

- AURORA BOREALIS - THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

Oslo – Bergen – Flåm Railway – Norwegian Fjords – Coastal cruise
via Kirkenes to Tromsø, Bodø and Trondheim – the heritage
UNESCO listed town of Røros – horse sleighs & dog sledding

Sunday 4 to Wednesday 26 February 2024



Join us for a twenty-one day tour to experience the beauty of winter in Norway – hunting the Aurora Borealis – the famed Northern Lights. The Aurora Borealis offer an entrancing, dramatic, magical display that fascinates all who see it — but just what causes this dazzling natural phenomenon? With many opportunities to experience the Northern Lights in the dramatic Norwegian landscape, from both land and sea, this tour offers a special insight into both nature's amazing light show, and the beauty of the Norwegian fjords and coast in winter. Return by rail from Trondheim, Norway, through central Norway to the UNESCO world heritage town of Røros, and experience the beauty of winter with horse sleigh rides, dog sledding, walks in snow covered nature and the relaxing and refreshing facilities of our spa hotel.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ❖ Oslo's impressive museums and harbour location
- ❖ Oslo to Bergen rail journey through the majestic high country to Bergen – its harbour, seafood and city sightseeing
- ❖ Bergen – Myrdal – Flam Railway – snow covered fjords in winter – Voss to Bergen rail journey
- ❖ Norwegian coastal journey on the MS Havila Polaris – the newest ship – through stunning snow clad coastal scenery
- ❖ Bergen - Kirkenes – Tromsø – Bodo – Trondheim and more through a winter wonderland
- ❖ Many opportunities to see the Aurora Borealis – the Northern Lights
- ❖ King crabs from the Barents Sea, freshly cooked local seafood, crossing the Arctic Circle
- ❖ Learn of Sami culture and living in nature in winter
- ❖ Extraordinary sightseeing along the Norwegian coastline with fjords and beautiful islands
- ❖ Horse drawn sleigh rides in the UNESCO world heritage listed village of Røros
- ❖ Dog sledding and local culture in the Forollhogna and Femundsmarka National Parks
- ❖ Local produce, fresh Norwegian seafood and more

ITINERARY

The itinerary for the tour, with key activities, is below. On some days additional activities are possible, some at no extra cost, others at additional cost. Options on the tour (at extra cost) are shown below and followed by (O). Some sightseeing on shore is included whilst aboard **MS Havila Polaris**, whilst other ship organised shore excursions are optional and at additional expense. Meals included are shown as Breakfast (B), Lunch (L), Dinner (D), Light Refreshments (LR). The tour is limited to 24 guests.

Sunday 4 February 2024 (D) – Australia to Oslo

Depart from Australia and fly to Oslo, Norway. Emirates, Qatar, Thai and Qantas code-share services offer convenient departures. We'll discuss your travel preferences with you. Overnight aboard the flight.

Monday 5 February 2024 (B) – Oslo

On arrival in Oslo transfer to our hotel, and depending on flight arrival time, head out for a short afternoon / early evening exploration. Oslo is surrounded by stunning natural beauty – mountains and ocean – and has a colourful and vibrant city centre. Then enjoy dinner at leisure in one of many excellent restaurants. Overnight Oslo.

Tuesday 6 February 2024 (B/D) – Oslo

One of the oldest Scandinavian capitals, Oslo has never been on the mainstream European tourist circuit. In the 1990's Oslo grew from what even the Scandinavians considered a backwater, to one of the glittering cities of Europe. A Nordic 'joie de vivre' permeates the city. Oslo was founded in the mid-11th century by a Viking king and became the capital around 1300 under Haakon V. During its history, the city burned down several times - fire destroyed it in 1824. The master builder Christian IV, King of Denmark and Norway, ordered the town rebuilt near the Akershus Castle. He named the new town Christiania (after himself), its official name until 1924, when the city reverted to its former name. In 1814 Norway separated from Denmark and united with Sweden, a union that lasted until 1905. During that period the Royal Palace, the House of Parliament, the old university, the National Theatre, and the National Gallery were built. After World War II, Oslo grew to 282 sq. km (175 sq. miles) and now has over half a million inhabitants. That makes it one of the largest world capitals in acreage - not in population. Oslo is also one of Europe's most heavily forested cities, and its citizens relish this standing. In winter the atmosphere is magical, with much in the museums, galleries and streets to enchant. We explore Oslo. A highlight is the Bygdoy Peninsula, which holds some of Oslo's top attractions – excavated Viking ships, Thor Heyerdahl's raft the Kon-Tiki, the Norwegian Maritime Museum and the Fram polar exploration ship. We travel to the Holmenkollen ski jump and the Tryvannstarnet observation tower for a fine view over Oslo, and visit the famed Vigeland Sculpture Park for its extraordinary outdoor collection. Enjoy dinner together and overnight Oslo.

Wednesday 7 February 2024 (B) – to Bergen

After breakfast we join a Norwegian Railways train and travel across the splendid rail line to Bergen. The Bergen Line is a unique experience as Northern Europe's highest railway. One of the greatest challenges for the Bergen Line is the harsh and unpredictable weather, especially in winter. The line is exposed to deep low-pressure centres from the west, which can mean strong winds and heavy snow for part of the year. Keeping the railway open demands great effort and technical expertise. Skilled workers, effective equipment, tunnels and snow tunnels currently make the Bergen Line one of the safest and most comfortable ways of travelling between Oslo and Bergen. Anywhere else, the Bergensbanen, or Bergen Line would be heralded as a wonder of the world. Here, it's a matter-of-fact way of linking the country's two most important cities – in winter it is a magical journey through snow-clad mountain ranges. Bring a picnic lunch for today, or purchase some refreshments from the café/restaurant car aboard. On arrival in Bergen we transfer to our hotel for the next two nights. Bergen was one of the great Hanseatic ports - founded in 1070. The people of Bergen are fiercely proud of their city, the second largest in Norway, the capital of Western Norway, and the "the gateway to the fjords" - definitely one of Norway's most beautiful port cities. Seven mountains surround the city, which is the reason for its rain statistics. Bergen is a major city with old world charm and atmosphere, wooden houses and narrow alleyways, a busy harbour and a whiff of sea salt in the air. The history of Bergen is linked to the medieval Hanseatic League of merchants, dating from the Hansa trader's settlement in 1360. Enjoy an evening meal in one of the many restaurants. Overnight Bergen.



Thursday 8 February 2024 (B) – Bergen to Bergen - the Flåm Railway, Gudvangen, Aurlandsfjord and Sognefjord

After breakfast we join a train for the journey along the Bergen rail line to Myrdal - the beginning and end station of the Flåm Railway. At Myrdal, the Flåm valley plunges towards the Aurland Fjord. During this wonderful journey, with breathtaking panoramic views between the tunnels, the train goes into a spiral tunnel inside the mountain to cope with the change in elevation of 865 m along a mere 20 km of track. The Flåm Railway is one of the world's steepest railway lines on normal gauge. The gradient is 55/1000 on almost 80% of the line, a gradient of one in eighteen. The twisting tunnels that spiral in and out of the mountain are manifestations of the most daring and skilful engineering in Norwegian railway history. Down in idyllic Flåm there is time for lunch and to explore before continuing our round trip by boat on the Aurlandsfjord and into the Nærøyfjord, one of the narrowest fjord inlets in Western Norway, surrounded by mountains up to 1,800m high. This fjord inlet of the Sognefjord is both beautiful and charming. Small west-country farms, covered in snow, lie dotted along the mountainsides and you can often see goats along the edge of the fjord. If you are lucky, you will also see seals lying on the smooth rocks along the shore. Cruising the fjords in winter provides a dramatic contrast of white snow, dark rock, and the ocean beneath. The ship docks at beautiful Gudvangen. The next stage of the trip is the bus journey up the 13 steep, spectacular Stalheimskeivane hairpin bends, with views of the Stalheim and Sivle waterfalls, to the Stalheim hotel. After a brief stop here to enjoy the view, the journey continues to Voss - a charming rural town with a population of almost 6000. Voss is situated in the heart of fjord country and has preserved its many traditions dating back some 3000 years when it became a farming community. After a short time at Voss we rejoin a Norwegian Railways service for the relaxing train trip back to Bergen. (*Note: depending on the final boat/train schedules, the combination of rail and road transport may vary.*) Dinner at leisure and overnight Bergen.

Friday 9 February 2024 (B/D) – Bergen's Floibanen, Edvard Greig's Museum, Norwegian Coastal Voyage aboard MS Havila Polaris north to Kirkenes, and then south to Trondheim

After breakfast we'll make a morning journey on the Floibanen for an unbeatable city view – we ride the Floibanen funicular and ascend 320m – for the fit you can enjoy a 40 min walk back down the mountain on a lovely circuit that switchbacks down the mountain to the harbour through neighbourhoods of old timber houses. We visit the Edvard Grieg Museum Trolldhaugen - home of composer Edvard Grieg for 22 years, where he composed many of his best-known works in the little garden hut. Now a living museum comprising an exhibition centre with shop and cafe, concert hall, composers' cabin and Grieg's villa dating from 1885. It will soon be time to board the Norwegian coastal voyage for our ten night journey north to Kirkenes, and then southbound to Trondheim. Calling at 34 ports, the Norwegian Coastal Voyage is the lifeline along a stretch of the coast, characterised by its tremendous distances, scattered settlements and dramatic scenery, that has operated every day for more than 100 years. Every day of the year a ship leaves Bergen on the 11-day voyage from Bergen to Kirkenes and return. We board the MS Havila Polaris at Bergen Harbour for our journey. During waking hours on this voyage we will have the opportunity of seeing the Møre coastline, and we will also experience the scenic Trondheimsleia channel and Stokksund sound. After that we will sail through the narrow, island-surrounded waters towards Rørvik and then through the Saltstraumen, where the tidal current flows between the Saltfjord and the Skjerstadjord south of Bodø. The voyage then continues across Vestfjorden to the Lofoten Islands which appear from the south to be a solid wall of mountains, described literally in Norwegian as Lofotveggen, 'the Lofoten Wall'. After that the ship sails past the green and gentle Troms coastline and then the wild coast of Finnmark. We will also call in at several towns where we will have time for a stroll around the streets or a sightseeing tour. We arrive at Kirkenes on the sixth day, from where we head southwards calling at different ports and at different times. All meals are included aboard the MS Havila Polaris.

"There is something really special with the winter. It is during the polar nights that nature's own floodlights really reveal their true purpose. And I'm not thinking about the sun now - we don't see much of that during winter, but the moon and the stars. There is nothing more peaceful than standing under a sparkling and starlit polar sky."



Aboard the MS Havila Polaris

The MS Havila Polaris is one of the two newest ships to ply the Norwegian coastline. Onboard the ships décor reflects Norwegian landscapes including the sea, the sky, mountains and glaciers. Natural materials and Nordic design creates a warm, genuine and unpretentious atmosphere. You can enjoy the scenery gliding by outside from the ship's many public areas. Comfortable seats and panoramic windows give you the best possible views of the Norwegian coastline. If you want to feel the wind in your hair and inhale some good sea air, there's the outer deck and the viewpoint in the bow, or the promenade on Deck 8, that is long enough for a proper walk. The observation lounge on the top deck, Deck 9, has recliners under a glass roof, where you can look at the Northern Lights and the star-studded night sky. The ship has two restaurants and a cafe. The menus feature locally sourced food and the best that Norway has to offer. Large cabins with Norwegian quality and design, where materials and colours reflect the landscape through which you will be sailing.

The **cabins included in the tour fare** are approximately 20-25 sqm, outside cabins, with floor to ceiling window, double bed, seating area with table, desk chair, refrigerator, hairdryer, tea/coffee facilities and free wifi. Cabins for sole use are approximately 15sqm, with similar features to the larger cabins. All cabins have ensuite bathroom facilities. A limited number of **superior suites** may be available which feature a private balcony, queen sized double bed, swivel TV, recliner, sofa bed with table, 2 wardrobes, minibar, coffee machine, bathrobe and slippers, free wifi, as well as the option for breakfast served in the premium Hildring fine dining restaurant. They also include additional benefits such as complimentary dining in the signature restaurant for one dinner, non-alcoholic beverage package, included premium coffee/tea choices, welcome drinks in the Havblikk Bar & Lounge on deck 9 every day from 16:00 – 18:00 – **please contact us if you are interested.**

Dining Aboard the MS Havila Polaris

Eating is about more than sustenance. The **Havrand Restaurant** is the main dining room. Breakfast, lunch and dinner is served here, in the ship's main restaurant. Choose your favourites from our extensive range of hot, cold, sweet and savory food. Havrand offers a number of set dishes in addition to food from the four different coastal regions through which we sail. This means that our menu changes during the voyage so that you can try something different for breakfast, lunch and dinner every day, all served at your table. **Hildring Restaurant** is something you may experience occasionally and on the most beautiful days. This is also how you may feel in our fine dining restaurant. Seafood from the pure icy Norwegian waters receives the warm attention of our chefs, creating flavours that will make you feel like you're floating on air. Sometimes, you have to add that little extra to your trip. This is when Hildring Fine Dining, with its delicious, leisurely breakfasts and our special signature dinner menu, comes in. The cold, clean waters that we sail in have the best seafood in the world, and it is from here that Hildring Fine Dining sources the turbot and scallops that are served. Berries that have benefitted from long sunny days on the mountainsides along the fjords bring your meal to a sweet conclusion. At Hildring Fine Dining we offer you the best of Norwegian produce. – a supplement applies for dining in the restaurant.

Saturday 10 February 2024 (B/L/D) – Florø - Måløy - Torvik - Ålesund - Molde - Kristiansund

Wake to the beautiful scenery of a snow covered Norwegian coastline. On the way north from Torvik, we can see Runde island far out to sea. It was here that divers brought to the surface 60,000 gold and silver coins that went down with a Dutch ship in 1725. Then it's on to picturesque Ålesund, the city that burnt down in 1904 and was rebuilt in Art Nouveau style. Most of these buildings are well preserved and make Ålesund unique in terms of architecture. Aksla Mountain adds to the city's singularity, providing magnificent views of the islands and headland on which the city is built. Last but not least, the people of Sunnmøre are sales people through and through, which means that Ålesund is a great place for shopping! The local people are inventive and determined and all kinds of businesses flourish throughout the region in every arm of the fjords! We then sail into Romsdal fjord with Molde facing south towards the magnificent Romsdal Alps. This is where perhaps the most famous picture in Norway was taken – King Haakon and Crown Prince Olav at the "King's birch tree" during World War II. Next, we sail into Julsundet sound, towards famous Hustadvika, where we meet the southbound Hurtigruten before docking at Kristiansund in the late evening. Overnight aboard MS Havila Polaris.



Sunday 11 February 2024 (B/L/D) – Kristiansund - Trondheim - Rørvik

We arrive in Trondheim in the early morning, having passed the tiny island in the Trondheim fjord on which the Munkholmen medieval monastery stands. It's a good idea to have an early breakfast to maximise your time to explore Norway's first capital city – the MS Havila Polaris is in port from 0600 to 1200 hrs – remember we return to Trondheim at the end of the Hurtigruten cruise for further sightseeing. In terms of architecture, Trondheim is a city of wood. The wooden buildings lining the river "Nidelven" to the east and Fjordgata Street to the north are also grand and impressive. Cross the old city bridge to see the charming old (and in some cases new) wooden buildings at Baklandet. We depart at noon and pass Munkholmen, with its history dating back to 1028, and soon we are out in the wide Trondheimsfjord with the large, well maintained farmsteads at Statsbygd and Rissa on our starboard side. We continue north through the narrow Stokksund sound at about 4.00pm and on towards the open sea at Folda before arriving in Rørvik at 9.15pm. Overnight aboard MS Havila Polaris.

Monday 12 February 2024 (B/L/D) – Brønnøysund - Sandnessjøen - Nesna - Ørnes – Bodø – Stamsund - Svolvær

This morning we cross the Arctic Circle - but you have to be up early to see the sign. Keep a lookout to the west between 7am and 7.30am and you may see the Arctic Circle globe on the small islet of Vikingen. Listen as the captain informs us that we have passed 66° and 33 degrees north, the most southerly point where the Midnight Sun shines 24 hours a day. The characteristic Hestmannøy Island is behind you and we head north through a wonderful island landscape. Many of these islands have been populated for generations. We make a short stop in Ørnes, an ancient trading post with some well-preserved houses typical of the beginning of the 19th century. We continue north past Kunna, where there has been a settlement since the Iron Age. Past Fugleøya to the west with its large puffin colony. Past Gildeskål church which dates from 1130 and was built by King Øystein. Then it's just a short journey across Saltfjorden before we dock at Bodø, the administrative centre of Nordland country. We have two and a half hours to enjoy in Bodø. In the afternoon we cross the Vestfjord and see the 100 kilometre long Lofoten mountain range rising from the sea. A seemingly solid, jagged mountain range that shelters the many fishing stations, including Stamsund and Svolvær from the sea to the west. We have an hour in Svolvær, and you can spend this late hour taking a walk along the quays and looking up at the distinctive, sheer rock formation of Svolvæргеita (the Svolvær Goat). Overnight aboard MS Havila Polaris.

Tuesday 13 February 2024 (B/L/D) – Stokmarknes - Sortland - Risøyhamn - Harstad – Finnsnes - Tromsø - Skjervøy

If you rise early before the ship docks at 6.45am, you can spend an hour in Harstad, an important trading centre, idyllically located on the northeast side of Hinnøya, Norway's largest island. Hinnøya is also a fertile agricultural region famous for the 'Midnight Sun-ripened' Hinnøya strawberries – delicious! Harstad is now the centre of oil exploration in this part of the country, but the region surrounding the town has a long and colourful history. Trondenes is an ancient assembly place and chieftain's seat. The first church was built here in the 12th century, and the present one dates from about 1250. Then we cross Vågsfjorden heading towards the narrower Tranøyfjorden. Sheltered by Senja, Norway's second largest island, the village of Finnsnes sits snugly, deep in the sound. The 1,150 metre Gisundbrua bridge, built in 1972, links Senja to mainland Norway. Heading northwards, we pass the old trading post of Gibostad to the west and Lenvik church to the east. Then we sail out into Malangfjorden and heading towards Kvaløya to the north where we find 2,500-4,000 year old rock carvings. We pass through Rysstraumen before catching sight of Tromsø, the city which has many names to live up to – the Paris of the North, Gateway to the Arctic and Gateway to the Arctic Ocean to name but a few. We spend four hours here this afternoon exploring the city. The Arctic Ocean Cathedral is not to be missed and neither is the Polaria Arctic experience centre. There is also the optional tour (O) to experience dog sledding with huskies in Tromsø. Further north, our route runs in the shelter of the large islands of Reinøy, Vanna and Arnøy to the west while there is a view of the fantastic Lyngen Alps to the east. Skjervøy, our last port of call for the day, is a natural harbour well protected by mountains and large islands. From here north the MS Havila Polaris is sailing into the area along the Norwegian coast where we have the best chance of seeing the Northern Lights, and we can gather on deck often to search for this breathtaking phenomenon. Overnight aboard MS Havila Polaris.



Wednesday 14 February 2024 (B/L/D) – Øksfjord - Hammerfest - Havøysund - Honningsvåg – Kjøllefjord – Mehamn-Berlevåg

If you rise early again you'll be able to enjoy our departure from Hammerfest, having arrived at 5.15am, we depart at 6.45am. We then cross open sea, through Rolvsøysund sound and on to a short stay at Havøysund. As we continue east, we sail through Magerøysund sound to Honningsvåg. Thanks to its excellent sheltered harbour, Honningsvåg has become a major fishing port and the capital of the North Cape region. About 4,000–5,000 ships call here each year. The North Cape Museum has a great deal of information on local coastal culture and we have 3½ hrs to explore the town. The optional (O) excursion to the North Cape Plateau puts you at 71°10'21"N, only 2,000 km from the Geographical North Pole. Standing on top the 307 m North Cape plateau gives you a sublime feeling of being at the end of the world. While admiring the view, make sure you get some photographic evidence of this amazing place. After all, you can't get any further north in mainland Europe. The tour includes a visit to the North Cape Hall, where you can see an impressive panoramic film about Finnmark and the North Cape. We then cross Porsangerfjord and pass the world's largest bird cliff, the huge Sværholtklubb on the starboard side, before Finnkjerka appears just before we pass Kjøllefjord. Here we find the world's most northerly birch forests. We round Kinnarodden headland, the most northerly point of mainland Europe (North Cape is on an island), before we make a short stop in Mehamn. The Mehamn Hotel boasts the most northerly room in mainland Europe (Room No 301). This region holds many titles and on the way to Berlevåg there is one more – Sletnes lighthouse, the most northerly lighthouse in mainland Europe. You can join an optional (O) unforgettable snowmobile trip to one of Europe's most extreme and exciting natural areas. Along the way, the guides will tell you about the Sámi people, the geographic and climatic conditions, what life is like on the Finnmark coast, and how the local population utilises nature in both the summer and winter months. Experience the snow-clad valleys, the fresh winter air and perhaps the mesmerising Northern Lights in the clear, starry sky. Late that night, at about 10.45pm we arrive at Berlevåg. Overnight MS Havila Polaris.



Thursday 15 February 2024 (B/D) – Båtsfjord - Vardø - Vadsø – Kirkenes

Overnight the ship continues sailing east along the Varanger peninsula, past Båtsfjord and Vardø. At breakfast we arrive in Vadsø, the administrative centre of Finnmark. From here Arctic explorers Roald Amundsen and Lincoln Ellsworth began their flights over the North Pole in the airship, Norge. The fishing industry makes its mark on Vadsø, particularly in winter when shoal of capelin arrive to spawn. The industry has also gained a tasty new arrival – the delicious Kamkatchka crab that has spread from northern Russia into the fjords. On to Bøkfjorden and then Kirkenes, the last port of the Norwegian Coastal Voyage. At longitude 30°E, you are actually further east than Istanbul and St. Petersburg. The town lies between two time lines, Helsinki and Moscow, and is a real border area. Kirkenes is south of the Arctic tree line and is therefore very fertile compared with the rest of coastal Finnmark. Trade with Russia, ship repairs, tourism and service industries form the basis of commerce in Kirkenes - the only town in Norway where west meets east. We disembark and, depending upon the situation at the time, enjoy a short tour of the city and visit the Russian Border at Storskog, the Norwegian border station between Norway and Russia. We reboard the MS Havila Polaris, and as we turn south, many of the northbound ports previously visited at night can now be seen by day.

In the afternoon the ship docks in Vardø, Norway's easternmost port, and weather permitting, you may be able to experience winter ice bathing in the Arctic Ocean! In the middle of the night we dock at Mehamn, where it is possible to join an optional (O) snowmobile trip through one of Europe's most extreme and exciting natural areas. Experience the snow-clad valleys, the fresh winter air and perhaps the mesmerising Northern Lights in the clear, starry sky. Overnight aboard MS Havila Polaris.

Friday 16 February 2024 (B/L/D) – Lyngenfjord - Hammerfest - Tromsø

In the morning we sail into the spectacular Lyngenfjord on our way to Tromsø. Our next stop, Hammerfest, was founded in 1789, and in its time was Norway's polar capital, acting as a base for hunting expeditions to the high Arctic. In the majestic Lyngenfjord, surrounded by the snowy peaks of the Lyngen Alps, we may be visited by a local fisherman and enjoy a taste of local freshly-caught prawns. Our next stop is Tromsø, where you can enjoy the Arctic Cathedral whilst attending an optional (O) midnight concert. Overnight aboard MS Havila Polaris.

Saturday 17 February 2024 (B/L/D) – Vesterålen and Lofoten Islands

The Vesterålen and Lofoten Islands are amongst today's highlights. In the morning we transit Risøyrenna, a channel that was specially made for Hurtigruten. Then we continue via Sortland to Stokmarknes, where Hurtigruten was founded more than 120 years ago and you can visit the Hurtigruten museum. Continuing south it looks like we are sailing straight into the mountain wall, but the captain finds an opening and sails through. As a tribute to the fishing history in this region, our chef demonstrates how to fillet the winter catch of the day on deck. We continue through the narrow Raftsund, the picturesque channel between the Vesterålen and Lofoten Islands, where we'll take a detour into the spectacular Havila Polaris where steep cliffs hug the ship's sides (time and weather permitting). From Svolvær we continue on to Stamsund, where the majestic peaks of the huge Lofoten wall can be viewed. We leave the islands during the evening and set course for the mainland. Overnight aboard MS Havila Polaris.

Sunday 18 February 2024 (B/L/D) – the Arctic Circle and the Seven sisters

The Helgeland coast with its hundreds of islets, fertile farmland and steep granite walls is rich in local lore. Legends include that of the Seven Sisters - a row of mountain peaks, and of how an arrow fired by the troll Hestmannen formed the hole in Torghatten mountain. Crossing the Arctic Circle at 66°33'N is an important 'rite of passage' today. We celebrate this with a taste of Arctic traditions out on deck. Another highlight is sailing past the Seven Sisters mountain range. All seven mountains are between 900 and 1,100m high, and it is easy to understand how these ladies' have influenced ancient myths. According to Norwegian folk tales, trolls are turned to stone if they do not hide before the sun rises. This was also the case for these seven beautiful sisters who, whilst still beautiful, are now also mountains. We make a short stop in Nesna, an idyllic old trading post before moving on to Sandnessjøen. Our last night aboard MS Havila Polaris.

Monday 19 February 2024 (B) – Trondheim

Our coastal voyage ends this morning. We enjoy one last breakfast aboard before we disembark and transfer to our hotel for two nights in the fine city of Trondheim. Trondheim is Norway's third largest city, founded by Olav Tryggvason in 997, and in the Middle Ages many made their pilgrimages to Trondheim and Saint Olav's shrine where Nidarosdomen is the historical relic remaining today. The most dominant landmark and Scandinavia's largest medieval building is the grand and impressive Nidaros Cathedral, where the altar was placed over the original grave of St Olav, the Viking king who replaced the Nordic pagan religion with Christianity. We inspect the adjacent 12th Century Erkebispegarden (Archbishop's Palace) and the adjoining Rustkammeret (National Military Museum.) Overnight Trondheim.



Tuesday 20 February 2024 (B) – Trondheim

This morning we visit the exquisite Ringve Music Museum - Norway's national music museum with a collection of over 2000 instruments. The museum is located on an old country estate just outside Trondheim's city centre, and is surrounded by the beautiful Ringve botanical garden. Enjoy luncheon in their restaurant / café, and then this afternoon we'll ride the sole remaining line of Trondheim's once extensive tram network – the 8.8km Grålkallbanen links St Olav's Gate in the city centre through Byåsen to Lian Station in Bymarka. We visit the tram Museum and some special arrangements are organised for our ride aboard. Dinner at leisure and overnight Trondheim.

Wednesday 21 February 2024 (B/D) – Røros, the Forollhogna / Femundsmarka National Parks

After breakfast we board a morning Norwegian train service for the journey from Trondheim, south to Røros. This mining town began to take form in 1644, when the first copper ore was extracted on the mountain plateau. Before that, there were only a few farms in the area. When the mining started, there were few people living here. Among the people trying to survive in the mountains with its unforgiving winters, were the indigenous people of Scandinavia, the Sámi. Today, more than 20 Sámi families reside here – actively working with reindeer husbandry. Today, the small town of Røros is almost like a living museum, and the entire town centre with its authentic wooden structures is protected, with many listed buildings. At the same time, this is also a town in full use with a history that is still unfolding. As you explore Røros' narrow streets, old courtyards and buildings, you will find an amazing number of charming shops and interesting workshops. The town is famous for its great number of artists and craftsmen, and it can also boast of an impressive list of award-winning designer products. We transfer to our warm and comfortable winter accommodation and enjoy an afternoon exploring in this winter wonderland. We discover Røros on a trip with a horse drawn sleigh - an unforgettable way to experience the small town. Our accommodation is a very comfortable hotel with spa and bathing facilities, with dinner included, and overnight Røros.



Thursday 22 February 2024 (B/L/D) – Dog sledding over the impressive Rørosvidda

Today we journey by dogsled through the beautiful Rørosvidda in western Norway. We'll acquaint ourselves with the dogs and pack the sleds - learn how to harness the dogs and drive the sled, and sit on reindeer hides on the sled. The dogs are keen to get going and soon only the rushing silence can be heard as our party takes off across the snow. We travel by sled into a beautiful winter landscape in the Norwegian mountains. In the scenic snow clad mountain wilderness we'll take a coffee break around a crackling fire, enjoy luncheon, then head back and return to our accommodation. (This activity depends on weather and a simpler dog sledding experience will be offered if weather or other conditions dictate.) For those who do not wish to participate today, you can enjoy the comforts of our lovely hotel, with spa, sauna and other relaxation facilities.) Dinner in our lovely hotel and overnight Røros.

Friday 23 February 2024 (B/D) – to Oslo

After breakfast we board a Norwegian Rail service for the journey south to Oslo. A scenically lovely rail journey that winds along rivers and past lakes and in the foothill of the Norwegian mountains. Late afternoon arrival in Oslo, we check in to hotel and enjoy our last dinner together. Overnight Oslo.

Saturday 24 February 2024 (B) – to Oslo Airport and to Australia

After a relaxed morning we catch a train to Oslo Airport for flights to Australia. You can also head to other European cities on the excellent rail network from Oslo to Gotheburg, Copenhagen, Hamburg and beyond. Overnight to Australia.

Sunday 25 February 2024 – arrive Australia

Arrival in Australia at the end of our wonderful Northern Lights tour in Norway.

ACCOMMODATION AND MEALS

Accommodation is generally in 4 to 4½ star hotels. In some locations the best available may not be 4 star, and in some locations we have selected superior hotels as they are part of the experience of the location. Breakfast is included almost every morning, and some lunches and dinners as identified in the itinerary. All meals are included when we are travelling aboard the MS Havila Polaris. Where there is a range of lunch and dinner options, we have not included these in the itinerary to provide choice in style and time of dining.

FARES AND BOOKING PROCEDURES

The tour fare is:

- from \$17,960 per person on a twin share basis, plus airfares to and from Oslo.
- from \$4,950 single supplement in hotels and sole occupancy of a cabin on the ten-night Norwegian coastal cruise
- from \$2,950 supplement per person for superior suite accommodation on the ten-night Norwegian coastal cruise

NOTE: Fare depends on stateroom availability and pricing at the time of booking – please email or call for firm price.

PAYMENT DETAILS

The deposit for the tour is \$3,000 per person. Please make cheques payable to Scenic Journeys by Rail. You can also pay by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Please email SJR to advise and send the booking form electronically or by mail. A letter will be sent acknowledging receipt of your deposit and providing further details.

Account Name:	Scenic Journeys by Rail
BSB:	033 364
Account Number:	612826
Reference:	Your name and 'Norway'

BOOKING, CANCELLATION AND TRAVEL CONDITIONS

Bookings will be accepted on the attached form. **Changes to the itinerary** - as the tour operates to some remote parts of Norway, where accommodation and travel options are limited, the tour organiser reserves the right to change and amend the itinerary at his sole discretion based on necessary changes to travel plans due to air, sea and land schedule changes and hotel availability. **Currency fluctuations** – the tour organiser reserves the right to adjust the tour price based on significant foreign exchange movement between the Australian Dollar and the Norwegian Kroner. **Cancellation** fees apply as follows: the initial deposit is non-refundable. After payment of further deposits towards the final tour cost, costs for tickets, accommodation, sightseeing etc made on your behalf will incur cancellation charges equal to the cancellation charges incurred to us, imposed by suppliers/operators, plus a fee to cover administrative costs – more than three months prior to departure, \$1000 per person; within three months, \$2000 per person. No refund will be made for cancellations after 1 November 2023. All cancellation or administration charges imposed by the suppliers/operators of components of this tour must be borne by you, the passenger. **Responsibility** - St James' Rail acts only as the organiser of the tour. On acceptance of tickets and travel documents for this tour, which may be evidenced in writing by a ticket, voucher, letter, or other document, you accept that neither St James' Rail nor representatives from any other firm supplying services in conjunction with this tour programme, shall be liable in contract or in tort (actionable wrong) for any injury, loss, damage, accident, sickness, delay or additional expense to you or your possessions arising directly or indirectly by force majeure or other events which are beyond our control, or which are not preventable by reasonable diligence on our part, including, but not limited to, civil disturbance, fire, floods, acts of God, acts of Governments or other authorities, changes in itinerary, weather, strikes, war, transportation disruption, failure of machinery or equipment, industrial action, pandemic, quarantine or any other cause. Where travel is by scheduled carrier, or charter service, that carrier's responsibility is limited in accordance with their conditions of carriage. Similarly all luggage is your responsibility, and we cannot be held liable for any loss or delay however caused. The care of your travel documents are your own responsibility. All expenses incurred by loss must be borne by you. Airline regulations and conditions are written on the airline tickets and are issued to passengers subject to their acceptance of these conditions. Changes in exchange rates, taxes and any land arrangements costs may alter the price of the tour, and St James' Rail reserves the right to change, amend or cancel this tour and/or itinerary if necessary. We reserve the right to amend the itinerary en route to account for unforeseen changes or conditions, or to improve the tour experience for the majority, as determined by the tour leader.

Passports, visas, vaccinations, health requirements – a valid passport with six months validity from the end of the tour is required. Obtaining all visas, vaccinations or other health requirements to meet the expectation of airlines or foreign governments is your responsibility. St James' Rail cannot accept responsibility for any losses or expenses incurred as a result of a passenger not holding valid and necessary passport, visa, vaccination or health documents. If the tour is unable to proceed due to Government restrictions, SJR may at our election: postpone your travel arrangements to a future date, in which case we will issue you with a credit note equal to amounts paid at the time of postponement; or cancel your travel arrangements, in which case our contract with you will terminate. If we cancel your travel arrangements and our contract terminates, neither of us will have any claim for damages against the other. However, we will refund payments made by you less unrecoverable third-party costs and less fair compensation for work undertaken by us up until the time of termination and in connection with the processing of any refund. SJR will refund payments it is able to recover or not incur from the various suppliers of services to this tour. Refunds will be made when the funds have been received by SJR from third party suppliers. **Full details of terms and conditions:** if you would like a copy of the full terms and conditions applicable to all SJR tours please contact us and we will forward a copy to you.

CAPACITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TOUR

Fitness and mobility is necessary for participation in the tour. Tour passengers must be able to manage their own luggage, and to carry/wheel it on and off trains, from stations to hotels, and if necessary, up or down a flight of stairs. The tour involves travel on the public transport networks of some cities we visit, and exploration of locations requires walking. By payment of your deposit and tour fare you confirm that you are of a suitable level of mobility and fitness to participate in the tour, and are aware of the nature of the tour. Additional transport costs incurred due to inability to move with the group will be at your own expense.

INSURANCE

A condition of travel on this tour is that you have a comprehensive travel insurance policy to protect yourself against cancellation fees, health and other travel risks. An insurance policy can be forwarded from our travel agent at Travel Associates, Paddington, NSW 2021. Obtaining insurance cover is your responsibility.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact us on (02) 9326 9660 or 0418 585 838, or email to sjr@digitor.com.au



THE NORTHERN LIGHTS BOOKING FORM

Sunday 4 to Wednesday 26 February 2024

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

Name:
Address: Suburb: Postcode:
Home tel: Work tel: Mobile:
Email:

BOOKING DETAILS (Passenger names EXACTLY as they appear in the passport – please send a copy of the data page of your passport , either with or in the weeks following your booking)

Passenger 1 Name:
Date of Birth: Passport No: Expiry Date:
Frequent Flyer details: Airline Number

Passenger 2 Name:
Date of Birth: Passport No: Expiry Date:
Frequent Flyer details: Airline Number

PAYMENT

..... I have enclosed \$ as a deposit (\$3,000 per person.) Please make cheques payable to St James Rail.

..... I have paid by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Please email SJR to advise and scan/mail send this form.

Account name:	Scenic Journeys by Rail	Bank:	Westpac
BSB:	033 364	Account:	612826
Reference:	Norway and your surname		

..... I wish to pay by credit card. We will call you to obtain card details. (A merchant fee of 1% for Visa/Mastercard will apply.)

AIR TRAVEL TO / FROM OSLO - we will contact you to discuss your flight preferences.

CRUISE OPTIONS

..... Please book us in the cabin allocation included in the tour fare

..... I/we are interested in a superior cabin (we will call to discuss)

HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

Single rooms: Double rooms: Twin (two bedded) rooms: Triple bedded room

SPECIAL REQUESTS

Please indicate any dietary or any other sort of special request :

YOUR SIGNATURE

I have read the reservation conditions outlined above and accept them on behalf of myself and my party by whom I am authorised to make this agreement.

Signature of person making reservation: Date:

Cancellation charges will apply as advised in this itinerary. An insurance policy can be forwarded from our travel agent Travel Associates, Paddington, NSW, 2021.