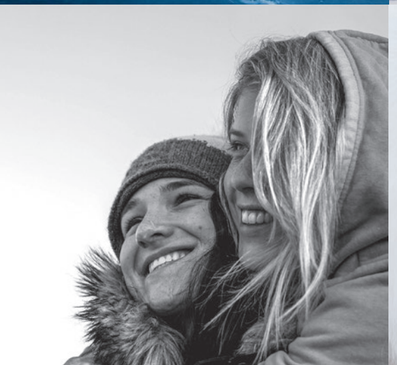
THE MOTHERBEAR

ARCTIC EXPEDITIONS

SVALBARD SPITSBERGEN GREENLAND 2023-2024

EXPEDITIONSRESOR



JOIN US ON AN ARCTIC EXPEDITION AROUND

SVALBARD AND SPITSBERGEN

We travel deep into the land of the polar bear and experience the dramatic landscapes, beautiful fjords, rugged mountains, glaciers and spectacular wildlife in one of the most extreme and remote regions on this planet. A journey through a world of ice.

These are unique and exclusive expeditions with a small group led by Fredrik Granath and Melissa Schäfer with an extremely experienced crew on board the best expedition ship in the Arctic: M/S Freya.

The adventure of a lifetime?

EXPERIENCE THE ARCTIC, Svalbard, its animals and nature up close. North of Norway, not far from the North Pole, we find Spitsbergen and the mythical archipelago of Svalbard. Visiting the high Arctic with its untouched nature is a magical experience.

JOIN FREDRIK GRANATH, MELISSA SCHÄFER AND EXPEDITIONSRESOR on an expedition into the extreme wilderness of Svalbard. The goal of our expedition is to experience the dramatic scenery and all the amazing wildlife around Svalbard.

WINTER AND SPRING IS A MAGICAL TIME OF THE YEAR around Svalbard and Spitsbergen. The landscapes are covered in snow and there is plenty of drift ice in the fjords and areas surrounding the islands. Our ship handles these conditions well and we will travel far out into the most remote and unique areas where we best can experience the Arctic nature and its impressive wildlife, of course including the polar bear. Hopefully we also encounter other animals, like walrus, seals, birds, and when we're on land: arctic fox and reindeer.

In March and April, after months of polar night, a world of ice comes out of darkness and the days quickly become longer. From the middle of March we have plenty of daylight with a warm and beautiful light, while sunsets color the snow covered landscapes and frozen fjords, shifting from dark blue, to pink, violet, red and orange.

In May, spring is beginning to embrace the Arctic and the midnight sun shines around the clock. The landscapes are still covered in snow and there is usually plenty of ice in the fjords.

The feeling out there is indescribable.

ON OUR CHARMING EXPEDITION SHIP M/S FREYA we are comfortably accommodated. During the days, when conditions allow, we leave the ship with our three zodiacs to cruise around for even closer contact with the amazing life and nature, like ice bergs and glaciers, or take a walk on land or the ice. The meals onboard are prepared by our Swedish chef, and when it's possible we can also enjoy a late-night barbeque on land or on deck. If someone would like to take a cool swim in the Arctic Ocean there's a sauna on board where you can get warm afterwards.

M/S FREYA IS THE BEST EXPEDITION SHIP IN THE ARCTIC in our opinion. She is small enough to get close to animals and nature without disturbing, but she also has the strength and power to force her way through close drift ice in a safe way. The ship is newly renovated with spacious twin cabins, a comfortable lounge, a large upper deck with an amazing 360° view of our surroundings, and everything we need for a relaxing and exciting expedition.

WHEN WE ARE NOT EXPLORING THE NATURE outside the ship, we enjoy the comfort on deck, looking for polar bears, whales, seals and other animals, or relax in the cozy lounge.

DETAILS - SVALBARD WITH M/S FREYA
9 DAYS - WINTER-SPRING CRUISE

Departure Longyearbyen at 4 pm first day.
Return Longyearbyen last day at 9 am.

TRIP LENGTH: 9 days
GROUP SIZE: maximum 18 people

PRICE per person:
Standard cabin US$ 7,800/EUR 6900
Superior cabin US$ 8,300/EUR 7400
Executive cabin US$ 8,600/EUR 7700

ACCOMMODATION:
Shared twin cabin. All cabins have separate, lower beds, private bathroom/shower and a window to the ocean. The **superior** and **executive cabins** are newly built, and are on deck level with quick access to the deck, lounge and dining areas. They are slightly larger than the **standard cabins**, which are upstairs. The executive cabin is the largest. It also has a double, king size bed.

Price includes:
- All activities, transportation and fees/permissions on Svalbard.
- Guiding in English by Fredrik Granath and two guides.
- All meals on board M/S Freya. (Dietary requirements like vegan, vegetarian, lactose, allergies etc are not a problem - let us know).
- Local transport to and from airport and the ship in Longyearbyen.
- Large format photo book with memories from our journey.
- 120% Climate compensated trip including your flight.

Not included in the price:
- Flight to/from Longyearbyen.
- Travel insurance.
- Optional tip for the ship crew.

Payment terms: A deposit of 20% after making your reservation. The rest is due two months before departure.

DATES M/S FREYA
SVALBARD AND SPITSBERGEN

2023
MARCH 22-30
MARCH 30-APRIL 7
MAY 1-9
MAY 9-17

2024
MARCH 22-30
MARCH 30-APRIL 7
MAY 1-9
AUGUST 21-29 **GREENLAND** EXPEDITION - SEE PAGE 24

FOR CURRENT AVAILABILITY OF SPOTS ON THESE TRIPS, CHECK OUR WEBSITE AT **THEMOTHERBEAR.COM** OR SEND US AN E-MAIL. CONTACT DETAILS ON THE LAST PAGE.

SVALBARD AND SPITSBERGEN

CLOSE TO 80° NORTH, Svalbard rises out of the Arctic Ocean. It is our home, and also the home of 2,000 to 3,000 polar bears. Svalbard consists of hundreds of islands, of which Spitsbergen is the biggest. Here, only 700 miles south of the North Pole, rugged mountains, glaciers, and magnificent landscapes make up one of the most unique and harsh regions on the planet. Sixty percent of the land area is covered by glaciers.

This was uncharted territory up until June 17, 1596, when Dutch navigator and explorer Willem Barentsz discovered Spitsbergen. It is one of the latest additions to the world map, and the archipelago now belongs to Norway.

These northerly latitudes are a world of contrasts in constant transformation. The seasons, the ever-changing light, the weather, the sea ice, the air - everything is in transition. Even the landscapes change as the glaciers move and sculpt the land beneath.

In the High Arctic, winters and summers are literally like night and day. On Svalbard, polar night reigns from November to February, when the sun remains under the horizon and the only sources of light are the moon, the stars, and the colorful auroras. Although far from visible, the sun still colors the sky dark blue, and some days it can make the sky red and purple for moments of magic by shining its light on ice crystals in the atmosphere.

From April to August on the other hand, the sun never sets. In the midst of midnight sun, the sun remains high in the sky even at midnight.

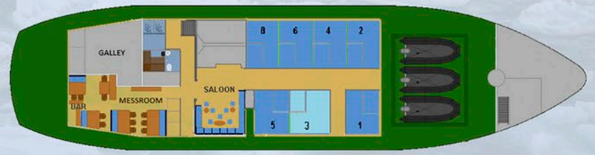
Every month is unique. We choose the dates for all our expeditions carefully. We want the perfect conditions when it comes to light, ice and wildlife. And it is the time of year when the sun is low that we love the most. In March and April the days become longer and the winter night slowly turns to permanent day. The rising sun brings forward color reflections in the sky, snow, and ice, shifting from blue, pink, and violet to red and orange. In May, the early days of the midnight sun, the sun is low at night, giving us a warm, beautiful light.

OUR SHIP M/S FREYA

M/S Freya is in our opinion the best expedition ship in the Arctic. She was originally built for the Swedish Maritime Administration in 1981 and was later taken over by the Swedish Coast Guard. She has been used as an environmental protection vessel as well as for research and science expeditions. In 2015 she was converted to an Arctic expedition ship and came to Svalbard for the first time in the summer of 2016. In 2018 Freya was acquired by Edvin Vidarsson and the Skattegården farm in Sweden. More about this and the work the owners and we do regarding the operations with this beautiful ship on page 32.

Freya is built to Lloyd's class for unrestricted trade and has the highest ice class 1A. She has capacity for up to 26 passengers in seven newly built twin cabins and four triple cabins. On this expedition we only bring 18 passengers, to make it as spacious and comfortable for everyone as possible. We also have three zodiacs (small rubber boats) on the ship, which we use as often we can when conditions allow it for exploring the surroundings more closely.

M/S Freya has a spectacular deck with a 360-degree view, a large dining room, a nice lounge and a cozy sauna where you can warm yourself after the day's adventures. Travelling with only 18 passengers makes it feel more like being on a private yacht rather than a bigger expedition ship. We have an experienced crew of eight people plus three guides on board, everyone ready to assist and make the most out of our expedition.



Standard cabin
Two single beds. Private wc/shower.

Superior cabin
Two single beds. Private wc/shower.

Executive cabin
Double king size bed. Private wc/shower.

DAY TO DAY PROGRAM

DAY 1
ARRIVAL IN THE ARCTIC In the afternoon we board our ship at the harbor in Longyearbyen. We meet the crew and have a safety briefing while we begin cruising out of Adventfjorden via Isfjorden out into the Arctic wilderness.

We settle in on the ship and in our cabins. During the evening we eat a welcome dinner, socialize and enjoy the magnificent glaciers and mountains pass by as we travel towards the land of the polar bear. Magic is ahead.

DAY 2 - 8
EXPLORING THE ARCTIC WILDERNESS Travelling through the drift ice, our exact route will be decided by ice and weather conditions. Our goal is to explore and experience as much as possible of what the Arctic has to offer and encounter the impressive wildlife, of course hopefully also the King of the Arctic: the polar bear. When conditions allow, we get into our zodiacs to cruise around and perhaps go on land or ice. We will most likely travel to the fjords Fuglefjorden and Raudfjorden on the north side of Spitsbergen where we should encounter the edge of the North Pole pack ice. Later in the week we travel down south on Spitsbergen's west coast to Bellsund and Hornsund.

DAY 9
BYE BYE ARCTIC After a last breakfast together on the ship it is time to leave. There is time to explore the village some more and perhaps shop some souveniers for friends and family back home.

Please note: *Our exact route and travel plans are depending on weather and ice conditions and where we expect the best opportunities at the time of our expedition. We will do everything possible to make the most out of our Arctic adventure. Flexibility is the key to a successful expedition!*

During our expeditions we typically encounter polar bears and other wildlife, such as seals, walrus, foxes, as well as in summer-autumn also some whales. And of course always the magical scenery of Svalbard. There are never any guarantees for anything up here though. But we do know one thing: it will be amazing. It always is, and every expedition is unique and unlike the others.

Nature is the boss. And that is what makes this a true adventure.

SOME TRAVEL DETAILS

Cabins
There are nine cabins for guests on board, all with windows facing the sea and with private shower and toilet. All cabins have closets with hangers and a few drawers for storage of personal items. All beds are lower beds (no bunkbeds).

Food
We are served food in the dining room three times per day: breakfast, lunch and dinner. Coffee, tea, drinks and snacks are available around the clock. Dietary requirements like vegetarian, vegan, lactose, allergies etc are not a problem - just let us know! There is also a bar in the dining room which has a selection of wine, beer and drinks.

Electricity
All electrical outlets on the ship have standard Swedish 220V / 50Hz outlets. When you come from abroad, for example the U.S., you need to bring a power plug adapter. Ask us if you're not sure.

Visit the bridge
Passengers are always welcome on the bridge. But please listen to the captain's orders that may come for example when navigating through close drift ice or during bad weather.

Water
The water on the ship is bunkered on Svalbard. It tastes great and you can drink it. Most of the water actually comes from melted snow and glaciers.

Cell phones and communication
There is good cell phone coverage and plenty of Wifi hotspots in Longyearbyen. But as soon as we leave the harbour, we disconnect from everything. For emergencies though, we have satellite phone on the ship.

Currency
On Svalbard we use Norwegian "kronor" (NOK). There is an ATM in Longyearbyen. Most stores, restaurants etc accept the common credit cards.

Passport
A valid passport is mandatory to enter Svalbard. Make sure it is valid for at least six months past the trip's last day. (Please note: a passport is also necessary for European citizens since Svalbard is not part of Schengen.)

Tipping
Tip is not included in the trip price. It is very appreciated to tip the crew (not us or the guides though) when we leave the ship. Please note that this is optional and everyone decides on their own if they want to tip and how much. A normal tip is around 50 NOK / US$ 5 / EUR 5 per passenger and day.

Travel insurance
Make sure you have a valid travel insurance for your entire trip. Check with your insurance company what's included and if you need to get additional coverage.

Weather
In March-April the temperature on Svalbard usually is around -15°C (5°F) and in May around -5°C (20°F), but it varies a lot. In the northern and eastern parts of the archipelago, it is normally a few degrees colder. Also keep in mind that we have windy conditions at times. It rarely rains here, but when we go in our zodiacs a little bit of sea water may splash over us. That's why we recommend clothing that can handle both wind and some water.

WHAT TO BRING

We spend most of our time on the ship and on its deck experiencing the amazing nature around us and looking for wildlife. Inside the ship we are warm and comfortable. Outside, the temperature in March-April usually is around -15°C/5°F, in May -5°C/20°F.

We often get asked if you need to be very physically fit for an expedition like this, and the quick answer is no! Getting in and out of the zodiacs you climb a short ladder while assisted by the crew. In the zodiac you sit comfortably on its side. We don't drive fast, and we don't go into the zodiacs if the sea is rough.

A couple of times during each expedition we may take a walk on ice or land, depending on conditions. We have three armed guides, so we can split the group if someone wants to take a longer walk. For your own and others safety, it is not allowed to walk alone. This is polar bear territory and the risks must be taken seriously. Our guides are very experienced, listen carefully to what they say. If there is something you're not sure about, don't hesitate to ask!

Packing the right gear in the right amount is important for a successful adventure. Here are some tips on clothing and items you will want to bring.

- Small daytrip backpack - for your personal items during zodiac rides and landings
- Rain cover or waterproof bag for your back pack and camera in the zodiac
- Parka or down jacket with hood (March-April)
- Wind- and waterproof jacket and pants
- Thermal underwear, wool or synthetic - two sets, one thick and warm, one thinner
- Fleece or wool sweater and pants
- Warm hat, scarf and mittens
- Gloves - thin, windproof ones that you can wear alone or inside the mittens
- Socks, thick and thin of wool - several pairs
- Comfortable clothes to wear inside the ship
- Comfortable shoes and sandals/sneakers to wear on the ship
- Trekking boots or insulated rubber boots - to wear in the zodiac and during landings
- Swimwear, if you feel like taking a dip in the Arctic Ocean!

And some other personal items:
- Personal hygiene, toiletry items and medication
- Sunscreen and lip balm
- If you use glasses or contact lenses, make sure to bring an extra pair
- Camera, memory cards and batteries
- Laptop and/or hard drive to backup your memory cards
- Cards, games, books etc for leisure time on the ship
- Binoculars
- Sunglasses with good UV protection
- Power adapter (all power outlets on the ship are of Swedish 220V standard)

Before the trip we will send you a more detailed list of recommended items. And we're always available for more advice.

FREYA
FREYA

SPECIAL EXPEDITION M/S FREYA

GREENLAND

AUGUST 21-29 , 2024

GREENLAND 2024

Join Fredrik Granath and Melissa Schäfer on board the best expedition ship in the Arctic for an amazing adventure and a unique opportunity to experience one of the most remote and untouched areas on our planet: the extreme wilderness of Greenland.

SCORESBY SOUND ON GREENLAND is an absolutely spectacular area. The fjord goes into the coast of eastern Greenland with waters beautifully framed by steep, dramatic mountains. For over eight months every year the fjord is packed with ice. When we visit in August, gigantic ice bergs are floating around the often mirror-like waters which are surrounded by land covered in spectacular autumn colors.

This is an exclusive expedition with a small group on the best ship for an adventure cruise like this. We travel through the fjord system and use our small zodiac boats as often as possible to get even closer to the nature around, like ice bergs and wildlife, and to go on land. We will hopefully encounter musk oxen, some seals and with a bit of luck also polar bears and whales, such as belugas. If the ice conditions allow it, we may also travel a bit north of Scoresby Sound, along the eastern coast of Greenland to the North Pole pack ice.

This is a unique opportunity to visit one of the most difficult to reach and stunning areas on our planet.

This expedition begins and ends in Reykjavik on ICELAND. In the morning of August 21 we travel with a private bus from Reykjavik to Akureyri on northern Iceland. The ride is around 4.5 hours. In the afternoon, we fly from Akureyri with our chartered airplane to Ittoqqortoormiit in Scoresby Sound, where M/S Freya is waiting for us. The flight takes around 1.5 hours. We return the same way and come back to Reykjavik in the evening of August 29.

DATES: AUGUST 21-29, 2024
TRIP LENGTH: 9 days
GROUP SIZE: maximum 18 people

PRICE per person:
Standard cabin US$ 8,800/EUR 7900
Superior cabin US$ 9,300/EUR 8400
Executive cabin US$ 9,600/EUR 8700

PLEASE NOTE: *The prices for this Greenland expedition are preliminary. One year before departure, in August 2023, we will set the final price, which should not differ much from this. However, you will at that point be able to cancel your reservation and get the deposit back if you wish.*

ACCOMMODATION: Shared twin cabin. All cabins have separate, lower beds, private bathroom/shower and a window to the ocean. The **superior** and **executive** cabins are newly built, and are on deck level with quick access to the deck, lounge and dining areas. They are slightly larger than the **standard** cabins, which are upstairs. The executive cabin is the largest. It also has a double, king size bed.

Price includes:
- All activities, transportation and fees/permissions on Iceland and Greenland.
- Guiding in English by Fredrik Granath and two guides.
- All meals on board M/S Freya. (Dietary requirements like vegetarian, vegan, lactose, allergies etc are not a problem - just let us know).
- All drinks/beer/wine during dinners.
- Bus transport on Iceland.
- Chartered airplane to/from Greenland.
- Large format photo book with memories from our journey.
- 120% Climate compensated trip including your flight.

Not included in the price:
- Flight to/from Reykjavik on Iceland.
- Travel insurance.
- Optional tip for the ship crew.

Payment terms: A deposit of 20% after making your reservation. The rest is due two months before departure.

OBSERVE TO PROTECT

The far north is an ecosystem in perfect balance when it has the cold and the ice it needs, but every single degree of warming has huge consequences, and this makes it extremely vulnerable. The high Arctic offers some of Earth's most extreme conditions and it inhibits some of the strongest, most powerful wildlife. At the same time it is the most fragile place you can imagine.

All human activity leaves footprints, also this trip. On our expeditions everything happens on the terms of Svalbard's environment and wildlife. If anything we do comes at a cost for these, we do all we humanly can to avoid it. We never disturb wildlife knowingly. If an animal seems affected by our presence we always back off and retreat. When an animal changes its behaviour because of us, we have failed. Being quiet and avoiding disturbance is a much easier task on our small ship with only 18 guests than the big ones, with dozens or hundreds of passengers.

By visiting the Arctic we leave footprints. And travelling with a ship, we can not avoid emitting greenhouse gases. We and the owners of M/S Freya are completely committed to minimizing our emissions. We look at all aspects of these operations, big and small. All from what fuel is used to the products used on board and what food is served. We are constantly looking at ways to improve our operations.

M/S Freya is owned by Edvin Vidarsson and his family who also are running Skattegården, a beautiful farm in Sweden. They have an amazing focus on environmentally friendly production and work for a sustainable future. The ship and the farm is part of the same concept. For example, the goal is to have as much as possible of the food served on board produced by the farm. Locally produced and served in the north! This way of working and forward way of thinking makes us very proud to work with Edvin, M/S Freya and Skattegården.

We also calculate all carbon emissions created during this trip, not only from the ship, but from our guests' flights to Svalbard as well. And we carbon offset (climate compensate) everything connected with this expedition. Our goal is to over-compensate up to at least 120% - to give more than we take to our planet. This is not a perfect system, but it is part of the bigger picture.

We follow all national and international laws and regulations as well as the guidelines set up by The Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO). But we also have our own guidelines to follow in situations when they are more strict.

The number one priority for these expeditions is to safeguard the place and life we are here to observe. The goal is to learn about the Arctic, its environment and wildlife by experiencing it close at firsthand. And of course to have the adventure of a lifetime.

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United Nations Framework Convention Climate Change

We are photographer Melissa Schäfer and producer Fredrik Granath. Partners in life, love, work and all. We are based in Stockholm, Sweden, Longyearbyen and the world.

We work with photography in the Arctic with a focus on the polar bear and climate change. Much of our field work we do on our own, during winter, often going on long expeditions travelling on snowmobile around Svalbard. Since 2016 we also charter M/S Freya every year. This has proven to be the best decision we ever made.

Bringing new friends to the Arctic and experiencing this world of wonders together on M/S Freya has proved to be amongst the most amazing things we could ever have hoped for. Many of our guests come home having become friends for life, with each other and us, all sharing moments we will carry together forever. We let you see the nature and wildlife through our eyes, and we are so grateful to also see it through yours - with new fascination and excitement!

MELISSA SCHÄFER PHOTOGRAPHER

From her early childhood days in Hamburg, Germany, Melissa has viewed the world through her camera lens. With a background in creative and portrait photography she has always had a unique eye for the surroundings. A deep love for the Arctic and polar bears as well as a strong commitment to nature and the environment is a foundation for all her work. In 2020 Melissa and Fredrik published their book “Polar Tales” worldwide in English. It has also been published in German as “Das Königreich der Eisbären” and Swedish as “Bortom isbjörnens rike”. Melissa has also been published by The New York Times, National Geographic, GEO and many others.

FREDRIK GRANATH PRODUCER

Leading expert on field work and production in the polar regions. Since 2001 he has been working around the Arctic on his own projects, and also as a producer and adviser for other film- and photographic projects in the Arctic, including work for film studios and the National Geographic. He has assembled a unique expertise of working under the most extreme conditions and is specialised in polar bears.

FREYA

We would love to have you with us!

If you want to make a booking request or have questions, call us or send an e-mail!

E-MAIL fred@themotherbear.com
PHONE +46 707 811 787

Or use the contact form on our website themotherbear.com

THEMOTHERBEAR.COM

Visit our website for the latest news on our expeditions, current projects, books and upcoming events.

You can also subscribe to our newsletter.

EXPEDITIONSRESOR

These expeditions are produced in collaboration with Swedish travel agency Expeditionsresor, one of the best and most experienced adventure travel operators in the world. They handle administrative details and all reservations. Expeditionsresor have the government issued travel guarantee required under Swedish law, which gives you rights such as absolute security in case of insolvancy or a cancelled trip.

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Phone: +46 8 540 254 40 E-mail: info@expeditionsresor.se

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