



TRIP NOTES

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**NORTH POLE CHALLENGE  
NORTH POLE**

Thu 05 Apr - Mon 16 Apr 2018





## In aid of Borne

05 Apr - 16 Apr 2018



### 12 DAYS | NORTH POLE | EXTREME

In 1909 Robert Peary, his partner Matthew Henson and four Inuit reached the North Pole. They were recognised as the first to do, although controversy still surrounds this claim. Following many further failed expeditions, the Pole was next witnessed in 1926, but it was 1948 before anyone actually stood there. Our challenge takes us over the dynamic polar ice cap. Skiing and sledging we will be surrounded by breath-taking scenery and will overcome an ever-changing variety of obstacles, including pressure ridges up to 5m high! This is your chance to add your name to the short list of adventurers who have made the ultimate journey to the top of the world.

- Embark on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to the top of the world
- Skiing and sledging over the polar ice cap
- Trek to the Geographic North Pole
- Negotiate this ever-changing ethereal landscape
- Be fully involved in all aspects of camp life

## YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

### DAY 1 Thu 05 Apr

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#### International departure from London

There's no turning back now as we meet the rest of our team at the airport for our adventure of a lifetime. After a last minute kit check, we will jump on board our flight to Norway and will stop off in either Tromso or Oslo, depending on our flight schedule. Overnight hotel/guesthouse.

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### DAY 2 Fri 06 Apr

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#### Arrive at Longyearbyen

After touching down in Norway, we transfer through to Longyearbyen on the Archipelago of Svalbard, a remote, yet modern village situated well above the Arctic Circle at 78 degrees north. Our guesthouse is conveniently located just outside the town centre and adjacent to our polar training area. This afternoon we'll have time to sort all our equipment before a briefing and ski fitting ready for our challenge. Overnight hotel/guesthouse.

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### DAY 3 Sat 07 Apr

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#### Training, kit prep, briefings in Longyearbyen

Today is spent in the wilderness for a short training trip. Here we perfect our skiing technique for the first time with pulks and kit. You will also practice setting up camp, cook and get used to the equipment, terrain and the cold. It's then back to our guesthouse to prepare for the challenge ahead. Guesthouse overnight.

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### DAY 4 Sun 08 Apr

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#### Final preparations in Longyearbyen

We have another full day to prepare for our challenge ahead with final preparations for our departure. Hopefully we will have perfected our skills for the trek across the ice cap. Guesthouse overnight.

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### DAY 5 Mon 09 Apr

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#### Fly to Barneo Ice Camp

It's an exciting day as we have our exhilarating flight to Barneo Ice Camp. The essential Barneo Ice Camp is located approximately 60 miles from the North Pole and is only set up for one month of the year (April) and this is when we have the very narrow window of opportunity to trek/ski to the Geographic North Pole. Despite many years of setting up and dismantling the Barneo Ice Camp, each year presents new challenges and so the camp operators absolutely reserve the right to make schedule and logistical changes at a moment's notice, even when we are airborne and en route to or from the ice. If we can't fly today, we will stay another night in Longyearbyen.

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### DAY 6 Tue 10 Apr

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#### Fly to Barneo Ice Camp or begin challenge

If we're not already there, we'll fly to Barneo Ice Camp, preparing and loading our sledges onto the helicopter before being dropped off at the start point. We'll set off north escorted by our head guide. Armed with the knowledge of the ice conditions, they will set the best route and tactics for us before we set up our first camp together in the frozen Arctic.

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#### **DAY 7** *Wed 11 Apr*

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##### **Start sledge pulling and skiing North**

Today our expedition really begins. The North Pole trek takes place in one of the last true wildernesses in the world. Temperatures can be as low as -45 degrees celsius. Each day we'll complete around eight hours of ice travel and three hours setting up camp. We typically walk for an hour, then rest to eat and drink, repeating this routine for up to eight hours a day. We will constantly check each other whenever we stop to make sure we keep warm and dry. Overnight camp on the ice.

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#### **DAY 8** *Thu 12 Apr*

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##### **Continue sledge pulling and skiing North**

The whole challenge takes place on the frozen ice on top of the Arctic Ocean. The ocean ice pack is moving and the ice can – and does – crack, causing open leads and pressure ridges. The terrain is tricky and we'll be navigating our way around frozen and open leads, ice rubble, pressure ridges and across wonderful flat pans of Arctic ice. A typical day will begin with melting ice for hot drinks, porridge and thermos flasks, before preparing our sledges for the day. Overnight camp on the ice.

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#### **DAY 9** *Fri 13 Apr*

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##### **Continue sledge pulling and skiing North**

Each day our guide will select a suitable place to pitch our camp, we will take control, erecting and securing our tents, melting ice from our faces and then boiling snow/water for our delicious evening meal. A moving ice pack has implications for journey times. If it moves in our favour (towards the North Pole), we will have to walk less distance to reach the Pole. If it moves against us, we can go to sleep and wake up to find ourselves with a few hours walk just to get back to where we were the night before. Overnight camp on the ice.

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#### **DAY 10** *Sat 14 Apr*

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##### **Reach the North Pole!**

On reaching the North Pole we will be exhausted and elated as we erect our tents and wait for the helicopter to pick us up, giving much needed time for our celebratory photos. If the weather is bad then we may need to spend the night camping at the ultimate sleepover destination – the North Pole – as we wait for the conditions to improve. Overnight camp on the ice or back at Barneo or even all the way back to Longyearbyen.

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#### **DAY 11** *Sun 15 Apr*

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##### **Back to Longyearbyen and a hotel bed**

With a new album full of photos stored on our cameras, we return to Barneo Ice Camp and potentially take an immediate flight back to Longyearbyen. This will be weather dependent and subject to the schedule and logistical demands of the Antenov plane that will take us. On the final evening of our trek we will enjoy a very special celebration dinner with the team and well-deserved night to thaw out at our hotel.

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#### DAY 12 Mon 16 Apr

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#### Contingency day or fly to the UK

Hopefully today we will have completed our challenge and be back in Longyearbyen where we will enjoy a final team breakfast before saying goodbye to this phenomenal landscape and flying back to the UK.

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#### NB

The Arctic Ocean is one of the most inhospitable regions on our planet. Logistics problems are enormous; the weather ferocious and unpredictable, ice condition is unstable. Distances are immense, facilities scarce. Safety and self-sufficiency are the paramount rules. We acknowledge and respect this. It is our obligation to warn to all clients that they like us and everyone else attempting to function in this extreme environment, are at the mercy of forces more powerful than any of us. Despite the expected period of calm dry weather, windstorms and blizzards as well as changes of the ice condition are a major threat to flights and groups en-route. Delays of days must be anticipated. Changes and amendments may apply to the programme, depending on the weather, ice or other conditions. It is important to consider possible delays or alterations, and accept them with patience. We will do our very best to keep to the general itinerary; however we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that might occur and we fully expect such changes to take place. In all such circumstances, your challenge leader will have the final say.

Please see this [document](#) for more information.

The challenge costs £43,000 per person, and this is made up of a non-refundable registration fee of £5,000 due at the time of booking and a balance of £38,000 due 17 weeks before departure.

Please see the "**Inclusions and Exclusions**" section below for a breakdown of what is included in the expedition costs and what you may have to budget for.

The group is anticipated to be between 6 and 12 people, and the costs are based on a minimum of 6 people. If there are 4 or 5 people, there will be a small group supplement of £2000 per person.

You can also upgrade your flights from economy class to business class. Please enquire once you have registered for the challenge.

Every pound that you raise will go directly towards the work of Borne.

### What do Borne do?

Around the world, each year, 15 million children are born prematurely and over 1 million die. It is the most important cause of infant death and disability worldwide. Even in the UK, preterm birth affects more than 1 in 12 babies, nearly 60,000 every year.

Borne is a medical research charity that aims to identify the causes of premature birth. Through our research, we are working to save lives, prevent disability and create lifelong health for mothers and babies.

Our research can make a difference between life and death and between a healthy life and a life of disability for millions of children and their families around the world. There is a colossal amount of work to be done. Obstetric research remains chronically underfunded in the UK despite the devastating impact of preterm birth. Our research to date has changed our understanding of labour, refocused our work and redirected our efforts. Through more vital research, we will identify the key interventions that will improve pregnancy outcomes and optimise fetal development.

### Level of difficulty

The North Pole challenge is rated Extreme due to the harsh climate. Please also see the **Safety** section below.

### Group Size

The challenge requires a minimum of 4 participants in order to run and a maximum of approximately 10 participants, due to the remote nature of the challenge.

### Leadership

Depending on the size of the group you will be accompanied by either one or two highly experienced polar guides. They will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group. The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, the strength of the group, and so on. We will do our very best to keep to the set itinerary. However, we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that may occur. In all such circumstances, your challenge leader will have the final say.

### Typical day

Its very difficult to give a typical day as it will be heavily dependent on the weather and conditions, but a rough guide, you will wake up early, collect snow, melt snow, boil water and make breakfast and warm up. You will then organise yourself and get your kit sorted for the day. The less you need to do once you have started skiing the better so preparation is key. You will get your flasks and snack food ready. Then the task of breaking down camp begins. Once the tents are down and packed on to your sledges, you will need to start walking/skiing/sledge hauling, to keep warm and progress further north! You will stop every hour or so to have some a snack, some hot soup or hot chocolate etc. You'll check on each other and then continue for another hour. This will continue for around 8-9 hours but could be more if required. Your leader will dictate the speed and distance to be covered. On some days this could be smooth going on others you could spend hours just trying to negotiate an open lead. When your leader advises you will stop

and pitch tents, and start the evening routine. Collecting snow, melting snow, boiling water and making your freeze dried dinner. Keeping warm and dry is key. After a good night's rest, the whole process begins again.

### Clothing and equipment

Good quality, durable kit could mean the difference between a fantastic challenge experience and an uncomfortable one. For this challenge, we will provide a comprehensive kit list and provide the main cold weather items. With significant cold weather, keeping warm and dry is paramount. We will advise you and support you to ensure you are properly kitted out. A full [kit list](#) for this challenge can be found here showing what we will provide and what you will need to.

### Accommodation

The first few nights in Longyearbyen will be spent in a simple guesthouse on the edge of town, conveniently near to your ice-training area. At the Barneo Ice Camp, should you spend a night there, there are heated 'dormitory tents' and a heated mess tent. On the main challenge you will be camping on the ice in three person tunnel tents. On your return to Longyearbyen you will stay in one of the town's top hotels. Please note that flights to and from Longyearbyen/Barneo can be changed at a moment's notice, requiring you to stay an extra night or in some cases, multiple additional nights in the town. If this were to occur we would try and book hotel accommodation, although during the month of April when most hotels are fully booked it may not be possible to find alternatives at short notice. In such cases, we may pitch the tents or as a last resort, you may have to sleep in a communal area of one of the hotels. If you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with please ensure that you note this where appropriate when booking or email [challenges@charitychallenge.com](mailto:challenges@charitychallenge.com).

### Safety

Charity Challenge considers the safety of all of our participants and staff to be a top priority, and as such we have set up Challenge Safe, one of the most advanced and thorough safety management systems in the industry. Challenge Safe formalises our ethos when it comes to safety, and brings together the procedures and risk management strategies that we use to audit all aspects of our challenges, from vehicles to accommodation to the challenge activity itself. Your welfare is absolutely paramount!

In terms of your North Pole challenge, there are a couple of important points that you should be aware of:

- The Arctic Ocean is one of the most inhospitable regions on our planet.
- Distances are immense, and facilities scarce.
- Logistics problems are enormous; the weather ferocious and unpredictable, and the ice condition is unstable. Even before the ski challenge itself begins, there can be major delays and changes to the programme.
- Once on the ice, our progress will depend on the weather conditions, the physical state of the group, whether the ice is flat or broken up, whether we encounter any leads (breaks in the ice) or encounter polar bears.
- Despite the expected period of calm dry weather, windstorms and blizzards as well as changes to the ice condition are a major threat to flights and groups en-route.
- It is important to consider possible delays or alterations, and accept them with patience.
- The challenge area is very remote and rescue can only really be implemented if helicopters can fly which is heavily dependent on the weather.

- Temperatures can go as low as –40 degrees centigrade and if you do not look after yourself, frostbite is a possible side effect.

### Emergencies

The event is not run as a race and there will be a discrepancy in people's speed on the ice and capabilities in camp. This is allowed for. In the unlikely event that rescue from the ice is required, this will be carried out by satellite phone call to the Barneo Ice Camp for helicopter rescue. A doctor is available in Barneo and quality medical services including hospital are available when back at Longyearbyen.

### Food & Drink

Food in the Longyearbyen restaurants is good, although vegetarian options are limited. Remember that all provisions have to be flown to Spitsbergen from mainland Norway. On the ice freeze-dried food will be cooked by the challenge members and guides. Please let Charity Challenge know prior to departure if you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies.

### Inclusions and exclusions

This price includes: the training weekend on Dartmoor, Specialist clothing and equipment as per the kit list, international flights in economy class from London Heathrow to Longyearbyen in Norway, First Aid qualified polar guide and all the expedition costs from when you leave Longyearbyen to when you return there - return flights between Longyearbyen and the Barneo Ice Camp, logistics and support at Barneo Ice Camp, and for the Last Degree expedition all food, camping equipment, harnesses, sledges, and all technical and safety equipment, accommodation and meals in Longyearbyen (and hotel and meals in Oslo if required as part of the standard itinerary) and travel insurance.

The following items are not included in the expedition costs; drinks and any extra food and accommodation necessitated by flight delays, any activities not mentioned in the itinerary, personal spending money, and travel to and from UK airports.

In addition, if you need to call out a helicopter on the ice cap to take you back to Barneo for reasons unrelated to injury or illness (i.e. you are not prepared for the challenge or just want to stop), you will have to cover the costs of the helicopter which is calculated depending on flying time, the position of Barneo relative to where you are. The cost may vary from 6,000 to 25,000 Euros.

### Implications of the remote and wild environment

**IMPORTANT NOTE: The Arctic Ocean** is one of the most inhospitable regions on our planet. Logistics problems are enormous; the weather ferocious and unpredictable, ice condition is unstable. Distances are immense, facilities scarce. Safety and self-sufficiency are the paramount rules. We acknowledge and respect this. It is our obligation to warn to all clients that they like us and everyone else attempting to function in this extreme environment, are at the mercy of forces more powerful than any of us. Despite the expected period of calm dry weather, windstorms and blizzards as well as changes of the ice condition are a major threat to flights and groups en-route. Delays of days must be anticipated. Changes and amendments may apply to the programme, depending on the weather, ice or other conditions. It is important to consider possible delays or alterations, and accept them with patience. We will do our very

best to keep to the general itinerary; however we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that might occur and we fully expect such changes to take place. In all such circumstances, your challenge leader will have the final say.

The following information is intended to better inform you of the environment in which the challenge will take place, as well as some of the extra measures that we have put in place to manage any unforeseen changes that need to be made to the itinerary. The information also gives you an indication of the costs to you in the unlikely event of an extended delay or change to your North Pole expedition.

**Please read the following information in full and ask any questions that you may have. If you are not 100% prepared to accept the nature of the challenge environment and the points clearly detailed below, please do not book on to the challenge.**

All of the above means that even before the ski challenge itself begins, there can be major delays and changes to the programme. Once on the ice, our progress will depend on the weather conditions, the physical state of the group, whether the ice is flat or broken up, whether we encounter any leads (breaks in the ice) or encounter polar bears. There are so many variables that you absolutely must be prepared for any changes and delays that might occur. Weather can also delay our flight home, or our return from the ice cap may be delayed.

Please do note that our standard itinerary does already include contingency days and this Important Note is to inform you of what we have planned and what you should expect in the unlikely event that our North Pole expedition encounters delays and changes. You will be asked to sign a separate waiver that acknowledges the above info.

#### **IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For 18 years Charity Challenge has been successfully running challenges across more than 30 countries worldwide in some incredibly wild and remote locations. As such, we have identified and put in place a number of measures to best manage our North Pole challenges and the many potential issues that have an immediate knock-on effect for the day-to-day logistics involved.

The following information is intended to better inform you of the environment in which the challenge will take place, and also some of the extra measures that we have put in place to manage any changes that need to be made to the itinerary. The information also gives you an indication of the additional costs you will incur in the event of an extended delay or change to your North Pole expedition, or early departure from the ice.

#### **PLEASE READ VERY CAREFULLY ...**

#### **IMPLICATIONS**

All of the above means that even before the ski challenge itself begins, there can be major delays and changes to the programme. We will make the reasonably necessary changes to the programme and you will need to cover the costs of any additional accommodation and meals in Longyearbyen that need to be arranged. (Longyearbyen is the town from where you catch the flight that takes you on to the ice; and it is to Longyearbyen that you return to after your expedition to the North Pole.)

Any international flight changes to accommodate delays or early departure will be at your expense. A standard flight change with the same booking class is approximately £60 per sector.

Once on the ice, your progress will depend on the weather conditions, the physical state of the group, the technical and logistical demands of Barneo, whether the ice is flat or broken up, whether you encounter any leads (breaks in the ice) or polar bears. **There are so many variables that you absolutely must be prepared for any changes and delays that might occur.** Weather can also delay the flight home, or your return from the ice cap may have to be delayed. Again, any additional hotel and meal costs will be on your own account.

We strongly advise you to ensure your diary is free of any important meetings or events for at least four days after the planned return to the UK in case we do have to delay your return flights. If you are on the ice and we need to amend the return date by up to four days, we will do so to enable the challenge to continue without checking with each individual (as this may be difficult to do once the challenge has begun). Please note that this is also subject to being able to extend the internal flights from Barneo to Longyearbyen which are at the absolute sole discretion of the Barneo camp operators, and subject to availability of alternative dates with the international carrier.

Please do note that our standard itinerary already includes contingency days and this information document and supplementary conditions are to inform you of what we have planned and what costs you should expect if your North Pole expedition is extended or amended.

### **YOUR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS**

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understood and agree fully all the information and conditions as set out in this document.

I hereby understand that I have booked this challenge with Charity Challenge and consent to their booking conditions and these conditions which I agree shall be incorporated into and form part of my agreement with Charity Challenge.

I hereby acknowledge and understand that the operation of the North Pole challenge is incredibly unpredictable and accept that there are circumstances where I could be denied from even starting the challenge if for example, the base camp cannot be established or flights cannot land on the ice due to poor weather.

I acknowledge that such situations are out of Charity Challenge's control and that I will not be entitled to a refund of costs if the challenge cannot take place.

I acknowledge and agree that Charity Challenge may, if it is considered necessary to enable the challenge to continue successfully, delay my return flight by up to a maximum of 4 days once the challenge has begun. I note that Charity Challenge will try to advise me if this is necessary but will not need to check for my permission to do so.

**The above notes are also contained in and form a part of your booking terms and conditions.**

### **Climate**

The North Pole is substantially warmer than the South Pole because it lies at sea level in the middle of an ocean (which acts as a reservoir of heat), rather than at altitude on a continental land mass. Winter temperatures at the North Pole can range from about 40 to 10°C (40 to 50°F), averaging around 31°C (24°F). The sea ice at the North Pole is typically around 2 to 3 m (6ft 7in to 9ft 10in) thick, although ice thickness, its spatial extent, and the fraction of open water within the ice pack can vary rapidly and profoundly in response to weather and climate.

## Toilets

In Longyearbyen there are good washing and toilet facilities and at the Barneo Ice Camp there are porta-cabin toilets. On the main challenge there are no facilities and you should pack a 'pee bottle' for the tent at night and take plenty of toilet paper and anti-bacterial hand gel (NB: wet wipes freeze).

## Flights

Flights are included from London Heathrow to Longyearbyen (the main settlement of Spitsbergen, Norway) via Oslo or Tromsø, in economy class. If you want to upgrade, we can assist you but this will be at additional cost. You will then be flown on to the sea ice to Camp Barneo. From here you will be flown to the start of the challenge by helicopter. For more general flights questions, please refer to our main [FAQS](#) page.

## Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you have a suitable travel insurance policy whilst participating on the challenge. We include a special policy which covers among other things, medical (emergency, evacuation and repatriation) arrangements, cancellation (up to a max of £20,000) and curtailment of the challenge, and more specifically for the adventurous activities undertaken on this challenge.

For more general travel insurance questions, please refer to our main [FAQs](#) page.

## Vaccinations

For up to date vaccination information please check the NHS 'Fit for Travel' website: <http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/home.aspx>. Although the Charity Challenge team are travel professionals, they are not medical experts and we would encourage you to visit your GP or travel nurse to discuss vaccination requirements.

## Visa

There are no visa requirements for Norway, just a valid passport with six months to run from the end of the expedition.

## Money

On the ice you will not need or be able to spend money! At Barneo Ice Camp (which you could just be transitting through or could be staying overnight depending on weather and flight times), only Euros or US Dollars are accepted. For all other expenditure in Longyearbyen on Svalbard (Norway) we recommend that you take a credit card and a sufficient amount of cash in Norwegian Krone. Travellers' cheques or credit cards should be accepted in the airports. You will have access to ATMs in Longyearbyen only. You will need to bring money for any unexpected delays in departing from Longyearbyen or returning early to Longyearbyen, for accommodation and meals. We recommend you bring a credit card for this purpose.

### Conditions and the impact on logistics

The Arctic Ocean is one of the most inhospitable regions on our planet. Logistics problems are enormous; the weather ferocious and unpredictable, ice condition is unstable. Distances are immense, facilities scarce. Safety and self-sufficiency are the paramount rules. We acknowledge and respect this. It is our obligation to warn you that everyone attempting to function in this extreme environment, are at the mercy of forces more powerful than any of us. Despite the expected period of calm dry weather, windstorms and blizzards as well as changes of the ice condition are a major threat to flights and groups en-route. Delays of days must be anticipated. Changes and amendments may apply to the programme, depending on the weather, ice or other conditions. It is important to consider possible delays or alterations, and accept them with patience. We will do our very best to keep to the general itinerary; however we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that might occur and we fully expect such changes to take place. In all such circumstances, your challenge leader will have the final say.

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### Luggage allowance and valuables

As no formal clothes are needed, luggage should be kept to the absolute minimum – details of what to pack are provided in your kit list and this is very detailed and specific to the harsh climate you will be going into. The allowance with SAS Airlines is 1 carry-on bag of 8kgs and 1 hold bag of 23kgs. You may be asked to take out extra bags for taking out group equipment and food but we will cover the costs of any extra luggage allowance. While we will do everything to provide adequate safety for the group and security for your possessions, the general rule is that if you don't need it, don't bring it. This includes jewellery, necklaces, rings and even watches. Your main luggage should not contain valuables and items not required on the challenge. These may be left in storage in Longyearbyen to be returned to you once you have returned from the Pole.

### Waiver

Please note that you will be asked by the team from Camp Barneo to sign a liability waiver before boarding their flight onto the ice to start your challenge.

### Training

Training and a high level of fitness are definitely required. A full Fitness Training programme is included within the challenge cost and more will be explained during the training weekend. You will be skiing and sledge hauling for around 8 hours a day and still have lots of physical work to do in setting up and breaking down the camp. We will provide a training guide but essentially you should improve your cardio vascular ability and practice pulling a tyre with a harness to simulate the actions and work the muscles that you will be using on the challenge. You do not need to be an expert skier but some confidence on skis will of course help! In your account area you will find more comprehensive Fitness Training Notes.

### Training weekend

Our challenge includes an induction and training weekend where you'll be sized for all thermal and polar clothing, Arctic boots, skis and sledge harnesses. You'll leave the training weekend with your personal harness and the knowledge to empower you to prepare for the challenge ahead. To simulate the motion of pulling a sledge, we'll drag a 4x4 car tyre on uneven ground using the harness.

### Phone and WiFi

Most of the accommodation you are in will have decent WiFi which you will be able to use. You are unlikely to have any phone signal once you leave Longyearbyen. We will have a satellite phone with us for emergencies. You can hire your own iridium go satellite comms and have the ability to send pictures from the ice from your smart phone so that you can update blogs each evening.

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## Any more questions?

Contact us:

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