

Svalbard Islands

Land of the Polar Bear

July 6 to July 19, 2026



Polar Bears
© Barry Wasserman

SAFARI OVERVIEW

Embark on a journey to the Arctic's crown jewel—the Svalbard Archipelago—a breathtaking gem nestled between mainland Norway and the North Pole. Here, glaciers glitter under the midnight sun, and polar bears roam freely across vast, ice-draped landscapes. This pristine wilderness is a haven not only for polar bears, but also home to other iconic Arctic wildlife, including walruses, reindeer, large seabird colonies, and numerous whale species. Cruise past towering fjords, glimmering icebergs, and expansive tundra while soaking in the untouched beauty of the Arctic.

WHY CHOOSE THIS EXPEDITION?

- **View Iconic Arctic Wildlife:** Witness polar bears, walruses, Arctic foxes, and Svalbard reindeer in their breathtaking natural surroundings. Thrill as various whale species glide past through the icy waters.
- **Discover Unforgettable Landscapes:** Experience the untouched beauty of massive glaciers, shimmering fjords, and striking ice formations illuminated by 24 hours of daylight.
- **Enjoy Unique Experiences:** Explore remote inlets and narrow straits aboard Zodiac boats, accessing hidden corners of the Arctic wilderness. Observe seabird colonies in their natural habitats, filling the skies with their vibrant activity.
- **Immersive Photography Opportunities:** Perfect your Arctic photography skills with expert guidance from an accomplished wildlife photographer specializing in Arctic expeditions.

- **Travel in a Small Group:** Navigate the Arctic aboard a small expedition ship designed for intimate exploration, offering flexibility to adapt to changing conditions for unforgettable experiences.

LEADER: Milo Burcham, assisted by an additional leader.

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

GROUP SIZE: 12.

COST: \$15,400 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 6	Travel to Norway.		
Jul 7	Arrive in Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway. Arrive from home in time to explore this gateway to the Arctic Circle.	Radisson Blu Polar Hotel Spitsbergen, Longyearbyen	—
Jul 8	Board your Ship. Do some morning exploration of the town, then embark on your ship in Longyearbyen and begin your exploration of the Arctic wilderness.	Aboard your ship	B, D
Jul 9–Jul 17	Explore the Svalbard Archipelago. Voyage throughout the Svalbard Archipelago with Zodiac cruises and landings for unbelievable Arctic photography and wildlife viewing in the pristine Arctic environment		B, L, D
Jul 18	Leave for Home. Disembark in Longyearbyen and bid farewell to the Arctic as you board your flights homeward, carrying memories of once-in-a-lifetime experiences..		B
Jul 19	Arrive home.		

LEADERS

Cheesemans’ Ecology Safaris carefully selects leaders who are experts in their field to ensure that your experience is the best it can be. Two leaders will provide a range of expertise for your trip.

Milo Burcham

Milo is a seasoned wildlife biologist with a lifelong passion for animals, having worked extensively with bears, moose, and elk, while maintaining a keen interest in all forms of wildlife—from birds to reptiles. An accomplished wildlife photographer for over 40 years, his work has been featured in *National Geographic*, *Audubon*, *Time*, and *Ranger Rick*. Based in Cordova, Alaska for more than two decades, Milo brings a deep understanding of Arctic and Antarctic environments and has guided expeditions to both Svalbard and Antarctica for Cheeseman’s since 2023. When not guiding, he enjoys outdoor pursuits such as hiking, backcountry skiing, wild ice skating, fishing, and traveling to remarkable wildlife destinations.



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 [10](#).

DETAILED ITINERARY

Jul 6 ~ Travel to Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway

Your Arctic expedition begins with a flight through Oslo, Norway, on your way to Longyearbyen, the gateway to the Svalbard Archipelago

Jul 7 ~ Arrive in Longyearbyen

Arrive in Longyearbyen, the northernmost settlement with a significant population, located on Spitsbergen, the largest island in the Svalbard Archipelago. After settling into your accommodations for the night, explore this Arctic town surrounded by dramatic mountain scenery. Walk through trails lined with early-blooming Arctic wildflowers, and keep an eye out for local wildlife, including Svalbard ptarmigan and snow buntings nesting along the outskirts of town. Along the coastal flats, you may encounter Common Eiders, Parasitic Jaegers (Arctic Skuas), and Arctic Terns. To gain deeper insight into the region's natural and cultural history, visit the Svalbard Museum, conveniently located near the town center.

Jul 8 ~ Embark on your ship

Spend the morning exploring Longyearbyen's local shops, observing birdlife along the shores of Isfjorden, or visiting local landmarks. In the late afternoon, board your expedition ship and settle into your cabin as your Arctic voyage begins. The surrounding waters are notably calmer than those around Antarctica, offering a more comfortable sailing experience. Despite Svalbard's northern latitude, the warming influence of the Gulf Stream creates a milder climate than one might expect. During this voyage, you will have ample opportunities for Zodiac cruises, shore landings, and wildlife viewing from the ship's deck.



Svalbard Ship
© Analise Dubner

Expedition itineraries are kept flexible to adapt to weather and sea ice conditions, ensuring the best possible experiences. Photography and wildlife observation are emphasized throughout the journey, with a strong focus on respecting wildlife and following local regulations to reduce disturbance. *Our small group size allows us to be patient and respectful observers, ensuring you have ample time to capture the perfect photographic moment while always prioritizing wildlife welfare and maintaining a safe, disturbance-free distance.*

Jul 9–Jul 17 ~ Voyage through the Svalbard Archipelago

Spend nine full days exploring the rugged beauty of the Svalbard Archipelago under the 24-hour daylight of the Midnight Sun. This extended daylight provides continuous opportunities to observe and photograph Arctic wildlife in their natural habitats. The ice-filled waters and tundra landscapes support a rich variety of species, making this region a dream destination for nature enthusiasts and photographers alike. As you cruise along the shores, we'll watch for a variety of species along the shore or on the ice, including polar bears and walruses. Inland areas offer the chance to encounter Svalbard reindeer and arctic foxes foraging across the tundra during the brief but productive summer season. The archipelago's exposed rock strata create stunning geological displays, adding to the visual diversity of the landscape.

On the coastlines, visit thriving bird cliffs teeming with Black-legged Kittiwakes, Northern Fulmars, Atlantic Puffins, and Thick-billed Murres (Brünnich's Guillemots). Marine mammals, including ringed and bearded seals, are often spotted lounging on icebergs or swimming nearby. Occasionally, you may glimpse a pod of beluga whales gliding through the fjords. Inland, the tundra becomes a nesting ground for Pink-footed Geese, Barnacle Geese, and King Eiders. Be mindful of nesting shorebirds such as Red Phalaropes and Arctic Terns, as these birds can become defensive if approached too closely



Puffin
© Stefan Froehlich

Here are some handy-to-know 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 and Monacobreen Glacier

Sail into Liefdefjorden to witness the expansive ice front of Monacobreen Glacier. This area is a prime location for polar bear sightings as they patrol the shores in search of prey, including seabird nests along the tundra. Thousands of kittiwakes often gather in the surrounding waters to feed, while geese graze the lush summer vegetation.

Raudfjorden

Along the northern coast of Spitsbergen, Raudfjorden deep inlets and towering glaciers create a breathtaking setting. The fjord's rich biodiversity includes thriving colonies of seabirds, ringed and bearded seals, and surprisingly verdant vegetation for such a high-latitude location.

Ytre Norskøya

Hike the lichen-covered cliffs of Ytre Norskøya, a small island with a historical whaling past and significant seabird colonies. The elevated vantage points provide excellent photography opportunities of the surrounding coastline and birdlife.

Krossfjorden and Kongsfjorden

Explore two of Spitsbergen's most beautiful fjords by Zodiac. Cruise along the majestic Fourteenth of July Glacier (Fjortende Julibreen), where the ice cliffs provide a dramatic backdrop to nesting birds and floating icebergs. Continue to Lilliehöökreen Glacier, one of the region's largest glacier fronts, stretching an impressive 22 kilometers..

Alkhornet

Conclude your fjord explorations with a landing near Alkhornet, a towering cliff face overlooking Isfjorden. Here, arctic foxes can often be seen scavenging for food beneath the bird cliffs, while Svalbard reindeer graze on wildflower-strewn slopes. This site offers some of the best opportunities for reindeer photography in the archipelago.

Jul 18 ~ Disembark in Longyearbyen and return travel

Disembark the ship around 9:00 AM in Longyearbyen. Transfer directly to the airport for your departing flight or spend additional time exploring the town before your journey home..

Jul 19 ~ Arrive home

COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)

Cost

Type	Cost per Person
Trip Cost, single occupancy on lower deck*	\$15,400
Trip Cost, double occupancy on main deck	\$15,400
*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 included night in the hotel, it costs the same as an additional night 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 27, 2026	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. Through November 26, 2025, 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-transferable.

Dates	Forfeited Amount per Person
On or before November 26, 2025	\$300 (see terms above)
November 27 to December 26, 2025	10% of trip cost
December 27, 2025 to January 26, 2026	40% of trip cost
On or after January 27, 2026	100% of trip cost

Included

- Carbon offsets for the duration of this trip.
- 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 7 in Longyearbyen.
- Ten nights on board your ship.
- Meals from breakfast on July 8 through breakfast on July 18, except meals listed in *Not Included* section.
- A group transfer on July 8 from the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel to the ship and a group transfer on July 18 from the ship to the airport or into town.
- 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 \$3000 between the US and Longyearbyen, depending on origin.
- Passport and visa fees.
- COVID tests.
- Lunch on July 8 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 \$300 to \$350 per participant to be distributed equally among the ship's crew and guides.
- Mandatory [emergency evacuation insurance](#).
- Optional [trip cancellation 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 Traveler Form.

SIGN UP

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

[Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris](#)

Email: info@cheesemans.com

WhatsApp: (408) 741-5330

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 hikes for those interested. Please contact us if you have any health concerns that may make this trip challenging.

Motion Sickness

Don't let a fear of motion sickness keep you away! Even those who have experienced seasickness reported that the incredible wildlife and overall experience were well worth the temporary discomfort. If you are susceptible to seasickness or are concerned that you might be, please come prepared! The key to avoiding seasickness is to act before you experience nausea. Do your own research and consult your doctor before taking any medications. A good night of sleep, eating well, limiting alcohol, and using your favorite seasickness remedy is sufficient for most travelers. Find more information on our [Coping with Seasickness](#) webpage (this information is applicable to any form of motion sickness) and contact us if you have any questions.



Ladder to Access Zodiacs

Flights

Detailed logistical information is included in the Trip Planning Materials we will send you.

Flights you book

- Arrive in Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway (LYR) anytime on July 7.
- Depart from Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway (LYR) after 11:00am on July 18, 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](#).

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 economy. We encourage you to explore the various ways in which Cheesemans' operates within this context:

- **Ecotourism and Conservation for Svalbard.**
- **Cheesemans' Trips are Carbon Neutral.**
- **Offsetting your Travel to/from our Trip:** We ask you to pledge to offset the carbon emissions for your travel to and from our trips. You can purchase offsets with most airlines (Delta includes them automatically), use our handy [carbon calculator](#) and donate to Sustainable Travel International, or contribute to your favorite offsetting organization.

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?

June and July represent the peak months of the short but incredibly productive Arctic summer in Svalbard. In addition to polar bears, it is during these months we see a peak of summer animal activity including the amassing of significant bird colonies, the beginning of the short season of wildflower blooming, the potential to discover arctic fox families with their new pup additions, and ice-free access to various walrus haul out locations. It is also during the short summer that the pack ice breaks up enough to allow further exploration of the far north fjords and coastline that is otherwise inaccessible due to ice during the winter and early spring months.

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 and less ice.

What are the new environmental regulations in Svalbard, and how do they affect expeditions?

As of January 1, 2025, Norway has introduced stricter environmental regulations to protect Svalbard's Arctic ecosystem. Key changes include limiting landings to 43 designated sites, enforcing stricter drone usage, reducing speeds near wildlife, and increasing wildlife viewing distances (e.g., 300–500 meters for polar bears, dependent on the time of year). Small-ship expeditions like ours, with just 12 guests, can still access all permitted sites. These rules ensure meaningful exploration while safeguarding the region's fragile environment.

How do these regulations promote sustainable Arctic tourism?

The updated measures reduce stress on wildlife, protect sensitive habitats, and prioritize low-impact travel. Restrictions on speed, sea ice navigation, and onshore activities help preserve Svalbard's pristine wilderness. Our conservation-focused approach already aligns with these standards, ensuring visitors experience the Arctic's untouched beauty while contributing to its long-term protection.

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.