



snow. Once unhitched and kennelled it was time to feed our hard working and friendly dogs. Robert gave us a real insight into the difficulties of living at such high latitude and his need for straw put it in a nutshell. It cost him 900Kr to buy and 6000Kr to have delivered.

We had a final day around town buying souvenirs including a down jacket so I'll never be as cold again.

The focus of the trip was passage making so we had to motor through some flat calms which gave much more time to explore Spitsbergen. That was the real bonus of the trip. Unless you are dedicated to sea crossings I would strongly recommend joining Southern Star in Longyearbyen her summer base for exploring the far north. I remember little of the cold, grey horizon-less seas but the huge snow clad mountains, the towering ice walls and the desolate splendour of the region will last a lifetime in my memory.

## POLAR SAILING WITH 69NORD

[www.69nord.com](http://www.69nord.com)

## EQUIPMENT AND CHARTS

Supplies can be obtained locally but do take all specialist items with you.

## COSTS

Norway was stunningly expensive so a tin of beer in a supermarket cost over £3 and most other things were typically double UK prices.

## SVALBARD

Is not governed but rather managed by Norway under international agreement so there is no taxation. A bottle of beer costs less than the UK but purchase is strictly limited. We had to show our flight ticket and once a limit is reached the shop would sell no more.

## CHARTS

### For Passage

The British Admiralty 2228. From the Lofoton Isles via Bear Island to S. tip of Spitsbergen.

### For Svalbard

Statens Kartverk Sjøkartverket  
Norwegian State Charts, showing much more land topography than our Admiralty charts  
504 Fra Sorkapp til Bellsund  
503 Bellsund – Forlandsrevet, Isfjorden

## WEATHER

Grib covers this area. Downloading weather data minimises network access and costs: [www.grib.us](http://www.grib.us).

## CURRENTS

Cold and warm currents make a huge difference to the distribution of ice. See Admiralty Ocean Passages for the World

## DAILY ICE FORECAST

[retro.met.no/kyst\\_og\\_hav/iskart.html](http://retro.met.no/kyst_og_hav/iskart.html).

## FLIGHTS

Norwegian Air & SAS (some BA). Prices vary a lot so staying longer actually cost us less.

## SPITZBERGEN ACCOMMODATION

Hotels such as Radisson  
Guest Houses - the huge Spitzbergen Guest House (but 20 mins walk up from town)

## USING YOUR OWN YACHT

I helped a friend sail a yacht over from Eastbourne to Norway and then up the coast with the ultimate aim of reaching Svalbard. But difficulties abound and here are a few:

Getting a reasonable weather window for the passage; the distance in such cold seas; the cost and storage of Immersion Suits which are vital; different boat gas bottles and the ability to arm yourself. By law anyone outside designated habitations must carry adequate arms to protect themselves but it is difficult to get a gun licence as a non resident.