



Planning your Polar Adventure

Booking Flights

Travel Insurance

Medical Evacuation Insurance

Traveling to the ends of the Earth is exceptional in every regard. Unlike other adventures, this journey will require a little more attention to your travel plans. Figuring out which flights to book and which travel insurance policy to purchase requires extra energy, but it is time well spent. To assist you, we have prepared some tips and suggestions for making your travel plans.

Tips for booking flights

- ✓ Purchase the ticket that offers the greatest flexibility! Discount tickets through websites or consolidators may sound appealing with their low prices, but always check the rules and regulations that apply to the fare *before your purchase the ticket!* Polar travel is very weather dependent and delays are often the rule, rather than the exception. In addition, changes to the itinerary can occur in the months leading up to the expedition. If you book your tickets months in advance ensure that you get tickets that *are both refundable and, most importantly, changeable!* **We cannot stress this enough!** Frequent flier tickets can be extremely useful depending on their restrictions.
- ✓ When choosing your dates and times of travel, ensure that you are allowing adequate time to get to your destination (Longyearbyen or Punta Arenas). What happens if you miss a flight? What happens if a flight is cancelled? Will you still be able to make it to Longyearbyen or Punta Arenas in time to meet up with the group, have your pre-expedition briefing, and make the flight? Keep in mind that oftentimes if you miss a scheduled flight (or have other travel problems) your luggage may be a day or two behind you! *Ensure that your travel plans are not cutting it too close!* Giving yourself an extra day in town prior to the start of your expedition is a safe insurance policy!
- ✓ You may be flying during high season (the holiday season for South Pole flights and the North Pole season for North Pole flights). Seats on these flights can be very limited. Don't wait until the last minute to book your flights!
- ✓ Consider working with a full-service travel agency to book your flights. A travel agent can help you explore the options for purchasing flexible tickets, and provide

sound advice. He or she can also make all the necessary corrections to your plans should you become delayed, saving you the time and hassle of making phone calls to foreign numbers and waiting around the help desk at the airport. We recommend contacting Pirjo DeHart of CTT Destinations at NWPassage@CTTDestinations.com or (800-909-6647).

- ✓ If you use a travel agent please have them forward to us your complete travel itinerary. You should also give us their contact information so that we can contact them on your behalf (if necessary) to advise them of delays that you may be experiencing on the ice.
- ✓ Your travel agent may try to sell you a lower fare ticket in exchange for less flexibility. While this is a kind gesture, ***you should insist on the highest level of flexibility. If your agent has any questions, please have them contact our office 847.256.4409***

Getting to...

Spitzbergen

Traveling to and from Longyearbyen, Spitzbergen, is relatively easy. Connections to Oslo can be made through many major European cities (London, Paris, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, and Stockholm). From Oslo, most flights stop in Tromso on their way to Longyearbyen. Two carriers fly into Longyearbyen: Norwegian (www.norwegian.no) and SAS (www.flysas.com). As with all of your travel plans, we highly suggest purchasing a ticket that allows for the most flexibility. Oftentimes airlines have special travel passes that allow for unlimited changes to the dates and times of travel. For instance, SAS often has a "Scandinavian Air Pass" that allows for unlimited date and time of travel changes to flights inside of Norway. In order to become eligible for this pass you must fly SAS for your Trans-Atlantic flight. Check with your agent about travel passes for SAS & Norwegian.

Punta Arenas

Traveling to and from Punta Arenas, Chile, is relatively easy. Connections to Santiago can be made through several US and European cities. From Santiago most flights connect through Puerto Montt before arriving in Punta Arenas. Lan Chile is the only major airline that flies into Punta Arenas, and that has an office in Punta Arenas. If you are delayed on Antarctica, it will be easier to re-schedule your return flight home if you have booked with Lan Chile. Even if you have a fully flexible ticket, you may need to go to the Lan Chile office to make the actual changes to your flight itinerary. In this instance, it may be beneficial to have a travel agent who is familiar with travel to and from Punta Arenas working on your behalf. Please contact us for travel agent recommendations.

Greenland

Traveling to and from Greenland is relatively easy. The starting point of expeditions heading West to East is Kangerlussuaq, Greenland. Kangerlussuaq is accessible by Air Greenland (+299 34 85 85) and SAS (www.flysas.com) direct from Copenhagen several days a week. Please contact them directly for flight information. The West to East

crossing ends in Kulusuk, Greenland. There are direct flights from Kulusuk to Iceland most days of the week. If you prefer to fly back to Copenhagen you'll first need to fly to Nuuk, Greenland (for Air Greenland flights) or back to Kangerlussuaq via Nuuk for SAS flights. Please contact us for travel agent recommendations.

Travel Insurance

We require that all participants on our Polar expeditions and adventures have travel insurance. Travel insurance will protect your investment in the trip if the unlikely occurs; (you break your leg, a family member becomes ill, etc.) There are many benefits to having travel insurance, but the reason that we require it is so that you are fully protected if you need to back out of the expedition at a late date (when many of our costs are unrecoverable).

We do not endorse one travel insurer over another, but many of our clients have purchased travel insurance from Travel Guard. We have enclosed information about Travel Guard and a few other travel insurance companies in your confirmation packet. If you are a non-US citizen or resident Travel Guard may not be able to write your policy, however their parent company, AIG has many offices worldwide that can write policies. Most companies have a number of policies that offer different levels of protection. The cost of the travel insurance depends on a number of factors including the cost of your expedition, your age, and the amount of coverage you want to have.

A few things to keep in mind when purchasing travel insurance:

- ✓ Several policies offer upgrades (such as exemptions for pre-existing medical conditions, or more general coverage) **if you purchase the policy within 15 days of your first trip payment.** These incentives can be very beneficial!
- ✓ *If you are not a US resident*, contact us for assistance or check with a local travel agent to find travel insurers in your country. Many US travel insurance companies do not insure non-US residents (if you are a non-US citizen with a US address you may be eligible).
- ✓ Read all of the small print. Pay close attention to the general exclusions. For instance, some policies exclude benefits if you plan to go mountain climbing (**important to know if you are climbing Vinson Massif!**)
- ✓ If you plan to get your medical evacuation insurance through your travel insurance company, double check the limits and ensure that they will cover you for the activities that you will be participating in (skiing, dogsledding, etc)

Medical Evacuation Insurance

We require that all participants on our Polar expeditions and adventures (with the exception of North Pole Champagne Flight participants) carry medical evacuation insurance. Medical evacuation insurance will cover the lofty expenses of evacuating you to the nearest medical facility if you should become injured or ill. These costs can soar well over \$100,000 and YOU will be responsible for the full payment! Needless to say, it is smart to have medical evacuation insurance. *Some travel insurance policies include medical evacuation. If you are planning to use your travel insurance's medical*

*evacuation coverage, make sure that it offers at least \$300,000 coverage. Make sure that the insurance will cover your evacuation from the “point of injury” and not from the nearest hospital or medical clinic. In addition, closely review the insurer’s policy regarding pre-existing conditions and excluded activities. **This is especially important if you are planning to climb the Vinson Massif, as often mountain climbing is an “excluded activity”!***

We hope that this information proves helpful to you. If you have additional questions regarding your travel plans or insurance, do not hesitate to contact our office 800.732.7328 in the US & Canada, or (+001) 847.256.4409 worldwide.