



Packing Advice for Arctic Cruises

Tips to stay comfortable and warm

- ❑ Avoid overdressing to reduce perspiration
- ❑ Wear water repellent outer garments that will keep you dry on the outside and still “breathe” enough so that moisture from your body can escape.
- ❑ Body heat is most likely to be lost from your hands and feet. Keep them warm and dry. For hands, mittens are better than gloves.
- ❑ If the rest of your body is covered, as much as 90% of the heat you lose can come from your head, so be sure to wear a cap, beanie or balaclava. These items can be pulled down to protect your ears, forehead, neck and chin. The neck also needs protection with a woollen or synthetic scarf, that can be wrapped around the face, when travelling against the wind.
- ❑ Dress comfortable, loose layers. For anyone out in the cold, it is far better to wear layers of relatively light, loose clothing than one thick, heavy item. Between each layer there is a film of trapped air which, when heated by your body, acts as an excellent insulator. Keep from overheating.
- ❑ Wool and silk are superior to cotton because they can trap warm air. Synthetic fabrics that spring back into shape after compression are also good. When damp or wet, polyester down is better insulator than goose or duck down. Polar fleece is popular and recommended.

What to pack

When packing, don't weigh yourself down with too many clothes or too much gear. Select informal, practical attire for your trip that can be worn in layers, including:

- ❑ Warm Trousers: Ski pants are suitable if you have them; otherwise, bring any sturdy trousers that can be layered between your long underwear and rain pants. Jeans and corduroys are good both for excursions and wear aboard ship.
- ❑ Waterproof Pants (trousers): Water resistant “rain pants” of coated nylon are essential for your comfort. Wear them over your regular clothes to keep you warm and dry. Gore-Tex and similar fabrics are waterproof and “breathable”.
- ❑ Thermal Underwear: Silk or polypropylene underwear is highly recommended since it keeps you warm without adding bulk. Most people prefer a lightweight version - but this depends on your personal thermostat.
- ❑ Sweaters: Wool sweaters or a polar fleece jacket of medium weight are recommended.
- ❑ Turtlenecks: Bring several practical turtlenecks for layering and use around the ship.
- ❑ T-shirts (for layers and to wear inside the vessel as temperatures are comfortably warm).
- ❑ Mittens and gloves: Keeping your hands warm and dry is a challenge - and important. Thin polypropylene gloves can be worn underneath warm mittens. Thus, you can take off the mittens to operate your camera and still have some protection from the cold. It's a good idea to bring an extra pair of wool mittens to wear if your other pair gets wet (or lost).
- ❑ Woollen cap and a scarf (Be sure to protect your ears.)

- ❑ Warm socks: Sturdy, tall wool socks worn over a thin pair of silk, polypropylene or cotton/wool socks should provide enough insulation for your feet. Bring several pairs, in case you get your feet wet.
- ❑ Waterproof & windproof Jacket: A well fitting garment with attached hood that can be worn over your under layers with reasonable comfort. It is most important that this garment is thoroughly water proof. Gore-Tex or sailing gear are ideal although it is possible to find cheaper waterproof gear. The waterproof jacket is a very important layer of clothing. There is nothing worse than wind on wet clothes at zero degrees.
- ❑ Backpack: A waterproof nylon backpack, rucksack, or similar bag with shoulder straps, for carrying your camera and other gear during shore excursions. Be sure to choose one with shoulder straps so that your hands are free. It is very important that you have some means of keeping your camera dry. You don't want your camera to be splashed in a zodiac!
- ❑ Sunglasses: Good quality sunglasses. Note that the glare from the water and surrounding snow/ice can be quite penetrating, even when the sky is overcast.
- ❑ A pair of binoculars is highly recommended.
- ❑ Camera and plenty of film. It is also advisable to bring an extra camera in case of a malfunction or accident. Cameras have been dropped in the water and it is a disappointed photographer who can't take pictures. Bring twice the amount of film you first plan to bring!
- ❑ Earplugs may be useful if you are sharing a cabin with a snorer.
- ❑ When using the shared showers it might be handy to take a pair of sandals/slippers.
- ❑ Teva Sandals or similar are very useful to wear around the ship.

RUBBER BOOTS

You will need a pair of knee-high rubber boots (now provided for use on most ships, though the exact available size can not be guaranteed). These boots are to be used in virtually all of our shore landings with Zodiacs. A pair of pull-on rubber, unlined and completely waterproof boots that are mid calf or higher with a strong, ridged non-skid sole is ESSENTIAL for landings. Stepping out of the Zodiacs to shore almost always involves stepping into water, it is important to have waterproof boots that are high enough to avoid water going over the top and into the boots. Also, expect poor footing on the ice and ashore. For this reason boots such as Sorrels, snow boots, hiking boots or low rubber boots are not satisfactory (you'll get your feet wet!)

Do not bring heavy, cumbersome boots that make it difficult to walk. Boots with waffle soles like those on a hiking boot or running shoe tend to give the best footing. Avoid imitation 'rubber boots' made from PVC. These are unyielding and more prone to slipping. Ideal boots are the "Wellies" and "Viking" boots, other brands of rubber boots can be purchased from work clothing stores, surplus stores, farm co-ops, garden supply & outdoor stores and marine supply houses.

Remember that you will be wearing these boots a lot. So they must be comfortable for extended wear and walking. The boots should not be too tight or too sloppy. If they are too tight you will get cold feet and if they are too loose fitting you can add an insole or extra socks to take up the space within reason. For maximum warmth, wear loose-fitting boots and two pairs of socks. Rubber boots generally come in whole sizes and many brands are uni-sex sizes. Be sure to get the best fit no matter what size they are.

Your boots are probably the most important items you'll bring. If you have questions or just need some further advise please don't hesitate to contact us.

A good rule for packing:

Pack less clothes & more film than you think you'll need.