

# Northwest Passage

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Join a convivial Toto Tours group aboard an exclusive Abercrombie & Kent charter of the luxury Ponant ship 'Le Boreal' for an extraordinary, once-in-a-lifetime voyage through the Arctic Northwest Passage from western Greenland to Nome, Alaska. Our journey begins in Montreal, Canada, and concludes in Anchorage, Alaska (using charter flights). We are holding ten staterooms for this departure. Toto Tours together with A&K's world-class Expedition Team welcomes you to the wonders of the Arctic.

Published price is \$30,995. Save \$3,000 per person on Cabin Categories 1, 2, and 3 if you book before October 31, 2017.

## Highlights

- Cruise the full extent of the Northwest Passage for 21 nights, voyaging from Greenland to the Canadian Arctic to the Bering Sea and ending in Alaska
  - Experience the luxury, all-balcony expedition ship 'Le Boreal' on an exclusive A&K charter
  - Travel in the company of A&K's world-class Expedition Team for a deeply enriching and captivating journey
  - Embark on every Zodiac excursion, all of which are included
  - Discover the most historic and remote islands, fjords and harbors of this elusive passage – just as the world's greatest polar explorers once did – with stops that may include Beechey Island, Franklin Camp, Fort Ross and Gjoa Haven
  - Explore the West Coast of Greenland, where you may meet with local Inuits and their dogsled teams, visit a hunting village and learn the art of leather tanning
  - Marvel at geological wonders from the "Smoking Hills" of Franklin Bay to the dramatic Ilulissat Icefjord, a UNESCO World Heritage Site teeming with icebergs
  - Delve into the remote Yukon Territory, where whaling once thrived and an abundance of wildlife still reigns supreme
  - See the spectacular Northern Lights
  - Take advantage of convenient A&K charter flights from Montreal to Kangerlussuaq and from Nome to Anchorage, beginning and ending your journey in North America
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## Itinerary at a Glance

Day 1: Arrive Montreal, Quebec

Day 2: Montreal | Dynamic French-English City

Day 3: Kangerlussuaq | Edge of *Indlandsis*

Days 4-8: Western Greenland | Where Amundsen Began

Days 9-18: Nunavut & the Canadian Arctic Archipelago | Heart of the Northwest Passage

Day 19: Franklin Bay & the 'Smoking Hills' | Endless Fire

Day 20: Hershel Island & the Yukon Territory | Safe Haven in the Farthest Reaches

Days 21-22: Beaufort & Chukchi Seas | Waters of the White One

Day 23: Little Diomedede | Along the Alaskan Coast

Day 24: Nome, Alaska | Gold Rush Fever

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## Full Itinerary

### Saturday, August 18, 2018: Arrive Montreal, Quebec

Arrive in Montreal and transfer to your hotel. The balance of your day is free to relax or explore the city independently, with our staff available at the A&K hospitality desk to assist with arrangements or reservations. | *No Meals Included*

### Sunday, August 19, 2018: Montreal | Dynamic French-English City

After breakfast this morning, enjoy the opportunity to explore this modern and culturally rich Canadian city with a choice of engaging tours, each arranged to fit a variety of activity levels. Tonight, gather with your A&K Expedition Team for a welcome cocktail reception and dinner to celebrate the start of your adventure. | *Meals: B D*

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### Monday, August 20, 2018: Kangerlussuaq | Edge of *Indlandsis*

Arrive by charter flight this afternoon in Western Greenland at Kangerlussuaq (Søndre Strømfjord in Danish), located on the tip of its namesake fjord and once a strategic allied stronghold during World War II. Weather and time permitting, visit the edge of the Greenland ice sheet (*indlandsis*), a vast body of inland ice covering 80 percent of the continent. En route, be on the lookout for native wildlife, such as musk oxen, reindeer, Arctic foxes, falcons and eagles. Later, arrive at the pier to board your luxurious expedition cruiser, 'Le Boreal.' Tonight, join your award-winning Expedition Team and crew for a welcome cocktail reception. | *Meals: B L D*

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### Tuesday, August 21 – Saturday, August 25, 2018: Western Greenland | Where Amundsen Began

In 1906, polar explorer Roald Amundsen became the first person to successfully cross the entire Northwest Passage. Start your voyage exactly where he did along the stunning West Coast of Greenland and north into Baffin Bay, which you explore for six days. Your enrichment and lecture program also begins, offering the first of many opportunities to delve deeper into the story of this dramatic and remote region.

Based on ice, weather and sea conditions, your captain and expedition crew determine the day's best sightseeing

opportunities, which may include:

**Sisimiut:** North of the Arctic Circle, Sisimiut is both the northernmost city in Greenland able to maintain a year-round, ice-free port, as well as the southernmost town with sufficient snow for dogsledding in winter and spring. Visit the local museum with its exhibits on Inuit culture and Greenlandic colonial history, and meet a dog musher and his dogsled team.

**Disko Bay & Ilulissat:** Cruise into Disko Bay, a wide inlet off of Baffin Bay first explored by Erik the Red in 985, when he established the first Norse settlements in Western Greenland. Discover the Ilulissat Icefjord, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, at the sea mouth of one of the fastest and most active glaciers in the world, Sermeq Kujalleq. The scene is spectacular with giant icebergs, floating growlers and bergy bits (large chunks of glacial ice), and the sounds of the calving ice-stream. Take a walking tour of Ilulissat, including a visit to the local history museum, and meet with villagers to learn about life in this often-harsh Arctic region. Enjoy a huskie dogsled demonstration and learn about the centuries-old methods of leather tanning still in practice today.

**Uummannaq Fjords:** Located north of Ilulissat, the Uummannaq Fjord System is an awe-inspiring geological wonder teeming with marine life. Visit Karrat ø to enjoy the stunning view of the iceberg-studded bay and also discover the remains of ancient huts, made of whale bones and sod by traditional Thule hunters (ancestors of the Inuit) some 500 to 1,000 years ago.

**Upernavik:** Founded in 1772, this summer camp for nomadic Greenland Inuit was an ideal hunting ground for whales, seals and fish. Witness this for yourself when you spend time with local villagers who still maintain a traditional way of life, living off the fish and seal populations common to the region. Visit the shops, church and local museum, the last of which offers an excellent display of Greenlandic life. | *Meals: B L D*

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## **Sunday, August 26 – Tuesday, September 4, 2018: Nunavut & the Canadian Arctic Archipelago | Heart of the Northwest Passage**

Cruise west across Baffin Bay and into the Canadian Arctic Archipelago of Nunavut, where you begin your journey to the heart and history of the Northwest Passage. The A&K Expedition Team continues to share captivating lectures to enhance your own discovery.

As ‘Le Boreal’ winds its way through legendary channels and inlets, your crew and Expedition Team determines the best route based on ice, weather and sea conditions. Exciting excursions await and are likely to include:

**Pond Inlet:** Located on the Northern end of Baffin Island, Pond Inlet, which translates to “Place of Mittima’s Grave,” is the noted gateway to the fabled Northwest Passage and a rich archaeological site.

After clearing customs formalities for Nunavut, set off for a shore excursion to an area originally inhabited by the ancient Thule. Visit the Nattinnak Visitor’s Center or Toonoonik Sahoonek Co-op, where you can shop for artisan carvings made from local red and green soapstone, beautiful wall hangings and other handcrafted goods.

**Lancaster Sound:** Situated between Devon Island and Baffin Island, this body of water forms the eastern entrance to the Parry Channel and the Northwest Passage. It’s also home to a rich abundance of Arctic cod, which in turn draws copious populations of sea birds and marine mammals. Beluga and endangered bowhead whales, the narwhal with its spiraling tusk, ringed and bearded seals, the enchanting polar bear, and mustached walrus, as well as northern fulmars, black guillemots and Arctic terns — all are among the fantastic wildlife that inhabit the area. Some may even come into view on thrilling Zodiac excursions and landings.

**Beechey Island:** Historic moments in Arctic exploration define this island, best known for providing a safe haven to British explorer Sir John Franklin in 1845. Look east toward Resolute Bay at the huge silhouette of Cape Riley and

imagine what Captain Franklin saw here in Erebus Harbour, where he took shelter for two years before his ill-fated attempt to conquer the Northwest Passage. See the wooden grave markers for three of Franklin's men, now bleached by the sun, and visit the cenotaph memorial erected in memory of the lost explorer. It is an unforgettable experience.

**Fort Ross:** An abandoned trading post on the tip of Somerset Island, Fort Ross was founded in 1937 as a place for trappers to barter Arctic fox pelts in exchange for food and necessities. Explore the remaining wooden buildings of the post, which closed in 1948, and imagine life in such a barren landscape. Keep an eye out for bowhead whales or, perhaps, take a Zodiac excursion to CoBay, where polar bears have been known to feed.

**Gjoa Haven:** During his first attempt to transit the Northwest Passage on 'Gjøa,' Roald Amundsen used this natural harbor as a respite while waiting for ice conditions to improve. For two years, he lived with the Netsilik Inuits, learning their skills for survival and more efficient travel, which would later prove invaluable in his successful South Pole expedition. Today, Gjoa Haven has a population of 1,200 and still bears the historic significance of playing a key role in polar exploration.

**Victoria Island:** Cruise along the south coast of Victoria Island, which straddles both Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, voyaging through Queen Maud Gulf, Dease Strait and Coronation Gulf. Expedition stops may include bird sanctuary Jenny Lind Island, where you may also spy its populations of musk ox, and Johansen Bay, home to the remains of a nomadic trapper basecamp. Your Expedition Team may also lead you to Ulukhaktok (Holman village) in Queen's Bay for an unforgettable visit with its local Inuit people. Only in contact with the rest of the world since the middle of the 19th century, the people of Holman continue to practice a traditional lifestyle and represent surprising cultural diversity; experience both with a warm welcome at the shore, drum dances, fresh char and bannock rings (fried dough) prepared over an open fire, and tours of the town art center. Ulukhaktok is famous for its printmaking and you bear witness to the beautiful tradition here; also find carvings, hats made of coveted *qiviut* (musk ox wool) and *ulus* — traditional, half-moon-shaped knives used by women to prepare food and skins. | *Meals: B L D*

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### **Wednesday, September 5, 2018: Franklin Bay & the 'Smoking Hills' | Endless Fire**

In the Northwest Territories at Franklin Bay, see the spectacular and enormous "Smoking Hills," cliffs of bituminous shale that endlessly combust and burn. This rare geological phenomenon has likely been occurring for millennia, with layers of the relatively unstable mineral jarosite covering these hills. When the mineral comes into contact with cold air, it becomes red-hot and produces a thick, black smoke a fantastic sight not unlike the smoky fumaroles produced by volcanoes, though far rarer to see. | *Meals: B L D*

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### **Thursday, September 6, 2018: Hershel Island & the Yukon Territory | Safe Haven in the Farthest Reaches**

During a long mapping expedition in 1826, Captain Franklin was the first European to lay eyes on this unique island at the northernmost point of the Yukon Territory. Named by Franklin, Herschel Island is a landmark in the West Arctic and has since served alternately as a whaling station, relay station and refuge for travellers. The island teems with wildlife that includes the migrating bowhead whale, walrus, moose, musk ox, Arctic fox and 94 species of birds. It is also one of the only places on earth where you may see a grizzly bear, black bear and polar bear, the last of which live along the ice edge in summer. Evidence of the island's whaling culture and Thule Inuit predecessors remains near the shoreline, though it may not for much longer; the island is subject to extreme coastal erosion and scientists predict the shoreline will disappear under the waves within 50 years. | *Meals: B L D*

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## **Friday, September 7 – Saturday, September 8, 2018: Beaufort & Chukchi Seas | Waters of the White One**

Typically dense with ice floes and fog, the Beaufort Sea opens up a 60-mile-wide coastal pass from August to September. From here, 'Le Boreal' cruises into the U.S. and clears at Point Barrow, Alaska. Sailing in the comfort of your luxury expedition cruiser, continue participating in eye-opening lectures led by the Expedition Team. Be on the lookout across the sea for bowhead and beluga whales, the latter of which sustain one of the largest populations in the world here. Still hunted on a sustenance quota basis by local Inuits, the sociable creatures often travel in numbers and are said to be quite "chatty," with their trills, clicks and squeals audible above the surface. In the late evening, relax on your private balcony or join fellow guests out on deck to witness the northern lights, known for delivering a stunning display in autumn. Your voyage continues through this narrow passage between North America and the ever-changing Arctic ice cap. | *Meals: B L D*

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## **Sunday, September 9, 2018: Little Diomedes | Along the Alaskan Coast**

Continue cruising through the Bering Sea to Little Diomedes, an island that sits between Alaska and Russia at the edge of the International Dateline. Disembark for a Zodiac cruise of the island, where the Ingalikmiut still maintain a traditional lifestyle of hunting, fishing and egg gathering. In line with customs and necessity, the Ingalikmiut also use seal, walrus and polar bear hides to make clothing, parkas, hats and mukluks, as well as trade currency for bartering. | *Meals: B L D*

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## **Monday, September 10, 2018: Nome, Alaska | Gold Rush Fever**

Arrive and disembark in Nome, Alaska, among the wildest reaches of mainland America and the final destination for the Iditarod dogsled competition. Gold can still be mined here and you enjoy the opportunity to try gold panning; also experience a dogsled demonstration and a stop at the Bering Sea Land Bridge National Monument visitor's center. Following lunch at Old St. Joe's Church, take advantage of time to explore the downtown area of Nome. Transfer to the airport for your A&K charter flight to Anchorage. Continue on your home-bound flight or extend your stay in Anchorage. | *Meals: B L*

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## **Tour Extension**

A three-night / four-day tour extension will be offered for Anchorage, with pricing to be announced in the near future. A brief sketch of the itinerary is as follows:

**Day 1:** Visit the bustling seaplane base of Lake Hood, take in expansive vistas at Point Woranzoff and witness a salmon run in Ship Creek. | *Meals: L*

**Day 2:** Ride the rails north to Talkeetna to enjoy a jet boat ride or a hike along Talkeetna Lake. | *Meals: B*

**Day 3:** Encounter natural icons at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center, ride a cable car to the top of Mount Alyeska and celebrate with a farewell dinner. | *Meals: B D*

**Day 4:** Transfer to the airport for your flight home. | *Meals: B*

