

Crystal Cruises Northwest Passage 2016 Frequently Asked Questions

General

Where exactly is the Northwest Passage? The Northwest Passage is a historical sea passage of the North American continent. It is a series of waterways north of the Arctic Circle that link the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, from Greenland through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago and onwards into the Beaufort Sea, originally explored as a shorter trade route between Europe and Asia.

1. What will be different about this cruise?

- **Historic event for Crystal guests** -- The opportunity to experience Crystal Cruises' first expedition-style cruise and our maiden transit of the renowned Northwest Passage, aboard Crystal Serenity.
- **Significant onboard expedition team** – Approximately 14 expedition experts to offer both enrichment on board and guidance on shore, with numerous lectures, seminars and workshops during the transit.
- **New Crystal Wilderness Adventures and unique, immersive Crystal Adventures® Shore Excursions** -- Crystal is preparing a wide selection of Crystal Adventures® Shore Excursions to immerse guests in the Arctic region and offer once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Under the approval of the local communities, we will be visiting remote areas with limited facilities, a limited infrastructure, and without established docks. On some “Crystal Wilderness Adventures,” (a new type of Crystal Adventures® created just for this voyage), guests will disembark directly onto the vast Arctic wilderness using Zodiacs.
- **Escort vessel accompaniment with “adventure equipment”** -- An escort vessel will accompany Crystal Serenity throughout the transit and offer a platform from which guests will be able to disembark for landings in the wilderness, kayak in scenic coves, take guided Zodiac cruises and even likely explore destinations by helicopter.
- **Flexible itinerary schedule for serendipitous exploration** -- To maximize the myriad of possibilities on the expedition, there will be far more itinerary flexibility. Scheduled port calls and day-to-day activities will be dependent on weather and wildlife opportunities. During the passage, several ‘expedition days’ will be determined and finalized 24 hours or less in advance based on current conditions.

2. How long has Crystal been planning this expedition?

- Crystal management began investigating the idea of a transit in January 2013. Since then, we have been working with EYOS-polar expedition experts, local community leaders, along with representatives from Transport Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard, to examine the feasibility and scope of the transit.

- More than 18 months of careful planning and analysis has already gone into this project from Jan 2013 to July 2014, and will continue up to, and through, departure.

3. Are there any medical and/or physical requirements for this voyage?

- There are no medical or physical requirements for joining this voyage. We urge guests to carefully select Crystal Adventures® Shore Excursions or Wilderness Adventures based on one's fitness level, as in some cases we will be going ashore in small, inflatable boats and landing directly onto the shore without any docks. For Zodiac access, guests must be able to walk up and down stairs and negotiate challenging gangways and gangplanks.
- No vaccinations are required.
- As facilities in the Northwest Passage communities are limited, shuttle busses or similar forms of transportation will be either non-existent or very limited.
- Most sightseeing on land is on foot. Expect uneven terrain and some slippery, rocky slopes. There are few warning signs or barriers to alert travelers to dangers when visiting glaciers and nature areas. Additionally, high winds and icy conditions can exacerbate the difficulty of visiting these areas.
- Travel to these regions is not suitable for people who require frequent or on-going medical attention. Guests in wheelchairs, or those with any conditions that demand special attention while travelling, are required to travel with a companion, even when occupying handicap accessible staterooms. Crystal crew and fellow guests are not able to provide care for guests with medical conditions, except under emergency circumstances. Additionally, certain landings and activities may be restricted for certain guests due to landing conditions and guest ability. This will be at the sole discretion of the Captain in the essence of passenger safety.
- Crystal Cruises reserves the right to refuse passage to anyone who fails to advise us of a physical disability or is deemed unfit for travel. Please ensure that we are aware of any physical disability or frequent or on-going medical requirements prior to the cruise.

4. Do I need to purchase trip insurance?

- Due to the remote locations, emergency medical evacuation by plane from the Arctic regions can reach costs of \$50,000 or more. Therefore, proof of a minimum of \$50,000 per person in Emergency Evacuation Repatriation insurance is required to participate in this cruise.
- Guests who do not purchase Crystal's Guest Protection Program must provide proof of adequate emergency medical evacuation coverage details to Crystal at least 90 days prior to the cruise departure date. Please include carrier name, policy number, emergency contact number and limits of coverage. This information must be emailed to NorthwestPassage@crystalcruises.com, or mailed to Documentation, Crystal Cruises, 11755 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 900, Los Angeles, CA, 90025.
- Trip insurance is not required, but strongly encouraged.

5. Will there be Internet/mobile phone coverage? How will I be able to contact friends and family back home?

- Crystal Serenity's Internet and telephone services will be available for approximately 90% of the expedition. However, there may be a few days in the northern-most section of the itinerary where the signal is either slowed considerably or not available at all.
- There will not be shore-based cell phone signals along the transit, except in the communities and towns we will be visiting. However, guests are requested to not use this signal when in port, as it will overwhelm the local system and disrupt the communication within the community.
- While communication channels may be temporarily limited or unavailable to guests, the ship's Captain and crew will always have operational and emergency communication throughout the entire voyage.
- We will provide guests with direct phone numbers to Crystal Serenity, which they may give to loved ones at home to enable them to contact a guest in case of emergency.

6. How cold will it be? Will there be rough seas?

- The Arctic in the summer is not as cold as might be expected. During the day, temperatures can be pleasant and sunny. Highs in Cambridge Bay, Canada (the midpoint of the cruise) in late August average 48F/9C, and, in early September in Pond Inlet, approximately 40F/4C. During the evening, the sea keeps temperatures from dropping precipitously, with temperatures reaching an average low of 34F/1C in Cambridge Bay and 28F/-2C in Pond Inlet.
- Generally, the Northwest Passage is sheltered from large ocean swells. While it is possible that high winds or storms could cause the ship to pitch or roll on occasion, in general, the transit itself is expected to be calm.

7. What should I pack?

- In general, for a range of temperatures, we recommend packing clothes that you can layer, such as loose, natural, breathable fabrics in cotton or wool. Windproof, waterproof clothing and shoes are key, as weather may change rapidly. In colder destinations, it's important not to overdress to the point of perspiration. Wet skin can lead to dangerous loss of body heat. If you wear several light- to medium-weight layers under a parka, you can better adjust your personal temperature.
- Crystal Cruises will provide water-resistant parkas and boot rentals. Additional details will be confirmed as Wilderness Adventures are confirmed.
- Guests booking Crystal Wilderness Adventures and Crystal Boutique Adventures, and those planning to participate in wilderness landings, will be provided with a detailed list of recommended clothing. Guests will need to pack sufficiently warm clothes and sweaters, in addition to lighter articles to adjust to their own comfort. It is useful to know how your individual body reacts to cold as this will guide you as to how much or little to bring along.

- Crystal will provide a link to an outfitter that will have a specially prepared collection of clothes suitable for the expedition, as well as a detailed list of recommended clothing and gear for trip participants.
- Onboard evening attire will be significantly relaxed, due to the nature of the voyage. There will be no black tie optional evenings, and other evening dress code recommendations will be determined and advised prior to the voyage.

Guest Experience

1. Since this is an expedition-style cruise, will Crystal be working with any researchers, scientists, writers, photographers, or other expert explorers as a part of the voyage?

- On board Crystal Serenity, an approximately 14-person expedition team will offer enrichment throughout the passage. These experts will lecture on a variety of topics -- from the history of the Northwest Passage and wildlife (including polar bears, birds and marine mammals of the area) to modern Inuit culture. In addition, they will conduct seminars and workshops and be active participants in the voyage, giving all guests an opportunity to interact with them directly.
- Prominent luminaries in exploration, science, and/or politics will also join parts of the expedition, giving additional insights to the enrichment program.
- Accomplished wildlife and landscape photographers will also be on board, offering lectures and tips for all guests. For additional fees, guests can join specialized hands-on photo workshops and seminars and photography-focused Crystal Adventures® Shore Excursions.
- A local Arctic guide will also be on board to guide the Expedition Leader and onboard management team on Inuit traditions, and to provide guest lectures with insight into the Inuit community.

2. Considering the location, there may be unexpected opportunities in nature, weather conditions or other circumstances that may occur during the cruise. How much flexibility is there in the itinerary? Will we be able to get off every day?

- As with other sea cruises, there will be a mix of several days at sea with scheduled port calls when guests can disembark.
- The itinerary has been designed to be flexible to take maximum advantage of weather and ice conditions and allow for possible delays due to ice concentration. This flexibility also allows for opportunistic wildlife spotting and viewing. There will be several surprise “expedition days” mid-Northwest Passage where the Captain will plan the itinerary based on current conditions, often with 24 hours or less advance notice.
- During these “expedition days,” there may be opportunities to disembark Crystal Serenity on a Crystal Wilderness Adventure, such as a hike across the tundra with an expedition guide, a kayak in protected bays, a helicopter ride, a guided Zodiac cruise or other possibilities.

Continuously throughout the transit, the expedition team will scan the shore and the seas for wildlife, and, where possible, the Captain will maneuver the ship to preferred locations for better viewing and photo opportunities.

3. If the communities don't have docks for *Crystal Serenity* or its tenders, how will we get ashore?

- Crystal Serenity will carry a portable system that will allow the crew to build a temporary pier for the ship's tenders at the main settlements on the itinerary. In such cases, getting ashore will be very similar to most other ports where Crystal Serenity tenders rather than docks.
- For some Crystal Wilderness Adventures where shore landings occur outside of any communities, Zodiacs will transport participating guests to a landing spot. Adventure indeed, everyone may then have to wade through a few inches of water in order to step ashore!
- Crystal Serenity's accompanying escort ship will carry the Zodiacs, which are sturdy, and exceptionally safe, inflatable rubber vessels that are widely used throughout the world in both polar and tropical passenger and scientific expeditions.

4. What wildlife will I see?

- Seals and walrus can be seen throughout, and, in Davis Strait, Crystal Serenity might encounter humpback whales. Beluga or bowhead whales are possible. Musk-ox might be seen on shore, either in Canada or Greenland, and the Northwest Passage boasts teeming colonies of kittiwakes, guillemots and murre.
- In general, wildlife along the Northwest Passage is unpredictable and often difficult to spot. Fortunately, the expedition team will keep a sharp lookout throughout the transit and notify all via the public address system (available on in-room television as well) when anything of note is spotted.
- While polar bears thrive in this region, there is no guarantee that any will be seen on the transit or that the ship will be able to approach within a few miles. Be assured, if an opportunity exists for viewing, and conditions allow, the Captain will attempt to position the vessel accordingly.

5. Will Crystal's usual assortment of Crystal Adventures® shore excursions be offered during this cruise?

Crystal will be offering five different types of Crystal Adventures® on this expedition:

1. Community visits
2. Crystal Wilderness Adventures (NEW!)
3. Crystal Boutique Adventures
4. You Care, We Care Voluntourism Adventures
5. Extended Land Programs/Overland Adventures

- **Community visits:** This option will be complimentary and will be available for guests who would like to go ashore to explore independently. Community visits will only be scheduled in the Canadian and Greenland port calls listed on the Northwest Passage itinerary, however, this may be restricted to specific areas due to wildlife and/or other factors which may be deemed unsafe for guests. While all guests will have the opportunity to proceed ashore and explore these communities on their own, due to the limited infrastructure, we will need to stagger the timings of guests' visits ashore and limit the total number of guests ashore at any one time. This is to prevent over-crowding in the ports and ensure the best possible shoreside experience for all guests.
- **Crystal Wilderness Adventures:** During several days in the Northwest Passage, Crystal Serenity will be making unscheduled, opportunistic stops in wilderness locations that will enable us to offer shoreside experiences escorted by our professional expedition team that will have very limited availability. Examples will include hiking with a naturalist on the tundra, kayaking, zodiac cruises led by an expedition staff member and/or other experiences. These varied programs will be dependent on weather and the ability to safely land guests ashore. They will only be available for purchase on board and we will take waitlists for those who wish to participate. We will contact guests on the waitlist sometimes as close as 24-hours in advance to give them an opportunity to book the excursions offered.
- **Crystal Boutique Adventures:** Crystal will be arranging a limited number of over-the-top-experiences which will have extremely limited participation, such as a helicopter tour of remote areas. These programs will also be dependent on weather and the ability to safely land guests ashore. Guests will need to pre-reserve these tours in advance.
- Crystal's signature "**You Care. We Care.**" complimentary voluntourism program will be available, in which guests and crew can volunteer their time in ports to help the local communities and generate a lasting, meaningful benefit from their visit.
- **Overland Adventures and/or pre- and post-cruise Extended Land Programs:** Crystal is planning pre/post land programs and exciting Crystal Overland Adventures that will allow guests to explore beyond the ship and ports. Potential Overland Adventures options might include a two-night trip to see the Caribou migration, overnights in remote fishing lodges, or an overnight on the Greenland ice-cap.

All Crystal Adventures® Shore Excursions for the Northwest Passage expedition are still being developed and are not yet confirmed. We hope to have them available for purchase online and ready for pre-reservations 18 months in advance of cruise departure.

6. What tours / day activities are included in the cost of the fare?

- All guests will be able to enjoy the small communities via complimentary "community visits" during calls in Cambridge Bay and Pond Inlet. They will have the opportunity to experience firsthand modern life in the Arctic, including daily chores indigenous to this part of the world, as well as the rich cultural heritage of the region.
- Lectures and seminars provided by the expedition team are included in the cruise fare and allow guests to learn more about the culture, history and wildlife of the region.

7. What will we see in and around the towns?

- The communities Crystal Serenity will be visiting are largely Inuit in population, have only a few thousand inhabitants, and do not offer the type of sightseeing attractions or the infrastructure expected on a more conventional cruise. Instead, guests will see daily life in these remote communities first-hand. Local community centers will be open, with cultural performances and demonstrations such as throat singing or traditional dress displays throughout the day. There will also be opportunities to visit a few small museums and the local co-op in each town, along with the chance to shop for traditional Inuit art.
- Crystal is also working with local operators to develop additional optional Crystal Adventures® Shore Excursions to sites outside of the communities. Possibilities range from a round at the northernmost nine-hole golf course in the world to fishing trips and ATV tours.

Environmental

1. What environmental protections will Crystal take?

- During the transit, Crystal Serenity will be voluntarily using Marine Gas Oil, a low-sulphur fuel. Marine Gas Oil contains less than 0.1% sulphur, is extremely clean burning and is well in excess of the existing environmental regulations. In addition, Crystal Serenity's transit speed has been set at a relatively low speed so that only 2 of the ship's 6 diesel generators will be required for the majority of the transit, which in combination with the fuel used, will minimize carbon footprint.
- The Escort vessel accompanying Crystal Serenity will be held to the same environmental standards as Crystal ships, burning the same low-sulphur fuel as Crystal Serenity.

2. What will you do with the garbage produced onboard? Will you leave it in the Arctic?

- Crystal will operate, as it always does, with a "nothing overboard" policy. No garbage or food waste of any kind will be thrown overboard. Some garbage will be burned in the incinerator on board, while other trash, recycling and food waste will be collected and stored on board the escort vessel. This waste will then be offloaded outside of the Arctic communities into specific collection facilities that are equipped to handle waste.

Safety

1. What safety precautions will Crystal take?

Crystal has been working on this project for approximately 18 months and will be implementing a number

of additional precautions to ensure the safety of all guests and crew, as well as to protect the pristine environment. Some, but not all, additional precautions are listed below:

- A full expedition team, experienced in the Northwest Passage, will be on board to advise and work with the Captain and onboard management on the transit.
- Additional officers will join the Bridge Team for the voyage, and team members will receive enhanced education, specifically focusing on polar and ice navigation.
- Two pilots with several decades of experience in the Northwest Passage will also be on board to complement the Captain and Bridge Team. (Other commercial vessels normally operate with only one pilot; having two ensures there is a qualified pilot with Arctic sailing experience on the bridge 24 hours a day.)
- Two ice searchlights, a high-resolution radar and other equipment will be installed to allow the vessel to scan the waters ahead looking for underwater obstructions or uncharted rocks. Very few commercial vessels have this technology, and it will help ensure Crystal Serenity has the most advanced technology available to avoid unexpected underwater terrain that could otherwise be an obstacle.
- On our expedition, an escort vessel with an experienced team will travel with Crystal Serenity.
- A helicopter will be carried on board the escort vessel to allow for real time ice condition reconnaissance.
- In addition to the oil pollution mitigation gear that Crystal Serenity always has on board, the ship will carry additional response and damage control equipment on the escort vessel.
- A diver who could assist with emergency response will also be part of the expedition team.

2. Is the Northwest Passage too remote a destination for the safe operation of a cruise ship?

- Cruise ships safely operate routinely in remote areas, and, in fact, the Northwest Passage is not as remote as one might expect. During the transit, Crystal Serenity will be passing many communities, including ones where commercial jets provide regularly scheduled air service.
- To administer and patrol the area, the Canadian Coast Guard also positions a fleet of vessels in the Northwest Passage every season. This is unlike in Antarctica, where no single nation patrols or is responsible for the waterways.

3. Isn't the Northwest Passage too full of ice to transit?

- Crystal Serenity plans to transit during the period of when ice concentration is minimal. The typical conditions along the planned route during the Arctic summer are substantially free of ice. With these extremely low ice concentrations, keeping the ship well clear of ice is entirely feasible.

- In addition, an escort vessel will accompany Crystal Serenity. The escort vessel will have ice breaking capabilities and would be able to assist in the extremely unlikely event that the ice concentration becomes a challenge for Crystal Serenity. Further, we will be working very closely with the Canadian Ice Services to monitor ice conditions to ensure they remain safe for transit.

4. What happens if there is a medical emergency?

- Crystal Serenity's medical facilities are some of the finest at sea and are well equipped to handle most medical situations that would arise during the transit. Regardless, Crystal's response plan has been shared with the Canadian and US Coast Guards to address any urgent medical needs that may arise.
- In the event that a medical evacuation is necessary, the shadow vessel will be carrying a helicopter to assist. Most of the communities that the ship will pass have airfields for further evacuation options if necessary.

5. Do we need to worry about polar bears when going ashore?

- Polar bears usually do not enter the towns and communities where guests will be going ashore, and there are ample houses, buildings and shelters in these communities. During Crystal Wilderness Adventures, the expedition team will accompany the guests ashore. The expedition team is well practiced in polar bear protection and will be carrying environmentally-safe non-lethal and lethal deterrents, and other equipment for additional protection. Recommended protocols on group size and behavior will be strictly followed.

Local Community Impact/Footprint

What sort of impact will this cruise have on the local communities?

- Crystal is committed to ensuring that the local Inuit communities are positively impacted by our visit. We have already begun working with local communities, Nunavut Tourism and the Nunavut Impact Review Board, to ensure that our visit will be embraced by the local communities and be respectful of their traditions and daily way of life.
- We have already begun making visits to the local communities to understand firsthand how Crystal can make the most positive impact. We will be discussing a number of ideas, ranging from helping with the construction of new buildings, scholarships for school children or bringing additional medical supplies. We hope to create easy ways for guests to voluntarily assist the communities along the way, as well.
- In some ports, we will be limiting the maximum number of guests allowed on shore at the same time to only a few hundred (rotations of approx. 100 – 200 at a time). Guests not booked on Crystal Adventures® Shore Excursions will be able to rotate ashore throughout the day in numbers similar to some expedition ships that operate in this region every year.

Booking Procedures

What are the deposit and/or cancellation policies for booking this cruise?

- Initial deposit - 20% will be required to secure the booking, \$500 of this deposit will be non-refundable.
- Final Payment – will be due 180 days prior to departure
- Cancellation Fee Schedule

After deposit	\$500
180 – 121 days	20%
120 – 61 days	50%
60 days	100%

- **Solo Traveler Fares:** For the Northwest Passage cruise (v6319), solo traveler fares are available at 200% of the offered (double occupancy) per person cruise fare, and are subject to the deposit and cancellation guidelines as noted above. Solo Fares are capacity-controlled, subject to change and/or may be withdrawn at any time without notice. Please contact Crystal Cruises or your travel agent for the most up-to-date Solo Traveler Fare.
- **Crystal Society Milestones:** All Crystal Society member will earn 4 (four) Milestone credits for this voyage. However, milestone redemption is **not** available on this voyage.

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