

# YOUR GUIDE TO NAVIGATING THE ARCTIC

In just 3 simple steps

Dreaming about an Arctic expedition but don't know where to go?

## STEP 1 - PICK A DESTINATION

**SPITSBERGEN**  
The Realm of the Polar Bear



**BAFFIN ISLAND**  
Wild Landscapes & Inuit Homeland



**GREENLAND**  
Vast Nature & Diverse Cultural History






When should you go and why?

**JUN - JUL**  
More ice improves the chances of seeing polar bears out hunting

**AUG - SEP**  
Less ice makes it easier to access Sam Ford Fjord and Pangnirtung

**SEP - OCT**  
Darkness improves visibility of the Northern Lights later in the year

What do you want to see?

 <p><b>Possible sightings of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Polar bears</li><li>• Walrus</li><li>• Whales</li><li>• Seabird colonies</li><li>• Reindeer</li><li>• Arctic foxes</li></ul>	<p><b>Possible sightings of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Whales</li><li>• Arctic hares</li><li>• Arctic foxes</li><li>• Polar bears</li><li>• Narwhals</li><li>• Walrus</li><li>• Wolves</li><li>• Lemmings</li></ul>	<p><b>Possible sightings of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Muskoxen</li><li>• Whales</li><li>• Polar bears</li><li>• Seals</li></ul>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Northwest Spitsbergen National Park</li><li>• South Spitsbergen National Park</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sam Ford Fjord</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scoresby Sound</li><li>• Greenland National Park</li><li>• Uunartoq hot springs</li><li>• Ilulissat Icefjord: UNESCO World Heritage Site</li><li>• Northern Lights</li></ul>
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Longyearben: one of the world's northernmost towns</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pangnirtung: Inuit art hub</li><li>• Kekerten: historic whaling station</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Norse and Viking historic sites</li><li>• Ittoqqotoormiit: modern Greenlandic community</li></ul>

What do you want to do?



Hiking, kayaking, zodiac cruising and snowshoeing



Hiking, kayaking and zodiac cruising



Hiking, kayaking and zodiac cruising

Now that you've got the lay of the land, it's time to pick an itinerary.

## STEP 2 - PICK AN ITINERARY

**Spitsbergen Highlights:**  
*Expedition In Brief*

**Spitsbergen Photography:**  
*In Search of Polar Bears*

**Spitsbergen In Depth**

**Spitsbergen Explorer**

**Intro to Spitsbergen**

**Three Arctic Islands:**  
*Iceland, Greenland, Spitsbergen*

**Iceland, Greenland & Baffin Island:**  
*Arctic Circle Traverse*

**Canada to Greenland:**  
*Baffin Bay Explorer*

*Experience both itineraries for the most in-depth exploration of Greenland and Baffin Island*

**East Greenland**  
*Northern Lights*

**Canada to Greenland:**  
*Baffin Bay Explorer*

**Arctic Express:**  
*Greenland's Northern Lights*

**Three Arctic Islands:**  
*Iceland, Greenland, Spitsbergen*

Frequently asked questions

**Why would I choose a longer Spitsbergen itinerary over a shorter one?**

On a longer itinerary, there are more opportunities to [see wildlife](#) and to [explore more islands](#) in the Svalbard archipelago. It depends on how much of the islands you want to see.

If you're short on time, we offer 2 shorter trips that will hit Spitsbergen's highlights.

**How are the two Baffin Island itineraries different?**

Iceland, Greenland & Baffin Island offers the [most varied experience in terms of cultural, natural and geographical highlights](#), plus a more in-depth voyage around East, South and West Greenland.

Canada to Greenland offers a more [in-depth exploration of the coast of Baffin Island](#), before crossing over to Greenland.

**How are the three regions in Greenland different from each other?**

Go to East Greenland if you want to:

- Explore the [world's largest national park](#)
- See the [largest fjord system](#) on the planet

Go to West Greenland if you want to:

- Explore [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#)
- Be immersed in Greenlandic village culture

Go to South Greenland if you want to:

- Relax in hot springs in [Uunartoq](#)
- Visit historic [Norse and Viking sites](#)

*Book East Greenland Northern Lights to catch these highlights!*

*Book Canada to Greenland: Baffin Bay Explorer to catch these highlights!*

Learn more

Download our Spitsbergen Guide

Download our Baffin Island Guide

Download our Greenland Guide

Ready to book?

## STEP 3 - CONTACT YOUR TRAVEL AGENT



OCEANWIDE  
EXPEDITIONS

# Seasons in Spitsbergen

## June - Late Spring

**M**idnight Sun is at its maximum height providing maximum light availability, temperatures are at about 5 degrees Celsius. A lot of snow on the tundra, where snow-free patches appear and lakes begin to thaw with open leads along their shores. The heads of the fjords are still covered with one years fjord-ice (about a meter thick). Pack-ice is usually reaching to and against the coast of North Spitsbergen, and the Southern parts of Spitsbergen, circumnavigations are virtually ruled out.

**S**ea birds are courting, beginning to lay eggs and incubating (maximum number of sea-birds in the colonies). Tundra - birds are also courting, beginning to lay eggs and incubating (Geese start earlier at the end of May). First flowers like *Saxifraga oppositifolia* start blooming.

- Bears on the pack-ice and on land
- Walruses on haul-outs just south of the pack-ice
- Ringed Seal at their breathing holes on the fjord - ice
- Bearded Seals along the edges of the ice
- Reindeer on the lower parts of the partly snow-free tundra

## July - Summer

**M**idnight Sun is a bit lower but still near maximum light availability, temperatures about 5 degrees Celsius. Snow is gradually disappearing from the tundra, lakes get free of ice. The fjord-ice is drifting out of the heads of the fjords. Pack-ice is usually retreating from the coast of North Spitsbergen, and the Southern parts of Spitsbergen. Circumnavigation usually possible with increasing probability toward the end of the month.

- Sea birds are hatching and young are being fed
- Tundra - birds are hatching, geese are moulting. Eiders still breed on isolated islets, depending on when the sea-ice retreated
- Flowers everywhere.
- Bears on the pack-ice and on land
- Walruses on haul-outs just south of the pack-ice
- Ringed Seals in the fjords
- Bearded Seals near glacier fronts
- Reindeer on the snow-free tundra



## August - Late Summer

**M**idnight Sun is approaching the northern horizon. Beautiful low light, with decreasing intensity, temperatures about 5 degrees Celsius. Snow has disappeared from the tundra, lakes are ice-free. Fjords free of fjord-ice. Pack-ice has usually retreated from the coasts of West Spitsbergen and sometimes also from Nordaustlandet. Circumnavigation mostly possible.

- Seabirds are fledging and leaving Spitsbergen, but Kittiwakes and Fulmars are present in the colonies during the whole month
- Tundra - birds have fledged and are leaving Spitsbergen, but geese, divers, and ducks have not yet started migration.
- Eiders still breed on isolated islets, depending on when the sea-ice retreated
- Flowers are fewer, but a few saxifrages can be seen the whole month
- Bears on the pack-ice and on land. If the pack-ice has rapidly retreated there are many bears on land
- Walruses on haul-outs in north and east Spitsbergen
- Ringed Seals in the fjords
- Bearded Seals near glacier fronts
- Reindeer on the snow-free tundra

## September - Autumn

**T**he Sun is setting, midnight darkness begins in the second half of the month. Rapidly decreasing intensity of daylight, temperatures 0 - 5 degrees Celsius. First ice on lakes, first new snow on the tundra. After night frosts easy walking on the dry and frozen tundra. Fjords free of fjord-ice. Pack-ice has retreated from the coasts of West Spitsbergen and from Nordaustlandet. Circumnavigation virtually always possible.

- Seabirds have left Spitsbergen, except for Black Guillemots, Kittiwakes and Fulmars
- Tundra - birds are leaving Spitsbergen, except Purple Sandpipers and Snow Buntings
- Eiders and Arctic Terns still can be seen with large young ones
- A single flower ( Saxifrage especially can still be seen )
- Bears on the pack-ice and on land. If the pack-ice has rapidly retreated there are many bears on land.
- Walruses on haul-outs in north and east Spitsbergen
- Ringed Seals in the fjords
- Bearded Seals near glacier fronts
- Reindeer on the snow-free tundra



## October - Early Winter

Short days, long nights, Aurora Borealis, temperatures minus 5 - 0 degrees Celsius. Ice on lakes, snow on the tundra. Difficult walking on the snow-covered tundra. Heads of the fjords freezing over. Beginning of winter storms. Pack-ice has retreated from the coasts of West Spitsbergen and from Nordaustlandet. Circumnavigation virtually always possible.

- Seabirds have left Spitsbergen, except for Black Guillemots and Fulmars
- Tundra - birds have left Spitsbergen, except for Snow Buntings, and Ptarmigans which stay year round
- Eiders can still be seen at sea
- Bears on the pack-ice and on land. If the pack-ice has rapidly retreated there are many bears on land
- Walruses on haul-outs in north and east Spitsbergen
- Ringed Seals in the fjords and on the new fjord-ice near their breathing holes
- Bearded Seals near glacier fronts
- Reindeer on the snow-covered tundra

