

TOGETHER WE TRAVEL!



solo connections





Arctic Adventure (Expedition Voyage)
18 Days
Fully Escorted
27 May – 13 June 2024

ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS:

- ▶ Reykjavik
- ▶ Iceland's Westfjords
- ▶ Jan Mayan Island
- ▶ Longyearbyen
- ▶ Zodiac Trips
- ▶ Svalbard
- ▶ Wildlife – Polar Bears, Puffins, Walrus etc
- ▶ Sail within 600KM of North Pole
- ▶ Oslo

INCLUDES:

- Economy class **airfares including taxes** ex Brisbane/Sydney/Melbourne or Perth* (*Business Upgrades on request*)
- **Private single category Balcony C Stateroom** (*upgrade to Balcony B Stateroom available*)
- **Private single rooms** in quality accommodation
- **New Ship** – Sylvia Earle (launched October 2022)
- **Meals** as per itinerary - 15 Breakfasts, 11 Lunches, 14 Dinners
- **Beer & Wine** included with dinner on board ship
- **Sightseeing** tours and transfers by private vehicle
- **Tour Host** – travels with group from/to Brisbane
- **Local English Speaking Guides** – Iceland and Norway
- **All shore excursions** and **Zodiac cruises** mentioned in the itinerary
- **Educational lectures** and **guiding services** from expedition team on board ship
- Access to **onboard doctor** and basic medical services on Sylvia Earle
- 3-in-1 **waterproof polar expedition jacket**
- Complimentary **loan of muck boots during the voyage**
- **Port Surcharges** – Landing Fees & Permits
- **Tipping** – Guides & Drivers **PLUS Onboard Gratuities** Sylvia Earle

EXCLUDES:

- Any meals other than mentioned above
- Travel Insurance and all other items of a personal nature i.e. laundry, drinks, phone calls, etc
- Visas – if not travelling on Australian Passport

EARLYBIRD From \$25,547* pp Balcony C or \$26,300*pp Balcony B Stateroom

Terms and Conditions apply. Price is per person Sole Use and subject to availability. Price is correct as at 11 September 2023. **Bookings must be deposited by 06 October 2023.** Based on Economy class Emirates airfare. Tour requires minimum number of passengers to depart. Prices may fluctuate if surcharges, fees, taxes or currencies change. Solo Connections is constantly striving to improve our itineraries and inclusions. If such improvements can be made, or unforeseen circumstances beyond our control make changes necessary, we reserve the right at any time to vary itineraries and to substitute inclusions of equal value. Beverages, additional meals, hotel mini bars, laundry, phone calls, any items of personal nature not included. Further booking conditions apply, please check all prices, availability and other information with your travel agent at time of or before booking. Package cancellation fees apply. Denise Marie Falsay trading as Solo Connections. ATAS Accredited A11424. ABN 92 582 582 99



Day 1 – Monday 27 May 2024
Depart Brisbane 21:00PM

Today we meet our Tour Escort and fellow travellers at Brisbane International Airport for our flight to **Oslo** via Dubai

Day 2 – Tuesday 28 May 2024
Arrive Oslo 12:35PM

D

On arrival in Oslo today we'll be met by our local guide and spend a little time sightseeing before we check into our hotel this afternoon.

After some time to freshen up we will come together for a welcome dinner at the hotel restaurant.

Accommodation: Thon Hotel Opera or similar (2 Nights)

Day 3 – Wednesday 29 May 2024
Oslo

B-L

Following breakfast this morning we will board the coach for a scenic drive through beautiful Oslo, passing such national landmarks as the Parliament building, with its two imposing lion statues at the main entrance, the National Theatre and the magnificent Royal Palace, official residence of the present Norwegian Monarch.

Our tour will take us outside of the city through charming suburban areas where beautiful homes are set within manicured gardens. A guided walk through the extraordinary Vigeland Sculpture Park, the largest sculpture park in the world created by one single artist, is invigorating and inspiring. The park covers eighty acres and was designed by renowned Norwegian sculptor Gustav Vigeland who created the over 200 iron and bronze statues. The sculptures artistically depict a complete human lifecycle from birth to death and are displayed in five different areas throughout the park. The gardens are vast and Vigeland also designed the impressive lawns and straight avenues flanked by maple trees perfect for strolling.

Following lunch we will discover all the highlights of Oslo from the Fjords on an electric cruise. Pass by the iconic landmarks of Oslo and get unique perspectives on history, culture and nature of the city & Oslo fjord. As we depart Aker Brygge we sail past Aker fortress as well as the birthplace of Oslo which traces back over 1000 years. From here it is a short journey to the idyllic green islands dotted in the fjord, home to mysteries and stories and charming Norwegian cottages & boathouses along the shore of Nesodden. Once we are further from the city we will launch our underwater drone to discover the world below the surface of the Oslo fjord. On the return we pass by Dyna Fyr and take a close look at the most iconic buildings in Oslo; the Opera house & Munch Museum.

Before we return to Aker Brygge we will pass by Bygdøy Island where you get the opportunity to disembark and continue your exploration at one of the many great museums. Throughout the tour our guides will share their knowledge about the history, nature and culture of Oslo and its surroundings. In the onboard cafe, you can purchase drinks and freshly baked goods should you wish.

We return to the hotel and have the evening at leisure.



Day 4 – Thursday 30 May 2024
Oslo - Reykjavik

B-D

Enjoy breakfast this morning before we are transferred to Oslo airport in time for our flight to Reykjavik.

Welcome to Iceland. This Nordic island nation, is defined by its dramatic landscape with volcanoes, geysers, hot springs and lava fields. Widely known as “The Land of Fire and Ice”, Iceland is home to some of the largest glaciers in Europe, and some of the world’s most active volcanoes. Reykjavik sits on the coast and is the country’s largest city and is the world’s northernmost capital. It is one of Europe’s most dynamic and interesting cities and where the majority of Iceland’s population make their home.

We will be met and transferred to our hotel to check and freshen up before meeting for dinner this evening in the hotel.

Accommodation: Fosshotel or similar (1 Night)

Day 5 – Friday 31 May 2024
Board *Sylvia Earle*

B-D

We check out after breakfast this morning and enjoy a panoramic tour of Reykjavik to experience the city's unique architecture and culture before transferring to the pier for embarkation.

This 104-metre ship is an Aurora Expeditions purpose-built expedition vessel. The *Sylvia Earle* is a floating ambassador for the conservation of the planet. Paying tribute to Dr. Sylvia Earle and six pioneering conservationists with public decks honouring their contributions and shining a light on their important conservation causes. Certified 100% Climate Neutral, with a fully equipped Citizen Science Centre, expert lectures and participative Citizen science programs, to enrich your knowledge and connection to the places we travel to.

The *Sylvia Earle* is a comfortable base camp for adventure. With a maximum of 132 expeditioners, our aim is to get you off ship experiencing the natural environment as much as possible and our smaller groups also mean we can tread lightly, making a positive impact to the environment.

Each of the vessel’s public decks bear the names of six pioneering female conservationists – Dr. Carden Wallace AM, Joanna Ruxton, Sharon Kwok, Bernadette Demientieff, Dr. Asha de Vos and Hanli Prinsloo – along with a deck dedicated to Dr. Earle herself. The scientists are inspiring leaders in their fields, and as part of the deck theming, will educate our expeditioners on the impressive and important conservation work they continue to do. Find out more about these talented women in conservation.

The X-Bow® hull makes sailing smoother and faster, and the new virtual anchoring system uses GPS and high-tech steering to hold the ship’s position so that sea floor is protected. Shore excursions are also made easier with four sea-level Zodiac-loading platforms and an activity preparation area, plus an observation lounge and viewing platforms offer spectacular panoramic views of scenery and wildlife. Also on board is a state-of-the-art lecture theatre, two Jacuzzis/plunge pools, a multi-media room and library, gym, wellness centre and more!

We’ll have time to settle into our cabins before a safety briefing and then tonight enjoy meeting your expedition team and Welcome Dinner.



Please refer to this itinerary for our expedition cruise as a guide only, as changes may occur due to unpredictable sea and weather conditions. Flexibility is key, and we will take each day as it comes and enjoy what is on offer.

Sea Kayaking is an optional activity at a cost of approx. \$850 per person. Exploring by kayak is an ideal way to surround yourself in the sights and sounds of the Arctic -paddling among icebergs and brash ice, observing wildlife in an unobtrusive manner. Some kayak excursions may be long in duration and on choppy water, so a reasonable level of kayaking experience is required to participate in this activity. Up to 20 paddlers will have the option to kayak during the voyage

Cruise Ship: Aurora Expeditions Sylvia Earle (11 Nights)

Day 6 – Saturday 01 June 2024
West & North-West Iceland

B-L-D

On this trip we'll discover the staggering beauty of Iceland's Westfjords, remote and seldom-visited Jan Mayen Island – the world's northernmost active volcanic island, and Svalbard's northwest coast. See dramatic bird cliffs and puffins nesting on ledges, marvel at volcanic geology, Zodiac cruise through impressive glacier-filled fjords, strike out on tundra hikes, and search for polar bears hunting or walrus hauled out on pack ice.

One third of Iceland's coastline is in the Westfjords, and the entire peninsula is carved and cut by long fjords. The Westfjords region is home to Látrabjarg; the westernmost point in Europe, and one of the continent's most remarkable seabird breeding cliffs, a delight for bird lovers. It is one of the best places in Iceland to photograph puffins, an opportunity you'll have on a Zodiac cruise, weather permitting.

Day 7 – Sunday 02 June 2024
West & North-West Iceland

B-L-D

Nearby Hornstrandir nature reserve is a peninsula accessible only by boat or by foot and inhabited by Arctic foxes, seals, birds and the occasional hiker. We plan to Zodiac cruise along the shoreline of Hornstrandir nature reserve and attempt a landing, subject to approval by the park ranger.

Day 8 – Monday 03 June 2024
West & North-West Iceland

B-L-D

At Patreksfjörður, a shore excursion by coach takes us to Látrabjarg cliffs. As Europe's largest bird cliff, Látrabjarg is home to millions of seabirds, such as puffin, razorbill, fulmar and guillemot. Enjoy the impressive variety of natural wonders and unspoiled nature. Látrabjarg also happens to be the westernmost point in Europe, east coast of the North American continent on the other side of the Atlantic.

We might visit places such as Isafjörður and Djúpavík, where kayakers can paddle in the peaceful waters surrounded by towering mountains while others can enjoy walks and hikes of varying levels of difficulty, soaking in the stunning surrounds including impressive waterfalls and deep fjords. You might sample some local delicacies or perhaps visit an abandoned herring museum converted into an exhibition and gallery space.



Day 9 – Tuesday 04 June 2024
At Sea

B-L-D

Cross the Denmark Strait to Jan Mayen Island accompanied by sea birds while keeping a look out for whales. Enjoy a presentation from Aurora's team of experts, get to know your fellow expeditioners, stay fit at the gym or treat yourself to a massage in the wellness centre.

Aurora Expeditions has an open bridge policy, which means at any point you can come up to the bridge and check out what the captain and officers are up to. From watching navigational practices to observing mapping techniques, you can get a firsthand look at the inner workings of the Sylvia Earle.

Day 10 – Wednesday 05 June 2024
Jan Mayen

B-L-D

The approach to Jan Mayen is spectacular. The huge Beerenberg volcano (2,277metres) is the world's northernmost active volcano, and last erupted in 1985. The northern part of the island is a great place to look for whales and dolphins, and contains impressive glaciers, some of which reach the sea. If the weather is friendly, we will try to land at Kvalrossbukta, a relatively sheltered bay on the island's west coast. This is one of the landings used to supply the weather station Olonkinbyen, situated on the eastern side of the island.

We hope to land on front of the Norwegian station at Olonkinbyen, stop to visit the weather station before embarking on a three-hour hike (weather permitting) to the other side of the Island where the Sylvia Earle will be waiting for us in Kvalrossbukta, and our trusty Zodiacs will transport us back to the ship.

Day 11 – Thursday 06 June 2024
At Sea

B-L-D

The sea around Jan Mayen offers excellent whale-watching opportunities (bottlenose, fin, and perhaps bowhead whales in the pack ice). Sail towards Svalbard, searching for the ice edge as we continue north, retracing the route of Dutch explorer Willem Barents who discovered Spitsbergen and the Barents Sea, named after him.

Make the most of shipboard life! You're welcome to 24 hours complimentary coffee, tea and snack facilities and all meals offer different menu options and courses.

Day 12 – Friday 07 June 2024
At Sea

B-L-D

It's breeding season for the harp seals and we hope to see them breeding on the sea ice. As we approach Svalbard, all eyes will be focused on spotting polar bears in the pack ice. On all Aurora expeditions, there are experts who lead presentations in the spacious lecture room so you can understand the region a little better. These often include topics as broad as history and culture, to biology and climate change, and these presentations aim to educate and entertain.

If you're keen to just watch the surroundings and keep your eyes peeled for wildlife, we have access to two bars/lounges where the stunning floor to ceiling windows offer a special perspective on the landscape.



Day 13 – Saturday 08 June 2024
Svalbard Archipelago

B-L-D

Svalbard offers Arctic wilderness at its best. The members of our experienced expedition team, who have made countless journeys to this area, will use their expertise to tailor our day-to-day itinerary, choosing the best options, based on the prevailing weather, sea-ice conditions and the possibility of encounters with wildlife.

We plan to cross 80° North, always on the lookout for polar bears on the pack ice, to reach Møffen Island, famous for its large walrus colony. In the coming days, depending on the weather and sea ice conditions, we may explore sites including the incredibly scenic Kongsfjorden (Kings Bay), a fjord headed by two giant glaciers.

Day 14 – Sunday 09 June 2024
Svalbard Archipelago

B-L-D

We may visit Raudfjord which features fascinating geology, glaciers and bird cliffs. A possible hike on Ytre Norskya offers splendid views to the north coast of Spitsbergen and maybe even to the North Pole in clear weather!

Day 15 – Monday 10 June 2024
Svalbard Archipelago

B-L-D

Phenomenal fjords, magnificent mountain ranges, and a polar desert rich in fossils, set the stage for heroic tales of early exploration. See walrus hauled-out on sea ice or on beaches. On land, we stretch our legs on walks across tundra carpeted in brightly coloured wildflowers. We visit towering cliffs noisy with nesting guillemots, and scree slopes that hold Svalbard's largest little auk colonies. Most memorable will be encounters with the majestic polar bear on pack ice. Your expedition team is just as keen as you are to find them – they will be on constant watch to spot these inspiring creatures.

If you have chosen an optional activity such as kayaking, you will have an opportunity to enjoy that activity when conditions allow. For those who are enthusiastic to participate in a polar plunge, as soon as conditions are suitable, you will hear the announcement to prepare for an exhilarating dip – a memory you will savour for years to come.

Day 16 – Tuesday 11 June 2024
Longyearbyen - Oslo

B-D

During the early morning we cruise into Longyearbyen the small coal-mining town on Spitsbergen Island, in Norway's Svalbard archipelago. Farewell your expedition team, before further enjoying explorations of fascinating Longyearbyen to learn the town's history, its geology, flora, fauna and the modern community that call the place home. Visit Svalbard Museum and Galleri Svalbard, Office of the Governor, Svalbard Church, Nybyen (new town), some of the town's mines including Santa Claus Mine, and make a quick photo stop at the famous beware of polar bear street sign. We will then be transferred to the airport in the afternoon for our onward flight to Oslo.

We will be met upon arrival in Oslo and transferred to our airport hotel for the overnight stay. Check in and freshen up before we come together for a final farewell dinner in the hotel.

Accommodation: Clarion Hotel & Congress Oslo Airport or similar (1 Night)



Day 17 – Wednesday 12 June 2024 Depart Oslo 14:35PM

B – (Day 17 only)

Day 18 – Thursday 3 June 2024 Arrive Brisbane 22:20PM

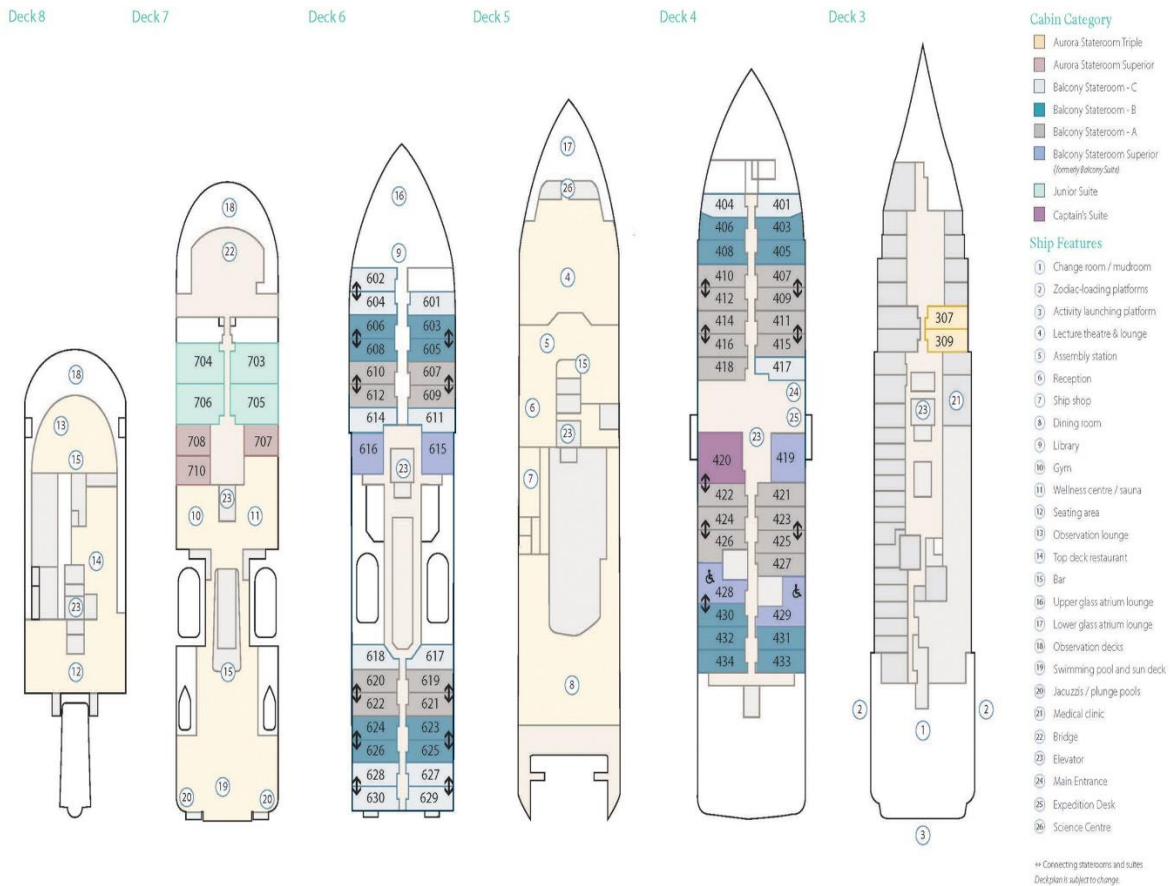
Following breakfast this morning we check out and are transferred to the Oslo Airport for our flights back to Brisbane via Dubai.

**Keep scrolling down for Sylvia Earle deck plan & key*



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The Sylvia Earle Deck Plan



EARLYBIRD PRICING – BOOKINGS MUST BE MADE AND DEPOSITED BY 29 SEPTEMBER 2023

BALCONY C STATEROOMS – from \$25,547*pp – Deck 6

BALCONY B STATEROOMS – from \$26,300*pp – Decks 4 and 6