



## REYKJAVIK TO CHURCHILL, MANITOBA LUXURY CRUISE

Adventure grips and never lets go on this Arctic expedition of icy extremes. Conquer Iceland's lava-clad lands before seeking the sky-scraping mountains and colossal glaciers of Greenland's Prince Christian Sound. Drop in on the pocket-sized capital city - where humpback whales traverse the waters - before sailing for Canada and Nunavut. Look out for the Kings of the Arctic - polar bears - and pick out belugas in the inky waters around Hudson Bay.



### ITINERARY

Day 1 Pre Cruise

Day 2 Reykjavik ICELAND

The capital of Iceland's land of ice, fire and natural wonder, Reykjavik is a city like no other - blossoming among some of the world's most vibrant and violent scenery. Home to two-thirds of Iceland's population, Reykjavik is the island's only real city, and



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a welcoming and walkable place - full of bicycles gliding along boulevards or battling the wind when it rears up. Fresh licks of paint brighten the streets, and an artistic and creative atmosphere embraces studios and galleries - as well as the kitchens where an exciting culinary scene is burgeoning. Plot your adventures in the city's hip bars and cosy cafes, or waste no time in venturing out to Iceland's outdoor adventures. Reykjavik's buildings stand together in a low huddle - below the whip of winter's winds - but the magnificent Hallgrímskirkja church is a solid exception, with its bell tower rising resolutely over the city. Iceland's largest church's design echoes the lava flows that have shaped this remote land and boasts a clean and elegant interior. The Harpa Concert Hall's sheer glass facade helps it to assimilate into the landscape, mirroring back the city and harbour. Its LED lights shimmer in honour of Iceland's greatest illuminated performance - the northern lights. Walk in the crusts between continents, feel the spray from bursts of geysers and witness the enduring power of Iceland's massive waterfalls. Whether you want to sizzle away in the earth-heated geothermal pools, or hike to your heart's content, you can do it all from Reykjavik - the colourful capital of this astonishing outdoor country.

### Day 3 Day at sea INTERNATIONAL WATERS

Days at sea are the perfect opportunity to relax, unwind and catch up with what you've been meaning to do. So whether that is going to the gym, visiting the spa, whale watching, catching up on your reading or simply topping up your tan, these blue sea days are the perfect balance to busy days spent exploring shore side.

### Day 4 Skjoldungen GREENLAND

Located on Greenland's relatively rarely visited rugged east coast, Skoldungen Fjord has enchanting scenery with towering mountains tipped with snow, ice-scraped valley sides and sculptured icebergs in shades of white and blue. At the top of the fjord one can easily see the retreating state of the Thrym Glacier. The U-shaped fjord offers spectacular scenery and as an extra perk, it is not uncommon to see whales in the fjord.

### Day 5 Cruise Prince Christian Sound GREENLAND & Aappilattoq (Kujalleq) GREENLAND

The transit through the Sound is one of this voyage's highlights. Connecting the Labrador Sea with the Irminger Sea, Prince Christian Sound or "Prins Christian Sund" in Danish is named after Prince (later King) Christian VII (1749-1808). 100 km (60 miles), long and at times just 500 m (1500 ft) wide, this majestic and spectacular fiord throws you back into a Viking era - flanked by soaring snow-topped mountains, rock-strewn cliffs and rolling hills, it is as if time has stood still and one easily forgets that this is the 21st century. As you marvel at the sheer size of the mountains that surround you, with the Arctic waters lapping deceptively at the hull, revel in the silence enveloping you. Icebergs float serenely by, carrying with them the ages of time. Be sure to wear warm clothing as this is one spectacle that you do not want to miss. If you're looking for remote and remarkable then you have found it. Cruise through Prince Christian Sound to the western end and you'll find Aappilattoq, a (very) small Greenlandic village of just 100 inhabitants. The name of the village means "sea anemone" in the local Greenlandic language, and the fact that the village has retained its Inuit name is a good indication of what you can expect; traditional village life much as it has been for the past 100 years. Hunting and fishing are the main occupations here, and it is not unusual when taking a stroll through Aappilattoq, past the





small school (where 22 pupils from ages 3-16 are enrolled) and church, to come across a polar bear skin drying in the wind behind a local dwelling. The village is hidden behind a prominent red rock and towering mountains, which make the village virtually inaccessible by land. Naturally, the Aapilattoq and its surrounding area are phenomenally rich in Arctic wildlife: Arctic fox and Arctic hare live in the countryside around the village while marine mammals include ringed seal, harbour seal, hooded seal, bearded seal, harp seal, humpback whale (typically in summer), minke whale, fin whale, narwhal, and beluga.

#### Day 6 Qaqortoq (Julianehåb) GREENLAND & Hvalsey GREENLAND

The largest town in southern Greenland, Qaqortoq has been inhabited since prehistoric times. Upon arrival in this charming southern Greenland enclave, it's easy to see why. Qaqortoq rises quite steeply over the fjord system around the city, offering breath-taking panoramic vistas of the surrounding mountains, deep, blue sea, Lake Tasersuag, icebergs in the bay, and pastoral backcountry. Although the earliest signs of ancient civilization in Qaqortoq date back 4,300 years, Qaqortoq is known to have been inhabited by Norse and Inuit settlers in the 10th and 12th centuries, and the present-day town was founded in 1774. In the years since, Qaqortoq has evolved into a seaport and trading hub for fish and shrimp processing, tanning, fur production, and ship maintenance and repair. 18 kilometers northeast of Qaqortoq, Hvalsey is part of Qaqortukuloq, one of the five sites of the UNESCO World Heritage Arctic farming complex Kujataa. Between Eriksfjord to the north and Einarsfjord to the south, the Hvalseyfjord branches off from Einarsfjord. Although Hvalsey is better known for the well-preserved ruins of one of the sixteen churches in the

Norse's Eastern Settlement, the church was in a farmstead known as Thjodhild's Stead. This farmstead at the northeastern end of the fjord included a large building with living quarters, a hall and livestock pens, as well as other livestock pens, a storage building and a warehouse –the ruins of which can still be seen. The Norse farming laid the foundation for the Inuit farming in later centuries, leading to the UNESCO World Heritage status in 2017. In the 14th century account "Descriptions of Greenland" the abundant fish, a reindeer farm on Reindeer Island and Hvalsey's name "Whale Island" clearly indicate that the Norse had ample food sources at that time. The church was built in the Anglo-Norwegian style of the 13th century, but is known to have been built over an older graveyard. The farmstead is mentioned in the Icelandic "Book of Settlements" as property of the Kings of Norway, and the last documented event of the Norse in Greenland is a wedding which took place in the church in September 1408. After almost 600 years of abandonment, conservation work had to be done to prevent the seaward wall from collapsing.

#### Day 7 Day at sea INTERNATIONAL WATERS

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#### Day 8 Nuuk (Godthab) GREENLAND

In the bustling capital city of Greenland, you could be forgiven for forgetting you are in such a vast and isolated country. Nuuk is Greenland's economic and social hub, home to more than a third of Greenland's population, and although it feels like a



world capital, scratch the surface, and a uniquely Greenlandic character can be found underneath. Nuuk Cathedral overlooks the gorgeous old Colonial Harbour district and the Greenland National Museum, resting place of the legendary Qilakitsoq mummies, the true highlight of the museum's archaeological collection. Above the Colonial Harbour sits downtown Nuuk, with lines of Scandistyle apartments, a bustling shopping district, the Greenlandic Parliament, Nuuk City Hall (which welcomes visitors to see its artwork) and even outdoor cafes selling locally produced food and beer. These nods to modernity compete for space with local artisan boutiques, the meat market selling the catch from Nuuk's vast fjord-lands, and the stunning Katuaq Cultural Centre, where blockbuster movies, as well as local and foreign performers entertain the people of Nuuk. Although Nuuk has long been a melting pot of Danish and Greenlandic ideas, this is a city where Greenland displays its sophistication, with the Country's only traffic lights, roundabouts and University. Most of all, expect to find a multitude of friendly people who are proud of who they are, and equally proud of the city they call home.

#### Day 9 Day at sea INTERNATIONAL WATERS

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#### Day 10 Iqaluit (Nunavut) CANADA

Iqaluit is the capital of Canada's newest territory, Nunavut, which is Inuktitut for "our land". The community is located at the head of Frobisher Bay, an inlet of the North Atlantic extending

into southeastern Baffin Island. The Bay is so long that it was first taken to be the possible entrance of a Northwest Passage. In Iqaluit, the Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum and the Nunavut Legislative Assembly Building both house incredible collections of Inuit artwork with interesting local prints for sale in the museum shop.

#### Day 11 Lady Franklin Island CANADA & Monumental Island CANADA

Named in honour of Sir John Franklin's widow, the lonely and uninhabited Lady Franklin Island lies off of Baffin Island's Hall Peninsula at the entrance to Cumberland Sound. The island is named for the wife of Sir John Franklin, the Arctic explorer who died trying to discover the Northwest Passage. The geology of the island is striking with vertical cliffs of Archean rocks, likely to be some of the oldest stone in Canada. The waters around Lady Franklin Island offer an abundance seabirds, ducks, seals, and walrus. With a bit of luck it is possible to see Atlantic Puffins here and perhaps even a rare Sabine's Gull. Monumental Island is a splinter of ancient metamorphic rock, hunching in the frigid waters of the Davis Strait, defying the ocean and ice around it. Named to honour the legendary Polar Explorer Sir John Franklin, the island displays at times displays everything Nunavut has to offer, in an ocean studded with vast icebergs drifting across from Greenland. Monumental Island is a well known den site for polar bears, the icon of the Arctic; there is a good chance to see mother bears with cubs on the island, as the bears become trapped by the lack of summer ice, using the island as a base to hunt until the ice returns in the Autumn. Seeing the white silhouette of a polar bear against the ancient black rock and autumn tundra colours is an experience that will remain long after returning on board. Groups of harp seals are a common sight in the waters around Monumental Island, and can be very





curious, often swimming very close to investigate new objects such as boats. There are several sites on the island also used as haul out sites for the charismatic Atlantic Walrus. These vast animals are surprisingly gentle and skittish, and can often be observed caring for their calves on the rock bluffs while keeping a careful watch for polar bears. Almost nowhere else in Nunavut can the charismatic wildlife of the Arctic be observed in such a stunning setting.

#### Day 12 Akpatok Island (Nunavut) CANADA

Akpatok Island is a remote spot near the northernmost limits of the Labrador Peninsula. Steep and sheer limestone cliffs jut out of icy waters. Encased in snow and surrounded with sea ice in the winter months this uninhabited island lures huge amounts of wildlife most notably the world's largest population of breeding Thick-billed Murres (known as Brünnich's Guillemots in Europe) estimated at well over a million birds. These auks flock to the bare cliffs of the island between June and September and murres incubate their single pear-shaped egg on the cliff ledges. Glaucous Gulls can be seen soaring above looking for unguarded eggs and chicks while Black Guillemots paddle around on the nearby sea. Akpatok Island is also a favorite summer home for polar bears as they wait for the winter ice to form.

#### Day 13 Kimmirut (Lake Harbour) CANADA

Kimmirut is a traditional Inuit hamlet of 455 people, located on the southernmost peninsula of Baffin Island, just across the Hudson Strait from mainland Québec. It is the southernmost community on Baffin Island. The name, translating as "the heel", is named for a distinctive rocky outcrop that looks exactly like the back of your foot! First contact with Europeans occurred around 1000 AD when Dorset and Norse sailors from Greenland

interacted. Intermittent contact continued between the Thule people and the Vikings for another 500 years. Interactions increased as fur hunters ventured farther and farther north, whalers came to Hudson Strait in search of bowhead whales, and Anglican missionaries arrived across the bay from the community in 1900. In 1911, the first Hudson Bay trading post on Baffin Island was built in Kimmirut. Today, Kimmirut, Formerly named Lake Harbour, is home to over four hundred people who preserve a traditional way of life, with a thriving culture of arts and crafts, including stone carving, ivory scrimshaw, and jewellery making using many gemstones native to this area.

#### Day 14 Cape Dorset (Dorset Island) CANADA

Cape Dorset is a small Inuit hamlet located on Dorset Island off the southern shore of Baffin Island. The traditional name for Cape Dorset is Kinngait (meaning "high mountain") describing the 'Cape' which is actually a 800 foot mountain. This is a nature-lovers paradise with breath-taking landscapes and an amazing abundance of arctic wildlife such as migratory caribou seabirds whales seals and walruses. Ancient native Thule (Dorset Culture) peoples lived in this area for three thousand years and it is here where the first archaeological remains were found. Captain Luke Foxe during his attempt to find the Northwest Passage in 1631 was the first European to land here. He named the Cape in honour of his sponsor Edward Sackville the Earl of Dorset. In 1913 the Hudson's Bay Company started a trading post exchanging furs and skins for supplies like tobacco ammunition flour gas tea and sugar. In 1949 the market for white fox collapsed but the art industry boomed. Since the 1950s Cape Dorset the "Capital of Inuit Art" has become an economic mainstay of the community with more than 20% of its residents employed in the arts.



Day 15 Coats Island, Nunavut CANADA

Day 16 Day at sea INTERNATIONAL WATERS

Days 17 - 18 Churchill, Manitoba CANADA

Archaeological evidence around Churchill indicates the former presence of Pre-Dorset, Dorset and Inuit groups, with the earliest date going back some 4,000 years. On the western shore of Hudson Bay and at the mouth of the Churchill River, Churchill became an important base for the Hudson's Bay Company and the fur trade. Two forts were built in the early 18th century, both on the Canadian National Historic Site list. A Parks Canada Visitor Center in the VIA Rail Station shows exhibits of the human and natural history. Today Churchill is a town of about 1,000 inhabitants which can only be reached by rail on land, by air, and in the case of ships only between July and November. The deep-sea port facilitates primarily the transport of Western Canadian grains. Once the ice breaks up in the Churchill River Basin, beluga whales come to feed and rest by the hundreds. With sub-arctic tundra and boreal forests, the area between Churchill and Nelson River to the south is well-known as polar bear country. Churchill even has a Polar Bear Holding Facility, better known as the Polar Bear Jail.

**Please Note:**

The excursions are provided as a sample of what may be offered on this voyage and are subject to change.





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