

1 CRUISE: I DID A COLD WATER PLUNGE ON THE EDGE OF THE ARCTIC CIRCLE ...TWICE

I felt vastly underdressed as I stood on the rocky edge of the Norwegian sea in my swimsuit. The decision to do a traditional Arctic dip, in the village of Traena, an optional excursion on the Hurtigruten Svalbard Express tour - one of two new routes celebrating the cruise line's 130th anniversary - was mine in theory. But peer pressure from my husband and friends on board was a major factor. I hate the cold, but there I was gingerly making my way across the slippery stones before inching toes, knees and thighs deep into the frigid water. Anyone with nipples will tell you it's that last dunk that'll do you in. My husband "helped" by pushing me just as my nerves gave out. When I emerged, my whole body felt electric. The post-dip sauna warm-up took a minute to work its magic, but once it did I could appreciate the adrenaline rush. I felt exhilarated, as I sat looking out at the water from inside the warmth of Traena's oldest boathouse. And I was chuffed at conquering one of those bucket list items I'd long thought I would ignore. Then, just as goosebumps had subsided, my husband appeared at the door. His grin said it all. Time for round two.

—Heather Greenwood Davis

■ **MAPPED INTEL:** To book a trip on board Hurtigruten's Svalbard Express visit hurtigruten.com.



📍 FISHING HUTS ALONG THE SEAFRONT IN TRAEANA, NORWAY



📍 SCUBA DIVING AT LADY MUSGRAVE ISLAND, SOUTHERN GREAT BARRIER REEF

2 REGENERATIVE: I HELPED RESTORE A GREAT BARRIER REEF

Coral are moody things. The conditions for spawning have to be just right. It only happens

under moonlight. The water temperature needs to be perfect. Heck, maybe they need a little Barry White for the magic to happen. Who knows? In fact - as I learned on a tour of Monsoon

Aquatics, Australia's largest coral farm - not even scientists know. Situated in Bundaberg at the southern tip of the Great Barrier Reef, Monsoon is currently researching how coral breed, which may help safeguard the reef's future.

In the face of climate change, the Great Barrier Reef has demonstrated surprising resiliency. And in the last two years, countless opportunities have emerged for visitors to get hands-on in reef research and restoration. For example, qualified divers on the Lady Musgrave Experience, an ecotourism vessel and dive platform, can help replant coral fragments, while snorkellers can contribute observations to citizen science apps such as Eye on the Reef. All along the reef's 2,300-kilometre length, tourism operators have propagated thousands of corals - work they'd be unable to complete without the tourism dollars visitors bring. On my trip, I didn't plant any coral. Instead, I drifted over colourful coral gardens and alongside green sea turtles, knowing my presence was helping to fund the research of on-staff marine biologists.

—Jessica Wynne Lockhart

■ **MAPPED INTEL:** Don't want to don a snorkel mask or even get wet? Head to Cairns, the closest city to the reef, for a tour of its new Living Coral Biobank at the Cairns Aquarium, a world-first conservation project to collect and protect all 415 known species of Great Barrier Reef hard corals. 📍