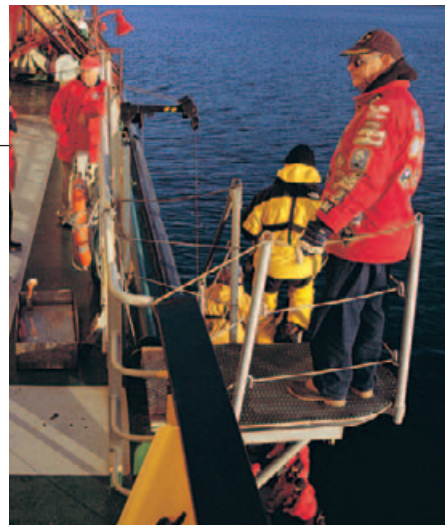


Northwest Passage – The Amundsen Route

The quest for the Northwest Passage – the sea passage through the Arctic regions of North America connecting the Pacific Ocean with the Atlantic Ocean – began in the 16th century. However, no-one made the journey successfully until the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen conquered the route almost exactly a century ago.

This remarkable voyage will bring alive the endeavors of those who charted this wild corner of the Arctic – not just Amundsen but also Sir John Franklin, Leopold McClintock and many others who faced the challenging ice on their voyages of discovery.



Gang/Author © Mike Mann/Corbis

July 18 – Anchorage, Alaska, USA

We arrive in Anchorage and transfer independently to the Millennium Hotel (or a similar centrally-located hotel) for an overnight stay. Sometimes described as ‘only 20 minutes from Alaska’, Anchorage is a modern, bustling city just a short hop away from a wilderness of glaciers, mountains and forests.

July 19-20 – Anchorage to Anadyr, Russia

In the morning, we board our flight from Anchorage and head west to Anadyr – crossing the International Date Line en route and therefore losing one day. We transfer by helicopter to the Kapitan Khlebnikov and sail on the evening of July 20.



Helicopter © Henry Millerburg

July 21-23 – Chukotka Peninsula & Bering Strait

This morning our lecture series begins with presentations on the unique wildlife, geology, glaciology and history of the Far North. We also keep a lookout for seabirds and whales along the way.

Our adventure begins by exploring the remote and beautiful Chukotka Peninsula. This is a naturalist’s paradise. High latitude plants such as Arctic poppies and saxifrage will be in flower and we explore the coastal sites and islands packed with nesting Least Auklets, Crested Auklets, Tufted Puffins, Horned Puffins, guillemots and many other seabirds. We also visit ancient cultural sites – stone rings and ceremonial grounds can be found all along this coast – and learn about some of the early human inhabitants of Russia’s Far North.

We also hope to explore Whalebone Alley, a sacred place on Ittygran Island once used for religious ceremonies associated with early whaling activities, and wander among the huge 500-year-old bones of bowhead whales.

Then we sail through the famous Bering Strait, a surprisingly narrow waterway separating Russia from the United States. We all gather on deck as we pass the island of Big Diomedé, a last outpost of Russia located directly next to the International Date Line. As well as its geographical and political significance, Bering Strait is rich in wildlife and huge numbers of whales and seabirds migrate through here each summer. This area is home to several interesting whales, including bowhead, gray and Minke whales.

July 23-24 – Chukchi Sea & Beaufort Sea

We continue north along the remote and beautiful Chukchi coast into the Beaufort Sea and celebrate crossing the Arctic Circle. We also cross back over the International Date Line, gaining a day.

We pass Point Barrow, the northernmost point in the United States, well known in wildlife circles for the bowhead whales that swim past on their migrations between their wintering grounds in the Bering Sea and their summering grounds in

Expedition In Brief

Cruise Name

Northwest Passage
– The Amundsen Route



Expedition Dates

July 18 – August 5, 2005

Expedition Start/Finish

Anchorage, Alaska, USA/Ottawa, Canada

Expedition Highlights

Anadyr, Chukotka Peninsula, Ittygran Island, Bering Strait, Beaufort Sea, Herschel Island, Franklin Bay, Amundsen Gulf, Victoria Island, Cambridge Bay, Victoria Strait, Larsen Sound, Boothia Peninsula, Lancaster Sound, Beechey Island, Resolute

Expedition Rates

Triple cabin	\$10,250	decks 5/8
Twin cabin	\$12,750	decks 5/6/7/8
Twin cabin - Single Occupancy	\$20,975	decks 5/6/7/8
Suite	\$15,250	decks 6/7
Corner suite	\$16,750	decks 6/7

All rates are per person in US dollars based on twin occupancy (except rate for single occupancy). Please ask about our request share program. Triple cabins are identical to twins but with a third pull down berth.

See page 17 for color coded deck plan.

the Beaufort Sea. This is where our journey through the fabled Northwest Passage officially begins. Arctic pack ice frequently blocks transit at this critical juncture, frustrating the attempts of ordinary expedition vessels to pass, but we break our way through thick, multi-year ice with relative ease.

July 25-27 – Herschel Island & Franklin Bay, Canada

Our next stop is Herschel Island, just off the north coast of the Yukon, which stands in the path of the famous Beaufort Gyre. This was the site of a busy 19th century whaling station and was the Yukon's first territorial park. We are met by park rangers at Pauline Cove who take us on a guided walk among the historic remains of the station. No fewer than fifteen ships overwintered here in 1894-95 and the now-abandoned town may once have housed as many as 2,000 residents.

Amundsen spent a winter at nearby King's Point before completing the first transit of the Northwest Passage in 1903-06. Customs and immigration officers join the ship to officially welcome us into Canada. Then we continue east across the shallow waters of the Mackenzie Delta and, if time and ice conditions permit, we sail into Franklin Bay.



July 28-30 – Amundsen Gulf, Victoria Island & Cambridge Bay

Pushing forward across the Amundsen Gulf, we approach Holman on Victoria Island. This is the traditional home of the Copper Inuit and its 300 friendly residents make a living from print making, hunting and trapping. Forging our way east through Dolphin and Union Strait, we maintain a watch for whales, polar bears and several species of Arctic seals. Past expeditions have also had good luck in finding musk ox along this stretch of the journey.

We plan an expedition landing in Johansen Bay where we visit the administrative center and historically important town of Cambridge Bay. Lying in the harbor are the weathered remains of the 'Maud' – the three-masted schooner that Amundsen sailed across the north polar basin from 1922-24.

July 31 – Victoria Strait

Amundsen spent two winters in this area, mastering his skills in dog sledding with the help of local people. It is here too that Captain Leopold McClintock finally found evidence of Franklin's lost expedition in 1859, including naval artifacts, sledges, graves and two letters. The Kapitan Khlebnikov takes the western route through Victoria Strait, renowned for its challenging ice conditions.

August 1-2 – Larsen Sound & Boothia Peninsula

We head north along the Boothia Peninsula via Larsen Sound, a route that was chartered by McClintock on his 1857-59 expedition aboard the 'Fox'. Past expeditions have had good luck with polar bear sightings in this area.

Continuing north - tides and ice conditions permitting - we hope to navigate Bellot Strait. This mile-wide channel separates Somerset Island from Point Zenith, the northernmost point of North America.

We sail north along either the east or west coasts of Somerset Island (depending on conditions) and into Lancaster Sound. This area is renowned for its whales and, with luck, we could see narwhal, beluga and even bowhead whales. It is also a good area for polar bears and Arctic seals among the ice floes and there are large concentrations of no fewer than 26 species of seabirds.

August 3 – Lancaster Sound & Beechey Island

This morning we hope to cruise around Prince Leopold Island, a dramatic flat-topped island renowned for its nesting seabirds. Then we head for Beechey Island.

We've made it! We have successfully transited the Northwest Passage – and are among very few people in the world ever to have done so. Beechey Island is where Sir John Franklin and his men spent a winter before disappearing forever – a tragedy that motivated one of the greatest search missions ever known. At this desolate spot, we contemplate the lonely Franklin Memorial and celebrate our successful voyage.

August 4 – Resolute to Ottawa

This morning we disembark in Resolute, on the south coast of Cornwallis Island, which is the hub for logistics in the Canadian Arctic. We transfer to the Narwhal Hotel before continuing back on our flight to Ottawa, where we spend the night at the Fairmont Château Laurier (or a similar centrally-located hotel).

August 5 – Ottawa

Our adventure has come to an end and, after breakfast, we continue home independently. We now belong to the privileged few to have successfully completed the Northwest Passage.

Note: please read this itinerary as a guide only. Our exact program will depend on local permissions and will vary to take best advantage of local weather and ice conditions and opportunities to experience wildlife. This is an expedition into a very little traveled area and flexibility is the key to the success.

