

Svalbard Islands

A Wildlife and Ice Adventure

June 26 to July 9, 2026



Polar Bears
© Stefan Froehlich

SAFARI OVERVIEW

Experience small ship expedition travel, cruising through Norway's Arctic, illuminated by the midnight sun, to witness the legendary polar bear in its natural habitat. This polar adventure takes you to the famed Svalbard Archipelago, located between the North Pole and Norway, home to one of the largest polar bear concentrations 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 expedition leader and photographer Milo Burcham is to share with you the raw beauty of the high Arctic world and the unique wildlife that inhabits this region, and for those interested, also provide you with skills and opportunities to produce quality images of unique Arctic wildlife and beautiful landscapes.

WHY CHOOSE THIS EXPEDITION?

- **View Iconic Arctic Wildlife:** Venture north of the Arctic Circle to observe legendary polar bears in their natural habitat. Encounter a variety of Arctic species, including Arctic fox, reindeer, walrus, seals, minke, and humpback whales. Enjoy 24-hour daylight, providing more opportunities to observe and photograph wildlife.
- **Explore Remote Arctic Landscapes:** Discover the vast, untamed beauty of Svalbard's mountains, fjords, glaciers, and icebergs. See bustling seabird colonies on their cliff nesting grounds. Navigate through hidden inlets and narrow straits that larger ships cannot access, uncovering secluded Arctic treasures.
- **Enhance Your Photography Skills:** Hone your wildlife and landscape photography skills under the guidance of biologist-turned-professional-photographer Scott Davis. Learn expert techniques to use in dramatic Arctic settings.

- **Enjoy a Personalized, Small-Group Adventure:** Travel aboard an expedition ship designed for intimate exploration. Experience the Arctic in a small group, ensuring more personalized guidance.

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
Jun 26	Journey to the Arctic. Travel to Norway.		
Jun 27	Longyearbyen Arrival. Explore a northern Arctic town, Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway.	Radisson Blu Polar Hotel Spitsbergen, Longyearbyen	—
Jun 28	Expedition Begins. Embark on the ship in Longyearbyen.	Aboard the ship	B, D
Jun 29–Jul 7	Arctic Odyssey. Voyage throughout the Svalbard Archipelago with Zodiac cruises and landings for unbelievable Arctic photography and sightings of ice, landscapes, and wildlife.		B, L, D
Jul 8	Farewell to the North. Disembark in Longyearbyen for flights homeward.		B
Jul 9	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

Jun 26 ~ Travel to Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway

Travel through Oslo, Norway en route to Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway. This charming Arctic town serves as the gateway to the wonders of the Svalbard Archipelago.

Jun 27 ~ Arrive in Longyearbyen

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

Longyearbyen is a Scandinavian town situated on Spitsbergen, the largest island 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 incredible Arctic wilderness. While walking around Longyearbyen, you'll be surrounded by tiny wildflowers beginning to bloom, and may encounter various wildlife. Birdlife is abundant, with sightings of Svalbard Ptarmigan and Snow Buntings nesting on the outskirts of town and coastal nesting species like Common Eiders, Parasitic Jaegers (Arctic Skuas) and Arctic Terns nest along the coastal flats adjoining the town.



Longyearbyen
© Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris

Jun 28 ~ Embark on the 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. In the late

afternoon, board the expedition vessel that will be your base for the upcoming Arctic exploration.

As the ship sets sail, take in views of the surrounding mountains and glaciers. The waters around Svalbard are relatively calm, making for a comfortable voyage. Thanks to the Gulf Stream, Svalbard's climate is milder than its latitude suggests. The flexible itinerary is designed to adapt to changing weather and sea ice conditions, ensuring the best possible wildlife encounters and landscape explorations.

We emphasize photography and observation of iconic Arctic wildlife and unique and beautiful landscapes, complying with local regulations regarding wildlife sightings in Svalbard. 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.



Bearded Seal
© Barry Wasserman

Jun 29–Jul 7 ~ Exploring the Svalbard Archipelago

For the next nine days, navigate through some of the most remote and beautiful areas of the Arctic. The constant glow of the Midnight Sun allows for extended exploration and prime opportunities for photography. Each day brings new possibilities, including Zodiac cruises through ice-strewn waters, landings on untouched shores, and wildlife viewing from the ship's observation decks.

As you venture deeper into the archipelago, you'll watch for wildlife from polar bears to walruses. Seabird cliffs bustle with life, featuring species like Black-legged Kittiwakes, Northern Fulmars, Dovekies, Thick-billed Murres, and Atlantic Puffins. In the fjords, ringed and bearded seals haul out on floating ice, and you'll spot various whale species gliding through the cold, clear waters.

On land, hikes across the tundra reveal another dimension of Svalbard's ecosystem. Svalbard reindeer, recognizable by their short legs and stocky build, graze on the summer vegetation, while arctic foxes stealthily roam in search of food. Birdwatchers will delight in seeing Pink-footed Geese, Barnacle Geese, King Eiders, and nesting shorebirds like Red Phalaropes and Arctic Terns. Geology enthusiasts will appreciate the vibrant rock layers that expose the island's ancient past.

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

Cruise into Liefdefjorden to witness the impressive ice face of Monacobreen Glacier. Polar bears frequently roam the fjord, scavenging along the shoreline, while flocks of kittiwakes gather at the glacier's edge to feed in nutrient-rich waters.

Raudfjorden

Located along Spitsbergen's northern coast, Raudfjorden captivates visitors with its dramatic glacier fronts and lush tundra. The fjord's sheltered waters are a haven for ringed and bearded seals, as well as diverse seabird colonies.

Ytre Norskøya

Step ashore on Ytre Norskøya, where colorful lichens blanket rocky cliffs and seabirds nest in abundance. This island's elevated trails offer panoramic views, ideal for both photography and quiet appreciation of the Arctic's serene beauty.

Krossfjorden and Kongsfjorden

Explore two of Svalbard's most picturesque fjords. Glide past the Fourteenth of July Glacier (Fjortende Julibreen), where you'll encounter waterfalls cascading from the ice and see seabirds nesting on surrounding cliffs. Continue to Lilliehöökreen, a massive glacier stretching 22 kilometers.

Alkhornet

At the mouth of Isfjorden, the largest of all Spitsbergen's fjords, is this prominent cliff. You may land to look for arctic foxes searching the cliff base for fallen birds. Svalbard reindeer are attracted to the luxuriant wildflower-covered vegetation, creating some of the best reindeer photography in the archipelago.

Jul 8 ~ Disembark and fights homeward

Arrive back in Longyearbyen around 9:00am where you'll disembark and either be transfer to the airport or into town, if you depart later in the day.

Jul 9 ~ 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 will not 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 17, 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 16, 2025, the cancellation fee of \$300 per person can be applied toward another trip if reserved within six months of the canceled trip's departure date. Cancellations are non-transferable.

Dates	Forfeited Amount per Person
On or before November 16, 2025	\$300 (see terms above)
November 17 to December 16, 2025	10% of trip cost
December 17, 2025 to January 16, 2026	40% of trip cost
On or after January 17, 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 June 27 in Longyearbyen.
- Ten nights on board the ship.
- Meals from breakfast on June 28 through breakfast on July 8, except meals listed in *Not Included* section.
- A group transfer on June 28 from the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel to the ship and a group transfer on July 8 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 June 28 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 June 27.
- Depart from Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway (LYR) after 11:00am on July 8, 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.