

Adventurous Advice: Get the Best Travel Tips & Tricks from Experienced Expeditioners

If you've never ventured on a small-ship expedition cruise before, you may be wondering how to prepare. Adventure Canada asked our past guests what advice they would give to a future expedition traveller. From the practical to the philosophical, here is a summary of their best suggestions.

By **Adventure Canada** | November 09, 2021



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Let Go of Expectations

One of the most common pieces of advice we heard from past guests was to drop any preconceived ideas of what your trip might entail, and instead open yourself up to the expeditionary spirit of discovery and adventure.

Linda Heywood ([High Arctic Explorer](#)) gave this advice: "Be open to everything *new*: new cultures, new food, new scenery, new weather, and, of course, new friends. One of the most thrilling aspects of adventure travel is discovering and appreciating the vast world we live in."

Sometimes the very nature of the places we travel to causes a change in plans. Weather, wind, ice, and sea conditions can be unpredictable, and since everyone's safety is of primary consideration, we may make itinerary changes.

When this happens, Jon Dudley ([Scotland Slowly](#), [North Atlantic Saga](#), [Iceland Circumnavigation](#), [Newfoundland Circumnavigation](#)) recommends appreciating the opportunity to experience the unexpected. "Don't miss the chance for a vacation from the world of routine and predictable schedules," he said.

Jean Servizi (High Arctic Explorer, [Greenland & Wild Labrador](#)) also had this to say: "Any new travellers with Adventure Canada should be reassured... that whenever necessary, adjustments in the itinerary will be made to the satisfaction of the traveller."

Indeed, many of our guests report that these changes of plan made their trips even better.



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A snowy Zodiac ride in Croker Bay, Devon Island, Nunavut

Bring the Right Gear

Packing for an expedition could be considered its own art form, and many past guests gave suggestions in this regard. Heather Brooks-Hill ([Northwest Passage](#), [Greenland & Wild Labrador](#)) admitted she brought along more clothes than she needed, but that the old, trusted guidelines for what to wear in cold weather still ring true: "Layers? Yes!"

"Forget your rain jacket!" suggested Lee Watt ([Atlantic Canada Explorer](#), [Scotland Slowly](#)). "Adventure Canada gives you a bright blue warm, waterproof jacket for those blustery days and Zodiac transfers."

Doug Grant ([Scotland Slowly](#)) took Lee and Heather's advice one step further. He pointed out that if you ask for an Adventure Canada jacket one size up from what you usually wear, it will make layering that much easier. "A collapsible walking stick is also handy," he added.



Lee and Terry Watt in Adventure Canada jackets, Scotland Slowly 2019

Although we provide jackets for you to keep, you are required to bring along your own waterproof pants. Paul Smith ([Scotland Slowly](#), [Greenland & Wild Labrador](#), [Bears of Churchill](#), [Northwest Passage](#)) reminded us that there's nothing worse than getting your bottom wet while sitting on a Zodiac pontoon. He offered this suggestion that isn't likely to leave your imagination any time soon: "Don some light clothing, put on your waterproofs, and stand under a shower for five minutes or so. You'll soon find out if they work. Either way you will have something to talk about!"

"It is also wise to ensure that your gloves are waterproof. As a fall back, I have on occasion used plastic shopping bags over my gloves. Cold water loves to get into crevices," he reported.

Finally, footwear was another hot topic of advice. Expedition cruises are an adventurous form of travel and you'll want to make sure that you can [stroll](#), [ramble](#), or [trek](#) comfortably. Adventure Canada supplies tall waterproof boots to make your Zodiac landings a breeze, but you may not find these comfortable for prolonged walking. So, bring a pair of beloved hiking boots to change into ashore, or take this tip from Donna Castledine (High Arctic Explorer, [Greenland & Wild Labrador](#), [Birding the High Arctic & Northwest Territories](#)): bring along a pair of rugged, knee-high waterproof overshoes that fit over your hiking boots.

"They are light-weight and fold up to the size of a shoe, so they are easy to pack. Once you arrive at the landing site you can slip them off, hook them onto your backpack, and you are ready to go with your comfy hiking boots already on!"



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Comfortable footwear and collapsible walking sticks are two pieces of gear highly recommended by past guests.

Arrive Well-Rested & Well-Prepared

Besides preparing your suitcase, a number of folks offered advice for preparing your body and mind for the upcoming adventure. Nancy Newland ([Costa Rica & Panama](#), [High Arctic Explorer](#)) said, "A tip I would give a first-time guest is to approach your trip well rested. Be prepared to be invigorated and informed all along the way."

Peter Machin ([Northwest Passage](#), [Greenland & Wild Labrador](#)) noted the usefulness of carrying sleep medications (with their prescriptions) to help with long flights or jet lag. "Along the same lines, you'll need ear plugs and eye shades," he advised.

While some recommended reading up about the nature, culture, and history of the area before you travel there, others raved about the [on-board presentations](#) you can attend to learn about these topics as you go.

Andy Harjula ([Greenland & Wild Labrador](#), [Heart of the Arctic](#)) gave a simple tip for all the hikers out there: "Get in shape."



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Don't forget to pack your swimsuit if you're keen to try a polar plunge!

The Fun Stuff

It wouldn't be an Adventure Canada expedition without a hearty dose of festivity. "One of the most fun things aboard the *Ocean Endeavour* is the themed costume party!" shared Amy Powers ([Scotland Slowly](#), [North Atlantic Saga](#), [Northwest Passage](#), [Greenland & Wild Labrador](#)). She recommends packing a lightweight ensemble, which you can always supplement with accessories from Adventure Canada's dress-up collection for the big event.

Purchasing a new camera or upgrading your smartphone to a device with high-quality photo capabilities was another common tip.

For those who love to shop 'til they drop, Françoise Girard ([Northwest Passage](#)) gave this reminder: "Bring enough cash to [buy crafts from local artisans](#)." And don't forget to check which currencies are accepted in the places you're planning to visit!

Last but not least, we offer these words of wisdom from Edna McCreight ([Northwest Passage](#)), which we think really gets to the spirit of this type of transformational travel: "Take part in everything at least once! You never know who you'll meet and develop a lasting friendship with."