

Churchill | Nunavut | Greenland

Pre-Cruise: Arrive in Winnipeg, Manitoba:

Our friendly staff at Hampton Inn by Hilton Winnipeg Airport Polo Park will shuttle you from the airport to your beautiful accommodations. Prepare for your journey through the arctic in your well-appointed guest room, or in the warm saltwater pool and whirlpool. Indulge in the On the House™ deluxe hot buffet breakfast before taking the complimentary shuttle back to the airport for your flight to the extraordinary Churchill, Manitoba.

Day 1: Arrive in Churchill, Manitoba pre-cruise:

Our journey through the arctic begins in the Polar Bear Capital of the World, Churchill, Manitoba. Initially a remote outpost, this northern community quickly grew to a bustling seaport for the Hudson Bay Company in the 1920s. Now with a population of under 800, Churchill welcomes thousands of visitors annually as truly unique destination. Polar bears frequent the town in the early winters, and beluga whales travel up the river during the summer months. When the sun sets, and the conditions are right, the Northern Lights showcase their spectacular dance.

Upon arriving, you will check-in to a hotel of your choice, and get ready to be mesmerized by the warm welcome and hospitality accorded by the residents. You will get the opportunity to get up close and personal with polar bears as we aboard a specially designed vehicles that will carry you to the heart of the Wildlife Management Areas frequented by Polar Bears, Caribou, Arctic foxes, Muskox, many species of birds and other wildlife that call the Arctic its home.

Possible shore excursions and activities:

- Take a tour of the historical Fort Prince of Wales that was established by the Hudson Bay company in 1717 to control the flourishing fur trade between UK & Canada
- Visit the Itsanitaq museum which houses a collection of internationally recognized Inuit art
- Stop by the visitor centre at the historic railway station
- Take a ride on the Dog Sleds
- Go for a tour in the river to view the magnificent Beluga whales
- Taste the delicious northern cuisine at one of the local restaurants.

Day 2: Churchill. Embarkation

Our ship, *Ocean Atlantic*, will be ready to embark in the evening. Once on-board, enjoy a welcome reception organised by the Ships Captain before you retire for the night in your allocated cabins.

Day 3: Marble Island and Rankin Inlet:

We go past marble island with its white marble like beaches that has been made famous by ill fated James Knight expedition in 1719 to the overwintering of the whalers in the 19th century. The island is a place of intriguing history and haunting stories. Stark graves of the early whalers on Deadman's island and piles of old iron barrel hoops indicate where whale blubber was rendered into oil. Belugas, ringed seals and polar bears are sometimes seen on this island and its bays.

We land ashore in Rankin Inlet which is the transportation centre, business and health centre of the Kivalliq region. It was known for its rich nickel mining history and for having the only ceramic factory in Nunavut. Artisans at the ceramic factory create works of art that are copy righted and displayed in museum all over the world. Conditions of this copyright include that these works of art must be

displayed for public viewing. A visit to the newly inaugurated visitor centre is a must to view its large collection of arts, crafts, fauna, flora and some of the land animals of the wild that call the arctic their home.

Take in a visit to the Northern Development Centre where you will see a very variety of Traditional Inuit arts, crafts and clothing for sale. For the strong hearted, a visit to the community meat processing plant and freezer next door helps understand how the community comes together to process and store its meat.

Day 4: Coats island (Coral harbor):

Coats island, named after Captain William Coats, who made many voyages for the Hudson Bay Company from 1727 -1751 is located about 90 miles south of Southampton Island on whose south shore is situated the small hamlet of Coral Harbor. Coats Island is itself uninhabited, with cliffs on this island rising to about 215 m above sea level. Most of the island is low-lying and flat. The bedrock is primarily limestone, but with large areas of Sedge tundra, tundra ponds and raised beaches. This topography of the island provides a perfect nesting place to large number of thick-billed murre, estimated to be about 30,000 that come here each year for breeding, nesting and raising their off-springs. Black Guillemots, peregrine Falcons (listed on the endangered list of species), and Glaucous Gulls also nest in the immediate vicinity. The island is a mix of federal crown land and parcels of private land owned by the Inuit of Nunavut, who frequently come from nearby Coral Harbor for hunting.

Local outfitters from Coral Harbor will be present in their own boats to help you observe the thick-billed Murre and many bird species that may be resting on this island. You may also get to view colonies of walrus that haul out on its beaches during the summer months.

Day 5: Cape Dorset:

This idyllic community in the territory of Nunavut is known as the centre for Inuit arts, crafts, prints and soapstone carvings unique to the Canadian arctic. Upon arrival, throat singers and drum dancers will welcome us before we are taken on a walking tour of the hamlet of cape Dorset. Enjoy a guided tour of the Kenojuk Arts Centre with print demonstration. Carvings, prints and handicrafts are available for sale.

We will also visit the Mallikjuaq Island to get a interpretive tour of the historical Thule House archeological site that was about 1000 years ago, home to the Thule people who lived in low stone houses framed with whalebone ribs, the roofs of which were lined with hides and sod. You will be able to see the remnants of nine winter houses whose stone foundations are still in place with the bones of whales, seals and walrus scattered all around.

Archeological evidence unearthed suggests that people from the Dorset culture (era 500 BC – 1500 AD) predated the Thule people who lived in the area from about 1000 AD – 1600 AD. Since then, the Inuit people have been living in this area. The ingenuity of these people can be seen in the many stone structures, kayak stands, fox traps, burial sites and 'Inuksuit' that have been built for their survival and guidance.

Local laws require these structures to be left untouched and not disturbed as they are protected under Nunavut Laws.

Day 6 : At sea:

This time at sea allows us to relax and reflect upon your journey, as well as prepare for the ventures ahead!

Unwind in the beautiful accommodations of the Ocean Atlantic, dine in the bright and spacious restaurant and lounge, read from the many topical subjects available in our well stocked library, enjoy playing the piano, sit back in the sauna, top up your tan by the pool, or keep active in the gym.

Take in the stunning scenery of the Arctic on the observation deck and search for wildlife.

Attend the many educational lectures on a variety of topics from the fauna, flora and wildlife to the historical importance of the geography and environment.

Day 7: Akpatok Island:

This island is in Ungava Bay off the northern coast of Quebec and known as being one of the largest migratory bird sanctuaries in North America with millions of seabirds, namely the Akpat, which is the Inuktitut for the Thick-billed Murre (also known as the Brunnich's Guillemot), a bird of the auk family. Breeding pairs come to this island from central and South America to nest and raise their offspring. Watch for predatory birds like glaucous gulls, and speedy peregrine falcons that fly around looking for unprotected eggs and chicks. Aquamarine colour of the eggs of these birds are the star attraction for these predatory birds. Keep a sharp eye for polar bears on the beaches below, as they may be prowling for an unprotected chick learning to fly on their own. Walrus and seals are also known to come to this island in large numbers to bask in the sun.

Weather and conditions permitting, your expedition staff will be more than happy to take you in the zodiacs to the beaches below. Here you can see the magnificent limestone cliffs that tower 150 to 250 meters above. Be alert and keep a safe distance for viewing for polar bears, walrus & seals. Remember that we are only visitors whereas they are opportunist animals in their natural habitat foraging for food. The Inuit, who left in the early 1900's, were the last inhabitants of this island. Traces of the last Inuit settlements can still be seen together with an airstrip that was used by oil/gas companies that were exploring in the 1970's. The only people you might see today will be the Inuit hunters who still come to the island hunting for walrus, seals, or polar bears.

Beautiful glaciers and ice floes floating near the island give a magnificent view of the island that create memories of a lifetime.

Day 8 & 9: At sea:

This time at sea allows us to relax and reflect upon your journey, as well as prepare for the ventures ahead!

Unwind in the beautiful accommodations of the Ocean Atlantic, dine in the bright and spacious restaurant and lounge, read from the many topical subjects available in our well stocked library, enjoy playing the piano, sit back in the sauna, top up your tan by the pool, or keep active in the gym.

Take in the stunning scenery of the Arctic on the observation deck and search for wildlife.

Attend the many educational lectures on a variety of topics from the fauna, flora and wildlife to the historical importance of the geography and environment.

Day 10: Uummannaq

During the evening, we have cruised past Disko Island and Nuussuaq Peninsular. In the crisp morning air, the heart shaped mountain of Uummannaq is our direction marker. Uummannaq was originally established as a colony on the Nuussuaq mainland in 1758, but shortly thereafter in 1763, it was moved to the nearby island, which offered more abundant seal hunting. Our walk along the town's steep streets will lead us to a historic building constructed in 1860, which once housed boilers to extract oil from the blubber of whales. The resulting production was shipped throughout Europe to light the streets and served as an important contribution to the oil trading economy in both Greenland and Europe.

Possible Excursions, sights and lectures:

- Nature hike (difficult 5 km hike) to Santa Claus Hut in s.k. 'Spragle Bay'
- Historic lecture in the town church
- In the afternoon, we hope to make Zodiac landing at Niaqornat, one of Greenland's smallest yet most beautiful settlements with only 60 inhabitants. Stepping aboard our ship's fleet of Zodiacs, we will cruise into the coast, to be welcomed by the jubilant greetings of productive, lively locals. Perhaps during our time ashore, we will spot a few residents, who are willing to pose for a photo in their national dress.

In the evening, we will return from the beach to our ship by Zodiac and continue our voyage across Davis Strait towards the calving glaciers of Eqip Sermia.

Day 11: Calving glacier of Eqip Sermia:

our ship will reach a magnificent natural highlight – the enormous Eqip Sermia Glacier. Situated approximately 50 nautical miles north of Ilulissat, the Eqip Sermia Glacier is renowned for her awe-inspiring beauty. Some legendary arctic explorers selected this location as a base for their studies. One such explorer, the acclaimed Swiss glaciologist, Alfred de Quervain, used the location as a base for his expeditions onto Greenland's inland ice cap over a century ago. We will sail as close as possible to the ice's edge – but at a safe distance to dodge the plunging blocks of ice and violent waves that result from the calving glacier.

The Captain take the vessel further south through the narrow fjords towards Ilulissat.

Day 12: Ilulissat, the capital of icebergs and walking tour to the Sermermiut Plain

Ilulissat is possibly the most well-placed town in Greenland. The name simply means 'icebergs' in Greenlandic and the town's nickname is rightly 'the iceberg capital'. In Disko Bay, which is located just off the coast of Ilulissat, gigantic icebergs linger in the freezing waters. These icebergs come from the Icefjord, which is located a half hour's hike south of Ilulissat. These impressive frozen structures are first born some 70km deeper into the fjord by the enormous Sermeq Kujalleq glacier. This 10km-wide and 1,000m-thick glacier is the most productive glacier outside of Antarctica. Whereas most glaciers only calve at a rate of approximately a meter a day, the Ilulissat glacier calves at a rate of 25m per day. The icebergs produced by the glacier represent more than 10% of all icebergs in Greenland, corresponding

to 20 million tons of ice per day! These facts, together with the fjord's extreme beauty, have secured the Icefjord a place on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

During the more than 250 years that have passed since the establishment of Ilulissat, the town has steadily flourished. Today, Ilulissat is Greenland's third largest with more than 4,500 inhabitants. The town is very vibrant, welcoming and lively with a wide range of cultural attractions, according to Greenlandic standards. The legendary polar explorer, Knud Rasmussen – first to take his dog sledge from Greenland all the way to Alaska - was born in Ilulissat.

Possible Excursions, sights and lectures:

- Walk to the deserted ancient settlement of Sermermiut. Spectacular views of the Ice Fjord.
- Trip to the Ice Fjord by local boat
- Helicopter flight along Kangia Ice Fjord (few seats available, subject to weather).
- During the night, our captain will navigate southward from "the iceberg capital", leaving lovely Disko Bay in our wake.

Day 13: Sisimiut

Early in the morning, we arrive at Sisimiut, Greenland's second-largest city at the foot of Nasaasaaq Mountain. The harbour is bustling, as this is the most northerly port of Greenland that remains free of ice in the winter. It is also the southernmost town with sufficient snow for dog sledding.

After breakfast, we will venture in to the busy city-centre to behold the 18th-century wooden buildings, including the culturally significant Blue Church. We will also visit the local museum to learn about the Inuit culture, and the colonial history of Greenland.

Having arrived here in several migrations from North America, the Inuit have lived around Sisimiut for an estimated 4,500 years. In 1600, the first European whalers arrived in the Sisimiut region, but they maintained very little contact with the Inuit population. It was only after Norwegian missionary, Hans Egede, colonised Greenland in 1721 that regular contact developed between the Inuit and Europeans. Nowadays, Sisimiut is an important place for education and industry, the fish processing plant is one of the largest of its kind in Greenland, and one of the world's most modern.

Possible Excursions, sights and lectures:

- Guided town walks with ship guides
- Old Quarter
- Tele Island.
- Lecture "From muskox to wool". Thirty persons at a time during the day in 'Yellow House', Old Quarter. "Greenland Tasting" at Hotel Sisimiut

Day 14: Kangerlussuaq. Fly to your home country.

During the night, we will complete our passage through the 160-kilometer Kangerlussuaq Fjord. After breakfast aboard the ship, we will bid farewell to the ship's staff and the Zodiac boats will shuttle us to shore.

Possible Excursions, sights and lectures:

- The inland ice sheet is one of Greenland's biggest attractions. Known as the Greenland Ice Sheet, it covers 80% of the island's surface and is second in size to the world's only other ice sheet in

Antarctica.

Possible tours

- 4WD bus tour Russel Glacier. 4 hours.
- 4WD bus tour to point 660 – and possible walk to the Ice Sheet edge. 5 hours.
- Tundra Safari, high chances to spot rein deer and muscox. 1.5 hour

In the afternoon board international flight from Kangerlussuaq.