Pond Inlet Floe Edge Basecamp

From the community of Pond Inlet, we will travel by snowmobile and Qamutik (wooden sled) towards the floe-edge, an area known as the "line of life". Guided by seasoned and highly qualified guides, ice conditions and weather will determine our exact route. Once a suitable area has been chosen, a comfortable base camp will be created. The base camp will serve as a hub for the expedition and the various activities that will be undertaken. Guest safety will be the number one priority as we explore, film and photograph one of nature's most amazing and variable landscapes. No other company in the world has the same experience organizing and running this type of adventure. The experience and knowledge of the local guides is unmatched. Combined with top quality customer service and attention to detail, this is truly one of the classic Arctic adventures. Full advantage will be taken of the endless days to explore and learn more about this incredible environment and area.

During this expedition we have a chance of seeing polar bears, a variety of species of sea birds, narwhals, seals, walrus and possibly the massive bowhead whale. With our hydrophone you’ll hear the seals and perhaps whales underwater. The Floe Edge of North Baffin Island is a must see place for wilderness photographers, birders, and wildlife observers. This basecamp expedition is perfect for any outdoor enthusiast seeking a one of a kind adventure in a most unique landscape!
Pond Inlet Floe-Edge Basecamp Itinerary

Day 1  May 18th, May 27th, June 5th or June 14th, 2018 - Arrival
- 9:15 AM flight from Ottawa to Pond Inlet, via Iqaluit. Arrive at 4:25 PM
- airport pick up and transport to hotel for check in and welcome dinner
- group talk and gear check, evening spent relaxing or exploring some of the community

Day 2  Expedition Departure
- Breakfast at hotel
- tentative lunchtime departure from Pond Inlet by snow machine and Qamutik to the Floe Edge, located about 70 Km east of the town
- set up basecamp

Day 3-7  Day Trips from our Base Camp
- explore the Floe Edge and the shores of Bylot Island by snow machine and Qamutik - view, bird cliffs, icebergs, floe-edge and sea ice
- weather and ice conditions permitting, there may be opportunities for skiing and sea kayaking

Day 8  Return to Pond Inlet
- Return journey by snow machine and Qamutik to Pond Inlet
- dinner and hotel accommodation

Day 9  May 26th, June 4th, June 13th or June 22nd, 2018 - Departure
- breakfast at hotel
- 9:45 AM flight from Pond Inlet to Ottawa, via Iqaluit. Arrive at 4:50 PM

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What is included in the trip fee?

- Guides - 5:1 ratio
- Accommodation
  - 6 nights camping
  - 2 night's accommodation Pond Inlet on Day 1 and 8
- Meals
  - excellent trail meals and snacks from Day 2 lunch to Day 8 lunch
  - dinners (Day 1 and 8) and breakfast (Day 2 and 9) in Pond Inlet
- Expedition Equipment
  - base camp - kitchen / group tents, bathroom, generators, cooking stoves, utensils, dishes, etc
  - sleeping tents - free standing custom expedition dome tents - 1 or 2 per tent
  - sleeping bags and sleeping cots
- Safety Equipment
  - first aid, safety, rescue and repair kits
  - communications equipment (satellite phone)
- Transportation
  - snow machine transfers between Pond Inlet and the expedition location on Day 2 & 8
  - daily tours by snow machine Day 3 - 7
  - airport transfers in Pond Inlet
  - transportation of guides, group gear, food, etc. to Pond Inlet

What isn't included?

- GST (goods and services tax): 5% of the trip fee
- Personal clothing and gear - a recommended clothing & equipment list will be provided
- Travel between your home and the trip rendezvous in Pond Inlet
- Hotel accommodation and restaurant meals other than those listed above in Pond Inlet
- Souvenirs, purchases of a personal nature, personal phone calls etc,
- Any additional expenses or costs incurred as a result of delays to the trip caused by factors beyond our control - i.e. snow and ice conditions, weather, flight delays, etc.
- Any costs associated with your emergency evacuation from the trip - please contact our office for more information on extended insurance options
- Gratuities
How to I get to the trip?

The Pond Inlet Floe Edge Basecamp adventure begins and ends at the airport in Pond Inlet, Nunavut (YIO). You guides will meet you at the airport and return you there after the trip in time for your flight south. From Ottawa, the lowest web fare is in the $4600 range but we can arrange a group discount. Our rate for 2017 was $2,940.00 CAD including tax. Please contact our office to confirm the trip before purchasing non-refundable tickets to/from Ottawa.

Flight Schedule: (tentative - expect minor changes)

May 18th, May 27th, June 5th or June 14th, 2018
9:15am     Depart Ottawa (YOW)      12:25pm  Arrive Iqaluit (YFB)
2:00pm.    Depart Iqaluit (YFB) 4:25pm Arrive Pond Inlet (YIO)

May 26th, June 4th, June 13th or June 22nd, 2018
9:45am.    Depart Pond Inlet (YIO) 12:09pm Arrive Iqaluit (YFB)
1:45pm     Depart Iqaluit (YFB) 4:50pm Arrive Ottawa (YOW)

About Pond Inlet

The Pond Inlet Floe Edge Expedition meets and ends at the airport in Pond Inlet, Nunavut. The Inuit name is *Mittimatalik* which means “the place where Mitima is buried”. Sadly, no one remembers who Mitima was. Pond is an Inuit community of 1550 people in northeast Baffin Island in the eastern Arctic. It is one of the most picturesque communities with mountainous ranges viewable from all directions. Icebergs are most often accessible from the community within walking distance or a short snowmobile ride in winter. There are ice caves to explore, hoodoos to marvel at and abundant species of wild animals to watch, including the magical unicorns of the sea — narwhals. There are also beluga and orca whales, ringed and harp seals, arctic foxes and wolves, seabirds, geese, gyrfalcons, ptarmigans, gulls and ravens to encounter, plus the occasional polar bear to be viewed from a safe distance. Nearby are Tarmaarvik Territorial Park, Sirmilik National Park and Bylot Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary.
About Pond Inlet

There are several places to stay, a restaurant, several stores, perhaps 350 houses, two schools, Nunavut Arctic College, a health centre, churches, etc. The hamlet is serviced by air and in the summer by sealift cargo ships. High transportation costs are reflected in the very high prices for food, fuel and consumer goods. A liter of milk is almost $6.00, and a can of pop even more. This an expensive place to live. The economy is expected to get a boost from the Mary River Iron Ore Mine being developed about 160 km from the village.

The Weather

Pond Inlet is classified as having a Polar Tundra Climate. In the 24 hour darkness of mid winter the average day time low is a punishing -38°C. By June it is light 24 hours a day and things have warmed up considerably. Expect the day time high to average something like +6°C (43°F) with night time lows of perhaps 0°C (32°F). The record highs and lows range from +15.5°C (60°F) to -14°C (7°F) during the dates of the expedition. Winds can make it feel colder. There is always some wind. The average wind speed is 9 km/h. With the gradual warming in the spring the precipitation increases with an average of 5 cm of new snow and 12 mm of rain in June. Expect some precipitation one out of six days but the amounts are usually negligible. The average accumulated snow depth on the ground is about 5 cm. The sun is very bright during this time of year, Sun protection is important as the light reflects from the snow. All in all the weather is quite pleasant for outdoor activities - cool enough that things stay dry but not uncomfortably cold.

Can I do this trip?

This Trip is rated Skill Level 1+. No previous experience is required. Our basecamp facilities are very comfortable, and can accommodate travellers with limited experience in the outdoors. We sleep on camp style cots, in top quality expedition tents, and enjoy a spacious group lounge and heated dining tent, where delicious meals and hot drinks are served. Each basecamp will have at least one group Privy. Most years the sea ice, on which we travel, will be relatively smooth however rougher sections can be encountered. The Qamutiq (sleds in which guests travel in) are designed to maximize comfort and enjoyment. Route-wise, this expedition is almost completely on the frozen ocean – sea ice. Each day the group will depart from the comfortable base camp and explore the surrounding area. Areas such as bird cliffs on Bylot Island, icebergs, glaciers, ancient dwelling sites and historic sites will all be visited. All clients are expected to assist in some camp duties.
Trip Highlights and Special Optional Activities

Although most adventurers on a Floe Edge Expedition are focused on wildlife viewing and photography there are a number of other opportunities on the trip.

Inuit Culture

On the Floe Edge trip a number of local Inuit hunters will be working alongside your Black Feather Guides. This allows you to learn first hand about Inuit Culture. Over the week you can develop a friendship with these remarkable hunters. It is a unique opportunity to gain some insight into the local people’s way of life, their world view, and the opportunities and challenges facing their community. Their specialized knowledge of the local wildlife, ice and weather conditions, and highly developed skills in ice travel are an essential contribution the the success and safety of the expedition.

Cross Country Skiing

For those interested, there is the option of cross country skiing. Metal edges touring skis and warm touring ski boots are available. When snow conditions allow, we'll offer guided ski tours. This allows us to greatly extend the area we can reconnoitre. Travel on the ice is easy and you don’t need to be an experienced skier. Depending the camp location we can explore inland, finding some hills to ski and climbing to vistas overlooking the sea ice. We’ll tailor the ski tours to the group’s abilities and interests.

Sea Kayaking

Our explorations don’t have to end at the edge of the ice. If you are interested we’ll outfit you in a drysuit and PFD to keep you warm and safe. No previous kayaking experience is required – we’ll show how to safely kayak, then lead you on a tour of the floe edge and through the sea ice. You’ll discover a completely different perspective and an excellent opportunity for photography. Arctic kayaking is a unique adventure. We recommend you give it a try.

Ice Travel

Our Floe Edge Basecamp will be located a considerable distance from the village of Pond Inlet. You will travel on a Qamutik (a large wooden sled) pulled by a snow machine. You will quickly get a demonstration of the guides knowledge and skills on the ice. We may have to cross leads (sections of open water in the sea ice), or drive through blowing snow. Getting to the camp is an adventure in itself.
The Guides
Black Feather guides are exceptionally qualified. Each principal guide has an extensive outdoor background, formal emergency response training and decision making and leadership experience. We will also be hiring local inuit hunters to join us on this trip. They provide a wealth of local knowledge and route finding, natural and cultural interpretation, and assist with the transportation of guests and equipment.

Depending on numbers there may be an assistant guide on the expedition. The guides are always ready to provide coaching and helpful advice on any aspect of the trip and will attempt to maximize the spirit of adventure for each individual. Your safety is their prime concern and your guide will make decisions with this in mind. We must stress that listening carefully to instructions given by the guide is your responsibility and in the best interest of you and the group. Each group member is encouraged to contribute to the tasks of the trip and your guides will act as helpful resource people. Lastly, as this is your holiday, the Black Feather guides have a real sense of fun and excitement, and will help to make this your trip of a lifetime!

Feel free to contact our office by phone or email with any questions you might have.
We look forward to hearing from you soon!