The Northwest Passage, the most legendary route in Arctic lore, is a series of deep channels through Canada's Arctic islands that have been historically ice-clogged year-round. Arctic warming has opened a window of opportunity to explore the quintessential Northwest Passage aboard National Geographic Explorer. Our ultimate ice ship navigates from Kugluktuk, Nunavut in the west, tracing the coast of Baffin Island, all the way along the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador. Our itinerary is flexible, and completely ice dependent, dictating our path north or south of Baffin Island* out into the Atlantic.

AUG. 19: U.S./EDMONTON, CANADA
Fly to Edmonton and overnight at our hotel. (D)

AUG. 20: KUGLUKTUK, NUNAVUT/EMBARK
This morning we fly to Kugluktuk, a traditional fishing hamlet and the most westerly community in the territory of Nunavut, where we embark National Geographic Explorer and begin our Northwest Passage adventure. (B.L.D)

AUG. 21-29: EXPLORING THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE
The Northwest Passage: the legendary sea passage of the North American continent,
representing centuries of effort to find a trade route from the Atlantic Ocean through the Arctic archipelago over the top of Canada. One of the world’s greatest maritime challenges, the route is located 500 miles north of the Arctic Circle. Our ultimate ice ship, National Geographic Explorer, follows nature’s path, dependent on ice and weather conditions. We explore the ice-choked channels and glacier-carved islands that stretch for hundreds of miles—a stunning display of raw geology. We take our cues from nature: following wildlife, stopping for hikes on the tundra, and dropping anchor in a beautiful fjord or an iceberg-strewn bay to kayak or explore by Zodiac. We may encounter ringed seals, arctic foxes, musk oxen, walruses and polar bears, as well as beluga and bowhead whales, and perhaps even the rare narwhal. We’ll learn about the Inuit peoples who have hunted and fished here for thousands of years. And we’ll hear heroic stories of the early explorers: Roald Amundsen, John Ross, William Edward Parry, and James Clark Ross among others. (B,L,D)

AUG. 30-SEP. 3: BAFFIN ISLAND*
All eyes will be on the Bridge as the Captain and his officers study the satellite ice imagery to decide whether ice conditions allow us to go south or north around Baffin Island. A narrow passage, filled with islands and clogged with ice even during the summer months which has made it impassable for most ships—the Fury and Hecla Strait is our quest. The strait is named after the two ships of Sir William Edward Parry, who spent many years searching for the Northwest Passage. If conditions are right and we are able to navigate this exciting passage, we will then spend the following days exploring—via ship, Zodiac, kayak and hikes ashore—the islands of the Foxe Basin and Hudson Strait. Wildlife and exciting new explorations will be plentiful.

If the Fury and Hecla Strait is impassable, we’ll sail to the north of Baffin Island, very familiar waters to us, filled with whales, birds and polar bears. The landscape is equally as stunning with great places to hike, kayak or Zodiac cruise, as well as plenty of late-season ice still to be found clinging reliably to parts of the eastern shore of Baffin Island. (B,L,D)

SEP 4-7: EXPLORING NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
We make our way, like the Vikings before us, south along the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, stopping at scenic Ikkudliayuk Fjord, and on to the quirkily named Button Islands, which attract thousands of seabirds and marine mammals. At Hebron, a Moravian Mission was established in the 1830’s to minister to the Inuit, and we see the original buildings. Next stop is Mugford Tickle, yet another scenic highlight with the 4,000-foot-high Kaumajet Mountains. Spend a day on the island of Quaker Hat, shaped like a broad-brimmed hat, exploring the fishing settlement of Indian Harbour and observing vast colonies of common murres. Continue to scenic Battle Harbour, with its historic 18th-century whaling buildings. (B,L,D)

SEP 8: L’ANSE AUX MEADOWS
In 1960, the remains of a Viking village established in the 11th century were discovered at L’Anse aux Meadows, now a UNESCO World Heritage site. Walk among the Norse ruins and reconstructed sod huts and learn the saga of the Vikings in North America—nearly 500 years before Columbus arrived. (B,L,D)

SEP. 9: GROS MORNE NATIONAL PARK
Graced by cliffs, fjords, and a sweeping alpine plateau, Gros Morne National Park has been designated a World Heritage site for its spectacular geology. Take a walk with our geologist to learn about the forces that shaped this land and the ancient serpentine rock that illustrates the phenomenon of plate tectonics.
Continue to Western Brook Pond, a pristine, glacier-carved fjord. (B,L,D)

SEP 10: AT SEA/SAINTE PIERRE ISLAND
After a morning at sea, go ashore at Saint Pierre Island, France’s oldest remaining overseas territory. Enjoy free time to explore the wharf and soak up the French culture. (B,L,D)

SEP. 11: ST. JOHN’S, NEWFOUNDLAND
Disembark this morning in St. John’s and transfer to the airport for flights home. (B)

Aboard the 148-guest
National Geographic Explorer

2014 Departure Date: Aug 19

2014 Cost Per Person Double Occupancy

Category 1..................$24,990
Category 2..................$26,950
Category 3..................$27,980
Category 4..................$29,990
Category 5..................$35,970
Category 6..................$41,390
Category 7..................$47,990

Sole Occupancy
Category 2.................. $33,690
Category 3.................. $34,980

Advance Payment:........$3,000

Sample Airfares:
Economy........................TBA
Business........................TBA
Subject to change.

Cost Includes: Accommodations; meals indicated; excursions; services of Lindblad Expeditions’ Leader, Naturalist staff and expert guides; use of kayaks; all port charges and service taxes.

Not Included: Air transportation; personal items such as alcoholic beverages, emails, laundry, voyage DVD etc.; discretionary tips to ship’s crew