen, Svalbard's largest settlement, and transfer to the harbor where we will embark on our ship.

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### Days 3–9

#### Summer in the Svalbard Wilderness

Svalbard is a true Arctic environment, where many iconic species spend their entire lives, entwined with the winter and spring sea ice. But with the arrival of summer—brief as it is—the archipelago bursts to life as countless migratory species settle in to take advantage of the season's endless daylight and abundant food.

Chief among Svalbard's summer migrants are seabirds, waterfowl, and other birds, joined by marine visitors such as baleen whales—including the mighty blue whale. Though wildlife sightings aren't guaranteed, these giants are sometimes observed foraging in the rich Arctic waters. Under the midnight sun, plant life also flourishes. While less diverse than in southern regions, Svalbard hosts hundreds of plant, lichen, and moss species, from hardy grasses to vibrant wildflowers. For a few brief months, snow and ice are replaced by pockets of green and splashes of color, framed by snowcapped peaks—a fleeting transformation of the High Arctic landscape.

Throughout the summer, sea ice fractures, melts and disperses. Many species that depend on it shift north and east where ice lingers, or remain ashore until it returns in late fall. While ice may be less frequent, the open water offers greater access to the archipelago's northern and eastern reaches. If we do encounter ice, we'll pause to explore it. At this time of year, wildlife is more often spotted in the water, along shorelines, or gathered in bustling bird colonies clinging to the cliffs.

Some terrain here is nearly vertical, with seabirds colonizing every possible ledge. Little auks, guillemots, and puffins nest in rocky crevices, spending the brief summer flying back and forth to feed themselves and their chicks before their first flights and plunges. Looking upward while seated in a Zodiac, the sky may seem alive with more birds than you can count, and sometimes we'll explore near these cliffs on foot. Keep watch for other iconic species too, such as Arctic terns, common eiders, and the occasional king eider. The sounds are astonishing—an Arctic "silence" feels alive with nature's calls. Standing beneath towering seabird cliffs renders visitors speechless.

Summer offers the chance to step ashore and walk on bare ground, though patches of snow can linger. We may hike into foothills, valleys, and Arctic beaches—land shared with polar bears. While sightings are farther inshore, their paw prints in sand or mud tell their story. Take time to look around and underfoot, where hardy vascular plants and wildflowers bloom. You might also spot driftwood—not from ancient Svalbard forests, but carried here by Arctic currents from Siberia, where tree trunks and branches are swept up in the Arctic currents, ultimately coming to rest here. Additionally, we may see reindeer, as they busily forage on the bountiful summer plant life.

Although the weather in midsummer is often cool—even crisp—in midsummer, it's possible to enjoy reasonably warm days in Svalbard. It's a surreal experience—feeling the warmth of the summer sun knowing you're less than 700 nautical miles from the North Pole.

As summer warms and sea ice recedes, glaciers come alive—meltwater hastening erosion, tidewater glaciers calving ice with thunderous force. From a Zodiac amid icebergs and brash ice, listen for the crackle of melting ice, the lap of currents, and Arctic terns calling overhead.

During summer, if conditions align, it might also be possible to visit some of Svalbard's residents, be they trappers or researchers. There are a number of trappers' cabins dotted across the archipelago, and the stories their occupants tell bring forth a life wrapped in resourcefulness, grit, humor, and hints of something approaching the magic of nature.

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With seven full expedition days in Svalbard, we aim to explore a wide range of locations. The order of our journey will be shaped by sea ice conditions, which vary daily. Potential destinations include the spectacular fjord systems of Hornsund, Bellsund, Isfjorden, Krossfjorden, Smeerenburgfjorden, Raudfjorden, Woodfjorden, Sorgfjorden, and others. These fjords feature dramatic mountains rising directly from the sea, folding into endless layers. Glaciers spill from the highlands, many reaching the water's edge where they calve into the sea.

Throughout Svalbard, we may find previously mentioned seabird colonies and other wildlife, as they are distributed throughout the archipelago of islands.

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### **Day 10** Disembarkation in Longyearbyen and Charter Flight to Helsinki

The time to say goodbye has come. Your adventure ends as it began, in the frontier settlement of Longyearbyen. From here, we'll transfer you to the airport for your charter flight to Helsinki, and group hotel night. Both are included in your Charter Flight & Hotel Package.

Day 11 on the 12-day itinerary

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### **Day 11** Depart Helsinki

After breakfast at your included hotel, make your way independently to the Helsinki airport for your onward flight home, or spend more time exploring the Finnish capital as prearranged.

Day 12 on the 12-day itinerary

# Arrival & Departure Details



\* Arrive at the hotel on Day 1 by 3pm or earlier. Day 1 includes a mandatory briefing.  
 International flights are not included in the cost of the voyage.



## Day 1

### Arriving And Hotel Night in Helsinki

You may arrive in Helsinki at any time during Day 1 of the itinerary. Your included accommodation will be at the airport hotel, so arrival transfers are not necessary.

Upon arrival at the hotel, you will receive a welcome letter outlining the departure information for the following day's flight. Please keep in mind that your hotel room may not be ready for check in until 3 p.m. A Quark Expeditions representative will be available in the lobby of the hotel later in the day to answer any questions.

- Arrive and spent the night in the Finnish capital

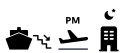


## Day 2

### Charter Flight and Embarkation in Longyearbyen

After a restful night at your hotel, you will join your flight to Longyearbyen. Upon arrival in Longyearbyen, you will be transferred from the airport to a drop-off point and your luggage will be taken directly to the ship. Details of ship transfer times will be provided during your arrival transfer. Due to port logistics, it is possible that you may need to board the vessel by Zodiac, rather than from the pier.

- Fly to Longyearbyen, Svalbard
- Embark on your Arctic expedition



## Disembarkation Day

### Disembarkation in Longyearbyen and Charter flight to Helsinki

Your voyage is scheduled to end back in Longyearbyen where you will disembark after breakfast. The process takes about an hour and, due to port logistics, may involve one last Zodiac ride to the pier. If time allows, you can spend the day exploring Longyearbyen before being transferred to the airport for your charter flight to Helsinki. Upon arrival in Helsinki, you will be transferred to your included hotel for the night.

- Disembark the ship after breakfast
- Potentially explore Longyearbyen before flying to Helsinki

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### Final Day

Departing from Helsinki

After breakfast at the hotel (which is included), make your way to the airport to catch your onward flight, or continue exploring locally.

### Airport Transfer

Included hotel accommodations are provided at the Helsinki airport; therefore, transfers are not required.

### Luggage Restrictions

This expedition includes charter flights. Your package includes one checked bag and one carry-on bag. Luggage weight restrictions on these flights are typically lower than those on international carriers. There is no option to pay for additional luggage. Specific weight limits will be confirmed in your final travel documents.



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# Book Your Next Adventure

Contact your travel professional or a Quark Expeditions Polar Travel Advisor.

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