

MS SPITSBERGEN

2025.05.08 - 2025.05.20



Legend

— HX Expedition

300 km © Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Day 1 - Embarkation in Fairlie

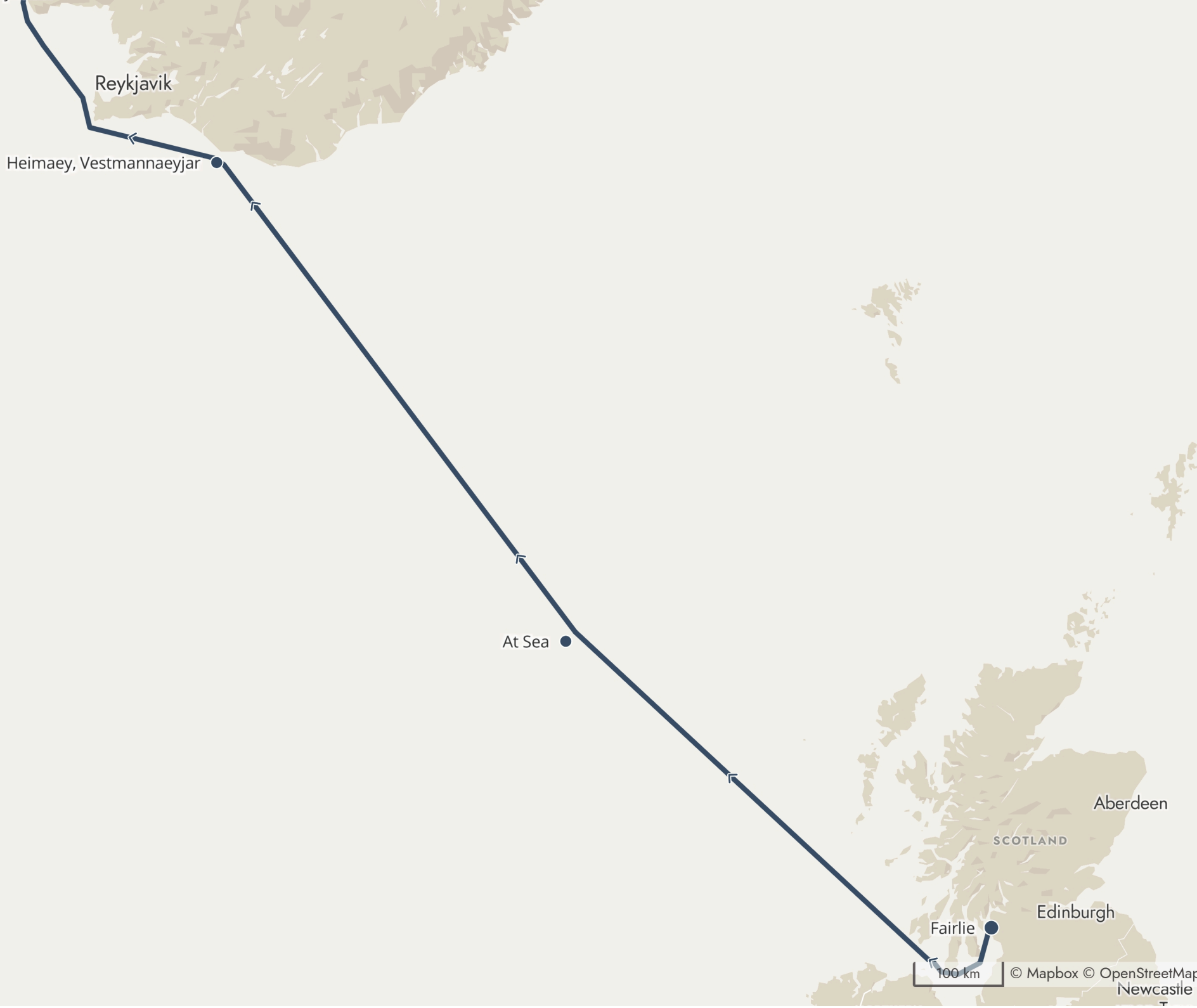
Our expedition began this afternoon in Fairlie, a quiet port near Glasgow, where we boarded MS Spitsbergen and took our first steps into the journey ahead. After checking in, settling into cabins, and collecting our blue expedition jackets, we explored the ship and met the team who will guide us north.

The atmosphere on board was filled with a mix of excitement and curiosity as new faces gathered for briefings and introductions. As we cast off in the early evening, a group of pipers played from the pier,

their music echoing across the harbour in a stirring farewell. With the sound of bagpipes carrying over the water, we waved our goodbyes and turned our bow to the north.

This voyage will take us far beyond the familiar—toward the dramatic coasts of Iceland, the remote volcanic island of Jan Mayen, and the icy wilderness of Svalbard. As Spitsbergen moved steadily into open water, the sense of anticipation grew. The adventure had begun.





Legend

HX Expedition

Days 2 & 3 - At Sea, on our way to Iceland

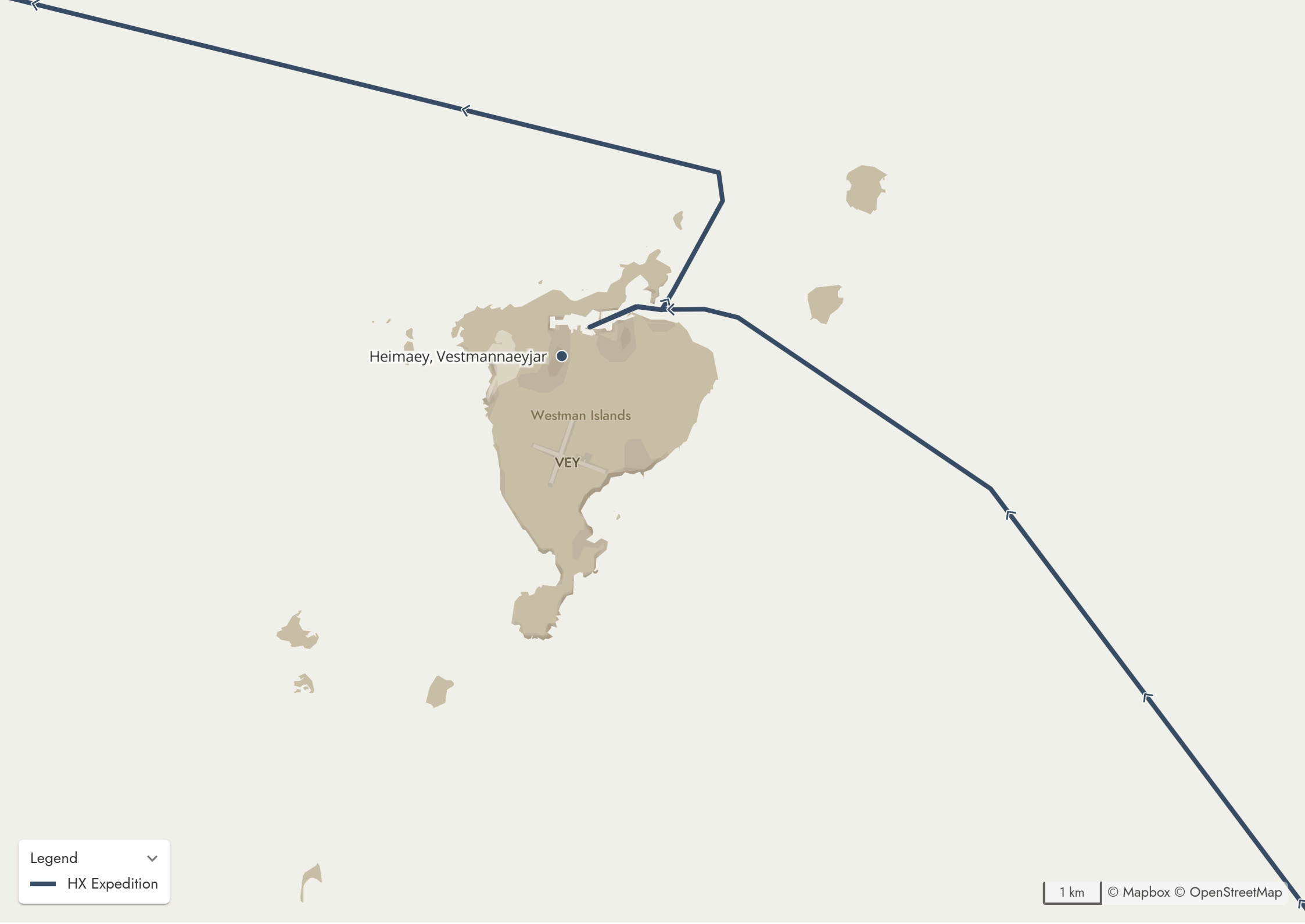
Our first two days at sea gave us a proper taste of ocean travel. With waves reaching up to 5–6 metres at times, MS Spitsbergen rode the swell with steady determination—and so did we. It was a dramatic introduction to the rhythm of life at sea, and the perfect opportunity to embrace our inner sailors.

While the ocean kept things lively outside, our onboard programme kept minds engaged and spirits high. We attended lectures on photographic composition, bird migration, and cetaceans—each one offering fresh ways to observe and appreciate the world we're moving

toward.

We were also introduced to the Science & Education programme, with opportunities to get involved in citizen science projects throughout the voyage. These initiatives help us connect with the natural world in a meaningful and hands-on way. On the first evening, we gathered in the Explorer Lounge for the Captain's Welcome. It was a chance to toast the journey ahead and share the camaraderie that naturally forms when the sea reminds us just how far we've already come.





Day 4 - Heimaey

After two full days at sea, we caught our first glimpse of Iceland this morning—and what a welcome it was. In the early hours, a few of us gathered on deck to watch the distant coastline slowly take shape. As we approached the Westman Islands, we were greeted by puffins and dolphins surfacing close to the ship, as if to escort us in.

The entrance to Heimaey was nothing short of spectacular. We passed between narrow, towering cliffs teeming with birdlife, a dramatic natural gateway into the harbour. By 10:00 a.m., MS Spitsbergen was docked, and we were more than ready to get ashore, stretch our legs, and breathe in the crisp Icelandic air for the first time.

In the afternoon, we split into small groups for a variety of excursions. Some of us hiked up to the summit of Eldfell, the volcano whose 1973 eruption reshaped the island. Others explored the town's powerful story through the "Pompeii of the North" tour, visiting homes preserved beneath lava and ash. Meanwhile, the "Lava and History" walk offered a closer look at Heimaey's layered past and its resilient spirit.

With calm winds, bright sunshine, and sweeping views in every direction, it was the perfect start to our time in Iceland—a day that showed how quickly the land can welcome you in and leave a lasting impression.





Hellissandur

Ólafsvík

Snæfellsjökull
National Park

Breiðavík

Búðavík

Grindarfjörður

Grindarfjörður

Ulfuhvalafjörður

Legend



— HX Expedition

3 km

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Day 5 - Grundarfjörður

This morning we entered the bay of Grundarfjörður under clear skies and calm waters. By 9 a.m., the unmistakable silhouette of Kirkjufell came into view—its iconic, symmetrical peak rising above the landscape and reflecting in the stillness of the fjord. As we approached the dock, the small town of Grundarfjörður greeted us with its colourful houses and dramatic mountain backdrop.

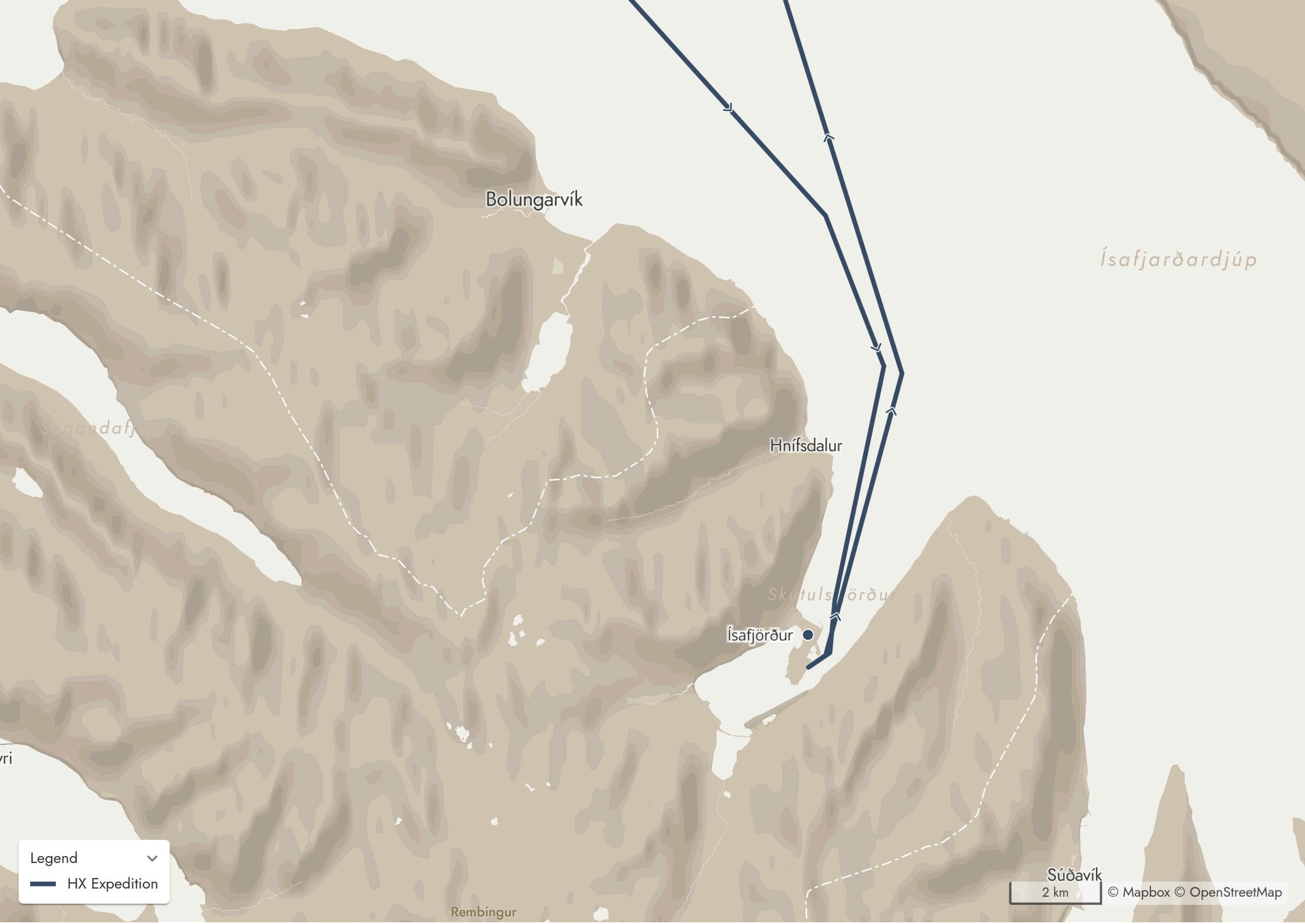
Shortly after disembarkation, guests set out to explore the area. Many took the shuttle to Kirkjufellsfossar, where the classic postcard view of the waterfalls and Kirkjufell in the background offered the perfect photo opportunity. Others laced up their boots and hiked around the base of the mountain, taking in sweeping views of the surrounding

coastline and volcanic terrain.

In the afternoon, most guests joined the Highlights of Snæfellsnes tour—a journey through lava fields, black sand beaches, fishing villages, and glacier-topped peaks that revealed the diverse beauty of this part of Iceland. A smaller group opted for the Top of the Diamond excursion, reaching one of the region's panoramic viewpoints for a spectacular perspective over the peninsula.

With fresh air, breathtaking scenery, and a perfect blend of exploration and quiet awe, today offered a deeper sense of what makes Iceland so endlessly captivating.





Bolungarvík

Ísafjarðardjúp

Hnífsdalur

Skutulsörður

Ísafjörður

Súdavík

2 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Legend



— HX Expedition

Rembingur

Day 6 - Ísafjörður

We arrived early this morning in Ísafjörður, the charming capital of Iceland's Westfjords. Nestled between steep mountains and quiet waters, the town greeted us with calm skies and crisp air—perfect conditions for a day of exploration.

Shortly after docking, most of us joined an excursion to Dynjandi, one of Iceland's most breathtaking waterfalls. Its wide, cascading tiers thundered down from the cliffs above, and we had ample time to take in the scenery and walk along the trail leading to its base. A smaller group chose to stay closer to town, hiking to Bunárfoss, a beautiful and lesser-known waterfall just outside Ísafjörður.

After returning from our excursions, we had some time to explore the town on our own—browsing small shops, walking along the harbour, or enjoying a warm drink with a view of the fjord.

As Spitsbergen pulled away in the afternoon, a couple of humpback whales appeared near the ship, surfacing as if to bid us farewell. Not long after, we had a surprise visit from none other than Freya herself, who came aboard to oversee our Arctic Circle baptism—marking this evening's symbolic crossing in true polar tradition. With spirits high and our course now set for the distant volcanic island of Jan Mayen, we ended the day feeling that the Arctic was truly calling.





Denmark Strait

Ísafjörður

Akureyri

At Sea

Jan Mayen

Legend

HX Expedition

Day 7 - At Sea on the way to Jan Mayen

Today we spent a peaceful day at sea, continuing our journey north toward the remote volcanic island of Jan Mayen. Although the wind was steady, it came from the aft, making for a smooth and comfortable sailing experience - perfect for relaxing, learning, and preparing for the adventures ahead.

On board, the day was full of activity. We attended a variety of lectures and workshops that deepened our understanding of the region and its unique natural features. Between sessions, the outer

decks were the place to be, with keen eyes scanning the waves for seabirds and marine life during our ongoing wildlife watch.

After lunch, we collected our rubber boots - another sign that we were getting closer to more rugged shores. The feeling of anticipation was unmistakable. With Jan Mayen on the horizon and the promise of wild, remote landings ahead, the sense of expedition was truly beginning to take shape.



Day 8 - Jan Mayen

Very early this morning, around 06:30, we caught our first glimpse of Jan Mayen—its rugged outline barely visible through a heavy curtain of fog. As MS Spitsbergen slowly approached Kvalrossbukta, hopes were high for a landing, but the sea had other plans. Waves crashed against the shoreline, breaking too high for a safe landing.

Still, the scene was nothing short of spectacular. The mist clinging to the island's slopes gave it a surreal, otherworldly presence. Jagged ridges and dark volcanic rock appeared and disappeared in the shifting fog, casting an air of mystery over this rarely seen place. It felt like sailing past the edge of the world.

We continued north along the coast, eyes fixed on the cloud-covered horizon in hopes of seeing Beerenberg, the island's towering glacier-capped volcano. And then—just as we passed its base—the skies parted, and there it was: the full 2,277 metres of Beerenberg, rising in crisp detail above the clouds. Snowfields glistened in the sunlight, and for a long moment, the outer decks fell silent as we all took in the view.

With that unforgettable sight etched into memory, we turned our bow once more to the north, setting course for the icy wilds of Svalbard.



Legend

— HX Expedition

Mayen

Greenland Sea

Bamsebu

Calypsobyen

Burgerbukta

100 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

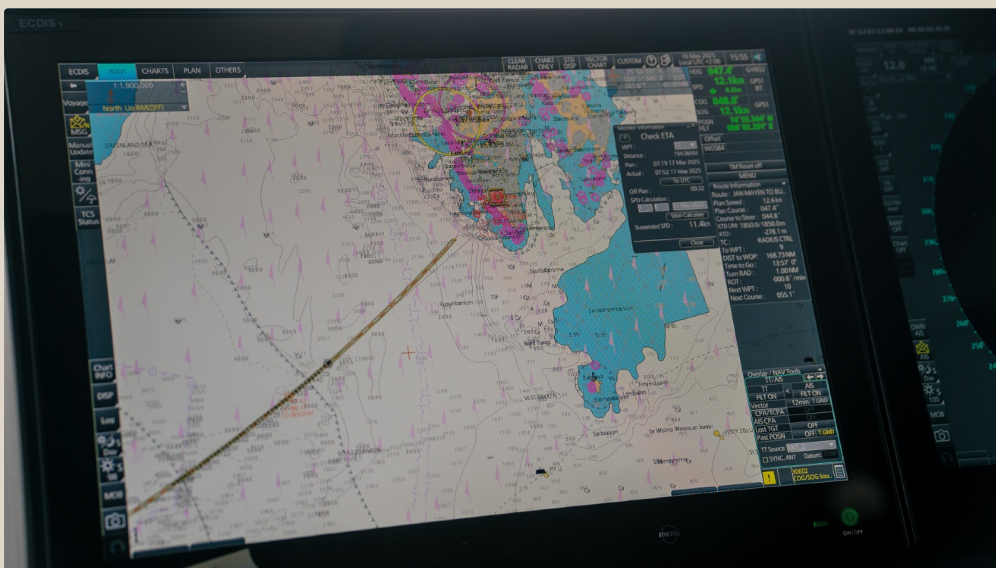
Day 9 - At Sea

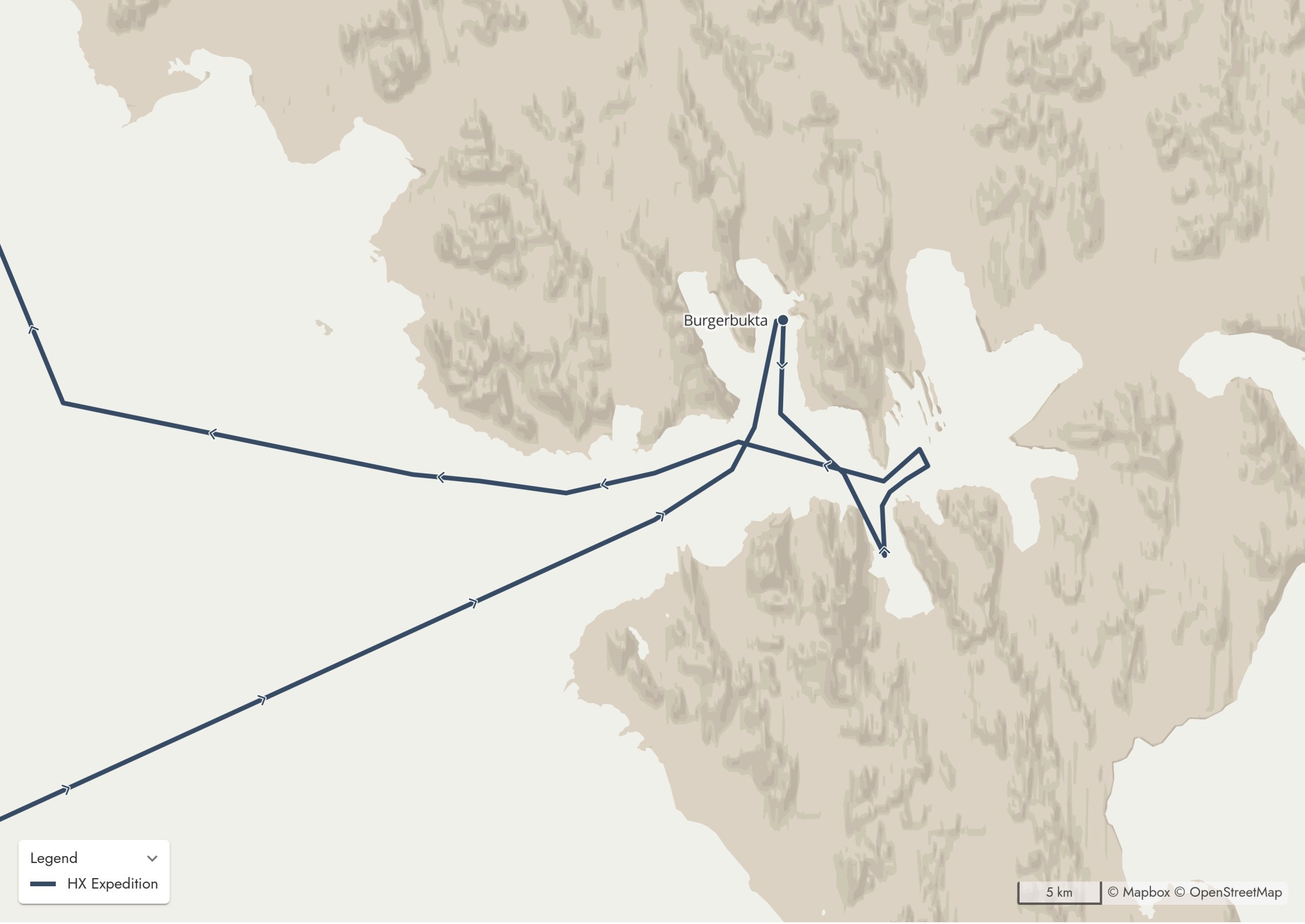
Today we continued our journey north, drawing closer to the icy frontier of Svalbard. The sea remained calm throughout the day, offering smooth sailing and quiet moments to reflect on how far we'd come—from the green hills of Scotland to the volcanic mystery of Jan Mayen, and now toward the polar realm.

On board, the day was filled with activity and preparation. We attended a new round of lectures and workshops, each one bringing us deeper into the natural and cultural context of the Arctic. Whether learning about wildlife, sea ice, or exploration history, the excitement for what lay ahead was growing.

The kayak briefing added another layer of anticipation, as we imagined gliding silently through Arctic waters with towering ice and steep cliffs as our backdrop. As part of our readiness for landings in Svalbard, we also gathered for the Polar Bear Safety Briefing - a key reminder of where we are headed, and the wildness that defines this part of the world.

With each mile sailed and each new topic explored, the sense of adventure sharpened. Tomorrow, the Arctic awaits.





Burgerbukta

Legend

— HX Expedition

5 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Day 10 - Burgerbukta

We crossed into the Arctic in style today as we arrived in Svalbard—just in time to celebrate Norway’s Constitution Day. Early this morning, as we sailed into the majestic fjord of Hornsund, the Norwegian flag was raised on MS Spitsbergen, and we gathered on deck to listen to the national anthem. It was a fitting and heartfelt start to what would become a truly memorable day.

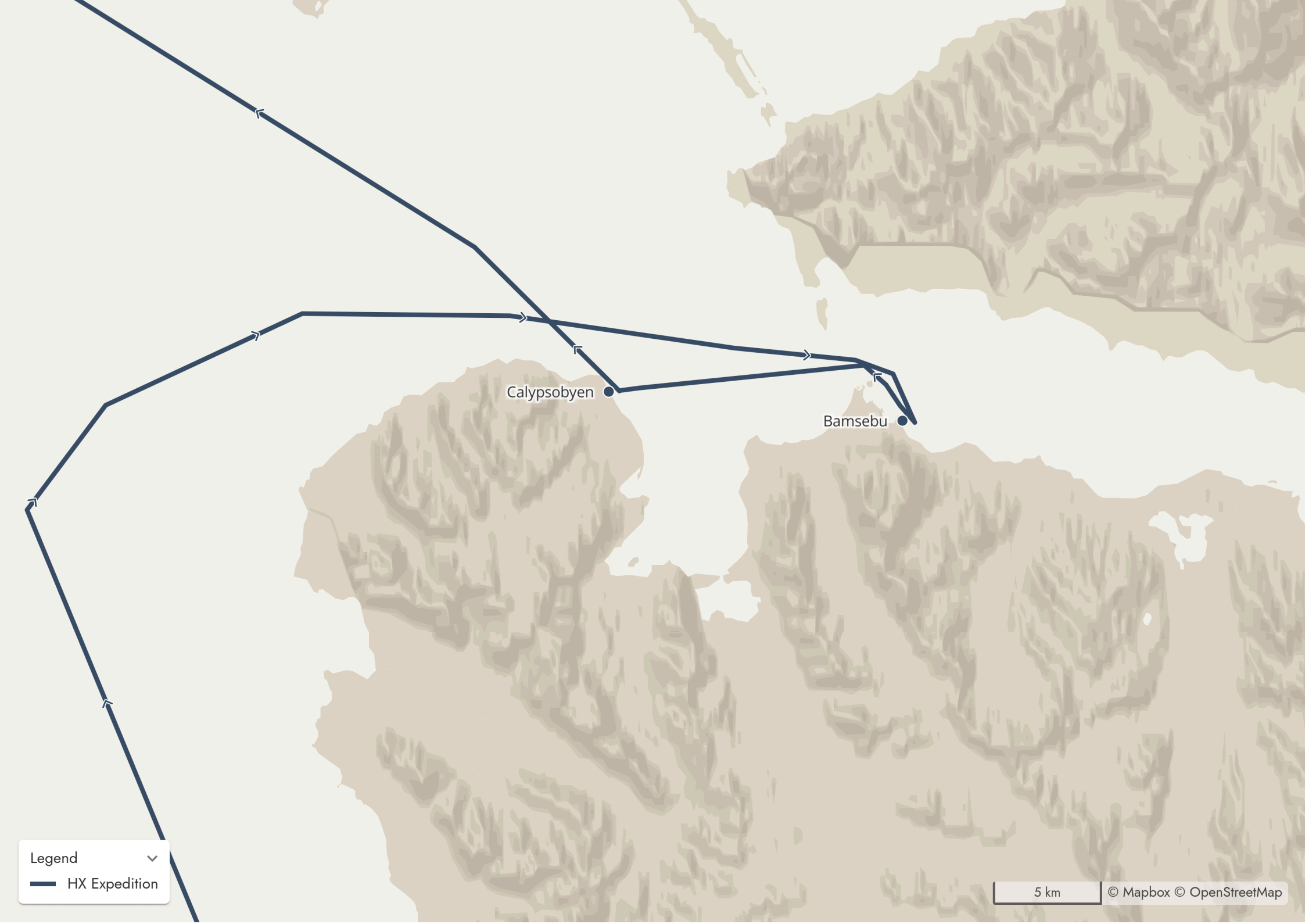
Later in the morning, we made our first landing in the Arctic at Burgerbukta. Conditions couldn’t have been better - clear skies, no wind, and a stillness that made the towering peaks and glacial backdrops feel even more dramatic. We explored the landing site, surrounded by snow-covered slopes and ice-streaked cliffs, soaking in

the quiet beauty of this remote fjord.

After returning to the ship for lunch, we continued deeper into Hornsund, sailing through blue waters flanked by glaciers and rugged terrain. In the afternoon, the celebration continued with a very Norwegian treat: waffles and ice cream served on the outer deck - a sweet way to mark both the day and the place.

With perfect weather, powerful landscapes, and a touch of national pride, it was the ideal first day in the Arctic - a beginning that promised great things to come. Hip Hip, Hurra!





Calypsobyen

Bamsebu

Legend



— HX Expedition

5 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Day 11 - Bamsebu

This morning we landed at Bamsebu, a site steeped in Arctic whaling history, tucked along the shores of Van Keulenfjorden. The skies were calm, but the landing itself proved challenging—reminding us just how dynamic and unpredictable the High Arctic can be. With determination - and some expert maneuvering - we managed a safe and successful landing, even experiencing a rarely used technique: stern boarding into the boats on our return to the ship.

The landscape here spoke volumes. On the east side of the site stood the historic Bamsebu cabin, once used by whalers and trappers during the early 20th century. Today a private cabin, it still offers a

direct and tangible connection to the harsh lives once lived in this frozen wilderness. Across the bay, the rusted remains of a whaling boat lay quietly on the west coast, its broken hull slowly giving in to time and tundra.

Walking among these relics, we were reminded of the complex history of human presence in Svalbard - both the resilience and the impact. With wind in the air and ice at our feet, Bamsebu offered not just a landing, but a moment to reflect on the people who once called this place their hunting ground.



Day 11 - Calypsobyen (PM)

In the afternoon, we continued our exploration of Van Keulenfjorden with a landing at Calypsobyen, just a few miles west of Bamsebu.

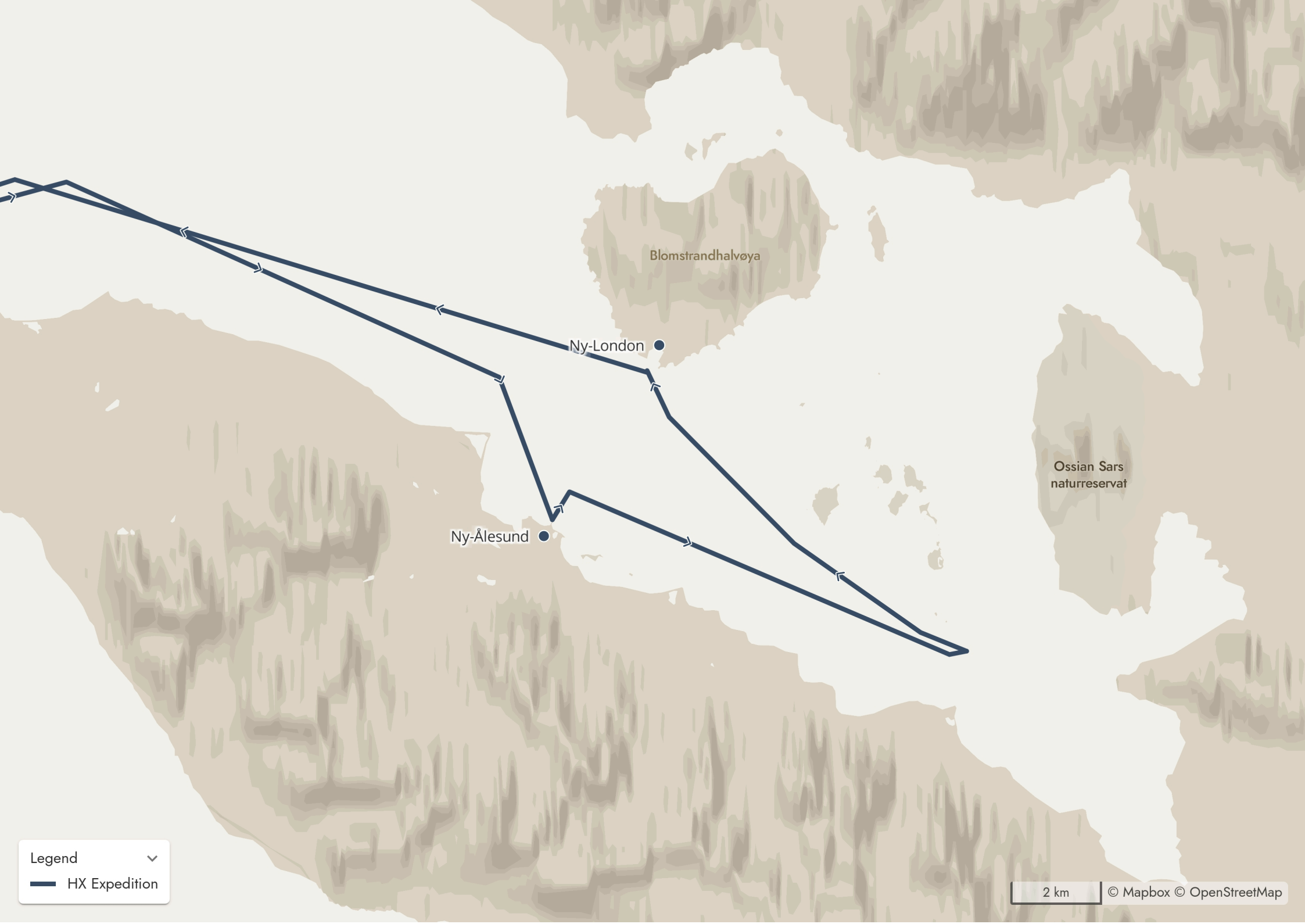
Once a coal prospecting site for the Northern Exploration Company, the settlement remains today as a cultural reminder of early 20th-century Arctic ambition—and of how unforgiving this landscape can be.

The landing conditions were far more favorable than in the morning, allowing for a smooth disembarkation and relaxed exploration. Within the perimeter set by the Expedition Team, we walked among the scattered remnants of cabins and mining equipment, imagining the

hopes and hardships of those who once tried to make a living here. Though the coal deposits proved too difficult to extract, the structures and artifacts left behind tell a vivid story of determination and endurance.

Back on board MS Spitsbergen later in the evening, the mood shifted from reflection to celebration as the Crew Band took the stage. With great energy and a set full of crowd-pleasing favourites, they brought music and smiles to the Explorer Lounge - a perfect way to round off a day filled with Arctic history and strong Svalbard spirit.





Blomstrandhalvøya

Ny-London

Ny-Ålesund

Ossian Sars
naturreservat

Legend



— HX Expedition

2 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Day 12 - Ny-Ålesund

We arrived in Ny-Ålesund under spectacular conditions—clear skies and crisp Arctic air revealing the full sweep of mountains surrounding this unique settlement in Kongsfjorden. The scenery was breathtaking, with jagged peaks and glaciers gleaming in the morning light.

As soon as the gangway opened, we stepped ashore to explore. Once a coal mining town and now one of the northernmost year-round scientific research stations in the world, Ny-Ålesund offers a rare glimpse into both Arctic history and its ongoing study. Some of us joined guided walks to learn more about the town's transformation and its role in polar research. A highlight was reaching the historic airship mast—the very one used by Roald Amundsen and

Umberto Nobile in 1926 to launch their journey to the North Pole aboard the airship Norge. Standing at the site, with the fjord and mountains as a backdrop, it was easy to imagine the bravery and ambition of those early explorers.

We also had time to visit the museum, which offers insights into the settlement's past, and the local shop—a rare treat in such a remote place.

With perfect weather and time to immerse ourselves in both history and modern science, Ny-Ålesund provided a striking and memorable Arctic experience.



Day 12 - Ny-London (PM)

After our morning in Ny-Ålesund, we remained in the breathtaking Kongsfjorden for a scenic sail along its dramatic coastline. Towering peaks and ancient glaciers framed our route as we cruised through calm waters beneath a clear Arctic sky. It was the kind of weather that makes this part of the world feel even more magical - crisp, still, and full of light.

In the afternoon, we made our final landing of the voyage at Ny-London, a small site on the southern side of the fjord. Once home to a British marble mining operation in the early 1900s, the scattered

remains of machinery, huts, and rusted rails still stand as a reminder of the human effort once poured into this remote place.

We wandered among the ruins, with views of Kongsfjorden all around us and the sun warming the air. It was a peaceful and reflective end to our journey - an ideal place to say farewell to Svalbard and all the remarkable landscapes we've encountered.

With minds full of history, wildlife, and wild beauty, we returned to MS Spitsbergen one last time, carrying memories of a voyage through some of the most remote and awe-inspiring corners of the North.





Legend

— HX Expedition

10 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap



Day 13 - Disembarkation in Longyearbyen

This morning we arrived in Longyearbyen, the northernmost town on our route and the final stop of our expedition. As MS Spitsbergen anchored in the quiet morning light, the sense of conclusion was clear - but so too was the feeling of having been part of something truly special.

After breakfast, we disembarked and took our last boat ashore, saying goodbye to the ship, the crew, the Expedition Team, and to one another. Together, we had travelled from the coast of Scotland, through the fjords of Iceland, past the volcanic cliffs of Jan Mayen,

and deep into the high Arctic landscapes of Svalbard.

Along the way, we explored remote islands, witnessed incredible wildlife, stepped into polar history, and stood in some of the most beautiful and isolated places on Earth. The rhythm of the sea, the midnight sun, the silence of the ice - all of it stays with us now as part of this shared journey. As we leave Longyearbyen and go our separate ways, we carry more than memories - we carry the spirit of exploration.



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