

Arctic

NORTHWEST PASSAGE

Why join this Voyage?

- One of the world's great historical sea journeys, tread in the footsteps of early explorers as you traverse the mythical Northwest Passage, a land of ice-choked channels and spectacular scenery
- Visit many of the significant locations associated with Franklin's tragic search for the Northwest Passage, as well as those associated with Amundsen's successful first transit
- Travel aboard the comfortable 96 passenger *Akademik Ioffe*, with an emphasis on experiencing the region up close with opportunities for long hikes on the tundra, zodiac cruises and kayaking



Trip Summary

The Northwest Passage, a route almost across the roof of the world linking the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, was long sought by the traders, explorers and military strategists of Europe, Russian Asia and America. It's now possible to undertake a similar journey to that first completed by Roald Amundsen, navigating a course through the Arctic that very few people manage to achieve. These waterways are renowned for tricky navigation, rapidly changing ice conditions and for supporting a diverse population of wildlife, as well as vestiges of former expeditions, including the most notorious of all, the ill-fated Franklin expedition of 1845. This voyage begins in Kugluktuk at the head of Coronation Gulf heading east, stopping at Victory Point before navigating the treacherous Bellot, Fury & Hecla Straits. Steeped in history the region also offers the opportunity to visit many small and isolated communities along with a good chance of wildlife sightings.

Itinerary



Day 1 London/ Ottawa

Depart London and fly to Ottawa, overnight in Ottawa.

Day 2 Sondre Stromfjord (Kangerlussuaq)

Charter flight to Sondre Stromfjord, one of the world's longest fjords that cuts into the interior of Greenland. Board the expedition vessel by zodiac and sail down the fjord, before reaching the ocean and Davis Strait.

Day 3 Sisimiut

Explore the fjord behind Sisimiut before visiting the town in the afternoon where you will hopefully meet a few of the traditional Greenlandic kayakers and see a demonstration of "Eskimo Rolling".

Day 4 Ilulissat and Jacobshavn Icefjord

One of the wonders of the world, the Jacobshavn Icefjord spews massive tabular icebergs out into Disko Bay. The approach to Ilulissat will be dependent upon the amount of ice in and around the mouth of the icefjord. Knud Rasmussen, one of Greenland's most famous explorers and anthropologists, was born here in 1879.

Day 5 Baffin Bay

Crossing Baffin Bay will be dependent on the extent of the 'middle ice'. The goal will be to find the edge of this and then follow it around to the coast of Baffin Island. Pilot whales, numerous species of seal and seabirds abound in Baffin Bay.

Day 6 Fjords of Northeast Baffin Island

Rising straight out of the water the cliffs of these fjords are incredible. The mouths of these fjord complexes are often rich in wildlife due to the confluence of fresher glacial melt water mixing with the seawater of Baffin Bay.

Day 7 Pond Inlet

Visit the town of Pond Inlet and the Natinnak Centre, for a display by the Elders and youth of Pond Inlet. Inuit carvings, jewellery and other local craft will be available to purchase from the local artisans. The children of Pond Inlet show their athletic abilities as they demonstrate the challenges of the Inuit Games.

Day 8 Lancaster Sound and Devon Island

Lancaster Sound is in the wildlife 'super-highway' of the Arctic, a huge outlet for nutrient rich water from the high Arctic. Coupled with areas of open water, it is home to a diversity and concentration of wildlife that can rare in this region.

Day 9 Beechey Island and Prince Leopold Island

Beechey Island holds great importance in the quest to complete the Northwest Passage. Franklin's ill-fated expedition spent its last 'comfortable' winter here in 1845 before disappearing into the icy vastness. Almost sixty years later, Roald Amundsen stopped at Beechey Island during the first successful complete transit of the Northwest Passage. From Beechey Island sail toward Prince Regent Inlet via the bird cliffs of Prince Leopold Island, a migratory bird sanctuary home several hundred thousand birds, this is one of the most important bird sanctuaries in the Canadian Arctic.

Day 10 Fort Ross and Bellot Strait

If ice conditions permit, sail south through Prince Regent Inlet and approach the eastern end of the Bellot Strait. Fort Ross, located at the southern end of Somerset Island, is a former Hudson's Bay Company fur trading outpost. Ancient archaeological sites nearby tell a story of more than a thousand years of habitation by the Inuit and their predecessors. Upon leaving Fort Ross, attempt the passage of the Bellot Strait, entering at slack water if possible, in order to avoid a current that can be more than seven knots during the peak flow. The mixing of waters in this strait provides ample food source for marine mammals so look out for harp seals, bearded seals and even polar bears.





Day 11 Pasely Bay

Located on the western coast of the Boothia Peninsula, this was wintering position of the RCMP Vessel St. Roch during the winter of 1941 - 1942. Locked in the ice in early September, the St. Roch was confined within the bay until August 1942. During this time, the crew members undertook extensive sled patrols, some lasting two months at a time.

Day 12 Victory Point, King William Island

Little is known of how the Franklin Expedition spent its last months. The vessels, abandoned in the ice of Victoria Strait, have left no trace. An abandoned lifeboat, 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 occurred.



Day 13 Cambridge Bay

On the southern shores of Victoria Island, Cambridge Bay, also known as Ikaluktutiak or "good fishing place", is a centre for hunting, trapping, and fishing. Local Inuit have had summer camps in the locality for hundreds of years. Today ships visit the region annually bringing supplies. Amundsen spent two winters in this area, learning how to master dogsledding from the locals. Prior to this, McClintock found solid evidence of the Franklin Expedition here in 1859, including naval artifacts, sledges, graves and letters.

Day 14 Johanssen Bay, Coronation Gulf

An anvil-shaped bay on the south coast of Victoria Island, Johanssen Bay is a wonderful place for a variety of hiking and water-based activities. Kayak up a small river at the east end of the bay, hike onto the ridge on the north shore or zodiac cruise along the shore. Hikers can reach an abandoned DEW line site (Distance Early Warning Radar base) and learn a little about the Cold War exploration of the Arctic. Johanssen Bay is also a great place to spot musk ox.



Day 16 Coppermine (Kugluktuk), Nunavut

Drop anchor off the beach in Kugluktuk and land by zodiac in time for the charter flight to Edmonton. Overnight in Edmonton.

Day 17 Edmonton/ London

Depart Edmonton for your flight back to the UK.

The Boat

Akademik Ioffe

Capacity: 96 passengers

The Akademik Ioffe, was built in Finland for the Russian Academy of Science in 1988-89. As the pride of the Russian scientific fleet, this ship boasts state-of-the-art technology, having been designed to be exceptionally stable, manoeuvrable, fast and quiet. Inside there is little, if any, ambient engine noise or vibration. The ship has a sophisticated stabilisation and trimming system built into its ice-strengthened hulls. Unmatched stability, coupled with superior speed, adds up to more time at your destination, rather than at sea.

Retaining an authentic expeditionary feel, the cabins range from triples with upper and lower berths & shared bathroom facilities, through to the spacious suites. All cabins have either (two opening) portholes or a picture window, along with a sofa and desk and ample space for equipment and storage. Onboard there is a dining room, a well stocked library, a small gym, sauna and plunge pool, a bar and lounge, a spacious passenger bridge and map room along with plenty of deck space for wildlife viewing. There are two presentation rooms where the expeditionary staff will give informal lectures on the regions. The ship carries a large fleet of zodiacs for landings and exploratory cruising, along with a selection of single and double kayaks.

2012 Expedition Dates

12th - 26th August (Kangerlussuaq - Coppermine)
26th August - 9th September (Coppermine - Kangerlussuaq)

Guide Prices for 2012

Cabin Type

(from guide price, quoted per person)

Triple with shared facilities	£5,200
Twin with semi shared facilities	£6,125
Twin with private facilities	£7,450
Superior	£8,100
Shackleton Suite	£8,775
One Ocean Suite	£9,525

Includes

- 16 day voyage on full board basis
- 1 night pre & post cruise accommodation
- All lectures and guided zodiac excursions while on board ship
- Post expedition voyage log
- All port duties

Excludes

- International flights into Ottawa return Edmonton
- Charter flights to point of embarkation (cost TBA)
- Any additional pre or post voyage hotel accommodation or services
- Gratuities, laundry and drinks onboard ship
- Medical insurance (mandatory)

Notes

The above prices are a guide price only, based on 2 people sharing a cabin and are subject to exchange rate fluctuations and possible fuel surcharges.

Single Supplement

For those solo travellers wishing to secure their own cabin, typically a multiplier of 1.5 for standard cabins and 2 for the suites, is used to calculate the single supplement. Please contact the office for a quotation.

Visa Information

If you fly directly into Canada currently there are no visa requirements for British Citizens. If however you prefer to fly via the US under recently introduced legislation you will need to apply for advance authorisation to travel through the Visa Waiver Program. This is relatively straightforward and completed online.

Visas are not required for Greenland for British Passport holders.

Want to discuss this trip?

Please call **Sue** on **01285 880981** for more details or to check boat availability



Having spent the best part of 5 years on my “gap year” working in travel seemed the natural progression. I am most at home travelling to remote wilderness areas of the globe. With a life-long passion for wildlife I love to get up close either by kayak or on foot and learn the local bushcraft skills. My travels have taken me to all seven continents. Most recently travelling to the Russian Far East along the Chukotka coast and up to Wrangel & Herald Islands, where I was lucky enough to encounter 105 bears. I have also voyaged to Spitsbergen, Antarctica, the Canadian High Arctic and Baja California’s Sea of Cortez on expedition vessels, along with sailing the Amazon Basin and paddling down the Yukon. I hope to go whale and bear watching in Alaska next.

Sue is Country Director for Steppes Voyages

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