March 19 - 30, 2019
(Exact dates of trip may change due to infrequent internal flights schedules which are not available at this time.)

Norway and the Arctic Circle
Northern Lights and Polar Bears

Leader: Dick Cable    Trip #1903    Co-Leader: Joe Thomas

There are places in this world whose primeval beauty evokes feelings of a rare intensity. With its stunning landscapes, the Arctic is one such place.

At the heart of these faraway lands, when the ice floes break up, when the sun no longer sets below the horizon and the snow-covered peaks shed their white mantle for a brief summer, our trip will introduce us to a polar desert of ice and water, a world where time stands still.

Our 12-day trip begins and ends in Oslo, the largest city in Norway which is quickly transforming into a cosmopolitan hub with an abundance of world-class museums, restaurants, and art,
while still maintaining the relaxed atmosphere of a much smaller town. We venture from Oslo north by plane and boat to experience the coastal beauty of this country. Along the way we’ll enjoy the smaller towns of the area and have time for snowshoeing, reindeer sledding, dog sledding and other activities. The trip culminates with a flight north, deep into the Arctic Circle.

Come join us for this amazing trip. This trip will leave you with memories for a lifetime and bragging rights forever. Don’t miss it.

OUR ITINERARY
(subject to change)

Day 1: March 19 Leave USA

Day 2: March 20 Arrive Oslo l Thon Opera Hotel (B&B)

Independent arrivals into Oslo.

From the airport, we take the Airport Express Train to Oslo Central, from where it is a very short walk to our hotel, the Thon Opera. Evening at leisure.

Bed & Breakfast – Thon Opera Hotel, Oslo

Day 3: March 21 Oslo walking tour l Thon Opera Hotel (B&B)

At leisure in Oslo. This morning, we will arrange for a three-hour guided walking tour of Oslo, after which we will have time to explore independently. We recommend a visit to the stunning sculptures in the Vigeland Sculpture Park, or some of Oslo’s fascinating museums, which include the Viking Ships Museum, Kon-tiki Raft, Polar Ship ‘Fram’ and the Akershus Fortress.

Bed & Breakfast – Thon Opera Hotel, Oslo
Day 4: March 22  Fly to Bodo, Boat to Lofoten (B,D)

Fly to Bodo. (departing Oslo 10:40am and arriving Bodo at 12:10pm). We can take a taxi to the Hurtigruten port and put our luggage on board the ship which arrives into Bodo at 12:30pm. We will then have a couple of hours to explore Bodo, or perhaps enjoy the splendid lunch buffet on board, before the ship sails for the Lofoten Islands.

At 3pm, depart Bodo on Hurtigruten sailing to the beautiful Lofoten archipelago. The ship will make a short stop at Stamsund on the southern part of the Lofoten Islands, before sailing north along the island chain to Svolvaer. A three-course dinner on board is included.

Expect to arrive at Svolvaer around 9pm. On arrival, transfer to our hotel, the Thon Lofoten, which is located a few minutes’ walk from the quayside.

1 night Bed & Breakfast – Thon Lofoten Hotel, Svolvaer

Day 5: March 23  Snowshoe Lofoten and cruise to Tromso (B&B)

This morning, set off on a four-hour guided snowshoe walk in stunning Lofoten scenery (all equipment is supplied).

Returning to our hotel in good time for lunch, the rest of the day is at leisure to explore the town of Svolvaer which can easily be explored on foot.

In the evening, board the northbound Hurtigruten ship, which sets sail at 10pm (boarding is at 9:00pm). If the weather conditions are right, the Hurtigruten ship provides a splendid vantage point for seeing the Northern Lights.

1 night Bed & Breakfast - We sleep tonight on board ship in unspecified twin-bed cabins.
Day 6: March 24  Arrive Tromso | Thon Lofoten Hotel (B&B)

Throughout the morning the ship will call at various ports in the Vesteralen Islands, as we make your way up the coast to Tromso, arriving around 2:30pm. Our hotel is situated a few minutes’ walk from the quay.

The rest of the afternoon is at leisure to enjoy this lovely city, with its cosy cafes, excellent restaurants and fascinating museums, not to mention the stunning Arctic Cathedral.

*Bed & Breakfast – Scandic Ishavshotel, Tromso – Superior Sea-view Room*

Day 7: March 25  Tromso Snowshoe Walk and Northern Lights Reindeer Sled Safari (B&B)

Start the day with a snowshoe safari to enjoy the stunning scenery and views around Tromso, before returning to town for lunch.

The afternoon is at leisure to explore Tromso as we please.

At 6pm we will be picked up for a 30-minute journey to a Sami camp, where we will be taken reindeer sledding with a Sami guide. We ride the sleds as passengers. The wilderness location has little artificial light, so conditions are ideal for seeing the Northern Lights, if weather conditions permit.

After the reindeer sledding, we will be served a traditional hot meal and learn more about the Sami culture, seated around a warm fire in the Sami tent. Return to Tromso late evening (approx. 10pm).

*Bed & Breakfast – Scandic Ishavshotel, Tromso – Superior Sea-view Room*
Day 8: March 26  Fly to Longyearbyen | Miners Cabins (B&B)

At leisure in Tromso until our flight departure for Longyearbyen.

On arrival at Longyearbyen, a private transfer is organized for the 10 minute drive to the Miners Cabins – simple guesthouse accommodation, where single rooms will be booked.

Depending on the exact arrival times of the group, we will arrange for a short tour of Longyearbyen this afternoon. The tour is a chance to learn about life in this most remote northern outpost. The sightseeing around town is mostly by bus, so we needn’t get out the polar gear just yet!

In the evening we will be briefed about the dogsled expedition scheduled for the next morning. There will also be time to go through our arctic equipment and ask any questions we may have about kit or activities. Then we are free to head out for dinner. There is a cozy bar and restaurant area at the Miners Cabins, or we may prefer to stroll into town to try one of Longyearbyen’s many restaurants.

Day 9: March 27 Longyear Glacier Ice Cave & Dog Sledding | Miners Cabins (B&L)

We will be collected from the our guesthouse after breakfast and driven to the dog kennels (12km from Longyearbyen). Once there we will be fitted for outer thermal clothes before setting off. Each sled will take two guests, allowing us to try riding as passenger and also mushing.

During the ride, we’ll stop at a beautiful ice cave within the glacier, taking an hour to explore the cave whilst the dogs rest. During the summer the ice cave becomes a bubbling meltwater river, while in the winter it is completely frozen over, revealing beautiful ice formations.
After exploring the cave, enjoy a light lunch. Depending on the weather, lunch may be served inside a heated tent until the dogs are ready to move again. By the time we’re finished, they will be well-rested and eager to head back down towards the dog yard – and so too, will we! The return journey is mostly downhill, but we will keep to a steady pace, with time to enjoy the unspoiled wilderness.

Return to the Miners Cabin. In the evening, there will be a clothing and kit check in preparation for the tomorrow’s snowmobile expedition. Dinner to our own account at the Miners or in town.

Day 10: March 28  Fjord Cruise to Pyramiden | Miners Cabins (B&B)

After breakfast, meet outside for the short transfer to the port of Longyearbyen. The 11 hour cruise, which includes a hot lunch on board, will take us far, far north of Longyearbyen into remote fjords, en route to the ghost town of Pyramiden.

We will sail north through the Isfjord and glide slowly past the bird cliff at Hatten. Here the Brunnich’s guillemot swarm in and out in big flocks. Like all bird cliffs in Svalbard, the cliff shines in bright shades of green, yellow and orange.

We will cross Sassenfjord and see the mighty mountain Tempelet guarding the entrance to Tempelfjord. This mountain landmark towers over the fjord like a Sphinx. Then on farther north to the Nordenskiöld glacier where we have lunch from a barbecue on the front deck.

The final destination is the harbour in Pyramiden, where our Russian guide will meet us. Please note that early in the boating season,
there might still be ice in the water in certain areas around Svalbard and it might not be possible to land at Pyramiden.

Polar bears are often sighted in this area, so we have to stay close to the guide and remain as a group. We will get a guided tour around the old Russian mining town of Pyramiden, which in its time was a luxurious town and working place for the communist miners.

Return to Longyearbyen and the Miners Cabins.

**Day 11: March 29  At leisure and flight home**

After breakfast, pack our bags ready for departure. We will be free to explore the town, do some last minute shopping or simply relax at the Miners. At midday, we rendezvous for the transfer to the airport and our own flight to Oslo.

_I night Bed & Breakfast – Thon Opera Hotel._

**DAY 12: March 30  Return to USA**

Breakfast at the hotel. Then make our own way to the airport and our own flight home.
As leaders, our goals for the group are to have fun, utilize your skills, and savor a foreign culture at reasonable cost and in the company of other adventurers with similar interests. We encourage your individual contributions, cooperation and good humor to enrich the group’s experience. We anticipate each participant’s engagement as part of a group, and expect each to abide by the leaders’ decisions and work towards the group having a good time. Be prepared to help your fellow participants and spend time with other participants on the trip. In doing so, you will help ensure each participant’s maximum experience.

**TRIP COST:**

**TRIP INCLUDES:**
- 10 nights 3/4* hotels with breakfasts; limited lunches and dinners (this trip is offered with limited meals included due to the fact that Norway dining may be very expensive. This allows people to pick and choose what they wish to spend on food as available);
- 3-day cruise; all listed activities (reindeer sledding, snowshoeing, dog sledding; travel insurance

**TRIP DOES NOT INCLUDE INT’L FLIGHT PLUS 3 INTERNAL FLIGHTS TOTALING APPROXIMATELY $1400.**

**CANCELLATION POLICY:**
Cancellations will receive a refund to the extent that it does not affect the trip status. Cancellations affecting the trip status may result in forfeiture of all or part of monies paid.

**Leaders:**

Dick Cable has been an AMC member for many years. He is a CT and Berkshire Chapter bike and hike leader. He has been an Adventure Travel Leader for 10 years and has led nearly 25 trekking, hiking, horse trekking, walking and biking trips to Yosemite, Mongolia, Nepal, Italy, Sicily, France, Norway, Finland, Tanzania, Cambodia, Vietnam, New Zealand, Patagonia, Peru, Easter Island, Germany, the Czech Republic and India/Bhutan. Dick is a retired teacher, Early Childhood administrator, and a national and international educational consultant. He is a certified trainer and fitness instructor. When in CT, he teaches senior fitness at a YMCA. He spends part of his year in Salamanca, Spain.

Joe Thomas has an avid interest in health and fitness which has paved the way to adventure travel. He has participated in bike trips through the Po Valley of Italy and the Camino de Santiago in Spain. He has co-led trips to Machu Picchu/ Easter Island, Italy, Patagonia, Dolomites, Tanzania, Vietnam/Cambodia and India/Bhutan.

Both leaders have a strong interest in sharing the allure of adventure excursions to the most beautiful and intriguing places on earth. Both are CPR and Wilderness First Aid

**Disclosures**

AMC Adventure Travel trips are run on a nonprofit basis. Leaders are not compensated except for their travel and administrative costs associated with the trip. A program fee is assessed toward AMC Adventure Travel Excursion program and administrative expenses.

For additional information, contact Dick at r.cable@sbcglobal.net or Joe at 203-755-5141 or thomasj73@sbcglobal.net.