



ALONG THE VIKING TRAIL: FROM ICELAND TO GREENLAND

How heroic were the earlier transatlantic voyages by Columbus' predecessors: the Viking explorers? We follow in the wake of these fearless explorers and colonists to discover the dramatic landscapes and rich traditions of Greenland and Iceland—in particular, Iceland's untrammelled western coast—and visit Greenland's fascinating Viking sites and settlements, each set against edenic backdrops. The history of Greenland is the history of life under extreme arctic conditions: an ice cap currently covers about 80 percent of the island, largely restricting human activity to the coasts. And, the fact that there is a human history makes this polar region extra-fascinating from an expedition perspective. And then, of course, there is the extraordinary beauty of the landscape. Human history against the dramatic grandeur of the ice. Who are the people that thrive in the extreme conditions of the Arctic? Descended from Eric the Red and the Vikings who settled the southwestern coast, and the original Inuit who descended into Greenland from the northwest, modern Greenland's culture is a mix of Scandinavian influences and ancestral traditions. We'll visit remarkable sites on the Viking trail, meet the friendly and welcoming people of the north, and experience the spectacular beauty of the ice. The incredible northern icescape & its creatures. We'll see seals, which have played such a key role in the life of the Inuit. And we might spot arctic foxes, and white-tailed eagles, among the 60 species of birds that breed in Greenland. Based on our past expedition experience in the region, we search for humpback whales, plus fulmars, kittiwakes, and terns. Every day is active and engaging. You'll get out on adventures every day—to Zodiac cruise, hike and walk, or kayak in spectacular fjords. You'll have

a choice of activities, plus your choice of naturalists to join—for a moveable feast of personalities, insights, and interests. Choice also includes opting to relax too. Enjoy the view from behind Explorer's panoramic glass windows. Or visit the fitness center with its generous views of the ice vistas, or ease into the sauna or a massage in the wellness center. Travel in excellent company. Explore under the sure guidance of an expedition leader, an assistant expedition leader, eight veteran naturalists, a National Geographic photographer, plus a National Geographic certified photo instructor, an undersea specialist, Global Perspectives guest speaker, a wellness specialist and a video chronicler. Their knowledge and passion for this fascinating region is the key to your extraordinary



experience.

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DAY 1: Reykjavik/Embark

Arrive in Reykjavik, which lies only a fraction below the Arctic Circle and receives just four hours of sunlight in winter and 22 in



summer. Have a guided overview of the Old Town, including Hallgrímskirkja Cathedral with its 210-foot tower, and shed some light on Nordic culture at the National Museum, with its Viking treasures and artifacts. Embark National Geographic Explorer. (L,D)

DAY 2: Explore the West Coast of Iceland

National Geographic Explorer navigates Iceland's wild western frontier, sailing past the immense Latrabjarg cliffs, the westernmost point of Iceland and home to a huge population of razorbills. The cliffs are an area once famous for egg collecting; the men were tied to ropes and lowered like spiders down onto the ledges. Continue to Flatey Island, a trading post for many centuries, for walks around the charming little hamlet that grew here. (B,L,D)

DAY 3: Crossing the Denmark Strait

Follow the wake of Eric the Red and Brendan the Navigator as we cross to Greenland. Watch for whales. (B,L,D)

DAY 4: Exploring East Greenland

The Greenland Ice Sheet, roughly 80% of the surface of Greenland, is the second largest ice body in the world, after the Antarctic Ice Sheet. The high arctic-like climate is dominated by ice floes. Among the options for exploration are landings at Skjoldungen fjord or Napasorsuaq fjord. We'll use our tools for exploration to the fullest, taking Zodiac or kayak forays among the icebergs and deploying our Remotely Operated Vehicle. (B,L,D)

DAY 5: Prins Christian Sund & Nanortalik

Prins Christian Sund is a major fjord on the southern coast of Greenland. Surrounded by mountain pinnacles and glaciers, the

decks are perfect for viewing this landscape. Anchor off Nanortalik, Greenland's most southerly town. Go ashore to the picturesque little town by the water's edge. (B,L,D)

DAY 6: Hvalsey Ruins (Qaqortukuloq) & Qaqortoq

Today you'll explore a remarkable site on the Viking Trail. Qaqortukuloq was settled by one of Erik the Red's cousins in 986 AD. A UNESCO World Heritage site, it is the most extensive Norse site in Greenland. The ship then continues to Qaqortoq. Inhabited since Norse times, the Scandinavian influence is still apparent in the colorful wooden buildings and town museum, displaying Greenlandic kayaks, hunting equipment, art, and crafts. (B,L,D)

DAY 7: Brattahlíð/Eriksfjord

Eriksfjord is the area that Erik the Red chose for his farm when he settled here in 982 AD. You'll explore Brattahlíð, site of the first Christian church in the western hemisphere, built by Erik's wife, Tjodhilde. This region is also the starting point of the first voyages to North America by his son, Leif Eriksson, 500 years before Columbus. (B,L,D)

DAY 8: Nuuk

Nuuk is the world's smallest capital city with 15,000 inhabitants. Visit the National Museum with its famous 15th-century Qilakitsoq mummies, found near Uummannaq, and the subject of a NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC cover story. (B,L,D)

DAY 9: Exploring Greenland's West Coast

Today is left open for exploration of this rugged coastline. We may take a Zodiac cruise, kayak, or hike across the tundra. Our Undersea Specialist may launch the Remotely Operated Vehicle to see the marine life inhabiting the fjord floor. (B,L,D)



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DAY 10-11: Kangerlussuaq/Disembark/Fly to Ottawa/Home

Disembark in Kangerlussuaq and fly to Ottawa via privately chartered aircraft. Overnight at the Fairmont Chateau Laurier, or similar, and fly home from Ottawa. (B)



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YOUR SHIP: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EXPLORER

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|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| YOUR SHIP: | National Geographic Explorer |
| VESSEL TYPE: | Luxury Expedition |
| LENGTH: | 108 meters |
| PASSENGER CAPACITY: | 148 (single & twin cabins) |
| BUILT/REFURBISHED: | 1982 / 2008 |

National Geographic Explorer is a state-of-the-art expedition ship. It is a fully stabilized, ice-class vessel, enabling it to navigate polar passages while providing exceptional comfort. It carries kayaks and a fleet of Zodiac landing craft. An Undersea Specialist operates a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) and sophisticated video equipment, extending access to the underwater world. Public areas : Bistro Bar; Chart Room; Restaurant; Global Gallery; Library, Lounge with full service bar and state-of-the-art facilities for films, slideshows and presentations; Mud Room with lockers for expedition gear, and Observation Lounge. Our "Open Bridge" provides guests an opportunity to meet our Officers and Captain and learn about navigation. Meals : Served in single seatings with unassigned tables for an informal atmosphere and easy mingling. Menu is international with local flair. Cabins : All cabins face outside with windows or portholes, private facilities and climate controls. Expedition Equipment : Zodiac landing craft, kayaks, Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV), hydrophone, SplashCam, underwater video camera, Crow's Nest remote controlled camera, video microscope, snorkeling gear. Special Features : A full-time doctor, Undersea Specialist, LEX Photo Specialist and Video

Chronicler, Internet Cafe and laundry. Wellness : The vessel is staffed by two Wellness Specialists and features a glass enclosed Fitness Center, outdoor stretching area, two LEXspa treatment rooms



and Sauna.



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