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Program description:

Longyearbyen-based pre-program for Spitsbergen Expedition Cruises

The request by customers booking expedition cruises in Spitsbergen for an introductory pre-program on land, preferably (adapted to the average customer of these cruises) based in comfortable Longyearbyen, has made us think and develop an add-on offer specifically for this type of customer:

- Observation tells that at least first-time passengers on one of these Spitsbergen cruises, who board the ship directly from the plane, often are shattered by the difference between life and surroundings at home and this tour into the arctic wilderness: everything is new and unfamiliar – what is special, what should be paid attention to? At the same time, big excursion groups with widely varying interests and fitness plus limited time per excursion require often high group discipline and newcomers therefore often would like to have more time in a more relaxed way to get acquainted with this very different region, than what is available on the landings in the course of the cruise.
- Accordingly, the main intention of this pre-program is to allow participants to get practically acquainted with Spitsbergen in its basic aspects of nature and history, to take photos of the typical plants and some birds, reindeer, etc. already before the actual cruise – thus seeing more on the cruise due to being familiar with Spitsbergen already and using the landings more efficiently by being able to focus on the really special features of the landing site, having seen the general basics of Spitsbergen already during the pre-program.
- As the focus is on gaining a basic understanding of Spitsbergen and as many of the cruise participants are not so much interested in demanding hikes, the pre-program consists of excursions which do not cover so much distance or climbing as many tops as possible, but focusses first of all on the details: looking at the flora and fauna (usually: birds, reindeer), guidance around Longyearbyen and the Svalbard Museum to understand the history and the peculiarities of modern life in the Arctic.
- Being a pre-program for cruises, we abstain from including fjord cruises – the participants will be on ship a lot afterwards, anyway.
- For the more sporty ones, an additional longer wilderness excursion is offered as an add-on to the pre-program.
- Picking up all participants at Longyearbyen airport after arrival with any flight and transfer to accommodation is included up to 2 days before beginning of the pre-program, if we get informed about the flight used by the traveller.
- 3 days allow a pleasant introduction and are at the same time an acceptable number of extra holidays to be spent in Spitsbergen.
- The pre-program will help in many cases to turn the nuisance of bad flight connections for reaching the ship directly (often an overnight stay is needed between the flights for getting to/from Spitsbergen due to inconvenient schedules on some days) into a pleasure by having this extra introduction and possibly being able to use more convenient flight schedules on other days.

Program:

A general problem of the expedition cruises is that they start at different days of the week, using also varying flights with varying arrival times. In some cases, the flights fitting directly to the cruises even require overnight stays on the way in Tromsø or Oslo, where it would make more sense to spend more time in Spitsbergen instead of along the route. To be flexible regarding the different needs of each cruise departure and the varying flight times, we offer to pick up the participants at the airport at their arrival day and do with them the transfer to the accommodation. Our actual pre-cruise arrangement can then either start immediately after, or you can book some extra days (just accommodation without program or extra day excursions) between the arrival day and the actual pre-cruise program. By this, we should be able to adapt to most combinations of cruise departures, client wishes and flight schedules. In any case, our pre-cruise program will be an excellent possibility to offer your clients a flexible total Spitsbergen experience and personal service from the day of arrival onwards, even if they arrive several days before the cruise. If you have a bigger group for such a pre-cruise program, we can also adapt the program further.

Arrival day: One of our tourleaders welcomes the arriving participants at Longyearbyen airport and transfers them to their prebooked accommodation – also up to 3 days before the start of the pre-program. In connection with these transfers, the tour leader can give them information also for eventual extra days. In case of arrivals just after midnight, the arrival day will be the same calendar day as the following first day of this schedule, but number of accommodation nights is the same, as this started night will be needed, as well.

First day: After breakfast, participants are collected by minibus from their accommodations, meeting with briefing/discussion together with the tour leader. Then guided sightseeing around Longyearbyen. Time for having lunch and doing some shopping. In the afternoon: guided visit to the nice Svalbard Museum (ca. 2 hours). For more sporty participants, the option on an additional hiking tour onto a nearby mountain is offered for the late afternoon/evening. Transfer back to accommodation. For further independent activities of the participants during other parts of the day, 2 optional group transfers in the Longyearbyen road net are included in price and the guide will assist with information on possibilities, etc.

Second day: After breakfast, participants are collected by minibus from their accommodations, meeting with briefing/discussion together with the tour leader. Transfer into Adventdalen and foot excursion into the inland, studying some permafrost phenomena, flora and inland glaciers with a huge and well-structured system of moraines. Duration ca. 5-6 hours, ca. 11 km (of these about 8 in mostly flat but pathless and partly boggy terrain, about 3 km pathless in moraines (gravel, scree slopes) and on glacier ice, no climbing, but good balance needed). Transfer back to accommodation. For further independent activities of the participants during other parts of the day, 2 optional transfers in the Longyearbyen road net are included in price and the guide will assist with information on possibilities, etc..

Third day: After breakfast, participants are collected by minibus from their accommodations, meeting with briefing/discussion together with the tour leader. Transfer to Isfjord and coastal foot excursion with focus on birds (including usually little auks, guillemots, fulmars, arctic terns, waders, snow buntings, eider ducks – depending of course also on part of season), flora and the forces of winter-ice and erosion. Duration ca. 4 hours, ca. 8 km, partly on road, partly on pathless tundra (in parts boggy) and gravel, mostly flat with some ascends/descends in between, crossing of a small river by wading (if possible regarding water level). Transfer back to Longyearbyen. For further independent activities of the participants during other parts of the day, 2 optional transfers in the Longyearbyen road net are included in price and the guide will assist with information on possibilities, etc.

Transfer day (= starting day of the cruise): Participants are taken from accommodation to ship, depending on boarding time stated by the ship. In case of ship departure in the afternoon, while check-out time at the accommodation is latest at 11:00, we can store the baggage for the time in between. Details will be fixed in the course of the days before.

Extra nights and activities: To adapt this program to the differing departure days of the ship, to suitable flights and to further private interests of the participants, extra nights in Longyearbyen and also further activities can be booked in addition. Further activities can be additional hiking, kayak paddling, visit to a mine, short introduction to dog-sledging (on a mountain plateau as long as there is sufficient snow), various day cruises in Icefjord (for instance to the Russian settlements of Barentsburg or Pyramiden). It is recommended to book extra nights for independent activities after the regular days of this program so that you are familiar with the area and Longyearbyen already. Observe that independent activities without being armed and experienced with that weapon, should be limited to Longyearbyen and the immediate surroundings where an eventual polar bear would be likely to be detected quickly by passing-by cars and reported to the police – this is basically the area near the coastal road between campingsite/airport, Longyearbyen and the first kilometres of road in Adventdalen. The guide will assist with consultancy for independent activities on extra days after the regular program.

In case of having booked the pre-program, we offer the possibility of booking extra nights and excursions also for a stay in Longyearbyen after the ship cruise.

Dates: adaptable to all Spitsbergen expedition cruise departures of ANTARCTIC DREAM and PLANCIUS from Longyearbyen after June 20th as a pre-program. For other ships, a similar arrangement is possible, provided at least 4 bookings for a departure.

Basic Prices 2011 (no flights included, per person (* tent: in case of occupation by several persons, same sex cannot be guaranteed, camping-site fee, rental of tent and insulation mat and breakfast included. ** rooms: breakfast included, same sex occupancy cannot be guaranteed in triple room, double room possible only if booked by two persons together)):

with accommodation in shared 4-person tent*:	NOK 3150
with accommodation in shared 2-person tent*:	NOK 3550
with accommodation in single tent* :	NOK 4150
with accommodation in shared triple room pension standard**:	NOK 4650
with accommodation in shared double room pension standard**:	NOK 5440
with accommodation in single room pension standard**:	NOK 6010
with accommodation in shared double hotel room**:	NOK 7200
with accommodation in single hotel room**:	NOK 9590
discount for children under age of 12:	NOK 300

Basic prices include: program as described plus 3 nights in accommodation as booked. Observe that in case of arrival with a night flight, the first night in accommodation will be needed already for the arrival night.

Add-on prices (all prices per person, bookable only in combination with the basic pre-program and in same accommodation standard):

Extra night (prices per person, * tent: in case of occupation by several persons, same sex cannot be guaranteed, camping-site fee, rental of tent and insulation mat and breakfast included. **: breakfast included, same sex occupancy cannot be guaranteed in triple room, double room possible only if booked by two persons together):

with accommodation in shared 4-person tent*:	NOK 150
with accommodation in shared 2-person tent*:	NOK 200
with accommodation in single tent:	NOK 300
with accommodation in shared triple room pension standard**:	NOK 400
with accommodation in shared double room pension standard**:	NOK 550
with accommodation in single room pension standard**:	NOK 700
with accommodation in shared hotel room**:	NOK 930
with accommodation in single hotel room**:	NOK 1700

Extra hiking day excursion mountain and glacier (for those who want to add a more sporty excursion to the pre-program – no real climbing, but more altitude (partly rough terrain, up to 800 m up and down again and longer than the regular excursions of the pre-program. Before July 10th, possibilities of glacier walks may be restricted by snow, route depends on actual weather and terrain conditions, needed transfers included)

NOK 500

Extra hiking day excursion, long (10-20 km, 6-9 hours, up to 1000 m upwards (and down again), mountainous pathless terrain – good fitness and balance needed, only in period July 5th to September 5th, needed transfers included, route depends on weather and terrain conditions)

NOK 900

Extra day excursion flora and fauna (5 hours, minibus plus hikes of up to 3 km each, slow pace, mainly for photographers and bird watchers, partial overlapping with regular program of third day of basic pre-program regarding visited sites. Observe that before June 20th and after August 15th, only few plants are flowering. Some birds migrate away already by mid-August).

NOK 600

Extra day-cruise into inner Isfjord (landing in former Russian settlement Pyramiden, approach to glacier front of Nordenskiöld glacier, close passage of birdcliff. Only period July 10th to August 31st, not every day) – including additional transfers between accommodation and pier

NOK 1380

Extra service: In combination with the basic program, we do not demand any minimum number of participants for carrying through booked extra excursions from the above choice but have to make reservations, of course, regarding other hindrances beyond our influence (weather and terrain conditions on land, ice and wind and waves and eventual technical problems of boat regarding fjord cruise)

General aspects:

Accommodation: from closest to nature (and cheapest) on the camping-site in one of our spacious base tents to pension standard (shared facilities, but friendly and clean) or hotel. For tent, own sleeping bag is needed (or can be rent) – summer temperatures are not as low as feared by some ! In July and up to August 25th, „night“ temperatures rarely go down to 0 C, while above +15 C is equally rare.

Meals: Breakfast is included (camping-site: more limited choice), while other meals are not included as we will be partly out on excursions and do not want to make the price higher than necessary by including meals and/or prescribing meal standards. Several restaurants in Longyearbyen, prices starting from about NOK 100 for a full meal in the cafeteria.

Requirements: Participants for this program must have good health which makes a need for medical assistance unlikely, and should be used to hikes in mountainous, pathless terrain. While the tours do not aim at trying to break sporty records, a basic fitness, agility and good balance is needed to be able to tackle more demanding stretches of terrain, including wading of streams with big stones, walking on loose scree slopes, snow slopes and on gravel and ice or through bog and morass. Daily hikes can be between 4-12 km and up to 300m upwards and down again on day excursions with day-packs.

For safety reasons (polar bears, etc.), all participants have to be close and within possible sight of an armed tour guide at any time when outside of the settlements and have to follow the instructions of the guide.

Participants have to bring along all required personal equipment, including sturdy hiking boots plus hiking rubber boots/wellingtons, a rucksack of sufficient size for day excursions, suitable sleeping bag (in case of tent accommodation), outdoor clothes for hiking in wild terrain with possible cold wind, rain and temperatures from –5 (rare –only sometimes in very early or very late season) to +15 centigrades including spare clothes packed waterproof, personal first aid / drugs set, in case of tent accommodation: cutlery and camping dishes, etc.

Participants are aware of and accept that the tour guides do not have a medical training exceeding basic first aid and that the available first aid equipment out on tour is limited, too (about as in a car first aid kit), while organising external help may be difficult and may take several hours. Any problems arising, have to be solved first of all within and by the group. For legal reasons (risk of consequences of anaphylactic shock (life-threatening allergic reaction on drugs), guides are not allowed to hand out medication/drugs to participants.

Accordingly, each participant is strongly recommended to bring along a private set of medication/drugs, put together with assistance of the private doctor.

Should a rescue operation be necessary, this requires almost always the use of expensive helicopter. Therefore, each participant must provide individual insurance cover (valid for Spitsbergen and the period of the tour) for search and rescue operations up to NOK 40,000.

The tour guides are entitled to exclude participants with the next opportunity and without compensation, who do not meet the physical or equipment demands (or where there is reason for fearing that participants may have problems with following parts of the program) or who refuse to integrate into the group or to follow the instructions of the guides or the regulations and laws valid for Svalbard (including environmental issues), etc.. Costs created by such an exclusion have to be covered by the excluded participant, while actual savings for Spitsbergen Tours as a result of such an exclusion will be refunded to the excluded participant.

Participants are aware of the fact that these programs are carried out in arctic wilderness, mostly in pathless terrain, which inherently bears risks due to accidents and possibly considerably longer waiting for help. While the tour operator has checked the basic routes of the programs over previous years, it is impossible to be acquainted with all route details in pathless terrain with quickly changing natural conditions and an according need to choose routes according to the conditions found rather than sticking to fixed routes. Accordingly, participants cannot expect from the tour leaders to be acquainted with the actual routes chosen in the course of the program.

For safety reasons, firearms and explosives are part of the equipment taken on the tour and it cannot be avoided completely that participants have access to these dangerous items. Participants are expected to abstain from handling/manipulating these items without clear consent of the responsible tour guide in each case.

Included in prices: Accommodation (including breakfast, except of morning of very early departure flights) as booked, all mentioned transfers, English- and German-speaking and armed guide, participation on all excursions of the program, consultancy by the guide for further independent activities in remaining parts of the day, museum entry.

Not included in prices: travel to/from Spitsbergen, other meals than breakfast, insurances, personal equipment/clothing, any medications/drugs, personal expenses.

Booking: Bookings have to be done in writing (no fax, no e-mail, etc.), stating the booked tour (with category) and tour operator (including seat), names of the persons booked in, tour price and confirmation that the booked in persons are familiar with the booking and participation conditions and accept these as the basis for their participation and fulfill these. A booking received by us will be confirmed by a booking confirmation by us if possible, including an invoice.

Payment: For this program, an instant payment of 10 % of the tour price is due after having received the booking confirmation, the remaining payment is due one month in advance of the beginning of the tour (all dates refer to the date where we have actually received the payment on our stated account or in cash).

Cancellation: A cancellation of a booking is possible at any time by the tour participant, who can also provide a suitable replacement participant. In case of a cancellation by the participant, the following cancellation costs will be charged: More than 100 days before start of tour: 10 % of tour price, 99-35 days before start of tour: 25 % of tour price, 34-21 days before start of tour: 40 % of tour price, 20 or less days before start of tour: 60 % of tour price (also in case of not appearing for the start of the tour).