

Beluga Expeditions B.V., NL-3195TA Pernis, Nederlande

In cooperation with Special Travel Club, Russia:

Icebreaker Expedition to Franz Josef Land

The diesel icebreaker "Kapitan Dranitsyn" is available again for passenger expedition cruises again after 4 years of usage by oil companies. With onboard helicopters and fleet of zodiacs we explore one of the most legendary and until now hard-to-reach Arctic archipelagos - Franz Josef Land! From this Northern outpost there are few steps from the North Pole away, but how hard those steps might be, we feel standing there!

DEPARTURE DATES:

27.07 – 06.08.2010 – German/English

06.08 – 16.08.2010 (optional)

PROPOSED DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

This itinerary should be read as a guide only, depending heavily on weather and ice conditions, as well as on other unpredictable circumstances.

Day 1

Independent arrival to Kirkenes, Norway, by scheduled air flights. The representative of our Expedition Team will be meeting you at airport and guide you to our busses. We proceed then by our busses straight to Murmansk via Norway-Russian border. Approximate way of 6 hours, including immigration control at the Russian border. Snack boxes will be provided at the busses and we make tea/coffee stops on route. During the way you can adore severe but incredibly beautiful landscapes of the tundra.

Upon arrival to Murmansk we embark our mighty icebreaker and we consecutively will immediately set out to sea. We will be briefed on our vessel's design and her features – a very special ship, costing in build of 400.000.000 Euro! We will also get acquainted with the crew and expedition staff.

Day 2

The whole day we are at sea on the way to Franz Josef Land. Our lecturers will deliver reports on the history of the archipelago's discovery, as well as a series of lectures on the local fauna representatives that we are likely to view in the course of our expedition.

Day 3

We expect to reach the archipelago towards late evening today. The lecturers continue to instruct those interested in the history and wildlife of the islands. The officers on duty at the navigation bridge keep a constant watch for whales to advise timely the tourists. Weather permitting our cooks plan to serve a picnic on the open deck. Today we are also to land on the Bell Island for a hike in order to visit the house built by Lee Smith expedition in 1881 that has remained in perfect condition

up to now.

Day 4

In the morning we are to attempt our landing at Cape Flora on the Northbrook Island that was discovered by Lee Smith expedition in 1880. The expedition had to winter on this island after the steam yacht "Aira" had been crushed by ice and sunk in the immediate proximity of the coast. It was the expedition headed by Jackson (1894-1897) that dwelled here longer than any other one and made a major contribution to the exploration of the archipelago. A whole settlement was built by the expedition; its remains may be seen there nowadays. In 1897 a memorable meeting of Jackson and Nansen took place on the island. Several memorial steles were erected on the island over past decades, to commemorate daring Arctic explorers. A huge sea birds colony has its home on the cliffs towering over the southern side of the Cape Flora. Today we are also to reach Tikhaya Bay on the Hooker Island. There is a huge cliff, the famous Rubini Rock in the bay that is home to thousands of sea birds. We will try to approach the cliff as close as possible, but very cautiously in order to watch kittiwakes and other Arctic birds without disturbing them. There is a derelict Polar station in the bay. Weather permitting we will land on its shore by helicopters.

Day 5

During the night we will have sailed to Cape Norway on the Jackson Island. In 1895-1896 Nansen and Johansen wintered there over 7 months, after a failed attempt to conquer the North Pole. The remains of their hut and a memorial wooden post may be seen there. By favorable weather and ice conditions we will attempt to visit the most Northern island of Franz Josef Land – Rudolf Island.

Day 6

Today we will touch Stolichky and Appolonov Islands. The main attraction of the islands is walrus rookeries. We will lower our boats and get as close as possible to the rookeries.

Day 7

We arrive at Cape Geller on the Wilchek Island. In 1899 two sailors, members of the Welle expedition wintered there, waiting for the core of the group that was trying to conquer the North Pole.

As everywhere on the Franz Josef Land, we are very likely to view Polar bears and sea mammals. Attracted by unfamiliar smells, the bears come to the very board of the vessel and rising to the hind legs, sniff the air, thus providing a unique possibility of taking pictures of the Lord of the Icy Realm in his habitual environment.

Day 8

Today our goal is the Champ Island. It is located in the very centre of the archipelago. Its landscape is majestic, being its cliffs and ice-capped mountains the highest on the archipelago. We are to land on Cape Fiume, where remarkable Nature creations are to be found, among them stones of ideal spherical shape (up to 3 m of diameter). Weather permitting we will undertake helicopter excursions along island shores, landing on the very top of the glacier.

Day 9

"On August, 30, 1873, toward the midday –Julius Payer recalled afterwards – we were standing on the deck, leaning on the ship's board and staring aimlessly at the mist, that had began to dissipate in some spots. Suddenly the mist dissipated completely in the North-West, and we saw cliffs. In a few minutes we caught an astonishing sight of a majestic mountainous landscape and glaciers that dazzled us in the sunshine. For a few seconds we stood stunned and couldn't believe our eyes. Then, overwhelmed by emotions, we burst out crying: "Land! Land!" And we named this unknown land after the Austrian Emperor Franz Josef Land. The first land seen by the expedition headed by

Weyprecht and Payer was the Hall Island. Cape Tegetthoff bears the name of the expedition's vessel. The island sights are very impressive: huge cliffs resembling dorsal fins of gigantic sharks submerge into the depths. The remains of wooden structures built by the Wellman expedition (1889-1899) may be seen there.

Once again, if the weather conditions are favorable, we might spend another morning at Franz Josef Land, if not, with a sorrow of goodbye we leave this mysterious archipelago in the very early morning this day.

Day 10

The whole day we are at sea, bound for Murmansk. We get together for our farewell meeting and review our cruise experience. We recall the unforgettable places we have visited and the wonderful wildlife of the islands, animals and birds - dwellers of this astonishing, though severe regions, that we have seen.

Day 11

In the morning we arrive at Murmansk. We disembark and transfer via Norway-Russian border to Kirkenes for a flight home or for an individual program.

An Art Report after previous Franz Josef Land Expedition cruise in the blog of Special Travel Club

Please, read and look at a report in English of our friend, Jo Dumon Tak, a Dutch artist, which fell in love with this severe archipelago. He visited this archipelago by an ice-rated vessel with us special-travel.livejournal.com/4055.html#cutid1

PRICES:

Triple Cabin	7 900 EUR
Twin Cabin	9 500 EUR
Suite Cabin	11 500 EUR
Corner Suite	13 500 EUR

Prices are shown per person, basing on double occupancy. The rate of single occupancy is 1.7 times the shared rate.

Note: there is an **early bird** discount of **300 EUR** per person by all bookings, confirmed before 30th December 2009.

The price includes:

- Group bus transfers between the airport of Kirkenes - ship – airport of Kirkenes;
- Baggage transfer between the airport of Kirkenes - ship – airport of Kirkenes;
- Voyage aboard the vessel "Kapitan Dranitsyn" as indicated in the itinerary;
- All shore excursions and activities throughout the voyage by "Zodiacs" and helicopters (as included in planned group excursions);
- Program of lectures by noted naturalists and the service of experienced guides;
- Three meals a day, coffee/tea round the clock;
- Pre-departure materials;
- All miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the program.

Not included:

- Passport and visa expenses (if required);
- Any airfares;
- Meals ashore and hotel accommodation (if required);
- Baggage, cancellation and personal **medical insurance**, which is **compulsory** and a copy of which have to be provided to the Special Travel Club prior to departure;

- Excess baggage charges;
- Telecommunication services;
- Laundry, bar and beverage charges;
- Standard tips at the end of the voyage for stewards and other service personal aboard (at your discretion).

Your Expedition Team

Expedition Leader - Arne Kertelhein

Cruise Director - Alexey Mironov

History - Arne Kertelhein

Geology - Heike Fries

Naturalist - Sepp Friedhuber

Biology, Birder - Yaroslav Nikitin

Photographer - Heiner Kubny

Booking and Cancellation Conditions

A deposit of 20% of the travel rate per passenger is required to confirm a booking. Full payment for the confirmed reservations is due 60 days prior to departure.

If cancellation is received up to 61 days prior to departure, deposits are refundable, less a 300 EUR administrative fee per person. Reservations cancelled 60 days or less prior to departure are non-refundable and all deposits and tariffs are forfeited. If cancellation occurs 60 days or less prior to departure, and full payment has not yet been received, the full penalty still applies and unpaid monies are due immediately. If Special Travel Club is forced to cancel a voyage due to unforeseen circumstances beyond its control, including non-delivery of the vessel, passenger agrees that the only remedy is full refund of all monies paid by each passenger to Special Travel Club for the cancelled voyage. Under no circumstances does passenger have rights to any additional compensation, including but not limited to claims by passengers, including claims associated with cancellation penalties for pre-paid travel services