

TOURISM IN POLAR ZONE IS EXPENSIVE BUT HIGHLY DEMANDED



People bored with traditional holidays at seaside may enjoy trips to the polar zone on board a Russian ice-breaker. The 'cruise' involves sleeping in a crowded cabin and other 'benefits' of a journey to the coldest place in the world. Surprisingly, there are quite a lot of people willing to pay large sums of money for such an experience.

Trips to the polar zone on board a ship sailing under Russian flag are quite popular nowadays. It is, however, very likely that such trips will not be possible for much longer. According to Cestovanie.sk, it was not long ago when the trips to the polar zone were the privilege of only rich westerners. Nevertheless, **the demand for such trips among Russians has increased in the last four years.** Tourists got bored with beaches, luxurious hotels and even with safari. **They want to experience something new and unique** and not only rest. The polar zone is ideal for those who are sick of spending their holidays on a beach.

A two week journey on board an ice-breaker costs at least 16,500 Euro per person. There are plenty of tourists who want to experience such journey but the season is very short. That is why the reservations must be made months in advance. The lucky ones may even take pictures from a helicopter which looks for a safe way for the ice-breaker in the treacherous frozen sea. Tourists also get the opportunity to go on board a nuclear ice-breaker. Of course, they will not be allowed everywhere but they will see the reactor since the levels of radiation in the room are harmless.

Just a few years ago, the prices of such a trip were lower by a third. **Despite the high prices, there are already enough reservations for the summer.** Andrej Smirnov from Rosatomflot, the owner of the ice-breakers, said that with such high numbers there will be at least four trips in the summer. Before the crisis, there used to be five or six trips in a season. It is possible that this will be the last tourism season. The polar zone tourism has been thriving for about 20 years now but it has never represented more than three per cent of the fleet's income. The transport in the polar zone is getting more and more expensive. If the trend continues the fleet might decide to stop taking tourists on board their ships. They will not need the money any more.

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