



## Itinerary

### 15 Day Follow The Lights: Southbound

**\*IMPORTANT NOTE:** Any extra nights, optional tours or other amendments, will not be visible on this itinerary.

#### DAY 1: Arrive Helsinki, Finland

Today is arrival day. Once you arrive in Helsinki, make your own way to our hotel and enjoy this day at leisure.

Helsinki is often dubbed one of the world's most liveable cities due to its vibrant nature and delicate balance of historic architecture and contemporary living. Spend the afternoon on your own exploring the city and discovering the many hidden gems, cafes and restaurants dotted around the city centre.

In the evening, you will have the opportunity to meet your fellow travellers and tour escort for an included welcome dinner as you prepare to follow the Northern Lights through Finland and Norway.

**MEALS:** In-Flight, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT:** 4 Star Hotel, Helsinki

#### DAY 2: Helsinki

On our first full day, we take to these streets for a walking tour that takes in the sights and sounds of this modern European city. At the heart of the city's historic quarter lies the Helsinki Cathedral and Senate Square, this large plaza is one of the most famous and important monuments and a great place to stop and embrace the vibe of the city. Another iconic stop on the tour is a visit to the Tempeliaukio Church, built into the bedrock of the city it has also become known as the 'Church of Rock' and a nod to the city's modern culture.

Spend the afternoon and evening uncovering the many hidden gems of the city! With a wide range of bars, restaurants and cafés there is something to satisfy every taste.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** 4 Star Hotel, Helsinki

#### DAY 3: Helsinki ~ Rovaniemi

In the morning we set out from Helsinki and start our journey towards Finnish Lapland and the arctic wilderness. Jump on board the train from Helsinki to Rovaniemi - the reputed home of Santa Claus. As the train winds north gaze upon snow-capped forests and a true winter wonderland.

Arriving in Rovaniemi, we are now in the capital of Finnish Lapland, where you will have the afternoon to explore this quaint town at your leisure. At night, keep your eyes on the skies as we are above the arctic

circle, the chances of spotting the Northern Lights increase.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** 4 Star Hotel, Rovaniemi

#### DAY 4: Rovaniemi ~ Husky Sledding

Wake up in the heart of Lapland and prepare for our first authentic experience, a meeting with the cute furry locals at a husky kennel. Learn about how huskies are reared to become as fit and as hardy as the local Sami people who have worked with these iconic arctic heroes for many years. After getting to know these animals we will enjoy lunch before joining a thrilling husky-drawn cart or sled ride through the Lapland wilderness with your new furry friends.

After spending the day living like a local, warm up with a hot drink at Lappish Kota, a traditional wooden hut dawning with reindeer hides and a roaring fire.

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**OVERNIGHT:** 4 Star Hotel, Rovaniemi

#### DAY 5: Rovaniemi ~ Santa Claus Village ~ Saariselkä

Feel like a child again as we spend the morning exploring the wonderous Santa Claus Village, and even get to meet the man himself!

In the afternoon we continue our journey north making a short stop to see the Sodankylä Old Church before continuing to the Northern Lights Village of Saariselkä. Upon arrival, be wowed at your accommodation for the night – your very own Aurora Cabin or Glass Igloo where you can watch the Northern Lights from your bed whenever they appear.

Following the included dinner at the hotel, we'll be welcomed into the traditional tent of a local Sámi family who'll talk enthusiastically about their unique culture and lifestyle. Feed the family's reindeer in the nearby paddock or practise your lasso skills under your host's expert tutelage. Weather permitting, we will also enjoy a reindeer sleigh ride. If you are really lucky, you can even catch a glimpse of the Northern Lights on this authentic arctic experience.

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT:** Aurora Cabin / Glass Igloo, Saariselka

#### DAY 6: Saariselkä ~ Inari ~ Kirkenes

As we continue North through the Finnish Lapland we arrive in the small township of Inari, the Sami capital (traditional nomads of Scandinavia, reindeer herders). On our stop in Inari, we will visit the newly renovated SIIDA museum - which is home to a collection featuring the spiritual and material culture of the Finnish Sami presented to the public through exhibitions and publications.

In the afternoon we cross into Norway and arrive at the iconic Snowhotel in Kirkenes, where you have the opportunity to join an optional excursion, choosing from activities such as king crab or Northern Lights safaris. Spend the night inside a traditional Gamme cabin, inspired by the traditional hunting and fishing hut known as 'gamme' which are typically found in the Lapland wilderness. Tonight's included dinner is in

the unique farmhouse restaurant, Låven.

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT:** Traditional Gamme Cabin, Kirkenes

### DAY 7: Your Hurtigruten Coastal Express Voyage Starts

Your voyage onboard the Coastal Express begins in the Arctic in the town of Kirkenes. Our first port of call is Vardø and its iconic star-shaped Vardøhus Fortress, built-in 1737. The northernmost fortification of any kind, it remains a part of the military to this day. Weather permitting, brave swimmers may want to take a dip in the icy Arctic Ocean (strictly optional of course!).

We cruise Norway's coastline to arrive in the small port of Båtsfjord in the evening and then on to Berlevåg. You might be able to make out Mount Tanahorn to the west, or see Kjølnes Lighthouse blinking atop a cliff overlooking the Barents Sea. These two idyllic ports are home to Norway's most famous male choir, comprising local fishermen.

#### TIME IN PORT:

Depart Kirkenes: 12:30

Vardø: 16:05 - 17:00

Båtsfjord: 20:00 - 20:30

Berlevåg: 22:25 - 22:35

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT:** Hurtigruten Coastal Vessel

### DAY 8: Unmatched Arctic Scenery: Mehamn ~ Tromsø

We make a late-night stop at Mehamn, where there is the option to join snowmobile trip through the vast Arctic wilderness. A great opportunity to experience snowy plains and valleys, crisp winter air under the Northern Lights in the starry sky above.

During the day we pass through various ports including Honningsvåg and Hammerfest where you can visit the UNESCO-listed Meridian Column, erected in 1854 to honour the first precise geographic measurement of the globe.

Late in the evening, we arrive at Tromsø, in time to enjoy a magical Northern Lights concert at the Arctic Cathedral in winter (optional).

#### TIME IN PORT:

Mehamn: 01:20 - 01:30

Kjøllefjord: 03:25 - 03:35

Honningsvåg: 05:45 - 06:00

Havøysund: 08:00 - 08:15

Hammerfest: 11:00 - 12:45

Øksfjord: 15:50 - 16:05

Skjervøy: 19:30 - 19:45

Tromsø: 23:45 - 01:30

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT:** Hurtigruten Coastal Vessel

## DAY 9: Where Nature Amazes: Finnsnes ~ Stamsund

This morning, we arrive at Harstad, where you can join one of our optional classic excursions - A Taste of Vesterålen. Discover the history, beautiful scenery, and cultural heritage sites of this iconic and breathtaking landscape. Those who stay on the ship experience our passage through the Risøyrenna, a shallow channel built for Hurtigruten in the 1920s.

Prepare for some amazing scenery as we sail through the world-famous islands of Lofoten and Vesterålen. Lofoten is known for its natural beauty, steep mountains, wilderness and picturesque fishing villages. After a short stop at the tiny village of Risøyhamn, we continue to Stokmarknes, where Hurtigruten began more than 125 years ago.

Continuing south, it will look like we're headed straight into a mountain, but don't worry, we are in fact sailing through a passage into the narrow Raftsund, flanked by peaks rising 1000m out of the sea. If that wasn't enough, we arrive at amazing Trollfjord. If conditions allow, we will sail between sheer cliffs that seem close enough to reach out and touch. It's an unforgettable experience!

### TIME IN PORT:

Tromsø: 23:45 - 01:30

Finnsnes: 04:20 - 04:40

Harstad: 08:00 - 08:30

Risøyhamn: 10:45 - 11:00

Sortland: 12:30 - 13:00

Stokmarknes: 14:15 - 15:15

Svolvær: 18:30 - 20:30

Stamsund: 22:15 - 22:30

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT:** Hurtigruten Coastal Vessel

## DAY 10: Cross the Arctic Circle: Bodø ~ Rørvik

We then cross over the Arctic Circle just after breakfast. Commemorate the moment with a tradition of tasting a spoonful of good ol' cod liver oil!

Sailing along the Helgeland coast, you see the strange mountain, Torghatten, famous for the distinctive hole through its centre. There is a local legend as to why and how this mountain came to have such a hole. Make sure you ask your Coastal Expert about it!

Another highlight is sailing past the Seven Sisters mountain range. It is easy to see how the peaks influenced ancient legends. The story goes that seven beautiful troll sisters were caught out at sunrise and turned to stone, thus creating the seven beautiful mountaintops.

Even though we're south of the Arctic Circle, there may still be good opportunities to see the Northern Lights.

**TIME IN PORT:**

Bodø: 02:30 - 03:30

Ørnes: 06:25 - 06:35

Nesna: 10:25 - 10:35

Sandnessjøen: 11:45 - 12:15

Brønnøysund: 15:00 - 17:25

Rørvik: 21:00 - 21:30

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT:** Hurtigruten Coastal Vessel

**DAY 11: Trondheim ~ Ålesund**

Today you have a chance to explore the wooden city of history: Trondheim. Be sure to visit the majestic Nidaros Cathedral, built over the burial site of King Olav II who reigned from 1015 to 1028. Treat yourself to quality coffee and a Nordic patisserie in one of the Bakklandet district's many chic cafés then walk up to Kristiansten Fort for great views of Norway's third-largest city.

As we sail along the coast, you will realise the importance of fishing to Norway's coastal communities. Kristiansund is regarded as Norway's 'dried cod capital' because of its long-time export of salted dry fish. An 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'.

**TIME IN PORT:**

Trondheim: 06:30 - 09:30

Kristiansund: 16:30 - 17:30

Molde: 21:15 - 21:45

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT:** Hurtigruten Coastal Vessel

## DAY 12: A Fjord Farewell: Ålesund ~ Bergen

During the night, the ship calls at Ålesund, Torvik and Måløy, as our voyage draws to a close. Before docking in Bergen, there is fascinating scenery to experience, including picturesque Nordfjord beneath Jostedal Glacier.

A few nautical miles south of Florø, we cross the mouth of the mighty Sognefjord, taking in superb views of the magnificent island-studded coastline en route. In the early afternoon, we arrive in the Hanseatic city of Bergen where our time on the Coastal Express comes to an end. After disembarkation we join our private coach for a city tour including a walking tour of the UNESCO World Heritage listed Bryggen, St Mary's Church, and Håkon's Hall, before heading to Troidhaugen, the home of Norway's most famous composer, Edvard Grieg. After arrival at the hotel the evening is yours to enjoy and explore this vibrant city. One recommendation is to take the Fløibanen funicular to the top of nearby Mount Fløyen to enjoy views of Bergen and the surrounding mountains.

### TIME IN PORT:

Ålesund: 00:30 - 01:20

Torvik: 02:35 - 02:45

Måløy: 05:45 - 06:00

Florø: 08:15 - 08:30

Arrive Bergen: 14:45

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**OVERNIGHT:** 4 Star Hotel, Bergen

## DAY 13: Norway In A Nutshell: Bergen ~ Oslo

Embark on an epic adventure today as we traverse the famed 'Norway in a Nutshell' route from Bergen to Oslo, a journey encompassing rail, coach, and ferry travel for a truly immersive experience.

Our adventure begins with a scenic rail ride from Bergen to Voss, treating us to breathtaking views of the Norwegian countryside along the way. Upon arrival in Voss, we switch to a comfortable coach for the next leg of our journey, heading towards the picturesque village of Gudvangen. En route, we're treated to the sight of cascading waterfalls adorning the valley, creating a stunning backdrop to our travels.

Upon reaching Gudvangen, we board a ferry for a mesmerizing fjord cruise along the UNESCO-protected Nærøfjord. Be awed by the towering cliffs and tranquil waters as we glide along, immersing ourselves in the natural beauty of this iconic fjord. Our scenic cruise concludes in the charming village of Flåm, where quaint streets and serene scenery await exploration.

Continuing our ascent, we hop on a mountain train journey to Myrdal, ascending three thousand feet amidst breathtaking mountain vistas. Prepare to be spellbound by the stunning scenery as we wind our way through valleys and over bridges, experiencing firsthand why this rail route is celebrated as one of the world's most scenic.

From Myrdal, our journey takes us southward towards our destination, Oslo, the vibrant capital of Norway. Reflect on the unforgettable memories of our epic adventure as we approach the cosmopolitan city, where modernity and tradition blend seamlessly amidst the backdrop of Norway's stunning natural landscapes.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** 4 Star Hotel, Oslo

#### DAY 14: Oslo Sightseeing

Enjoy breakfast in the hotel and prepare for our final full day on tour.

On our coach tour learn more about this vibrant European city, as we journey through the history of Oslo, from the world's largest sculpture park by a single artist - Vigeland Sculpture Park to the site of the 1952 Winter Olympics and the Holmenkollen Ski Jump.

The afternoon is yours to continue exploring before joining your fellow travellers and tour escort for our final farewell dinner in a local restaurant.

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT:** 4 Star Hotel, Oslo

#### DAY 15: Your Adventure Ends ~ Departure

It is in the morning that we say goodbye as this exciting arctic adventure comes to an end. Depart the hotel with lifelong memories of your time in Norway and Finland under the dancing skies of the Northern Lights. Make your own way to the airport for your onward journey.

**MEALS:** Breakfast