



CHEESEMANS' ECOLOGY SAFARIS

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Svalbard Islands ***Realm of the Polar Bear*** July 4 to 17, 2021



Polar Bear with Cub
© Scott Davis

SAFARI OVERVIEW

Sail through Norway's Arctic past glaciers lit by the midnight sun to find a most mythic predator: the polar bear. This polar adventure is to the famed Svalbard Archipelago of northern Norway. Located between the North Pole and Norway, these islands are home to one of the greatest concentrations of polar bears on Earth. This region remains wild and pristine with its vast mountains, dramatic fjords, massive glaciers, and picturesque icebergs coupled with a myriad of Arctic wildlife. The primary mission of professional photographer leader Scott Davis is to provide you with skills and opportunities to produce quality images of unique Arctic wildlife and beautiful landscapes.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Adventure north of the Arctic Circle to seek out polar bears in 24 hours of daylight.
- Zodiac cruise up to the base of striking cliffs to view nesting seabird colonies.
- Slip into Svalbard's many inlets and straits where larger ships cannot access.
- Search for beluga whales, blue whales, humpback whales, and walrus.
- Improve your photography skills with biologist-turned-professional-photographer Scott Davis.

LEADERS: Scott Davis and Agnès Brenière.

DAYS: 14, including estimated travel time. 10 nights aboard the ship.

GROUP SIZE: 12.

COST: \$12,800 per person, single occupancy (each person has a private cabin if they choose), not including airfare. See the *Costs* section on page 5.

Date	Description	Accommodation	Meals
Jul 4	Travel to Norway.		
Jul 5	Arrive in Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway.	Radisson Blu Polar Hotel Spitsbergen, Longyearbyen	—
Jul 6	Embark on our ship in Longyearbyen.	Aboard our ship	B, D
Jul 7–15	Voyage throughout the Svalbard Archipelago with Zodiac cruises and landings for unbelievable Arctic photography.		B, L, D
Jul 16	Disembark in Longyearbyen for flights homeward.		B
Jul 17	Arrive home, depending on flight schedules.		

LEADERS

Scott Davis

Scott is a professional photographer specializing in wildlife, nature, and travel. Originally trained as a wildlife and marine biologist, his research and photo assignments took him to the far corners of the globe. National Geographic, BBC, Animal Planet, and other renowned magazines have used his photography. His patience for teaching and love of capturing the essence of his subjects make him one of our most popular tour leaders.



Agnès Brenière

Agnès is a self-taught naturalist who studied environmental law and management; she is devoted to helping others discover nature and is a committed conservationist. She worked in partnership with the League for the Protection of Birds in France, initiating and leading a project developing access to nature for disabled people. She specializes in guiding in the Polar Regions and the Russian Far East, where she shares her passion for these fascinating habitats and their wildlife. Agnès is also a keen photographer and one of the authors of *Journey to Antarctica*.

SHIP

We chose the most well-equipped and comfortable ship that sails the Svalbard archipelago in the small ship category. The ice-strengthened hull and shallow draft enables us to explore and photograph channels and inlets other ships simply cannot navigate. The ship is equipped with Zodiacs for cruising and shore excursions. Enjoy excellent wildlife and scenic viewing from a dual-level, large observation deck at the front and large windows in the social areas. The spacious and comfortable lounge provides room to relax, gather socially, edit photos, and attend informative lectures. The cabins are comfortable and each person has his/her own private cabin (if you choose) with private bathroom facilities. The chef serves wonderful cuisine. With only twelve passengers, this ship is perfect for exploring the beautiful inlets of the Svalbard archipelago. See the *Deck Plan* on page 9.



DETAILED ITINERARY

Jul 4 ~ Travel to Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway

Travel through Oslo, Norway on your way to Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway.

Jul 5 ~ Arrive in Longyearbyen

Arrive in Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway, for an overnight stay before boarding the ship the next day.

Longyearbyen is a Scandinavian town located on the island of Spitsbergen, the largest in the Svalbard Archipelago. Three other small settlements on Spitsbergen include another 1,000 people with most in the Russian settlement of Barentsburg. The rest of the 62,000 square kilometers of Spitsbergen, and the remainder of the archipelago, are largely pristine. While walking around Longyearbyen, you'll be surrounded by tiny wildflowers beginning to bloom, and may encounter wildlife such as Svalbard ptarmigan and snow buntings nesting on the outskirts of town. Common eiders, parasitic jaegers (arctic skuas) and arctic terns nest along the coastal flats adjoining the town.

A note about Norwegian geography terms (as seen in many of the following place names): "bukta" means bay, "sund" means sound, "sundet" or "stretet" means channel or strait, "øy" or "øya" means island, "landet" means land or country, "breen" means glacier, and, of course, "fjord" or "fjorden" means fjord or inlet.

Jul 6 ~ Embark on our ship

Today you can choose to do some last-minute shopping, visit the excellent museum next to the Radisson Blu hotel, or simply explore the shore for birds. Side trips to other locales along the coast of Isfjorden are available. You'll board the ship in the late afternoon.

The waters around these islands are very calm compared to the Antarctic. Due to the shallow seas and the warming waters of the Gulf Stream, the climate is much milder than one would expect so far north. During this in-depth voyage, you will have ample opportunities to land ashore, Zodiac cruise, and view wildlife from the decks of our ship.

Flexibility is paramount in expedition travel. Our itinerary depends on the weather and ice conditions. We emphasize photography and observation of polar bears and other Arctic wildlife along with unique and beautiful landscapes. Our small group size gives us the flexibility to stay at a perfect photographic moment for however long needed.

Jul 7–15 ~ Voyage through the Svalbard Archipelago

Your expedition will have an incredible amount of freedom to explore the Svalbard archipelago. In the land of 24-hr daylight, you'll search for Arctic wildlife of all shapes and sizes. The region hosts a myriad of species that will present you with great opportunities to capture world-class images. Your small group expedition will have the time, flexibility, and freedom to cruise around the shores. When you land on shore, you'll have the opportunity to hike, explore, and photograph wildlife and landscapes.

You'll visit fantastic bird cliffs where black-legged kittiwakes, northern fulmars, and several species of alcids breed which include dovekie, black guillemot, thick-billed murre (Brünnich's guillemot), and Atlantic puffin. You'll seek out polar bears, seals, and ivory gulls where ice abounds. You'll also have time to get inland a bit to see goose colonies – pink-footed and barnacle – along with common eider, king eider, and long-tailed duck (oldsquaw).



Arctic Fox Pup
© Scott Davis

While walking, stay alert for nesting shorebirds, such as red phalaropes, terns, and skuas. Arctic terns and parasitic jaegers (arctic skuas) are quick to dive bomb if they are disturbed. While on land, keep an eye out for arctic fox and Svalbard reindeer (an endemic subspecies with very short legs) foraging during the plentiful summer months.

Some favorite landing sites:

Liefdefjorden ~ You may sail to the mouth of Liefdefjorden and go ashore for a walk on the tundra of Andøya. Many geese feed on the tundra lushness at this time of year and you may also see the less common king eider. Monacobreen, with its five-kilometer-long face, is an impressive glacier at the end of this large fjord. Polar bears have been seen on the glacier, and the surrounding sea is a favorite feeding spot for thousands of kittiwakes.

Raudfjorden ~ Along the north coast of Spitsbergen, Raudfjorden is a beautiful fjord with spectacular glaciers. It is home to ringed and bearded seals, seabird colonies, and surprisingly rich vegetation.

Ytre Norskøya ~ The small island of Ytre Norskøya, on the northwest coast of Spitsbergen, has an accessible breeding ground of seabirds and is a beautiful place to hike along the colorful lichen covered cliffs.

Krossfjorden and Kongsfjorden ~ On the west side of Spitsbergen, Krossfjorden and Kongsfjorden are good places to Zodiac cruise along the famed Fourteenth of July Glacier or Fjortende Julibreen and other beautiful glaciers.

Alkhornet ~ At the mouth of Isfjorden, the largest of all Spitsbergen's fjords, you may land at Alkhornet where arctic foxes search the cliff base for fallen chicks. Also, Svalbard reindeer graze the luxuriant wildflower-covered vegetation, creating some of the best reindeer photography in the archipelago.

Jul 16 ~ Disembark and fights homeward

The entire group will disembark the ship in Longyearbyen around 9:00am and either travel to the airport or into town for those departing later in the day.

Jul 17 ~ Arrive home

Arrive home depending on your flight schedule.

COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)

Cost

Type	Cost per Person
Trip Cost, single occupancy*	\$12,800
*Single occupancy aboard the ship, but double occupancy at Longyearbyen hotel.	

Costs are per person, single occupancy, not including airfare, singles extra for your night in the hotel. See *Included* and *Not Included* sections for more details.

If you are a single traveler, we will find a roommate for you at the hotel in Longyearbyen, but if we cannot find you a roommate, we may charge you a single supplement. If you prefer a single room for your night in the hotel, it costs extra and is subject to availability.

We cannot guarantee a specific cabin number, but if changes occur, we will assign a cabin of equal or greater value.

Payment Schedule

Payment	Due Date	Amount per Person
Deposit	Due now to reserve your space	\$3,000
Second	December 1, 2019	\$3,000
Third	August 1, 2020	\$3,000
Final	February 1, 2021	Remaining Balance

Payments are due based on the schedule above. All reservations require a deposit to confirm reservation of your space.

Cancellations

Refunds are given depending on the time left before departure according to the following table. The cancellation fee of \$300 per person can be applied toward another trip if reserved within six months of the cancelled trip's departure date. Cancellations are non-transferrable.

Dates	Forfeited Amount per Person
On or before November 30, 2020	\$300
December 1 to December 31, 2020	10% of trip cost
January 1 to January 31, 2021	40% of trip cost
On or after February 1, 2021	100% of trip cost

Included

- All leaders, transport, park entry fees, landing fees, and permits for all activities unless described as optional.
- Accommodations (double occupancy, singles extra) for the night of July 5 in Longyearbyen.
- Ten nights on board our ship.
- Meals from breakfast on July 6 through breakfast on July 16, except meals listed in *Not Included* section.
- A group transfer from the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel in Longyearbyen to the ship on July 6 and a group transfer from the ship to the airport or into town upon disembarkation on July 16.
- Trip Materials – information about flights, packing, entry and departure requirements, airport transfers, gratuities, etc.

Not Included

- All airfare, airport and departure taxes, and excess baggage fees. Round-trip airfare is approximately \$1,600 to \$2,900 between the US and Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway, depending on origin.
- Passport and visa fees.
- Lunch on July 6 in Longyearbyen.
- Transfer from the airport to the hotel upon arrival in Longyearbyen.
- We can arrange extra hotel nights for an extra cost.
- Gratuities – tipping is always discretionary. However, we suggest budgeting about \$20 to \$25 per participant per day for July 6 to July 15 (about \$200 to \$250 total per participant) to be distributed among the ship's crew and assistant guide.
- Mandatory emergency medical and evacuation insurance. For more information see www.cheesemans.com/travel-insurance.
- Optional trip cancellation insurance. For more information see www.cheesemans.com/travel-insurance.
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone calls, medical costs or hospitalization, room service, alcoholic and other beverages, items not on the regular menu, etc. If you have special dietary needs, please indicate them on your Reservation Form.

SIGN UP

Please contact us first to check availability, reserve your space, and obtain a Reservation Form. To confirm your reservation, we require a deposit and signed form from each participant.

Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris

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OTHER DETAILS

Climate

You will visit the Arctic during its summer with 24 hours of daylight. Weather patterns may be highly variable, so bring appropriate attire to handle a mix of weather conditions including wind, snow, rain, and sun. Expect temperatures in the 30s and 40s°F (0 to 9°C), but weather fronts can cause temperatures to either drop further or rise to the 50s and low 60s°F (10 to 17°C).

Fitness Level

You must be fit enough to get from the ship into the Zodiacs via a six-foot ladder with staff assisting you above and below. Once ashore, you must be able to get in and out of the Zodiacs including occasionally on a rocky coastline. You will have opportunities for short, relaxed hikes, usually less than a mile over varied terrain (tundra, flat areas, hilly and grassy areas, or rocky slopes) and, at times, uphill for about 20 to 30min. Please contact us if you have any health concerns that may make this trip challenging.



Ladder to Access Zodiacs

Seasickness

Don't let a fear of seasickness scare you away! For all but the most sensitive, seasickness is rarely a problem in this region. It's a good idea to bring medication if you get seasick or are unsure, but you may find that you do not need it after a couple days once you have your "sea legs." Even those who have experienced seasickness reported that the incredible wildlife and overall experience were well worth the temporary discomfort. Read our suggestions for coping with seasickness at www.cheesemans.com/seasickness and contact us if you have any concerns.

Flights

Airfare is not included in trip costs. Detailed logistical information and the contact information for our recommended flight-ticketing agent are included in the Trip Materials we will send you. Please let us know if you are arriving earlier or staying later in Longyearbyen, as we are happy to assist you with any extra overnights that you might want to arrange.

Flights you (or a travel agent) book: Arrive in Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway (LYR) on July 5. Depart Longyearbyen, Svalbard (LYR) after 11:00am on July 16, as we disembark from the ship at 9:00am and recommend at least one hour to check-in before departure.

Terms and Conditions

Read our current Terms and Conditions at <https://cheesemans.com/terms-and-conditions>.

Conservation

Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris is passionate about conserving the precious regions that we travel to and supports many conservation efforts. By visiting these areas, we contribute to sustainable conservation of these valuable wildlife habitats. We urge you to support conservation organizations that protect and restore natural habitats and write letters to tourism and government agencies to promote work in preserving wildlife.

We aim to make all our trips carbon neutral by splitting the cost of carbon offsetting with our participants. For your convenience, the optional donation amount for your half of the carbon offset will be indicated on your invoice. We source high quality offsets through CarbonTree Conservation Fund, a non-profit we helped found, supporting pioneering forest conservation in the Rio Bravo Reserve in Belize, a Nature Conservancy project (www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/latin-america/belize/rio-bravo-conservation-area/).

FAQS

Why is this the best ship?

With only twelve passenger cabins, our ship is smaller than most ships in Svalbard, allowing you to travel farther and into smaller inlets than other cruise ships. Our small group size gives you the flexibility to stay at perfect photographic moments to capture world-class images, thus you will see things other ships miss. With two leaders and only twelve passengers, you will receive plenty of individual attention. We also use enough Zodiacs to allow plenty of room for you and your photography gear.

Why do we sail in June and July?

A decent amount of sea ice is present during this time, which provides a good platform to walk onto the shore. When this "ice platform" melts, it is almost impossible to climb onto the shore and over the shoreline banks, which decreases the number of landing possibilities. Polar bears stay with the sea ice and actively look for and hunt seals, thus providing more opportunities to see them. Also, very large seabird colonies nest along the cliffs during this time of year.

Will we see anything different in June vs. July?

Because our two expeditions visit the archipelago back to back, spanning four weeks, your wildlife encounters will not vary much, but the July expedition *may* have slightly more opportunities to see wildflowers.

DECK PLAN



Deck plan and cabin sizes are not to scale and shows the number of beds, not actual bed arrangement.

Cabins #101, 102, 107, and 108 all have one twin bed with a private bath.

Cabins #103–106, 109, 110, 201, and 202 all have one double bed with a private bath.