

THE HIGH ARCTIC – 2017

OVERVIEW

Tour Date: 18 July 2017 – 14 August 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 five-day cruise along Norway's rugged west coast, past shimmering glaciers and majestic fjords. We then fly to Iceland where our seven-day adventure takes us on 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

18/07/2017 Australia – Dubai

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

19/07/2017 Dubai – Oslo (D)

Depart Dubai Emirates, EK 159 07.15

Arrive Oslo 12.30

The Norwegian capital lies between the Oslofjord and the green hills of Osloomarka. 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

20/07/2017 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.

21/07/2017 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

22/07/2017 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.

23/07/2017 Flam – Bergen (BLD)

Depart Flam Train 5, 08.30

Arrive Bergen 12.05

After breakfast we take the train to Bergen and on arrival transfer to our hotel. We then 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

24/07/2017 On board ship (BD)

This evening we board the Nordkapp for the five-day journey to Tromso. 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.

25/07/2017 Floro – Molde – Kristiansund: On board ship (BD)

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.

26/07/2017 Kristiansund – Trondheim – Rorvik: On board ship (BD)

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.

27/07/2017 Rorvik – Bronnoysund – Svolvær: On board ship (BD)

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.

28/07/2017 Tromso – Oslo – Reykjavik (B)

This afternoon we arrive at Tromso, gateway to the Arctic. Here modern shops and cafes provide a contrast to the stunning stained glass of the Arctic Cathedral. We explore Tromso before boarding our evening flight to Oslo and Reykjavik.

Depart Tromso Scandinavian Air SK4431, 18.40

Arrive Oslo 20.30

Depart Oslo Icelandair FI 325, 21.55

Arrive Reykjavik 22.35

Hotel Reykjavik Centrum

Reykjavik

29/07/2017 Reykjavik (BD)

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. In the afternoon we relax with a trip to the world-famous Blue Lagoon.

30/07/2017 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.

Sveinbjarnargerdi Country Hotel

Akureyri

31/07/2017 Akureyri – Lake Myvatn (BLD)

After breakfast we visit the 'waterfall of the gods', Godafoss before continuing to Grenjadarstadir Folk Museum where we get an insight into the history of Iceland. Now we pass through majestic mountain ranges and narrow passes en-route to Lake Myvatn, where we spend the afternoon visiting the old pseudo craters, and the strange lava formations of Dimmuborgir.

Hotel Reynihlid

Myvatn

01/08/2017 Lake Myvatn – Egilsstadir (BLD)

Today 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. After lunch we head to Egilsstadir and the stunning fjords of east Iceland.

Egilsstadir Guesthouse

Egilsstadir

02/08/2017 Egilsstadir – Skaftafell (BLD)

Today we visit the Glacier Lagoon, Jokulsarlon, and enjoy a boat tour among the floating icebergs. Jokulsarlon, in south eastern Iceland, 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).

Fosshotel Skaftafell

Skaftafell

03/08/2017 Skaftafell – Vik – Selfoss (BLD)

Today we continue to the black volcanic beach of Vik, where we get the chance to visit a local farmer and hear his stories about the local area, whilst enjoying lunch. Then we head towards Selfoss via Skogar and Sejlandsfoss waterfalls.

Hotel Selfoss

Selfoss

04/08/2017 Selfoss – Reykjavik (BLD)

Today we take the Golden Circle tour, visiting the waterfall Gullfoss and the sprouting geyser, before returning to Reykjavik where we enjoy a city tour.

Hotel Reykjavik Centrum

Reykjavik

05/08/2017 Reykjavik – Ilulissat (BLD)

Depart Reykjavik Air Iceland NY255, 11.15

Arrive Ilulissat 12.30

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

06/08/2017 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.

07/08/2017 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.

08/08/2017 Ilulissat (BLD)

Today we view the astonishing Equip Glacier. Known as the 'calving glacier', the Equip often provides spectators with the awesome sight of the 'birth' of an iceberg. 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.

09/08/2017 Ilulissat (BLD)

Today we continue to explore this magnificent part of the world. This afternoon is at leisure.

10/08/2017 Ilulissat – Kangerlussuaq – Copenhagen (B)

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

Depart Ilulissat Greenland Air GL 571, 08.45

Arrive Kangerlussuaq 09.30

Depart Kangerlussuaq Greenland Air GL 782, 13.10

Arrive Copenhagen 21.30

Radisson Blue Royal Hotel

Copenhagen

11/08/2017 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.

12/08/2017 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, 14.55

Arrive Dubai 23.15

13/08/2017 Dubai – Australia

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

14/08/2017 Arrival in Australia

Melbourne and Brisbane passengers arrive home today.

THE HIGH ARCTIC

If I travel alone, do I have to pay the single supplement?

If you do not want to share a hotel room with another person in the group, you will have to pay the single supplement. However, if you are willing to share we will team you up with another passenger of the same gender. If a match-up is not possible, we will upgrade you at our expense.

How long is the flight from Australia to Norway?

Flying time to Dubai is between 11 and 14.5 hours, depending on your Australian capital city of departure. Flight time from Dubai to Oslo is 7 hours 15 minutes.

What are the average temperatures at this time of year?

The temperature varies along the route. In Norway, temperatures during the day can get up to the high twenties. In Iceland it is considerably cooler with a temperature range of around 10 to 16C. Greenland has an arctic climate with average temperatures that do not exceed 10°C.

What is the best currency to take on this journey?

The best currency is Euros, in small denominations. i.e. 100s, 50s, 20s, 10s.

How much spending money do I need for the entire trip?

Because almost everything is included, we would suggest an amount of 1000 Euros per person as being ample for the whole journey.

Are credit cards acceptable?

Credit cards are widely accepted throughout the journey and ATMs are available along the entire route. However it is not recommended to rely on these as your main source of funds.

Do I need vaccinations for this journey?

No vaccinations are mandatory on this route but we would recommend you seek advice from your doctor. Tetanus should certainly be up to date.

Can I extend my stay in Copenhagen at the end of the tour?

Yes, it is possible to stay on in Copenhagen after the group departs. Our consultants will be happy to make the arrangements for you. If you wish to take up this option, all arrangements must be confirmed before leaving Australia.

Do I need any visas for this tour?

No, visas are not required on this tour.

A lot of companies have many expensive optional extras on their tours. Do you?

We don't believe in a lot of expensive 'optional tours'. Our itineraries are designed to make the best possible use of time and to include all the must-see sights, plus additional surprises. Therefore, practically everything is included in the tour cost.

Is the water safe to drink en-route and what is the general standard of hygiene?

We err on the side of caution on all of our tours and advise travellers to drink only bottled water. This is easy to obtain everywhere. The standard of hygiene is high along the entire route.

What is the standard of the hotels?

The hotels are generally 4-star quality, comfortable, clean and all with en-suites.

Are there internet facilities en-route?

Most of the hotels we use have internet facilities. There are also many internet cafes in the near vicinity of the hotels offering even cheaper access.

Do mobile telephones work?

Telstra and Optus mobiles work throughout the entire journey. You will need to ensure you have global roaming. Contact your service provider for further details.

How much should we tip the guides and porters?

There is no need to tip guides or porters as all tips and gratuities are included in the tour cost.