



CHEESEMAN'S ECOLOGY SAFARIS

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Svalbard Islands

Extended Realm of the Polar Bear

August 29 to September 17, 2022



Polar Bear

© Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris

SAFARI OVERVIEW

Sail through Norway's Arctic 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 iconic Arctic wildlife. Each day during this extended itinerary, you will sail to new places to hike and walk, photograph, and explore by Zodiac. Visiting this time of year when the waters are more ice-free, you can sail to the most northeastern island of Nordaustlandet, an important location for walrus and polar bears, and perhaps circumnavigate the largest island of the archipelago, Spitsbergen. With only 12 passengers and three leaders on board, you'll have ample opportunities to learn about wildlife behaviors and photography techniques and get the most out of what the Arctic offers.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Six more days than our typical Svalbard expedition means more opportunities to explore the archipelago and photograph wildlife.
- Adventure north of the Arctic Circle to seek out polar bears, arctic foxes, Svalbard reindeer, walrus, whales, and seals.
- Our smaller ship means visits to Svalbard's many inlets and straits where larger ships cannot access.
- Photograph dramatic mountainous and coastal landscapes during the golden sunrise and sunset hours.
- Improve your photography skills with biologist-turned-professional-photographer Scott Davis and learn about Svalbard's ecology and history with Sam and Agnès.

LEADERS: Scott Davis, Sam Blanc, and Agnès Brenière.

DAYS: 20, including estimated travel time. 16 nights aboard the ship.

GROUP SIZE: 12.

COST: \$17,000 per person, single occupancy for lower deck cabins and double occupancy for main deck cabins, not including airfare. See the *Costs* section on page 6.

Date	Description	Accommodation	Meals
Aug 29	Travel to Norway.		
Aug 30	Arrive in Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway.	Funken Lodge, Longyearbyen	—
Aug 31	Embark on our ship in Longyearbyen.	Aboard our ship	B, D
Sep 1–15	Voyage throughout the Svalbard Archipelago with Zodiac cruises and landings for unbelievable Arctic photography.		B, L, D
Sep 16	Disembark in Longyearbyen for flights homeward.		B
Sep 17	Arrive home.		

LEADERS

Scott Davis

Scott is a professional photographer (www.scottdavisimages.com/) specializing in wildlife, nature, and travel. Originally trained as a wildlife and marine biologist, his research and photo assignments have taken him to the far corners of the globe and all seven continents. National Geographic, BBC, Animal Planet, NY Times, and 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*.

Sam Blanc

Sam spent three years as the head of educational programs for the League for the Protection of Birds in France and has an incredible eye for spotting camouflaged birds and mammals in the cryptic tundra of Svalbard. He specializes in guiding in the polar region, and his photos have won many prizes. His lectures about ice and the explorers of Svalbard, plus his knowledge of wildlife and wildflowers will keep you entranced during our voyage.



SHIP

We chose the most well-equipped and comfortable vessel in the small ship class. The ice-strengthened hull and shallow draft enables you 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 large, dual-level 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. You have your own private cabin for lower deck cabins (or shared for main deck cabins), all with private bathroom facilities. With only twelve passengers, this ship is perfect for exploring places bigger ships cannot navigate. See the *Deck Plan* on page 9.



DETAILED ITINERARY

Aug 29 ~ Travel to Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway

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

Aug 30 ~ 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. Common eiders, parasitic jaegers (arctic skuas) and arctic terns nest along the coastal flats

adjoining the town.

Aug 31 ~ Embark on our ship

Today you can choose to do some last-minute shopping, visit the excellent museum next to the Radisson Blu Hotel, explore the shore for birds, or take a side trip to other locales along the coast of Isfjorden. 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.



Arctic Terns
© Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris

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, complying with local regulations regarding wildlife sightings in Svalbard. Our small group size gives us the flexibility to stay at a perfect photographic moment for however long needed according to the wildlife behavior and reactions.

Sep 1–15 ~ Voyage through the Svalbard Archipelago

Your expedition will have an incredible amount of freedom to explore the Svalbard archipelago. With six more days than our typical expedition, you'll have more opportunities for polar bear sightings and for finding other Arctic wildlife of all shapes and sizes. The region hosts species that will present you with great opportunities to capture world-class images. Your small group expedition allows for flexibility and freedom to cruise around the shores. When on shore, you'll have the opportunity to hike, explore, and photograph wildlife and landscapes. You'll also find that Svalbard is a geologist's paradise with all the ancient colorful rock strata exposed and ready to explore.



Arctic Fox Pup
© Scott Davis

You'll see many bird species, such as Atlantic puffins, black guillemots, black-legged kittiwakes, and northern fulmars. You'll also have time to get inland to see pink-footed and barnacle geese plus common eider. Be aware that 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 short legs). At this time of year, fox pups are approaching adult size and wandering out of the dens, and you may even see some getting their white winter coats! Male and female Svalbard reindeer will be shedding their antlers' velvet, signaling their readiness to begin the

mating/rutting season. October is typically the prime rutting season, but you may be lucky enough to witness some fights between males. Read more about some of our favorite landing sites below.

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.

Liefdefjorden

The end of this fjord encompasses the broad, impressive glacier front of Monacobreen. Polar bears regularly visit this fjord, searching for seals, birds, and eggs to eat. At this time of year, many geese feed on the lush tundra, and keep an eye out for the rare king eider.

Ytre Norskøya

Hike along the colorful lichen-covered cliffs on this small island on the northwest coast of Spitsbergen.

Krossfjorden and Kongsfjorden

On the west side of Spitsbergen, Zodiac cruise along the famed Fourteenth of July Glacier (or Fjortende Julibreen, its Norwegian name) and other beautiful glacier fronts, such as Lilliehöökibreen, one of the largest, at 22km in length.

Alkhornet

At the mouth of Isfjorden, the largest of all Spitsbergen's fjords, you may land to look for arctic foxes searching the cliff base for fallen birds and Svalbard reindeer grazing the luxuriant vegetation, creating some of the best reindeer photography in the archipelago.

Nordaustlandet

This northeastern island is known for its large icecaps, Austfonna and Vestfonna, and the glaciers that stream from these icecaps. Bråsvellbreen is a 45km-long glacier that streams from Austfonna, and it often provides stunning ice wall/ice cliff photography opportunities. This island is also an important area for polar bears and as a walrus haul-out site. Depending on the wildlife activity here, you may circumnavigate this island.

Sep 16 ~ Disembark and fights homeward

The entire group will disembark the ship in Longyearbyen around 9:00am and either transfer to the airport or, if you depart later in the day, into town.

Sep 17 ~ Arrive home



Polar Bear
© Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris

COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)

Cost

Type	Cost per Person
Trip Cost, single occupancy on lower deck*	\$17,000
Trip Cost, double occupancy on main deck	\$17,000
*Single occupancy aboard the ship, but double occupancy at Longyearbyen hotel.	

Costs are per person, single occupancy for lower deck cabins and double occupancy for main deck cabins, not including airfare. 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	January 15, 2021	\$3,000
Third	September 15, 2021	\$3,000
Final	March 15, 2022	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 January 14, 2022	\$300
January 15 to February 14, 2022	10% of trip cost
February 15 to March 14, 2022	40% of trip cost
On or after March 15, 2022	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 August 30 in Longyearbyen.
- Sixteen nights on board our ship.

- Meals from breakfast on August 31 through breakfast on September 16, except meals listed in *Not Included* section.
- A group transfer from the Funken Lodgel in Longyearbyen to the ship on August 31 and a group transfer from the ship to the airport or into town on September 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, depending on origin.
- Passport and visa fees.
- Lunch on August 31 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 August 31 to September 15 (about \$320 to \$400 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.

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 Website: www.cheesemans.com
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OTHER DETAILS

Climate

You will visit the Arctic during its late summer with long 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.

Fitness Level

You must be able to get in and out of the Zodiacs, from the ship, via a six-foot ladder with staff assisting above and below you. Once ashore, you must be also able to get in and out of the Zodiacs onto the beach. You'll have opportunities for a range of activities from easy, short hikes to longer, more vigorous, snowshoeing hikes for those interested. 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 August 30. Depart Longyearbyen, Svalbard (LYR) after 11:00am on September 16, as you disembark the ship at 9:00am and we 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

What is the difference between sailing in June and July versus August and September?

June-July: Depending on the year, sea ice is still present along the coast or in fjords. Polar bears tend to stay with the sea ice and actively look for and hunt seals, thus providing opportunities to see them. Polar bears also hunt close to glacier fronts and are regularly seen walking on land. Some polar bear mothers may have young cubs. Also, very large seabird colonies nest along the cliffs during this time of year. The tundra is blooming with carpets of tiny but colorful flowers. The sun is out 24-hours. The route the ship takes is generally up the western side of Spitsbergen, across the top and over to parts of Nordaustlandet, and then back down the western side to Longyearbyen.

August-September: With less sea ice, you should be able to visit sites that are blocked earlier in the season. Polar bears are still present, and mothers may have cubs following behind them. Bird colonies will have dwindled since breeding season is over, but you will still see seabirds. The tundra is usually starting to get its fall colors, and snow may fall, creating beautiful contrasting landscapes. Sunrises and sunsets with long twilight periods make excellent golden light for photography. With the number of days in this itinerary and the absence of packed sea ice, you might be able to circumnavigate Spitsbergen.

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.