WONDERS OF THE ARCTIC:
Voyage from Greenland to Canada’s Nova Scotia

Aboard the New Expedition Cruise Ship VEGA
September 23 - October 10, 2024
This voyage along the shores of Baffin Bay, through the Labrador Sea, and into the Gulf of St. Lawrence combines wild landscapes and seascapes of glaciers, fjords, and icebergs with villages and settlements whose recorded history dates to the arrival of Norsemen from the east in the 10th century followed by migrating Inuit from the west in the 13th.

Five days on Greenland's western coast begin in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Disko Bay, with its magnificent calving glaciers and year-round population of beluga whales. Working our way south, through a world of fjords and ice floes and pausing along the way to visit Inuit communities that dot the shore, we explore a wilderness that remains largely unchanged since the time of Erik the Red, and call at the site of his settlement in Nuuk, now Greenland's capital.

Crossing the Davis Strait, we reach the southern end of Baffin Island in Canadian Nunavut, where the town of Iqaluit invites us to experience the customs, traditions, and crafts of the Inuit who govern the province. Here in Frobisher Bay and on nearby small islands, we will be on the lookout for polar bears, whales, and walrus, as well as for the myriad seabirds who nest along the cliffs. Then, as we sail along the coast of Labrador and Newfoundland, we visit the Torngat Mountains, sacred to the Inuit, and the abandoned missionary community of Hebron, before exploring the UNESCO World Heritage Norse settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows and discovering the wonders of Gros Morne National Park.

Our special guest lecturer throughout the voyage will be Pulitzer-prize-winning author Jared Diamond. In a series of lectures and discussions, Jared will bring his experience and expertise to bear on much that we see and do, with a particular emphasis on why Inuit communities in this part of the world were successful while Viking settlements failed—the subject of a major section of his 2005 award-winning book, Collapse.

The vessel for this cruise is the Swan Hellinic Vega, a state-of-the-art, new-generation expedition cruise ship built in Finland and launched in 2022. Accommodating only 152 guests in superb staterooms and balcony suites, Vega features elegant common areas and the most modern mechanical and environmentally conscious technology, far exceeding the standards set by international regulatory agencies.

Please take a moment to look over the enclosed brochure and then begin making plans to join Professor Jared Diamond and fellow travelers next fall as we set off an expedition to explore the Wonders of the Arctic.

Warm regards,

Dr. Michael Shermer
Executive Director
The Skeptics Society

P.S. 7% of your cruise fee will be a tax-deductible donation to The Skeptics Society - a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization.
Built in Finland and launched in July 2022, Swan Hellenic’s Vega is a new-generation expedition cruise ship. Although at 10,250 tons the ship is large enough to accommodate more than 250 passengers, Vega will accommodate a maximum of 152 guests in 76 spacious staterooms and balcony suites. The low guest density results in one of the most generous indoor and outdoor space-to-guest ratios among cruise ships.

Featuring the latest advances in technology and engineering, Vega is among the world’s first environmentally responsible ships. Equipped with hybrid engines and a unique water filtration system, Vega leaves a minimal footprint. For cruising in Polar regions, the ship meets the stringent requirements of the new Polar Code with its high PC5 Category A ice-strengthened hull and other advanced features. A computer-controlled Dynamic Positioning System allows the ship to maintain position without anchoring. Operated by a complement of 120 experienced European officers and international crew members, Vega will carry a fleet of Zodias, versatile landing boats, and kayaks. Powerful stabilizers provide a smooth ride.

Vega’s interior spaces exude sophisticated elegance, with most rooms opening to panoramic views of the sea. All staterooms and suites face outside and are equipped with private facilities, climate control, TV, Wi-Fi and USB connections, and other amenities. Of the ship’s 76 staterooms, 60 have balconies. Public areas include a spacious observation lounge equipped with state-of-the-art facilities for lectures and presentations; a club lounge; a restaurant that accommodates all guests at one seating; an outdoor café/bar that surrounds the heated swimming pool; a wellness area with gym, spa, and sauna with an adjoining outdoor jacuzzi; library; beauty salon; and an infirmary that is attended by a full-time doctor and nurse. The ship also features expansive open-deck areas. Two elevators connect all decks. Attentive service is provided on a 24-hour basis. The outstanding cuisine is complemented by fine wines at lunch and dinner.
**For Reservations and Information, Please Call Thalassa Journeys at 866–633–3611 or email reservations@thalassajourneys.com**

**Monday, September 23, 2024**

**DEPART THE UNITED STATES**

**Tuesday, September 24**

**REYKJAVÍK, Iceland**

Arrive in Reykjavík and transfer to Hotel Hilton Reykjavík Nordica (or similar). Gather with fellow travelers this evening for a welcome dinner. (D)

**Wednesday, September 25**

**KANGERLUSSUAQ, Greenland/EMBARKATION**

After breakfast at the hotel, transfer to the airport for a flight to Kangerlussuaq, Greenland. On arrival, transfer to the pier to embark Vega and set sail. (B,D)

**Thursday, September 26**

**AT SEA**

During this day at sea, attend informative lectures and briefings from the ship’s expert expedition staff, relax and enjoy cruising the open sea, and treat yourself to some of the many amenities aboard ship as Vega sails north and crosses the Arctic Circle (B,L,D)

**Friday, September 27 and Saturday, September 28**

**DISKO BAY/QEQERTARSUAQ/ILULISSAT**

During these two days, we will explore the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Disko Bay, a land of calving glaciers, Inuit settlements, and whales feeding on the rich krill in the cold waters. We begin on Disko Island, the only volcanic island in Greenland—its rich soil, basalt columns, and hot springs contrasting sharply with the rest of the country. Qeqertarsuaq, a small town at the southern end of the island, affords opportunities for hiking on the black sand beaches and perhaps a visit to Arctic Station, a satellite campus of the University of Copenhagen. We plan to call the following day in the town of Ilulissat to visit the Icefjord for which it is named. Hike the boardwalk along the fjord filled with icebergs of all shapes and sizes that come from Sermeq Kujalleq, the largest glacier in the northern hemisphere. (B,L,D)

**Sunday, September 29**

**SISIMIUT**

Today we sail south to Sisimiut, the second largest town in Greenland, boasting a population of just about 6,000. Visit the Sisimiut Museum of Trade & Industry and hike to Tele Island to explore the remains of an Inuit village, turf farm and burial ground. Pause for views of Nasaasaaq Mountain on the return to Sisimiut, and enjoy some time at leisure to explore on your own before reboarding the ship. (B,L,D)

**Monday, September 30**

**NUUK**

Situated just 150 miles south of the Arctic Circle, Nuuk (also known by its Danish name, Godthab) is the northernmost capital in the world. It is also the oldest town in Greenland, founded by missionaries in 1728. Visit the Greenland National Museum before enjoying a panoramic tour in and around this town of colorful wooden houses, avant-garde architecture and fjords of clear ice water. (B,L,D)

**Tuesday, October 1**

**AT SEA**

Sail across Davis Strait as we leave Greenland for Canada. Attend informative lectures and briefings from Jared Diamond and from the ship’s expert expedition staff, relax and enjoy cruising the open sea, and treat yourself to some of the many amenities aboard ship. (B,L,D)

**Wednesday, October 2**

**IQALUIT, NUNAVUT, Canada**

Call today at Iqaluit, the capital of Nunavut. Located at the head of
Frobisher Bay on southern Baffin Island, Iqaluit provides one of the best opportunities to learn about the Inuit people—through a visit to the Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum and by browsing in the galleries owned by local Inuit artists. Those interested in a more vigorous activity may enjoy a hike in Sylvia Grinnell Territorial Park. (B,L,D)

Thursday, October 3
**LADY FRANKLIN ISLAND**
Lady Franklin Island, about 25 miles southeast of Baffin Island, is a birder’s paradise. The island’s steep cliffs rising out of the ocean are a nesting area for thousands of Black Guillemots, Ptarmigans, and gulls. Nearby Monumental Island is a favorite haul out for walrus, as well as a site of polar bear dens. And the icy waters surrounding it are frequented by beluga whales. (B,L,D)

Friday, October 4
**TORNGAT MOUNTAINS**
As we sail through the Eclipse Channel in the Torngat Mountains National Park, we are in the midst of the historical land of the Labrador Inuit, a place sacred to them and home to the spirits of their ancestors and the keepers of their traditions. This is also an area of dramatic scenery, as where fjords cut through the highest mountains in Canada east of the Rockies. (B,L,D)

Saturday, October 5
**HEBRON**
Hebron is the northernmost community founded by the Moravian missionaries in the early 19th century to convert the Inuit to Christianity. Abandoned in 1959 due to poor living conditions, the remaining families were relocated to other communities along the Labrador coast, Hebron was declared a Canadian national monument in 1970. A walking tour visits the remnants of the settlement, including the Moravian Church and Mission and the Old Hudson Bay Company Store. (B,L,D)

Sunday, October 6
**AT SEA**
During this day at sea, attend informative lectures and briefings from Jared Diamond and the ship’s expert expedition staff, relax and enjoy cruising the open sea, and treat yourself to some of the many amenities aboard Vega. (B,L,D)

Monday, October 7
**L’ANSE AUX MEADOWS, Newfoundland**
Following in the footsteps of Leif Ericson, we land today at the 1,000-year-old Norse settlement at L’Anse aux Meadows on the northernmost tip of Newfoundland. Explore the archaeological site and view the ruins of sod dwellings that have been identified as the “Vinland” referred to in Norse sagas. The recreated village here is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. (B,L,D)

Tuesday, October 8
**BONNE BAY/WOODY POINT/GROS MORNE**
Call this morning in Woody Point, a small community in the middle of Gros Morne National Park, known for its unusual geology and spectacular scenery. Hike along the Tablelands, a mesa of rock pushed to the surface form the Earth’s mantle about 400 million years ago. And spend some free time in the town getting to know the locals through their shops and cafés. (B,L,D)

Wednesday, October 9
**AT SEA**
During this day at sea, attend informative lectures and briefings from Jared Diamond and the ship’s expert expedition staff, relax and enjoy cruising the open sea, and treat yourself to some of the many amenities aboard Vega. (B,L,D)

Thursday, October 10
**HALIFAX, Nova Scotia/DISEMBARKATION**
After breakfast aboard, transfer to the airport for flights homeward. (B)
All accommodations aboard Vega are spacious staterooms and balcony suites. They are elegantly decorated, face outside, affording sea views, and include a queen-size bed that can be arranged as two twin beds, a spacious bathroom, mini-refrigerator, safe, ample closet space, climate control, telephone, TV, Wi-Fi, and USB connections, as well as other amenities.

**CATEGORY DESCRIPTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>RATES PER PERSON / DOUBLE OCCUPANCY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Oceanview staterooms with two large oval windows. 206 sq. ft. Deck 4. Staterooms 401–404.</td>
<td>$11,990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Oceanview staterooms with two large oval windows. 206 sq. ft. Deck 4. Staterooms 405–416.</td>
<td>$12,490</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Suites with balcony &amp; living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 5. Suites 501–504, 530–533.</td>
<td>$13,790</td>
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<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>Suites with large balcony, separate bedroom &amp; living room. 440 sq. ft. Decks 5 &amp; 6. Suites 515, 516, 615 &amp; 616.</td>
<td>$17,890</td>
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**LOYALTY REWARD PROGRAM**

Travel on this cruise program and enjoy savings of $400 to $900 per person on your next voyage with SKEPTICS and THALASSA JOURNEYS aboard a Swan Hellenic ship. Savings are determined by the stateroom category booked and is applicable when you reserve your trip within 30 days of the completion date of WONDERS OF THE ARCTIC. This saving cannot be combined with other offers and is subject to change.

**FOR SOLO TRAVELERS**

A limited number of cabins are available for single occupancy in categories D to B at no additional charge. Additional single cabins are available at a supplement of 50% of the per person double occupancy rate, instead of the normal 70% supplement.
PROGRAM INCLUSIONS

The rates are all-inclusive. There are no hidden costs and no additional charges such as shore excursions or embarkation and port charges. Other than the international airfare and expenses of a personal nature, all else is included. Specifically, the rates include:

- One night pre-cruise at the Hotel Hilton Reykjavik Nordica (or similar) in Reykjavik.
- Welcome dinner in Reykjavik.
- Charter flight between Reykjavik, Iceland and Kangerlussuaq, Greenland.
- Cruise aboard the Swan Hellenic Vega, as described in the itinerary.
- Airport/hotel/pier transfers and handling of luggage on arrival and departure dates.
- Program of lectures and discussions with Jared Diamond.
- Comprehensive program of lectures and discussions with the onboard expedition team of naturalists.
- Complete program of shore landings and activities ashore, led by onboard experts.
- All meals aboard the ship, with a selection of wines, beer and soft drinks during lunch and dinner.
- Welcome and farewell cocktail receptions aboard the ship hosted by the captain.
- Open bar with select alcoholic beverages.
- Coffee, including espresso and cappuccino, tea and soft drinks throughout the day and night.
- 24-hour room service.
- Gratuities to the ship’s crew, guides, porters and drivers.
- Basic Wi-Fi aboard the ship.
- The services of an experienced Thalassa Journeys Trip Director.
- All local taxes and service charges, including port and embarkation taxes.
- Complete pre-departure material.

NOT INCLUDED: International airfare; travel insurance; expenses of a personal nature; any items not mentioned in the itinerary or the above inclusions.

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Join JARED DIAMOND, Professor of Geography, UCLA on WONDERS OF THE ARCTIC

The colorful houses perched on rocks in Sisimiut, Greenland

FOR RESERVATIONS AND INFORMATION

PLEASE CALL

THALASSA JOURNEYS AT

866-633-3611

or email

reservations@thalassajourneys.com