

SVALBARD 31. AUGUST – 4. SEPTEMBER

We signed up for a trip to Svalbard which was organized by [Stavanger Aftenblad](#) in collaboration with [Unik Travel](#). It was [Norwegian](#) who would fly from Oslo to Longyearbyen.



Svalbard



Flag



Coat of arms

According to Wikipedia, Svalbard is first mentioned in Icelandic annals from 1194. In the Icelandic [Landnámabók](#) from the 1200s is Svalbard also mentioned, but it is uncertain whether this is the same as today's Svalbard. In 1596 the Frisian-Dutch [Willem Barentsz](#) discovered the islands, but [Denmark-Norway](#)'s sovereignty was respected and defended. In 1671 the German doctor [Friedrich Martens](#) did accurate observations of the flora and fauna. From the 1890s, when Norway was asked to make claims on the archipelago, it took 30 years before the Norwegian government partly reluctantly eventually accepted a French draft treaty at the Paris Conference in 1920. The 17. July 1925 the law on Svalbard sanctioned was by the King, and on August 14 the same year the archipelago Svalbard was officially taken over by Norway.

Links: [Visit Svalbard](#) – [Wikipedia](#) – [Spitsbergen Travel](#) – [Store Norske Leksikon](#) – [Statistisk sentralbyrå](#)

The plane was going at 09:00 and we should be at the airport at 7:15. To avoid having to travel so early from Kongsvinger, we traveled the night before and stayed at [Radisson Blu Airport Hotel](#), Gardermoen. Last time we stayed there it was poorly cleaned. We complained, and as an apology we did stay for free this time. In a huge suite. Not bad.

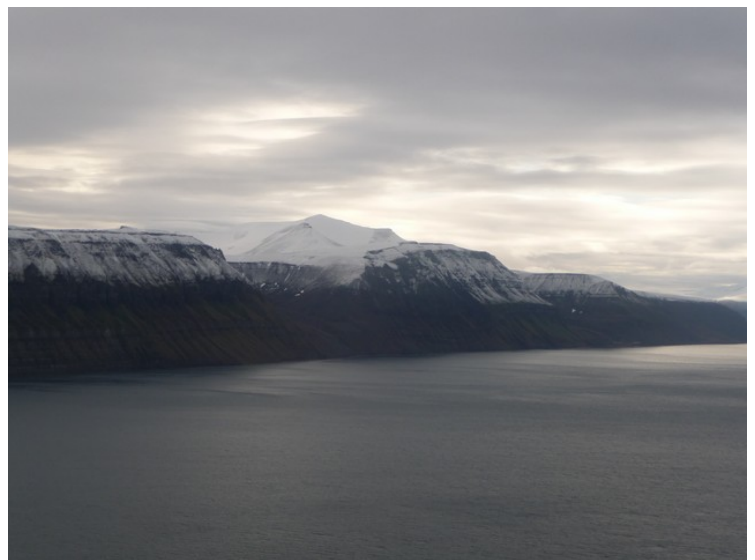
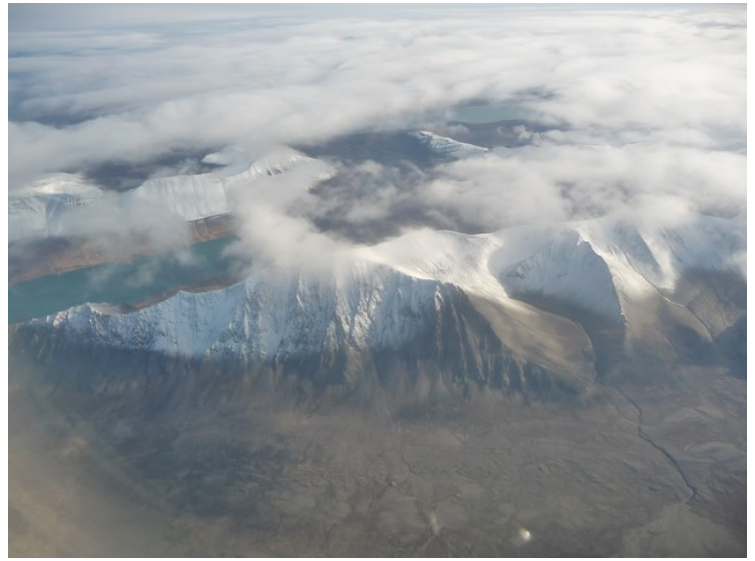




When we came to Svalbard we first noticed the mountain formations which we took a lots of pictures of. Here are a few of them on the south and west side of Spitsbergen. We do not know what we have captured. It is hard for us who are not familiar to distinguish the different mountains apart.

The southernmost area is called [Sørkapp Land](#). Then follows [Hornsund](#), [Wedel Jarlsberg Land](#), [Van Keulenfjorden](#), [Nathorst Land](#), [Van Mijenfjorden](#) og [Nordenskjöld Land](#).

The [geology](#) of Svalbard is very varied with everything from basement to sandstone and moraine.





Almost there at the airport. This is a bit of [Hotellneset](#).

The airport in Longyearbyen, [Svalbard Lufthavn, Longyear](#).



Arrival and departure hall.

Here is the plane we came with.



The polar bear stands in the middle of the conveyor belt in the arrivals hall.

Mountains in Longyearbyen.



Sjuøyane

Nordenskiöld bukta

Repøyane

KVITØYA

Lågøya

Kapp Leigh Smith

STORØYA

Verlegenuken

NORDAUSTLANDET

ORVIN LAND

Danskøya

Velkomstpynten

BEINSDYRS FLYA

Woodfjorden

Widelfjorden

Andrefjorden

ANDRÉE LAND

NY FRIESLAND

JAMES I LAND

SPITSBERGEN

Ny-Ålesund

Wahlbergøya

Wilhelmsøya

Erik Erikssonstrøket

Abeløya

Kongsøya

KONG KARLS LAND

Fuglehuken fyr

Kongsfjorden

Forlandsundet

PRINS KARLS FORLAND

OSCAR II LAND

DICKSON LAND

Pyramiden

OLAV V LAND

SABINE LAND

Isfjorden

Grumant

Barentsburg

Sveagruven

Nordenskiöld land

NATHORST LAND

HEER LAND

Van Mijenfjorden

Van Keulenfjorden

WEDEL JARLSBERG LAND

TORELL LAND

Hornsund

SØRKAPP LAND

Sørkappøya

Kapp Payer

BARENTSØYA

Ginevrobotnen

Freemandsundet

Olgastrøket

EDGEØYA

Ryke Yseøyene

Negerpynten

Tusenøyane

HOPEN

Hopen radio

Bjørnøy radio

BJØRNØYA

50 km





We stayed at [Radisson Blu Polar Hotel Spitsbergen](#)
This is the entrance.



Our room looked something like this.



After we had checked in and had eaten a simple lunch, we were taken by bus to Svalbard museum. Here we are inside the museum and the guide tells a about Svalbard and the museum.



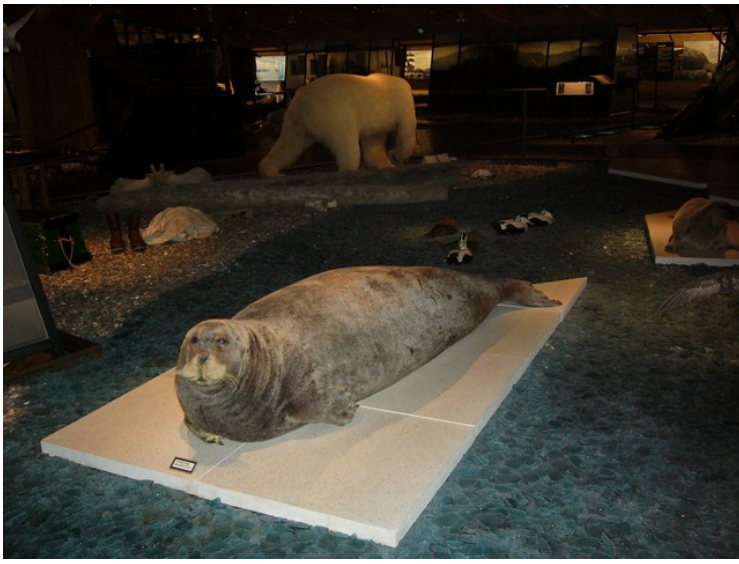
Svalbard Museum: [Link 1](#) [Link 2](#)
Svalbard Museum opened in 1979. Until 2006 the old pig barn was used as museum facilities. From April 2006 they moved the museum to [Svalbard Forskningspark](#). The exhibition presents fragments of Svalbard's 400-year history, and examines the activities and living conditions which reveal the close relationship between sea and land, nature and culture.



Whale.



Vertebra of whale.



Two different seals.

The Dutch ran huge catch of seals in the Arctic Ocean as early as the 1600s. Sealing started for Norway's part in 1795 when a ship set out from Hammerfest, but it was not until the 1820s that the catch increased in scope.



There are many information boards along the walls.

The reindeer on Svalbard is shorter and has shorter legs and shorter snout than reindeer in [Finnmark](#). It also has a thicker layer of blubber to survive the long winter. It is up to 14cm thick.



The coal worker has difficult working conditions.



I'm not afraid of [polar bears](#).



Polar bear cub.



Walls of a hunting cabin.



The interior of an old house on Svalbard.



[Scurvy grass](#). It contains a lot of C-vitamin and is therefore a means towards scurvy.



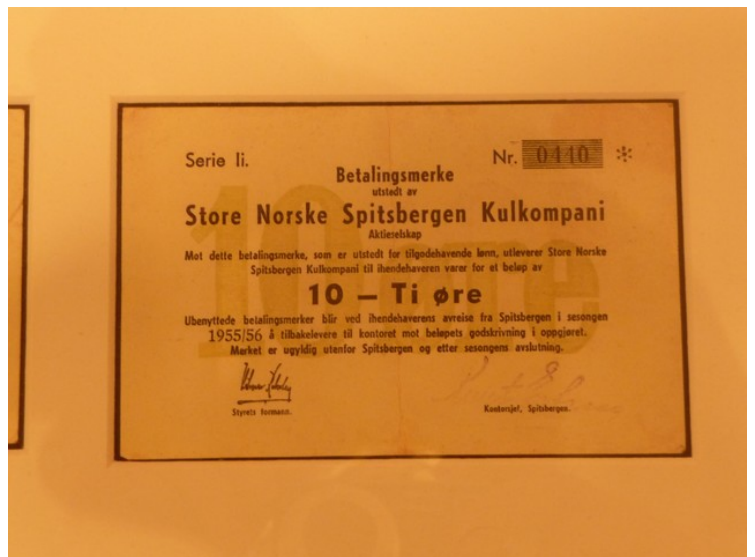
Furs from [Arctic fox](#). Arctic foxes, also called polar fox, is a close relative of the red fox, and it lives all over in Svalbard. The body size is smaller than the red fox, are better adapted to an Arctic life in the cold with short snout, small rounded ears and a coat that is thick in winter and thinner summer.



After we had been on Svalbard museum, we were driven further up the valley to [Galleri Svalbard](#).

Gallery Svalbard houses the permanent art and cultural collections, Kåre Tveter collection, Svalbard collection (maps, books and notes) and Recherche-collection (lithographs from the expedition in 1838 and -39). In addition the gallery conveys selling art through permanent and temporary exhibitions. In outlet it is also a book and gift department with different art books, general Svalbard literature and a growing array design items. Hot drinks and refreshments are available at Art Café, which also has a liquor license.

Below are some badges from the collection.





Here is an example of maps from this time. When we look at this, it is no wonder that they did not come to the place that they wanted.



Some of the pictures, which were exhibited.



View down the valley from Gallery Svalbard.



Up in the mountain side, we see the entrance to mine 1. Mine 1, also referred to as the American Mine was the first mine in Longyearbyen. It was opened in 1906 and was closed in 1958.



Spectacular mountains.



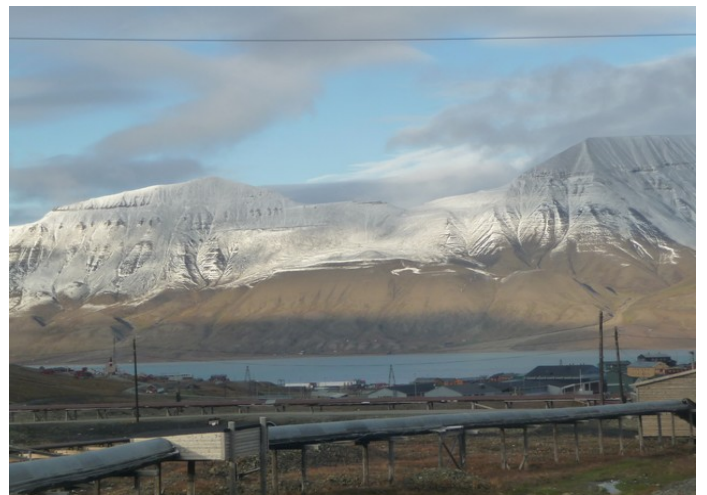
Our guide that day. She was very knowledgeable and told with empathy, so everything was interesting.



A few images of the buildings below Galleri Svalbard. We do not see it so well here, but all the houses are painted in bright colors to liven up. It was a [prosjekt](#) which was initiated in 1981 by [Store Norske Spitsbergen Kullkompani](#). [Grete Smedal](#) in [Designfelleskapet](#) has been working on this since. She has received several awards for this work, including [Norsk Form's](#) Honorary Award



The cemetery in Longyearbyen where the 26 victims of coal dust explosion in Mine 1 on 3 January 1920, is buried, along with the seven miners who died of [The Spanish Flu](#) in 1918.



District heating pipes. All residences in Longyearbyen have radiators and are heated by district heating coming from the power station. The power station is the only coal-fired power plant in Norway and it also provides electricity.



Remains of the settlements before the war.



It was shot on fire in 1943.



[Svalbard church](#). The first church was built in 1921. In 1943 Longyearbyen was bombed by the German battleships Tirpitz and Scharnhorst, and the church was burned down. This church was not completed until 1958.



[Cableway](#) for the transportation of coal. It went from Mine 1 and down to the cableway center. It is not in use anymore.



Three courses were collected in this [Areal Ropeway Junction Building](#). It is now closed. The coal is now being transported by truck. It has been decided that it should be protected along with the cable car that goes from here to the coal pier.



Here we are at the Ropeway Junction Building, looking down towards the center of Longyearbyen.



A portion of the cableway that goes to the coal pier. We see the chimney at the power station, [Longyear Eneriverk](#), to the left in the image. The plant gets coal from [Mine 7](#), east of the village, and uses about a third of the 80 000 tonnes of coal annually broken in the mine.



The same cableway with views along Adventfjorden towards Isfjorden.



[Bykaia](#).



In the bus again. [The worlds largest postbox](#) is here in Longyearbyen. It receives mail from Santa Claus throughout the year.



The last sightseeing leg goes south east to Isdammen in [Adventdalen](#). There are many marshes and wetlands in the valley.



Danger Sign - Polar Bears. This sign is specific for Svalbard. Beyond the sign one must have a rifle.



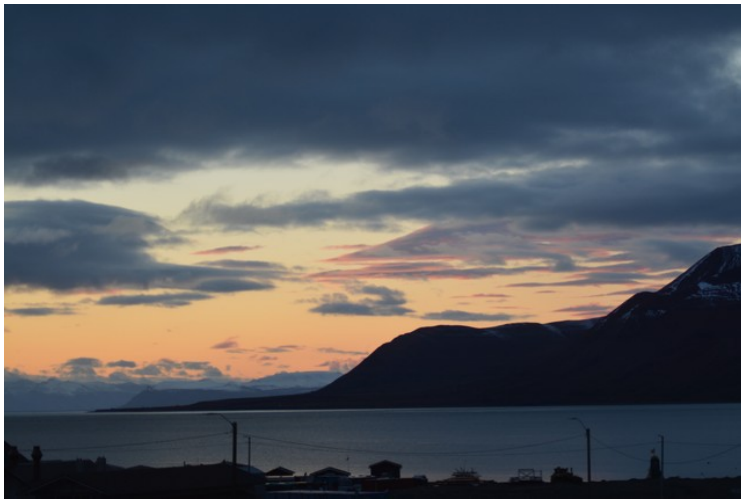
Isdammen. (The ice pond)



Southeast of Longyearbyen, lies this lake, [Isdammen](#). Longyearbyen get all its water from it. It is made by damming up some lakes. It will not be bottom frozen in winter, so the city has water all year round. There is supposedly no one who have a good explanation of why the lake is not frozen to the bottom.



After this sightseeing tour we were driven back to the hotel, where we relaxed a bit before the group was to meet for a common dinner in the hotel dining room. There were 42 people in the group, including our tour leader. Before we went to dinner, we took pictures from our room of the mountain [Hjorthfjellet](#), across [Adventfjorden](#).



After we've eaten we took pictures from our room with views out Adventfjorden. The sun has gone down. The last day of midnight sun in Longyearbyen was on August 23. That was only a week ago, so it does not get dark during the night.

This was the end of day one.



Finally an aerial photograph of Adventdalen and Adventfjorden, which is obtained from [Wikipedia](#).