



SVALBARD & NORTH CAPE

Exploring the Polar Bear Islands of
Svalbard and North Norway

Aboard the New Expedition Cruise Ship **VEGA**

June 8 - 20, 2026



There are more polar bears in the Svalbard archipelago than permanent inhabitants

Dear Alumni and Friends,

We are delighted to extend a special invitation to you to join us on a once-in-a-lifetime expedition to the High Arctic. On this unforgettable voyage through Norway's Svalbard archipelago—nestled halfway between mainland Norway and the North Pole—we will immerse ourselves in the awe-inspiring beauty of this icy realm. Along the way, we'll encounter the remarkable wildlife that calls it home, especially the iconic polar bear for which Svalbard is renowned.

Aboard the eco-luxurious small ship *Vega*, we'll have the opportunity to experience the Arctic by cruise ship, Zodiacs, and land excursions as we explore these magnificent islands. We will venture deep into the fjords, navigating past towering cliffs alive with colonies of nesting birds, in search of seals and walrus. Using Zodiacs, we'll seize every opportunity to get up close to the rugged terrain and the extraordinary wildlife it shelters. While Svalbard boasts a rich array of animal and plant life, the undisputed king of this Arctic wilderness is the polar bear. In fact, polar bears outnumber humans here, making Svalbard one of the best places on Earth to witness these magnificent creatures in their natural habitat.

Aboard the ship there will be a team of knowledgeable naturalists and expert guides who will share their expertise on the flora and fauna, geology and history of Norway and Svalbard.

Please join us on an Arctic adventure of a lifetime!

Sincerely



Cary DeWitt Allyn
Director, Vanderbilt Travel Program

ACTIVITY LEVEL

This is an expedition voyage. Other than tours in Tromsø and Skarsvåg, you will be visiting remote and isolated sites that are only accessible by Zodiac landing craft. Your excursions will include nature walks that can last 2-3 hours on sand, rock, and snow/ice-covered surfaces; there are no trails or groomed paths. Other excursions will include Zodiac cruises along bird cliffs and glaciers. Shore landings are wet landings, which entail swinging your legs over the side of the Zodiac and, with the assistance of the expedition staff, stepping down into shallow water no deeper than mid-calf and taking a few steps onto the beach. All landings are conducted at an easy and careful pace.

CRUISE WITH A TEAM OF NATURALISTS AND EXPERT GUIDES

Our activities in Norway and Svalbard are planned and conducted by a team of expedition leaders and naturalists who are among the most experienced in the field, with several years of leading small-ship cruise expeditions to this incredible region of the world. Members of the team comprise a truly astonishing assortment of expertise and intellect. Onboard and ashore, through talks and presentations they will create a comprehensive understanding of the natural life, history and culture of this region. The experience we will provide is not just one of awe-inspiring sightseeing, but a complete learning adventure.



Arctic Cathedral, Tromsø, Norway

ABOUT THALASSA JOURNEYS

Thalassa Journeys is a tour company founded by the men and women who, working as Travel Dynamics International, pioneered educational and cultural travel in the 1970s in partnership with the leading educational, research, cultural and performing arts institutions in the United States. For more than 45 years our mission was to provide robust, intellectually stimulating experiences to lifelong learners who see travel as an opportunity to expand their understanding of the world and their place in it. This same mission guides us today. We believe that the most rewarding travel experiences happen when small groups of like-minded individuals share an enthusiasm for engaging with the richly varied environments of the world, and with the history, culture, ideas and ideals of the people who inhabit them.

THE **NEW** 152-GUEST EXPEDITION CRUISE SHIP **VEGA**



Oceanview Stateroom



Balcony Suite



Swan Restaurant



Swimming Pool



Observation Lounge

Built in Finland and launched in July 2022, Swan Hellenic's *Vega* is a new-generation expedition cruise ship. Although at 10,250 tons the ship is large enough to accommodate more than 250 passengers, *Vega* will accommodate a maximum of 152 guests in 76 spacious staterooms and balcony suites. The low guest density results in one of the most generous indoor and outdoor space-to-guest ratios among cruise ships.

Featuring the latest advances in technology and engineering, *Vega* is among the world's first environmentally responsible ships. Equipped with hybrid engines and a unique water filtration system, *Vega* leaves a minimal footprint. For cruising in Polar regions, the ship meets the stringent requirements of the new Polar Code with its high PC5 Category A ice-strengthened hull and other advanced features. A computer-controlled Dynamic Positioning System allows the ship to maintain position without anchoring. Operated by a complement of 120 experienced European officers and international crew members, *Vega* will

carry a fleet of Zodiacs, versatile landing boats, and kayaks. Powerful stabilizers provide a smooth ride.

Vega's interior spaces exude sophisticated elegance, with most rooms opening to panoramic views of the sea. All staterooms and suites face outside and are equipped with private facilities, climate control, TV, Wi-Fi and USB connections, and other amenities. Of the ship's 76 staterooms, 60 have balconies. Public areas include a spacious observation lounge equipped with state-of-the-art facilities for lectures and presentations; a club lounge; a restaurant that accommodates all guests at one seating; an outdoor café/bar that surrounds the heated swimming pool; a wellness area with gym, spa, and sauna with an adjoining outdoor jacuzzi; library; beauty salon; and an infirmary that is attended by a full-time doctor and nurse. The ship also features expansive open-deck areas. Two elevators connect all decks. Attentive service is provided on a 24-hour basis. The outstanding cuisine is complemented by fine wines at lunch and dinner.

FOR INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT **VANDERBILT TRAVEL OFFICE** at 615-322-3673 or alumni.travel@vanderbilt.edu

ITINERARY



Monday, June 8, 2026
DEPART THE UNITED STATES

Tuesday, June 9
TROMSØ, Norway

Arrive in Tromsø, Norway's main port city in the north. Transfer to the *Clarion Hotel Edge* (or similar). Gather for a welcome dinner in the evening. (D)

Wednesday, June 10
TROMSØ/EMBARKATION

After breakfast, explore this beautiful and vibrant city 220 miles north of the Arctic Circle. Begin with a visit to the Tromsø Polar Museum, housing a variety of natural history and ethnographic collections that provide a comprehensive introduction to traditional Norwegian culture, including an informative section on the Sami. Also tour the Arctic Cathedral—the city's iconic modern landmark—constructed in 1960 of concrete, aluminum and glass, and featuring a spectacular triangular stained-glass window that fills one entire wall. After lunch at a local restaurant, transfer to the pier to embark *Vega* and set sail. (B, L, D)

Thursday, June 11
SKARSVÅG

Cruise along the scenic coastline of Norway's North Cape including a visit to Skarsvåg, proudly known as the northernmost fishing village in the world. On the edge of the continent, colorful houses dot the rugged coastline and reindeer often roam nearby. Walk through the village and visit a traditional Sámi camp and the delightful Christmas and winter house—open year-round and brimming with local charm. Skarsvåg offers a warm and memorable encounter with life at the top of the world. (B, L, D)

Friday, June 12
BEAR ISLAND, Spitsbergen, Norway

Sail to the remote beauty of Bear Island, a wildlife sanctuary tucked between mainland Norway and Svalbard. As *Vega* approaches



Midnight sun at North Cape



Black-legged Kittiwake



Polar bear with cubs, Svalbard

the island, prepare for breathtaking views of soaring cliffs teeming with life. Over a million seabirds—Puffins, Guillemots, Kittiwakes, and more—nest along these dramatic rock faces each summer, creating one of the Arctic's most extraordinary natural spectacles. Weather permitting, Zodiacs will bring you close to the action for unforgettable wildlife viewing. Our onboard naturalists will guide you through the island's unique ecosystem and its importance as a protected nature reserve. Rugged, uninhabited, and alive with sound and motion, Bear Island is a true hidden gem for nature lovers and adventurers alike. (B, L, D)

Saturday, June 13 to Thursday, June 18

CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF SVALBARD

Spend six days exploring Svalbard, Norway's incredible group of islands that are located 600 miles south of the North Pole. The ship's schedule will be kept flexible to take advantage of the best opportunities that arise for landing ashore and for wildlife sightings that include polar bears. The number of polar bears exceeds the

islands' human population, and Svalbard is considered one of the best places in the world to observe polar bears in their natural habitat. *Vega's* ice-strengthened hull allows it to navigate and enter safely into the icy waterways, bays and fjords of the islands, and its fleet of Zodiac motorized boats will bring us closer to the places we want to explore. (B, L, D)

Friday, June 19

LONGYEARBYEN/DISEMBARK/COPENHAGEN, Denmark

Arrive this morning in Longyearbyen and transfer to the airport for a flight to Copenhagen. Overnight at the *Clarion Airport Hotel* (or similar) in Copenhagen. (B, L)

Saturday, June 20

COPENHAGEN/HOMEWARD

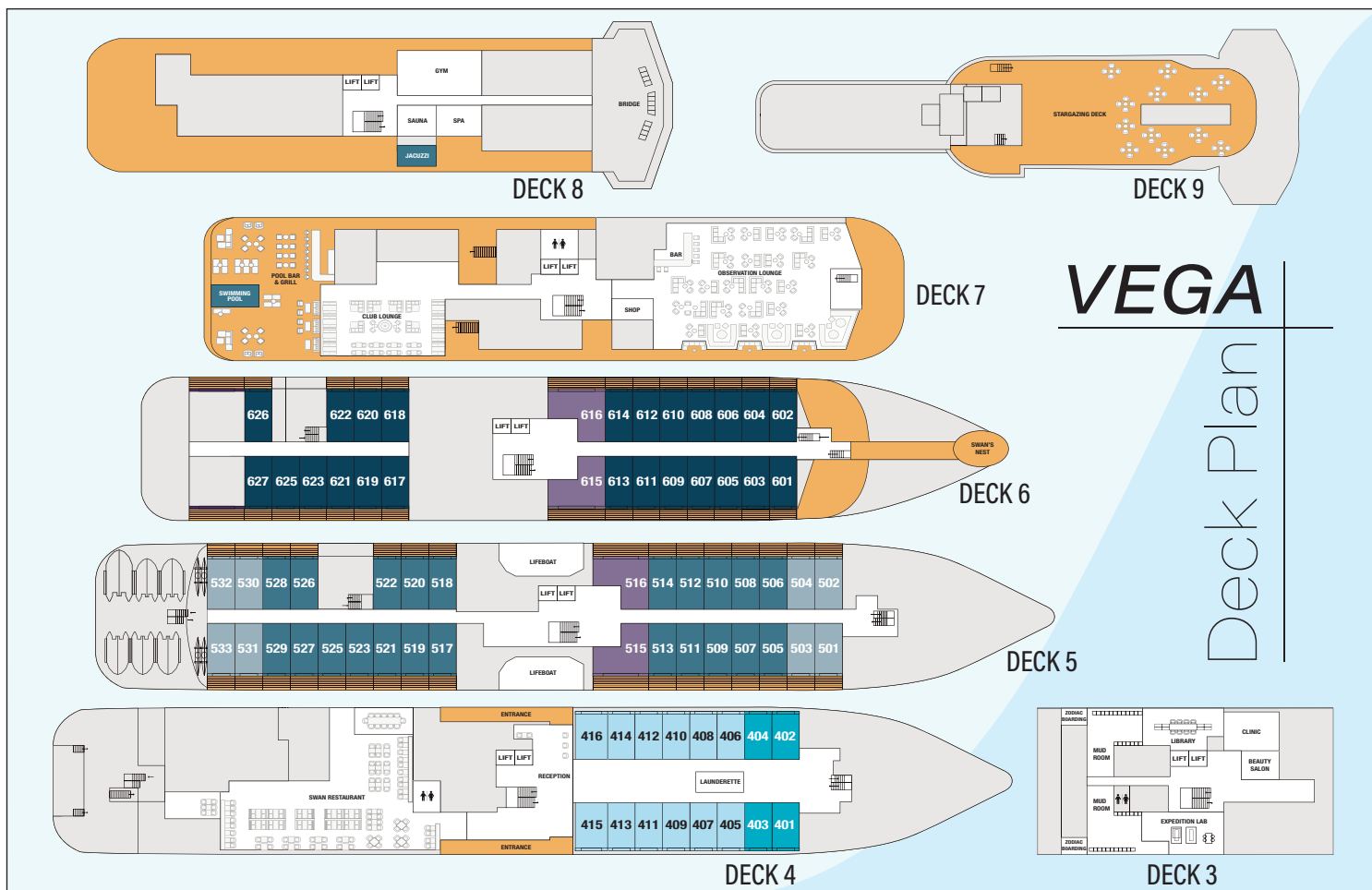
After breakfast at the hotel, transfer to the Copenhagen international airport for flights homeward. (B)



Tromsø, Norway



Walrus on the icy landscape of Svalbard



All accommodations aboard *Vega* are spacious staterooms and balcony suites. They are elegantly decorated, face outside, affording sea views, and include a queen-size bed that can be arranged as two twin beds, a spacious bathroom, mini-refrigerator, safe, ample closet space, climate control, telephone, TV, Wi-Fi, and USB connections, as well as other amenities.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	RATES PER PERSON / DOUBLE OCCUPANCY
E	Oceanview staterooms with two large oval windows. 206 sq. ft. Deck 4. Staterooms 401-404.	\$ 10,990
D	Oceanview staterooms with two large oval windows. 206 sq. ft. Deck 4. Staterooms 405-416.	\$ 11,490
C	Suites with balcony & living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 5. Suites 501-504, 530-533.	\$ 12,590
B	Suites with balcony & living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 5. Suites 505-514, 517-529.	\$ 12,990
A	Suites with balcony and living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 6. Suites 601-614, 617-627.	\$ 13,590
AA	Suites with large balcony, separate bedroom & living room. 440 sq. ft. Decks 5 & 6. Suites 515, 516, 615 & 616.	\$ 17,490
FOR SOLO TRAVELER A limited number of cabins are available for single occupants in Category D at 120% of the per-person, double occupancy rate, and in Categories C, B, and A at 150% of the per-person, double occupancy rate.		

LOYALTY REWARD PROGRAM

Travel on this cruise program and enjoy savings of **\$400 to \$900** per person on your next voyage with **VANDERBILT ALUMNI ASSOCIATION** and **THALASSA JOURNEYS** aboard a Swan Hellenic ship. Savings are determined by the stateroom category booked and is applicable when you reserve your trip within 30 days of the completion date of

SVALBARD & NORTH CAPE

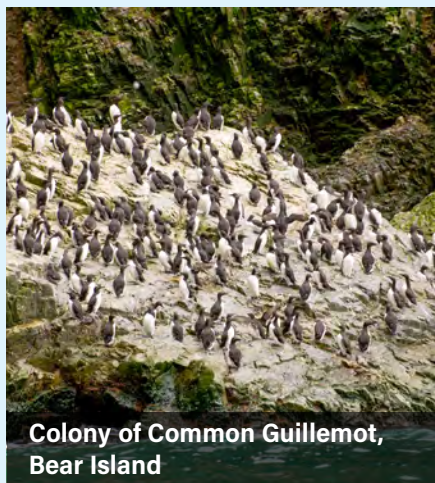
This saving cannot be combined with other offers and is subject to change.

PROGRAM INCLUSIONS

The rates are all-inclusive. There are no hidden costs and no additional charges such as shore excursions or embarkation and port charges. Other than the international airfare and expenses of a personal nature, all else is included. Specifically, the rates include:

- One night at the *Clarion Hotel Edge* (or similar) in Tromsø, Norway.
- One night at the *Clarion Airport Hotel* (or similar) in Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Welcome dinner on the day of arrival, and lunch on embarkation day.
- Cruise aboard the *Swan Hellenic Vega*, as described in the itinerary.
- Airport/hotel/pier transfers and luggage handling on the program arrival, embarkation, disembarkation and departure dates.
- Charter flight from Longyearbyen to Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Complete program of tours and Zodiac excursions led by expert shipboard naturalists.
- All meals aboard the ship, with a selection of wines, beer and soft drinks during lunch and dinner.
- Welcome and farewell cocktail receptions aboard the ship hosted by the captain.
- Open bar with select alcoholic beverages.
- Coffee, including espresso and cappuccino, tea and soft drinks throughout the day and night aboard the ship.
- 24-hour room service.
- Gratuities to the ship's crew, guides, porters and drivers.
- Basic Wi-Fi aboard the ship.
- The services of an experienced Thalassa Journeys Trip Director.
- All local taxes and service charges, including port and embarkation taxes.
- Complete pre-departure material

NOT INCLUDED: International airfare; travel insurance; expenses of a personal nature; any items not mentioned in the itinerary or the above inclusions.



Colony of Common Guillemot,
Bear Island

REGISTRATION

VAND 26V-0608

Enclosed is my check or credit card no. for \$_____ (\$ 1,500 per person) as a deposit to hold _____ place(s) on **SVALBARD & NORTH CAPE**, June 8-20, 2026 with Vanderbilt Alumni Association. I understand that final payment is due ninety (90) days prior to departure and is payable by check or credit card.

For further information, and to reserve your space, please contact Vanderbilt Travel Office at 615.322.3673 or e-mail alumni.travel@vanderbilt.edu.

If you would prefer to pay by check, please complete this form and return it to Thalassa Journeys to the address below. **Thalassa Journeys**, 8815 Conroy-Windermere Rd., Suite 406, Orlando, FL 32835
Phone: (866) 633-3611

☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Discover
No. _____ Exp. _____ 3- or 4-Digit Security Code _____

PLEASE SELECT STATEROOM CATEGORY IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE

1st choice ☐ _____ 2nd choice ☐ _____ 3rd choice ☐ _____

☐ Double Occupancy ☐ Single Occupancy (Inquire for rates)

PREFERRED BED CONFIGURATION Double ☐ _____ Twin ☐ _____

FIRST	MIDDLE	LAST (AS ON YOUR PASSPORT)	CLASS OF
FIRST	MIDDLE	LAST (AS ON YOUR PASSPORT)	CLASS OF

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

TELEPHONE (HOME) _____

(CELL) _____

EMAIL _____

Each participant must sign below: I/We have read the "General Information" section and agree to its terms.

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

GENERAL INFORMATION

PAYMENT SCHEDULE: A deposit of \$1,500 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure. Payment can be made by personal check or charged to a credit card.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: All cancellations are subject to a \$300 per person administrative fee. Cancellations received 71-90 days prior to departure will be assessed a penalty equal to 50% of the total program cost per person. Cancellations received within 70 days of departure are subject to 100% cancellation penalties. Requests for cancellations must be made in writing. No refunds will be made for any part of this program in which you choose not to participate.

INSURANCE: We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance, which is available for coverage of expenses in conjunction with cancellation due to illness or accident. Baggage insurance is also recommended. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement.

ITINERARY: The itinerary, accommodations and arrangements are subject to change at the discretion of Thalassa Journeys.

RESPONSIBILITY: Please read carefully the following terms and conditions, which constitute the sole, legally enforceable agreements between the traveler and Thalassa Journeys. Thalassa Journeys acts solely as agents for the traveler with respect to all transportation, hotel and other tour arrangements. In that capacity, we exercise all reasonable care possible to ensure the traveler's safety and satisfaction, but, we neither assume nor bear any responsibility or liability for any injury, death, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity arising in connection with the services of any ship, airplane, train, automobile, motor coach, carriage or other conveyance, or the actions of any third-party, involved in carrying the traveler or in affecting these tours. We are not responsible for damages, additional expenses, or any other losses due to cancellation, delay or other changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, civil disturbances, acts or threats of terrorism, travel warnings or bans, termination or suspension of war risks or other carrier insurance, quarantine, acts of God or other causes beyond our control. All such losses must be borne by the traveler, and tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. In the event of cancellation, delay or rescheduling mandated by any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall have the option of accepting in lieu of the original tour such rescheduled tour or other substituted tour(s) as may be offered by us, or else, receiving a refund of as much of such advance tour expenditures as we are able to recover on the traveler's behalf from carriers, third-party tour vendors, etc., but, we shall not have any obligation or liability to the traveler beyond the foregoing. We reserve the right to make alterations to the tour's itinerary and to substitute hotels, transportation methods, or lecturers if this is required. We reserve the right to cancel, delay, or reschedule any tour prior to departure, and, so long as this is not due to any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall be entitled to a full refund of all monies paid to that point if he/she so desires. No refund shall be made for any unused portion of any tour. By forwarding their deposit(s), the traveler certifies that he/she and/or their dependents, minors or others covered thereby do not have any mental, physical or other condition of disability that could create a hazard for them or other travelers. We reserve the right to decline to accept or to decline to retain any person as a member of any tour should such person's health, condition or actions adversely affect or threaten the welfare or safety of other travelers or impede the tour. Baggage or valuables brought on the tour shall be transported, handled or stored at the traveler's risk entirely, and, we shall bear no liability or responsibility for any damage or other loss thereto. Resolution of any disputes arising hereunder shall be affected exclusively in the state or federal courts presiding in Florida, pursuant to applicable Florida law.

RATES: Tour costs are based upon current airfares, tariffs, and currency values. While we do everything possible to maintain the listed prices, they are subject to change.

CST 2138603-50
ST 42408



PMB 4077352301
Vanderbilt Place,
Nashville, TN 37240

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Brentwood, NY
Permit No 36

VAND 26V-0608

SVALBARD & NORTH CAPE

Explore Svalbard's
landscape by Zodiac



**FOR RESERVATIONS AND INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT
VANDERBILT TRAVEL OFFICE AT 615.322.3673**