

TRAIL OF THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

27 FEBRUARY 2027 – 21 MARCH 2027

Tour Cost (\$AUD):\$25,950
Single Supplement (\$AUD):\$4,990

Tour Duration:23 days



OVERVIEW

Imagine waking up in a glass igloo in a remote forest setting with lights blazing in perpetual motion in a silent night sky. Imagine great swaying bands of colour dancing above the glass ceiling of your igloo as you watch from your cosy bed. Welcome to the greatest show on earth and the 23-day spectacular 'Trail of the Northern Lights'!

The *Trail of the Northern Lights* begins in the Norwegian capital, Oslo, before we take a breathtaking train ride to the beautiful west coast city of Bergen. Here we board our ship for a seven-day cruise along Norway's rugged west coast, past shimmering glaciers and majestic fjords to reach one of the most remote northern points in Europe, Kirkenes. Crossing the Norwegian/Finnish border, we reach the forest of Kakslauttanen, where we spend two nights in our unique accommodation set amongst snow-laden trees. A complete lack of pollution and unspoiled nature make this remote outpost a wonderful place to see Aurora Borealis. In the cosy warmth of glass igloos, we have multiple opportunities to see this amazing spectacle play out in the skies above us. Within the forest we move in reindeer sleighs among indigenous peoples before heading into southern Finnish Lapland, and the town of Rovaniemi, traditional home of Father Christmas. We have three nights here, visiting Santa Claus Village and meeting the man himself, and enjoying a spectacular sunrise cruise on the Gulf of Bothnia aboard an icebreaker ship. Next stop is the Finnish capital Helsinki where we spend two nights before taking a ferry to the Estonian capital, Tallinn, one of Europe's most beguiling and beautiful medieval cities. Join us for a magnificent adventure through sweeping snowscapes and majestic fjords, on the *Trail of the Northern Lights!*

Tour Fitness Level: Active

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TOUR MAP



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ITINERARY

27/02/2027 Australia – Dubai

Depart from your chosen Australian airport on the flight to Dubai.

28/02/2027 Dubai – Oslo (D)

Depart Dubai Emirates EK 159, 07.45

Arrive Oslo 12.00

The Norwegian capital lies between the Oslofjord and the green hills of Osloomarka. Once we settled into our hotel we visit the superb 80-acre Sculpture Park. The park, located in western Oslo, features 212 sculptures by Gustav Vigeland. Every year more than one million tourists from all over the world visit the site.

Thon Hotel Opera

Oslo

01/03/2027 Oslo (BLD)

Today we explore Oslo's rich history in the grand buildings and museums at the 13th century fortress of Akershus in the centre of the city. The fortress is also a popular recreational area with wonderful views to the harbour. In the afternoon we visit the museum that houses the world's most famous polar ship, the Fram. We go aboard the ship and see how Norway's polar explorers lived and survived in the coldest places on earth more than 100 years ago.

02/03/2027 Oslo – Bergen (BLD)

Depart Oslo Train 5, 08.27

Arrive Bergen 14.57

This morning we board our train for the breathtakingly scenic journey to Bergen. Widely regarded as one of the most scenic rail journeys in the world, the train reaches the highest altitude of any train ride in Europe and passes through dramatic landscapes of magnificent glaciers, majestic forests

and crystal-clear fjords. On arrival in Bergen we transfer to our hotel.

Thon Hotel Rosenkrantz

Bergen

03/03/2027 Bergen (BLD)

After breakfast we take a tour of this delightful city, famed for its beautifully preserved wooden houses, which are protected as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Early evening we board our ship for the six-night cruise north along the spectacular Norwegian coastline.

04/03/2027 Floro – Alesund (BLD)

Today we experience the breathtaking beauty of the Nordfjord. Sailing past the West Cape, we venture into open sea before navigating through skerries and islands to reach the Art Nouveau town of Ålesund. Aboard ship we have the opportunity to enjoy a colourful and enlightening presentation about the Aurora Borealis which we may begin to see in the coming days.

05/03/2027 Kristiansund – Trondheim – Rorvik (BLD)

This morning we arrive in beautiful Trondheim. The architecture and surroundings in this city create a beautiful and almost mythical setting. After exploring Trondheim we chart a northwest course, passing the beautiful Kjeungskjær lighthouse and numerous charming islets and rocky outcrops. After passing through the narrow Stoksund, the ship arrives at charming Rørvik.

06/03/2027 Bronnoysund – Svolvaer (BLD)

The Arctic Circle marks the border to the Arctic region. In summer this means 24-hour daylight – often referred to as the 'Midnight Sun'. During autumn and winter, being above this degree of latitude provides the best chances of experiencing the Northern Lights. We continue sailing along the

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beautiful coast of Helgeland up to Bodø with the impressive Borvass Mountains looming on the starboard side. Later this afternoon the sight of the 1,000m high Lofoten Wall appears on the horizon. The charms of the Lofoten Islands are revealed in small, picturesque fishing villages with their bohemian atmosphere.

07/03/2027 Tromsø – Skjervoy (BLD)

Arriving in Tromsø, gateway to the Arctic, we explore the town, including a visit to the Polar Museum. After an exhilarating day, we continue our northbound journey. The ship now sails into the area along the coast where we have the best chance of seeing the Northern Lights and we gather on deck in the hope of seeing this breathtaking phenomenon.

08/03/2027 Oksfjord – Berlevåg (BLD)

Today we experience the magnificent sub-Arctic landscape as we cross the 71st parallel on our journey towards the North Cape, the northernmost point on the continent. After earlier stops in Hammerfest and Høyvåg we arrive in Honningsvåg, the gateway to the spectacular North Cape. The Hurtigruten continues north, sailing into the very heartland of the indigenous Sámi people. We pass their ancient sacred site, the rock formation Finnkirka, as we approach the fishing village of Kjøllefjord. Here we learn more about the lives and customs of the Sami people and explore the wonderful surrounding area.

09/03/2027 Kirkenes (BLD)

After breakfast we reach Kirkenes – 400km north of the Arctic Circle and just 15km from the Russian border. Here in this vast Barents region indigenous people live in their traditional way alongside a modern industrial society. Families from the Russian Revolution of 1917 still live in Kirkenes and signposts are in both Russian and Norwegian. Kirkenes has been the end point of the Hurtigruten for more than 100 years, yet it is also the start point of the

Northern Sea Route to China, that shortens the distance of traditional shipping routes through the Suez Canal by more than 40%.

Thon Hotel Kirkenes

Kirkenes

10/03/2027 Kirkenes (BLD)

Today we fully explore Kirkenes, visiting the Snow Hotel and the Russian Monument. After lunch we explore the surrounding countryside and visit a typical fishing village.

11/03/2027 Kirkenes – Kakslauttanen (BLD)

Today we cross into Finland and head towards Kakslauttanen in our search for the Northern Lights. Aurora Borealis results from the collision of gaseous particles from the earth's atmosphere with charged particles released from the sun. The subsequent burst of coloured light can last from less than a second to all night. Nestled in the wilderness near Urho Kekkonen National Park, our hotel at Kakslauttanen has one of the Arctic Circle's best vantage points to see the Aurora Borealis. The complete lack of light pollution reveals millions of stars each night, and during March the location offers incredible views. Each of our glass igloos is fitted with thermal glass walls and ceilings that insulate the interior to keep it warm and cosy at night. The glass also contains a frost preventative, maintaining crystal clear panoramic views even when temperatures outside drop to -20 degrees Celsius.

Arctic Resort

Kakslauttanen

12/03/2027 Kakslauttanen (BLD)

This morning we experience one of the oldest ways to travel in Lapland – by reindeer sleigh. There are no petrol fumes or rumbling engines, just the swoosh of

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snow and the pounding of hooves as your wooden sleigh glides through the snowy landscape. This is nature in its purest form! We travel through the forests and meet with reindeer herders who live hand in hand with the wilderness. In the afternoon we visit a husky farm which is located near our resort.

13/03/2027 Kakslauttanen – Rovaniemi (BLD)

Today we leave Kakslauttanen for the 3-hour drive to the riverside city of Rovaniemi. Although there has been continuous human settlement in this area since the Stone Age, few of the buildings date back before 1944 as nearly all of the city was destroyed during WWII. After the devastation left behind by the Wehrmacht the major streets of Lapland's capital were planned and rebuilt in the shape of antlers with the head of a reindeer. This is because Rovaniemi, which is located eight kilometres south of the Arctic Circle, is home to reindeer, elks and huskies – and to Santa Claus, the legendary father of Christmas. After our lunch in Santa Claus Village we meet Father Christmas himself and explore his village which is close to Rovaniemi. Later in the afternoon we visit the Arktikum, a fascinating museum and science centre that showcases the culture, history and modern life in the Arctic.

Vaakuna Hotel

Rovaniemi

14/03/2027 Rovaniemi (BLD)

Today we explore Rovaniemi and the surrounding area including the Ranua wildlife park, which is home to many arctic species, including polar bears. The park is set amidst beautiful conifer forests which is the natural habitat of most of the animals that live here.

15/03/2027 Rovaniemi – Kemi – Rovaniemi (BLD)

Today we drive south to Kemi on the Gulf of Bothnia,

where we board the ice-breaker Sampo. We set sail for a unique experience as a fusion of steel, ice, sea and sunrise provides enthralling action. The thundering sound of more than 3,500 tons of steel crushing the thick ice of the vast open ice fields, combined with the ever-changing colours of the morning sky, is a unique experience that will live on in your memory long after you return home.

16/03/2027 Rovaniemi – Helsinki (BD)

This morning we board the Santa Claus Express for one of the most exciting and comfortable train journeys in northern Europe.

Depart Santa Claus Express Train 24, 09.30

The double-decker train is thoroughly modern with a superb dining car and even free on-board Wi-Fi. This fairy-tale ride from the Arctic Circle to the Finnish capital provides a magnificent showcase of the Finnish countryside, with frozen lakes, forests and snow-covered landscapes. By evening the train pulls into Helsinki.

Arrive Helsinki 17.35

On arrival in Helsinki we transfer to our hotel.

Vaakuna Hotel

Helsinki

17/03/2027 Helsinki (BLD)

Situated on the Baltic Sea, Helsinki is a modern city of more than half a million people. It is surrounded by an archipelago of hundreds of tiny islands, and is culturally influenced by both the East and West. Today we embark on a walking tour which unveils some of the most distinctive architecture in the world, both old and new. Despite being tucked away in a pocket in north-eastern Europe, Helsinki is one of the cultural hot spots of Europe. A walk through the city centre reveals a superb array of neoclassical architecture especially around Senate Square. Close

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by on a hilltop stands the Uspenski Cathedral, Europe's largest Russian Orthodox Church, and a stunning example of the Byzantine-Russian style. Scattered about the city are fine examples of Art Nouveau while elsewhere, the Temppeliaukio Church and Finlandia Hall represent early Modernism.

18/03/2027 Helsinki – Tallinn (BLD)

This morning we leave Helsinki's west harbour for the short ferry ride to Tallinn in Estonia. Situated on the Gulf of Finland and dating back to the 10th century, Tallinn is the oldest capital in Northern Europe. In 2011 it was named European Capital of Culture and is one of the most beguiling walled cities in Europe. Its maze of cobbled streets, looming spires and brooding battlements conspire to create a Gothic masterpiece. On arrival in Tallinn we start to explore this ancient city starting with the open-air museum Rocco Al Mare. Later we explore Kadriorg Palace, built for Catherine the 1st of Russia by Peter the Great.

Telegraaf Hotel

Tallinn

19/03/2027 Tallinn (BLD)

Today we continue to explore the city. More than a mile of the original city wall remains, showcasing medieval fortifications and 26 defensive towers. We visit the Patkul lookout point where the fairy-tale views entrance the visitor. From here we explore the labyrinth of lanes that make up the heart of the old city.

20/03/2027 Tallinn – Amsterdam – Dubai (B)

After breakfast we transfer to the airport for our homeward flight.

Depart Tallinn Air Baltic BT857, 07.25

Arrive Amsterdam 09.10

Depart Amsterdam Emirates EK 148, 14.40

21/03/2027 Dubai – Australia

Arrive Dubai 00.15

On arrival in Dubai connect with your flight back to Australia.