

KAYAK EXPEDITION NOTES AND ITINERARY

Late summer, when the pack ice recedes, is the ideal time to attempt to cross the North East Passage. The spectacular terrain combined with a lack of suitable infrastructure makes travel to most areas difficult except by sea. We believe travel by expedition ship is the safest, most efficient and enjoyable way to unlock the secrets of one of the world's great wilderness frontiers.

These notes will give you a brief idea of what you may experience on this remote voyage. Our emphasis is on exploring pristine landscapes, unique wildlife encounters and learning about the fascinating history and geology that has shaped this region. However, we stress that this is an expedition style voyage. Our adventures and daily program will be influenced by the changeable weather and sea conditions of the region. We'll delight in taking advantage of these spontaneous opportunities and there is always an element of the unexpected. We ask you to join us in the spirit of expedition cruising as we discover this extraordinary region with you.

On this amazing voyage we cross nine time zones and six seas while exploring Siberia's vast northern coast. We marvel at the millions of migratory birds heading south, polar bears trying to fatten cubs before winter arrives and the tundra's breathtaking colours. We'll paddle a maze of river deltas, islands and sea cliffs. A true expedition, only adventurers need apply!

Using our ship as a floating base camp, we hope to paddle twice a day, spending as much time on the water as possible. We will normally leave the ship immediately after breakfast for the first paddle of the day. Then, often after lunch, we will have time for a second paddle before returning to the ship for dinner. Most paddles range from two to four hours. We endeavour to have at least one extended paddle where we are away from the ship for most of the day. The flexibility of kayaking with a small private group ensures our own unique experiences, quite different from those encountered by the other passengers on board. Zodiacs will be available for extended shore excursions for those who do not wish to paddle on any given day.

EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Kayakers should be of an intermediate standard and have paddled before on outings up to 12 km in length. You do not have to be an expert or know how to roll but should have an adventurous spirit and recognise that the weather will influence greatly what we can and can't do. This is cold water kayaking and should not be your first paddling experience. You need to be comfortable putting spray skirts on, ferry gliding and have practiced support strokes. We have very little opportunity for instruction before we commence paddling, so we highly recommend that you have done some kayaking recently and in a variety of conditions.

We often begin our first paddling session from the shore and after that will be launching directly from the ship so you should be comfortable paddling on seas that could have up to one metre swell and some current. The water surface will vary from calm to wind chop. Your guide will assess your ability on the initial paddle and, if you have insufficient experience, he or she may not allow you to participate in rougher conditions. Our paddling excursions will not involve camping out. For additional experience, rent a kayak before leaving home and seek out a local operator for some paddling tuition. DO practice paddling in a variety of conditions prior to the trip.

We'd be happy to talk to you about your level of experience and may be able to advise you how to obtain the necessary skills before your trip.

Please Note: Along with your voyage booking form we require all participants to complete our "Sea Kayak Booking and Experience Form" and return it to us immediately to secure your spot in the sea kayak group.

ACROSS THE NORTH EAST PASSAGE

13 AUGUST-07 SEPTEMBER 2012

ITINERARY

Day 1– Anadyr

Transfer from the airport to the *Akademik Shokalskiy* late afternoon for an evening departure from Anadyr. Enjoy whale and bird watching opportunities this evening as we enter into the Bering Sea.

Day 2 – Achen Lagoon

Today we explore the amazing Achen lagoon, a favourite of migratory birds and paddle among Preobrazheniya Bay's extraordinary basalt spires and overhangs.

Day 3 – Whalebone Alley

Yttygran's historic sculpture park of weathered whalebones precedes our visit to the Chukchi inhabitants of Yanrakinnot village. Pintegney Bay and Seniavinskiy Strait may reveal puffin rookeries, walrus and beluga whales.

Day 4 – Uelen village

We enjoy the skilled Chukchi and Eskimo ivory carvers and hunters in Uelen village. From Cape Dezhnev, easternmost point of mainland Asia, we visit Big Diomed Island.

Day 5 – Kolyuchin Island

Paddle under Kolyuchin Island's sea cliffs where puffins, gulls and cormorants fledge.

Days 6-8 – Wrangel Island

Wrangel Island, the world's most northern World Heritage Site, is a wildlife paradise! Never glaciated, the low mountains, rivers and wetlands support 400 plant species and the planet's greatest concentration of polar bear dens. There are thousands of migrating birds and countless animals to observe on the ground and from our kayaks.

Days 9-10 – Aion and Medvezie Islands

When winter snow melts, Chukotka's Aion Island pastures lure reindeer herds. In the 1920's and 30's, Russian archeologists unearthed ancient Eskimo artefacts here. Often ice bound, even during summer, the Medvezie (Bear) Islands are a popular denning area for polar bears.

Day 11 – Indigirka Delta

The Indigirka delta's patchy forests, autumnal grasses and mosses provide habitat for a myriad of birds in one of the world's most important breeding grounds.

Day 12 – Novosibirskie Islands

The melting permafrost on the Novosibirskie Islands reveals megafauna bones and tusks 200 millennia old, when mammoths roamed the Great Arctic Plain. We may see sanderlings, sandpipers, red knots, wolves and polar bears.

Day 13 – Lena River

We enjoy the Mighty Lena River delta, the world's second largest. Walk the carpets of moss, lichen, medicinal herbs and flowers. While paddling, we keep a look out for walrus, seals, beluga whales and the very strange looking narwhals.

Day 14 – Taimyr Peninsula

We seek the world's biggest migrating caribou herd, a diversity of birds and woolly mammoth tusks on the Taimyr Peninsula, mainland Asia's northernmost feature.

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Days 15-17 – Severnaya Zemlya

Severnaya Zemlya's four biggest islands sport mountains, ice caps, glaciers and fjords- perfect for paddling. We observe little auks, guillemots and kittiwakes wrapping up their breeding season.

Days 18-20 – Kara Sea

We enter the icy Kara Sea aiming for Uyedineniya and Pakhtusova Islands, favoured by sea birds, walrus and polar bears.

Days 21-23 – Novaya Zemlya

Mountainous and shrouded in mystery, the Novaya Zemlya archipelago remains one of Russia's most restricted regions. Most of the archipelago lies within a closely guarded military zone, so we head north and become some of the first visitors to Putin's recently extended Arctic National Park. We'll paddle around island bird rookeries, on the look out for glaucous gulls, Arctic terns, snowy owls, geese and eider ducks.

Days 24-25 – Barents Sea

A time to relax, recap all that we've seen and enjoy crossing the Barents Sea.

Day 26 – Murmansk

Disembark in Murmansk and transfer to our group hotel for an overnight stay.

Day 27 – Departure

Enjoy a city tour of Murmansk before a transfer to the airport.

GENERAL INFORMATION

HIGHLIGHTS OF "ACROSS THE NORTH EAST PASSAGE"

- One of the great geographical challenges of our time.
- Wildlife opportunities – prolific bird and sea life including polar bear, walrus and whales.
- Paddle where few have paddled before.
- Huge Siberian river deltas.
- Pack ice, fjords and glaciers.
- Woolly mammoth tusks.

THIS VOYAGE INCLUDES

- Group transfers to and from the ship.
- Ship's accommodation. All public areas are open to all passengers.
- All meals on board ship.
- Overnight accommodation in Murmansk.
- Murmansk city tour and transfer to airport.
- All shore excursions from the ship including Zodiacs.
- Lectures, videos, slide and film shows and guide services.
- Medical services. Basic infirmary on board.
- Port taxes and port charges imposed by government authorities.
- Pre-departure information and briefing.
- The trip price comprises the voyage cost plus a surcharge for the kayaking option. This surcharge covers use of a drysuit, all your paddling and kayak equipment and the services of a professional sea kayak guide.

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THIS VOYAGE DOES NOT INCLUDE

- Air transport to and from the ship.
- Visa, passport and vaccination charges and airport departure taxes.
- Hotels and meals not included in ship cruise itinerary.
- Tips on board for crew and service personnel.
- Optional excursions not included in ship cruise itinerary.
- Laundry, postage, personal clothing, medical expenses, personal travel insurance and items of a personal nature such as bar charges, wine and phone calls.
- Emergency evacuation charges.

SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES

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SHIP DETAILS

Akademik Shokalskiy was built in Finland in 1985 as an ice-strengthened research vessel. In 1998 she was refurbished to provide comfortable accommodation for 54 passengers.

Akademik Shokalskiy is **not a luxury ship, she is homely and strong**, built to be a working vessel and refitted to a comfortable passenger standard. The accommodation is simple yet comfortable and the meals are wholesome and delicious. The mood on board is definitely casual. A favourite pastime on board is to stand on the deck or in the bridge, watching for wildlife and absorbing the dramatic scenery. A small fleet of Zodiacs, (rubber inflatable boats), with outboard motors enable us to travel from ship to shore.

Length-71.6 metres, beam-12.8 metres, draft-4.5 metres, cruising speed-10 knots.

Chef – European, Australian or New Zealand, Captain & Crew – Russian.

General Facilities:- Bar/lounge/library area, sauna, laundry service, medical services, dining area.

There are six classes of cabins on board the *Akademik Shokalskiy*.

The Captain's Suite: Double bed in separate room, plus foldout couch that can be used as a single bed; forward and port windows; lounge and table area; fridge; TV; video player and private bathroom, with shower, toilet and washbasin.

The Mini Suite: Double bed in a separate room, foldout couch that can be used as a single bed, TV, DVD player, windows, desk, and private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin.

Quad Private: Two upper and lower bunks, window and private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. Suitable for a family of four or a group of friends travelling together.

Twin Private: Two bunks, a desk, windows and private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin.

Twin Public: Two bunks, desk, small washbasin, ample storage & hanging space, couch and a porthole. Showers and toilets are close by and are shared with other Main Deck cabins.

Triple Public: Two lower bunks and one upper bunk, desk, small washbasin, ample storage and hanging space and portholes. Showers and toilets are close by and shared with other Main Deck cabins.

