



Notice how the people in this picture aren't identifiable? It's known as exercising courtesy, since it's not fair to imply any of them are committing any of the less-than-cool behaviors in this listicle (Arrrrrgh! Yes, we're caving to that feux-hip trend for a week, hopefully never to be done again). Anyhow, even if all these folks from the 3,013-passenger *MSC Magnifica* cruise ship are being perfect guests, their sheer number still tends to push the limits of what Longyearbyen can handle without chaos.

MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

# TOP SEVEN WAYS NOT TO BE A CRUISE SHIP BOOB

*Uninvited home tours, plucking polar bear pelts and pocketing 'free' mementos don't make visit cooler*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

We get it: It costs a lot of money to take a cruise here and it can be frustrating when that "bold Arctic adventure" turns out to be a few hours of feeling like you're part of a cattle herd being hustled through a modern small town that's much like many others.

But don't take it out on the locals with vindictive acts, or ignoring rules and/or basic decency so you can feel like you've had a

unique experience or gotten at least some of your money's worth.

Yes, the requisite disclaimer about troublemakers being a small percentage of cruisers is noted here. Locals obviously are quite happy welcoming visitors that are both a vital part of the economy and the lifeblood of the summer social scene. But avoiding the following behaviors that seem to occur with inexplicable regularity will lessen the frustration for everyone on those busiest of days:

**1. Just because everyone else has their hand in your pocket, it doesn't mean you can freeload in insane ways here.**

Yes, people in Svalbard tend to leave their homes and cars unlocked (although it seems they are doing so less frequently during the summer for reasons you're about to read). That doesn't mean you can wander into locals' abodes and rifle through their cars to (at best) discover fascinating tidbits about the lifestyles

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## Who will get the last laugh?

*Arctic rig seized by Greenpeace comes up dry – so Statoil will simply try again further norther*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Greenpeace got their wish despite their failed protest, as Statoil won't be extracting oil from the world's northernmost well after hitting a dry hole. But the environmental's group celebration might be a bit premature, as that "world's northernmost" designation is going to

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NORWEGIAN PETROLEUM DIRECTORATE

A well drilled by a Statoil oil rig about 175 kilometers from Bjørnøya, at the site with the yellow label, was a dry hole, but the company will try again at the site with the white label.

## Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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## Corrections policy

When we screw up you'll know about it – on the front page. One of the big complaints about newspapers is they tend to bury corrections and clarifications deep inside where few people who read the original article see them. If we need to fix something, an alert box on the front page will state what story is in error and where the full correction is printed.

## Submitting material

Letters, columns, photos and other material are welcome, but we can't offer pay for published items since nobody here is getting paid at the moment. Submissions in electronic form (text, Word documents, JPEGs, etc.) are highly preferred, although typing and/or scanning of items will be considered on a per-case basis. We reserve the right to edit submissions for length, clarity, accuracy, libel and other reasons, but we will also make every reasonable effort to contact the author about any changes prior to publication.

## Shockingly, he started it with a single match



Kjetil Slettnes, above, pours fuel on old mine cable spools and other scrap wood in preparation for the annual Midsummer Party hosted by the Svalbard Sailing Club on Saturday. At left, a group feels plenty of heat at a distance shortly after the bonfire is lit. Photos by Mark Sabbatini / Icepeople.

## Icesheet

### Random bits of the week's weirdness:

We've seen plenty of people go to the North Pole for crazy reasons and experience plenty of strain on the trail there, but Jake Thompson of Worcester, England, has a pretty strong case for claiming the crown in both categories this year. He was planning to ask his girlfriend of eight years, Hannah Bennett, to marry him and decided to do the honorable thing by asking her father first. **Dad's reply, according to the *London Daily Mirror*: "Yes, he could marry Hannah...but only if he walked to the North Pole with him first."** "I got a bit more than I bargained for," Thompson said. "But it was an honor to be able to go on an adventure like that and I would have done anything to marry Hannah. Even if he said I'd have to walk to the South Pole with him too, I would have done it." Two other people, took park in the 10-day trek, although one had to be airlifted out after getting frostbite in temperatures bottoming out at minus 45 degrees Celsius. And the supposed 100-kilometer journey turned out to be closer to 260 kilometers due to constant retracing their path to find a navigable route. And apparently they didn't get feeling back in their toes until two months after the trip was over. But in the end they raised £30,000 for the National



HOLIDAYSPLEASE.CO.UK

"One of the ugliest towns I've ever seen." So says a *New York Times* journalist who spends most of his time in cities ravaged by war. But a tiny blog says our colorfulness rocks. So there.



SWNS

**A future son-in-law, under armed guard:** Polar bears and deadly cold probably weren't the biggest fears of the guy on the right.

Osteoporosis Society and the Colourful Life Foundation. Oh, and she said yes ... **We've had a few folks offer less-than-complimentary opinions about Longyearbyen's aesthetics recently, so it's somewhat comforting to show up in yet another tourism listicle, titled "10 Colourful Places in the World" by the Holidays Please Blog.** We're actually a bit surprised any number of other Norwegian cities with similarly colorful houses weren't selected, but the blog notes the homes "truly stand out particularly against the backdrop of snowy surroundings." We doubt that'll convince the skeptics, but considering one of them also didn't understand why we wanted to live in a town that's virtually free of crime (I guess as journalists we're supposed to root for that sort of thing) we're not sweating it ... Finally, **we present maybe the most worst "48 hours off the beaten track" itinerary ever, courtesy of *Conference & Incentive Travel*:** Breakfast at Spitsbergen Hotel at 9 a.m., walk to the Radisson at 10 a.m., "remain at the hotel!" until noon for lunch and then hang out some more before a 2 p.m. dogsledding trip. Eat dinner at Huset at 7 p.m. Somewhat better is day two: Take a snowmobile trip and eat dinner at Camp Barentz.



COURTESY OF GREENPEACE

The Greenpeace ship *Esperanza* approaches the Transocean Spitsbergen oil rig in the Barents Sea in May, carrying 15 protesters that climbed aboard the rig to stall its northward journey. The protesters were removed two days later and the ship was towed from the rig's drilling site.

## Northernmost well comes up dry

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be very short-lived.

The "Apollo" well about 175 kilometers from Bjørnøya in the Barents Sea was drilled to a vertical depth of 1,050 meters below the sea surface by the Transocean Spitsbergen rig, according to a prepared statement by the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate. But only a few meters of reservoir rocks were of good quality.

"Statoil has permanently plugged and abandoned the well," the statement noted.

Cue the protesters' celebration.

"We're thrilled that there were no accidents and we're thrilled that they didn't find anything," said Truls Gulowsen, program manager for Greenpeace Norway, by phone today. "If they had listened to us, they would have avoided wasting hundreds of millions of kroner on a meaningless exploration well."

As it turns out, Statoil still isn't listening.

"The Transocean Spitsbergen rig is now heading even farther north in the same license to drill the Atlantis well, about 300 kilometers (186 miles) from the mainland," the directorate's statement declared.

Fifteen Greenpeace protesters boarded the rig May 26 in the Barents Sea while it was in transit to the drilling sight, forcing it to stop moving for safety reasons. Many voluntarily left when asked to do so by Norwegian Coast Guard and other officials, but several remained on the rig until they were forcefully removed

May 28.

The environmental group also tried to thwart the drilling by parking its *Esperanza* ship at the site, but the coast guard towed the ship the day after the protesters were removed from the rig.

The protest was motivated by a Greenpeace-commission study, conducted by the Norwegian Meteorological Institute, indicating oil from a spill at the drilling sight could reach Bjørnøya in 30 days, linger for months and "be almost impossible to clean up." Statoil disputes the study, stating the risk of a spill is very low, as are the chances of any oil reaching Bjørnøya is one occurs.

The drilling itself reads a bit like a dinosaur history exhibit, as "the primary exploration target for the well was to prove petroleum in reservoir rocks from the Middle Jurassic to Late Triassic Age (Realgrunnen subgroup), while the secondary exploration target was to prove petroleum in reservoir rocks from the Late Triassic Age (Snadd formation)," according to the petroleum directorate's statement.

While there were a few meters of good reservoir-quality rocks in the Jurassic/Triassic layer, the Late Triassic Age layer was a washout and drilling was halted at a depth of 1,050 meters below the sea's surface.

**There's more! Visit [www.icepeople.net](http://www.icepeople.net) for the complete story.**

### HEADLINES STOLEN FROM **SVALBARDPOSTEN** VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

#### Stone blockage in Lunckefjell reduces yield by 128,000 tons

Store Norske may get higher prices for some of the coal in its new Lunckefjell mine, but a massive stone blockage means the company will be able to extract 128,000 tons less than expected, officials announced last week. A section of the mine intended to be 797 meters long will be only 581 meters because it is not practically feasible to drill through the stone with Store Norske's current equipment, said Production Manager Martin Østling. The bad news was revealed at roughly the same time as the results of an initial test suggesting the quality of coal in the mine may be ideally suited for the metallurgical industry, which typically sells for a higher price than standard-energy coal.

#### Unfinished pedestrian path to schools concerns parents

Longyearbyen parents are expressing concern about the city's failure to complete a walkway between homes on Elvesletta Syd, Longyearbyen School and Polarflokken kindergarten. About 150 meters of the path remain unfinished, forcing pedestrians to walk on Vei 500, one of the city's busiest streets. "This is a dangerous stretch," said Bente Næverdal, head of Parents' Council Working Committee for Longyearbyen School. "I think it's just luck that there have been no accidents yet. City officials said the final stretch is still lacking an approved land-use plan and was not funded in this year's budget. Work is expected to start in 2015, but will not be completed until 2016 at the earliest.

#### Record ptarmigan count may mean same for hunting quota

A record hunting quota of Svalbard ptarmigan may be set this fall as researchers conducting an annual population count this spring say there were an unprecedented number of sightings. During a bad year, one adult male per square kilometer may be sighted, with up to three counted during a good year. But Eva Fuglei, a Norwegian Polar Institute researcher, said the per-kilometer density this year was 4.7 adult males. The reason is not certain, but feeding conditions were optimal during the mild winter. A large migration of the birds from elsewhere is also considered a possibility.

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Cloudy. S winds to 15 km/h. High 5C (3C wind chill), low 4C (1C wind chill).	Cloudy. Variable winds to 15 km/h. High 6C (3C wind chill), low 4C (1C wind chill).	Cloudy. SE winds to 25 km/h. High 6C (2C wind chill), low 5C (2C wind chill).	Cloudy. E winds to 29 km/h. High 6C (2C wind chill), low 5C (1C wind chill).
24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight
<b>Extended forecast:</b> Sunday, cloudy, 6C (3C), 5C (1C), light 24:00h; Monday, p. cloudy, 5C (1C), 4C (1C), light 24:00h; Tuesday, cloudy, 5C (2C), 4C (1C), light 24:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, 6C (4C), 5C (2C), light 24:00h			

Data provided by storm.no



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

This is maybe one-fourth of the people trying to use a single free wi-fi network at the library in Lompensenteret on a day when one of the biggest cruise ships visiting Longyearbyen is in port. If you get caught having Skype sex, indecency is going to be the least of what incurs their wrath.

## How a stray few spoil the scene for all

### INEXPLICABLE, from page 1

of the natives. Also, those stuffed polar bears on display at various places in town are not free fur samplers (notice the barriers around some, due to the mind-boggling number of folks not grasping this?). Similarly...

### 2. Just because everyone else has their hand in your pocket, it doesn't mean you can freeload in crooked ways here.

See those checkout line security scanners and surveillance cameras at the supermarket? You can thank passengers from previous voyages if for some reason you bring great humiliation upon yourself for triggering them. Svalbardbutikken spent mega money on them last year after determining its loss from thefts, especially during the summer cruise season was greater than the investment necessary to turn into Big Brother. There's also instances of cameras and other valuables of locals mysteriously vanishing shortly before a group of tourists is scheduled to depart. Trust us – we deal with the pain of some of the world's highest prices every day. Don't take it out on us just because some on-board art auction or "gold-by-the-inch" huckster screwed you.

### 3. Don't get huffy.

Those sealskin boots with the slightly garish stitching that scream "tourist souvenir?" Locals actually wear those things because it turns out millenniums of evolution (yes, evolution) have given the sea mammals an exterior that's ideal for snowy and frigid winters. And that frozen (or fresh, on an occasional lucky occasion) whale meat that's sometimes cheaper than beef? Sure, we don't have to eat it thanks to modern commercial air and shipping freight. But for many it's still a big thing here, both in cultural and economic terms. Put another way: how would you feel about a visitor from India walking up to you in a McDonald's and berating you for eating a sacred animal when so many other choices are available - right there on the menu, no less? Just...lay...off.

### 4. No, you're not that 'special exception' in protected areas.

We can't believe there's a need to mention

this here given the emphasis guides, both on the ship and in port, place on behaving responsibly in the fragile Arctic environment. But there's the inevitable subset who believe stepping off the path to pick a wildflower or pocketing a piece of wood from a historic cabin is an exception merited "just this one time." Wrong. Nobody – local or not – cares if your travel blog has 10,000 readers or month or your special snowflake really loves whatever you did to help despoil something forever.

### 5. The free public wi-fi hotspot is not the place to download the latest 'Game of Thrones' episodes.

This might be as much about self-preservation as it is courtesy, since the frustrations of people desperately trying to send urgent e-mails to employers and loved ones are highly visible on busy cruise days. If you're near the library surrounded by 80 such folks who are hearing the occasional streaming sounds of battle emitting from your computer, it's a decent bet you'll be in for a life-meets-art medieval experience.

### 6. If you need a bunch of something to bring back to the ship, notify someone in advance.

OK, it sucks the galley is short of bread, but coming into the supermarket and hoarding the entire day's baking unannounced kind of massively screws things up for every other local and visitor in town that day. Communication technology is a wonderful thing and it usually works even in the High Arctic. Use it so we can plan ahead.

### 7. Kids are not tourist attractions. Don't stalk them to take pictures or strike up chummy conversations.

This isn't the United States, so you probably won't get questioned by police for being a suspected kidnapper or child molester. But even the local media is asked not to take pictures of kindergartners unless their parents give permission, so it's not hard to imagine how parents feel about groups of total strangers acting like they might upon sighting a herd of grazing reindeer.

## What's up

### June 29

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

### July 1

7 p.m.: Evening Mass and fireplace social. Svalbard Church.

### July 6

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

### July 8

7 p.m.: Evening Mass and fireplace social. Svalbard Church.

### July 13

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

### July 15

7 p.m.: Evening Mass and fireplace social. Svalbard Church.

### July 20-22

Theater workshop for youths ages 14-18. Free. For details contact birgitte.dahl.knutsen@lokalstyre.no.

### Aug. 10

7 p.m.: Movie: "Sex Tape," U.S. comedy, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

### Aug. 17

7 p.m.: Move: "Guardians of the Galaxy" (3D), U.S. action/sci-fi, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

### Aug. 20

6 p.m.: Movie: "How to Train Your Dragon 2" (3D), U.S. animated family film, ages 7 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Aug. 24

5 p.m.: Movie: "How to Train Your Dragon 2," U.S. animated family film, ages 7 and up. Kulturhuset.

7 p.m.: Movie: "Hercules" (3D), U.S. action/adventure, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

### Aug. 26

7 p.m.: Evening Mass and fireplace social. Svalbard Church.

### Aug. 27

6 p.m.: Movie: "Hercules," U.S. action/adventure, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

## What's online

Icepeople.net provides daily updates of news about Svalbard and the world's polar regions, plus extras for articles from the print edition. Among the latest news:

- Offer: \$10K to disprove climate change
- Arctic rail linking Norway, Finland sought
- Herders protest name of Reindeer Police
- Climate change deterring space aliens?