



HOTEL SØMA

# Welcome to the Arctic Visitor Guidelines

Dear guest,

We are delighted to have you with us on this extraordinary journey. Traveling in the Arctic is a unique privilege, but it also comes with responsibilities. To help protect this fragile environment, its wildlife, and its communities, SØMA has prepared a set of guidelines that all our guests are kindly asked to follow.

These guidelines are designed to ensure **safe, respectful, and environmentally conscious travel**. They highlight important safety measures, ways to minimize our footprint, and how we can engage positively with local cultures.

We invite you to take a few moments to read through them carefully. By following these simple principles, you help us preserve the Arctic for generations to come—while making your own experience safer and more rewarding.

We wish you a safe, memorable, and truly inspiring Arctic adventure!

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**7 basic  
rules**

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# 1 7 basic rules

## 1. Leave No Trace of Your Visit

"Leave no trace" means avoiding any lasting signs that you were there. This includes not leaving behind rubbish of any kind, even small items like cigarette butts. Do not carve into rocks or buildings, and avoid stacking stones, moving rocks, or making other marks that alter the landscape.

Also, be careful where you walk to protect plants and fragile ground cover, and try not to create new paths. Please avoid stepping on flowers or plant beds whenever possible.

## 2. Respect Nature

The Arctic is a fragile environment where every plant, stone, and trace of history plays a part. Please enjoy its beauty with care, so it remains untouched for future visitors and wildlife.

## 3. Avoid Disturbing Wildlife

All animals and birds in the Arctic are regarded by SØMA as protected. We ask you to minimize disturbance by speaking quietly and avoiding loud noises when near wildlife or nesting birds.

Your tour guides may also share these rules with you. Please help protect Arctic fauna by respecting these instructions.

## 4. Respect Cultural Remains

Historic sites are legally protected, including a 100-meter buffer zone around them. Always walk around, not through, archaeological features. Do not touch, move, or take anything from these sites.

## 5. Take Polar Bear Safety Seriously

Polar bears are both dangerous and vulnerable. It is essential to follow your guide's instructions at all times. Detailed safety rules for polar bear areas are found in the section below.

## 6. Respect Local Communities

When visiting towns and villages, remember that you are a guest. Show respect for local people and their traditions. SØMA strives to ensure that visits contribute positively to local communities rather than causing harm.

## 7. Stay Safe

Arctic travel involves risks. The most important rule is to listen carefully to your expedition leader or guide and follow their instructions. Do not wander off on your own. More safety details are outlined below.





## 2 Safety

### Polar Bears and Firearms

Polar bears can appear at any time and in any place. They usually avoid humans, but encounters can be extremely dangerous. To protect both guests and bears, strict safety measures are in place:

- Expedition staff carry firearms and deterrents where polar bears may be present. These are handled only by trained personnel—never touch them yourself.
- Do not leave your group or the guides carrying safety equipment.
- If you see a polar bear, remain calm and alert your guide immediately.
- Never approach a bear, and never leave food out to attract them.
- Always follow your guide's instructions without exception.

### Arctic Dogs

Many settlements have large numbers of working Arctic dogs. These dogs are not pets and may be dangerous to strangers.

Never pet or approach them without the owner's supervision.

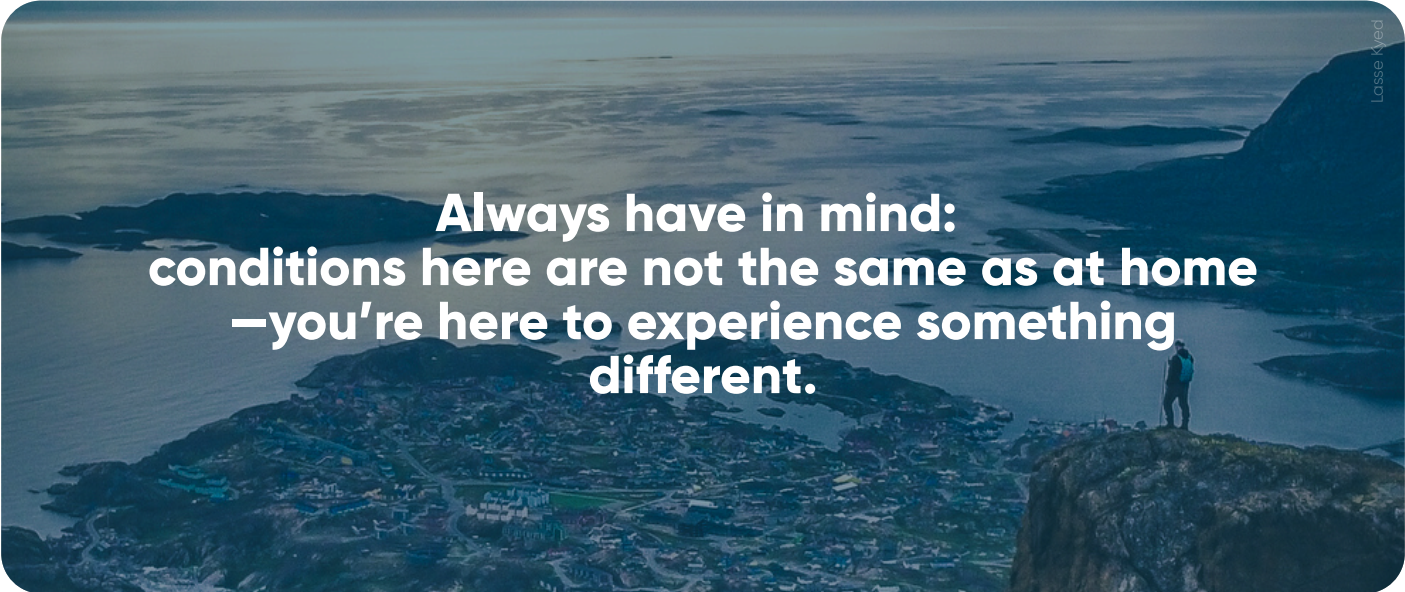
Do not feed them unless given permission and guidance by their handler.

### Rabies Awareness

Rabies exists in the Arctic, with animals such as Arctic foxes, wolves, and dogs as possible carriers. Never touch wild animals—alive or dead.

### Small Boat Excursions

- Always wear your life jacket correctly.
- Embark and disembark one at a time, using the sailor's grip.
- Sit only in designated places and stay seated—only one person should be standing at a time.
- Keep personal items secure to avoid losing them overboard.

A wide-angle photograph showing a person standing on a dark, rocky cliff edge. Below the cliff, a coastal town with colorful buildings is visible, nestled between the sea and the land. The ocean extends to the horizon under a pale sky. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

**Always have in mind:  
conditions here are not the same as at home  
—you're here to experience something  
different.**

## 3 Social & cultural interaction

The Arctic is mostly vast wilderness, with only small, often isolated towns—many of them Inuit communities. Few places are connected by road, and contact with the outside world can be limited. In such settlements, the arrival of tourists is often a major and welcome event.

Local residents may show interest in visitors, but with tourism in the Arctic expanding rapidly, it is important to be mindful of its social, cultural, and economic effects. Both visitors and operators share responsibility for ensuring respectful and beneficial interactions.

### Cultural Understanding

Tourism can be a bridge between cultures, promoting knowledge, tolerance, and respect. When traveling, you may encounter practices and values that differ greatly from those at home. Instead of judging, aim to understand and appreciate cultural differences as natural and meaningful.

### Guidelines for Respectful Conduct:

- Show respect for local customs and traditions.
- Avoid stereotypes and prejudiced attitudes.
- Respect privacy: keep distance from private homes, and never peek into or photograph windows.
- Speak with people, not about them.
- Do not enter graveyards or religious/cultural sites without permission.
- Always ask before taking photos of people. If they hesitate, take that as a "no."
- Do not alter cairns, as they may serve as markers.
- Do not trade or bring prohibited items into communities.
- Buying local products and souvenirs is encouraged—but be aware of international regulations on transporting items (e.g., CITES rules on endangered species).

