Pathways to Franklin

A JOURNEY THAT UNRAVELS THE MYSTERIES OF EARLY ARCTIC EXPLORATION.

This outstanding expedition showcases the breathtaking wilderness of Canada’s High Arctic. Wildlife is another major draw card and throughout the voyage we visit one of the largest migratory bird sanctuaries in Canada and a number of locations where encounters with polar bears are frequent. Sightings of seals, whales and narwhal are also common.

However, the principal focus of our expedition is the history of Arctic exploration and early quest for the Northwest Passage. The story of Sir John Franklin’s expedition from the mid 18th century and the enduring mystery of their fate has gripped the imagination and intrigue of Canadians - and history lovers - for more than 150 years.

A new chapter in this tale was written when in September 2014, when a joint government/private expedition located the final resting place of one of two of Franklin’s ‘lost ships’ - HMS Erebus, in the frigid waters of the Victoria Strait.

We navigate our modern expedition vessel through these very same waters and wonder about the fate of these early Arctic explorers. Throughout the journey, we enjoy onboard presentations by polar experts and fascinating shore excursions to many key historic sites.

Expedition Highlights

› Visit numerous historic locations related to the Franklin expedition of the 1840s
› Outstanding wildlife observation on shore, on zodiac cruises and from the ship
› Learn from Arctic historians through presentations and interpretive shore visits
› Navigate through the heart of the fabled Northwest Passage including Bellot Strait
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 Resolute via a charter flight. We transfer to the ship for embarkation via zodiac.

At the conclusion of the trip, we fly from Cambridge Bay back to Edmonton via a charter flight. Upon arrival in Edmonton, 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 Edmonton 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 RESOLUTE (NUNAVUT) (SUNDAY, 11 AUGUST 2019)
We depart Edmonton this morning on our special charter flight to Resolute, a remote outpost above the Arctic Circle. Located on the southern shores of Cornwallis Island, the town is named after the British ship HMS Resolute which became trapped in ice and abandoned here in 1854 while searching for the lost Franklin Expedition. A weather station and airstrip here made it a strategic outpost during the time of the Cold War. On arrival, we are transferred to the beach where our expedition team will meet us and prepare us for our zodiac ride to the ship. Onboard, we will have time to explore the ship and get to know our cabins before a welcome cocktail. We weigh anchor and depart Resolute in the early evening.

DAY 2 / BEECHEY ISLAND AND RADSTOCK BAY
Beechey Island is a site of great historical importance. It is here that Sir John Franklin’s ill-fated expedition spent its last ‘comfortable’ winter in 1845-1846 before disappearing into the icy vastness to the south, as they probed for a route for a comfortable’ winter in 1845-1846 before disappearing into the icy vastness to the south, as they probed for a route. The enduring mystery of what happened to the Franklin party and two ships, was partially solved in September 2014, when a joint Parks Canada and scientist, historians, researchers, dignitaries and sponsors of this history defining mission.

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. Over the coming days you will learn about this enduring Arctic tale from our onboard historians and polar experts. An afternoon visit to Radstock Bay brings us to the imposing Caswell Tower - a huge rock headland and known archaeological site. Remains of Thule ‘qarmat’ homes, made of rocks, whale bones, rock and sod walls and skins for roofs can be found in the vicinity telling a story of over 800 years of human habitation.

DAY 3 / CAPE CHARLES YORKE AND ELWIN INLET
We cross the broad expanse of Lancaster Sound, spending time on the ship’s bridge, or outer decks looking for wildlife. The sound has been likened to the wildlife ‘super highway’ of the Arctic. A massive confluence of water from the Atlantic to the east and Pacific to the west, and from the archipelago of islands to the north all mix here, combining to make a rich source of nutrients and food for an abundance of Arctic wildlife. Approaching northern Baffin Island we are in awe of the spectacular Arctic landscape that seemingly stretches on forever. Cape Charles Yorke offers several great walking opportunities and we may enjoy some sightings of polar bears along this coast. We navigate the ship into nearby Elwin Inlet, a breathtaking fjord which is well protected and great for a zodiac cruise or hike onshore.

DAY 4 / PRINCE LEOPOLD ISLAND
Having crossed Prince Regent Inlet overnight, we approach the towering bird cliffs of Prince Leopold Island in the morning. The island is home to thick-billed murres, black guillemots, northern fulmars and black-legged kittiwakes. Numbering in the order of several hundred thousand birds, Prince Leopold Island is one of the most significant Migratory Bird Sanctuaries in the whole of the Canadian Arctic and makes for fantastic zodiac cruising. The sea ice around Prince Leopold Island is a great place for spotting ringed seals and wherever we find ringed seals - we usually find polar bear. Nearby Port Leopold is an historic site where in 1848, English explorer James Clark Ross wintered here during the search for the missing Franklin expedition. In addition to Port Leopold’s historical attraction, the shallow gravel beds along the shoreline are attractive to the beluga whales who tend to moult in this part of the Arctic each summer.

DAY 5 / FORT ROSS AND BELLOT STRAIT
Continuing to navigate the ship south into Prince Regent Inlet, we approach the eastern end of the Bellot Strait. 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. Having explored Fort Ross, we attempt a transit through the narrows of Bellot Strait. 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 and Officers and capabilities of the ship becomes apparent during this exciting day of Arctic navigation.

DAY 6 / CONNINGHAM BAY

Having emerged from Bellot Strait, we cross Franklin Strait and arrive at Conningham Bay on the shore of Prince Of Wales Island. 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. It is not unusual to find the shoreline littered with whale skeletons – and very healthy looking polar bears!

DAYS 7 AND 8 / VICTORY POINT, KING WILLIAM ISLAND AND VICINITY

Heading further south, the mystery of Sir John Franklin and his ‘lost expedition’ is beginning to unravel. Prior to the recent discovery of the HMS Erebus in September 2014, very little was known of how the Franklin Expedition spent its last months in the frozen Arctic. The vessels, abandoned in the ice of Victoria Strait are just coming to life thanks to the ongoing efforts of Parks Canada’s marine archaeological team and the recent Victoria Strait Expedition.

On Victory Point a lifeboat left abandoned, bits and pieces of copper and iron, cutlery and buttons and a skeleton here and there - all tell a story of a desperate race south in search of rescue that never came. We hope to visit Victory Point as we transit Victoria Strait, travelling very near the actual location of the wreck of HMS Erebus, all the while, learning about the quest for exploration that eventually opened up the Arctic. One can only imagine the last desperate days of Franklin’s men as another frigid Arctic winter approached, supplies dwindling and health failing.

DAY 9 / ROYAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY ISLANDS

This small non-descript group of islands is of tremendous historic importance. In this vicinity the wreck of HMS Erebus was found in September 2014. To bookend this remarkable find, the sister ship - HMS Terror was discovered nearby in the summer of 2016. It is profoundly moving to be in the location where Franklin and his men abandoned their ships knowing hope of rescue was virtually non-existent. We plan a shore landing on the islands to stretch our legs as we cross islands that may have felt the doomed footsteps of Franklin’s men. Returning to the ship, we meet in the presentation room and enjoy a memorable voyage recap by our expedition leader. We celebrate with a special dinner, attended by the Captain of the ship reflecting on a wonderful expedition.

DAY 10 / CAMBRIDGE BAY, NUNAVUT TO EDMONTON, ALBERTA (TUESDAY, 20 AUGUST 2019)

By morning, we are at anchor in Cambridge Bay – our final destination. Today, this remote outpost on the southern shores of Victoria Island is a centre for hunting, trapping and fishing. We make our way ashore by zodiac and bid farewell to our crew. A charter flight returns us to Edmonton where our journey comes to an end.

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 a planned route. A flexible approach is something we encourage you to bring to the ship.
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 medical 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 Nordic 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 (or pre-arranged)
› Pre or post-cruise transfers unless otherwise specified in the itinerary (or 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 Kangerlusuaq. If you have questions about these flights, please discuss these with your booking agent at the time of confirming your voyage.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS
Most nationalities will be required to have 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 RIGHT SHIP = THE BEST EXPERIENCE

The Akademik Ioffe is the perfect ship for exploring Canada’s High Arctic region. Although she is a very spacious expedition vessel, the ship accommodates just 96 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 coastal communities - a fact not lost on our local hosts in such locations. Our ship features a sophisticated in-built stabilization system which makes for smooth sailing, even on open water crossings between northern Labrador and Baffin Island. This also means we have a great platform for wildlife viewing and photography from the observation decks of the ship. Request a copy of the Ship Fact Sheet containing detailed specifications and additional information.
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 = exceptional service
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 committed to providing exceptional service and are renowned for our flexible, yet professional approach and an ability to ‘make things 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:

Trip Note Updated: 20MAR18 - RC