



SVALBARD PACKING LIST

Throughout the time you will be visiting Svalbard the average temperature is 5°C. Due to the wind chill factor, and when travelling to the eastern part of the archipelago, expect to experience temperatures a few degrees below zero. There is normally very little rain in Svalbard, which is considered a semi-desert, however when going ashore in the Zodiacs it is mandatory to wear waterproof jacket and trousers as well as rubber boots!

The key is to dress using the layering system, which gets rid of perspiration, insulates you from the cold and offers protection from the wind. The layering method also allows you to easily adjust your clothing when the weather and temperatures change. Please note that for April/May departures, it is possible to experience temperatures as low as -16°C so you will need to be prepared for colder weather if travelling at this time.

PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP: CLOTHING

Dressing properly is the key to being comfortable in the Arctic. It is important to keep dry and keep warm as wetness increases the loss of body heat. Overdressing can also be an issue as too many layers may cause perspiration and therefore wetness. For your trip, we recommend dressing in layers, giving you flexibility to add or subtract layers according to your needs and the changes in weather.

Base Layer

Why? This layer is in direct contact with your skin. Its purpose is to pull moisture away from your skin and keep you dry.

What? Synthetic fabrics such as polypropylene and polyester, merino wool and silk. Avoid cotton, down and activewear. The fit should be snug to your skin but not restricting

Tips

- You can never have too many pairs of socks – some days you may want to wear up to three pairs!
- Pack some hand warmers that you can keep in you jacket or trouser pockets.

Suggested Quantities

- Two sets of long underwear tops and bottoms
- Multiple pairs of wool or synthetic socks
- Glove liners

Mid layer (s)

Why? This layer adds insulation by trapping body heat to keep you warm but continues to move moisture outward, providing insulation and retains body heat without restricting movement. This will help you control your body temperature.

What? Fleece, wool and down. This layer should be roomy enough to fit your base layer underneath without being too restricting.

Tips

- Bring multiple mid layers to accommodate changing weather conditions and activities.
- A packable down jacket is a great insulating mid-layer and has multiple uses!
- On a cold day we recommend wearing two or more middle layers.
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Suggested Quantities

- Two insulating tops (these can be fleece, wool, synthetic down/down but ensure they are roomy enough for your base layer).
- Two pairs of insulating bottoms.
- Insulated jacket (this is a great insulating mid-layer item).

Outer layer

Why? The outer layer acts as protection from the elements by blocking wind and precipitation. It is important that this layer is breathable, allowing air to circulate and excess moisture to escape.

What?

Shell jackets (Gore-Tex or equivalent) provide great protection from the elements as it should be waterproof, windproof and breathable.

Down or synthetic down jacket. The 'fill power' of down jackets refers to the amount of warmth it provides. A jacket with a fill power of 600-700 is good and 750-850 is excellent.

Tips

This layer needs to fit easily over your base and mid layers but needs to be snug enough to retain your warmth.

Most manufacturers have their own unique material technology, but should all have clear waterproof, windproof and breathability rating information.

Suggested Quantities

- Water resistant, insulated jacket
- Water resistant, insulated trousers
- Waterproof, insulated mitts
- Windproof, warm winter hat.
- Snood/Neck warmer



Footwear

- Rubber/Muck boots - Mandatory. Provided on a complimentary basis. Please tell us your size.
- Walking boots - if you would prefer not to walk in rubber boots after landing/for around Longyearbyen
- Comfortable shoes for the ship. These must have rubber soles to avoid slipping.

Clothing Onboard

Dress on board is casual and informal. You may prefer to bring slightly nicer clothing for the Captain's dinner but this is not required. For footwear, sturdy walking shoes or sneakers with a good grip sole for the slippery deck are all you need. For indoors on the ship, enclosed hard soled slippers/moccasins are a good option.

Additional Items

- Polarised sunglasses
- Sunscreen and lip protection
- Ear plugs
- Sleep Eye mask
- Camera and double the amount of memory cards you think you may need!
- Extra batteries and charger for your camera
- Bean bag to rest your camera on
- Binoculars
- Cleaning cloth for camera lens
- Zip-lock or dry bags to protect your equipment from getting wet during Zodiac rides
- Travel plug adapter
- Prescription medication (ensure you have enough to cover you for a further two weeks)
- Pills, wrist bands or patches for sea sickness (if applicable)
- Spare pair of prescription glasses (if applicable)
- Swimsuit in case you get to take the Polar Plunge!

PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP: BINOCULARS

A pair of binoculars per person is highly recommended as they can add immense quality to your travel experience as sightings will often be from a distance. Please refer to the below for extra information:

- All binoculars are listed by power and brightness (e.g. 7x20 or 10x50). The first number indicates magnification and the second relative brightness and field of vision. At least 7x power is recommended with 7x35 or 8x40 being an excellent choice.
- Wide-field binoculars allow you to see a wider area making it easier to spot wildlife.
- Compact models (in the 7x20 range) can fit in a pocket and are lightweight, however, they do sacrifice brightness and field of vision and are perhaps harder to use than larger models!
- Centre-focus binoculars are easier to use than individual focus models.
- Armoured or rubber-coated models are generally more shock resistant and some of these are also waterproof.

PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP: CAMERAS

The camera gear you bring to the Arctic is completely up to you! Wildlife will generally be 100 metres away or more. If you are a serious photographer, it would be a good idea to bring a telephoto lens (optimal would be 500-600mm), a mid-range zoom (70-200mm), a tele-converter (1.5x) and a wide-angle lens (24mm or less). If you do not currently own a lens that fits these suggestions then it is possible to rent a lens from a photography store, which is a more economical option. However, guests have also had success using a point-and-shoot camera.

The weather in the Arctic can be unpredictable and depending on the season we recommend bringing snow or rain covers and heavy-duty plastic bags to wrap your gear in.

Please note AECO bans the use of drones and unmanned aerial vehicles. These are not permitted under any circumstances.

Equipment

Whatever camera you use, be sure to check that it is working properly before you depart for Svalbard. If it is a new camera we recommend that you bring the manual to help address any problems you might unexpectedly encounter!

Batteries

Weak batteries account for the largest percentage of camera problems on expeditions, especially in colder climates. For this reason, please ensure you have spare camera batteries with you regardless of whether the camera is new or not.

Memory Card

For a once-in-a-lifetime expedition consider bringing more memory cards than you expect to need. On this expedition, there will be no stores nearby and you wouldn't want to run out of memory!

Tripods & Beanbags

Tripods are not useful on ships as they tend to transmit the ship's vibrations. If you are bringing a lens larger than 300mm then you may want to consider bringing a bean bag that can be placed on the railing to support your camera. Unlike tripods, bean bags tend to absorb the ship's vibrations.