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FOLLOW THE MIDNIGHT SUN (NORWAY – SWEDEN – FINLAND)

Bask in long, summer days as you explore the Finnish Lapland and take in Norwegian coastal towns on this escorted small-group tour. From Stockholm, an overnight ferry brings us to Helsinki. We spend the next few days exploring Rovaniemi, the home of Santa Claus, and Saariselka, cultural centre of the indigenous Sami. Crossing over to northern Norway, you'll join the ship in Kirkenes for a southbound voyage along the Norwegian coast. Visit places like Hammerfest and Tromsø and experience the beauty of the Lofoten islands and the Helgeland coast on our way to Bergen.



ITINERARY

Day 1 - Arrive in Sweden

Welcome to Sweden! Depending on what time you arrive, you'll be able to enjoy some time at the hotel or exploring Stockholm before we all meet at the hotel in the evening. You'll meet your Tour Manager along with the rest of your group and be treated to a welcome dinner at the hotel which will be a three-course set menu or a buffet.

Day 2 - From one capital to another

Today, you'll get to see more of Stockholm on a private four-hour guided tour of the city. The tour will take us past

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Stockholm's main highlights by coach, including a walking tour of the old town or Gamla Stan in Swedish. We'll also visit the City Hall, one of Stockholm's most iconic buildings. Entrance is included, so step inside to admire the impressive mosaics of the Golden Hall, which is the venue of the Nobel Peace Prize ball held each year, along with the Blue Hall, which is the venue for the banquet before the ball. The city tour ends at your hotel, at which point you'll have some time at your leisure. A coach will then pick us up from the hotel and bring us to the ferry terminal. Board Tallink Silja ferry bound for Helsinki, via the Åland Islands at the entrance to the Gulf of Bothnia. The archipelago here is made up of some 6,500 skerries and islands with less than a hundred of them inhabited. Enjoy an evening buffet dinner on the ferry while admiring views of the islands before retiring to your cabin for the night.

Day 3 - Finland's capital city

Enjoy a buffet breakfast aboard the ferry before we arrive in Helsinki. After disembarking, we'll meet with a local English-speaking guide and board a private coach for a three-hour tour of Helsinki. You'll be shown the highlights of the city, including the spectacular Temppeliaukio Church. Built into the bedrock of the city in 1969, this iconic structure is often called the 'Church of Rock'. You'll also get to see the Sibelius monument, an impressive sculpture dedicated to the late Finnish composer, Jean Sibelius. Found in Sibelius Park, this imposing structure is made of over 600 hollow steel pipes welded together to create an abstract, wavy form. The tour ends at your Helsinki hotel for check-in. Spend the afternoon exploring more of the city at your leisure, and discover the many hidden gems dotted around the centre, such as Senate Square and Helsinki Cathedral.

Day 4 - Scandinavian scenery

After breakfast at your hotel in Helsinki, we'll make our way to the train station next door in time for our departure to Rovaniemi. Reputed to be the home of Santa Claus, our destination is known for its Arctic scenery and dense forests. At this time of year however, the area is unrecognisable, with its white fields and snow-capped trees replaced by lush greenery lit by the soft glow of the never-ending Midnight Sun. We'll spend almost the whole day travelling north by train. Gaze out the window and admire the Scandinavian wilderness as it rushes by us -- you won't want to miss a moment. Our journey will take us across the Arctic Circle, to the far north of Finland. On arrival, a private coach will transfer you from the railway station to another hotel for check-in. You'll be free to use the rest of the afternoon and evening however you like. Why not enjoy a dinner at Sky Kitchen & View Restaurant with the Midnight Sun still shining high above.

Day 5 - Santa's home

Board a tour bus from your hotel in Rovaniemi in the morning and let out your inner child as we explore the wondrous Santa Claus Village. Here in the Arctic, you can see herds of reindeer and even meet the jolly bearded man himself - looking suitably relaxed until the winter. We'll continue our journey north and make a quick stop in Sodankyla, where you can admire the facade of the Sodankyla Old Church. Built in 1689, this is one of Finland's oldest wooden churches. Enjoy some lunch and free time before we continue to Saariselka. Arriving at the Midnight Sun Village in Saariselka, you'll be wowed at your accommodation. For the next two nights, you'll be staying in your very own Midnight Sun cabin, where you can enjoy the Arctic summer view through the 360 degree glass roof.

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Day 6 - Hike with huskies

You'll have the morning to spend at leisure. Relax and take in the tranquil surroundings, or join one of the optional excursions, such as a safari on your own electric fat bike. Enjoy an included lunch at the hotel before setting off for an excitement-filled afternoon. As part of today's included activity, you'll get to meet several friendly Siberian huskies. Have one of these energetic dogs accompany you on a hike through the wilderness, tied to a waist belt. Learn about arctic wildlife and plants from your guide as you follow the scenic trail. Pick and eat fresh berries along the way, take a drink straight from a mountain stream, and lose yourself in the pristine nature around you. The route includes a moderate climb, so this activity is recommended for fairly confident hikers. Enjoy dinner at the hotel followed by a Midnight Sun Photography Expedition. We'll make a photo stop at the quiet, picturesque Lake Inari, which was believed by ancient Laplanders to be the home of Ukko the Overgod. Then, we'll continue to a wilderness camp on the lake shore, where we'll enjoy a warm drink and prepare a traditional Lapland midnight snack while waiting for the sun to near the horizon.

Day 7 - Sámi culture

After breakfast at your hotel in Saariselka, we'll board a private coach to continue our journey through Finnish Lapland. Our first stop in the morning is the small township of Inari. There, we'll explore the newly renovated SIIDA museum and take a guided tour of the open-air exhibition. This museum houses exhibits and artefacts that document the rich culture of the Finnish Sami. We'll have lunch at the museum restaurant before continuing north and crossing the border into Norway, finally arriving at Kirkenes in the afternoon. Just a few miles from the border, Kirkenes was a strategic location during WWII and has a number of WWII museums and monuments today which chronicle that

era. The waters around Kirkenes also teem with king crab, a local delicacy and important source of livelihood for those living in this frontier town. You'll check in to your hotel in Kirkenes in the evening in time for dinner.

Day 8 - The voyage begins

Breakfast at the hotel will be followed by our morning visit to the Snowhotel, Kirkenes 365. This is the first ever hotel completely made of snow and ice. Here, you'll enter a real life winter wonderland, even in the middle of summer. Your visit includes a guided tour of the Snowhotel along with a welcome drink. Make sure to visit the resident huskies and reindeer - the excited squeaks of the pups will surely melt your heart. At the end of the visit, you'll transfer from your hotel to the pier to board your ship. The ship will depart from here. Please note that no portage service is available at Kirkenes pier, and the tour manager leaves the group after embarkation. After boarding, we'll prepare for our sea voyage. Take some time to get used to your new nautical home and to find your sea legs. Settle into your cabin for the night and get ready to see the famously beautiful Norwegian coast.

Day 9 - Unmatched arctic scenery

We make stops at Mehamn and Kjøllefjord during the night, before early morning visits to Honningsvåg and Havøysund. In the early afternoon, you'll spend time in Hammerfest, once the northernmost town in the world until Svalbard's Longyearbyen claimed the title. Check out the UNESCO-listed Meridian Column, shop for souvenirs at the Polar Bear Society, or take the path behind the town to the viewpoint on Mount Salen. We'll continue cruising Norway's coastline south to Øksfjord and then to Skjervøy, a town surrounded by stunning mountain peaks. We've been docking at this vital fishing port since 1896. As we

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make our way to Tromsø, you might catch a glimpse of the Lyngen Alps, which boast some of the highest peaks in all of Norway. We'll dock at Tromsø just before midnight, and we'll stay in port for a couple of hours. If you're feeling energised by the 24-hour daylight, why not take a stroll around the city under the Midnight Sun - you might be surprised at how busy it is. As part of an optional excursion, you can take a midnight boat ride around the city or experience a candlelit classical concert at the iconic Arctic Cathedral.

Day 10 - A stunning archipelago

Today, you'll be exploring the archipelagos of Lofoten and Vesteralen, real highlights of our Norway scenic route. After Finnsnes early in the morning, the ship calls at Harstad, where you can join one of our classic optional excursions for "A Taste of Vesteralen". Discover history, beautiful scenery, and cultural heritage sites on this tour, then rejoin the ship further south at Sortland. Those who stay on the ship will experience our passage through the Risøyrenna, a shallow channel built for our ships in the 1920s. Prepare for some amazing scenery as we sail through the world-famous islands of Lofoten and Vesteralen. Lofoten is known for its natural beauty, steep mountains, wilderness, and picturesque fishing villages. Our daylight route through the region is the voyage highlight for many of our guests. After a short stop at the tiny village of Risøyhamn, we continue to Stokmarknes, where we, The Hurtigruten Coastal Express, began more than 125 years ago. You may wish to visit the Hurtigrutemuseet here. Continuing south, it'll look like we're headed straight into a mountain, but don't worry, we're in fact sailing through a passage into the narrow Raftsund, flanked by peaks rising 1000m out of the sea. We now arrive at the amazing Trollfjord. If conditions allow, we'll sail between sheer

cliffs that seem close enough to reach out and touch. It's an unforgettable experience! Next, we arrive in Svolvær, where you can choose from several optional excursions or just relax in town at one of many cafes, pubs, and restaurants.

Day 11 - Leaving the Arctic region

Crossing the Arctic Circle is an important 'rite of passage', and today, we'll celebrate the occasion on deck with a taste of Arctic tradition - a spoonful of cod liver oil. Leaving the Polar region means saying goodbye to the Midnight Sun, but you'll still see incredibly long days throughout the rest of the summer voyage. Sailing along the Helgeland coast, you'll find the strange mountain, Torghatten. This mountain rises 258m above sea level and is famous for the distinctive hole through its centre. The hole is 160m long, 35m high, and 20m wide, and was formed during the ice age. Another highlight is sailing past the Seven Sisters mountain range. According to legend, the seven peaks were formed from seven beautiful troll sisters; when they were caught out at sunrise, they turned to stone, thus creating the seven beautiful mountaintops. Next, we make a brief stop at the idyllic trading post of Nesna before moving on to Sandnessjøen. In Brønnøysund, join an optional excursion to the Norwegian Aquaculture Centre for an informative tour and taste of fresh salmon.

Day 12 - Living history and culture

This morning, you'll have the opportunity to explore the historic royal city of Trondheim for a few hours. Be sure to visit the majestic Nidaros Cathedral, built over the burial site of King Olav II who reigned from 1015 to 1028. Leaving Trondheim, we'll sail past beautiful island scenery and some of Norway's smallest communities before arriving at Kristiansund and Molde. Kristiansund is regarded as Norway's 'dried cod capital' because

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of its long-time export of salted dry fish. Here, you can join an excursion along the Atlantic Road, a National Scenic Route. The 8km stretch of highway spans eight bridges, crosses picturesque landscapes and is surrounded by open sea. Another interesting excursion is to the Bergtatt marble mine, which takes you inside a mountain and across an illuminated subterranean lake before serving you a meal in the mine's 'Grand Hall'. Those who remain aboard at Kristiansund will experience the ship's open sea crossing towards Molde - Norway's 'City of Roses' which, if you're there in season, is adorned with rose bushes in bloom. You can also see the distant 222 pointed peaks of the Romsdal Alps across the fjord, called 'the Molde Panorama'.

Day 13 - Leaving the ship

Today marks the end of our Norwegian coastal cruise together, but there's still plenty to see during your last day with us. During the night, we'll call at Ålesund and Torvik, and on our approach to Maløy, you might catch a glimpse of the northbound Coastal Express if you're up early enough. Before docking in Bergen, you'll have a chance to glimpse Nordfjord under the enormous Jostedal Glacier, mainland Europe's largest glacier. Here, the fjord widens to the east and forges 90 km inland. We'll dock at Florø, Norway's westernmost community, in the morning. You'll have some time to take in the harbour and marina before we set off again soon after. As we leave the port, get your camera ready to snap some shots of Stabben Lighthouse, a favourite subject for photographers. As we reach our final port in the afternoon, the ship will navigate through the last islands and skerries of our Norway scenic route, and we'll sail down Hjeltefjord to arrive in Bergen, Norway's second largest city. After saying goodbye to the captain and the crew, we'll board a private bus for a city sightseeing tour of Bergen, which includes a walking tour of the

UNESCO World Heritage listed Bryggen, St Mary's Church, and Hakon's Hall. The tour ends at your hotel in Bergen, where you'll check in. The remainder of the day is at your leisure. Spend some time browsing the food stalls at the fish market, or head across to the colourful Hanseatic wharf at Bryggen for some souvenir shopping.

Day 14 - The "City of Seven Mountains"

You have the day at leisure to further explore the city. Surrounded by seven mountains, Bergen is often called "The Gateway to The Fjords" and offers a perfect mix of pristine nature and rich culture. You can get stunning views of the city and the surrounding waterways from the top of Mount Fløyen. A leisurely ride on the funicular railway will take you all the way to the peak. There's also the art collections and exhibits of the four KODE museums and galleries to peruse, as well as the shops, cafes, and restaurants around Market Square. Reconvene in the evening to enjoy a farewell feast at a local restaurant, perhaps Bryggeloftet & Stuen, located in the historic Bryggen area.

Day 15 - A fond farewell

After breakfast at your hotel in Bergen, it's time to bring your tour of Scandinavia with us to a close. Although your journey with us is over for the time being, you'll take home with you souvenirs that will last a lifetime. Whether in the form of photographs, handmade crafts picked up along the way, or simply treasured memories, these will forever remind you of your time with us. We hope to see you again soon for another adventure.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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YOUR SHIP: NORDKAPP

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VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:



Sailing the Norwegian coast since 1996, MS Nordkapp was christened by Norway's Queen Sonja in 1996 and her maiden voyage was to the Shetland Islands. Since 2007, the vessel has been part of Hurtigruten's fleet of ships dedicated to sailing the Norwegian coastline. MS Nordkapp was refurbished in 2016 and now features a modern, Arctic-inspired interior. On board are three different restaurants, a Multe bakery and ice cream bar, a sauna and fitness room. Out on deck you can enjoy the view from one of our two hot tubs. We also have a cosy bar at the front of the ship where you can enjoy a nice traditional drink. The ship additionally has a large compass area with reception, a tour guide, conference room, and shop.



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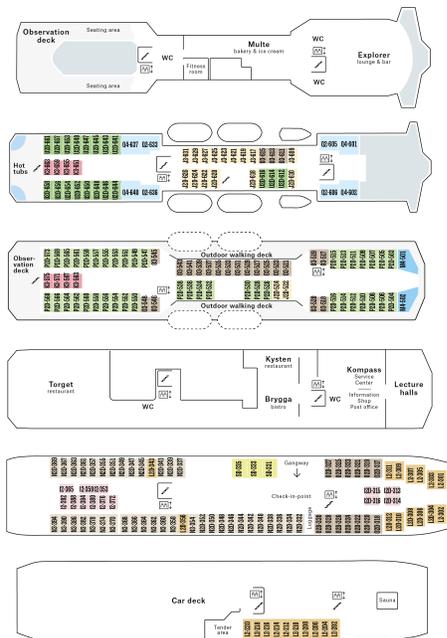
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