

# THE HIGH ARCTIC – 2017

## OVERVIEW

Tour Date: 4 July 2017 – 31 July 2017

Tour Duration: 27 days

Tour Cost (\$AUD): \$23,950

Single Supplement (\$AUD): \$4,995

*The High Arctic is one of the world's most beautiful regions, yet it is surprisingly little-visited. Our spectacular 27-day tour features stunning glaciers, mountains, fjords, geysers and icebergs and one of the world's greatest rail journeys, the Flam.*

Our journey to the High Arctic begins in Norway then continues to Iceland, Greenland and finally the Danish capital, Copenhagen. Embracing all of the incredible highlights of these countries, this unique tour is a mix of majestic scenery, ancient civilisations and cultures, and vibrant history. The tour begins in the Norwegian capital, Oslo, and it is here that we board the 65-year-old Flam Railway for one of the world's most fantastic rail journeys. On this amazing train ride we climb nearly 900 metres from fjord to mountain top, an incline of 1 in 18, a tunnel that spirals inside a mountain, and views that will take your breath away! We arrive at the beautiful city of Bergen and board a ship for a six-night cruise along Norway's rugged west coast, past shimmering glaciers and majestic fjords. We then fly to Iceland for seven nights, making a complete circuit of this amazing island. But undoubtedly, the centrepiece and major highlight of this great tour is a four-day visit to Greenland's iceberg town of Ilulissat, home to the midnight sun. Here we take a midnight cruise through the icebergs of Disko Bay and take a plane flight over the spectacular Icefjord. We invite you to join us on an unforgettable adventure to the extraordinary High Arctic!

**Tour Fitness Level: Moderate**

# THE HIGH ARCTIC 2017

## TOUR ITINERARY

### 04/07/2017 Australia – Dubai

Depart from your chosen Australian airport for the flight to Dubai.

### 05/07/2017 Dubai – Oslo (D)

Depart Dubai Emirates, EK 159 07.25

Arrive Oslo 12.30

The Norwegian capital lies between the Oslofjord and the green hills of Oslomarka. On the way to our hotel we visit the Viking Ships Museum and the superb 80-acre Sculpture Park. The park, located in western Oslo, features 212 sculptures by Gustav Vigeland. Every year more than one million tourists from all over the world visit the site.

**Thon Hotel Opera**

Oslo

### 06/07/2017 Oslo (BLD)

Today we explore Oslo's rich history in the grand buildings and museums at the 13th century fortress of Akershus in the centre of the city. The fortress is also a popular recreational area with wonderful views to the harbour. In the afternoon we visit the museum that houses the world's most famous polar ship, the Fram. We go aboard the ship and see how Norway's polar explorers lived and survived in the coldest places on earth more than 100 years ago.

### 07/07/2017 Oslo – Flam (BLD)

This morning we board our train to Flam via Myrdal. The 65-year-old Flam railway is considered to be one of the world's most fantastic stretches of railroad. On this amazing journey we climb nearly 900 metres from fjord to mountain top, an incline of 1 in 18, a tunnel that spirals inside a mountain, and views that will take your breath away!

Depart Oslo 08.11

Arrive Flam 14.25

**Frethiem Hotel**

Flam

### 08/07/2017 Flam (BLD)

This morning we board a boat and head out to Naeroyfjord, an area of extreme, dramatic and beautiful scenery. We stop frequently to view the wildlife and the old settlements in the high mountain sides. Our guide informs us about the landscape and local wildlife, and may also tell old stories from the area. In the early afternoon we return to Flam.

### 09/07/2017 Flam – Bergen (BLD)

Depart Flam Train 5, 08.30

Arrive Bergen 12.05

After breakfast we take the train to Bergen and on arrival we begin a sightseeing tour that includes a visit to the composer Edvard Grieg's house in Troidhaugen, where he lived and worked during the winter months. He was much in demand all over the world, both as a pianist and a conductor, and became Norway's foremost ambassador for the music of his time. Today Troidhaugen is a living museum, consisting of, not only the museum, but also the composer's house, cabin and tomb.

**Det Hanseatiske Hotel**

Bergen

#### 10/07/2017 On board ship (BD)

This evening we board the Ms Kong Harald for the seven-day journey to Kirkenes. Often described as the world's most beautiful voyage, this is far more than just a cruise as it provides a unique insight into the linkage between Norway's coastal communities.

#### 11/07/2017 Florø – Molde – Kristiansund: On board ship (BLD)

The ship crosses the open seas of Stadthavet and arrives at the Art Nouveau town of Alesund. On arrival at the town we disembark and drive to the Geirangerfjord by way of a spectacular road that winds down to the Trollstigen pass. We then re-board our ship and continue to Molde, passing the magnificent Rimsdal Alps, before sailing into the busy port of Kristiansund.

#### 12/07/2017 Kristiansund – Trondheim – Rorvik: On board ship (BLD)

Today we sail up the wide Trondheim fjord to the medieval city which is the pride of the country. The city boasts many charming old wooden buildings as well as the superb Ringve Museum. In the afternoon we head northwest and the ship cruises past 6,000 islands before arriving at Rorvik in the evening.

#### 13/07/2017 Rorvik – Bronnoysund – Svolvær: On board ship (BLD)

Today we cross the Arctic Circle on our approach to the modern town of Bodo, with the impressive Borvass Mountains looming on the starboard side. We then cross the Vestfjord and steer towards the magnificent sheer Lofoten Wall. Arriving at the large fishing village stations of Stamsund and Svolvær, the ship continues into the Raftsund Strait.

#### 14/07/2017 Svolvær – Harstad - Tromsø: On board ship (BLD)

This afternoon we arrive at Tromsø, gateway to the Arctic. Here modern shops and cafes provide a contrast to the stunning stained glass of the Arctic Cathedral.

#### 15/07/2017 Tromsø – Honningsvåg – Melhamn: On board ship (BLD)

Honningsvåg with its 2,800 inhabitants is the capital of the North Cape. Walking through Honningsvåg you'll find excellent shops, Arctic dining experiences and other exciting activities. Check out the Perleporten Kulturhus (the local cultural centre), the Once Upon A Dream art gallery, and the Artico Ice Bar.

#### 16/07/2017 Melhamn – Kirkenes – Oslo – Reykjavik (BD)

This morning we arrive at Kirkenes – meaning 'church headland' – after Kirkenes church which was built here in 1862. Upon arrival we transfer to the airport for our flight to Iceland via Oslo.

Depart Kirkenes Scandinavian Airlines SK4473, 11.30

Arrive Oslo 13.35

Depart Oslo Scandinavian Airlines SK4785, 17.10

Arrive Reykjavik 17.55

Welcome to Reykjavik, the world's most northerly capital! In many ways it feels more like a provincial town than a capital city. When viewed from the top of the famous Hallgrímskirkja Church, the city - with its low buildings and brightly painted houses - stretches out like a toy town. Despite this impression, Reykjavik is home to three out of five Icelanders. The diminutive city is the focal point for Icelandic life and politically, socially and economically it dominates the country.

**Alda Hotel**

Reykjavik

### 17/07/2017 Reykjavik – Akureyri (BLD)

After breakfast we leave Reykjavik. Driving across the highland interior, we may see the Icelandic horse, a breed unchanged since its introduction by the Vikings more than 1,100 years ago. We continue via Nesjavellir and Thingvellir, arriving at Akureyri in the afternoon.

#### Hotel Akureyri

Akureyri

### 18/07/2017 Akureyri - Lake Myvatn – Egilsstadir (BLD)

Today we visit the 'waterfall of the gods', Godafoss, before continuing through majestic mountain ranges and narrow passes en-route to Lake Myvatn, where we visit the old pseudo craters, and the strange lava formations of Dimmuborgir. In the afternoon we head inland across the empty vastness of the highland desert plateau towards Namaskard Pass, where boiling mud pools and flashing colours of the pass merge with ash and lava from the volcano Krafla. We then continue to the biggest waterfall in Europe; Dettifoss, before we head to Egilsstadir and the stunning fjords of east Iceland.

#### Egilsstadir Guesthouse

Egilsstadir

### 19/07/2017 Egilsstadir – Skaftafell – Efri-Vik (BLD)

This morning we leave Egilsstadir and head south towards Skaftafell and Efri-Vik. En-route we visit the Glacier Lagoon, Jokulsarlon, and enjoy a boat tour among the floating icebergs. Jokulsarlon lies at the foot of Europe's largest glacier Vatnajokull. Breidamerkurjokull, an outlet glacier of the great glacier Vatnajokull, crumbles down the steep mountainside of the glacier and big icebergs break off into the lagoon where they float around before melting. We then continue over Skeidararsandur to the Skaftafell National Park, a beautiful green oasis beneath the towering Oraefajokull glacier, Iceland's highest peak (2,119m).

#### Hotel Laki

Efri-Vik

### 20/07/2017 Efri-Vik – Vik – Selfoss (BLD)

Our activities today begin at Reynisfjara Beach – a black volcanic beach located just a few minutes outside Vik. Here we see the mysterious basalt columns that protrude out of the stormy North Atlantic Ocean – making this one of the most photographed and documented sites in Iceland. Rumour has it that the stacks originated when three trolls, pulling a three-masted ship to shore, were petrified and turned into needles of rock after being caught by surprise at dawn. But more than just a piece of Icelandic folklore, the cliffs surrounding Reynisfjara Beach also play an important role during the breeding season, when they host several bird species, including the much sought-after puffin. Later we head towards Selfoss via Skogar and Sejlandsfoss waterfalls.

#### Hotel Selfoss

Selfoss

### 21/07/2017 Selfoss – Reykjavik (BLD)

The Golden Circle is the quintessential Icelandic excursion, and this morning we embark on this remarkable tour, which takes us to the magnificent sights of Gullfoss (the Golden Waterfall) and the geothermal area where geysers shoot columns of water high into the air. After witnessing these thrilling displays of the force of nature, we continue on to Reykjavik.

#### Hotel 1 Reykjavik Centrum

Reykjavik

### 22/07/2017 Reykjavik (BLD)

This morning we enjoy a city tour. In the afternoon we relax with a trip to the world-famous Blue Lagoon.

### 23/07/2017 Reykjavik – Ilulissat (BLD)

Depart Reykjavik Air Greenland GL717, 06.40

Arrive Ilulissat 07.40

On arrival we explore the town and learn its fascinating history. In the old town we visit the Danish trading station, the busy fishing harbour and the museum.

Hotel Arctic

Ilulissat

### 24/07/2017 Ilulissat (BLD)

With a population of 4,000, Ilulissat is set in the marvellous surroundings of Jakobshavn fjord. Perched on the shores of spectacular Disko Bay, Ilulissat is world-famous for its icebergs. These shimmering ice masses run aground in the mouth of the fjord, literally just outside the town! Today we tour by boat to the hunter's settlement, Rodebay.

### 25/07/2017 Ilulissat (BLD)

Today is a major highlight of the tour as we take a magical plane flight over the spectacular Icefjord. In the evening we take a cruise on the Icefjord as the midnight sun and warm red colours reflect in the gigantic icebergs, creating an unforgettable sight.

### 26/07/2017 Ilulissat (BLD)

The Eqip Glacier – known as the 'calving glacier' – often provides spectators with the awesome sight of the 'birth' of an iceberg. Today we cruise along the 5km wide glacier, hoping to see a spectacular 'delivery'. As the new iceberg crashes and rotates in the water, sea creatures rise to the surface providing waiting flocks of sea birds with a huge meal.

### 27/07/2017 Ilulissat – Kangerlussuaq – Copenhagen (B)

Early this morning we board our flight to Copenhagen via Kangerlussuaq.

Depart Ilulissat Greenland Air GL 533, 10.05

Arrive Kangerlussuaq 11.40

Depart Kangerlussuaq Greenland Air GL 782, 13.10

Arrive Copenhagen 21.30

Imperial Hotel

Copenhagen

### 28/07/2017 Copenhagen (BD)

This morning we begin our tour of Copenhagen, passing by the Tivoli Gardens and the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek. We drive through the colourful canal district, past the National Museum, and Christiansborg Palace, home to the Danish Parliament. We continue to The Old Stock Exchange and across Kongens Nytorv, where we can see the Royal Theatre, world-famous for its Royal Ballet. The tour continues past the colourful harbour district of Nyhavn to Amalienborg Palace - winter residence of the Royal Family. Here we have the opportunity of seeing the changing of the Danish Royal Guard. This afternoon is at leisure before a wonderful farewell dinner in the Tivoli Gardens.

### 29/07/2017 Copenhagen – Dubai (B)

This morning is at leisure in this beautiful city before a midday transfer to the airport for our flight home.

Depart Copenhagen Emirates EK 152, 15.35  
Arrive Dubai 23.55

**30/07/2017 Dubai – Australia**

In Dubai connect with the flight to your chosen Australian city, arriving home on the same day (except Melbourne and Brisbane passengers).

**31/07/2017 Arrival in Australia**

Melbourne and Brisbane passengers arrive home today.