



# Record or new normal?

*Three Svalbard locations feel record high temperatures in June, trend likely to continue*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

No, you can't bake cookies in your car or watch your shoes melt on the asphalt like some places to the south. But a long stretch of record heat is still having a shattering impact on Svalbard.

Of seven locations in Norway setting record monthly mean temperatures in June, three were in Svalbard, according to the Norwegian Meteorological Institute. The trend is showing no signs of letting up this month, with exclamation-point alerts of "unusually high" double-digit temperatures prominent in the long-term weather forecast.

The heat, which some scientists attribute to changes in the jet stream due to a record loss of the Arctic ice sheet last year, is being felt in many parts of the globe, including the southwestern United States where Earth's record temperature of 57 degrees Celsius is being threatened. While there's been no general agreement so far the temperatures are due to climate change, scientists say the conditions

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MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Josefine Axelsson, 24, left, Albert Jungselius, 27, and Emma Hellstrom, 24, partake of the soup course during Arctic Tapas' debut 14-course meal tour of Longyearbyen. The meals are prepared entirely with foods from sources north of the Arctic Circle.

# Forking over bus fare

*14-course meals on wheels debuts as Arctic Tapas offers slow-food Longyearbyen tours*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

As a special night out after a long absence, Ronny Nilsson thought a plodding bus ride on bumpy roads would make for a fancy date with his wife.

But they were hardly going Greyhound

as they settled into seats draped with plush animal pelts and indulged in a 14-course meal while jazz played subtly overhead. The ambiance was ever evolving as the bus stopped frequently at noteworthy points, with the driver also serving as storyteller/tour guide.

"I've been living here 14 months and my wife got here last night," Nilsson said. "We were on Facebook and saw this announcement. We're both fond of good food so we

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# 'Food bank' saves expedition

*Researchers in north Svalbard, short on food due to missing cache, offered nearby supplies*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

A couple of hungry researchers and their dog, isolated in the most remote part of northeast Svalbard, have managed to find way to put food on their plates thanks to a loan from a bank.

"A group of scientists have been so kind that they have entrusted us with their food bank," wrote German researchers Björn Klauer and Regina Elpers in their expedition journal at

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UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

A supply cache in northeast Svalbard, intended for use by researchers at the University of Oslo, is providing a German couple with much-needed food after their supplies were raided by bears.

## 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.

## OK, our party sucked compared to yours



LINDA BAKKEN / SVEANYTT

Workers at Svea give a thumbs-up to Svalbard's hottest summer solstice party, as they elevated the traditional bonfire of waste wood into a full-scale fire drill at the coal mine. An accidental ignition of the thousands of tons of stored coal could be disastrous, but a simulation in a controlled burn made the flames at similar parties in Longyearbyen and Hopen look like kindling in comparison.

## Icesheet

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

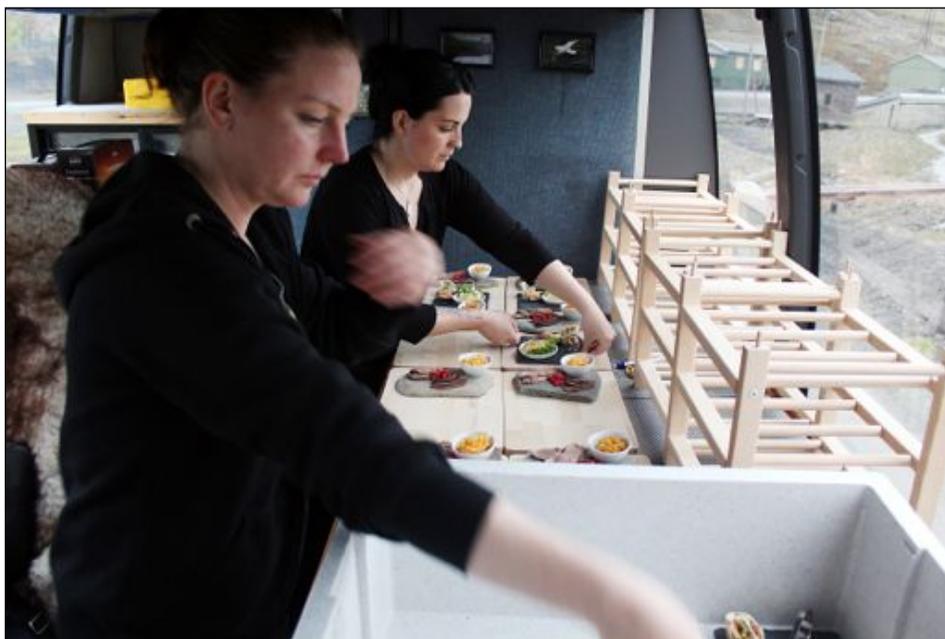
**Longyearbyen School's method of education may be "really stupid," but Emilie Ulsnes Sommervold, 18, has achieved the "hilarious" feat of graduating with what is believed to be the schools's highest grade point average ever.** The student council president had harsh words two months ago in an NRK interview about students doing several hours of self-study courses a week due to a lack of teachers, saying it impairs youths needing extra help. The unique self-sufficiency mandate has required some students, including those with disabilities, to move to the mainland. But Sommervold's activism on such issues didn't distract from her studies as she earned a grade point average of 5.6 on a scale of six, a feat she described with more humor than pride. "Firstly, I have chosen subjects that I know I do well in," she told *Svalbardposten*. "That's why I stayed away from some, including physics." She said she's working now to earn enough to travel to New Zealand for New Year's, with plans to study philosophy in Oslo or Bergen next year ... **Transitioning to probably the stupidest thing encountered this week, we offer this solution to coping with the record heat wave: "Exotic Northern Images in Liberty Slots' New 'Arctic Queen' are Perfect Remedy for Summer Heat."** That's the headline of a press release from a company that's apparently decided gambling is a good way to deal with melting glaciers, massive forest fires and people dying in temperatures threatening Earth's highest-ever mark of 57 degrees Celsius. Allowing bets from 25 cents up to \$250 (U.S.), the slots feature symbols such as huskies, seals and "an enchanting Eskimo girl Wild." Furthermore, "a Free Game Feature is awarded when three or more scattered Northern Lights symbols occur." Maybe



PRIVATE

**If Socrates were alive today** he'd be absolutely schooled by aspiring successor Emilie Ulsnes Sommervold, 18, who speaks in vivid attention-getting sentences rather than an endless stream of incomprehensible questions.

it's because we're too broke to play, but we're feeling very warm at the moment ... Also in the not-exactly-genius category is **a press release from Norway's Parliament that starts by asking "What do you do at the shipwreck of a cruise ship in Svalbard?" – then ignores the subject except for a few more Socrates-like questions at the end.** The release supposedly summarizes "What happened at the Nordic Council's summer meetings," but inquisitive citizens basically learn the northern half of Norway can be a dangerous place due to the geography and weather, and more emergency preparation is necessary ... Finally, if the heat and idiocy don't have your blood boiling, **greenies may be inflamed to know Norway has passed the 400 mark in hunted whales during a year where demand is strong, according to Lofotposten.** But some condolence might come from knowing hunters are feeling "anguished" as things are turning sour with a mere 55 catches last week, 37 of which were from Bjørnøya and Spitsbergen.



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Janne Korneliussen, left, and Jeanette Hove-Nordhagen prepare to serve a reindeer course in the rear of the Arctic Tapas bus Tuesday as it stops near Huset. Tours are being offered on a somewhat limited "test stage" schedule until late fall, with plans to resume with a full schedule possibly by early February.

## Bus offers swills, thrills – and no spills

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thought it was a good idea."

The couple was among a select few dining aboard the first official Arctic Tapas tour Tuesday in Longyearbyen. The company, winner of a 275,000 kroner Innovation Norway award for its concept of combining Arctic-sourced meals with tours, advertised the special half-price debut on a community Facebook page at 11:30 p.m. Monday and sold out the limited allocation of 14 spaces by early Tuesday afternoon.

Getting the tours going has been stressful, with the debut delayed a month due largely to problems getting adequate electricity to a separate kitchen site where food is prepared, said Jeanette Hove-Nordhagen, one of Arctic Tapas' three employees. Meal preparation is also demanding, such as a reindeer course involving a 12-hour cooking process.

The tours, which regularly cost 550 kroner and have space for 30 people, are initially offering a set menu of cold foods.

"Hopefully after a while we'll have a more variable menu," she said. "For now they're the same to be on the safe side."

All of the food – including lamb and cheeses, but no whale so far – is from suppliers north of the Arctic Circle, mostly in Tromsø, Hove-Nordhagen said.



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Bent Heggen Larsen interrupts his driving with a historical narrative during a stop on Arctic Tapas' first official bus meal and tour Tuesday.

"We have our own women picking berries," she said.

Although the bus stops while food and drinks are served, it continues moving while passengers are dining. But there were no mishaps during some pre-opening test meals.

"We haven't had any broken dishes or spilled food so far," Hove-Nordhagen said.

Achieving that on Longyearbyen's rough and often non-paved roads takes patience.

"The trip is very slow, 19 to 21 kilometers an hour," said Bent Heggen Larsen, the driver and tour narrator. "Coming home we do 60."

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

## HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

### Museumsveien may be shut until winter due to bridge

A collapsed bridge on Museumsveien may keep the road closed until winter, according to city officials. Thomas Skogvold, an engineer for Bydrift, said the collapse is due to water finding new avenues in the gravel beneath. The water is supposed to flow through pipes located below the road, but instead the new flows washed the foundation of the pipes away. Excavation work started Sunday, but Skogvold, said he doesn't know when work will be finished.

### After 25 years, WWII cannon finally restored at old location

After years of controversy about its location, a restored cannon from World War II has been returned to its old position at Heerodden. The weapon was originally on board the Norwegian destroyer *Sleipner* and placed at Heerodden after Norwegian forces settled in Barentsburg in the spring of 1942. Other guns placed in Longyearbyen and at Hotellneset are lost. The controversy over the Heerodden gun began in 1987 between Norwegian officials and Det Norske Svalbardselskap, with the former prevailing and moving it from Heerodden to Hotellneset, arguing the Russians did not take good enough care of the cannon. But placement was random since nobody could remember the exact position. The cannon was moved back to Heerodden in 2011 without dispute, with the Russians refurbishing it during the past winter.

### Car stolen from parking lot, hits two other cars, returned

A car stolen Monday night from the parking lot at Vei 228 rammed two other vehicles on the street before being returned to its original spot, according to police. "We are very interested in tips if anyone has seen anything," says Sgt. Roger Haugen of the Svalbard governor's office. Several neighbors reported being awakened by a loud bang, but did not see the theft of the white Toyota Corolla. The car's owner, Johannes Drægne, said he learned about the theft when a friend asked about major damage to the rear window and left side of the vehicle. "It's a bit my own fault since I had left the keys inside the vehicle," he said. "But that is the Svalbard style."

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Occasional rain. E winds to 39 km/h. High 11C (8C wind chill), low 8C (4C wind chill).	Cloudy. Variable winds to 29 km/h. High 8C (7C wind chill), low 7C (4C wind chill).	Cloudy. S winds to 22 km/h. High 7C (5C wind chill), low 6C (3C wind chill).	Cloudy. SE winds to 18 km/h. High 8C (6C wind chill), low 6C (3C wind chill).
24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight
<b>Extended forecast:</b> Sunday, cloudy, 8C (6C), 6C (4C), light 24:00h; Monday, cloudy, 7C (4C), 6C (4C), light 24:00h; Tuesday, cloudy, 7C (4C), 6C (3C), light 24:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, 7C (5C), 6C (4C), light 24:00h			
Data provided by storm.no			

## Don't do this? Don't bitch about stupid policies



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

A booth awaits voters in Longyearbyen's municipal building Monday, the first day of early voting in this year's Parliamentary elections. Voting is open to Norwegian citizens who will be at least 18 years old by the end of the year and are registered on the election roll of a Norwegian municipality. The Longyearbyen booth is open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays until Sept. 2 (non-Svalbard locations allow early voting until Sept. 6). Early voting may be done in any Norwegian municipality, but those voting on Election Day (Sept. 9) must do so where they are registered. A photo ID is required. More information about voting qualifications and rules is available at valg.no.

## Heat shatters records, roads

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are indicative of what will become normal in the near future because of it.

In Svalbard, Bjørnøya's mean of 5.3 degrees Celsius is the highest since readings began in 1910, breaking the record of five degrees set in 2006, the NMI reported. Hopen's 2.6-degree mean, the highest since readings began in 1945, beats the high of two degrees set in 2006. Svea's 4.4-degree mean, the highest since readings began in 1978, exceeds the record of 3.9 degrees set in 1978 and 1980.

While Norway's record temperatures were felt in the north, other parts of the country didn't escape freakish weather as June was also the fourth-wettest on record with precipitation at 160 percent of normal. But that was unevenly distributed as the northern town of Vardø,

for example, received only 15 percent of its normal precipitation.

The heat in Longyearbyen triggered landslides and slush avalanches that heavily damaged roads in early June. Both major roads leading out of the city were closed briefly and a washed-out bridge at Museumsveien may keep that road closed until winter.

Another shattering – but less hazardous – impact can be seen to the "stem" of the snow campaign glass on Operafjellet. A contest to guess the date the stem will "break" by melting is held annually, with the winning date coming usually occurring in late July. But the stem is nearly severed this year only one day after the July 1 entry deadline.

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

## Hungry expedition gets new life

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spitzbergen-expedition.de.

"This covers all our needs until the first half of August. It was a great message to get, and we were very happy. (Björn) was there today ... and filled a backpack and a dog bag."

The couple was facing the abandonment of their four-month trip, where they are researching the fate of a fatal 1913 expedition, due a missing food barrel cached at their site. Three other barrels had polar bear paw scratches on them, indicating they had been disturbed, with the missing barrel possibly washed out to sea.

The Svalbard governor's office turned down requests from the couple's friends to

have a helicopter fly in supplies, stating such a flight would be banned under a rule prohibiting tourist flights in the archipelago.

But Jon Ove Hagen, who participates in expeditions to the area annually with University of Oslo researchers, contacted the governor's office after reading a news report about the couple's situation.

"It would be too bad not to use the repository once it is there," he told *Svalbardposten*. "Had there been an emergency, it was obvious. But it's also boring to cancel an expedition you have planned for so long," he said.

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

## What's up

### July 7

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

8 p.m.: Movie: "The Lone Ranger," U.S. action/adventure, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

### July 9

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

### July 14

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

8 p.m.: Movie: "The Internship," U.S. comedy, ages 7 and up. Kulturhuset.

### July 16

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

### July 21

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

8 p.m.: Movie: "World War Z," U.S. action/drama, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

### July 23

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

### July 28

6 p.m.: Evening Mass. Svalbard Church.

8 p.m.: Movie: "The Wolverine," U.S. action/sci-fi, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

### July 30

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

### Aug. 4

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Pornopung," Norwegian drama/comedy, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Aug. 6

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

### Aug. 11

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

8 p.m.: Movie: "R.I.P.D.," U.S. action/comedy, 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:

- *Northernmost oil rig in Barents a bust*
- *Air crash in Siberia kills 21; 11 are kids*
- *Packing for a summer Arctic expedition*
- *In Siberian "reality" show, camera is evil*