**SVALBARD – THE PEARL OF THE ARCTIC**

Svalbard is located halfway between mainland Norway and the North Pole and offers one of the world’s most magnificent wildernesses. This vast glaciated archipelago invites to midnight sun, pack ice and dramatic mountain chains. During the Arctic summer months millions of seabirds arrive here to breed. Svalbard is also home to animals such as the charming walrus, the cute Arctic fox, the endemic Svalbard reindeer and last, but certainly not least, the king of the Arctic – the polar bear.

Established in 1999, PolarQuest has long experience of arranging small ship expedition cruises in Svalbard. Every expedition is unique and our aim is that each passenger will have the trip of a lifetime. When you call our office you will speak to members of staff, whom all have 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.

**SPRING, SUMMER AND AUTUMN IN SVALBARD**

**Thanks to the Gulf Current,** Svalbard has a mild climate compared to other areas on the same latitude. The average temperature in Longyearbyen in May - September is -5°C to +5°C. During winter ice and snow cover the archipelago, but when the warmer weather arrives, the ice loses its grip and the coasts become accessible by ship. Millions of seabirds arrive to their annual nesting sites and the archipelago teems with life.

Please remember that no Arctic season is exactly like the previous one. There is no way to tell what this year’s ice conditions will be. The following is however a general description of the season:

_**May and the beginning of June**_ are characterised by a lot of snow and a wonderful purity. It is still spring in the Arctic. This year’s polar bear cubs are still small and sometimes bears and seals can be seen on the fjord ice in front of the glaciers.

_**Summer arrives in late June.**_ 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 late August and it is now that the snow free landscape is most visible. 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. From mid-August you may be able to see the Ivory Gulls’ chicks, while some birds are preparing to migrate. Harp seals can be seen and female walruses with cubs are not an uncommon sight.
**OUR NEW EXPEDITION SHIP M/S SJØVEIEN ("SEAWAY")**

*M/S Sjøveien* (meaning the Seaway) was built in Bergen in 1964 for the Norwegian Government and she worked for them in various capacities. From 1979 until 1995 she was used as a training ship for mariners. Since 1995 she has been in private ownership and during the many years since, worked for the Norwegian coast guard. After being a hotel ship for the past few years, she is now being refurbished into a classic and exclusive passenger ship and will set sail towards Svalbard in the early summer of 2017.

She is a true beauty with wooden decks and vintage details. There is a lot of deck space on the main deck and there is also an excellent area on top of the bridge, from where you have wonderful views of the magical Svalbard scenery.

To accommodate a maximum of 12 passengers there are eight outside cabins, all with private facilities. On the lower deck there are four twin cabins with portholes. On the main deck there are two larger twin cabins with windows and one large superior cabin with a double bed and windows.

The eighth cabin is located on the upper deck and is a large superior cabin with windows. The dining area on the main deck is where you are served breakfast, lunch and dinner. Here is also a lounge area where you can relax with a cup of tea or coffee and listen to interesting talks by the guides. There is an international crew on board who speak English and the bridge is open for visitors.

*One of the secrets* behind a successful expedition cruise is the Zodiaks. With these safe and sturdy rubber boats we navigate among icebergs, cruise along glaciers and go ashore to get unique nature experiences.
SVALBARD ADVENTURE WITH M/S SJØVEIEN

The midnight sun reigns supreme, the bird colonies are teeming with life and the peaks of the dramatic mountain ranges are beautifully snow-covered. The ice still keeps the islands in its grip and we can admire the ever-changing ice formations. Spring has arrived and summer is just around the corner. This Arctic pearl has fascinated explorers for centuries, starting with Willem Barents, who discovered the main island Spitsbergen in 1596.

**Day 1: Longyearbyen**
We arrive in Longyearbyen and transfer to our hotel.

**Day 2 - 8: Svalbard**
We start our adventure in Svalbard by exploring Longyearbyen. In the afternoon we embark the expedition ship *M/S Sjøveien* and sail out through Isfjorden. 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 Zodiaks. 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.

**Virgohamna, Danskøya**
Two of the most courageous attempts to reach the North Pole started on the island of 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 pinkfooted geese nest in the area and if lucky we 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 number 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. The scientific village of Ny-Ålesund is situated in *Kongsfjorden*. It was from here that Amundsen and Nobile started their heroic expeditions to the North Pole.

### North Spitsbergen

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.

**Southwest Spitsbergen**

The grand fjords of Hornsund offer spectacular glaciers and a breathtaking landscape of towering mountain peaks, often reaching above the clouds. On a clear day we can see the summit of the highest mountain Hornsundtind, measuring 1431 meters. Hornsund is a favourite haunt for some of Svalbard’s polar bears and bearded seals are often seen resting on the fjord ice.

**Day 9: Longyearbyen**

Early morning we disembark our expedition ship and begin our journey back home.

**Please note:** Our exact route will depend on ice, weather conditions and wildlife. The places mentioned 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!

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**DATES & PRICES**

**SVALBARD ADVENTURE WITH M/S SJØVEIEN**

**Duration:** 9 days.

**Dates:** 26 May - 3 June, 22 - 30 June, 29 June - 7 July 2017.

**Group Size:** Maximum 12 passengers.

**Accommodation:** Cabin on board *M/S Sjøveien*, hotel. **Transport:** Expedition ship, Zodiacs.

**Price:** From USD 7,190 per person.

**Rate includes:**
- 7 nights on board *M/S Sjøveien*.
- 1 night in a hotel in Longyearbyen.
- All meals on board.
- 1 Expedition Leader and 1 guide.
- 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.

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EXPEDITION SVALBARD WITH M/S SJØVEIEN

The Arctic summer has arrived, the midnight sun reigns supreme and the purple saxifrage decorates the slopes. The ice is slowly starting to loosen its grip, which offers good opportunities to explore the seldom visited eastern parts of the archipelago. With ten nights on board we have plenty of time for grand nature experiences and wildlife encounters.

Day 1: Longyearbyen
We arrive in Longyearbyen, embark our expedition ship in the afternoon and sail out through the spectacular Isfjorden.

Day 2 - 10: Svalbard
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 Zodias. Here are some examples of places we may visit:

Northwest Spitsbergen
The scientific village of Ny-Ålesund is situated in Kongsfjorden. It was from here that Amundsen and Nobile started their heroic expeditions to the North Pole.

Two other courageous attempts to reach the North Pole started on the island of 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.
Magnificent 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. In Krossfjorden we revel in the beautifully sculptured front of the 14th of July Glacier to the raucous greeting of kittiwakes and Brünnich’s guillemots 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 Strait and Alkefjellet
If the ice allows we 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. Barentsøya and Edgeøya offer magnificent landscapes and vast tundra. Chances to encounter walruses, Arctic fox and Svalbard reindeer are good here.

Southwest Spitsbergen
The grand fjords of Hornsund offer spectacular glaciers and a breathtaking landscape of towering mountain peaks, often reaching above the clouds. On a clear day we can see the summit of the highest mountain, Hornsundtind, measuring 1431 meters. Hornsund is a favourite haunt for some of Svalbard’s polar bears and bearded seals are often seen resting on the fjord ice.

Day 11: Longyearbyen
Early morning we disembark our expedition ship and begin our journey back home.

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

DATES & PRICES
EXPEDITION SVALBARD WITH M/S SJØVEIEN

Duration: 11 days.
Group Size: Maximum 12 passengers.
Accommodation: Cabin on board M/S Sjøveien.
Transport: Expedition ship, Zodiacs.
Price: From USD 9 390 per person.

RATE INCLUDES:
10 nights on board M/S Sjøveien. All meals on board. 1 Expedition Leader and 1 guide. 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.

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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.