

Tanquary Fjord, Ellesmere Island & Greenland

Venturing to within some 500 miles of the North Pole, this wonderful voyage would be impossible without our polar-class icebreaker. Our ultimate goal is the unforgettable Tanquary Fjord on Ellesmere Island but, along the way, we visit some of the most wonderful icy paradises in the whole of the Arctic.

Following in the wake of 19th-century explorers, we journey through dense pack ice in a spectacular world of towering mountains, glaciers and fjords. We visit some incredibly remote communities, watch the Greenland ice-cap tumbling down to the shore, and keep a lookout for a wealth of Arctic wildlife.



Arshore © Rosanne Perré

August 16 – Ottawa, Canada

We arrive in Ottawa and transfer independently to the Fairmont Château Laurier (or a similar centrally-located hotel) for an overnight stay. Ottawa is an attractive city on the south bank of the Ottawa River at its confluence with the Rideau.

August 17 – Ottawa to Resolute

We depart this morning for our flight to Resolute. Located high above the Arctic Circle, Resolute is the only settlement on Cornwallis Island and occupies a strategic position in the Canadian Arctic. There is an old saying that 'Resolute is not the end of the world, but you can see it from here'.



Kapitan Khlebnikov © Henry Allmendinger

It is certainly the first and last chapter in many Arctic adventures, whether you are planning a trek to the North Pole or, like us, will be exploring some of the wildest and remotest corners of the Arctic. After a brief tour of the town and tea at the Narwhal Hotel, we transfer to the Kapitan Khlebnikov for a late afternoon embarkation and sail in the evening.

August 18 – Lancaster Sound & Baffin Bay

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.

Sailing along the south coast of Devon Island, we follow the route of 19th century explorers 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.

Later this morning we cruise into Dundas Harbor, a short fjord bounded by steep mountains on the south-east coast of Devon Island. Landing by Zodiac, we explore the tundra and hope to encounter our first musk ox of the trip.

We also examine some of the extensive Thule remains along the coast – evidence that the area has been inhabited for centuries. Following in the wake of early Arctic whalers who battled through this notorious gyre of moving ice, we continue east into Baffin Bay on our way to Greenland.

August 19-20 – Qaanaaq (Thule), Greenland

We plan a visit to Qaanaaq (Thule) in Murchison Sound, the administrative capital of northern Greenland. The Greenland ice cap tumbles down to the shore along impressively steep fjords and huge blue and white icebergs drift in front of striking red cliffs.

We explore the town of Qaanaaq, home to some 300 Greenlanders and the northernmost naturally inhabited community in the world. Narwhal are fairly common in the area at this time of year.

Expedition In Brief

Cruise Name

Tanquary Fjord, Ellesmere Island & Greenland



Expedition Dates

August 16 – 31, 2005

Expedition Start/Finish

Ottawa/Ottawa, Canada

Expedition Highlights

Resolute, Lancaster Sound, Dundas Harbor, Qaanaaq (Thule), Cape York, Coburg Island, Hells Gate, Norwegian Bay, Tanquary Fjord, Ellesmere Island, Axel Heiberg Island, Belcher Channel, Little Cornwallis Island, Beechey Island

Expedition Rates

Triple cabin	\$9,150	decks 5/8
Twin cabin	\$11,450	decks 5/6/7/8
Twin cabin - Single Occupancy	\$18,765	decks 5/6/7/8
Suite	\$13,550	decks 6/7
Corner suite	\$14,950	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.

August 21 – Cape York

This morning the striking scenery of Melville Bay will appear on the horizon - the historically important land of the Polar Eskimos. When John Ross came upon these people at Cape York in 1819, they were so isolated they believed themselves to be the only people in the world.

Even today few ships sail this far north along the Greenland coast but, with our powerful icebreaker, we are able to pass straight through the heavy drift ice that is typical of the region. We will be on deck to watch the Kapitan Khlebnikov at work and to keep a lookout for harbor seals, polar bears and a wealth of other marine mammals that are found here.



Arctic Scene © BBC Alexander

August 22– Coburg Island, Canada

We sail back across Baffin Bay and arrive at the wildlife reserve of Coburg Island, in the entrance to Jones Sound. Pending permission, we plan a Zodiac cruise along the spectacular seabird cliffs here. An estimated 30,000 pairs of Black-legged Kittiwakes crowd the rocky ledges, along with 160,000 pairs of thick-billed murres. As most of the murre chicks have already fledged by the time we arrive, we see them diving and feeding in the rich waters along the shore.

August 23 – Hell Gate & Norwegian Bay

Today we make history! We round the south-west coast of Ellesmere Island and cross the glorious waterway of Hell Gate – the strong currents in this narrow passage prevent the water from freezing even at the height of winter but it has been navigated by only a handful of vessels before us.

As we push further north through the ice into Norwegian Bay and on to Eureka Sound, our powerful icebreaker will be tackling some incredibly thick ice. Inevitably our rate of progress will depend on conditions, but constant helicopter reconnaissance will help the Captain plan our route. Whilst we are on deck to watch the pilots and the Kapitan Khlebnikov at work we can keep a lookout for polar bears and other wildlife.

August 24-25 – Tanquary Fjord & Ellesmere Island

Sometime today we hope to reach our ultimate goal - Tanquary Fjord. Here we will be approaching 81° North and entering Ellesmere Island (Quttinirpaaq) National Park, which contains Canada's northernmost land and eastern Canada's highest peak. The vegetation is surprisingly lush and we will be able to find mountain avens, saxifrage, Arctic dwarf firewood, poppies, Arctic cotton grass and white Arctic bell heather. The head of the fjord lies in a beautiful valley surrounded by high mountains and glaciers flowing to the water. We also hope to see large numbers of Arctic hares, small roaming bands of endangered Peary caribou and herds of musk ox. There are polar bears and Arctic whales along the coast and even Arctic wolves live here too, although we would be lucky to see them. If weather permits, we intend to organize helicopter sightseeing flights to view the unbelievably spectacular glaciers and landscapes of Ellesmere Island.

August 26 – Eureka Station & Axel Heiberg Island

We leave Tanquary Fjord and head south for Eureka, about midway along the west coast of Ellesmere Island. We visit Eureka Station, an isolated weather station and plan unforgettable helicopter flights over Axel Heiberg Island. This is a remote and extraordinarily beautiful island with excellent chances to spot musk ox, wolves, and Arctic hares.

August 27-28 – Belcher Channel & Little Cornwallis Island

Continuing south, the Arctic pack ice frequently blocks passage at this critical juncture making it impossible for any ship other than a powerful icebreaker to pass. We expect to battle through thick, multi-year ice and vast ice floes – some of the most challenging ice conditions in the entire Arctic.

Along the way we will keep a lookout for polar bears which are often encountered in this region. Depending on ice conditions we may visit Bathurst Island, rich in birdlife and Arctic flora, and we will pass the Polaris Mine on Little Cornwallis Island, the most northerly metal mine in the world. We then proceed via Crozier Strait back into Lancaster Sound, keeping a lookout for narwhal and beluga. We also hope to see walrus – which often gather to feed in these waters.

August 29 – Beechey Island

The amount of time we have today will be determined by our progress through Norwegian Bay and Belcher Channel. If possible, we head for Beechey Island. This is where Sir John Franklin and his men spent a winter in the mid-1800s 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.

August 30 – Resolute to Ottawa

This morning we disembark in Resolute and 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 31 – Ottawa

After breakfast, we continue home independently.

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.

