EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Realm of the Polar Bear - M/S Fram (FRRP 2016)

POLAR

TOURDURAT
9
DAYS

Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Relaxed
Tour Type: Small Groups
Tour Comfort: Comfortable
tour Code: FRRP

Tour 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

Tour Essentials

Accommodation:	1 night Comfortable Hotel 7 nights Comfortable Boat
Included Meals:	8 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 7 dinners
Start Point:	Join tour: Longyearbyen
End Point:	Tour ends: Longyearbyen
Transport:	Zodiac, MS Fram
Countries:	Spitsbergen

Realm of the Polar Bear - M/S Fram

Arctic Wilderness
Starting in Longyearbyen, you head north, first visiting Barentsburg, then NyÅlesund, and leaving civilisation behind. Our aim is to sail to the remote polar regions in order to experience the Arctic wilderness, drift ice, flora and fauna. The Gulf Stream has allowed the island's 400 km long western coastline to become incredibly rich in animal and plant life, while the remote east is forever under the grips of the Arctic winter environment. Some years it is possible to sail through the Hinlopen Strait to attempt a circumnavigation of the archipelago, while other years there is a great deal of ice, which makes it harder to navigate around. Your specialist guides will ensure we get the most out of the experience, as well as recounting tales of Svalbard's cultural and exciting polar explorative heritage - traces of this rich history can be found on several of excursions when we go ashore.

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.

Tour Comfort: Comfortable

Hand-picked and chosen for their character, location or local importance, these properties have excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service. They provide the perfect wind down after an active day.

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 tour 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

Fly from Oslo to Longyearbyen in the evening. On arrival, you will be transferred to your hotel.

Overnight: **Comfortable Hotel**

Included Meals: None

DAY 2 Longyearbyen and Barentsburg

Spend the morning exploring Longyearbyen and it's 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. This 'Company town' was built in 1935 around the entrance to the coal mine.

Overnight: **Comfortable Boat**

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. The landscape varies from large tundra plains to alpine peaks with dramatic glaciers calving into the ocean. At 78º 55'N, Ny Ålesund is the world's northernmost permanently inhabited community, where a number of countries run their own national research stations. Activity here is particularly high in the summer. Magdalenefjord is home to a very important piece of cultural heritage; a whaling station from the 16th century, including a graveyard of whalers who died during the first oil 'gold rush'.

Overnight: **Comfortable Boat**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4 North Svalbard

Deep inside the giant Woodfjord system we find the enormous and fast moving Monaco Glacier. In front of this dramatic glacier the mixing of fresh and saline water creates excellent feeding grounds for sea birds. The Jotunkjeldane thermal springs in another branch of the Woodfjord system are unique – they are the northernmost documented thermal springs on Earth.

Overnight: **Comfortable Boat**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5 North-east Spitsbergen Nature Reserve

The two large nature reserves in East Svalbard were established to protect some of the most pristine High Arctic environment on Earth. The Nature Reserves in East Svalbard serve as reference for scientists as this is virtually untouched by man. The Hinlopen Strait separating the main island of Spitsbergen from Nordaustlandet is teeming with birdlife and scattered on the islands here there are Polar bears. The spectacular bird cliff of Alkefjellet is sometimes referred to as the Piccadilly Circus of seabirds; its 300m spires rise directly from the sea and create perfect nesting conditions.

Overnight: **Comfortable Boat**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6 South-east Svalbard Nature Reserve

Edgeøya is the third largest island in Svalbard. Here you will find cultural heritage from all eras of human exploration of Svalbard. Storfjorden will give us spectacular views of the east coast of Spitsbergen. In the distance we will see hundreds of glaciers and mountains and if we are lucky we meet some of the marine mammals of Svalbard.

Overnight: **Comfortable Boat**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7 South Spitsbergen National Park; Hornsund

The landscape of Hornsund is alpine with some very special mountains like Bautaen, or in English, the Obelisk, which, seen from the right angle looks like a giant Viking sword. Let your imagination run wild while spending the day in these extraordinary surroundings.

Overnight: **Comfortable Boat**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8 Isfjord

In central Spitsbergen, Isfjord is the largest fjord system in Svalbard. One of the most prominent mountains here is Alkhorn, where thousands of Brünnich's guillemots nest during the summer season. In the afternoon our Expedition Team will search for a fitting bay where we can make our last expedition landing and we will wrap things up with some onboard festivities.

Overnight: **Comfortable Boat**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 9 Longyearbyen to Oslo

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

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 8 breakfasts, 7 lunches,7 dinners included in the price of this tour. 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 Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour 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

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

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 Tour

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.

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.

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

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.

EXPLORE!
The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE

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.

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.

Vaccinations & Protection

Spitsbergen

Preparing for your Tour

Climate

Spitsbergen

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 refilllable 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 for a small charge.
Also ensure you take good walking boots and trainers for relaxing.

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 tour: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Spitsbergen

Electric Supply & Plugs

Spitsbergen

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 & tailormade holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one 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, elephant, 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.

Our commitment to the environment

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 and traditional, 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), Dekamer (a turtle rescue centre in Turkey) and Kids Saving the Rainforest (a wildlife rescue centre in Costa Rica supported through the LATA foundation). We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation and Friends of Conservation.

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

- The Travel Foundation

  Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk
- Tourism Concern

  Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- For further information on responsible travel go to www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/

Know before you go

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

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 LicenceÂ granted by the Civil Aviation Authority.Â 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 2014 and 31st December 2015.

Tour 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: 2016 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2016. 2017/18 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2017.

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