

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Realm of the Polar Bear - M/S Fram (FRRP 2017)



TRIP DURATION
10
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Relaxed

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Premium

Trip Code: FRRP

Trip Highlights - Realm of the Polar Bear - M/S Fram

- ✓ Discover the Arctic's dramatic scenery
- ✓ Spot sea birds, walruses, seals & polar bears
- ✓ Regular Zodiac landings to explore the rugged shorelines
- ✓ Comfortable cabins on-board a very comfortable expedition ship
- ✓ Expert naturalists and guides to explain the Arctic's history and wildlife

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 1 night Premium Hotel
8 nights Premium Boat

Included Meals: 9 breakfasts, 8 lunches, 8 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: Oslo

End Point: Trip ends: Oslo

Transport: Zodiac, MS Fram

Countries: Spitsbergen

Realm of the Polar Bear - M/S Fram

Arctic Wilderness

A cruise around Spitsbergen gives you ample opportunity to explore all the aspects of this fascinating arctic island. See the great eastern nature reserves and some of the most spectacular highlights of the Arctic. We aim to take you well above the 80th parallel and placing you closer than 600 nautical miles from the Geographical North Pole. The eastern part of Svalbard is more barren and characteristically High Arctic, compared to other places that we visit with the M/S Fram.

During this voyage, you will see some of the most spectacular fjords of Spitsbergen. The eastern part of Svalbard is mainly divided into two large nature reserves and combined, they represent one of the largest and mainly untouched, wildernesses in Europe. Traversing the large fjord east of Spitsbergen will give you spectacular views of the island's east coast, with hundreds of glaciers and mountains. If we are lucky, we'll meet some of Svalbard's marine mammals like seal and walrus and wherever there is ice, there is a great chance of spotting polar bears !

Wildlife

Polar Bears, walruses, seals, Arctic fox, musk oxen, Reindeer and a prolific birdlife - Arctic terns, Ivory gulls, Guillemots, Kittiwakes, to name a few..

Ship Description

The M/S Fram is a comfortable vessel for your polar exploration with modern amenities such as a fitness room, Jacuzzi and sauna. The ample indoor and outdoor public spaces are designed to ensure you enjoy the passing scenery and wildlife sightings; each table in the restaurant has scenic views and the observation lounge has panoramic windows. There's also a selection of shore excursions to choose from, allowing you to experience as much of the polar wilderness as possible.



Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Premium

Our comfortable accommodation is hand-picked and chosen for its character, location or local importance. These properties have excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.



Tour Pace: Relaxed

Easy paced tours with plenty of time to relax and absorb the sights and immerse yourself in the local surroundings.

Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

DAY 1 Oslo to Longyearbyen

Your Arctic adventure starts with an evening flight from Norway's capital, Oslo. Before departure, you can spend some time exploring this fjord-side city surrounded by forests, lakes and hills. Oslo offers a varied architecture, top-notch restaurants and endless shopping possibilities. The contrast will be significant when you arrive in Longyearbyen a couple of hours later. On arrival, you will be transferred to your hotel.

Hotel in Longyearbyen



Included Meals: None

DAY 2 Longyearbyen and Barentsburg

Spend the morning exploring Longyearbyen and its surroundings, before embarkation in the afternoon. Longyearbyen is a Norwegian settlement often referred to as the capital of Svalbard. This is a lively small town, situated amid some incredible Arctic landscape. Barentsburg is a Russian settlement with an exotic collection of Russian artefacts and architecture and is very different to Longyearbyen. The museum, library and newly opened brewery function as meeting points and a research station is under construction. See a colourful folklore show and visit the hotel and museum. Experience a different side of Svalbard - a little piece of Russia in the Arctic. You will board your expedition vessel in the late afternoon.

M/S Fram



Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3 North-west Spitsbergen National Park

In local slang called The North West Corner, this area, scattered as it is with islands, fjords and beaches has a long history of exploration. Kongsfjorden is the largest fjord on the northwest coast of Spitsbergen and is considered to be one of the most beautiful fjord areas in Spitsbergen, with mighty glaciers calving icebergs into the sea, delightfully framed by the characteristic mountain formations found in these parts.

M/S Fram



Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4 North-west Spitsbergen National Park

As we sail northwest, we reach Krossfjorden and Mitrahalvøya, where you can see the remnants of the old whaling huts. Beautiful alpine flora, bird cliffs and quite often Svalbard reindeer, can also be found here. You will have the opportunity to attempt to cross a glacier with our Expedition Team. On our way back, we will visit the former mining settlement of Ny-Ålesund, now an international centre for research, with a picturesque mix of old and new buildings.

M/S Fram



Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5 North-west Spitsbergen National Park

Cruising in the north west corner of Spitsbergen, we will make a stop at Raudfjorden, which offers fantastic hiking opportunities. Later, we continue deep inside the giant Woodfjord system to visit the enormous and fast moving Monaco Glacier. In front of this dramatic glacier, the mixing of fresh and saline water creates an excellent feeding ground for sea birds including kittiwakes, fulmars and glaucous gulls. The icy-blue colours of the glacier, make this an excellent site for photography.

M/S Fram



Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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DAY 6 Eastern Svalbard Nature Reserves and South Spitsbergen National Park

Eastern Svalbard also boasts the highest population of polar bears on the archipelago - we really hope that we'll get the chance to see one on this journey! Today, we'll explore Sorgfjorden, which borders the North East Spitsbergen Nature Reserve and was the location of a famous 17th-century battle between whalers. Enjoy the view from the deck as we pass the spectacular bird cliff of Alkefjellet, one of the largest of its kind. Storfjorden will offer us spectacular views of the east coast of Spitsbergen, with hundreds of glaciers and mountains in the distance. If we are lucky, we might meet some of the marine mammals of Svalbard, such as walrus and seals.

M/S Fram

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7 Eastern Svalbard Nature Reserves and South Spitsbergen National Park

Edgeøya is the third-largest island in the Svalbard archipelago. On its western shores, the landscape is largely un-glaciated, unlike most other places on the east side of Spitsbergen. Kapp Lee is a wonderful site where you will find cultural heritage from all eras of human exploration of Svalbard.

M/S Fram

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8 Eastern Svalbard Nature Reserves and South Spitsbergen National Park

We continue to the southern cape and the southernmost tip of Spitsbergen. Within a short distance, Hornsund has large variations in its landscape and geology. This is another great place for spotting bears, as ice being pushed into the fjord early in the season attracts polar bears that hunt on the ice.

M/S Fram

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 9 Isfjord

Isfjord is the most extensive fjord system in Svalbard. We will spend the day exploring both the outer and the inner parts of the fjord. One of the most striking features of the outer part is the Alkehornet peak, where thousands of Brunnich's guillemots nest during the summer season. In the inner parts of Isfjorden, the landscape changes constantly. The immense U-shaped valleys, carved out of the mountains by the giant glaciers that covered the area some ten thousand years ago, are home to large populations of the endemic Svalbard Reindeer. In the late afternoon, our Expedition team will search for a scenic bay for our farewell dinner - an on-board barbecue in the most beautiful Arctic surroundings.

M/S Fram

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 10 Longyearbyen to Oslo

We call at Longyearbyen after midnight, where our voyage comes to an end. You will be transferred to the airport in the early morning for your onward flight to Oslo.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 9 breakfasts, 8 lunches, 8 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Cabins

Prices are based on the use of inside, category one cabins on decks 3, 5 and 6. Category one cabins are based on twin share, with one bed and one sofa bed. They are comfortable with a private toilet and shower, fridge and TV. The MS Fram has a number of different cabin categories, many of which are outside facing, with two beds (apart from superior cabins and suites, which have double beds). Some cabins have portholes and others, larger windows and sitting areas. All cabins are twin share, but we can also offer single occupancy at a supplement, if you are travelling alone. Call us for details on the cabin choice to fit your requirements.

Ship Dining

On-board the ship all meals are included in the price of your expedition; a buffet breakfast and lunch, and set menu dinner; it's free seating for breakfast and lunch, and assigned for dinner. Vegetarians and some special dietary requirements can be accommodated with advance notice, please advise us at time of confirmation. Coffee and tea are provided free of charge. All other beverages, alcoholic and non-alcoholic, are not included and can be purchased in the bar.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Spitsbergen

Lunch £: 12.00-16.00

Dinner £: 35.00-40.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Spitsbergen

Bottle of Beer £: 6.00-8.00

Water £: 2.00-3.00

Tipping - Local Crew

Tipping is collected at the end of the voyage and is divided among the crew. Tipping is a very personal matter and the amount you wish to give is at your discretion, but as a generally guideline, we suggest US\$12 per person per day.

Foreign Exchange

Spitsbergen

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

Entry visas NOT required by UK, AUS, NZ, USA, CAN Citizens. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate. All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Vaccinations & Protection

Spitsbergen

Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider

Preparing for your Trip

Climate

Spitsbergen

Between May and September is the best time to visit this region, with summer temperatures reaching a maximum of 5 degrees centigrade. North of the Arctic Circle, the sun does not set between the middle of May and the end of July, so you can expect to encounter the midnight sun during this period.

Clothing

Pack comfortable, casual clothing for all activities. Wind and waterproof outer layers are essential, and a jacket is provided in the cost of the cruise. Beware of tight clothing that leaves no room for trapped air, which is an excellent insulator. Wool, silk and some of the new synthetic fibres, like polar fleece, retain heat better than cotton.

Parkas

A wind and waterproof jacket is provided as part of the cost of your holiday.

Gloves

Keeping your hands warm and dry can be a challenge. Thin polypropylene gloves can be worn underneath warm outergloves. This allows you some protection from the cold when removing your gloves to operate your camera etc. We strongly recommend that you bring more than one pair of gloves, in case one gets wet (or lost).

Hat/Cap

Warm, woollen hat/cap to protect your ears, as well as a scarf, neck gaiter or other face protection, such as a balaclava.

Trousers

Water-resistant trousers of coated nylon or, even better, Gore-Tex® are essential for your comfort. They can be worn over your regular clothes to keep you warm and dry. We suggest that you purchase trousers a few sizes larger than you normally wear as you will be wearing them over other clothing. Gore-Tex® or similar fabrics are excellent for keeping out wind and water without trapping excess heat. Rain gear and Gore-Tex® products can be found in any outdoor sport clothing store. In addition to your waterproof trousers, warm ski pants are suggested if you have them. Warm trousers such as jeans, corduroys etc are also good.

Socks

Warm wool socks worn over a thin pair of silk, polypropylene socks should provide enough warmth and insulation for your feet. Bring several pairs of socks, since you will inevitably get your feet wet.

Outer Clothing

Woollen, knit or cotton sweaters/tops, polar fleece tops (medium weight), several cotton turtlenecks and T-shirts for layering on and off the ship.

Underclothing

Thermal underwear is highly recommended as it will keep you warm without adding bulk. Most polar travellers prefer a lightweight version.

Equipment

Sunglasses and sun cream

Personal toiletries

A refillable water bottle

Books/reading material

Camera and memory cards (and something to protect the camera when out in the elements)

Seasickness remedy

Walking poles

Footwear

Waterproof boots are available on-board, free of charge. Ensure that you take good walking boots with you and trainers for relaxing on the ship. Crocs shoes also offer good grip when out on deck, if you prefer to take these in place of trainers.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Spitsbergen

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Electric Supply & Plugs

Spitsbergen

2 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award-winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family-run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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