Classic Northwest Passage and Baffin Island

AN IN DEPTH EXPLORATION OF CANADA’S ARCTIC AND BAFFIN ISLAND REGION.

This iconic voyage explores Canada’s remote Northwest Passage and the stunning fjords of the Baffin Island coastline. We enjoy excellent wildlife encounters, Inuit community visits, exciting navigation, hikes on shore and superb photographic opportunities along the way.

We follow in the footsteps of the early Arctic explorers such as Franklin, Amundsen and Larsen, exploring the archipelago of islands and channels that create Canada’s high Arctic region. This is the home of the polar bear, Muskox, caribou and walrus and we journey through the wild Canadian north aboard our celebrated ice-rated expedition ship.

Wildlife is a major draw card of our expedition, but there is plenty of historical interest and the stories of that ill-fated expedition by Sir John Franklin nearly 170 years ago is central to our voyage. Franklin made his last heroic foray into the Arctic in 1845 with two ships and 129 men, never to be heard from again. The fate of the expedition remained a mystery – until September 2014 – when one of the vessels, HMS Erebus, was discovered in a remarkable state of preservation in the frigid waters of Victoria Strait.

The find is undoubtedly one of the great archaeological discoveries of the last 100 years and has been likened to the discovery of Tutankhamen’s tomb. This is small ship expedition cruising at its best.

Expedition Highlights

› Outstanding wildlife observation on shore, zodiac cruising and from the ship
› Historic locations of early Arctic exploration
› Cultural interaction and understanding through visits to remote Inuit communities
› Best possibility to observe the majestic Aurora Borealis - Northern Lights!
ON THIS TRIP

Zodiac excursions
Onshore hiking options
Wildlife observation
Photographer in Residence
Sea kayaking available
Whale watching
Inuit community visits
Educational presentations
Active Cruising & Wellness

IMPORTANT VOYAGE LOGISTICS

This trip commences in Edmonton - Alberta’s provincial capital city. We recommend you arrive in Edmonton at least one day prior to the scheduled voyage departure date. This gives you a buffer in the event of any unexpected travel delays between home and trip departure time. From Edmonton we fly to Cambridge Bay in Nunavut, via a charter flight. We transfer to the ship for embarkation via zodiac.

At the conclusion of the trip, we fly from Iqaluit in Nunavut, back to Ottawa via a charter flight. Upon arrival in Ottawa, a transfer is provided from the airport to a central downtown location. This flight arrives in the early evening and we advise staying the night in Ottawa and making your onward travel plans for the following day.

Full joining instructions are provided in your final travel documentation. If you have questions before this time, please ask us.

YOUR DAY-BY-DAY EXPEDITION ITINERARY

DAY 1 / EDMONTON (ALBERTA) TO CAMBRIDGE BAY (NUNAVUT), (SATURDAY, 01 SEPTEMBER 2018)

We depart Edmonton this morning on our special charter flight to Cambridge Bay. Located on the southern shores of Victoria Island, today it is a centre for hunting, trapping and fishing. Upon arrival, enjoy a walking tour of the town and board our expedition ship in the afternoon. After settling in to our cabins and exploring the ship, we meet our expedition team and fellow passengers. Excitement is in the air as we enjoy a welcome cocktail and cast off, bound for the fabled Northwest Passage.

DAY 2 / VICTORY POINT, KING WILLIAM ISLAND

As we chart a course into the Northwest Passage, our onboard presentation series begins, and the legend of Sir John Franklin and his ‘lost expedition’ is beginning to unravel. The mystery of what happened to Franklin was partially solved in September 2014, when a joint Parks Canada and Royal Canadian Geographic Society expedition, found the long lost Franklin shipwreck, HMS Erebus in the Victoria Strait. One Ocean Expeditions played a pivotal role in the search by carrying underwater search equipment on our ship as well as scientists, historians, researchers, dignitaries and sponsors of this history defining mission. We aim to visit Victory Point, travelling very near the actual location of the wreck of HMS Erebus, all the while learning about the quest for exploration that eventually opened the Arctic. Experts and marine archaeologists all agree, the second of Franklin’s lost ships, HMS Terror is likely to be in this vicinity. There is great optimism that it will also be found when ice conditions permit the search to resume.

DAY 3 / CONNINGHAM BAY

This morning we arrive at Conningham Bay on the shore of Prince of Wales. Here, in the heart of the Northwest Passage we hope to encounter one of the most remarkable wildlife sites in the Arctic. This is a known hotspot for polar bears who come here to feast on Beluga whales, often caught in the rocky shallows at the entrance to the bay during low tide. It is not unusual to find the shoreline littered with whale skeletons – and very healthy looking polar bears!

DAY 4 / BELLOT STRAIT AND FORT ROSS

Today we transit the narrow passage of Bellot Strait – a channel separating northerly Somerset Island from continental North America. The aim is to enter at slack tide if possible, in order to avoid a current that roars through the passage at more than seven knots during the peak flow. The mixing of waters in this strait provides an abundant food source for marine mammals and we keep our eyes peeled for harp seals, bearded seals and even polar bears. The skill of the Captain, Officers and capabilities of the ship becomes apparent during this exciting Arctic navigation. The historic site of Fort Ross, located at the southern end of Somerset Island, is a former Hudson’s Bay Company fur trading outpost. Fascinating archaeological sites nearby tell a story of more than a thousand years of habitation by the Inuit and their predecessors.

DAY 5 / BEECHEY ISLAND

Beechey Island holds great historic importance on our journey through the Northwest Passage. It is here that Sir John Franklin’s ill-fated expedition spent its last ‘comfortable’ winter in 1845 before disappearing into the icy vastness, sparking an incredible series of search expeditions that last almost three decades. A trip ashore at Beechey Island to visit the grave markers on a remote windswept beach, gives one pause to wonder on the bravery (or foolhardiness) of these pioneering explorers, as they sought a way through the barren, frozen landscape. This is a thrilling location for history buffs and for many it will be the defining moment of our expedition.

DAY 6 / LANCASTER SOUND AND DUNDAS HARBOUR

We are now at almost 75° degrees north of latitude. Cruising the coastline of Devon Island, we are now in the waters of Lancaster Sound – a rich, bio-diverse region often referred to as the wildlife ‘super highway’ of the Arctic. These massive volumes of water from Baffin Bay to the east, Beaufort Sea to the west, and from the archipelago of islands to the north, combine to make a rich cocktail of nutrients supporting an abundance of Arctic wildlife. We plan on visiting the old Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) outpost at Dundas Harbour, situated on the southern shores of Devon Island.
DAY 7 / MITTIMATALIK (POND INLET)

We sight the wild north coast of Baffin Island and navigate through Navy Board Inlet. The vast landscapes of Sirmilik National Park surround us as we approach the remote Inuit community of Mittimatalik. We are welcomed ashore and a highlight will be a visit to the Natinnak Centre, where a fascinating cultural exhibit showcases aspects of daily life, culture and history of the people of the north. Inuit carvings, jewellery and other traditional craft is on display and purchasing such items from the local artisans is a great way to support the community.

DAY 8 / GIBBS FJORD

This morning we enter the spectacular Gibbs Fjord with towering cliffs all around us. Our expedition ship will seem dwarfed by the giant peaks and snowy glaciers as we cruise slowly along the dark waters. One recent guest was heard to comment that Gibbs Fjord ‘was like something out of Lord of the Rings’ – and we think you’ll agree!

DAY 9 / ISABELLA FJORD

Isabella Bay (Niginaniq) is an important summer habitat and feeding area for endangered bowhead whales. These remarkable marine mammals are able to break sea ice with the crown of their head. The area also includes a shallow shelf at the entrance to the bay that provides protection for bowheads from predatory orca whales. Polar bears, ringed seals, Canada geese, snow geese and narwhal are also found in and around the area.

DAY 10 / SUNSHINE FJORD

Sunshine Fjord straddles the Arctic Circle. This location offers terrific hiking opportunities and we have a number of great routes in mind. You may wish to take the extended hike, gaining some real elevation and offering wonderful views of our surroundings. Or choose to take the less strenuous option along the shoreline. The sheltered waters of the fjord provide the kayakers with great conditions for paddling.

DAY 11 / PANGNIRTUNG

Nestled in the heart of Cumberland Sound and the gateway to Auyuittuq National Park, Pangnirtung is beautifully situated between the mountains and the sea. This remote town is known for its arts and crafts and a visit to the local art gallery is a highlight. In addition, the Angmarlik Visitor Centre has a wonderful interpretive display featuring the lifestyle of the Thule and of the modern Inuit.

DAY 12 / MONUMENTAL ISLAND

Situated in the Davis Strait, the rocky dome of Monumental Island can be seen from a distance. We explore by zodiac along the rocky shoreline and hope to encounter polar bears in this vicinity. In good weather a complete circumnavigation of the island in the zodiacs is possible. We often encounter large icebergs drifting southward towards Labrador and Newfoundland on the currents of the Davis Strait. As we near the end of our journey we enjoy an entertaining voyage recap from the Expedition Leader. This evening we celebrate with a special dinner attended by the Captain of the ship and reflect on our voyage across the top of the remote Canadian Arctic.

DAY 13 / IQALUIT DISEMBARKATION – RETURN FLIGHT TO OTTAWA

By morning we are anchored off the beach from Iqaluit – the largest community on Baffin Island. We say goodbye to our crew and make our way ashore on our final zodiac ride. We are transferred to the airport and board our scheduled flight to Ottawa. On arrival in Ottawa our journey comes to an end. A transfer is provided to a downtown location.

ABOUT OUR ITINERARY: Polar exploration can be unpredictable. Specific sites visited will depend on prevailing weather and ice conditions at the time of sailing. The above itinerary should be read as a ‘guide only’ and may change. The ship’s Captain in conjunction with the Expedition Leader continually review the sailing plan throughout the voyage, making adjustments to the itinerary along the way to take advantage of optimal weather and ice conditions or to maximize our encounters with wildlife. Decades of experience spent exploring these waterways mean we have a large number of outstanding landing sites and zodiac cruising locations to consider, even when the weather conditions may not be ideal or when heavy ice may hinder our planned route. A flexible approach is something we encourage you to bring to the ship.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS FOR THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE: This is one of three variations of this itinerary operating in 2018. A reverse trip, starting in Kangerlussuaq and ending in Cambridge Bay also features. A modified variation commences in Cambridge Bay and spends more time exploring the coastline of Baffin Island, concluding in Iqaluit (Nunavut). See the website for details.
YOUR EXPEDITION INCLUDES:

- Comprehensive pre-voyage information package including details to help you prepare for your trip in the Canadian Arctic
- Transfers to the ship on embarkation day and from the ship to the airport or local hotel on disembarkation
- Shipboard accommodation in your selected cabin category with daily housekeeping. Cabins feature outside views with windows or portholes that open on each deck
- High quality, eco friendly, Canadian made natural amenities in every cabin
- All breakfasts, lunches and dinners on board throughout your voyage with daily afternoon tea
- 24 hour tea, coffee, hot chocolate in bar lounge plus in cabin tea, coffee, hot chocolate replenished daily
- Experienced Expedition Leader and professional expedition team of marine biologists, naturalists, historians, adventure guides and photographers
- Daily off-ship excursions by Zodiac boat breaking into small groups for shore landings
- Guided hikes and walks on shore of various durations for guests of all abilities
- Visits to wildlife colonies, historic sites, places of outstanding natural beauty and community visits
- Educational presentations and talks by polar experts in their field (ie. marine biologists, naturalists, historians etc). Onboard or on shore
- Resident photography guide available to assist all guests
- Access to computers in the multimedia lab for image downloads, file back up and management
- An emergency trained Physician onboard every voyage
- Dedicated hospitality team including Hotel Manager, four chefs, professional bar staff and Adventure Concierge staff
- Onboard sauna, plunge pool, Jacuzzi and fitness centre including personal trainer and massage options (charge applies for massage and spa treatments)
- Sea Kayaking programme available (additional charge of $695pp) – must be reserved at the time of booking your voyage and you must have some prior paddling experience
- Access to well stocked library full of polar reference books
- End of voyage video, photos and take home USB
- Port fees and all permits to access visited areas

The right gear for your trip – included

When you travel with One Ocean Expeditions, you will have the use of an expedition gear package free of charge. Containing around $US900 worth of essential equipment, this kit includes a quality waterproof/windproof jacket and bib-pants plus insulated rubber boots designed for extended walking. We also include a set of binoculars and a trekking pole for use when on shore. A waterproof backpack completes your package. This kit saves you buying expensive clothing and equipment you may only ever use once. It also eliminates the need to carry such cumbersome gear to the ship (total weight around 8kg/17lbs).

The Expedition does not include:
- Any international or local airfare unless otherwise specified in the voyage itinerary
- Visa and passport expenses
- Pre or post-cruise hotel accommodation unless otherwise specified in the itinerary (pre-arranged)
- Pre or post-cruise transfers unless otherwise specified in the itinerary (pre-arranged)
- Personal expenses on board such as alcoholic beverages, bar charges or laundry expenses
- Telecommunication charges (ie. email, satellite phone)
- Baggage, cancellation or medical travel insurance related expenses (travel insurance is mandatory on all voyages)
- A voluntary gratuity at the end of the voyage for expedition staff and ship crew (suggested amount – $US12-15 per day)
BEFORE YOU BOOK – IMPORTANT VOYAGE DETAILS

FLIGHTS TO JOIN YOUR ARCTIC CRUISE
Flights are required to get to (and from) the ship embarkation locations in the Arctic. These flights are in addition to the voyage price. This flight package must be booked in conjunction with your cruise. Flights are either on scheduled airlines (ie. Ottawa to Iqaluit) or are specially arranged charter flights operating into very remote Arctic locations such as Resolute, Cambridge Bay or Kangerlussuaq. If you have questions about these flights, please discuss these with your booking agent at the time of confirming your voyage.

THE RIGHT SHIP = THE BEST EXPERIENCE

The Akademik Sergey Vavilov is the perfect ship for exploring Canada’s Arctic region. Although she is a very spacious expedition vessel, the ship accommodates just 92 passengers. This makes all the difference when we disembark for our shore landings and zodiac excursions. Our fleet of zodiacs enable everyone to get off the ship at the same time. We do not need to operate shuttles to and from the ship or run hurried shore landings. This is the reality of a cruise on larger capacity vessels. Our smaller group sizes mean we are less obtrusive and better able to manage visits to remote Inuit communities - a fact not lost on our local hosts in such locations. The high ice classification of the ship (1A) - allow us to safely push into areas of broken sea ice. This transition zone is a place where we frequently encounter seals, seabirds and polar bears and sightings from the ship are not uncommon. To learn more about this exceptional vessel, request a copy of the Ship Fact Sheet containing detailed specifications and additional information.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS
Most nationalities will be required to an Electronic Travel Authorization (known as an eTA) to enter Canada (except US citizens). This is easily obtained online prior to travel and a fee of $CAD7.00 is payable at the time you lodge your application. The eTA is valid for a period of five years from date of issue. Speak to your booking agent for more information or contact your local Canadian consular authorities for further details.

COMPREHENSIVE PRE-VOYAGE INFORMATION
Upon receipt of your deposit and booking forms, a detailed booklet will be sent to you providing additional information to help you prepare for your voyage. This resource is full of useful facts and covers practicalities such as suggested clothing, life on board the ship, wildlife, geography and history as well as details about the activities available throughout your voyage. Information regarding passports and visas, budgeting, as well as travel insurance requirements are also found in this helpful document.

TRAVEL INSURANCE
On all One Ocean Expeditions’ voyages, you must have comprehensive travel insurance. Your booking agent can recommend a policy designed to cover participants on these voyages. Your policy must provide coverage for your medical costs in case of hospitalization, emergency travel and repatriation.

Please check the terms of your policy carefully, particularly with regard to limits of cover. Also ensure you are familiar with the procedure for making claims. Once you have paid your deposit or full payment, certain fees will apply if you have to cancel your holiday (see the cancellation provisions in our booking terms and conditions). For this reason you should take out travel insurance at the time of paying your deposit, which should then protect you in such a situation. You will be required to send us travel insurance policy details prior to your voyage.

THE ONE CLUB – EXPEDITION ALUMNI
Come as a passenger, leave as a friend. Once you have experienced one voyage with us, it’s likely you will want to experience another. Your commitment to travel with us, is rewarded with our commitment to you, our valued guest. As members of the One Club Expedition Alumni, your loyalty is rewarded with a range of great travel benefits when you return for your next voyage — no matter the destination. Ask your agent, or our office for a copy of this document if you are interested in joining the sea kayaking program.

IMPORTANT: The information provided here is given in good faith and has been compiled with all reasonable care. However, some of the information may become out of date. Please keep this in mind and check with us if you want to be sure about anything. The document was correct at time of printing. If you have any queries, please contact your voyage booking agent or our office. We are here to help you.
A true partner in Canada’s North
Social and environmental responsibility is something we take seriously. We are committed to supporting the economic sustainability and unique cultures of northern communities. We employ Inuit guides and traditional artisans on our voyages to share with you their fantastic knowledge, history, rich cultural traditions and talents. For many guests, this deep insight into northern life is the highlight of their voyage.

World Leading - the World Over
For several years One Ocean Expeditions and the Royal Canadian Geographical Society have maintained a collaborative relationship grounded in geographical education, exploration, science, social and economic community development, Canadian national identity and experiential travel. We are proud to be the exclusive marine travel partner of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society and affiliates.

The right team
Fewer than 100 guests on the ship doesn’t mean fewer staff. Quite the opposite. You will come to appreciate the dedication of our expedition team when onboard the ship. The highest staff to guest ratio in the industry (1:4) allows you to experience the broadest range of activities possible, catering to all interests and abilities. We are known for our flexible, yet professional approach and an ability to ‘make it happen’.

INTERESTED IN THIS EXPERIENCE?

When choosing to travel with One Ocean Expeditions we ensure your experience from start to finish, is straight forward and well organized. Start by customizing your journey and mapping out the trip ahead.

If this sounds like the right trip for you, please discuss your ideas and plans with your preferred booking agent. They will reserve a cabin for you on your chosen voyage. This provides time to book flights to the embarkation points of this voyage and to plan other pre or post voyage travel requirements. Please remember that you will require comprehensive travel insurance to join our voyages. This is best arranged at the time of booking. Following confirmation of your Reservation, you will need to complete a detailed One Ocean Expeditions Booking Package plus other pre voyage documentation to accompany your deposit. At this point your voyage of discovery is underway.

Take advantage of our experience, which spans decades of expedition travel in the Polar Regions. Should you have any questions, we are here to help at any time.

YOUR NOTES: