

Hurtigruten excursions

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Day 3

Geiranger with Trollstigen Pass

Get ready for a full day exploring the world-famous Geirangerfjord, surrounded by snow-capped peaks, wild waterfalls and lush vegetation. We first drive from Geiranger up the incredibly steep Ørneveien (Eagle Road), which tops out at 620 metres above sea level. At the summit is Ørnesvingen viewpoint and a waterfall. The vista here encompasses Geiranger, Geirangerfjord and its sheer mountainsides plunging into the sea, and the “Seven Sisters” waterfalls. We then drive along Eidsvatnet lake and proceed to Eidsdal to ferry across the fjord to Linge.

Back on dry land, we head again for the mountains, stopping en route at the impressive Gudbrandsjuvet (Gudbrands Gorge). We then drive down Trollstigen (The Troll’s ladder), a 106-kilometre-long stretch of road with dizzying views of abrupt mountainsides, precipitous waterfalls, deep fjords and fertile valleys. Trollstigen descends out of the mountains at a 9 percent gradient with 11 hairpin bends, surrounded by lofty peaks named Kongen (the King), Dronningen (the Queen) and Bispen (the Bishop). At the bottom, it’s time for a hot drink and snack before continuing to the gentler terrain of Romsdalsfjord. We conclude our day with dinner in Molde before embarking on the Hurtigruten ship.

Alesund – Art Nouveau Walk

Enjoy a guided walk that will show you the architectural marvel of Ålesund, and tell you the intriguing story behind it. Your guide will take you through the streets of this enchanting town of rounded towers, sinuous lines and foliate forms. Along the way you will pass the picturesque fishing port of Brosundet, the charming Apotekertorget square and the beautifully decorated main street.

In 1904, the larger part of Ålesund was destroyed in a devastating fire. In an act of genuine foresight, it was decided to rebuild the town consistently in Art Nouveau, the fashionable style of the time. Amazingly, only one person died in the fire; an old woman that went back inside her house to get her purse. Modern historians have concluded that the fire was actually positive in terms of city development. The pre-fire city centre was extremely crowded, consisting mostly of old and cramped wood housing with only rudimentary sanitary facilities.

Visiting the “Jugendstilsenteret”, you’ll find everything from modern multimedia presentations to original interiors, providing a fascinating insight into the history of Art Nouveau, and how it came to be displayed so wonderfully on the west coast of Norway.

A Taste of Norway

Enjoy “a taste of Norway” and see places that have fascinated visitors for centuries. After arriving Hjørundfjord by sea, a tender boat takes you to the tiny village Urke. From here, we go by bus through what is considered Norway’s narrowest valley, Norangsdalen. Because of its shape and location, Norangsdalen is often closed during winter. In 1908 there was a large landslide that dammed a lake named Lyngstølvatnet and submerged an ancient settlement that you can see beneath the surface of the water. We also visit the historic Hotel Union Øye, one of the most distinct hotels in all of Europe. Built in 1891, the hotel provides elegant comfort in magnificent natural surroundings and has been a favorite of European royalty, writers and lovers for generations. Enjoy local specialties and a drink here before we return to Urke and visit the local grocer or a pub. We guarantee a great experience in the midst of majestic scenery.

Day 4

Trondheim City Walk

This guided walk through Trondheim takes you through a thousand years of exciting history. We walk up to Stiftsgården, the royal residence in Trondheim. Possibly the largest wooden building in Northern Europe, this stately home has housed royals and their guests since 1800. We continue to the market square to take a closer look at the statue of the city’s founder, the Viking King Olav Tryggvason, towering over the busy square.

We continue to Nidaros Cathedral, Norway's national shrine. Its construction started in 1070. Stained glass from the 19th and the 20th centuries adds to its character, and the west front is one of the most beautiful and ornate portions of the church. After spending some time discovering and exploring the awe-inspiring cathedral, we walk across the old city bridge. Its red gateway is known among the locals as "the portal of happiness". Across the bridge we enter the Bakklandet area, which has managed to preserve its charming wooden architecture. Originally this was the industrial part of the city. Today, the old factories have been renovated into desirable housing surrounded by boutique shops and gourmet restaurants. This is where you find the world’s only bicycle lift. You have to see it to believe it.

Trondheim – Nidaros Cathedral & Ringve Museum

Trondheim is an ancient city, founded by Viking king Olav Tryggvason in 997. Today we explore two of Trondheim’s main attractions. We first visit Nidaros Cathedral, Norway’s national shrine. The cathedral is built over the grave of Norway’s patron saint, St. Olav. Construction of this magnificent building started in 1035 and ended around 1300. Take time to admire the intricate architectural details and exquisite works of art, including statues, ornaments and stained glass windows.

After a guided tour, you are free to explore the cathedral, before we continue to the Ringve Museum of Musical History. Here, an enthusiastic tour guide brings Norway’s musical history to life. The museum is in an elegant old manor house that was the childhood home of 18th century Norwegian naval hero Petter Wessel Tordenskiold. Adjacent the museum is Ringve Botanical Garden, designed and built in the geometric Renaissance style, with medicinal plants, herbs, and array of

traditional perennials. The museum and gardens are at an idyllic spot providing beautiful views of both the city and the fjord.

Trondheim with Nidaros Cathedral

Trondheim is beautifully situated by the Trondheimsfjord. With the river Nid meandering through the city centre, it is surrounded by water on all sides. In addition, the characteristic low and colourful wooden architecture add to the unique atmosphere.

Enjoy a guided tour through the historic capital of Norway. The history of the city has played an important role in the development of the country from the Viking age and medieval times, which many of the popular attractions bear witness to. The original name of Trondheim was Nidaros. The Norwegian Viking king Olav Tryggvason established the city in 997. You will see Trondheim's streets, boroughs and highlights, including a short stop at Utsikten (The View) to admire the city from a high elevation.

The Nidaros Cathedral towers over the town, and is built over the burial place of St. Olav, the patron saint of Norway. The building of Norway's national sanctuary began in 1070. Nidaros Cathedral displays beautiful stained glass from the 19th and the 20th centuries, and the statues and ornaments of the west front is a great attraction in itself.

Day 5

Experience Bodo and Saltstraumen

We start the tour with a sightseeing through the town of Bodø, the second largest town in the northern part of Norway. Bodø has 50.000 inhabitants and lies just north of the Arctic Circle.

We continue through a fantastic landscape on our way to Saltstraumen – the strongest tidal current in the world, with water speeds reaching 22 knots. Up to 400,000,000 cubic meters of seawater forces its way through a 3-kilometre wide strait every six hours.

Saltstraumen has existed for about three thousand years. The height difference between the sea level and the fjord inside can be up to 1 meter. When the current turns, there is a period when the strait is navigable. We stop to take pictures of this phenomenon, before returning to the ship.

Meet the Vikings

At the Lofotr Viking Museum the largest Viking building ever found has been recreated. The original Chieftain's house was established in about 500 AD and was inhabited until around 900 AD. This rebuilt version exhibits an array of finds from this era.

The Chieftain and the Lady of the house invite you to join them for a real Viking feast in the banquet hall. And a Viking feast is not complete without mead. During winter, the Vikings made a sacrifice to ensure the return of the sun and the light. Experience the magic and excitement as they sacrifice to the Gods, praying that the sun will return to avoid Ragnarok, the end of the world. Outside, the northern lights might be flickering over the sky. The Viking Chieftain's house offers a perfect outdoor arena for watching the wonder of the northern lights.

Highlights of Lofoten

After a photo stop at Torvdalshalsen, we continue to Kabelvåg, the oldest fishing village in Lofoten and previously also the largest. It was here that Lofoten's commercial fisheries started more than 1,000 years ago. In Kabelvåg, we visit Gallery Espolin, with the largest collection of works made by beloved artist Kaare Espolin Johnson, known for his depictions of the sea, Lofoten and the hard lives of fishermen. Close to the gallery is Lofoten Museum where you can learn about the history of the local fishermen. At the site of the medieval town of Vågar, once an important community founded on the fish trade, we see authentic fishermen's cabins and boathouses featuring Nordland boats. Our last stop is Vågan Church in Kabelvåg, also known as Lofoten Cathedral. The church was built in 1898 in the Gothic Revival style and is one of Norway's largest with close to 1,200 seats.

Day 6

The Arctic Capital – Tromsø

Tromsø is located beside the mighty Arctic Ocean, surrounded by towering mountains. It also has a fascinating history that includes walrus and polar bear hunting in the Arctic Ocean, the timber transport from Russian rivers, the Pomor trade, coal mining and sealing.

On your way to the Polaria centre, the guide will tell you about Tromsø and the city's history in an informative, interesting and entertaining way. At the Polaria centre you can experience the Arctic aquarium, a seal pool, educational displays and a panorama cinema. Watching the movie 'Svalbard – Arctic Wilderness', will take you on a spectacular journey through Svalbard's unique scenery.

The tour also includes a stop at the famous Arctic Cathedral. Built in 1965, the design of the church was inspired by the beliefs and natural surroundings evident throughout northern Norway, and features northern Europe's largest stained-glass window.

Day 7

The North Cape

"Here I stand at the North Cape the extreme of Finnmark, at the very end of the world," said Francesco Negri in the winter of 1664. Over 300 years later, the North Cape has become a major tourist destination. The mighty plateau rises 307 metres above the Arctic Ocean, and marks the end point of the European mainland.

The journey from Honningsvåg to the North Cape takes you past a wild cliff coast that plunges down into the Arctic Ocean, treeless plains and picturesque fishing villages. In winter and spring, see the frozen shores, endless white plains and snow-capped mountains highlighted by dramatic weather and that special arctic light. In the last kilometres before reaching the cape, the bus has to follow the snowplough. In summer you might see reindeers grazing under the midnight sun, and you'll have a chance to meet Sámi reindeer herders.

"The globe" sculpture has become the symbol of the North Cape, and is always a popular site for that all-important picture. The North Cape Hall houses a modern visitor centre with a number of facilities. A panoramic film takes you on a beautiful and exciting journey through the area and the dramatic shifting of the seasons. Enjoy a coffee in the café, buy souvenirs and send a postcard from the centre's very own mailbox! Go down some stairs and you'll find a great viewpoint, a great hall, a small

chapel inside the cliff and...a Thai museum, commemorating King Chulalongkorn's voyage to the cold shores of Norwegian Lapland hundred years ago.

Day 8

The Russian Border

The only town in Norway where East meets West, Kirkenes represents the turning point of your Hurtigruten voyage. You can see the Russian influence characterised by street signs in both languages, and you can often hear Russian being spoken.

Our first stop is Andersgrotta, which was the town's bomb shelter during the Second World War. Here, we are shown a film about civilians and their experiences during the war then we drive to the Norwegian-Russian border at Storskog. Crossing the Pasvik River, you can see the Russian settlement Boris Gleb and vegetation which is characterized by the Siberian taiga.

We pass through the Pasvikdalen valley which is known to have Norway's largest population of brown bears. The border crossing at Storskog, defines the limits of the Schengen area and is one of the most guarded borders in Europe. Unfortunately, crossing the border is prohibited but you are allowed to take pictures. Back in Kirkenes we make a stop at the impressive Prestfjellet Mountain, which overlooks both the town and your waiting Hurtigruten ship.

King Crab Expedition

These spiny giants from the Barents Sea can weigh up to 10 kilos and have leg spans measuring 1.8 metres. An experienced guide takes you out on this unforgettable king crab fishing trip in a brand-new RIB (rigid-inflatable boat). We cruise along the Bøkfjord and out to the Barents Sea to find the right place to anchor. All hands on deck are needed to help pull up the crab pots from the depths.

The king crab is a recent arrival in Norway and actually originates from the North Pacific Ocean. Soviet marine biologists began releasing them into nearby Murmansk Fjord in the 1960s, and the first king crab was caught in Norwegian waters in the mid-1970s. The spiny monsters are now caught as far west as Tromsø. After we haul up enough crabs, we head to a traditional boathouse along the fjord to prepare and serve your catch. Eat as much of this Arctic marine delicacy as you like. Bon appétit

Day 9

Midnight Concert in the Arctic Cathedral

The Arctic Cathedral stands proud at the end of Tromsø bridge and is clearly visible from the centre of the town, set against the background of the 1 238-metre Tromsdalstind peak. On account of its striking shape and daring architecture, the church became known as Ishavskatedralen (The Arctic Cathedral) as soon as it was opened in 1965. The Arctic Cathedral is a beacon in the town, for churchgoers and for travellers in the north.

A new organ was installed in the church a few years ago, and strip lights have been positioned between the lamella panels that make up the walls. When darkness falls, the unusual outline of the church is clearly visible from all parts of Tromsø. The special chandeliers of Czech crystal are inspired by icicles and contribute to the distinctively cool look. The eastern wall behind the altar is decorated with one of the largest, most monumental stained glass windows in Europe.

There is perhaps no more beautiful way to experience the Arctic Cathedral than by attending a midnight concert (with a duration of approximately 45 minutes). As the candle lights flicker, this elegant church is filled with the sounds of the most beautiful Norwegian folk songs as well as some wonderful classical and sacred selections. This musical experience is enhanced by the Arctic Cathedral's sublime acoustics. With a combination of solo vocals, piano, trumpet and cello music as well as choral and organ music, a varied and rich programme awaits concert visitors. A moving and perfect way to end the day

The Northernmost Town in the World

On arrival in Hammerfest, the bus will take you to the Meridian Column. It commemorates the first official measurement of the exact size and shape of the Earth, and is on the UNESCO list of World Heritage sites. The place also offers interesting views of Melkøya and the LNG plant where gas from the Snøhvit field in the Barents Sea is processed.

Hammerfest has a long, eventful history; back in 1891 it was the first town in northern Europe to get electric street lighting produced purely from hydropower. While heading up to the Mount Salen, you will learn more about Hammerfest's unique history, and get an insight into the Sámi history and culture. From Salen there is a great view over the town. On the way back you have a chance to see the town church, featuring unusual architecture inspired by fish drying racks!

Day 10

A Taste of Vesteralen

This outing from Harstad to Sortland is one of the real classics in Hurtigruten's excursion programme. Your tour starts with a short sightseeing walk through the streets of Harstad, before moving on to the Trondenes peninsula.

Explore truly historical grounds and see the world's northernmost medieval church. For 750 years, the white church at Trondenes has been reflected in the waters of Vågsfjord. The interior is richly decorated and in the chancel, you can see the remains of chalk paintings. Three of the original nine triptychs that are real art treasures have been preserved in the church. The choir screen and the pulpit date from 1762. They are in wonderful Rococo style and feature an hourglass. When the sand ran out, it was time for the minister to end his sermon. The organ dates back to 1790 and is one of the oldest in Northern Norway. The churchyard walls are even older than the church itself. They date from the 1100's and were probably built to protect an earlier stave church that stood on the same site from attacks from the north and east. On the upper side of the church lies the inland lake Laugen, where the first Christians in the area were baptised in the 1000's.

The bus then takes you across Hinnøya Island – Norway's largest – with views of beautiful fjords, steep mountains and large fertile agricultural areas. Moving on, you will cross the Gullesfjord by ferry, giving you a chance to enjoy a hot drink and some freshly baked cakes. The tour then continues along the Sigerfjord to Sortland. This is a great experience in all seasons; idyllic in the summer, but just as picture perfect in winter.

Sea Eagle Safari

Join us on an excursion into Norway's spectacular Trollfjord and experience close encounters with magnificent sea eagles.