

Touring holidays of Scandinavia

Expressions



Grand Arctic Norway touring holiday



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15 NIGHTS/16 DAYS

Trondheim • Bodø • Lofoten
Islands • Senja • Alta • Karasjok •
Kirkenes • Tromsø



Northern Lights (copyright Kent Even Grundstad)

This grand, luxury touring holiday of Norway will take you across some of the northernmost territories on mainland Europe, finishing in the Arctic capital of Tromsø. Start by spending two nights in Trondheim. The third largest city in the country, Trondheim is home to the world's northernmost cathedral, the Nidaros Cathedral. You may want to explore the picturesque streets of Bakklandet, a small neighbourhood of painted wooden warehouses. From here you travel by train to Bodø, crossing the Arctic Circle as you pass through the Saltfjellet mountain range. Bodø is a relatively small city set amidst some of Norway's most beautiful scenery. One of its main attractions is the beautiful harbour, whose pier offers stunning views across the Norwegian Sea. For the more adventurous visitors there is a wide range of activities available around the city, from eagle safaris to glacier hiking. After two nights here board the Hurtigruten across to the Lofoten Islands. These islands offer an incredible combination of mountains, fjords and beaches. Using Svolvær as your base and your hire car to get around, you have two full days here to explore some of the most beautiful beaches in the world and the picturesque fishing villages dotted around the islands. From here you drive across to Harstad on Norway's largest island Hinnøya. Spend one night here before taking the Hurtigruten to Senja. Spend the afternoon exploring the second-largest island in Norway, home to quaint fishing villages, beautiful beaches and dramatic mountain scenery. From here you drive further north to Alta over 375 km north of the Arctic Circle. One of its greatest historical features is the rock carvings thought to be several thousand years old. The Alta Canyon is a particular highlight and can be explored by land or water. The next day you drive eastwards to Karasjok, the headquarters of the Sami people. The fascinating culture of these indigenous people can be witnessed at the Sami Parliament building and at the Sami Museum. From here it's another two and a half hour drive to Kirkenes, known for its history and king crab fishing. During World War II this was the site of an important military base, evidence of which can still be seen in the Borderland Museum. After two nights here indulging in Arctic activities you return to western Norway via Hurtigruten cruise ship. You traverse the Barents Sea, along to Varanger Peninsula to Batsfjord. The ship will visit North Cape, the northernmost part of mainland Europe, then continue on to Hammerfest. You arrive into Tromsø in the evening and check in to your hotel for your final 2 nights. Tromsø is one of the best places in Norway to witness the Northern Lights. Its two months of darkness known as the Polar Night make it an ideal setting to see this incredible natural phenomenon. The city offers incredible architecture in the Arctic Cathedral and an insight into the lives of polar pioneers at the Polar Museum. On your final day return to the UK by plane via Oslo.

Day one Arrive in Trondheim

This grand touring holiday of Norway's Arctic starts with a flight to Trondheim via a short stopover in Oslo. Transfer to your hotel and check in for two nights.

Day two In Trondheim

Trondheim lies on the southern shore of the Trondheimsfjord and has played a significant role in Norwegian history. As the country's first capital city, it was the site where Norwegian kings were crowned for over 700 years, specifically in the Nidaros Cathedral. We highly recommend taking a visit to this beautiful building, which is the world's northernmost mediaeval cathedral and started construction in 1070. South of this is the striking Archbishop's Palace Museum, which offers an insight into the 1000-year history of the cathedral and its diocese. You will also find here the Royal Regalia, including the 200-year old Crown of Norway. For a glimpse of the more rustic side of Norwegian life, a visit to the Trøndelag Folk museum is essential: dominated by the ruins of Sverresborg castle, this outdoor museum consists eighty historic buildings giving information about folk culture as well as rural monuments and the Haltdalen stave church, which dates back 1170. Another picturesque area of the city is Baklandet, a small neighbourhood of painted wooden warehouses home to galleries, cafes and restaurants.

Day three Trondheim to Bodø by rail

After two nights in Trondheim you will board the direct Nordland Railway line service to Bodø. This 729 km railway line is Norway's longest and presents huge variety in culture, climate and landscape. The journey starts by skirting around Trondheim Fjord, reaching the small town of Steinjker two hours later at the head of the longest arm of the fjord. From here you head into the hills. Be sure to notice the colourful station buildings at the small Norwegian towns as you pass by. Leaving the steel works town of Mo I Rana the train skirts the Saltfjellet-Svartisen National Park, passing close by the Swedish border. Shortly after this you cross the Arctic Circle, before heading back towards the coast to reach the shores of Skjerstad Fjord. You continue along this spectacular natural beauty until you reach the station of Bodø, the final stop on the Norwegian railway system and your base for the next two nights.

Day four In Bodø

The city of Bodø is an excellent base from which to explore some of Norway's best scenery and natural attractions. One of its most well-known features is the Saltstraumen



Trondheim

maelstrom, a small strait home to the world's strongest tidal current. Here you can witness whirlpools bigger than 10 metres with the water moving as fast as 40 km/h. Slightly further out of the city is Kjerringøy, a small, rural community featuring beautiful alpine landscapes ranging from mountains to white sandy beaches. The Kjerringøy trading post is a museum offering a unique insight into the lives of the powerful local merchants and information about the fish trade of the 19th century. For those looking for more adventurous activities, Bodø offers kayaking, RIB tours and even snorkelling in the surrounding fjords, and fishing is a popular local activity. There are also numerous hiking routes including Keiservarden, which leads up to Keiservarden hill overlooking Bodø, and Mount Ronvikfjellet, one of the top viewing spots for the Midnight Sun in the country. Within Bodø itself the beautiful harbour offers views from its pier dating back to 1904 and the Norwegian Aviation Museum offers an insight into the civil and military aviation history of Norway.

Day five Bodø to Svolvaer by ferry

After two nights in Bodø you board the Hurtigruten service in the mid-afternoon heading to the Lofoten Islands. This is a journey of roughly six hours which takes you across the open waters of the Vjestfjord to the port of Svolvaer. As this takes you across a wide expanse of the Norwegian Sea the waters can sometimes get fairly choppy, and it is possible to reserve a cabin onboard. As you draw closer to the Lofoten Islands its majestic

peaks will welcome you as you pull into Svolvaer, the largest town on the islands.

Day six In Svolvaer

This morning collect your hire car and start exploring your surroundings. The Lofoten Islands have some of the most incredible landscapes in the world, ranging from mountains to fjords to white sandy beaches. Your base of Svolvaer is the largest town in the Lofoten Islands and offers fishing excursions and cruises around the islands. Using your hire car we recommend visiting some of the other picturesque fishing villages such as Henningsvaer and Hamnoy, which offer excellent authentic dining options. Nusfjord is one of the best-preserved fishing villages and is now an open-air museum with a sawmill producing cod-liver oil. A perhaps unexpected attraction of the islands is their top-quality beaches. Framed by towering mountains, these stretches of white sand and clear water even offer excellent surfing opportunities, although this is a much more comfortable experience during the summer months. Uttakleiv Beach and Haukland Beach are easily accessible by car and can be reached in just over an hour from Svolvaer. For the best views the Lofoten Islands have to offer we recommend indulging in some of their hiking trails. Reinebringen is the most popular of these with its lookout onto the numerous villages and jagged peaks resting on the calm waters, although this is a relatively challenging hike. For those looking for an easier option Ryten, Svolvaer Floya and Festvagtind are

shorter, easier options which still have a rewarding view from the top.

Day seven Svolvaer to Harstad

On your final day in the Lofoten Islands drive across to Harstad on Norway's largest island Hinnøya, a journey of roughly two and a half hours. Harstad is in the middle of the Northern Lights belt, making it an excellent location to try and spot these, and is known for its high-quality restaurants. You may want to sample one of these on your one evening here.

Day eight Harstad to Senja

Today you travel to Senja via the car ferry from Harstad. Although it is the second largest island in Norway, Senja is a lot quieter than most other destinations, giving you chance to truly appreciate the scenery and tranquillity of this beautiful area. You may want to spend your time here exploring the Senja National Tourist Route, which will take you along the island's rugged outer coastline. Other areas of interest include the Bergsbotn viewing platform which offers an outlook onto the town of Bergsfjord and the surrounding peaks. Hiking is a popular activity here, with the most popular route being Segla. The beaches are also well-worth a visit, in particular Ersfjord Beach, a white sand beach in the town of Ersfjord. Senja is known for its fishing villages, the most active of which is Husøy. This town sits on an island in the middle of the Øyford and is worth visiting for the views en route alone.

Day nine Senja to Alta

After one night on the island of Senja you will drive further into the heart Arctic Norway to Alta, a journey of around six hours. Start by driving along the coast of Senja, skirting the beautiful Anderdalen National Park. You will cross back to mainland Norway at Silsand, arriving into the small town of Finnsnes. Continue along the coast, passing small harbours and quaint boating houses. You will then head further inland, passing through small towns and villages interspersed with dense forest, before skirting the edge of the remote lake of Finnjordvatnet. As you proceed further north the settlements become less frequent and the mountains become bigger. One of the visual highlights of this journey will be when you join the Northern Lights route, driving along the length of the Lyngenfjord. You will head briefly away from the fjord to travel down remote lanes hemmed in by mountains before heading back to the beauty of the fjord. On the final stretch of the journey more buildings will start to appear again as you draw closer to Alta, also known as the Town of the Northern Lights. Located 375 km above the Arctic Circle, Alta is a small town



Henningsvaer Lofoten Islands

with a population of just under 15,000 people. One of its most well-known features is the Rock Art of Alta. This is a group of thousands of paintings and engravings dating from around 4200 to 500 B.C. split between 45 different sites, the most of its kind in northern Europe. They are believed to have been made by hunter-gatherers and give an insight into the cosmology of prehistoric peoples. Alta is also known as the Town of the Northern Lights and is home to the world's first observatory dedicated to studying the Aurora Borealis. The relatively low level of annual precipitation its location on the inner section of the Altafjorden makes it an excellent Northern Light-spotting site. The Northern Lights Cathedral is a large modern church in the town centre designed to represent the lights. Alta's location makes it an excellent location to partake in some more adventurous arctic activities, including snowmobiling and snowshoeing.

Day ten Alta to Karasjok

After one night in the Town of the Northern Lights, you travel on to Karasjok, a journey of roughly two and a half hours. Much of the scenery you pass here consists of vast open landscapes interspersed with beautiful clear waters of small lakes. The mountains are much smaller than many other places in Norway but still provide dramatic backgrounds as you traverse the open roads. As you draw further away from Alta you will start to feel like you have entered the true Arctic wilderness with very few settlements to be found. The final stretch as you approach Karasjok will give

you tantalising glimpses of the Karasjohka river, which meanders its way through the county of Finnmark. Arrive at the tiny town of Karasjok and check in to your hotel for one night. Karasjok is the headquarter of the Sami people, an indigenous group with a total population of approximately 80,000. This is the oldest culture in large areas of Northern Norway with the current population being the descendants of nomadic peoples who inhabited northern Scandinavia for thousands of years. The Sami Parliament is an important visit if you wish to learn more about these people – opened in 1989 it is the representative body for people of Sami heritage in Norway.

Day eleven Karasjok to Kirkenes

Today you depart Karasjok for your most remote destination – the town of Kirkenes. The first section of this 4-hour journey closely follows the Karasjohka river, which will flit in and out of view as the trees part. Upon reaching the tiny village of Tana you will eventually cross the river, traversing briefly back down the other side before branching off into more isolated scenery consisting of rolling fields and shining lakes. You will pass through the town of Varanger, where you may want to stop at the Varanger Sami Museum to learn more about the culture and history of this indigenous people. From here you venture further south, skirting the edge of the large Varangerfjord, before arriving into Kirkenes in the far east of Norway.

Day twelve In Kirkenes

This town in the far north-east of Norway has a rich history. During World War II Kirkenes was an important German base where 10,000 soldiers were stationed and the area around the town was the site of some dramatic battles. Over 80 prisons and prisoner of war camps were constructed around Kirkenes and following a disastrous air raid in 1944 it became one of the most bombed areas in Europe. In the centre of Kirkenes you will find a monument dedicated to the memory of the Soviet soldiers who fought and died here, and the Borderland Museum gives a deep insight into this fraught period of history. The museum's centrepiece is a Soviet military aircraft which crashed into a lake and was recovered in 1947. Another main attraction of Kirkenes is king crab fishing: these enormous crabs can reach 1.5 metres in length and were introduced artificially in the 1960s by the Soviet Union. The main fishing period is October to February and there are multiple tour options in the town. You will also find many options to partake in more traditional Arctic activities such as dog-sledding and Northern Light chasing.

Day thirteen Onboard the Hurtigruten

On your final day in Kirkenes drop off your hire car and board the Hurtigruten service to Tromsø. This journey will take you along the outer edge of Norway's northern coast, allowing you to take in spectacular views of the mountains and fjords. Following a relaxing lunch you will sail across the Barents Sea, with local experts often giving information about the wildlife found in the area such as king crabs and birds. The ship docks in Berlevåg in the evening.

Day fourteen Arrive in Tromsø

This morning the Hurtigruten cruise ship picks up again to travel to North Cape, mainland Europe's northernmost point. Standing at the edge of this cliff will give the sensation of standing on the edge of the world as the vast expanse of water stretches out in front of you. Continuing to Hammerfest, Norway's former polar capital, you will witness the Meridian column, erected in 1854 to commemorate the Struve international land measurements of the earth. After crossing the open sea, you will eventually arrive into Tromsø at around 23:45 and check in to your hotel for your final two nights.

Day fifteen In Tromsø

Tromsø is known by many as the Arctic capital, and for good reason. With its plethora



Bodo (copyright Reidar Hernes)

of activities and interesting museums, there is something to do here for everyone. The city is perhaps best-known for being an excellent location to see the Northern Lights. The Polar Night, from mid-November to mid-January, is the best period to witness this extraordinary natural phenomenon, as the sun never rises above the horizon. For an excellent view of these the Storsteinen mountain ledge, reachable via cable car, offers an uninterrupted outlook on the city. This is also a popular location from which to see the Midnight Sun during the summer months. Some of the more adventurous activities offered in Tromsø are whale and dolphin safaris and fjord cruises, where you will witness stunning scenes of snow-capped mountains and cascading waterfalls, and possibly the occasional reindeer. Within the city itself the most striking feature is the Arctic Cathedral. Consecrated in 1965, this aluminium and glass building is luminescent during the long polar nights and during the summer there are special Midnight Sun concerts given by professional musicians. Tromsø is also home to a number of museums: The Polar Museum offers an insight into the lives of polar pioneers, whilst the Tromsø Museum explores the history and geology of the region and its inhabitants.

Day sixteen Tromsø to London by air

On your last day make your way to Tromsø airport for your return flight home via Oslo.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This tailor-made touring holiday is one of several suggested touring holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one mountain or lake resort too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.

PRICES

From £3,890 per person

Based on two people sharing a double or twin room.

Alternative hotel options can be offered in most locations as well as room upgrade supplements.

DATES

This holiday can be arranged throughout the year.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights with British Airways from London to Oslo
- Second-class travel on all trains (Plus class available on certain trains can be booked at a supplement)
- Scheduled flights from Oslo to Trondheim and Tromsø to Oslo.
- Hurtigruten ship from Bodø to Svolvær and Harstad to Tromsø
- Hire of a group B car for 8 days
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in a Polar outside cabin on the Kirkenes – Tromsø Hurtigruten
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in a Superior double room at Britannia Hotel, Trondheim
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in a Superior double room at Clarion Collection Hotel Grand Bodø, Bodø
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in a Rorbu S cabin at Svinøya Rorbuer, Svolvær
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in a Standard double room at Thon Hotel Harstad, Harstad
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in a Standard double room at Senja Fjordhotel, Senja
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in a Standard double room at Scandic Alta, Alta
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in a Standard double room at Scandic Karasjok, Karasjok
- 2 nights' half board in a Gamme cabin at Kirkenes Snowhotel, Kirkenes
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in a Standard double room at Clarion Hotel the Edge, Tromsø
- Concierge service and Expressions Holidays regional helpful hints

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Early check-in or late check-out at any hotels (although we can arrange this on request at additional cost)
- Any other services not mentioned above, such as transfers and meals except breakfast at hotels
- Personal holiday insurance. This is essential and cover should be in place from when you book the holiday.
- Possible local tourist tax, usually the equivalent of £1 to £3 per person per night, and payable locally to the hotel
- Transfers in any cities

TOUR CODES

SCFD06
EX338453

FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS

Our arrangements are very flexible in that you choose to travel on any day you want, subject to availability of your chosen transport and hotels. As mentioned above, additional nights can be added at any point.

OUR PRICES

The sample prices mentioned in this leaflet are generally a 'from' price based on the cheapest season of travel. However, fares and hotel rates can change (up and down depending on offers), so we give you an accurate price for your holiday when we provide you with a quotation. Our sample prices should be used as an indication of how much a particular combination will cost and to show the differences on average between the hotel categories on offer.

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BOOKING CONDITIONS

Our booking conditions apply to all holidays. A copy can be found on our website and a copy is also sent to you with a written quotation and when you make a booking.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Expressions Holidays offers full financial protection for all holidays you book with us. If your holiday includes a flight, the ATOL (3076) covers the costs of the holiday. If the holiday does not include a flight, it is the ABTOT bond that protects the cost of the holiday. We are also members of AITO (the Association of Independent Tour Operators) and ABTA.



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HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

01392 441250

and we can take you through the details we need and start the booking process. A deposit is required to confirm the arrangements and this can be paid by debit or credit card over the phone. The level of the deposit will be confirmed at the point of booking.