

The Arctic is unforgiving; riding in this icebreaker isn't

July 26 2017, by Frank Jordans



In this Saturday, July 22, 2017 photo, Canadian Coast Guard Capt. Victor Gronmyr looks out over the ice covering the Victoria Strait as the Finnish icebreaker MSV Nordica traverses the Northwest Passage through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. (AP Photo/David Goldman)

While it may be frigid and wet on deck, the crew of a modern icebreaker can expect creature comforts inside the ship, even saunas.

Cabins on board the MSV Nordica are small but functional, with a desk,

a TV and an en suite bathroom. Most of the 21 regular crew work 12-hour shifts as the vessel pushes through the Arctic's Northwest Passage. It's also carrying a team of Associated Press journalists who are aboard to document the impact of climate change.

The day starts with breakfast at 6:30 a.m., featuring a buffet of eggs, beans, mushrooms, bacon, cold cuts, cereal, porridge, yogurt, fruit and fresh coffee—up to eight large vats are drunk on board each day.

Lunch takes place from 11:30 a.m. and dinner is at 5:30 p.m. The menu aboard Nordica in a given week can include roast salmon, pork ribs, burgers, tortillas and, in a nod to the Far North, reindeer roast.

The ship has two gyms and two Finnish saunas, where the crew can burn off the calories and stay fit. Both are off limits during [stormy weather](#). The vessel is relatively stable in the water, but can shake when it crushes sea ice.

Recreation rooms on the fifth floor, right beneath the bridge, offer a view to the horizon and space for movie nights with a selection of films from the onboard library.



In this Friday, July 7, 2017 photo, researcher Daria Gritsenko, left, plays "Hotel California" on the guitar as fellow researcher Ari Laakso, right, looks from aboard the Finnish icebreaker MSV Nordica as it sails the North Pacific Ocean to traverse the Northwest Passage through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. (AP Photo/David Goldman)

One popular pastime is scanning the sea for signs of marine life.

Although modern ships can largely drive themselves in open seas, there is always someone on the bridge keeping watch.

Even below deck the ship is a 24/7 operation, with engineers tending the machinery and cooks preparing meals while the rest of the crew relaxes, sleeps or stays in touch with friends and family using the vessel's satellite internet connection.



In this Saturday, July 8, 2017 photo, researcher Ari Laakso, right, plays ping pong with trainee Maatiusi Manning aboard the Finnish icebreaker MSV Nordica as it sails the North Pacific Ocean to traverse the Northwest Passage through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. (AP Photo/David Goldman)



In this Thursday, July 6, 2017 photo, researcher Ari Laakso reclines in a massage chair aboard the Finnish icebreaker MSV Nordica as it sails the North Pacific Ocean to traverse the Northwest Passage through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. (AP Photo/David Goldman)



In this Wednesday, July 12, 2017 photo, trainee Jussi Mikkotervo climbs out of the pool after touching up the paint aboard the Finnish icebreaker MSV Nordica as it sails the Bering Sea to traverse the Northwest Passage through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. (AP Photo/David Goldman)



In this Wednesday, July 12, 2017 photo, Nigel Greenwood, assistant ice navigator and retired Royal Canadian Navy rear admiral, climbs down the six flights of stairs from the bridge to the mess hall as he heads down for dinner aboard the Finnish icebreaker MSV Nordica as it sails the Bering Sea to traverse the Northwest Passage through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. (AP Photo/David Goldman)



In this Saturday, July 8, 2017 photo, chief steward Mika Tiilikka prepares a strawberry cake aboard the Finnish icebreaker MSV Nordica as it sails the North Pacific Ocean to traverse the Northwest Passage through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. (AP Photo/David Goldman)



In this Monday, July 10, 2017 photo, ice navigator Capt. David "Duke" Snider, from left, Canadian Coast Guard Capt. Victor Gronmyr, U.S. Coast Guard Cmdr. Bill Woityra, assistant ice navigator Nigel Greenwood, and biologist Paula von Weller talk over dinner in the mess hall aboard the Finnish icebreaker MSV Nordica as it sails the North Pacific Ocean to traverse the Northwest Passage through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. (AP Photo/David Goldman)



In this Saturday, July 8, 2017 photo, reindeer is served during dinner aboard the Finnish icebreaker MSV Nordica as it sails the North Pacific Ocean to traverse the Northwest Passage through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. (AP Photo/David Goldman)



In this Thursday, July 13, 2017 photo, researchers Tiina Jaaskelainen, right, and Daria Gritsenko do yoga in the warm weather aboard the Finnish icebreaker MSV Nordica as it sails the Bering Sea to traverse the Northwest Passage through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. (AP Photo/David Goldman)



In this Thursday, July 13, 2017 photo, trainee David Kullualik is reflected in a deck door window looking out to sea as researcher Ilona Mettiainen reclines in a massage chair aboard the Finnish icebreaker MSV Nordica as it sails the Bering Sea to traverse the Northwest Passage through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. (AP Photo/David Goldman)



In this Tuesday, July 18, 2017 photo, trainee Jussi Mikkotervo works out on a punching bag aboard the Finnish icebreaker MSV Nordica as it sails the Beaufort Sea to traverse the Northwest Passage through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. (AP Photo/David Goldman)



In this Saturday, July 15, 2017 photo, researchers aboard the Finnish icebreaker MSV Nordica put their feet up while watching the movie "El Dorado" starring actor John Wayne as the ship sails the Chukchi Sea to traverse the Northwest Passage through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. (AP Photo/David Goldman)



In this Sunday, July 9, 2017 photo, first engineer Kristian Autio does a check of the engine room aboard the Finnish icebreaker MSV Nordica as it sails the North Pacific Ocean to traverse the Northwest Passage through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. (AP Photo/David Goldman)



In this Thursday, July 20, 2017 photo, engine repairman Jari Jarvinen burns garbage aboard the Finnish icebreaker MSV Nordica as it traverses the Northwest Passage through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. (AP Photo/David Goldman)



In this Monday, July 24, 2017 photo, boatswain Henri Helminen sits the sauna after working a shift aboard the Finnish icebreaker MSV Nordica as it sails the Lancaster Strait while traversing the Northwest Passage through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. (AP Photo/David Goldman)



In this Sunday, July 9, 2017 photo, boatswain Henri Helminen reads a book in his cabin after working a shift aboard the Finnish icebreaker MSV Nordica as it sails the North Pacific Ocean to traverse the Northwest Passage through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. (AP Photo/David Goldman)



In this Thursday, July 6, 2017 photo, first officer Jukka Vuosalmi, right, and second officer Ilkka Alhoke look out from the bridge during a night shift while piloting the Finnish icebreaker MSV Nordica as it sails the North Pacific Ocean to traverse the Northwest Passage through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. Most of the 21 regular crew work 12-hour shifts. (AP Photo/David Goldman)

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