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Best of the Western Arctic: Canada and Greenland Trip Notes

 **Ways to Travel:** Guided Group
 **Destinations:** Arctic, Iceland
 **Programmes:** Polar Expeditions

Trip Code:
POP



20 Days Land only
Min age: 18

Trip Overview

Explore the northerly shores of Canada's Baffin Island and the western coast of Greenland, searching for the wildlife and visiting the communities that call this mysterious realm home. Zodiac cruising gives you an awe-inspiring perspective of impressive icebergs, glaciers and fjords, while visits to communities immerse you in their traditional and modern way of life. The rugged beauty of these pristine places will have you marvelling at the soaring cliffs of Sam Ford Fjord and the dazzling icebergs dotting the Ilulissat Icefjord. In this remote, wildlife-rich region, you may spot whales in their natural surroundings or get a glimpse of one of the Arctic's most iconic animals: the Polar bear.

At a Glance

- 17 nights on the ship, 2 nights hotel in Reykjavik
- Expedition cruising in comfortable conditions

Trip Highlights

- Search for iconic Arctic wildlife, such as Polar bears, Musk ox, walrus and whales
- Explore Canadian wildlife sanctuaries and the Ilulissat Icefjord, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Visit traditional settlements and meet Inuit and Greenlandic locals

- Travel in a small expedition vessel
- Accompanied by extremely qualified Expedition Staff

Is This Trip for You?

Travelling Conditions

The voyages are designed to be as flexible as possible, taking advantage of circumstances and events as they occur, as well as passengers' wishes and particular interests wherever possible. The atmosphere on board is relaxed and friendly with expedition staff, including naturalists and Polar experts, on hand and the opportunity to mingle with people from all over the world. The ship is kept warm, clean and comfortable with a wet/mud room in which to hang gear and store boots ready for the next adventure.

On the Zodiac cruises you are sitting still for most of the time with the potential for some sea spray and a cold headwind - if you are not dressed appropriately you will get cold. On the shore excursions, the majority of landings are wet which means that the Zodiacs beach and you are helped to slide into the ankle deep shore break before walking up onto dry land (wellington boots are issued to all passengers). There are, of course, no paths, so be prepared for slippery, rough terrain and sometimes fairly deep snow. Back on board the cosy ship after each adventure, you can have a sauna and/or a hot shower and then relax with a tea, coffee, hot chocolate or something stronger from the bar.

Optional activities

Sea kayaking option:

Kayaking in the Arctic is probably one of the most intimate and inspiring ways you can explore the rugged coastlines and calm bays of the regions we visit.

Kayaking in the Polar Regions is highly weather-dependent, however we guarantee at least one outing throughout your voyage, but your kayak guides will take you out as many times as possible throughout your voyage.

Offered on most Arctic voyages, spaces are limited and require some kayaking experience. All equipment, guides and instructions are provided by Quark.

Paddling Excursion:

Explore the ocean from a more intimate vantage point on a sit-on-top kayak. No experience is required to manoeuvre these very stable kayaks, allowing you to enjoy an unforgettable experience on the water, taking in breathtaking landscapes and wildlife. Whether it's your first time in a kayak or you want greater flexibility to try other Adventure options, this shorter excursion is for you.

Paddling in the Polar Regions is highly weather-dependent and a one-time experience. Your kayak guides will attempt to take you out on the water for 1-1.5 hours of paddling. Offered on most voyages, spaces are limited. All equipment, guides and instructions are provided by Quark.

Following a review of all our trips we have categorised this trip as generally not suitable for persons of reduced mobility. However if you are a regular traveller on such trips, please contact customer services to discuss the trip and your personal condition.

Group

The Breakaway group forms part of the ship's complement (max of approx. 100), enjoying the relaxed, intimate and informal atmosphere, which breaks into smaller groups to facilitate the frequent excursions. We offer these cruises in conjunction with our partner, Quark Expeditions, and Breakaway participants will join an international group, not all of whom have booked through Breakaway. Occasionally some of these may be younger than 12 years old, the Breakaway' stated minimum age for this trip. We work with many fine Expedition Leaders and Polar Experts, bringing a diversity of interests including zoology, Polar history, geology,

ornithology and ocean sciences. The ship's operating crew is Russian and have many years of experience in Polar Regions and are committed to ensuring a safe and memorable journey. Each day your cabin will be serviced by the housekeeping crew, and your meals served by the friendly and attentive restaurant staff. There is also a resident medical officer.

Adult min age: 18

Max group size: 132

Itinerary



Land Only Itinerary

Day 1

Arrive in Reykjavik, Iceland

Your Arctic expedition begins in Reykjavik. Explore Iceland's capital city on your own before spending the night at your included hotel.

Day 2

Embarkation day in Kangerlussuaq, Greenland

In the morning, the group will transfer to the airport and board our private charter flight to Kangerlussuaq, a small town at the eastern head of Søndre Strømfjord, one of the longest fjords in the world. After embarking the ship in the afternoon, enjoy time out on deck, taking in your new surroundings as you set sail on your Arctic expedition.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 3

At Sea

As we cruise across the Davis Strait, the Expedition Team will prepare you for the adventures that await. Learn about the storied history and politics of the Arctic, its fascinating wildlife, geology, ecology and climate, and the incredible sights you will soon explore. Staff will also keep a lookout for seabirds soaring above your ship, as well as whales that frequent the waters here.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Days 4-6

Exploring Baffin Bay Island, Canada

Baffin Island is the fifth-largest island in the world, it was named for English navigator William Baffin, who ventured to the area in the early 17th century in search of the fabled Northwest Passage. Our days sailing along the island's eastern coast will be guided by weather and ice conditions, with each day and each landing presenting new adventures. Some of our favourite destinations include Qikiqtarjuaq, Isabella Bay and Sam Ford Fjord. Towering mountains, deep fjords, colourful tundra, and Inuit settlements await!

The Inuit community of Qikiqtarjuaq (which means "the big island" in Inuktitut) is located just north of the Arctic Circle, on Broughton Island. Fondly called Qik by locals, the welcoming hamlet offers a superb vantage point of the Davis Strait. You'll also have a chance to support local Inuit artisans here by purchasing unique artwork, crafts and jewellery.

The rarely explored Sam Ford Fjord is one of the most isolated places on the planet. It is a spectacular big-wall playground, attracting adventurous climbers eager to scale the dozens of towering vertical granite cliffs that erupt from the sea. Have your camera handy as you cruise along this impressive coastline carved by ancient glaciers—the towering formations, stacked side by side, are simply majestic.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

At Sea

As our ship sails farther north, take in a presentation by our on-board experts, sip an icy cocktail in the bar, watch a movie or join the Expedition Team on the bridge as they scan for wildlife—there is no shortage of activities while at sea.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Days 8-11

Lancaster Sound

The gateway to the Northwest Passage, Lancaster Sound is one of the richest marine habitats in the Arctic. With open-water areas staying ice-free all year, it is an important summer feeding area for whales and other marine wildlife. Our days here will be spent exploring several of the sound's beautiful bays and inlets, discovering historical sites, enjoying Zodiac cruises and searching for such iconic wildlife as walrus, seals and, of course, whales. Polar bear sightings are possible too, as Lancaster Sound is known for polar bear sightings. If you're fortunate, you may even spot the elusive Narwhal.

There may be a possibility for a shore visit at Radstock Bay, the location of one of the most impressive ancient Thule sites in the Arctic. Exploring the well-preserved remains of the subterranean houses, including the whale bones used as supports for the dwellings, will give you an understanding of how these pre-Inuit people thrived in the Far North.

We will attempt to land at Beechey Island, a Canadian National Historic Site. Named after explorer Frederick William Beechey, the island is the final resting place of members of Sir John Franklin's 1845–46 expedition to find the Northwest Passage. The graves, on a desolate rocky beach, were discovered in 1850 by a team searching for signs of the ill-fated expedition.

Predominantly covered in glaciers and ice fields, Coburg Island and its surrounding waters comprise the Nirjutiqavik National Wildlife Area. The island's steep coastal cliffs are an ideal habitat for hundreds of thousands of nesting seabirds like Brünnich's guillemots (Thick-billed murre), Black-legged kittiwakes, Northern fulmars and Black guillemots.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12

Smith Sound

Before saying goodbye to Canada, we'll push as far north as possible, exploring both sides of Smith Sound, the uninhabited passage between Ellesmere Island and Greenland. Experience a true expedition as weather and ice determine how far north we explore.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Days 13-14

Exploring Northwest Greenland

Return to Greenland and sail along the remote northwest coast, a land of impressive icebergs and massive glaciers. Qaanaaq, formerly known as Thule, is one of the northernmost towns in the world. Here, local Inuit share their culture and traditions, while the museum sheds more light on life near the top of the world.

We hope to explore Melville Bay, a significant whaling site until the early 1900s. Opening up to Baffin Bay, the area is a major egress for the Greenland ice cap and is home to spectacular icebergs in all shapes and sizes, making it an ideal spot for Zodiac cruising.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 15

At Sea

As we continue sailing south along the west coast of Greenland, presentations by our on-board experts will prepare you for the adventures that lie ahead.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Days 16-18

Exploring West Greenland

Boasting spectacular glaciers, mountainous landscapes, dramatic fjords and vibrant communities, the west coast of Greenland will leave you breathless. Some areas we hope to explore here are Uummannaq, Itilleq and the impressive Ilulissat Icefjord.

Quite possibly the most picturesque place in Greenland, the traditional Inuit town of Uummannaq (which means "heart-like") takes its name from the red heart-shaped mountain that rises up a staggering 3,840 feet (1,170 metres) behind it. You'll want to be positioned on deck as your ship approaches the shore, with your camera ready to capture the inspiring vistas of the twin peaks soaring high above the colorful houses dotting the rugged coastline.

Another beautiful locale is the Ilulissat Icefjord, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Home to Jakobshavn, one of the most active glaciers in the world, this is a great spot to enjoy a Zodiac excursion past towering icebergs. Venturing ashore in the town of Ilulissat (which means "iceberg") will allow you to visit the icefjord on foot and gaze at this unforgettable river of ice from the rocky shore.

Surrounded by sea and mountains, Itilleq (meaning "crossing place") is situated about a mile (2 km) above the Arctic Circle, in a scenic hollow on a small island. It is the southern limit of the Greenlandic sled dog. To keep the breed pure, the dogs are not permitted south of this community and all other dog breeds are prohibited this far north. Explore the town's traditional wooden houses painted in a rainbow of colours, chat with the locals, whose main trade is fishing, and maybe challenge them to a game of football (soccer) — it won't be long before you're experiencing Itilleq's famous friendly vibe.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 19

Disembark in Kangerlussuaq and fly to Reykjavik

Enjoy one more Zodiac ride to shore, where you'll board your charter flight back to Reykjavik, Iceland. Upon arrival in Reykjavik, we will transfer you to your included hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 20

Depart Reykjavik, Iceland

Today, you can make your way home at your leisure or spend time exploring this vibrant city.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation

Ocean Adventurer



The **Best of the Western Arctic: Canada and Greenland** voyage is offered on the **Ocean Adventurer** which is a Polar Adventure Ship. One night in a standard hotel in Oslo is included. Full board accommodation on the ship, generally on a twin share basis in a variety of cabin types, all with en suite facilities. Please visit the Polar Fleet page (www.exodus.co.uk/polar-holidays/polar-fleet) for Ship Information and Deck Plans.

Polar Adventure Ships

These are small ice rated vessels well qualified for Polar waters. Intimate adventures are always more enjoyable with like-minded passengers and staff, so these voyages are for people who like flexible itineraries and plenty to keep them busy. Activities include frequent Zodiac excursions, trekking, kayaking and many hours on deck in areas that other ships only dream about accessing. Food and staff are superb and every guest benefits from the technical advances of this superb fleet. Rest assured our Polar Adventure Ships enable any traveller to maximize their experience sensitively in the Poles.

Where a single supplement is available, paying for a single will only guarantee a room for single use. It does not necessarily mean a twin or double room will be provided for sole occupancy.

Please note that a member of the group may be allocated a single room by default if the make-up of the group means there isn't anyone for them to share with. Paying the supplement in advance is the only way to guarantee a single room.

Single supplements cannot be refunded retrospectively.

Food & Transport

Eating & Drinking

All meals while on the ship included.

Typical Meals

The ships galley offers good quality service and cuisine throughout, with excellent chefs preparing international menus including vegetarian dishes, accompanied by a wide variety of drinks from around the world on sale.

Breakfast: Buffet style – unlimited tea and coffee, a selection of fruit juices, hot options including bacon and eggs or omelettes, a selection of bread and toast and jam/honey/marmalade, fruit and cereal.

Lunch: Three course set meal, or the occasional buffet or BBQ.

Dinner: Three courses with a starter of soup, salad or anti-pasto, a choice of three mains with at least one vegetarian and one seafood option and a dessert of sweet pudding or ice cream or fruit, tea and coffee.

Transportation

During the expedition, you will visit remote and isolated sites that are accessible only by Zodiac landing craft. Designed for expedition work, these large and heavy-duty inflatable vessels are extremely safe.

Weather & Seasonality

Weather Information

Both the Canadian Arctic and Greenland have an Arctic climate with average temperatures that do not exceed 10° C in the warmest summer months. However, the conditions in the coastal regions of the Arctic during the northern summer are both mild and changeable. Enjoyable sunny days can swiftly change to cold, windy storms with snow flurries and rolling seas. Average daily temperatures in mid-season are between -4 and +2 Celsius; however, wind conditions can make it seem colder. It is common that you will experience daytime temperatures below freezing.

Joining Instructions

Travelling land only: 20 days starting and ending in Reykjavik

Your trip normally starts at our hotel in Reykjavik in the afternoon of Day 1 of the itinerary. Details of how to reach the start point are provided in the Final Joining Instructions - sent approximately two weeks before departure.

Full joining instructions including local emergency numbers will be sent to you as part of our Final Joining Instructions. If you do not receive these at least a week before departure, or require them earlier please contact our office or your travel agent.

Location start: Reykjavik

Location end: Reykjavik

What to Take

Essential Equipment

Boots – Rubber boots are essential for a Polar expedition, but to eliminate these from your packing list we will loan you a pair for the duration of the voyage.

Parkas – A complementary Quark parka will be provided on the ship.

Trousers – Waterproof trousers are essential for Zodiac travel as well as activities on shore.

Gloves – To keep your hands warm and dry, pack a minimum of two pairs of gloves: a pair of thin polypropylene gloves to be worn underneath warm outer gloves.

Hat and Scarf – Pack a warm, woollen hat or cap that covers your ears, as well as a scarf, neck gaiter or other face protection.

Socks – For maximum warmth, we suggest that you wear two pairs of socks to wear inside the rubber boots.

Outer Clothing – Pack woollen or fleece jumpers and tops, plus several turtlenecks for layering.

Underclothing – Pack silk or polypropylene underwear since it will keep you warm without adding bulk.

Knapsack or Backpack – To keep your hands free for shooting photograph, bring a water resistant or waterproof knapsack or backpack.

Shoes – Non-slip shoes for walking around the vessel.

Optional Equipment

Swimsuit

Sunglasses

Binoculars

Camera, extra batteries, film or memory cards

Protective sunscreen

Electric converter with adapter plug set

Small medical kit containing prescription medicines and over-the-counter medication for basic ailments such as stomach upsets, allergies, headaches and seasickness

Snow poles or trekking poles



Practical Information

Passport

Iceland

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information below is primarily for US passport holders, and other nationalities should check with their travel agent or the relevant embassies. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

Visa

Arctic

No visa required for US passport holders.

Iceland

No visa required for US passport holders.

Greenland

No visa required for US passport holders.

Visa regulations can change without notice: please check the current regulations in good time to obtain a visa if one is required.

Vaccination

Arctic

There are no specific health risks.

Iceland

There are no specific health risks.

Greenland

There are no specific health risks.

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad.

The above information can change at short notice; as we are not qualified to answer all your questions about travel health we strongly recommend you contact your Medical Professional or a Travel Health Clinic at least 8 weeks prior to departure for up-to-date information. Please note: vaccinations that are routinely recommended to residents of North America or Australasia are not considered to form part of the travel health advice, and you should ensure these are kept up to date where necessary.

For additional information please visit: Centers for Disease Control C.D.C at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>

Insurance - are you adequately covered?

It is a condition of joining any of our holidays that you must be fully insured against medical and personal accident risks (to include repatriation costs and air ambulance or helicopter rescue services where appropriate). On arrival in destination for your trip, you will be asked to present details to your leader or local representative of your policy.

If you are resident of the United States, we recommend the Travelex Travel Select travel insurance policy, this is specifically designed to cover all activities on your trip. If arranging your own policy please ensure that you are covered for all activities that are part of the trip, optional activities that you intend to take part in and/or on high altitude itineraries, that you are covered up to the maximum altitude of the trip.

Local Time

Iceland's Timezone: Atlantic/Reykjavik GMT (GMT +00:00)

Electricity

Arctic's Electricity: The electrical supply on board most of the Polar vessels is 220v/50Hz. The electrical outlets found in the cabins and around the ships on most Polar vessels accept standard European two round pin plugs, so you may need to bring your own travel adapter. The electrical supply at Arctic Watch Wilderness Lodge is 120v/60Hz, same as most North American plugs.

Iceland's Electricity: 230 Volts. Plug types C & F; establishments often take two round pin plugs.

Greenland's Electricity: Standard European adapter required. 220 Volts.

Money

Arctic's Currency

On board all Polar vessels USD are accepted as the primary currency.

The Canadian dollar is the standard currency at Arctic Watch Wilderness Lodge.

Iceland's Currency

The national currency of Iceland is the Iceland Krona (ISK), with an exchange rate at the time of publication (January 2019) of approximately 121 to the USD, 91 to the CAD, 138 to the EUR, 87 to the AUD and 82 to the NZD.

Greenland's Currency

The national currency of Greenland is the Danish Krone (DKK) with an exchange rate at the time of publication (July 2018) of 8.4 to the GBP, 6.4 to the USD, 4.85 to the CAD, 7.5 to the EUR,, 4.3 to the NZD and 4.7 to the AUD.

Extra Expenses & Spending Money

On board the ships all transactions are in US dollars.

At the conclusion of your voyage, you will be presented with an account. This will include any drinks from the bar, laundry or ship's shop purchases for which you have signed. You may pay for this in US Dollars cash, credit card (Visa or MasterCard ONLY) or US dollars Traveller's Cheques.

Please note: on the last evening, once your ship account has been settled, credit card payments are no longer accepted. It is therefore advisable to bring at least some US\$ cash if you wish to purchase drinks from the bar or any items from the on board shop at this time.

Tipping

The appropriate amount to tip the staff and crew is a personal matter but it is customary to provide an end-of-cruise gratuity (as a rough guide approximately US\$ 13-15 per day per passenger would be appreciated)



Responsible Tourism

At Breakaway we believe in the power of Responsible Travel.

Every time we travel, we are part of a global movement that creates jobs, builds more sustainable societies, encourages cultural understanding and safeguards common natural and cultural heritage.

Important Information

On all guided trips

Although our leaders are well trained to deal with different capabilities, if they have any concerns about someone's ability to safely partake in an activity, or their impact on other people's enjoyment, we authorize them to take necessary action which, in some circumstances, may involve asking someone to miss that activity.

Although rarely enforced, by booking this trip you agree to section 5 of our Booking Conditions which clearly states that our leaders have the authority to do this. In these circumstances we will ensure anyone sitting out is safely provided for and offered alternative options where possible. Refunds will not be provided for activities missed and customers may be liable for additional costs incurred.

On all trips

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call the Breakaway office and ask to speak to one of the experts on this itinerary.

In an emergency, please contact our 24 hour out of hours service on +44 (0) 844 326 7041.

Every time that you travel abroad you should take the time to read the warnings in the essential information in the brochure.

Full joining instructions including local emergency numbers, and details of how to reach the start point, will be sent to you approximately 2 to 3 weeks prior to departure. If you do not receive these at least a week before departure, or require them earlier please contact our office or your travel agent.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure or website, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure and website. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; in order to enjoy them you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary. Occasionally, as stated in our brochure, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned. This may be for a variety of reasons - climatic, political, physical or other. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements that maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

TRAVEL AWARE – STAY SAFE & HEALTHY ABROAD

The U.S. State Department has up-to-date advice on staying safe and healthy abroad. For more on security, local laws, plus passport and visa information, see <https://www.state.gov/travelers/>

Keep informed of current travel health news by visiting Centers for Disease Control C.D.C at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>

Advice can change so check regularly for updates.

For all latest travel information about your holiday, please visit our Travel Safety Advice page.

How to Book

Ready to book? Please contact **Breakaway Adventures on Tel: 1-800-567-6286; International Tel: +1-843-856-9771.**
<https://www.breakaway-adventures.com>