

# KANDOO ADVENTURES



23-DAY ADVENTURE

## TEXAS BAR

Svalbard

A truly remarkable expedition in the lands north of Spitsbergen. A place where few humans venture, an arctic paradise where polar bears reign and silence dominates, a land of icebergs, glaciers and rocky outcrops. This the most northern sea kayaking destination in the world and the perfect place for complete escapism.

## TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Cruise the north of the Svalbard Archipelago
- Venture into the heart of the untouched arctic world
- Explore a paradise of icebergs, glaciers and rocky outcrops
- Paddle the world's most northern kayaking destination



# ITINERARY

## DAY 1

### ARRIVE LONGYEARBYEN

Welcome to Svalbard. We will greet you at the airport and escort you to your accommodation in the city. Don't worry if your flight arrives in the middle of the night, we provide 24 hour airport transfers.

Accommodation: **Guesthouse**

## DAY 2

### LONGYEARBYEN

Your guide will join you at your accommodation this morning for an official briefing - this morning is a chance to meet the group, prepare for our adventure and deal with logistics like equipment, the weather forecast and safety procedures. We should also have time to explore Longyearbyen before our afternoon departure by boat for the North via Isfjord, which will take around 12 hours.

Accommodation: **Night Boat**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

## DAY 3

### THE NORTH OF THE SVALBARD ARCHIPELAGO

Today we cruise along the west coast to the north of the archipelago. It is a spectacular start to a great expedition, cruising through the ice-filled waters. The boat will drop us on a beach during the night depending on the weather conditions.

Accommodation: **Camping**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

#### DAYS 4 TO 20

### THE GREAT NORTHERN EXPEDITION

Over the next 17 days we will spend each night camping, discovering different sheltered spots and immersing ourselves completely in these northern lands. We can expect a new adventure each day in this varied remote wilderness where polar bears reign supreme - the northernmost kayaking destination on the planet!

To begin, we will most likely head to Smeerenburg Fjord in the northwest of the island, just opposite the island of Amsterdam. It is one of the most spectacular places of the archipelago with its distinctive, sharp peaks. In these untouched remote northern lands we will observe white and blue glaciers tumbling abruptly into the sea and thousands of islands which are home to a surprising variety of wildlife. We will weave around islands of black rock (the last rocks before the North Pole), and imposing icebergs which drift through the seas, battered by the winds.

We will find ourselves in an area where few humans have ventured before and explore coves and cliffs sheltering thousands of birds - our own private spectacle. Here, on the beaches, it is not uncommon to find seals or walruses basking in the sun. Then we will explore the great ochre red flat lands where reindeer roam. This is the kingdom of the mighty polar bear. We are likely to come across these breath-taking mammals often and are able to observe them in their natural environment.

We will then head to Wood Fjord and Leift where we find the hut of Texas Bar, opposite the huge glacier of Monaco that gave its name to this magnificent expedition. The Glacier Front stretches for more than 3 miles (5kms) and carries tons of icebergs which are scattered across the bay. Our remote wilderness adventure comes to an end at the secret hot springs of Woodfjorden.

#### DAY 21

### RETURN TO LONGYEARBYEN

After 3 weeks away from civilization, we board the boat in the Texas Bar area and make the long journey back to Longyearbyen. Following the west coast of Svalbard, keeping an eye out for marine life and catching our final glimpses of the true polar wilderness, before stepping onto the harbour at Longyearbyen where a hot shower and real bed await us.

Accommodation: **Camping**

Meals included:

**Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner**

Transport: **Boat (10 hours)**

Accommodation: **Guesthouse**

Meals included: **Breakfast / Lunch**

#### DAY 22

### FREE DAY IN LONGYEARBYEN

If for safety reasons (i.e. poor weather) we are unable to make the return journey on Day 21, today is the contingency day. If all goes to plan, we can spend today taking a relaxing stroll around Longyearbyen and soaking up the local atmosphere; perhaps visit the polar museum.

Optional full or half-day activities such as dog sledding, snowmobiling or ice cave exploration are also available (to be booked locally, speak to the guide about this).

Accommodation: **Guesthouse**

Meals included: **Breakfast**

#### DAY 23

### DEPARTURE

Depending on your flight time, you have the morning to relax and explore Longyearbyen with its edge-of-the-world atmosphere.

We recommend visiting Svalbard museum and you can also choose from a variety of optional activities like summer dog-sledding or a cruise to the abandoned Russian city of Pyramiden (Additional charges apply).

Meals included: **Breakfast**

Our team will transfer you to the airport for your return flight.

### PLEASE NOTE

*Please note that this itinerary, including distances and times, is indicative. Our guides aim to provide the adventure that is best suited to the weather, your interests and the demands of the group. Please be aware that in order to achieve this, changes to the programme may be made.*

# TRIP INFORMATION

## DIFFICULTY

Our extreme adventures are only for those with a very high level of fitness.

This is a demanding winter expedition in the land of polar bears. Due to the remote nature of the journey and the limited amount of supplies that we can carry, it is essential that we cover distances in good time. You must know how to kayak to participate in this type of trip. Proper control of the boat and good stamina are required. This trip begins with training so you can get accustomed to your equipment and enjoy a smooth start to warm your muscles and avoid injury. Temperatures can also fall to -20C so we highly recommend you get some cold weather camping experience under your belt beforehand. A wild camping trip in the mountains of the UK or US in December or January will give you a taste of what its like to sleep under canvas in freezing conditions. We provide all your technical equipment such as down jackets, polar overalls and snow boots but there is nothing like real experience to get you prepared! Please note: our difficulty levels can also change based on weather and ice conditions.

For this trip, we must stress the difficulty of getting help in an emergency evacuation. Radio links are non-existent and health centres are very often far away. Your guide is a qualified first aider and will always carry a full first-aid kit but we recommend that you bring your own personal first aid supplies. A consultation with your doctor is a prerequisite for any trip; please explain clearly that you are going to the Arctic in weather conditions that may be very severe and require excellent health.

As well as kayaking and hiking you will also be packing away and putting up tents, assisting with cooking, loading and unloading kayaks and fetching water. There are no porters, cooks or waiters on this trip, you are part of the expedition and must do your share of the work. Although this makes the adventure more demanding, it also adds to the enormous sense of satisfaction and achievement at the end of your journey.

We are camping in the wilderness where there is the possibility of polar bears roaming near the camp. A member of the team must be on "bear watch" at all times day and night and this is normally done in rotating 2 hour shifts. As it never goes dark in Svalbard in the summer months, some people may find it difficult to sleep.

To talk to us about your suitability for this trip please feel free to give us a call.

## FOOD & DRINK

Besides one evening meal in Longyearbyen, this trip includes full board. For your evening meal on the final day there are shops and kitchen facilities available or local restaurants for you to sample - we have lots of recommendations!

We are proud of the varied, fresh and frankly delicious food we provide even when camping. Meals are based on a selection of local products and you will have the opportunity to try several local delicacies. Each day will start with a cold breakfast accompanied by plenty of tea and coffee or hot chocolate. Then you will prepare your own picnic lunch for the day from a buffet style array of options. Evening meals will include three courses: soup/starter, a hot dish and a dessert. Due to the length of this trip we are not able to offer fresh fruit and vegetables every day.

Your help in the kitchen is expected and much appreciated, particularly in the evenings. We like when the whole group work as a team to cook dinner, it creates a pleasant atmosphere as we reflect on the days adventures together. We want you to be a member of our team; not a sheep!

Please let us know about any dietary requirements when you book the trip and we will work with you to cater for your needs.

## ACCOMMODATION

**LONGYEARBYEN:** warm guesthouse accommodation in twin rooms. Shared bathroom and kitchen facilities with heating and hot water. Although these aren't en-suite, there are plenty of bathrooms available per floor of the accommodation and these are modern facilities kept to an extremely high cleanliness. From the accommodation it is roughly a 10 minute, downhill walk into Longyearbyen town.

**NIGHT BOAT:** one night on the cruise ship to reach start point of expedition

**CAMPING:** We provide a 3 man dome tent per 2 people, an insulated sleeping mat and a synthetic sleeping bag. For our expeditions we use light equipment which is appropriate for Svalbard's winter conditions. We will also provide a spacious mess tent for meal times, fully equipped with kitchen equipment. Please be aware that our expeditions in Svalbard involve full participation, we expect all travellers to assist with setting up and packing down our camps, preparing meals etc. This is a team effort!

**TOILETS:** In Longyearbyen your accommodation will have flushing toilets. Whilst camping the toilet situation will be a little less luxurious. It is a case of finding somewhere hidden, away from camp or the path and digging a hole. You will be provided with a flare gun whilst away from camp to protect you from polar bears. We can guarantee it will be the most scenic, exciting toilet break you've ever had! Please remember to bring toilet roll and a lighter to burn it after use.

## LUGGAGE

You may bring a hold bag (up to 20kg) as well as a cabin bag. Your possessions will have to fit into your kayak during the expedition so please do not over pack. For your hold luggage please bring a soft bag like a rucksack rather than a suitcase because it is more practical when loading local buses and trailers. We also recommend that you pack your clothes in plastic bags inside your rucksack so that they stay dry in the event of bad weather. Your main luggage will remain in Longyearbyen during the trip. We will provide you with 2 dry bags to safely store the sleeping bag and your personal clothes. Please note that the bag for your personal clothes does not exceed 22 litres

Please bring a small rucksack to use as a day bag. You can bring this as hand luggage on the plane. You will carry your lunch, water, spare layers and any personal medication with you each day.

## HOW DO I GET THERE?

To reach Longyearbyen, there are direct flights from Oslo (3 hr journey) provided by SAS and Norwegian Airlines. Although they are direct, the flight will land in Tromsø on Norway's west coast and you will be asked to disembark to go through the Svalbard immigration before re-embarking on the plane once more and continuing your journey. This means that you will be flying at a low altitude when passing over the jaw dropping Lofoten islands. If you wish to get a birds eye view of these out of the plane window then make sure to be seated on the left hand side of the plane for both the outgoing and return flight. Direct flights do not operate every day of the week so you may also need to spend a night in Oslo before continuing your journey the next day.

To reach Oslo from the UK, there are direct flights with British Airways from Heathrow and Norwegian Airlines have direct flights from Gatwick and Edinburgh. SAS have direct flights from Manchester.

If you are travelling from the US, SAS operate direct flights to Oslo from New York. From the west coast there are good flight options with Air France, KLM and Lufthansa.

## BUDGET & CHANGE

The currency in Svalbard is the Norwegian Krona (NOK). For the latest exchange rates please visit [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com)

Please be aware that Svalbard is nearly cash free due to the absence of banks. Payments are made with credit or debit cards so it is important you take a card with you for any incidental purchases. Please inform your card provider that you intend to travel to Svalbard (Norway) before departure, this will ensure that your card continues to work properly while overseas. A lunch in Longyearbyen will cost you roughly £20 (265 NOK) and dinner will be £30 (350 NOK). Therefore, our recommended guidance for spending budget in the Svalbard would be roughly **£100-150** (1300-2000 NOK) on top of any tips, to give you ample souvenir spending money.

## TIPS

Tipping customs vary all over the world and can be very confusing when travelling to a new country. Tipping in Svalbard is always appreciated, however it is not obligatory and should be left to the discretion of each individual. If you are satisfied with your guide's services we recommend a tip between **350-450 NOK per person (equivalent to £30-40 per person)**. On the other hand, if you receive bad service or have not been treated well, you would not be expected to tip at all.

# FORMALITIES & HEALTH

## PASSPORT

Most travellers require a passport that is valid for at least six months after the return date. It is your responsibility to confirm your specific passport requirements and please be aware that proof of onwards travel may be required. You can check your requirements on the website provided by the Norwegian government

## VISA

Travelling to Norway is visa free for up to 90 days, for UK and US citizens

## VACCINATIONS

No vaccinations are required.

## INSURANCE

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are fully and adequately insured for the duration of your trip. Please ensure that all activities, excursions and destinations in your itinerary are included in your travel insurance policy, in addition to your regular cover for cancellation and medical expenses.

We ask that you keep a copy of your policy summary (containing policy number and the emergency contact number for your insurer) in your day sack at all times, so that we can access this information should we need to contact the insurer on your behalf.

## MEDICATION

Your guide is a trained first-aider and will carry a full first aid kit at all times during the trip. Please bring with you any personal medication that you may need such as inhalers, prescription medicine, plasters and painkillers.

# EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING

## EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED BY KANDOO ADVENTURES

We will provide you with all of the technical equipment you will need for this amazing adventure. Our tandem sea kayaks were chosen for their stability and comfortable, they are suitable for first time kayakers and have plenty of storage capacity for our expedition gear. They are suitable for the changeable sea conditions and in the unlikely event of capsizing they are surprisingly easy to right; even at sea you would be back on board and paddling in no time.

### GROUP EQUIPMENT

- 'Tepee' style mess tent with table, stools and cooking equipment
- 'Ortlieb' water belts
- Sarsat beacon
- VHF radio
- Heavy caliber rifle
- Alarm gun
- Mini-flares and penjectors for each group member
- First aid kit

### INDIVIDUAL EQUIPMENT

- Suitable tent per 2 people (3 man dome tent for maximum space & comfort)
- Self-inflating sleeping mat
- Suitable synthetic sleeping bag ( -6°C)
- Aluminium thermos flask per 2 people
- Helly Hansen fleece lined salopettes for kayaking and ashore
- Tandem sea kayak with directional rudder (per 2 people)
- Gore-tex dry suit with integrated warm fleece liner
- Pair of kayak pogies
- Spray deck
- Life jacket with two pockets
- Neoprene balaclava
- Pair of 'croc' style shoes/sandals

## **CLOTHING TO BRING**

- Walking boots
- Waterproof jacket (with a hood, Gore-Tex/Nikwax or equivalent)
- Waterproof trousers (Gore-Tex/Nikwax or equivalent)
- Warm gloves and a hat
- Thermals – long-sleeved top & long johns
- Fleece/jumper
- Suitable underwear, t-shirts and walking trousers
- Thin socks and thick socks (we recommend bringing 3-4 pairs of thick socks)
- Sunhat and sun cream
- Sunglasses (UV 400)

### **Choosing the right materials**

We prefer that you do not wear cotton clothing, including underwear, when participating in activities. When cotton gets wet from water or sweat it ceases to insulate and does not dry quickly. The best materials for outdoor activities are fast drying materials like polyester or materials which are warm when wet like wool. The most powerful materials against the wind and rain are 'breathable' materials like Gore-Tex or Nikwax.

## **EQUIPMENT TO BRING**

- Sleeping bag liner
- Mini toiletry kit and toilet roll
- Any personal medication
- Water bottle/flask
- Small rucksack to use as a day bag
- Head torch & spare batteries (although it is nearly always light in the summer)

### **OTHER USEFUL KIT**

- Your camera (with suitable protective case)
- Binoculars
- Comfortable evening outfit for Longyearbyen
- Small inflatable pillow
- Insect repellent
- Knife
- Notepad and pencil
- Plastic bags for wet/dirty clothing

# HOW TO BOOK THIS TRIP

## **1 CHOOSE YOUR DATE AND CHECK AVAILABILITY**

A full list of available dates can be found on our website.

## **2 CONTACT US**

Contact us by phone, email or through our website. We will answer any questions you may have and send you a personalized itinerary and quote.

## **3 COMPLETE BOOKING AND PAYMENT**

When you are ready to book, we will send you a link to our online booking forms and participation agreements. We accept all major credit and debit cards and require a low 20% deposit to secure your place.

