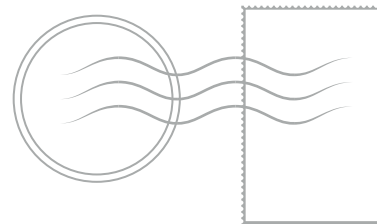


## DESTINATIONS

SOLO TRAVEL | GREENLAND

# POSTCARD Greenland



Sue Bryant takes the plunge on a solo cruise from Spitsbergen to Reykjavik

We're in East Greenland, and five of us are shivering in our swimming costumes on a beach strewn with ice. We join hands and race into the freezing sea, screaming our heads off, to cheers from our fellow passengers.

There's no better way to bond with new friends than the Polar Plunge, a rite of passage on Arctic and Antarctic voyages. Back on G Adventures' *Expedition*, we down shots of Aquavit and cram into the sauna on a high.

I'm travelling solo on a 14-night voyage around Svalbard and Greenland. The trip certainly packs in the thrills, from sightings of polar bears to invigorating hikes over the tundra against a backdrop of jagged, snowy mountains and towering icebergs.

I'd wondered how it would feel, being alone; my backpacking days are in the distant past and I'm more used to travelling with family or my partner. But like a lot of people on this trip, circumstances were such that I'm sailing solo. G Adventures offers a cabin-share scheme so single travellers can keep the cost down. Of 129 on board, 37 are travelling alone, and we're a diverse crowd. Among my new friends are a South African skydiver, an Australian academic and a banker from San Francisco. The only niggle I hear from those sharing is about snoring.

The ship has a happy, laid-back vibe. In reality, you'd struggle to be lonely, as all the tables in the dining room are shared and we do everything together. Twice a day, we either hike or explore by Zodiac, getting up close to enormous glaciers and spotting the animals of the high Arctic: polar bears, Arctic foxes, walruses, reindeer and musk oxes. A crack squad of 14 expedition leaders, ranging from geologists and botanists to a resident artist, keep us educated and entertained with talks.

Travelling alone, I push myself out of my comfort zone by joining an art class, despite being terrible at art and opting for the longest, toughest hikes. It's a struggle at first to sit with strangers at dinner – but does anybody find this easy? However, with so many incredible shared experiences conversation never runs dry, and we part with hugs and promises to keep in touch. **TW**



### BOOK IT

A 14-night Arctic Highlights cruise from Longyearbyen to Reykjavik costs from £4,799 in a shared cabin, including all meals and activities, plus several days exploring the vast East Greenland National Park, departing August 31, 2020. Flights are not included. [gadventures.co.uk](http://gadventures.co.uk)



FROM TOP: G Adventures' Arctic ship *Expedition*; Sue Bryant

PICTURE CREDITS: Clare Forster; Andy Gilbert; Shutterstock