



Polar Expedition

2027

Arctic Polar Bear Photo Safari

Letter From the Team

At Tusk Photo, we believe the best wildlife photographs are created where true wilderness still exists. Our Svalbard expeditions are built around access, patience, and a deep respect for the environments we explore.

Photographing wildlife in remote places is about far more than simply being present. It requires understanding the light, reading the landscape, and positioning ourselves where extraordinary moments can unfold naturally. Our team of experienced photographic guides is there to support you throughout the journey helping you refine composition, anticipate behaviour, and make the most of every opportunity.

But these expeditions are about more than photography. They are about exploration, shared adventure, and experiencing some of the most powerful landscapes on Earth alongside a small group of like-minded photographers.

Our goal is simple: to give you the best possible platform to create remarkable images in one of the last truly wild environments on the planet.

We look forward to welcoming you aboard.

The Tusk Team



Overview

A New Way to Photograph Polar Bears

Regulations in Svalbard have changed in recent years, increasing the required distance between vessels and polar bears. While these rules are important for protecting wildlife, they also make traditional wildlife viewing from crowded expedition ships far more limited.

Our answer is simple: go where the bears actually live.

Instead of waiting along the edges of the archipelago, we travel deep into the drifting pack ice, where polar bears hunt, travel and live naturally across the frozen Arctic Ocean.

Out here the experience is completely different. Vast landscapes of moving sea ice stretch to the horizon, wildlife encounters happen on the bears' terms, and the sense of wilderness is absolute.

Photographing polar bears in their true habitat, deep in the pack ice, is one of the most powerful wildlife experiences on Earth.

The MS Kvitungen – Built for the Ice

To make this possible we operate from a very special vessel: the MS Kvitungen.

This is not a luxury cruise ship. It is a serious Arctic expedition vessel, built for strength, endurance and the ability to travel where most ships cannot.

With a reinforced Ice Class hull, the MS Kvitungen is designed to withstand the immense pressure of shifting sea ice and safely push through dense pack ice conditions. This strength allows us to venture far beyond the normal routes of tourist ships and explore remote areas of the Arctic Ocean.

Simply put, the stronger the ship, the deeper we can go.

And deeper in the ice is exactly where the best wildlife and most dramatic photographic opportunities exist.

For photographers, the MS Kvitungen offers an outstanding platform. Open decks provide excellent vantage points for shooting, while the vessel's size and manoeuvrability allow us to position ourselves quickly when wildlife appears.

THIS IS IMPORTANT TO READ - The Refitted Expedition Vessel

During the 2026/2027 season, the MS Kvitungen will undergo an interior refit with upgraded cabins and modern finishes. This refit process will take place over stages starting in 2026. At this point the engineers and architects cannot guarantee how long each stage will take given that they are working on a vessel that has active duty. For this reason we do not have a clear cut indication on how far the refit will be once we start our voyages in Aug 2027.

While the vessel remains a rugged expedition ship at heart, the updated interiors will provide comfortable accommodation after long days working on the ice.

At this point we know that the ship will have 3 double / twin rooms with private facilities and 4 single rooms with shared facilities.

With only 10 guests onboard, the atmosphere remains quiet, spacious and focused entirely on the journey.

The Photographer's Arctic – September

Our expeditions take place in September, one of the most rewarding times to work in the high Arctic.

By this point most expedition ships have already left the Svalbard archipelago, leaving the vast pack ice quiet and largely empty. This gives us the freedom to explore a truly wild Arctic landscape without crowds.

The returning darkness of autumn also brings beautiful low-angle light, long shadows across the ice and dramatic skies perfect conditions for wildlife and landscape photography.

With endless horizons of drifting ice and constantly changing weather, every day offers new photographic possibilities.

Costings

The Kvitungen: Rooms and options

The MS Kvitungen has the capacity to take 12 guests. However we at TuskPhoto have decided to limit that number to only 10 guests. This will ensure the best possible opportunities when working with bears and space on Zodiacs etc.

By the time we do our expeditions in 2027 the MS Kvitungen would have had a partial interior refit. We can confirm that the ship will have 3 double / twin rooms with own private facilities. Further more there will be 4 single rooms with shared facilities.

Pricing for the rooms will be as follows:

Double / Twin room with private facilities - €14,500 per person

Single room with shared facilities - €13,500 per person



Dates | Costs | Prices

Dates	Cost	Spaces	Nights
2027-08-25 to 2027-09-03	EU€ 13,500 - €14,500	10	9
2027-09-03 to 2027-09-12	EU€ 13,500 - €14,500	10	9

Cost:

Our expedition is priced at EU€ 14,500 per person in town / double rooms with private facilities and €13,500 for single rooms with shared facilities.

Please note that any bank charges incurred during the payment process are not covered by Tusk Photo. We kindly request the full amount indicated on the invoice, including any fees imposed by Paypal if you choose to use this payment method.

Deposit:

To secure your reservation, a 50% deposit of the full price is required within 14 days of making your booking. Once we receive your deposit, your booking will be confirmed. Please make sure to complete this step within the given timeframe to secure your spot.

Balance:

The remaining balance is due at 6 months prior to the safari. If you are making a booking within 6 months of the safari, the full price will be payable at the time of booking.

Cancellation Policy:

We understand that plans can change, and in the event of a cancellation, the following fees will apply unless Tusk Photo is able to fill your safari space:

- Cancellation more than 365 days prior to departure: 30% of the full price
 - Cancellation 180 - 365 days prior to departure: 60% of the full price
 - Cancellation less than 180 days prior to departure: 100% of the full price
- ** VERY IMPORTANT - No Cancellation Fees if we can fill your spot ****

Please note: Your travel plans are made entirely at your own risk, and Tusk Photo cannot be held responsible for any flight cancellations, disruptions, or delays that may occur. We recommend considering travel insurance to protect your investment and provide peace of mind.

Itinerary

Day 0 - Arrival day in Longyearbyen and not included in the tour

- It is recommended you arrive in Longyearbyen, Svalbard, at least 1 day before we set sail to the North.
- There are a number of hotels in Longyearbyen all very close to each other. Our Tusk Photo hosts will more than likely be staying at the Radisson Blu Hotel.

DAY 1

- Transfer to the MS Kvitungen
- We set sail to the Polar ice cap.

DAY 2 to 10

- Exploration of Svalbard and Polar ice cap.
- Photographing Polar Bears, whales, walrus, sea birds and more.

DAY 10

- Return to Longyearbyen.
- End of tour.

What You Get

INCLUDED:

- Services of Tusk Photo hosts + 2 Expedition staff
- Accommodation on board the MS Kvitungen
- All meals
- All activities

EXCLUDED:

- Visas
- Drinks on the MS Kvitungen
- Gratuities
- Purchases of a personal nature.
- Travel costs to and from Longyearbyen

Flights and Transport

- Guests can book flights to Svalbard Airport from various major cities, with connecting flights often available from Oslo, Norway.
- From the airport, a convenient transfer service is available to transport guests to the heart of Longyearbyen.

Photography and Gear

It is not advisable to take photographs of border posts, airports, military, police posts or any other related government structures. Doing so can lead to an unpleasant situation and even arrest.

It is advisable to bring the following camera equipment:

- At least 2x Camera bodies (a backup will mean peace of mind)
- Spare memory cards and batteries
- Long telephoto lens 300/400/500/600/800
- Medium telephoto lens 70-200 or equivalent
- Wide angle lens(es) for landscapes and wide-angle wildlife
- Tripod with Gimbal head & Ball head is optional if you would like to photograph birds and wildlife and your equipment is too heavy to hand hold
- Flash with off-shoe cord and battery pack is optional
- Notebook or additional storage devices.
- Please remember that it is very likely that you could possibly photograph thousands of images over the safari period. We therefore strongly advise you to have sufficient storage and battery arrangements in place. If you are unsure of anything, please contact us for more details.



Our Expedition Leader

Meet our specialist expedition leader:
Piet van den Bemd

Joining our Polar expedition is Piet van den Bemd, a seasoned polar guide with unparalleled expertise in Arctic waters. Having spent eight years running a company specialising in orca and northern lights tours, Piet knows these icy fjords like the back of his hand. With countless hours on the water, he brings invaluable knowledge of orca behaviour, marine wildlife, and the mesmerising auroras. His deep experience ensures you get the best possible encounters, whether watching pods of orcas hunt or witnessing the sky ignite in colour.

Piet joined our Tusk Photo team in 2025 as a specialist guide and photographic host. His knowledge, enthusiasm and bubbling personality make him a valuable asset to this tour.



Our Photo Tour Leader

Meet our specialist photographic leader:
Wim van den Heever

Wim van den Heever, Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2025, is an internationally acclaimed wildlife photographer and founder of Tusk Photo. With decades of experience photographing wildlife across the globe, Wim is known for his powerful imagery and deep passion for the natural world.

As the photographic tour leader on our 2027 polar expedition, he will guide guests in capturing extraordinary moments in search of Polar Bears in the Arctic Polar region. Combining expert photographic instruction with an adventurous spirit, Wim helps photographers of all levels improve their skills while experiencing one of the planet's most breathtaking and wildlife-rich environments.





Tour Info

INSURANCE

- **Travel Insurance:**

While it is highly unlikely, there is a possibility of scheduled flights in and out of your destination being delayed due to unforeseen circumstances. To provide peace of mind and cover any potential flight disruptions or missed connections, we strongly recommend purchasing additional travel insurance.

- **Medical Insurance:**

For your safety and well-being, we highly recommend having medical insurance that covers unforeseen medical emergencies and evacuation. Please let us know in your booking form whether you have taken out any medical insurance for this safari.

PASSPORTS AND CUSTOMS

- Passports are required by all foreign visitors and must be valid for 6 months after the intended length of stay. Please ensure that there are two blank pages per country to be visited.
- Visas are required by most countries to enter Norway which is the entry point to Svalbard – please make sure you check with your local embassies regarding visa requirements. Alternatively have a look at www.visaHQ.com for country specific visa requirements as well.
- It is advisable to declare any cameras, lenses, laptops and other valuable items when leaving your country. We normally recommend keeping a detailed list of all items including serial numbers and descriptions. This makes the customs process that much quicker.

MONEY AND CURRENCY

- The currency accepted in Norway and Svalbard is NOK.
- Banks and foreign exchange bureaux are available at all international airports and in all main towns in Europe but limited while in Longyearbyen.
- Credit card payments can be processed by most retail outlets, hotels and Inn's as well as for your drinks on the MS Kvitungen.

HEALTH

- The Arctic has little to no health hazards apart from illnesses like influenza and other related conditions associated with extreme cold environments.
- Alternatively, should you require additional advice, we suggest you contact your local travel clinic.

LANGUAGES

- The official language is Norwegian. However, nearly everyone speaks English.

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

We understand the importance of accommodating diverse dietary needs, and our team is dedicated to ensuring that we can cater to most dietary requirements. Please provide us with any specific dietary needs in your booking form.

CLIMATE

The climate in Svalbard and the Polar ice region is generally quite cold during summer months. During this time of year the sun does not set and we will experience



CLOTHING AND WHAT TO PACK

We will experience arctic conditions on this tour, so please be prepared for the cold!

- Windproof garments are highly recommended!
- Good thermal underwear, long johns and long sleeved thermal under-shirts.
- Warm insulated trousers, similar to those used for skiing – no loud colours please!
- Waterproof (preferably Gore-Tex or similar) over-trousers.
- A down or hollow fibre jacket or waterproof (preferably Gore-Tex or similar) jacket layered with a thick warm fleece under it.
- Thermal / Pac boots with a sole good for walking on snow and ice, and thick warm socks. We recommend looking at MuckBoots or similar 'Wellies' that will keep your feet dry and warm. A rating of -40C is advisable.
- A pair of thermal 'camp booties' is advisable for use on the boat.
- Warm hat / beanies (bring a spares)
- Thin pair of thermal gloves.
- A second, larger pair of insulated over-gloves. Also consider bringing a spare pair in case your gloves get wet.
- Polar Fleeces; a few thin fleeces to aid layering.
- A fleece neck gaiter is very useful for protecting your face.
- Hand and foot warmers.
- Sun glasses, Lip balm and sun block.
- If you are concerned about or prone to sea sickness, see your doctor or ask a qualified pharmacist for advice on what sea-sickness medication you should use, and bring some for our mornings on the boat out to the sea ice
- Please bring a pair of Binoculars to help us find Polar Bears.

GRATUITIES

Please note that the following gratuity amounts are provided as a minimum guideline, and you are welcome to increase them if you wish:

- Boat Staff: US\$ 200 per guest
- Expedition leaders: US\$ 200 per guest

CONNECTIVITY & EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

There is no Cellular and Data connectivity in the Arctic.

Tusk Photo PTA Office

Tel: +27 82 443 1232

Indemnity

Tusk Photo and its staff prioritize your safety and wellbeing during your safari; however, please be aware that we cannot accept liability for any incidents, including but not limited to accidents, loss, or property damage. By completing the Safari Booking form, you acknowledge the inherent risks associated with travel and agree to indemnify Tusk Photo against any claims or liabilities that may arise.

While this document provides comprehensive information, it is not exhaustive. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to contact our office. Please note that the information contained herein is correct at the time of compilation to the best of our knowledge.

We Are Excited To Host You on Your Dream Photographic Safari!

