



Most Arctic expedition cruises lines are now avoiding Russia

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An expedition cruise ship lies off the Bolshoy Zayatskiy Island in Russia's White Sea. (Thomas Nilse

A few years ago, foreign cruise vessels [lined up to sign agreements with Russia](#) for permits to sail to Franz Josef Land, the glacier-covered archipelago at 80 degrees North.

Today, wealthy international tourists will have big problems reaching the Russian Arctic as most expedition cruise ships have changed itineraries, scrapping sailings to the country that covers half of the circumpolar regions.

Senior Fellow with the Arctic Institute, Ekaterina Uryupova, has looked into the sailing season of 2023.

In a [piece for the institute](#), she notes that many cruise liners have changed previously scheduled

northern voyages for the next few years.

That includes companies with years of experience in sailing tourists to Arctic shores, like [Aurora Expeditions](#), Poseidon Expeditions, National Geographic and Quark Expeditions.

The Barents Observer previously [reported](#) that Hurtigruten Expeditions will find alternative routes for its planned voyages from Tromsø to Franz Josef Land via Russia's militarized port of Murmansk.

Quark Expeditions [states in an update](#) that the company is no longer accepting bookings for trips that include Russia in the itinerary. Instead, additional voyages to Greenland, Iceland and Spitsbergen are introduced to the portfolio.

Regent Seven Seas Cruises removed stops to Murmansk and White Sea region, including highlights like Solovki Archipelago and Arkhangelsk.

Ponant, which offers tours to the North Pole, has [no longer any tours](#) to Russian Arctic destinations.

Uryupova predicts more troubled waters in the time to come.

"The political landscape does not make it easy for tour operators to work in the area and they will most likely continue to alter Russian itineraries due to the Ukraine conflict," she concludes.

One company, however, that still sells a luxury tour to Arctic Russia is Scenic.

Its 200-guest vessel leaves Tromsø in June 2024 for an [18-day voyage to Franz Josef Land](#) with return sailing via the Kara Sea east of Novaya Zemlya, across the Barents Sea to Murmansk, before returning to Tromsø in Norway.

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Author

krestiaarctictoday-com

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