

SCOTLAND TO SPITSBERGEN

A Northern Odyssey

An expedition cruise of the Scottish Isles, the fjords
and islands of Norway and Spitsbergen
aboard the *Ocean Nova*

26th May to 10th June 2012



NOBLE CALEDONIA



Reindeer

Our voyage begins on the East coast of Scotland in the port of Aberdeen. From here, our journey north includes calls in the Orkney and Shetland Islands where we can immerse in some of the mysterious ancient history.

Reaching Sunnfjord, one of Norway's most stunning areas, we will make our way along the coast, visiting the vast swathe of fjord indented coast and through the chain of islands all the way up to the Lofoten group. Using the *Ocean Nova* as our moving base camp, we shall visit the dramatic fjords and remote seabird islands. Now well inside the Arctic Circle, we continue north and leave the Norwegian mainland for Bear Island and Spitsbergen. Here, just a few hundred miles from the North Pole, we have three days of exploration around the main island of the Spitsbergen archipelago. Our days will be filled with spectacular sights of immense glaciers, narrow fjords and abundant wildlife, hopefully including some Polar bear sightings.

Such a journey can of course only be undertaken by a special vessel with the self-sufficient qualities of the *Ocean Nova*. With our Zodiacs we shall be able to land on remote beaches and explore shorelines with their prolific birdlife. Our daily schedule will take advantage of weather conditions and possible sightings to achieve as much as possible from our voyage.

One of the most important factors of any expedition cruise is the expedition team. Our team have been selected for their enthusiasm, professionalism and specialist knowledge of the natural world. They will give daily briefings, accompany you on excursions and add to your enjoyment in so many ways.

The Itinerary

Day 1 Aberdeen. Embark the *Ocean Nova* in the afternoon and sail. Transportation will be provided from Aberdeen rail station and airport to the harbour.

Day 2 Scrabster & Stromness, Orkney. This morning, visit the Castle and Gardens of Mey which was built between 1566 and 1572 by George Sinclair, 4th Earl of Caithness. The castle was purchased by Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother in 1952 and it has since been restored with the creation of beautiful gardens which we will see today. This afternoon we will sail across to Stromness and visit the Standing Stones of Stenness, the Ring of Brodgar with its more than 5000 year old ceremonial circles and nearby Skara Brae, a seaside Stone Age settlement.

Day 3 Fair Isle & Mousa. This morning call at Fair Isle. The tiny population of sixty or so islanders always extend us a warm welcome. Enjoy a walk across the island, perhaps visiting the Bird Observatory, searching out the puffin slopes. Later, we will cruise to the island of Mousa to see the forty-foot defensive tower, the tallest, best preserved example of an Iron Age broch (tower) in Britain.

Day 4 Lerwick, Shetland Islands. Our morning tour will begin with a wander through the narrow stone lanes of this historic port. Visit the Shetland Museum, containing artefacts from shipwrecks and the whaling era. Continue on to the Neolithic ruins of Jarlshof, featuring well-preserved structures from the Bronze and Iron Ages. Return to the vessel for lunch and sail in the afternoon.

Day 5 Sunnfjord, Norway. Today we reach the southern fjord region of Norway. The scenery is breathtaking with gushing waterfalls, wild rapids, glaciers and mountains. We will dock in the small village of Bygstad and from here explore the surrounding area including a drive across the scenic route of the Gaurarfjell mountains, also known as "waterfall country", where we will view the waterfalls and wild rapids.

Day 6 Nordfjord. Here we find the very essence of the fjord country, with many side fjords, waterfalls and lakes. We will drop anchor at the village of Olden and travel up the beautiful Olden Valley. Where the road ends we continue on foot to the great cascade of water, which rushes from beneath the Briksdal Glacier.

Day 7 Stadlandet. Just off the Stad Peninsula is the historically important small island of Selje. Here we will visit the Selje Cloister and the remains of a Viking settlement. There will also be time to explore this beautiful area by Zodiac. In the afternoon, we will cruise past the birdcliffs of Runde, home to gannets, razorbills, puffins, guillemots and kittiwakes.



Nordfjord



Briksdal Glacier



Puffins



Western Fjords near Olden



Walrus, Spitsbergen

Day 8 Torghatten. Enjoy a relaxing morning at sea. After lunch Mount Torghatten will come into view, one of the most famous landmarks on the Norwegian coast. A fairly strenuous optional walk will take you to the 'hole' in the mountain which has been eroded by the sea. This evening, make a toast as we cross the Arctic Circle in the midnight sun, passing the small island of Vikingen where a monument to it sits.

Day 9 Lofoten Islands. Morning cruising as we head for the Lofoten Archipelago, an enchanting area of picturesque villages with jagged granite mountain peaks forming a dramatic backdrop. We will call into the small fishing village of Aa in the late morning to explore and visit the museum. Afternoon cruising to Reine where we will board Zodiacs to cruise the harbour in search of whales.

Day 10 Trollfjorden. Wake early this morning to take in the sights



Ring of Brodgar

as we take a scenic cruise through this beautiful, narrow and steep-sided fjord. Enjoy the abundant birdlife, views of cascading waterfalls and the surrounding dramatic scenery.

Day 11 At sea.

Day 12 Bear Island. Cruise through the rich waters of the Barents Sea looking out for minke and humpback whales, dolphins and sea birds. We will approach Bear Island, a fantastic bird island populated by thousands of fulmars, kittiwakes, guillemots and gulls.

Days 13-15 Spitsbergen. A place of deep fjords, mountains and massive sheets of ice that cover much of the land, Spitsbergen is home to a wonderful assortment of wildlife; walrus, seal, reindeer, Arctic fox and Polar bear. Our itinerary will be flexible to allow us to take advantage of the local conditions.

Day 16 Longyearbyen to London. Disembark and return to London by scheduled flight via Oslo.

Prices per person

Based on double occupancy Tour Code: SCON260512

| Cat | Cabin Description | |
|---------|--------------------------------|-------|
| ■ Cat 1 | Bunk bedded cabin for twin use | £3695 |
| ■ Cat 2 | Standard twin | £4195 |
| ■ Cat 3 | Superior | £4595 |
| ■ Cat 1 | For sole use | £3995 |

Price includes: 15 nights aboard the *Ocean Nova* on full board, shore excursions, port taxes, expedition team including naturalists, transfers, scheduled flight from Longyearbyen to London.

Not included: Travel insurance, gratuities.

N.B. Ports subject to change. Local weather conditions may affect itinerary.



Reine, Lofoten Islands



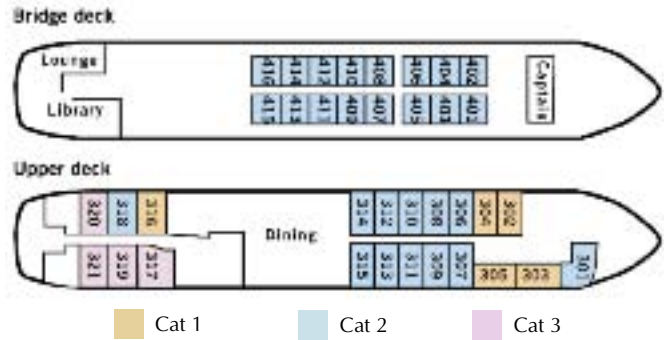
OCEAN NOVA

The expedition ship *Ocean Nova* is a sister ship to our popular *MS Quest*. She was built in Denmark in 1992 with high ice class to serve Greenland's west coast. In 2004 to 2005 she was completely refurbished and has now a career as a small and comfortable expedition ship. The *Ocean Nova* accommodates 86 passengers in single, double and triple cabins, all with sea-view and private facilities. The double cabins have either two lower beds or upper and lower beds. The triple cabins have upper and lower beds. In your cabin you will also find a desk with chair and ample storage space for clothes and equipment.

In the dining room you are treated to delicious meals in between landings and in the panorama lounge you can enjoy a drink with a breathtaking view of the surrounding landscape. This is where the on board specialists entertain and educate you with lectures. There is also a library with panoramic views and a good selection of books. On board there is a satellite phone, gym and medical doctor. Passengers are welcome on the bridge around the



Category 3 Cabin



clock and there is always something to see or search for from the spacious observation decks. The vessel has European officers and there is a friendly and informal atmosphere on board. Travelling with this small expedition ship offers an entirely different experience and perspective than from onboard a larger and more conventional cruise ship.



Exploring by Zodiac



The Bridge





Restaurant



Library

EXPEDITION CRUISING
 This cruise visits out of the way destinations. You will be accompanied by an expedition team and many landings ashore may be made by Zodiac landing craft. This cruise will appeal to the more adventurous and those who enjoy the natural world.

NOBLE CALEDONIA

Front Cover: Polar Bears.