

# 22 Day Spectacular Scandinavia & Northern Lights

## THE ESCORTED ESCAPES INCLUSIONS

- ✓ AIRFARES INCLUDED\*
- ✓ FULLY ESCORTED HOLIDAYS\*
- ✓ VISAS, TRANSFERS & TIPPING INCLUDED\*
- ✓ SMALL GROUPS\*
- ✓ INCLUSIVE SIGHTSEEING\*

## TRIP HIGHLIGHTS:

- ✓ Spend the night in a spectacular glass igloo gazing at the stars and, if you're lucky, the Northern Lights
- ✓ Visit Rovaniemi, the home of Santa Claus and one of Finland's best areas for winter activities
- ✓ Cross the Arctic Circle under the amazing colour displays of the Northern Lights
- ✓ Experience the legendary Flåm Railway, considered one of the most beautiful rail journeys in the world
- ✓ Cruise Norway's coastline with Hurtigruten, a world leader in exploratory travel
- ✓ Learn about the lives and training of the well known Huskies at a working Husky farm
- ✓ Take in the spectacular beauty of the UNESCO World Heritage listed Norwegian fjords
- ✓ Discover the rich history of Norway at the Viking Ship and Kon-tiki Museums
- ✓ Take a day trip to the medieval town of Tallinn in Estonia

## ACTIVITY RATING

This tour requires an adequate level of fitness and mobility to participate

It is essential that all passengers are able to:

- Walk 2km at any one time unaided
- Walk over uneven ground, including ice & snow
- Stand for up to 1-2 hours without needing to sit
- Get in and out of transport including coach, train and cruise unassisted
- Manage your own luggage





## AIRFARES INCLUDED

Economy class airfares are included from most Australian capital cities (Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne or Adelaide) plus all internal flights as per the group itinerary. We fly with Qatar Airways Internationally. Your Escorted Escapes host will travel from Brisbane on the proposed flights\* below:

DAY	FLIGHT NO	DEPARTURE CITY AND TIME	ARRIVAL CITY AND TIME
<b>DAY 1-2</b>	QR	Adelaide/Brisbane Sydney/Melbourne	Doha (DOH)
<b>DAY 2</b>	QR 175	Doha (DOH) 08:25	Oslo (OSL) 13:25
<b>DAY 20</b>	QR 308	Helsinki (HEL) 22:55	Doha (DOH) 06:15
<b>DAY 21-22</b>	QR 906	Doha (DOH) 07:55	Adelaide/Brisbane Sydney/Melbourne

\*These are proposed flight times only and may change depending on your tour departure date and airline schedules. # arrives into destination the next calendar day

You have three options available to join your host and group:

1. Travel with your host from Brisbane
2. Meet your host en-route at either Sydney, Doha or Oslo

Upgrades and extensions are available on request please contact your travel agent for further information and availability.

# NORTHERN LIGHTS – IMPORTANT INFO

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The Northern Lights are a natural phenomenon and sightings can never be guaranteed. The Northern Lights vary in strength and beauty, and what we get to see is highly nature dependent.

## FULLY ESCORTED HOLIDAYS

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Your Escorted Escape is personally hosted from Australia by an experienced travel professional. Our hosts have travelled extensively themselves and have a passion for exploring our wonderful world. We are there to liaise with the local operators to ensure you relax and enjoy your holiday while we take care of the details.

## VISAS, TRANSFERS & TIPPING

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### Passports

All information provided regarding passports and visas is based on Australian Passport holders only – please advise your travel consultant as soon as possible if you will be travelling on a different passport. **Australian passport holders must have a minimum of 6 months validity on their passport from the date they return home, and a minimum of four (4) blank pages.**

### Visas

No visas are required for Australian Passport Holders.

### Transfers

We believe travel should be simple and easy for you, which is why we include transfers from your home to the airport to the value of \$100 per person. Your transfers will be arranged by your travel agent to ensure the best available option for your needs. Should your transfers exceed \$100 per person, you may choose to pay the difference, or alternatively, if you wish to make your own way to the airport your agent can deduct the transfer value from the total cost of your trip.

### Tipping

Our Escorted Escapes are designed to make travel easier for you, so we take care of tipping for all of our group activities and meals, as well as for your tour leader, local guides and drivers. You will be responsible for tipping any services or meals outside of the group inclusions, including during your free time.

## SMALL GROUPS

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We offer a small-group experience on all of our tours. We believe travelling in smaller groups will ensure a more personalised and comfortable group travel experience for everyone.

This tour will run with a minimum of 12 Passengers and a maximum of 20 (plus your tour host).

# INCLUSIVE SIGHTSEEING

At Escorted Escapes we pride ourselves on including the very best sightseeing on offer in each location. Our sightseeing highlights on this trip include:

- Welcome dinner at a local restaurant
- Full day Oslo Sightseeing, including the Opera House and Vigeland Sculpture Park
- Half day Oslo Sightseeing, including the Holmenkollen Ski Jump, Viking Ship and Kon-Tiki Museums
- Bergen railway scenic train journey Oslo to Voss
- Scenic tour of Fjords from Gudvangen to Flam, and iconic Flåm Railway
- Bergen railway scenic train journey Voss to Bergen
- Half day Bergen sightseeing, including old Hanseatic Wharf at Brygge and Troidhaugen
- 6 night Hurtigruten Coastal Voyage
- Experience Siida – The National Museum of the Finnish Sami
- Visit a husky farm
- Visit Santa's Village
- Enjoy the changing scenery on the train from Rovaniemi to Helsinki
- Orientation tour in Helsinki
- Explore Tallin on a full day private excursion

# ACCOMMODATION

We use a range of quality accommodation, including hotels, cruise cabins and glass igloo. All of our accommodation includes private en-suite facilities.

Hurtigruten cruise cabins are based on category N - Polar Outside cabins which have separate twin bedding - please enquire if you wish to upgrade to a double bedded cabin whilst cruising.



*Arctic Snow Hotel & Glass Igloo*



*Thon Hotel Opera*

<b>DESTINATION</b>	<b>27 Feb - 19 Mar 2020</b>
<b>Oslo</b>	Thon Hotel Opera
<b>Flam</b>	Flamsbrygga Hotel
<b>Bergen</b>	Clarion Admiral Hotel
<b>MS Kong Harald</b>	Your cabin of choice
<b>Saariselka</b>	Santa's Hotel Tunturi
<b>Sinetta</b>	Arctic Snow Hotel & Glass Igloo
<b>Rovaniemi</b>	Sokos Hotel Vakuna
<b>Helsinki</b>	Holiday Inn City Centre

# MS Kong Harald



Norway's reigning monarch, a seasoned sailor, lends his name to this remarkable vessel.

MS Kong Harald was refurbished in 2016 and now features a modern, Arctic-inspired interior. On board are three different restaurants, the 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. There is a comfortable bar at the front of the ship where you can enjoy a nice traditional drink.

The vessel also has a large compass area where you find the reception, the Expedition Team, conference room and shop. The top deck of the boat features a sun deck, observation saloon and panorama lounge, all of which provide splendid views of spectacular coastal scenery. MS Kong Harald has its own on-board Expedition Team and serves as a university at sea. Interesting lectures inside the ship as well as out on the sun deck make this an exciting and educational journey. Topics depend on the season and the waters we sail in. The Expedition Team host a lecture programme and evening gatherings daily.



<b>Year built</b>	1993	<b>Year of refurbishment</b>	2016
<b>Shipyard</b>	Volkswerft (Germany)	<b>Passenger capacity</b>	590
<b>Beds</b>	498	<b>Gross tonnage</b>	11,204
<b>Length</b>	121.8 m	<b>Beam</b>	19.2 m
<b>Speed</b>	17 knots		

## CABINS:

### N2 - Middle deck for two travellers – Polar Outside

These standard outside cabins for two people on the middle deck have separate beds, one of which converts into a sofa.



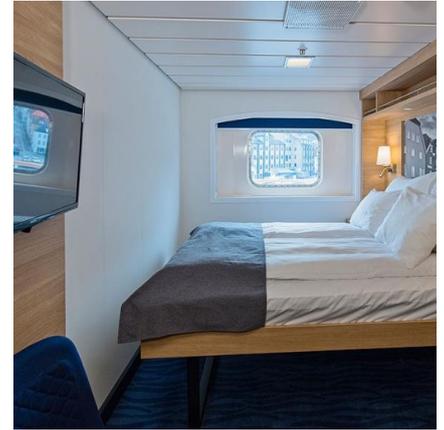
### O2 - Upper deck for two travellers – Arctic Superior

These comfortable, outside cabins for up to two people on the middle deck have separate beds, one of which converts into a sofa. (limited double available)



### P2 – Middle deck for 2 travellers – Arctic Superior

These comfortable, outside cabins on the upper/middle decks have double bed.



CABIN UPGRADE COST	
<b>TWIN SHARE</b>	
Category O2 Upgrade \$130pp	
Category P2 Upgrade \$180pp	
<b>Chose a specific cabin \$396 per cabin</b>	



### Duty Free purchases

PLEASE NOTE: Due to strict laws surrounding alcohol in Norway, and for the safety of guests, alcohol that has not been purchased on board may not be consumed in any public area of the Hurtigruten ship or in your cabin. Guests may bring up to two unopened bottles (max 1.5 litres each) per person onboard, but will be required to be checked in at the reception desk, and will be returned at the end of your voyage.

# TRANSPORT

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We will be travelling in a private air conditioned vehicle, as well as by train and on the Hurtigruten cruise vessel. Please note: vehicles pictured below are an indication only, exact vehicles may vary.



# LUGGAGE

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Our Escorted Escapes baggage recommendation is one suitcase with a maximum size of 76 x 53 x 28cm (30 x 21 x 11 inches) and a maximum weight of 20kg. You may also carry a small backpack or overnight bag as carry on luggage - Escorted Escapes provide you with a suitably sized daypack ideal for use as carry on luggage and throughout the trip.

Individual airlines also have their own limits, for this trip they are as follows\*:

Qatar Airways – 30kg of checked luggage per person (this can be distributed over 2 bags) + 7kg carry-on luggage.

\* Airline baggage limits listed above are based on our included, economy class flights. If you have upgraded your flights your baggage limits may change.

Please keep in mind you will be required to manage your own luggage at times throughout the tour, so we recommend bringing luggage that is of a size and weight that you can comfortably handle.

On this trip, excess luggage is **allowed**, but it is not included and will be at your own expense.

Liquids in carry on luggage – You are allowed to bring ONE plastic zip lock bag containing **liquids, aerosols, gels, creams or pastes** (e.g. lipstick) in your carry-on bag and through security checkpoints. These are limited to travel-sized containers that have a maximum size of 100mL or less per item. At certain airports these may need to be removed from your hand luggage to be screened, so we recommend keeping them close at hand.

There are no luggage restrictions in our Overland Vehicle.

# CLIMATE & SEASONAL INFORMATION

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Due to the Gulf Stream and warm air currents, **Norway** has a friendlier climate than the latitude would indicate, and the coldest areas in the winter are often inland or far to the north. In the winter, much of Norway is covered in snow, though in the south and along the west coast snow is much rarer than in the mountains and Northern Norway.

The climate of **Finland** is characterized by long and cold winters, and by short, mild and moderately rainy summers. Among the Scandinavian countries, Finland is the one with the coldest climate, due to the proximity to Russia.

Winter is long and cold throughout the country; it is almost five months long even in Helsinki, which lies in the far south. Here, the temperature remains almost constantly below freezing (0 °C ) from mid-November to late March.

## Temperature Averages – Minimum to Maximum

CITY	November
Oslo	0° to 5°
Tromsø	-2° to 2°
Rovaniemi	-7° to -2°
Helsinki	0° to 4°

## PACKING TIPS

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Coats and Jackets are absolutely necessary for Scandinavia's winter months. As mornings and nights will normally be below freezing, it is advisable to bring along layers of clothing. Pack decent thermals and a warm top layer as well as a cosy hat and good gloves. Eyewear if you're going out on the snow, is also essential.

Furthermore, raincoats or windbreakers, regardless of the season, are always a good idea to bring along, as they help to keep you warm when it is windy.

Tough and comfortable shoes are also essential for a Scandinavian vacation if you want to enjoy outdoor activities. We recommend that you do bring your own boots, with suitable grip for uneven terrain. While on our Hurtigruten cruise you may hire out special high-quality Muck Boot® rubber boots to wear throughout the Hurtigruten landings and hikes free of charge. These boots will be kept on the ship's tender deck and guests will have their own pair throughout the voyage.

### **RECOMMENDED:**

- Woollen underwear – long johns and a thin long sleeve top in a merino wool will be warm, lightweight and the natural fibres in the merino stops them from getting too smelly. If wool irritates you, there are plenty of high performing synthetic polypropylene fabrics that will function just as well
- Wool or fleece jumper – this should be a jumper you can wear as either an inner layer or an outer layer in warmer weather
- Mid layer jacket – great for the southern section of your cruise, this sort of jacket should be warm but most importantly wind-resistant as it is often the ocean breeze that will make you cold
- Thick winter jacket – a down or synthetic equivalent
- Wind and waterproof jacket and trousers – a high performing jacket is really worth the investment. Waterproof overpants work well whilst on the Hurtigruten cruise – once you are back inside, you can hang them out to dry without having to get changed

- Woollen socks – if you find that woollen socks irritate you, consider buying some bamboo liner socks to wear underneath your warmer woollen ones. Liner socks can also help to prevent blisters when you are walking long distances.
- Comfortable everyday shoes – for wearing around deck and exploring port towns. Keep in mind shoes (e.g. sneakers) with mesh inserts are not windproof so bring fully enclosed shoes and/or warm socks
- Winter boots with good grip – try to buy these a few weeks before your trip and wear them in, even if that just means wearing them around the house. This means that you'll avoid any nasty blisters when you wear them on walks ashore
- Beanie, gloves and scarf will be especially helpful to keep you warm
- Sun screen and sunglasses (polarised, preferably) – sun reflecting off the snow is especially hazardous!

## OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS

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Please ask your agent for our comprehensive list of optional excursions available on this trip.

## CURRENCY & MONEY MATTERS

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Norway: Norwegian Krone (Nok)

Finland: Euro

**Before you depart** - ensure you notify your bank that you will be travelling overseas. You will need to advise each country you will be travelling to. In this case it will be **Norway and Finland**.

**Norway** – Krone will be used on-board the Hurtigruten Cruise. ATMs will be available everywhere in towns and cities, and in most rural areas there will at least be one place where you can withdraw money, such as a kiosk or a petrol station.

**Finland** – All credit cards are widely accepted and ATMs are prevalent through out all larger towns.

When exchanging cash it's advisable to request bank notes in smaller denominations, as it can sometimes be hard to get change from large notes.

## WI-FI

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**Norway's** internet network is fast and reliable. Wi-Fi, 3G and often 4G are available right across the country, often in surprisingly remote locations. Wi-Fi is widely available at most hotels, cafes, restaurants and tourist offices; it's nearly always free nowadays, although you'll invariably have to ask for the password. Connection speed varies from room to room in hotels, so always ask when you check in.

**Finland** has wireless internet access and it is widespread; several cities have extensive free networks and nearly all hotels, as well as many restaurants, cafes and bars, offer free access to customers and guests. Data is very cheap. If you've got an unlocked smart phone, you can pick up a local SIM card for a few Euros.

### Hurtigruten Wi-Fi information

You will find wireless networks to connect laptops, tablets, mobile phones etc. Ships offering full Wi-Fi coverage incur a cost as per the table below. Please note that the bandwidth is limited and the strength of the wireless signal varies. It is suitable for use of social media, email and basic surfing. It is not suitable for streaming and can be used on two devices.

#### Cost (NOK) indication only

1 day	3 days	5 days
50	125	200

## TIME ZONES

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**Norway** is in the Central European Time Zone (CET) which is 1 hour ahead of Coordinated Universal Time (UTC +1), and 9 hours behind Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST).

**Finland** is 3 hours ahead of Coordinated Universal Time (UTC +3), and 7 hours behind Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST).

## POWER OUTLETS

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Escorted Escapes supply you with a universal adapter - this also has 2 USB ports for charging electronic items.

Voltage: For the two countries visited on this tour, the electricity supply is **230 volts** and frequency is 50 HZ. Most plugs are 2-prong, with round pins (Type F).

## SAFETY

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We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Your host and Tour Leader will accompany you on all included activities, however during your trip you'll have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. Please use your own good judgement when selecting your free time activities and exercise due caution when you are out and about exploring. Ensure you carry your host's phone number and ideally the address and phone number of your hotel as well.

Please also note that your Tour Leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it's deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

## FOOD & DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

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Please advise us if you have any specific dietary requirements upon booking your trip. This information can be provided on our standard booking form.

Modern Norwegian cuisine, although still strongly influenced by its traditional background, now bears globalization influence: pastas, pizzas, tacos, and the like are as common as meatballs and cod as staple foods. Urban restaurants sport the same selection one would expect to find in any western European city.

Finnish cuisine is based on fresh and natural ingredients that vary according to the season. In addition to vegetables, mushrooms, berries and fish, Finnish food is typified by simplicity and purity of taste. Helsinki's own cuisine also features influences from both the East and the West.

Vegetarians can be catered for on-board Hurtigruten but advanced notice needs to be given to ensure there is ample availability.

#### Meals not included:

It's true that Norway is not a budget destination and with fast food starting from 90 NOK (approx AU\$15) and sit-down meals in a decent restaurant nearly always topping 285 NOK (approx AU\$50) or more per main course. For a cheap quick snack Norwegian-style, look no further than the nearest grill or convenience store, where you can eat a hot dog or sausage for around 30-50 NOK (approx AU\$6 – 9).

In Finland you can expect meals like lunch specials to be around €8–€16 (approx AU\$12 - 24) and for something a bit nicer, a two-course meal for two with wine can range from €100–€160 (approx AU\$150).

#### Water:

The tap water in Scandinavia is generally considered safe to drink.

## MEDICAL & HEALTH

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We suggest that you consult with your own physician prior to your trip to ensure your routine immunizations, such as tetanus, are up-to-date before travelling. Older travellers in particular may wish to consider preventive measures against influenza and pneumonia.

We also recommend consulting your local doctor, travel medical service or specialist vaccination clinic to ensure you are aware of any health requirements and recommended precautions relevant to your trip.

It is advised to carry any personal medication in its original container and it should have a clearly printed label. Prescription and controlled medication must be accompanied by a prescription from the prescribing physician on letterhead stationery and include the medication's generic name.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

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It is a condition of travelling with Escorted Escapes that you have a valid, fully comprehensive travel insurance policy for the whole duration of your travel arrangements.

It's important that you protect yourself in case of natural disasters, lost or delayed baggage and unforeseen medical expenses. We strongly recommend that the policy covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. Please make sure you bring a copy of your policy with you on tour.

If you lose any of your belongings while on tour you may be required to obtain a police report. Make sure you keep any receipts for anything you may wish to claim for on your return – i.e. medical receipts etc.

# GROUP TOUR ETIQUETTE

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We endeavour to make group travel with Escorted Escapes a truly enjoyable experience and showing respect to everyone we encounter will help ensure that the group travel memories you bring home are happy ones.

We ask you to remember that patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### **Why does this tour require an adequate level of fitness?**

Our tour is designed to be a leisurely pace and the majority of our sightseeing uses a private coach for your convenience, however the coach may not be accessible to all locations. In some instances you will be required to walk continuously without sitting due to limited seating availability.

### **Are there laundry facilities?**

Our tour leader will be able to help source the Laundromat facilities close by to our hotels; we suggest this is done when we are staying for 2 nights.

On board Hurtigruten there is a self-service launderette where washers, dryers and laundry products are available for a negligible charge.

### **What are the toilets like?**

In Norway most towns (and many roadside stops) have public facilities. However, at some shopping malls, train stations, bus terminals and even some (but not many) restaurants, you may have to pay up to Nok10.

In Finland - Public toilets are widespread but expensive – often €1 a time.

On doors, 'M' is for men, while 'N' is for women.

### **How much spending money will I need?**

When it comes to spending money on the trip, every traveller is a little different. You know your spending habits better than we do so please budget a sensible amount for things like meals that are not included, drinks, shopping and optional activities.