



CHEESEMANS' ECOLOGY SAFARIS

2059 Camden Ave. #419
San Jose, CA 95124 USA
(800) 527-5330 (408) 741-5330
info@cheesemans.com
cheesemans.com

Svalbard Islands

Realm of the Polar Bear

July 7 to July 20, 2024



Polar Bear
© Scott Davis

SAFARI OVERVIEW

Sail past glaciers through Norway's Arctic 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 iconic 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 that larger ships cannot access.
- Search for walrus, beluga whales, blue whales, and humpback whales.
- Improve your photography skills with biologist-turned-professional-photographer Scott Davis.

LEADERS: Scott Davis and Milo Burcham.

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

GROUP SIZE: 12.

COST: \$13,775 per person, single occupancy for lower deck cabins and double occupancy for main deck cabins, not including airfare. See the *Costs* section on page 5.

Date	Description	Accommodation	Meals
Jul 7	Travel to Norway.		
Jul 8	Arrive in Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway.	Radisson Blu Polar Hotel Spitsbergen, Longyearbyen	—
Jul 9	Embark on our ship in Longyearbyen.	Aboard our ship	B, D
Jul 10–18	Voyage throughout the Svalbard Archipelago with Zodiac cruises and landings for unbelievable Arctic photography.		B, L, D
Jul 19	Disembark in Longyearbyen for flights homeward.		B
Jul 20	Arrive home.		

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 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.



Milo Burcham

Milo, a wildlife biologist and photographer with 32 years of experience, calls Cordova, Alaska home. His recent research focused on Black Bears in Prince William Sound, but he's worked with various species. With over 30 years as a professional wildlife photographer, he's published images in National Geographic, Ranger Rick, Audubon, and more. Milo collaborated with BBC on Planet Earth and Edens, and led a month-long boat expedition for a conservation project along Alaska's Arctic coast.

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

Jul 7 ~ Travel to Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway

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

Jul 8 ~ 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.

Jul 9 ~ 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.



Svalbard Reindeer
© Debbie Thompson

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, 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.

Jul 10–18 ~ 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 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.

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 pink-footed and barnacle geese along with common eider, king eider, and long-tailed duck (oldsquaw).

While walking, stay alert for nesting shorebirds, such as red phalaropes, terns, and skuas. 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) foraging during the plentiful summer months. 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.



Arctic Terns

© Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris

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. 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

Hike along the colorful lichen-covered cliffs on this small island on the northwest coast of Spitsbergen. There is an accessible breeding ground of seabirds here.

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 Lilliehöökreen, 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 for Svalbard reindeer grazing the luxuriant wildflower-covered vegetation, creating some of the best reindeer photography in the archipelago.



Arctic Fox Pup
© Scott Davis

Jul 19 ~ 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.

Jul 20 ~ Arrive home

COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)

Cost

Type	Cost per Person
Trip Cost, single occupancy on lower deck*	\$13,775
Trip Cost, double occupancy on main deck	\$13,775
*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	\$6,000
Final	January 28, 2024	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 27, 2023	\$300
November 28 to December 27, 2023	10% of trip cost
December 28, 2023 to January 27, 2024	40% of trip cost
On or after January 28, 2024	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 8 in Longyearbyen.
- Ten nights on board our ship.
- Meals from breakfast on July 9 through breakfast on July 19, except meals listed in *Not Included* section.
- A group transfer from the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel in Longyearbyen to the ship on July 9 and a group transfer from the ship to the airport or into town on July 19.
- Trip Planning 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 \$1,500 to \$3,000 between the US and Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway, depending on origin.
- Passport and visa fees.
- COVID tests.
- Lunch on July 9 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 9 to July 18 (about \$200 to \$250 total per participant) to be distributed among the ship's crew and assistant guide.
- Mandatory emergency 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

Email: info@cheesemans.com

Website: www.cheesemans.com

WhatsApp: (408) 741-5330 | Skype: CheesemansEcologySafaris

Phone: (800) 527-5330 or (408) 741-5330

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 and gear to handle a mix of conditions including wind, snow, rain, and sun. Expect temperatures in the 40s°F (4 to 8°C) during the day and in the 30s° (0 to 4°C) at night, 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 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.

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.



Ladder to Access Zodiacs

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 8. Depart Longyearbyen, Svalbard (LYR) after 11:00am on July 19, as you disembark from 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

Our company ethos has always regarded conservation as inseparable from responsible tourism. We struggle with the dilemma that traveling worldwide expends climate-changing carbon. However, we wholeheartedly believe that traveling with us will cultivate your passion for conserving our beautiful world, while stimulating each destination's local economies.

We take you to amazing destinations, navigating far and wide, and when we do, we recognize that the world pays a steep price. Taking this into account, we have made each trip carbon neutral (<https://cheesemans.com/carbon-neutral>).

And, by signing up with us, you pledge to offset your carbon emissions to and from your trip, either through your favorite offsetting organization or by using our handy carbon calculator (<https://cheesemans.com/carbon-calculator>).

FAQS

Why travel on a small ship?

With only twelve passenger cabins, our ship is smaller than most ships in Svalbard, allowing you to travel farther into smaller inlets than other ships. Our small group size gives you the flexibility to seize the moment and enjoy special wildlife encounters. With two leaders and only twelve passengers, you will receive plenty of individual attention. And, with two Zodiacs, you have plenty of room for you and your photography gear.

Why do we sail in June and July?

A decent amount of sea ice is usually still present, 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. Large seabird colonies also are nesting along the cliffs.

Is there a big difference between the June and July trips?

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 for 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 have one twin bed with a private bath.

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