

Southern Greenland: On the Trail of the Vikings

Reykjavik, Iceland, Europe to Toronto, Canada, North America (SGE)

Day 1 Arrive in Reykjavik

Having made your way to Reykjavik, you will be met by a representative of Aurora Expeditions and transferred to our group hotel. Upon arrival at your included hotel, please visit the Aurora Expeditions hospitality desk to collect your luggage cabin tags and to speak with our ground operations team, who may have information to share with you about pre-embarkation or to provide you with information about where to dine, withdraw cash or purchase last minute items from a local pharmacy or supermarket. The remainder of your time is at leisure. All meals today are at your own expense. Accommodation: The Grand Hotel Reykjavik



Day 2 Embarkation

This morning, please ensure your cabin luggage is fitted with cabin tags clearly labelled with your name and cabin number. Your luggage will be collected from your hotel and transferred directly to the port for clearance and delivered to your cabin ahead of your arrival on board. Please keep any valuables or personal items with you throughout the day. Today we follow the path of one of Reykjavik's most popular seismic attractions – the Golden Circle. Stops along our route include Thingvellir National Park, accredited as the site of Iceland's first parliament. A shaky start to the new nation, it is also the point where the Eurasia and North American tectonic plates meet as an open fissure. Our next stop is Gullfoss waterfall. This impressive water feature tumbles 34 meters into the Hvítá River, offering a

popular photographic opportunity. Next we explore the geothermal fields and geysir's for which Iceland is famous. The variety of hot springs and bubbling pools are mesmerising as the sheer capacity of water and steam erupting from the ground makes you ponder just how much power is beneath your feet. Late afternoon we return to Reykjavik to board the *Sylvia Earle*. After boarding, there's time to settle into your cabin before our important safety briefings before we 'throw the lines' to begin our Greenland adventure. This evening, meet your expedition team and crew at the Welcome Dinner.

Day 3 At Sea

Crossing the Greenland Sea, we sail through the Polar Basin's nutrient-rich waters, searching for encroaching pack ice, fin whales and seabirds. Our team of experts entertains us with informative talks about sea ice, glaciers, European arctic plants and animals and epic tales of early explorers such as Nansen, Andreé and Scoresby.

Day 4 Kangertivatsiaq Fjord

Popular among skilled rock climbers, Kangertivatsiaq Fjord is home to spectacular mountain peaks and essential big walls that attract daring climbers. A new discovery for Aurora Expeditions in 2022, the 26-kilometre (16-mile) fjord is filled with glaciers including the Glacier of France. It's an ideal place for ship cruising, Zodiac excursions and discovery hikes.

Day 5 Skjoldungen Island

Continue south along Greenland's King Frederik VI Coast, always on the lookout for whales, especially the rare sperm whale that is occasionally seen here. Weaving through the narrow channels of Skjoldungen Fjord we land at the end of the fjord for a walk along a glacial river, across a tundra valley covered in northern willow and blooming pink wildflowers. Kayakers can paddle across the front of a tidewater glacier, search for harp seals, ivory gulls and whales. Back on board, enjoy the stunning surrounds with a drink in hand basked in the soft light of the setting sun.

Day 6 Prince Christian Sound

Prince Christian Sound connects the Labrador Sea with the Irminger Sea. Approximately 100 km (60 mi) long, and, in parts, as narrow as 500-m (600-ft) wide, the fjord is flanked by jagged mountain peaks, some reaching over 2,200 m (7,200 ft) high, with countless glaciers coming all the way down to the sea. We slow-cruise through the sound to enjoy the spectacular scenery. Icebergs sculpted into fantastic shapes often block the entrance to the sound, a great spectacle for photography.

Day 7 Aappilattoq, Tasermiut Fjord, Klosterdal

Aappilattoq is a small settlement that lies in the southern section of a sound. Aappilattoq means red in Greenlandic, and the town is named after the red mountains rising above it. Aappilattoq is well-known in Greenland for the jagged mountain peaks that surround it—a delight for photographers. The towering, jagged mountains that surround Tasermiut Fjord is why it's often referred to as the 'Patagonia of the north'. At Klosterdal, we are surrounded by three giant mountains - Napasorsuaq, Ketil and Nalumasortoq. Here we can walk to a Norse ruin, hike along the valley, or explore the bay by kayak.

Day 8 Nanortalik, Uunartoq

Continue to Nanortalik, the southernmost town in Greenland, located on an island of the same name. Its name derives from the West Greenlandic word 'Nanoq' meaning 'the place where bears pass through,' describing the polar bears that were once seen floating past on sea ice. Deep fjords, woodlands and grasslands, and rugged mountainside cliffs, some over 1,000 m (3,280 ft), attract enthusiastic climbers from around the world. On arrival, you'll receive a warm welcome from the local community who have opened up their town for you to explore. Nanortalik is a town that's known for their love of singing and you'll be treated to choir performance. Visit Nanortalik Church, a wooden, Danish Lutheran church built in 1916 and is currently the only church serving the Nanortalik congregation. The church is in the old colonial quarter of the town. Next to the church is a landmark boulder called the 'Knud Rasmussen Stone,' named after Greenland's most famous citizen, Dr Knud Rasmussen, an explorer and ethnologist.

Day 9 Hvalsey, Qaqortoq

Hvalsey Church is the best-preserved Norse ruin in Greenland. 'Hvalsey' is old Norse for 'Whale Island.' Christianity arrived in Greenland around 1,000 AD and gradually churches began to be built. Late medieval documents indicate there were up to 14 parish churches in the Eastern Settlement. Hvalsey itself was built in the early 14th century, but it was not the first church built on this site. After exploring Hvalsey ruins, continue to Qaqortoq, where our Zodiacs shuttle us ashore. Qaqortoq is the capital of South Greenland. With a history dating back to 1775, the town offers various cultural activities and attractions including an outdoor art project called 'Man and Stone,' which features stone carvings scattered throughout the town created by local artists. Qaqortoq is Greenland's southernmost town and is the administrative centre of the south Greenland. Built from yellow stone, and dating back to 1804, the building that now houses the Qaqortoq Museum originally belonged to the town's blacksmith. Qaqortoq's landmark building is the Church of our Saviour. This large wooden Lutheran church, known as the 'Red Church', is in the historic part of town, near the harbour.

Day 10 Igaliku

At Igaliku in Tunulliarfik Fjord, lush valleys filled with tall grass hints at Greenland's first sheep farming settlement. Igaliku also guards the entrance to the well-preserved remains of Norse ruins allowing visitors to explore Norse history, hike within the UNESCO World Heritage-listed surroundings to discover lakes, mountains and hidden Norse ruins.

Day 11 Narsarsuaq, Qassiarssuk

Narsarsuaq is the gateway to hiking trails through lush valleys and Norse ruins spotted along Tunulliarfik Fjord. Narsarsuaq holds historical significance to Greenland's history. The Norse Vikings settled in this area in the 12th century and gave Narsarsuaq a name to suggest that an Arctic forest covered the large plain. Taking home stories of lush valleys and plains nestled in deep fjord, the Vikings called this country Greenland. Marked trails allow hikers to enjoy the superb scenery, with the one of the most popular hikes leading to the spectacular lookout over icebergs in the Tunulliarfik Fjord and the Qooroq Glacier. At Qassiarssuk, located directly across the Tunulliarfik Fjord, follow in the footsteps of Erik the Red and

discover why he made it his home. The remains of a church, stables, hall and other buildings can still be seen. Visit the tall statue of Leif Erikson (son of Erik the Red) overlooking the town and fjord. Sailing between Hvalsey, Igaliku and Qassiarssuk allows you to connect the dots of Viking history in Greenland.

Day 12 At sea

As we sail towards Nuuk, enjoy some free time relaxing or attending a presentation from our expedition team. This evening, share stories and celebrate with fellow expeditioners at Captain's Farewell Dinner.

Day 13 Disembark in Nuuk, fly to Toronto

During the early morning, we cruise into Nuuk and disembark at approximately 8.00 am. Farewell your Expedition Team before transfer to the airport for a charter flight to Toronto for an overnight stay. Accommodation: Westin Toronto Airport Hotel

Day 14 Depart Toronto

After breakfast, check out of your room and continue your journey with a transfer to the airport.