

# BEST SERVED SCANDINAVIA



SUMMER 16



## WELCOME

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Welcome to Best Served Scandinavia's round-up of the best this extraordinary region has to offer during those happy summer months saturated with almost unlimited sunlight and long hours.

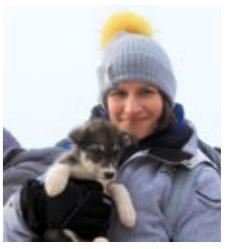
Our summer Scandinavian showcase is filled with adventures, all experienced, explored and enjoyed by our team of specialists. We've personally stayed in the hotels we recommend, paddled kayaks and cruised across the mirrored fjords, watched whales and processions of polar bears, and our expertise ensures you too will have a sensational time during your stay. Food plays a leading role in many of our itineraries with fresh fish, seafood and seasonal ingredients making for a delicious holiday.

The midnight sun is as intoxicating as winter's Northern Lights, and glows over majestic landscapes. As the spring sun melts the snow, these wilderness areas are blanketed with vast swathes of wildflowers and berries as the year progresses, while waterfalls cascade mightily after the melt – including Europe's tallest, the

spectacular Vinnufossen in Norway, which flows down a steep mountainside into the Driva river. This is a region ideally suited to action and adventure, from hiking and white water rafting to mountain biking; but it's also a paradise for gentler pursuits such as bird watching and fishing.

Cultured, cosmopolitan cities give way to spectacular countryside, and it's as easy to plan a sunny weekend break as it is an extended active holiday. Our experienced team will tailor two days or two weeks into an unforgettable trip filled with nature and Scandinavian charm.

KATHERINE GERSHON  
MANAGING DIRECTOR





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## ABOUT THIS BROCHURE



### BEST FOR

Throughout this brochure you'll spot the symbols below next to our properties. These should give you a helpful hint as to the hotel's qualities and features, making sure you pick the perfect spot.



### EXCURSIONS

We've included our favourite recommended excursions throughout this brochure, but don't hesitate to ask our travel specialists for advice on alternative options. Excursions are usually paid as an extra unless otherwise stated.

### ACCOMMODATION IN THIS BROCHURE

As there is no universal system for grading hotels, we have applied our own grading system to featured hotels and itineraries. They are based on the opinion of our destination specialists, usually upon first-hand experience of staying there themselves.

#### Standard

Clean and comfortable accommodation with reasonable facilities (typically 3 stars).

#### Superior

A high standard of accommodation with a good range of quality facilities, often in a good location (typically 4 stars).

#### Deluxe

Outstanding accommodation with excellent facilities and service, usually in a fantastic location (typically 5 stars).

### MEAL INCLUSIONS

Any meals included in the price of our suggested itineraries, whether they're part of a tour, an excursion, or a hotel stay, are indicated at the end of each day's description using the following symbols:

Breakfast

Lunch

Dinner

### WEATHER & CLIMATE

Scandinavian summers are generally mild and pleasant, but the weather can be changeable so bring layers and waterproofs. Svalbard and Greenland are still quite cold, especially at night. The summer months are the perfect time for exploring Fjord Norway, Western Sweden and Finnish Lakeland, where the days are long, warm and bright. Iceland's south coast is warmer, wetter and windier than the north. In Arctic Norway, Swedish Lapland and Greenland the midnight sun facilitates round-the-clock activities such as hiking, kayaking or midnight boat trips among the icebergs at Ilulissat.



## SCANDINAVIAN SUMMER

Iceland, Finland, the three kingdoms of the Scandinavian Peninsula (Norway, Sweden and Denmark) – and Arctic Canada – may conjure images of winter snow and ice in the popular imagination, but out of those frozen landscapes and perpetual darkness spring an awesome, vibrant summer scene, offering visitors as many exciting activities and adventurous opportunities as the ice-white playgrounds of the chillier months.

This is the season of movement. Free of pack ice, the seas host migrating whales from the ghostly belugas of Hudson Bay

to the playful pilot whales that frequent Swedish Lapland's pretty coast, and bears, bees and birds are cut loose. Puffins, sea eagles and guillemots return to the cliffs of Norway's Lofoten Islands and gangs of giant polar bears stalk the Arctic tundra. The regions' epic landscapes are transformed as carpets of beautiful wildflowers and delicious berries stretch through forests and over high mountaintops, and the rapid snowmelt creates a multitude of waterfalls from Norway's fjordside Vinnufossen, Europe's tallest, to southern Iceland's mighty Gullfoss. This vibrant world is perfect for

whitewater rafting, mountain biking and other high-energy sports, whilst hikers, birders and anglers are diverted by gentler but equally compelling distractions.

If you're lucky, winter's Northern Lights spectacular can still be spotted at the cusps of spring and autumn, but the midnight sun in the northernmost territories each June and July is an equally magical experience, bringing 24-hours of uninterrupted daylight in which to explore these amazing regions.



## NORWAY

Norway is a sparsely populated, scenically stunning country where outdoor experiences are a year-round delight. The breathtaking fjords of the west coast are the focal point of summer visits, and are accessible from a tantalising choice of amazing cities.

The pretty historic port of Bergen and the cultured capital Oslo are two of the most popular starting points. Both cities are fabulous short break destinations, with Viking museums, art galleries and spectacular natural backdrops close at hand. The scenic Oslo to Bergen railway is a memorable way to cross the fjordlands, whose highlights include cascading waterfalls, towering mountain peaks and precipitous viewpoints such as Troll's Tongue at Hardangerfjord and, to the south, Pulpit Rock at Lysefjord, a short hop from lively Stavanger. Norway's fjords are also tailor-made for summer activities including hiking, kayaking, cruising, while a network of scenic roads, which criss-cross the region, enable you to explore at your own pace. The art nouveau city of

Ålesund, Norway's adventure capital, is a great place to include on an extended stay, and you can also pause at pretty fjordside villages such as Flåm, Balestrand and Fjærland. The Arctic Circle is blessed by endless summer daylight when the midnight sun casts its glow over remote outposts like the Lofoten Islands, Alta, Kirkenes and the islands of the Svalbard archipelago. These places are known for their immense beauty, isolation and thrilling adventures – which in Svalbard include the chance to watch polar bears at close quarters. Another wonderful way to explore the far north is to join a Hurtigruten cruise, a former freight, post and passenger service, which has been plying the waters of Norway's Arctic coast for over 120 years.



01

HIGHLIGHTS  
OF NORWAY

## 5-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR

2 days Oslo >> 1 day Norway in a Nutshell tour >> 2 days Bergen



among the statues at Vigeland Sculpture Park, dip into the past at the Viking Ship Museum, or give your tastebuds a treat at Aker Brygge's renowned restaurants. Stay at the Thon Bristol (Superior) or Thon Munch (Standard).

**>> PRICES FROM:** £695 pp (Standard) £825 (Superior). incl. flights, 2 nights Oslo BB, Norway in a Nutshell day tour, 2 nights Bergen BB. Operates 1 May to 30 Sep.

Combine a visit to Norway's major cities with a cross-country rail and road trip taking in mountains, fjords and waterfalls. If you have more time, stop at your choice of picturesque fjordside villages and explore the landscape on foot or by bike.

**Days 1–2 >> Oslo** Fly to Oslo. Norway's easily navigable capital is home to a host of museums, shops and attractions. Stand face to face with Edvard Munch's *The Scream* at the National Gallery, hang out

glorious views of the town and surrounding countryside. After breakfast on day 5, head for the airport to connect with your return flight.



## EXTEND YOUR STAY

Add more nights by breaking your Norway in a Nutshell tour with stays in the villages of Flåm or Balestrand en route from Oslo to Bergen (opposite). You can also modify the tour element by choosing a boat, road and rail excursions around Hardangerfjord or Sognefjord (page 13).

## FLAMSBRYGGA, FLÅM

## SUPERIOR



The picturesque village of Flåm is nestled deep in a tributary of the world's longest and deepest fjord Sognefjord, at the beginning of the spectacular Flåm Railway. Surrounded by steep mountainsides, roaring waterfalls and deep valleys, it's a wonderful place to stop for a few nights on the Norway in a Nutshell route. A great day out is to take the train to Myrdal, hire bikes and freewheel back to Flåm with the views stretching out before you. Built in log cabin-chalet style, Flamsbrygga is a great jumping-off point for hiking trails around the Flåmsdalen and Aurlandsdalen valleys and for excellent fjord fishing. Most of the 41 spacious rooms come with a private balcony, some with fjord views.



## KVIKNES HOTEL, BALESTRAND

## SUPERIOR



Also tucked away on the edge of the Sognefjord, tranquil Balestrand is a popular draw for tourists and artists fascinated by the natural beauty, local culture and the constant change of light in the sky. This charming, family-run Balestrand institution is located right on the fjord, and cycling and hiking in the spectacular landscape is a magical experience. The rooms and suites of the Swiss-style historic building are a delight, with antique furnishings and balconies in most rooms with spectacular views across the fjord. The hotel restaurant offers imaginative buffet meals and 4-course fine dining paired with excellent wines from a 300-strong cellar.



## ... IN A NUTSHELL TOURS

A popular addition to any itinerary through Norway's fjordlands, these bespoke road, rail and boat tours cram in a rich variety of scenic adventures. One-way or round-trip excursions can be completed in a day, but we strongly recommend an overnight stop along the route to enjoy the beautiful scenery or partake in an exciting activity such as kayaking, hiking or a fjord safari.



### NORWAY IN A NUTSHELL

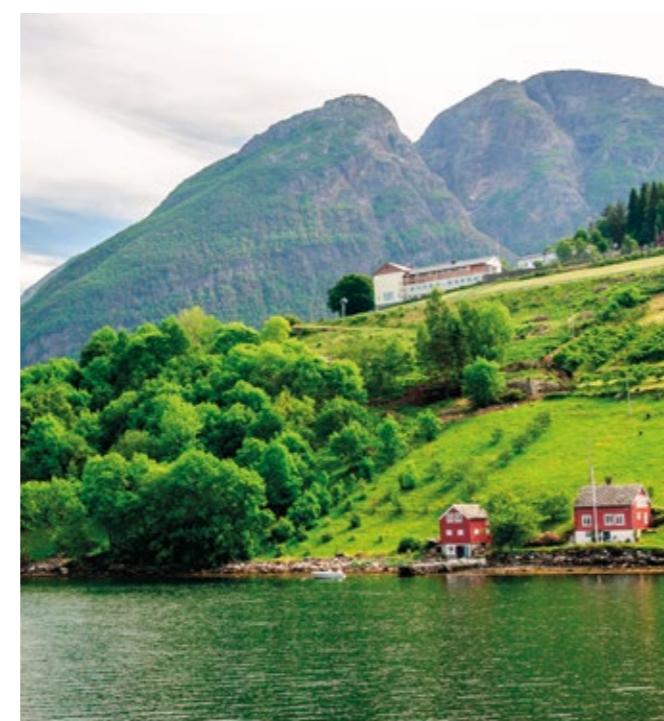
The original Norway in a Nutshell tour takes you through some of the country's most beautiful fjordland including the scenic Bergen Railway via Myrdal, the breathtaking Flåm Railway, a boat trip along the beautiful and dramatic Aurlandsfjord and Nærøyfjord and, in the summer months, a stunning drive on the steep hairpin bends of Stalheimskleiva. In the charming village of Flåm, surrounded by steep mountainsides, cascading waterfalls and narrow valleys, you can stroll around the village or visit the Flåm Railway Museum and learn about one of the steepest normal-gauge railways in the world. The 20-km train ride between Myrdal and Flåm offers panoramic views of some of the most magnificent mountain scenery Norway has to offer, including the famous Kjosfossen waterfall.

**>> VARIOUS PRICES AND DURATIONS.** Operates daily, year-round from Oslo, Bergen, Voss or Flåm (Stalheimskleiva 1 May to 30 Sep only).

### HARDANGERFJORD IN A NUTSHELL

Journey through a landscape of majestic mountains, roaring waterfalls and bounteous orchards. The 179 km Hardangerfjord provides spellbinding natural landscapes throughout its course. Your 3.5-hour cruise is broken by a sightseeing trip to the spectacular Eidfjord-Vøringsfossen waterfall, and bookended by scenic train and bus rides including a thrilling one-hour journey through wild mountain terrain on the Bergen Railway, the highest altitude railway in Northern Europe. From Voss, the trip continues to the beautiful village of Ulvik. Ulvik and Hardanger are known as the Orchard of Norway; in May you'll enjoy sweeping vistas of fruit blossoms, or in late summer you can gorge on the harvest of cherries, plums, pears and apples. Eidfjord is the gateway to the high mountain plateau Hardangervidda, Norway's largest national park and home to Northern Europe's largest stock of reindeer and some amazing hiking trails.

**>> VARIOUS PRICES AND DURATIONS.** Operates daily 1 May to 30 Sep from Bergen or Oslo.



### SOGNEFJORD IN A NUTSHELL

The Sognefjord, Norway's longest and deepest, extends more than 200 km inland to the foot of the Jotunheimen mountains and is recognised as one of the world's most spectacular natural backdrops. The Sognefjord in a Nutshell round trip combines a leisurely cruise on the fjord with a spectacular train journey on the Flåm Railway. Breaking the tour with an overnight stay leaves you time for kayaking at Flåm, a fjord safari on the UNESCO-listed Nærøyfjord, or to embark on any number of hiking or biking trails. A one-way tour can be taken in either direction with as many stopovers as you please. From Bergen you can start by boat from Strandkaiterminalen or take a train to meet the boat at Flåm via Myrdal.

**>> VARIOUS PRICES AND DURATIONS.** Operates daily 1 May to 30 Sep from Bergen or Oslo.



### FJÆRLAND FJORDSTUE

#### SUPERIOR



This boutique hotel run by Bård and Linda Huseby sits at the water's edge at the northern end of Fjærlandsfjorden, a picturesque branch of Sognefjord. At weekends the hotel bar comes alive with locals debating the latest events over beer brewed by Bård. Breakfast eggs come from chickens raised in the hotel grounds, and dinner ingredients are sourced from local farmers and fishermen. There are excellent biking and hiking trails right outside the hotel – and don't miss the chance to take a kayak out on the fjord. This is also a sumptuous spot for relaxation and reflection in the midst of a cruising or driving tour of Norway's fjordlands.

**CLARION COLLECTION  
HOTEL NO. 13**
**SUPERIOR**

This charming hotel in central Bergen is handily located next to a shopping centre, with a taxi rank and airport bus stop right on the doorstep, and within easy striking distance of the city's main attractions. Clarion Collection's winning formula offers free afternoon waffles and a light evening meal as well as breakfast included in the room rate. The Deluxe Double rooms are especially spacious, and in the sole suite on the top floor the king-size bed sits beneath an arched ceiling window with delightful views across the city.


**CLARION COLLECTION HOTEL  
HAVNEKONTORET**
**SUPERIOR**

This stylish and contemporary hotel in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bryggen quay in central Bergen is decorated in a neo-Baroque style and located in a fascinating stone building dating from the 1920s. Nearby attractions include Fisketorget Fish Market, the Fløibanen funicular, which takes visitors to the top of Mount Fløyen, and Bergen's famous aquarium. As with other Clarion Collection hotels, complimentary afternoon tea and waffles, and a light buffet dinner are all included in the room rate. Book a Superior room for a fine view across the world-famous harbour.


**AUGUSTIN HOTEL**
**SUPERIOR**

Bergen's oldest family-run hotel, the Augustin was built in the art nouveau style in 1909, later expanding to incorporate neighbouring harbourside houses and additional wings. In recent years, it has undergone extensive modernisation with a designerly touch. Paintings, sculptures and graphic prints add further character to the rooms and public spaces. The Brasserie No. 22 restaurant has a modern rustic interior and a sophisticated menu. The five-roomed Altona cellar also houses a lively wine bar with wooden-beamed and stone-vaulted ceilings.


**CLARION HOTEL ADMIRAL**
**SUPERIOR**

On the opposite side of the quay to the Havnekontoret, this beautifully decorated former warehouse has one of the best locations on Bergen's harbourfront. Room rates include Clarion Collection's signature afternoon waffles and tea or coffee plus a complimentary light evening buffet meal as well as breakfast. Or you can switch to à la carte at the Kitchen & Table restaurant, which offers a concept menu from Swedish masterchef Marcus Samuelsson. Superior Doubles are corner rooms with wonderful views of the pier and harbour, while Deluxe Doubles overlook Vågen bay and Bryggen.



02

BEST OF  
THE WEST

## 6-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR

1 day Ålesund >> 3 days Geirangerfjord  
 >> 2 days Ålesund



>> PRICES FROM: £905 pp incl. flights,  
 4 days car hire, 2 nights Hotel Brosundet  
 BB, 3 nights Hotel Union HB. Operates  
 1 May to 30 Sep.

This easy but adventure-packed self-drive tour through the fjords of western Norway combines the art nouveau delights of Ålesund with exciting driving, hiking and cruising opportunities across some of Norway's most spectacular landscapes and waters.

**Day 1 >> Ålesund** Fly to the picturesque coastal town of Ålesund and check in at the Hotel Brosundet. In the afternoon, head out for a look around the town, which was rebuilt in characteristic art nouveau style after much of the centre was destroyed by fire in 1904 – you can learn more about the disaster and the rebuilding efforts at the Art Nouveau Centre. Scale the 418 steps (or take a bus) to the summit of Mount Aksla to take in views of the town, the surrounding archipelago and the dramatic Sunnmøre Alps. On the way down, take in the statues of Kaiser Wilhelm II and the Viking warrior Rollo and unravel their historical roles in bringing fame and wealth to the town. **B,D**

**Day 2–4 >> Geirangerfjord** Collect your hire car and drive 100 kilometres from Ålesund to the heart of Geirangerfjord, recognised by UNESCO as one of the

world's most beautiful fjord regions, with near-vertical cliff walls and powerful waterfalls. The scenic driving route via the high mountain road of Trollstigen is simply stunning. Check in at the Hotel Union and plot your next two days of sightseeing. Take a drive along the famous Eagle's Road, enjoy a cruise on the fjord and visit Dalsnibba, the highest peak in the area, which offers breathtaking views over the fjord and surrounding landscape. There are also plenty of well-marked hiking trails to explore, beginning with the short hike to Vesterås Farm and many incredible viewpoints beyond. **B,D**

**Day 5–6 >> Ålesund** Drive back to Ålesund for a final night at the Hotel Brosundet and head into town for a well-deserved slap-up meal. After breakfast on day 6, drop your hire car at the airport and catch your flight home. **B**



## HOTEL BROSUNDET, ÅLESUND

SUPERIOR



This delightful hotel is housed in a listed wharf building on Brosundet canal, the main artery of Ålesund. The interior has wooden beams and is full of character and period detail. The 47 rooms (including the unique Molja Lighthouse, 5 minutes' walk from the main building) are individually styled by internationally renowned architects Snøhetta. The elegant Restaurant Maki offers à la carte dining, set dinners, and a superb 8-course tasting menu based on the catch of the day.

## HOTEL UNION GEIRANGER

SUPERIOR



The Union is a stylish establishment of long tradition surrounded by unspoiled nature, and a must-stay inclusion on any Fjord Norway itinerary. The hotel is perched halfway up a mountain overlooking Geirangerfjord – a view that can also be admired from the outdoor pool. Fjord View rooms are highly recommended, as is the excellent evening buffet dinner. Vognfabrikken is a unique basement bar showcasing the owners' extensive vintage car collection.

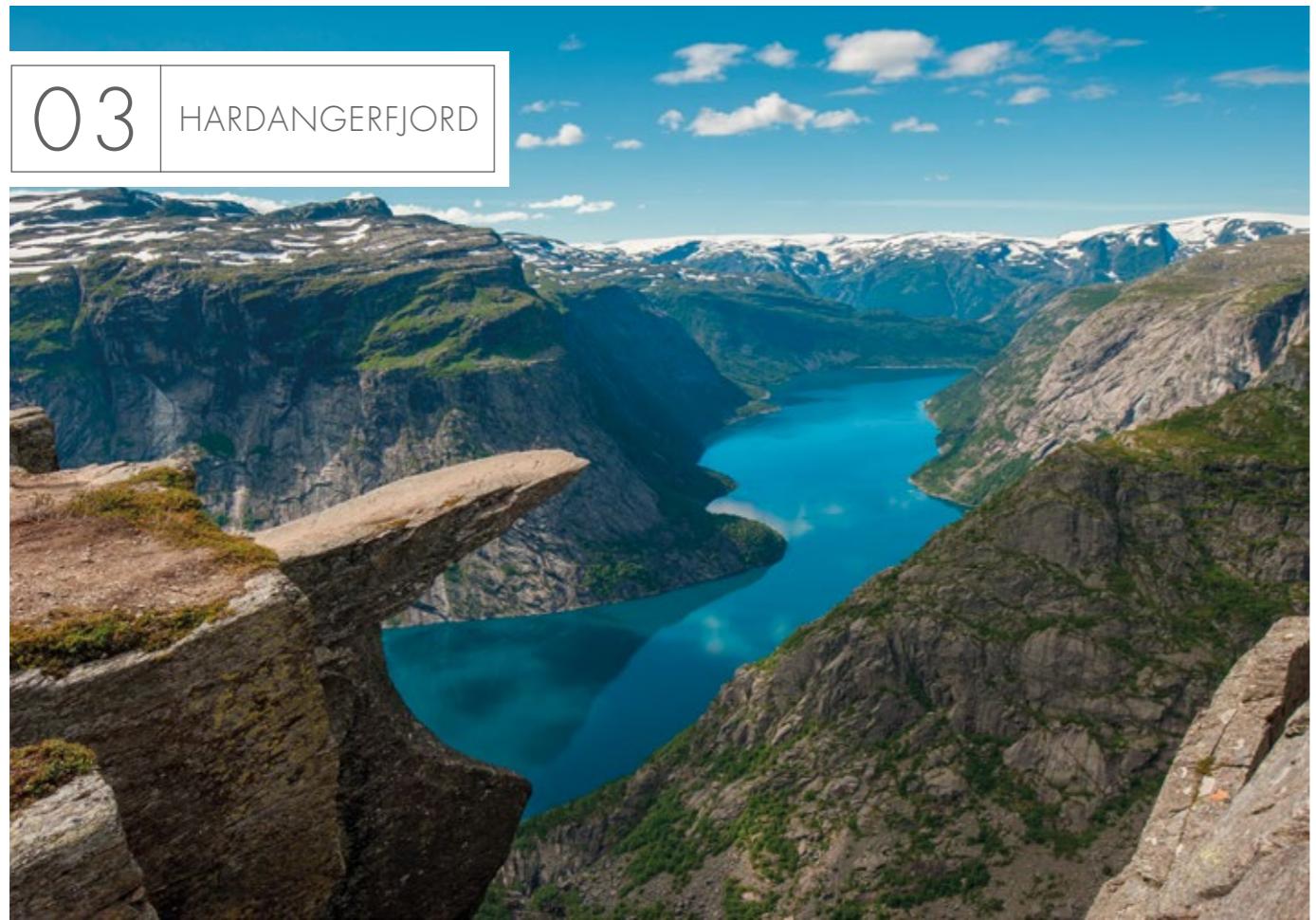


## STORFJORD HOTEL

DELUXE



A luxury cabin-style lodge with stunning views over Storfjord, 30 minutes by car from Ålesund or 90 minutes from Geiranger, this is a fabulous place to unwind. The tempting four-course gourmet dinner at the Storfjord's restaurant is savoured with an amazing vista over the fjord and mountains. We recommend a Superior Deluxe Double room, which comes with a spacious lounge area, private balcony or terrace, and a fjord or forest view.



03

HARDANGERFJORD

**6-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR**

1 day Bergen » 1 day Ulvik  
2 days Lofthus » 1 day Norheimsund  
» 1 day Bergen



**» PRICES FROM:** £810 pp incl. flights, transfers, 2 nights Clarion Hotel Admiral, Ulvik BB, 1 night Brakanes Hotel BB, 2 nights Hotel Ullensvang HB, train, bus and ferry travel as per itinerary. Operates 1 May to 31 Oct.

The scenery around Hardangerfjord is among Norway's most awe-inspiring. An excellent network of buses, trains and ferries connect the key destinations in the fjords. There's also unlimited flexibility to extend your travels in the fjords or to continue on to Oslo or beyond.

**Day 1 » Bergen** Fly to Bergen and check in at the harbourside Clarion Hotel

Admiral. The Fish Market and Bryggen quay are within easy walking distance and well worth exploring.

**Day 2 » Ulvik** Catch the early morning train to Voss, and continue your journey to Ulvik by bus. The village lies on an arm of Hardangerfjord and is surrounded by high mountains with several breathtaking hiking trails, all within easy reach of Brakanes Hotel where you'll spend the night. **B**



**Days 3–4 » Eidfjord & Lofthus A** A scenic 30-minute boat ride drops you at Eidfjord, where you'll have a few hours to explore the Måbødalen valley and the Vøringsfossen waterfall before continuing to Hotel Ullensvang in Lofthus. Lying on the eastern shore of Sørfjorden, another arm of the immense Hardangerfjord, Lofthus is especially beautiful in late spring and early summer, when pink and white fruit blossom adds an extra flourish to an already stunning landscape of green hills and snow-tipped mountains, all reflected in the fjord's tranquil waters. **B,D**

**HARDANGERFJORD SELF-DRIVE**  
Call one of our specialists on **020 7838 5869** to plan your self-drive tour of the region, taking in the same sights and more.

**HOTEL ULLENVANG, LOFTHUS****SUPERIOR**

From humble beginnings as a stagecoach inn with a single straw bed above a shipping office, the Ullensvang is now firmly established as the best place from which to explore the natural wonders of Hardanger, including dozens of amazing hiking trails and the famous jutting rock Trolltunga (Troll's tongue) high over lake Ringedalsvatnet with its endless vista of mountains and glaciers beyond. Most of the 200 rooms have views of interest, but the Fjord View rooms are particularly appealing. The Hardanger Buffet Restaurant serves a first-rate pick-your-own dinner, whilst Zazoni has delectable fine dining offerings from around the world. The packed lunches to take on your hikes are also highly recommended.

**BRAKANES HOTEL, UVLIK****SUPERIOR**

Situated right on the water's edge in the pretty village of Ulvik, this hotel has a well-deserved reputation for both comfort and adventure. The 143 rooms are light, airy and tastefully decorated, and the best have private balconies with magnificent views over Hardangerfjord. All-day snacks and sumptuous evening meals can be enjoyed in the restaurant, and village attractions range from a bathing beach to a wide range of hiking trails. The surrounding wetlands are home to some 80 bird species, and kayaking and waterskiing on the fjord are popular pursuits. Other facilities at the hotel include a swimming pool, sauna and steam bath.



## THE LOFOTEN ISLANDS

The Lofoten Islands are a magical arc of islands stretching for 200 km into the blue-green Norwegian Sea. This is a dramatic Arctic landscape of soaring mountains, deep blue fjords, squawking sea birds and sweeping beaches. Colourful fishing villages pepper the coast and artists and photographers have long been drawn to the region – never more so than during the long bright summers when the sun hangs above the horizon casting a hazy glow across the towering cliffs and secluded bays.

Although the islands lie well above the Arctic Circle, the climate is fairly mild year-round due to the warming Gulf Stream, and daytime summer temperatures often reach 23°C. But be prepared for a dip in temperatures when the sun is behind clouds or low in the sky. During the warmer months, outdoor activities include hiking, cycling, horse riding, fishing, rafting, kayaking, snorkelling and diving.

Summer is also the best time to join a sea safari in search of local wildlife including seals, sea eagles and majestic orcas. Life in the islands revolves around the fishing industry, and you can get a taste of a life dependent on the sea by staying in a cosy *rorbu* fisherman's cabin at the water's edge. It's a long way north, so it's a good idea to break your journey in Oslo, Trondheim or Bodø as part of a wider tour.



## 04 BODØ & THE LOFOTEN ISLANDS



### 7-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

1 day Bodø » 2 days Nusfjord »  
1 day Henningsvær » 3 days Svolvær



**» PRICES FROM:** £1,350 pp incl. flights, 1 night Clarion Collection Grand Bodø BB, 5 days car hire, 2 nights Nusfjord Rorbuer HB, 1 night Henningsvær Bryggehotel HB and 2 nights Svinoya Rorbuer BB. Operates 15 May to 15 Sep.

Beginning in Bodø, gateway to the stunning landscapes of the Lofoten Islands, spend two nights in a traditional *rorbu* on the peaceful shores of Nusfjord and embark on a flexible self-drive tour taking in the superb Lofotr Viking Museum near Borg and the regional capital Svolvær.

**Day 1 » Bodø** Fly via Oslo to Bodø and check in at the Clarion Collection Grand. Head out of town to witness the world's strongest tidal current at the narrow strait of Saltstraumen, where on a lucky visit you can see whirlpools of up to 10m wide of the kind that inspired Edgar Allan Poe's 'A Descent into the Maelström'. Other attractions include the National Norwegian Aviation Museum and the Stone Age Museum.

**Days 2–3 » Nusfjord** Fly to Leknes in the Lofoten Islands, collect your hire car and take a 30-minute drive to Nusfjord. Your base for two nights is Nusfjord Rorbuer, a collection of *rorbu* (red-painted fishermen's cabins) at the edge of the fjord. A rowing boat is included in the price of the room

so you can to take to the water under your own power, or charter a private fishing boat and crew. Alternatively, there are excellent hiking, climbing and biking routes in the surrounding mountains.

**Day 4 » Henningsvær** Drive 90 km to Henningsvær, stopping en route at the Lofotr Viking Museum. Built on the site of an Iron Age village, the museum includes a reconstruction of the largest Viking building ever known, thought to date from around 500 AD. Check in for a night at the Henningsvær Bryggehotell, perched on a pier with views across the fjord. Request room 223 if you can; it has unobstructed views across the fjord towards the point where the sun dips lowest on the horizon.

**Days 5–7 » Svolvær** After a short drive to the islands' tiny capital your time is free to explore the surrounding mountains and beaches. Don't miss the opportunity to take a boat trip from the harbour in search of sea eagles. Drop your hire car and fly home after breakfast on day seven.

## SVINØYA RORBUER, SVOLVÆR

SUPERIOR



For traditional Lofoten living, Svinøya Rorbuer offers the perfect location, set right on the water just a short walk from central Svolvær. Choose from an authentic *rorbu* fisherman's cabin on stilts over the sea, or suites, apartments or houses scattered around the picturesque fishing village. The 30 original rorbuer and the larger, recently built Rorbusuites are kitted out with a well-equipped kitchen and modern bathroom whilst maintaining time-honoured craftsmanship. The Rorbusuites have large windows with stunning views over the bay. Børsen Spiseri is a sensitively converted quayside warehouse serving up fresh local delicacies.



## NUSFJORD RORBUER

STANDARD



The 46 traditional fishermen's cabins dotted around Nusfjord, one of the oldest and best-preserved fishing villages in the Lofotens, each have a lounge area with splendid fjord views. Authentic features include outdoor terraces and *bugang* (cabin passages), where fishermen used to store and repair their tackle. Enjoy gourmet dining at Karoline Restaurant, surrounded by artifacts from the freighters that once set out from the bay, then head to Oriana Kro inn, where the decor includes the old galleon figurehead from a local cargo ship. On the jetty is another small bar with al fresco dining.

HENNINGSVÆR  
BRYGGEHOTELL, VESTFJORD

SUPERIOR



This boutique hotel is located right on the pier in the pretty fishing village of Henningsvær. The 30 double rooms are spacious, with an understated elegance. You have full access to the hotel sauna and relaxation room, and Den Blå Fisk ('The Blue Fish') restaurant cooks up a storm with the catch of the day and locally produced meats. You won't tire of walking around the village, but must-try local tours include rafting on the open sea and fishing for cod and halibut onboard a traditional Lofoten smack. Summer golfers will leap at the chance of a swift boat transfer to one of Norway's most dramatic courses for 9 holes either side of midnight as the sun dips oh-so briefly behind the mountains.

## HAMN I SENJA

SUPERIOR



This remote, fully renovated former fishing village occupies a spit of land reaching out into the Arctic sea on Senja island. A choice of 65 purpose-built rooms, suites and apartments are dotted around the wharf, all with magnificent views across the water. The convivial Storbrygga Restaurant comes into its own in the summer months, with dining right on the waterfront. A host of summer activities include some amazing local hikes, bike trips around the fjords and sandy beaches, deep-sea fishing, fjord cruises and kayak adventures. A hike to the summit of Husfjellet is rewarded with views in all directions over Bergsfjorden, Steinfjorden and Ersfjorden.



## LOFOTEN EXCURSIONS

In Norway's Arctic archipelagos, mountain meets sea with little in between. The result is a dramatically contrasting landscape of imposing cliffs, claustrophobic straits and abrupt pinnacles, with picturesque fishing villages dotting the shore. Fishing is big here as the seas are healthily stocked, and the whales know this too. Some of Europe's best whale watching is out on the open water, while the fjords can be explored closer by kayak.



### WHALE WATCHING IN ANDENES

Take a three-hour cruise around the stunning coastline of the Vesterålen archipelago in search of the many species of whale that frolic in Norway's rich coastal waters. The crew use state-of-the-art equipment to seek out the cetaceans, with sperm whales the most common, but killer whales and others are also frequently spotted. On the journey out to the whale grounds, you'll also pass Bleiksøya, an island home to a large puffin colony.

**>> PRICES FROM:** £85 pp incl. entry to Whale Centre and guided tour, tea, coffee and snacks. Duration 3 hrs. Operates daily May to Sep.

### SEA KAYAKING IN LOFOTEN

Invented by Inuit, the kayak has been used as a versatile craft in the Arctic for centuries. During your time on the water, you'll be able to paddle at your own pace, under the watch of an experienced guide who will point out local flora and fauna and assist with improving your paddling technique. Best of all is the backdrop to the activity: the sheer peaks and corridor sounds of the Lofoten archipelago.

**>> PRICES FROM:** £90 pp incl. transfers, equipment and guide. Duration: 4 hrs. Operates May to Sep.



05

WHALE WATCHING &amp; MIDNIGHT SUN



### 8-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR

2 days Andenes >> 2 days Senja  
>> 4 days Tromsø



**>> PRICES FROM:** £1,590 pp incl. flights, 2 nights Hotell Marena BB, 2 nights Hamn i Senja BB, 3 nights Clarion Collection Hotel With BB, Whale safari and 3 days car hire. Operates 25 May to 15 Sep.

In summer, Norway's Arctic is a photographer's paradise, a land of infinite light that stretches and smoulders and never disappears; a land where mountains rise sharply from the sea and reflect crisply in the waters of the fjords they shelter. This tour takes you through the highlights from Vesterålen to Tromsø.

**Day 1 >> Andenes** Connecting through Oslo and Bodø, fly to Andenes at the tip of the island of Andøya and check in to Hotell Marena, the newest in town.

**Day 2 >> Andenes** After breakfast, join up with a whale-watching safari for near-guaranteed viewing of the world's largest mammals. Just off the coast of Andøya the continental shelf drops dramatically, meaning you don't have to travel far on the whale-route to catch a sighting. Learn more about the wild creatures on a guided tour of the Whale Centre and a visit to the Hisnakul Nature Centre. B

**Day 3 >> Senja** Pick up your hire car in Andenes and drive to join the ferry to Gryllefjord, a port on Norway's second-largest island, Senja. From here make for Hamn, and continue to the Hamn i Senja hotel on the little island

of Langbaren, a quayside property ringed by mountains. B

**Day 4 >> Senja** The tranquil waters and fells around Hamn are perfect for all sorts of activities, so spend the day hiking, biking, fishing and kayaking in the surrounds. B

**Day 5–8 >> Tromsø** Embark on a gorgeous 3-hour drive wiggling around the fjords to Tromsø, one of the Arctic's largest towns. Check into the imposing Clarion Collection Hotel With and, over the next few days, enjoy Tromsø's vibrant summer nightlife. Drink locally-brewed Mack Beer at the Ølhallen, catch a concert at the Arctic Cathedral, and climb the surrounding peaks for a bird's-eye view of the town. After breakfast on day 8, make for the airport for your return flight. B



06

## THE GREAT NORWEGIAN COASTAL TOUR

## 18-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY WITH THON HOTELS

3 days Bergen >> 1 day Ålesund >> 2 days Trondheim  
 4 days Lofoten Islands >> 3 days Tromsø >> 2 days North Cape  
 >> 3 days Kirkenes



>> PRICES FROM: £2,090 pp incl. flights, 11 nights BB Thon Hotels, 6 nights Hurtigruten inside cabin (5 nights HB, 1 night BB), Norway in a Nutshell tour. Operates daily year-round.

This extensive cruise, city and island break takes you from toe to tip of Norway's magnificent fjord-lined coast.

**Days 1–2 >> Bergen** Fly to the UNESCO-listed city of Bergen for two nights at the Thon Hotel Bristol. Enjoy a day-long Norway in a Nutshell tour through spectacular fjord scenery. **B**

**Day 3 >> Bergen** Explore the city, taking in the view from Mount Fløyen, before boarding your Hurtigruten ship. **B,D**

**Day 4 >> Ålesund** Spend the day navigating the skerries and larger islands north of Bergen. Call in at Ålesund. **B,D**

**Days 5–6 >> Trondheim** Spend two nights at the Britannia Hotel in Norway's original capital, Trondheim, where the attractions include the world's northernmost medieval cathedral. **B**

**Days 7–9 >> Lofoten Islands** Sail into the Arctic Circle to the town of Svolvær in the spectacular Lofoten Islands. Check into the Thon Hotel Lofoten for a two-night stay and maybe pay a visit to the Lofotr Viking Museum. **B**

**Day 10 >> Lofoten Islands** Enjoy your final island day around Svolvær before rejoining the ship for an overnight cruise to Tromsø. **B,D**

**Days 11–13 >> Tromsø** Three nights at Thon Hotel Tromsø. Explore this lively Arctic city's nightlife, or go hiking or whale watching. **B**

**Days 14–15 >> North Cape** Sail up to the North Cape, the northernmost point of mainland Europe. Enjoy a presentation on the history of local Sami culture and visit the village of Mehamn. **B,D**

**Days 16–18 >> Kirkenes** Spend two nights at the Thon Hotel Kirkenes, close to the Russian border. Summer is the best time to try your hand at King Crab fishing. After breakfast on your last day, head to the airport for your return flights. **B**

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## SVALBARD

A remote outpost flung far out into the Arctic Ocean, the Svalbard archipelago represents the ultimate polar destination, its sparse townships the only permanent human habitations amidst the chilling sea. First tentatively settled by early whalers, miners and fishermen, the islands have never been fully tamed and, particularly during the summer months, mankind is easily outnumbered by polar bears, making Svalbard the best place to view these evocative and endangered animals as they prowl across sweeping glaciers and scrubby fells under epic pastel skies.

The Svalbard archipelago is synonymous with its largest island, Spitsbergen, which has captured the imagination since the Dutch first spotted pointed, craggy peaks piercing the sheet ice and the clouds. Here, the town of Longyearbyen serves as a comfortable base. A handful of cosy hotels sit among the colourfully painted cabins spread along the sheltered shores of Adventfjorden, and the surrounding mountains provide protection from the worst of the wind. Under the unceasing glow of the summer sun, a little heat reaches even this Arctic land, and the frozen fjords and tundra of winter give way to a stunning grey-green environment where the desolation is enlivened by a carpet of tiny flowers and lichen. Somewhat surprisingly in an otherwise sleepy atmosphere, the town's pubs and cafes add real vibrancy, with many open long into the still-light night.



## RADISSON BLU POLAR

SUPERIOR



One of the finest hotels in Longyearbyen, the Radisson Blu Polar offers both traditional hotel rooms and serviced apartments, so you can be completely flexible with your living arrangements. Luxury modern amenities line up alongside more timeless comforts such as an open fire in the lobby and a traditional sauna room. Restaurant Nansen serves up a range of delicious treats sourced in the Arctic alongside international fare for the less adventurous, and your meal will always unfold with a spectacular panoramic view. Nestled close to the coast, this is an excellent base for sea adventures from tranquil cruises to kayaking around the bay.



## SPITSBERGEN HOTEL

SUPERIOR



As a former accommodation for coal miners – although it has been comprehensively refurbished since those days – the Spitsbergen Hotel offers one of the more historic experiences in Longyearbyen. Situated on a hill overlooking the town and the Lars glacier, the hotel enjoys fabulous views from its cosy rooms. The Funktionærmessen restaurant serves up classic dining inspired by French cuisine alongside Arctic specialities. There's a spa room with a traditional sauna, and the Funken Bar is a lively pub with a good range of drinks, food and snacks that offers a glimpse into the rowdy, convivial atmosphere of the old mining days.



## BASECAMP TRAPPER'S HOTEL

SUPERIOR



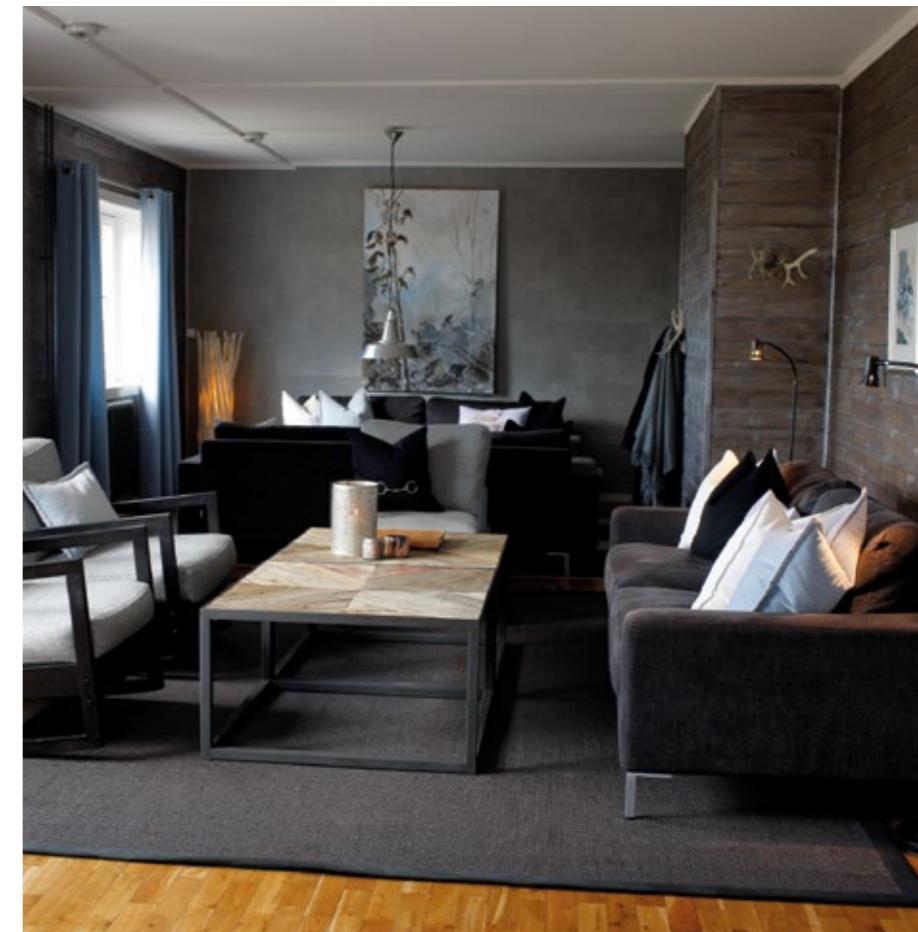
The perfect retreat for switching off, relaxing and reconnecting with nature, Basecamp Trapper's Hotel is located in the heart of Longyearbyen, close to an array of restaurants, shops and bars. Inside is an atmospheric homage to the Arctic days of yore, with the walls showcasing trophies from centuries of trapping and whaling activity around the archipelago. Rooms burst with character and provide a cosy and intimate base, all with extraordinary views across the Longyeardalen valley. Two of the 16 rooms are suites with generous living space and separate bedrooms. In keeping with the rustic cabin feel there are no TVs in the rooms, but the Cognac Loft has a large screen for communal viewing.

## ISFJORD RADIO

SUPERIOR



Once a thriving mining outpost, much of Svalbard's sparsely scattered infrastructure has had to be reclaimed and readapted to modern usage. One such building is Isfjord Radio, which has been transmitting waves across the island since 1933. As old industries declined, the buildings were turned into stylish accommodation, and today this modest-looking, far-flung outpost houses rooms that are snug and chic. With the eerie Soviet town of Barentsburg just a few kilometres away, Isfjord Radio is the perfect place to discover a different side of Svalbard. Dining at the world's most remote boutique hotel is based around locally sourced meat and fish with a nod to Italian, French and Asian cuisine.



## SVALBARD EXCURSIONS

In winter when the land is covered in snow and ice, a team of huskies is the favoured mode of transport, and one of the most enduring images of Arctic life. Luckily with a little adaptation you can still enjoy this experience in the summertime, where the landscape strips off to flaunt its colours and curves. Sometimes we want to conquer a landscape, not just admire it, and in the peak summer hiking season on Svalbard you can do just that.



### DOGS ON WHEELS WITH LUNCH

This excursion begins with a visit to a local husky kennel, where nearly a hundred excited dogs greet you with a succession of yelps and howls. Your chosen team is harnessed up to a wheeled wagon, and after a lesson in dogsledding basics, you'll set out into the beautiful Svalbard countryside, admiring its contoured mountains, alpine meadows and varying wildlife.

**>> PRICES FROM:** £115 pp, incl. hot drinks and lunch. Duration 4.5 hrs. Operates daily Jun to Sep.

### MOUNTAIN SCRAMBLING

Setting off at ten in the morning, you're met at your hotel by your guide and taken off to begin the day's exertions. Good physical condition is required, but the day will be tailored to suit you, and you can choose how hard to push yourself. The country around Longyearbyen is crammed full of excellent hikes, promising fabulous views of Isfjorden and the surrounds, as well as the chance to stroll on a glacier.

**>> PRICES FROM:** £115 pp, incl. hot drinks, lunch and guide. Duration 6 hrs. Operates daily Jun to Sep.



## SVALBARD EXCURSIONS

Strangely enough for somewhere so remote, there is plenty of cultural fun to be found on Svalbard, and these two excursions juxtapose two old favourites: champagne and socialism. Founded as a coal-mining settlement, Barentsburg is the second largest town on Svalbard and, unlike the mainly Norwegian character of the rest of the archipelago, is very Russian, redolent with Soviet-era busts of Lenin and murals depicting heroic workers.

### CHAMPAGNE TASTING

The world's northernmost wine collection, found in the historic Nordpolen liquor store, is particularly proud of its champagne selection and clients are invited to step in, sit back and pour a glass of fizz – after all, from the midnight sun to the wildlife and dazzling scenery, there's plenty to celebrate.

**>> PRICES FROM:** £50 pp incl. three glasses of champagne, canapés. Duration: 1 hr. Operates year-round.



### BOAT TRIP TO BARENTSBURG

Though ostensibly a trip to the nostalgic Soviet mining town, this day cruise also allows you to explore the bays and inlets of Isfjorden, passing towering cliffs teeming with birdlife and looming mountains. Once at Barentsburg, you're taken on a tour of the town, learning about its Soviet past and the fascinating relics that remain. This is followed by a sumptuous barbecue on deck which you can enjoy surrounded by stark Arctic scenery.



**>> PRICES FROM:** £175 pp, incl. lunch, hot drinks, transfers and guide. Duration 9–10 hours.



## SWEDEN

A six-hour working weekday and a tremendous variety of natural surrounds make Sweden one of the world's happiest nations – and an unforgettable holiday destination. As big as California, but with just a quarter of the population, there's plenty of space to go around, and a lifestyle emphasising the outdoors and an annual mass-retreat to thousands of beautiful islands would tempt even the most committed urban dweller. From the end of May to mid-July, there's rarely a moment of darkness up in Swedish Lapland, as the midnight sun bounces off the horizon and takes another turn. This means there's no end of opportunity to explore incredible landscapes from the rugged west coast to the uninhabited islands of the Luleå archipelago and the verdant pine forests of the Arctic north.

But it's not all kayak tours and seafood safaris (though these are undeniable attractions). Scenic, laidback Stockholm is a year-round draw, modelled around a group of islands where the freshwater Lake Mälaren meets the salt water of the Baltic. And when it comes to design, Sweden boasts some of Scandinavia's most stylish hotels, from the iconic Treehotel to seductive boutique properties in downtown Stockholm and medieval Visby, as well as converted countryside manor houses

and distinctive seaside lodges and cabins dotted around the islands. There are wonderful arts-and-crafts stores and a host of cultural sights, from the achingly hip cafes of Gothenburg to Stockholm's impressive Royal Swedish Opera and the Nobelmuseet, hosting exhibitions honouring over 100 years of Nobel Prize laureates and their endeavours. A magnificent destination at any time of year, a Swedish summer is replete with boundless temptations.





07

## GOTHENBURG &amp; THE WEST

## 8-DAY SUMMER SELF-DRIVE TOUR

2 days Gothenburg » 1 day Villa Sjötorp » 2 days Fjällbacka  
» 2 days Bjertorp Slott » 1 day Gothenburg



**» PRICES FROM:** £1,125 pp incl. return flights, 2 nights Elite Plaza BB, 1 night Villa Sjötorp HB, 2 nights Stora Hotellet Bryggan BB, 2 nights Bjertorp Castle HB and 6 days car hire. Operates May to Sep.

Sweden's rugged west coast is scattered with pretty fishing villages, elegant estates and isolated hideaways. Starting from Gothenburg, a highlight in any Swedish summer holiday, you'll head north to visit country manors, picturesque waterfronts and some of the region's best seafood restaurants.

**Days 1–2 » Gothenburg** Arriving in Gothenburg, transfer to the Elite Plaza, a palatial hotel within walking distance of the city's opera house, best shops and restaurants. Enjoy a boat trip along the canals, explore the city's excellent museums and parks and browse the old town's many arts-and-crafts stores. **B**

**Day 3 » Villa Sjötorp** Pick up your hire car and drive north along the scenic west coast to Villa Sjötorp, a charming country hotel with just 10 rooms. In the evening, dine out on the terrace of the hotel's award-winning restaurant overlooking the bay. **B,D**

**Day 4–5 » Fjällbacka** Continue north to Fjällbacka, a small coastal settlement which was once a favourite haunt of Ingrid Bergman. Explore the village's narrow cobblestone lanes, boutique shops and busy cafes and spend the night at the quaint and comfortable Stora Hotellet Bryggan, which sits prettily on the edge of the village pier. **B**

**Days 6–7 » Bjertorp Slott** Today you'll continue on to Bjertorp Slott, an elegant art-nouveau manor which specialises in gourmet dining and hosts one of the region's best golf courses. Nearby attractions include the Saab Museum in Trollhättan and the Gota Alv River valley. **B,D**

**Day 8 » Gothenburg** After breakfast at the manor, take a leisurely cross-country drive 100 km south to Gothenburg's international airport to connect with your return flight. **B**



## MUSSEL SAFARI FROM FJÄLLBACKA

Join restaurateur Janne Bark onboard the MS *Martha* on a voyage to the mile-wide mussel farms of Scanfjords where you'll harvest live blue mussels. Keep your eyes peeled for harbour seals, deer, egrets and eagles. On the return trip you'll prepare your catch for a delicious meal back on shore at Janne's Clock Tower restaurant.

**» PRICES FROM:** £75 pp incl. guide, equipment hire, lunch, hot drinks and snacks. Duration: 3–4 hrs. Operates Saturdays Apr to Oct.



## 6-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

3 days Visby » 3 days Stockholm



**» PRICES FROM:** £895 pp incl. flights, 3 days car hire, 3 nights Hotell Slottsbacken BB and 2 nights Hotel Diplomat BB.

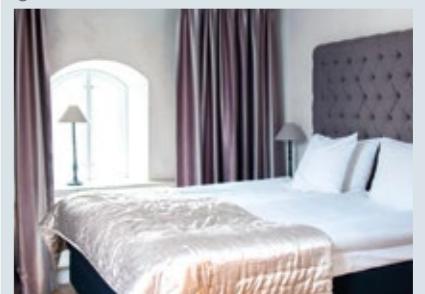
Explore the two main columns of Swedish life – secluded island hideaways and a cultural and cosmopolitan capital – on this six-day tailor-made holiday. Enjoy coastal walks, watersports, comfortable accommodation and culinary classics as you visit Stockholm and Gotland Island in the Baltic Sea.

**Days 1–3 » Visby** Fly via Stockholm to Visby. Pick up your hire car at the airport and head to Hotell Slottsbacken, located in the characterful old quarter – a treasure trove of medieval architecture. Spend the next few days driving around exploring the stunning scenery and pristine

landscapes of one of Sweden's most picturesque destinations. You'll also want to pop over to the neighbouring island of Fårö, where you'll find the origins of one of Sweden's oldest dialects and a collection of towering sea stacks known as *rauks* that from certain angles resemble human faces and eerie animal shapes. **B**

**Days 4–6 » Stockholm** Depart Gotland and head north by car ferry to the Swedish capital, one of the true metropolitan jewels of the Baltic Sea. Drop off your hire car and check in at the Hotel Diplomat, a stylish and modern hotel renowned for its culinary knowledge, comfortable rooms and art exhibitions, and an excellent base from which to explore the city's trendy boutiques, beautiful parks, abundant museums and excellent waterfront walks. During the summer months, residents and visitors alike take the chance to go sailing, swimming and kayaking around the Stockholm Archipelago – a series of 30,000 islands, skerries and rocks, which stretches over

50 miles. After a leisurely breakfast on day 6, transfer to the airport for your return flights. **B**



## HOTELL SLOTTSBACKEN

Located in the centre of Visby, a stone's throw from the harbour, the botanical gardens and the town's best restaurants and shops, this contemporary 4-star hotel was opened in 2012 and quickly established itself as one of Gotland's finest. Stylish rooms offer comfortable furnishings, and the hotel's sun terrace is a deservedly popular 6 o'clock spot. There's no onsite restaurant, but staff are clued up about the best local dining options.

## HOTEL DIPLOMAT

SUPERIOR



One of our favourite Swedish properties, Hotel Diplomat is located on fashionable Strandgatan boulevard, facing the waterfront in downtown Stockholm. Housed in an elegant art nouveau building that dates back to the early 20th century, the Diplomat's 130 rooms and suites are bright, spacious and feature DUX luxury beds and splendid harbour views. Facilities include a sauna, Jacuzzi and a popular restaurant with a menu emphasising the use of local produce.



ETT HEM

DELUXE



Freestanding marble baths and stylish four-poster beds are among the charms of this homely 12-room hotel in Stockholm's Lärkstaden neighbourhood. Built as a family residence in 1910, Ett Hem's laidback hospitality means guests can help themselves to a glass of wine from the communal kitchen or enjoy a meal with others in the courtyard's glasshouse. The garden, laid out by one of Sweden's most acclaimed landscape architects, is a superb spot for al fresco meals and drinks.



## CLARION HOTEL SIGN

SUPERIOR



This Gert Wingårdh designed hotel – all glass and granite, sharp lines and simple Scandi décor – is located in the centre of Stockholm, close to many of the capital's best bars and restaurants, museums and boutiques. Facilities include a rooftop swimming pool – complete with a popular poolside bar – spa treatment rooms and a gym and an American-style brasserie. The hotel is also pet-friendly, so don't be surprised to meet the occasional pampered pooch in the Living Room meeting area.

# 09 UNDER THE MIDNIGHT SUN



## 5-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

3 days Brändön Lodge » 2 days Treehotel



» PRICES FROM: £1,450 pp incl. flights, transfers, 3 nights Brändön Lodge, 1 night Treehotel, kayak excursion and meals as indicated.

**From the end of May to mid-July the midnight sun hovers above the pretty landscape of Swedish Lapland, adding extra magic to this captivating destination. Among the enchanted forests and pretty archipelagos lie two of Sweden's finest hotels – and you get to stay at both.**

**Day 1 » Brändön Lodge** Fly to Luleå via Stockholm and transfer to Brändön Lodge

where you'll check into a sea view room. With stunning views of the Bay of Bothnia and the beautiful Luleå archipelago, this cabin-style hotel has just 15 lodgings, each with two bedrooms and a front-facing porch, allowing guests to make the most of the spectacular coastal scenery (see page 47).

**Day 2 » Kayaking on the Luleå archipelago** After breakfast, set out onto the calm waters of the bay and enjoy a kayak tour of a few of this special archipelago's 1,000+ islands and skerries. Locked in ice during the winter months, these pretty islands – mostly uninhabited – are rich in plant and birdlife and are well known for their abundance of berries, including blueberries, Arctic raspberries, cloudberries and seabuckthorn. An experienced guide will point out some of the islands' interesting

features and lead you on a short hike through forest and shrubland.

**Day 3 » Brändön Lodge** Today you'll be free to enjoy the area as you please. Relax on the water's edge, explore the surrounds by mountain bike or take a canoe and drift by other parts of the coastline. We recommend a visit to Klubbviken, a short boat ride from Luleå, where you'll find an excellent restaurant situated on a great swimming beach. Please ask us about prearranging this excursion.

**Days 4–5 » Treehotel** After breakfast, check out and drive north towards the forested slopes of Harads and the Treehotel. Every room of this award-winning hotel is distinct, each one designed by one of Scandinavia's leading architects (see overleaf).



## TREEHOTEL

## SUPERIOR



The world-famous Treehotel set a new standard for design hotels everywhere, quite an achievement for a property located in a wild pine forest in Sweden's remote north.

Situated 40 miles south of the Arctic Circle, outside the small village of Harads, the Treehotel features six entirely individual rooms designed by different architects. Mixing modernist, minimalist design and back-to-nature values, the rooms are dotted among the pines and hung around the canopy, allowing guests to live their childhood treehouse fantasies in true style. Each quirky-themed room is equipped with underfloor heating, a sink and toilet. Showers and meals are taken at the hotel's main house. The Tree Sauna is a wonderful addition and makes for a welcome retreat after a day's exploring.

During the summer months, hotel activities include full-day hikes in the Korgen Nature Reserve, mountain biking and whitewater rafting and visits to local Sami communities. Back at base, Britta's restaurant offers a delicious array of Swedish home cooking based on fresh, wild local produce including Arctic char, Caviar of Kalix (also known as 'red gold'), salmon, moose and reindeer.

With all of that taken care of, the hardest part is choosing which room to stay in. The Cabin sits on a platform high on the hillside overlooking the Lule River valley,



## BRÄNDÖN LODGE AND CABINS

## SUPERIOR



Overlooking Bothnian Bay, the far-north tip of the Gulf of Bothnia and the Baltic Sea, this secluded modern lodge is a perfect base for exploring the many islands of the Luleå archipelago. These recently renovated cabins – just 15 in all – offer uninterrupted coastal views, two comfortable bedrooms, a lounge and front-facing porch. A large central log cabin provides ultra-comfortable communal spaces, including a restaurant and fireside lounge and, free from the snow and pack ice that define winter in these parts, the beautiful surrounding countryside is easily explored.



## SÖRBYN LODGE AND CABINS

## SUPERIOR



Located on the shores of Lake Vitträsket in the Råne River valley, deep in the wilderness of Swedish Lapland, Sörbyn is the ultimate rustic retreat. Step out from spacious timber cabins or plush hotel rooms and immerse yourself in the surrounding wilds with summertime activities including guided hikes, kayak and mountain bike tours and whitewater rafting. Return at the end of each day to a soothing sauna by the lake and a wonderful menu featuring the best local ingredients, from freshly caught fish and home-baked bread to herbs and fruits foraged from the surrounding forest.



## SWEDISH LAPLAND EXCURSIONS

Swedish Lapland, so synonymous with ice and snow, is just as magical during the summer months when the midnight sun illuminates free-flowing waterways and throws streams of sunlight through lush, green forests. The following excursions will show you the best bits of this wonderful summertime playground and introduce you to the people who have relied on it for over 5,000 years.



### KAYAKING ON THE LULEÅ ARCHIPELAGO

Explore this spectacular sub-Arctic archipelago by sea kayak. Paddle out into the waters of Hagaviken Harbour and drift between the isles, rocks and skerries, learning about the area's rich flora and fauna as you go. At Sandskäret Island you'll have lunch and then explore the interior on a short hike into the forest.

**» PRICES FROM:** £130 pp (minimum 2 people), incl. guide, kayak & equipment hire, lunch and drinks. Duration 6–8 hours. Operates daily 15 May to 15 Sep.

### VISIT A SAMI FAMILY AT GORGIM

Lars Eriksson is your expert guide as you visit a Sami family at Flakaberg along the Råne River valley. Lars will introduce you to the community's reindeer herd and tell you about Sami life through the millennia and up to the present day. You'll enjoy a traditional campfire lunch served in a tipi at Gorgim Lake and hike around the surrounding countryside.

**» PRICES FROM:** £195 pp incl. transfers, lunch & hot drink. Duration: 3 hrs. Operates year-round.



## 05 GÖTA CANAL CRUISE



### 6-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

1 day Gothenburg » 3 days Göta Canal  
» 2 days Stockholm



**» PRICES FROM:** £1,440 incl. flights, 1 night Elite Plaza BB, 3 nights Göta Canal Steamer FB, 1 night Hotel Diplomat BB.

A spectacular four-day cruise along the 380-mile long Göta Canal by steamer links Sweden's two largest cities – the elegant port city of Gothenburg and cool capital Stockholm. See ancient towns, UNESCO World Heritage Sites and beautiful rolling countryside from the comfort of your cabin, plus time to explore both cities.

**Day 1 » Gothenburg** Fly to Gothenburg and check in at the Elite Plaza Hotel. Spend the rest of the day strolling around the city's impressive waterfront and exploring the Old Town or visit the Gothenburg Museum of Art, home to one of the world's finest collections of 19th-

century Nordic art, as well as important works by the likes of Monet and Picasso.

**Days 2–4 » Göta Canal** Board a Göta Canal Steamer and depart the Gothenburg docks for Stockholm, Sweden's fashionable capital. Over the next few days you'll cruise through two of Sweden's largest and prettiest lakes – Vänern and Vättern – glide past the obelisk of the Berg Canal and innumerable magnificent castles and old settlements, enjoying plentiful onboard comforts and refreshments as you go. There'll also be an opportunity to see Birka and Hovgården, one of Sweden's first Viking settlements, now a fascinating



archaeological complex and UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**Days 5–6 » Stockholm** Check in at the Hotel Diplomat on arrival in Stockholm and spend the evening exploring the cobble streets, bars and restaurants of the city's 13th-century old town, Gamla Stan. Alternatively, hop on board a harbour cruise and see the capital lit up at night. The next day, head to the airport for your return flight.



## ICELAND

Much of Iceland is a spectacular wilderness peppered with volcanic eruptions, vast glaciers feeding impressive waterfalls and mighty rivers, where geothermal geysers shoot 30 metres into the air. Along the coast humpback whales congregate with dolphins and orcas in sheltered bays lined by black-sand beaches, while in the colourful, cultured main cities you can sample fine cuisine and dive headfirst into a boisterous bar scene.

The interior is a limitless playground for outdoor enthusiasts, amateur geologists and photographers and the varied coast attracts wildlife spotters and cold-water surfers. During summer, the locals go en masse to build campfires around the country's lakes, Icelandic horses run wild in lush summer meadows and music festivals add an extra atmospheric edge to proceedings. Most visitors however just come to soak up the amazing ambience, and try to take in the extreme vastness of Iceland's volatile landscape, which rolls through deep gorges and over snow-capped mountain peaks, tumbles down waterfalls and collapses into the heavy swells of the Atlantic Ocean. You can catch all the main sights on a tour of the Golden Circle, which embraces the gushing pools of Geysir, the giant double waterfall of Gullfoss and the rugged rift valley at Thingvellir National Park.





## 5-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

5 days Reykjavik



» PRICES FROM: £1,240 pp incl. flights, transfers, 4 nights Reykjavik Centrum BB, Húsavík and Westman Islands excursions.

Iceland is only a short hop away and in spite of its small size, you can still pack loads into a short trip here, especially with the long summer days. Based in Reykjavík, on this trip you'll watch whales in Húsavík and observe a vast colony of puffins on Heimaey Island.

Day 1 » Reykjavík Touching down, head into the vibrant Icelandic capital and make for the Hôtel Reykjavík Centrum in the

heart of the city next to gourmet restaurant Fjalaköturinn, where you can sample some of the freshest Icelandic produce for your evening meal.

**Day 2 » Reykjavík** On the first of your exciting excursions, you'll fly north to the remote town of Húsavík on the Arctic coast. Regarded as the whale-watching capital of Europe, this secluded bay offers summer visitors a 97% chance of spotting whales, of which humpbacks, minke and the behemoth blue are the most regular visitors, joined frequently by dolphins and porpoises. After visiting the town's whale museum, you'll take a three-hour cruise in pursuit of cetacean sightings, before returning to Reykjavík for the evening. B

**Day 3 » Reykjavík** Today you have free in Reykjavík – time to recuperate from a busy schedule, visit the city's restaurants, shops

and museums, or to book another day trip, perhaps on the country's most famous tourist trail, the Golden Circle. B

**Day 4 » Reykjavík** For today's adventure you'll be transferred south to Heimaey, the largest island of the volcanic Vestmannaeyjar (Westman Islands) archipelago. Already possessing an attractive natural harbour and fishing fleet, in 1973 the debut eruption of Eldfell extended the island's coastline with some of the world's newest rock. It's a gentle upward stroll to view the crater, and you can then take a cruise around the island to see its nesting puffin colonies. B

**Day 5 » Reykjavík** Time to head home, but you'll have time to stop at the natural thermal spa of the Blue Lagoon en route to the airport. B



## HOTEL REYKJAVIK CENTRUM

### SUPERIOR



Situated on one of Reykjavik's oldest streets in one of the city's liveliest districts, the charming Reykjavik Centrum is perfectly placed for fun. Choose from deluxe rooms, suites or a sleek studio apartment, featuring a fully-equipped kitchenette and living room. Fjalaköturinn, an inventive restaurant right next door, is popular with local foodies and has an à la carte menu brimming with regionally inspired dishes, with an emphasis on fresh seafood and traditional delicacies with a modern twist.

## ALDA HOTEL

### SUPERIOR



This smart 4-star stop on Laugavegur, Reykjavik's main shopping street, offers comfortable and modern rooms in a relaxed and friendly environment. The hotel features a fitness centre with sauna and a full range of exercise equipment, a buzzing bar serving local draft beers and champagne cocktails, a chocolate shop, a 24-hour grab-n-go snack station and in-room massages. The rooftop terrace offers excellent sea and mountain views.



## KVOSIN DOWNTOWN HOTEL

### SUPERIOR



Recently opened, the Kvosin Downtown Hotel is right in the heart of Reykjavik, in a quiet square behind Reykjavik Cathedral and the Icelandic Parliament, minutes from an array of museums and galleries. The stylish, airy rooms here are apartment-style and equipped with their own kitchenette, and larger studios sleep up to six and are perfect for families. The hotel is also home to a buzzy bar which offers a tasteful selection of wines and cocktails alongside some local brews.



## ICELAND EXCURSIONS

The landscapes of the 'Land of Fire and Ice' are truly otherworldly – a stunning showcase of geological and climatic clout. Exploring them is easier than you might expect and Reykjavík is the perfect jumping-off point – climb aboard the Puffin Express, set sail in search of whale pods on the bays of the west coast or lie back in the Blue Lagoon and let lava-field thermals warm your bones.



### WHALE WATCHING FROM REYKJAVÍK

Observe the North Atlantic's diverse whale populations as they circle Iceland's barren coastline on this fascinating short cruise. Sail out into the bay of Faxaflói to spot dolphins, orcas, minke and humpback whales from comfortable inside seating and outdoor viewing decks. Guides are on hand to offer information about Iceland's rich waters and diverse habitats.

» PRICES FROM: £50 pp incl. warm overalls and guide. Duration 3–3.5 hrs. Operates daily, year-round.



### PUFFIN EXPRESS

Cruising on board *Skúlskeið*, a lovely old wooden craft, head out for a guided tour of the islands of Akurey and Lundey in Kollafjörður, just north of Reykjavík, where the birdlife includes terns, guillemots and of course puffins. The boat's engine will be turned off so you can enjoy the avian cacophony to the maximum.

» PRICES FROM: £30 pp. Duration 1 hr. Operates daily, 1 May to 20 Aug.



### THE BLUE LAGOON

When photographer Jürgen Teller travelled to Iceland to photograph Björk, they visited the Blue Lagoon, where he took one of his best-loved portraits. Central to a laidback culture, no trip to Iceland is complete without a visit to this modern spa powered by the country's lively geothermals.

» PRICES FROM: £55 pp incl. standard entry and transfers. Operates daily, year-round.

## ICELAND EXCURSIONS

Heading away from Reykjavík, you don't have to go far to be stunned by Iceland's volatile landscape. The Golden Circle represents the country's most famous tourist route, covering lakes, geysers and a powerful golden waterfall before stopping at a number of other smaller attractions that can include fascinating geothermal plants like Nesjavellir that harness the island's natural energy. Further south, a coastline punctuated by glaciers

### GOLDEN CIRCLE BY SUPERJEEP

Explore the extraordinary landscapes of Iceland's famous Golden Circle by Superjeep on this full-day tour, taking in Thingvellir National Park, the geyser Strokkur that erupts every few minutes, and the impressive falls of Gullfoss. After lunch by the falls, the jeeps come into their own as you tank cross-country, charging through rivers and bouncing over the mountainsides, pausing to admire the stunning vistas and geological features that you pass on the way, including the Langjökull glacier and the amazing Kerid crater lake, where the vivid aquamarine water is set off by red rock and deep moss.

» PRICES FROM: £200 pp incl. transfers and guide. Duration 8–9 hrs. Tues, Thurs & Sat, year-round.



### GLACIER WALK DAY TOUR

Forming a vast icy plateau that covers much of Iceland's interior, the country's southern glaciers serve up an otherworldly landscape of glassy crevasses and ice caves that glow a minty turquoise. Here you'll visit Mýrdalsjökull, driving by its famous neighbour the Eyjafjallajökull glacier and volcano, and be provided with hiking gear before stepping out onto the glacier's offshoot Sólheimajökull. As meltwater pours off the plateau it forms a procession of towering waterfalls such as Seljalandsfoss and Skógarfoss, which you'll pause to visit on your way back.

» PRICES FROM: £125 pp incl. transfers, guide and equipment hire. Duration 8–9 hrs (glacier walk 3 hrs; approx. 2 hrs on ice). Operates daily, year-round.



## 11 HIGHLIGHTS OF ICELAND SELF-DRIVE

### 10-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR

3 days Reykjavík >> 7 days self-drive around Iceland



**>> PRICES FROM:** £1,445pp incl. return flights, transfers, 2 nights Hotel Alda BB, 7 nights regional hotels BB, 7 days car hire and route guide.

Iceland's rugged and remote interior is best travelled in a rough circle, following Highway 1 along the coast around the island. This itinerary covers the glaciers, gorges, waterfalls and wildlife on an unforgettable route.

**Day 1 >> Reykjavík** Touch down in Iceland's capital, where you'll be met and transferred to Hotel Alda. Take advantage

of the central location to browse the city's excellent cafes and galleries.

**Day 2 >> Snæfellsnes** Follow the coast of Faxaflói north for a few hours until you get to Snæfellsnes, a peninsula home to Jules Verne's legendary entrance to the centre of earth. B

**Day 6 >> Höfn** Take the stunning coastal road from Reyðarfjörður to Höfn, passing charming fishing villages on the way. B

**Day 7 >> Kirkjubæjarklaustur** Hugging the coast, admire Vatnajökull glacier and cruise on Jökulsárlón glacial lagoon. B

**Day 8 >> Geysir** Continue past the many waterfalls and glaciers of the south coast before heading inland to begin the Golden Circle at Gullfoss and Geysir. B

**Day 4 >> Mývatn** Head inland to Mývatn, a volcanic lake that teems with birdlife, passing Goðafoss (the falls of the Gods). A detour to coastal Húsavík is a must if you fancy a whale-watching tour. B

**Day 5 >> Egilsstaðir** Travel eastwards, exploring the mystical landscape including



## 12 JOURNEY AROUND ICELAND

natural wonders, allowing you to pack in as much as possible without spending too long on the road – though journeys in a landscape as stunning as this are never remotely dull.



### 8-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR

2 days Reykjavík >> 6 days escorted tour



**>> PRICES FROM:** £1,655 pp incl. flights, transfers, 2 nights Centerhotel Plaza BB, 5 nights regional hotels BB, and 6-day escorted tour.

If you've a week to spare, this whistle-stop tour encompasses most of Iceland's

**Day 4 >> Lake Mývatn** Cross the blackened plains of Möðrudalsræfi before reaching the most powerful waterfall in Europe. Next is Mývatn, a eutrophic lake, and finally stop by at Goðafoss before reaching Akureyri for the night. B

**Day 5 >> Akureyri** Today is a free day in the northern capital, so get stuck in to the vibrant bar culture here, and perhaps head to Húsavík for a whale-watching cruise. B

**Day 6 >> Snæfellsnes** Skagafjörður is home to a fascinating museum, Glumbær. Here you'll learn about the traditional Icelandic turf houses you will have seen dotted around on your trip. B

**Day 7 >> Snæfellsnes** Spend the day exploring the scenery, beaches and birdlife of the Snæfell peninsula, named after the glacier-covered volcano at its tip that can be seen from Reykjavík. B

**Day 8 >> Reykjavík** Have a last look around the capital before heading to the airport for your return flight. B

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NORTH ICELAND  
ODYSSEY

## 6-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR

1 day Reykjavík » 2 days Siglufjörður  
1 day Akureyri » 2 days Reykjavík



» PRICES FROM: £805 pp incl. flights and transfers, 4 days car hire, 5 nights BB and Whales, Puffins & Sails excursion.

The north of Iceland is home to a treasure trove of treats. This itinerary takes you to a world of quiet fishing villages, secluded fjords, giant whales and cute puffins, with the urban pleasures of Reykjavík and Akureyri never too far away.

**Day 1 » Reykjavík** Arrive at Keflavík International Airport and en route into the capital immerse yourself in Iceland's geothermal environment with a trip to the Blue Lagoon. Cleansed and composed, head into Reykjavík and check into your centrally-located hotel.

**Day 2 » Siglufjörður** Picking up your hire car, set off on the road to Iceland's northernmost town, watching the volcanic landscape unfold on the journey. Check

in to Hótel Sigló, a beautiful fjordside property surrounded by towering mountains, and dine at one of its three excellent restaurants.

**Day 3 » Siglufjörður** A short trip around the crenulated coast is Húsavík, known as the best place in Europe for whale-watching. Take a day cruise here, which offers a great chance of sighting humpback, minke and many other cetaceans as well as viewing the puffins nesting in the Bay of Skjálfandi. Return to Siglufjörður.

**Day 4 » Akureyri** Your tour of the north continues with a visit to the regional capital, Iceland's second city. Rated as one of Europe's top destinations, the city is



resplendent in colourful summer blooms and boasts the world's northernmost botanical gardens. Enjoy the vibrant social scene as the day tries its hardest to become night.

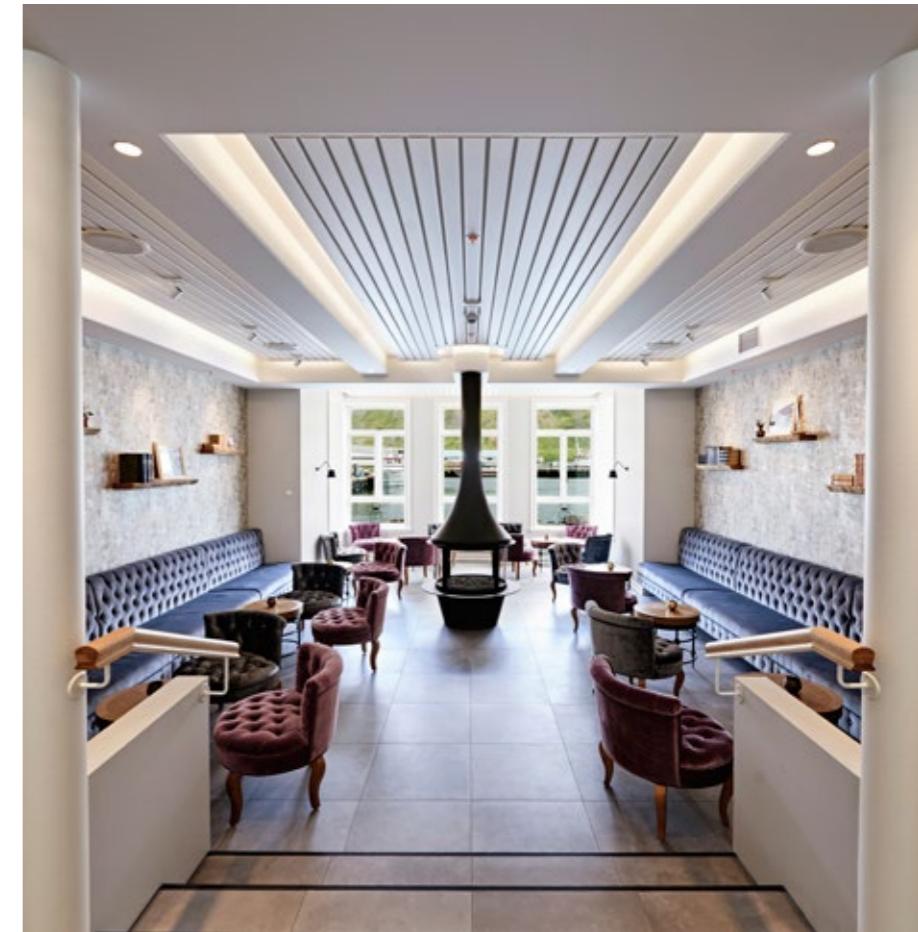
**Days 5–6 » Reykjavík** Return to Reykjavík, perhaps stopping at Thingvellir National Park on the way. Take your pick of the city's restaurants in the evening. After breakfast on day 6, transfer to the airport for your return flight.

## SIGLÓ HÓTEL, SIGLUFJÖRÐUR

## SUPERIOR



Situated on the waterfront in Iceland's northernmost town, Sigló occupies one of the prettiest spots in the country. To the north the glassy waters of the fjord stretch away, reflecting the sheer mountains that barricade its shoreline. Fresh fish is a regular feature here, and diners in Restaurant Sunna can gaze through the window to see the latest catch brought in. Two further restaurants offer diversity, with Hannes Boy providing traditional Icelandic fare and Kaffi Rauðka catering to more international tastes. Rooms at the hotel exemplify an indulgent Scandinavian ethos, cosy in winter and light and airy during summer, with attractive wooden furnishings complemented by modern amenities and a window seat overlooking the fjord.



## HÓTEL RANGÁ, HELLA

## SUPERIOR



One of the best hotels in Iceland, the Rangá is an Icelandic institution. About two hours south of Reykjavík, this hotel is an ideal stopover on a self-drive tour of the southern national parks. The acclaimed restaurant overlooks one of Iceland's finest salmon rivers and serves Nordic cuisine with a Mediterranean twist. There are three outdoor hot tubs which are loved by visitors at all times of year. Deluxe rooms have sofa seating and a little more space than standard. If booking a suite, be prepared for a mind-bogglingly eclectic Seven Continents theme, with quilts, hangings and handicrafts adorning the walls of the African and American rooms, a Zen theme representing Asia, and a nautical flavour for Australasia. Most fun is the penguin-themed Antarctic room.



## HÚSAVÍK EXCURSION

Summertime is peak whale-watching season in northern Iceland, as crowds descend on Húsavík for a near-guaranteed chance to see the sea's most impressive creatures, while nearby, puffins and other squawking seabirds make the littoral their summer breeding ground. Both can be seen on this unique sailing trip.



### WHALES, PUFFINS & SAILS

Embark one of two traditional oaken schooners, *Hildur* or *Haukur*, for an exhilarating day trip to view the wildlife of Iceland's north coast. As the sails fill, you'll be whisked out from Iceland's whale-watching capital to the island of Lundey ('puffin island') in the Bay of Skjálfandi to view the distinctive little birds with coloured beaks, before cruising the seas in search of minke, humpback and many other species of whale that congregate off the shore. You'll also have a chance to help hoist the sails and assist the skipper.

**>> PRICES FROM:** £75 pp incl. guide, sailing gear, hot drinks and snacks.  
Duration 4 hrs. Operates daily, 1 May to 20 Aug.



### HOTEL REYNIHLÍÐ, MÝVATN

#### STANDARD



The best hotel in the Mývatn region, with superb views across the lake, this is a perfect spot for exploring the northern wilds of Iceland. In summer over 100 species of migrating birds can be spotted around the lake, and aside from exploring the eerie volcanic landscape and geothermal wonders it's handy for whale-watching tours from Húsavík, a 45-minute drive north. With just 41 rooms, the hotel is usually full right through summer, so it's advisable to book early. Restaurant Myllan ('the mill') has a good choice of daily specials and à la carte dining options, and the neighbouring Gamli Bistro is a friendly tavern with a decent range of snacks, outdoor seating and live music.



### MÝVATN HIGHLIGHTS BY SUPERJEEP

A vehicle perfect for the perforated and pockmarked terrain surrounding Mývatn, the SuperJeep is the ultimate off-roader. Beginning at the roaring falls of Goðafoss, continue on to the shores of Mývatn, where you'll explore the rootless craters known as Skútustaðagígar, the castle-shaped lava pinnacles at Dimmuborgir, the magical thermal grotto of Grjótagjá, geothermal Mt Námafjall, and the lava fields surrounding Krafla volcano containing the deep aquamarine Viti crater lake. En route, take a dip in the thermal pools at Mývatn Nature Baths.

**>> PRICES FROM:** £130 pp, incl. guide, transport and entry to Mývatn Nature Baths. Duration 8–9 hrs. Daily, year-round.



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WEST & SOUTH ICELAND  
NATURE & WILDLIFE**11-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY**

1 day Reykjavík » 1 day Breiðarfjörður  
1 day Húsafell » 2 days Kerlingarfjöll  
2 days Hella » 2 days Hnappavellir  
2 days Reykjavík



mountains, volcanoes, glaciers and rivers. This intensive itinerary takes you to the country's most spectacular sights and scenic hiking trails.

**Day 1 » Reykjavík** Fly in and take a shuttle bus from the airport to check in at the Fosshotel Reykjavík.

**» PRICES FROM:** £2,425 pp incl. flights, transfers, 9-day escorted bus tour, 10 nights BB, other meals and excursions per itinerary.

While Reykjavík and Akureyri have burgeoning cultural scenes, the main reason everyone visits Iceland is for its



**Day 2 » Breiðarfjörður & Húsafell** At Breiðarfjörður, where you'll take an ornithological cruise around the bay's islands, home to birds including puffins and guillemots. After, follow the stunning peninsular coast of Snæfellsnes, heading inland towards Húsafell and stopping off to hike around the crater of Grábrók, then checking in at the Hotel Húsafell. **B**

**Day 3 » Húsafell** Visit the beautiful waterfalls Hraunfossar and Barnafoss along the course of the Hvítá, which carves its way through lava fields formed after a volcano erupted under Langjökull glacier – your next stop, as you tour the man-made ice tunnel through its heart. **B**

**Day 4 » Thingvellir National Park** Thingvellir National Park is home not only to a beautiful lake and the site of the tectonic plate boundary that makes the island so geologically volatile, but also the country's first parliament. Visit the park before stopping by Strokkur geyser, and checking in at the simple and remote Kerlingarfjöll Mountain Lodge. **B,D**

**Day 5 » Kerlingarfjöll** Take a two-hour hike around the mountainous, volcanic landscape of Kerlingarfjöll, camera at the ready. In the afternoon, travel to the hot springs at Hveravellir, where you can have a scalding soak in the mineral-rich waters surrounded by the barren, icy landscape. **B,L,D**

**Day 6 » Hella** Stop at Gullfoss waterfall to soak in more geothermal pools near the town of Flúðir. Then, passing the cone of Hekla, visit a Viking farm at Stöng and hike to the pools at Gjáin before making your way to the Stracta Hotel Hella. **B**

**Day 7 » Hella** Explore the extraordinary landscape of Landmannalaugar. Here, lava fields, crater lakes and russet-coloured rock abound, and it is known for some of the best hiking in Iceland. **B,L**

**Day 8 » Vatnajökull & Vík** Heading south, pass the towering falls at Seljalandsfoss and Skógafoss. Near the latter is Skógar, home to a fascinating folk museum, after which you'll explore the black

sand beach and towering bird cliffs at Vík. Check in for two nights at the Fosshotel Glacier Lagoon. **B,D**

**Day 9 » Vatnajökull & Jökulsárlón** This morning hike to Svartifoss waterfall, before an optional walk on Svínafellsjökull, filming location of the icy planet in *Interstellar*. Afterwards, visit Jökulsárlón, a glacial lake strewn with icebergs. **B,D**

**Day 10–11 » Reykjavík** On the way back to the Fosshotel Reykjavík stop for a hike in the steep-sided canyon of Fjaðrárgljúfur and pause at the extraordinary hexagonal cliffs at Reynisdrangar, then take in an Icelandic horse show. On day 11, head to Keflavík for your flight home. **B**



## DENMARK

This flat windswept land to the south of Scandinavia's most impressive mountain ranges can be easy to overlook, but Denmark's gentle topography can be as epic as the fjordlands further north. Long, sandy stretches unravel under watercolour heavens, a stiff breeze buffets the dune grasses and magical beech forests populate the bucolic landscape. Add colourfully cosmopolitan Copenhagen into the mix and you have a diverse and exotic summer destination just an hour away.

A trip to Denmark usually begins with a visit to its capital Copenhagen, one of the world's most attractive cities and a cultural powerhouse teeming with a vibrant cafe culture and a panoply of museums, galleries and shops. Like so many other great European cities, its wealth is founded on trade, the historical remnants of which can be seen in the myriad canals and quays that encircle and infiltrate the centre. Many a memorable vista has a soundtrack that squawks with gulls and clinks as halyard strikes mast while the city's historic townhouses and wharves look on, their facades reflected in the glassy water. Further afield the gentle hillocks and tufted dunes of the long Danish coast are peppered with Iron Age hill forts that recall the days of the Vikings and *Beowulf*, and the countryside is sprinkled with quaint medieval towns with cobbled streets, Gothic cathedrals and Hanseatic warehouses. This is northwestern Europe, and summer is a fleeting luxury of which the locals are compelled to take full advantage. Now you can join in the fun too.



## HOTEL 71 NYHAVN

## SUPERIOR



A stylish warehouse conversion in the heart of historic Copenhagen, 71 Nyhavn isn't just well located for the city's attractions – it is one of them. The subterranean Restaurant Pakhuskælderen offers a tempting array of market-fresh dishes, while an extensive art collection includes some striking oil paintings alongside avant-garde works that infuse the hotel with an unmistakably European elan. Book a Superior Room or higher and enjoy wonderful views of the harbour.



## NIMB HOTEL

## DELUXE



Set within a Moorish-style palace with an impressive Venetian marble facade in Tivoli Gardens, the Nimb brings a worldly exoticism to the Danish capital. Its stylish rooms and suites feature open fires and beautifully designed bathrooms, and the dining options are superb for a small hotel. Simple European classics are to be found at the Nimb Brasserie, while Nimb Terrasse, Tivoli's oldest restaurant, serves locally caught seafood and meat dishes paired with classic wines.



## COPENHAGEN ADMIRAL HOTEL

## SUPERIOR



The 4-star Copenhagen Admiral is a central harbourside hotel overlooking the new opera house. Housed in an old grain-drying warehouse, the hotel is full of interesting maritime artifacts. Wooden beams give rooms a warm rustic feel in sharp contrast with the modern architecture over the water. SALT restaurant and bar, has the feel of a Parisian brasserie, with a menu packed with French-accented dishes. Bikes can be hired from reception so you can dart around the city like a local.

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VIKING TRAIL  
SELF-DRIVE

## 7-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR

- 1 day Copenhagen ➤ 2 days Roskilde
- 2 days Lejre, Ruds Vedby & Trelleborg
- 2 days Copenhagen



➤ PRICES FROM: £725 pp, incl. flights, transfers, 6 nights BB, 5 days car hire and selected activities.

How much do you really know about the Vikings? Perfect for curious adults and excitable kids alike, this itinerary takes you on a Danish swirl around Sjælland's best Viking museums, archaeological sites and more, opening a new door into the world of wild, hairy men with horned helmets.

**Day 1 ➤ Copenhagen** Fly to the Danish capital and transfer to 71 Nyhavn, a historic hotel on the city's famously colourful quayside. Spend the rest of the day browsing Copenhagen's many museums and palaces, or sit at a Nyhavn cafe and watch the world go by.

**Day 2 ➤ Roskilde** Collect your car and drive to Roskilde. Known primarily for its famous music festival, which takes place in June/July, the town is also home to a gorgeous Gothic cathedral in which Harald Bluetooth is buried.

**Day 3 ➤ Roskilde** Take a guided tour of the town to uncover its Viking past, taking in the remains of five longboats housed in

the Viking Ship Museum.

**Day 4 ➤ Lejre & Ruds Vedby** Just west of Roskilde is Lejre, once an important Viking settlement that was the location of the king's mead hall in *Beowulf*. The Lejre Museum and nearby park help reconstruct Viking life with classes in weaving, pottery and more. Drive to Ruds Vedby to check into Kragerup Gods for two nights.

**Day 5 ➤ Trelleborg & Lake Tisso** Visit the earth ramparts at Trelleborg, a typical example of a circular Viking fort. Try a Viking mead, and then visit Tisso, a lake next to the remains of a Viking farm.

**Day 6 ➤ Kragerup Gods & Copenhagen** Enjoy a day of play before your drive back to Copenhagen. Your hotel is home to a canopy high wire, while at nearby Gerlev there is an action-packed historically-themed fun park.

**Day 7 ➤ Copenhagen** Breakfast and transfer to the airport for your flight home.



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ROYAL DENMARK  
SELF-DRIVE**8-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR**

2 days Copenhagen » 2 days Middelfart  
» 2 day Gråsten » 2 days Esbjerg



» PRICES FROM: £880 pp, incl. flights,  
transfers, 7 nights BB and 6 days car hire.

Discover Denmark's rich history as you drive through its rural heartland from Copenhagen to Billund, visiting picturesque villages and historic castles along the way, covering the country's two main islands and its mainland peninsula, Jylland. Ending on the beautiful Vadehavet coastline at Esbjerg, this comprehensive itinerary includes stays at some of the country's finest hotels.

**Days 1–2 » Copenhagen** Arrive in Copenhagen and check in for two nights at the Absalon Boutique Hotel. Use the central location to spend time exploring the capital's bars, museums and shops.

**Day 3–4 » Middelfart** Collect your hire car and head west towards Middelfart on the island of Fyn. We suggest you break the journey at Roskilde, whose attractions include the Viking Ship Museum and a Gothic cathedral that contains the remains of a 10th-century king. At Middelfart, check in for two nights at Hindsgavl Slot, a beautifully renovated 13th-century castle

set among landscaped gardens. Also in the area is the Hans Christian Andersen Museum at Odense and the 450-year-old Egeskov Castle.

**Day 5–6 » Gråsten** Travel onto the European mainland and south through Jylland to the Benniksgaard Hotel at the highest point of the Flensborg Fjord, where many of the buildings date back to the 18th century and meat is grilled on an open fireplace each evening. Nearby is Gråsten Palace, the summer residence of the Danish royal family, where you can visit the gardens and church.

**Day 7–8 » Esbjerg** The final stop is the town of Esbjerg on Denmark's west coast, where you'll spend a night at Hjerting Badehotel. Facing west and on the beach, you can gaze out as the sun sets over the North Sea. We recommend a walk along the Vadehavet shoreline, followed by a sundowner at the hotel's Ship Inn. After breakfast on day 8, return your hire car at Billund and catch your flight home.





## FAROE ISLANDS

Despite lying hundreds of miles from continental Europe, the Faroe Islands are governed by Denmark, but both the landscape and language are closer to the Arctic remoteness of Iceland than the flat familiarity of their sovereign state. Summer is definitely the best time to visit this unique destination, an archipelago of precipitous cliffs, Arcadian dales and quaint customs.

From above, the Faroes resemble many of the other littoral landscapes of the North Atlantic, with the same fjord- and mountain-riddled coastline as Scotland, Norway and Iceland. It's certainly something that appealed to the Vikings when they came to settle over a thousand years ago, and like in Iceland their culture has thrived in oceanic isolation. The gateway to this fascinating world is the capital Tórshavn, on the island of Streymoy. From here, you can access the other main islands through a network of tunnels and bridges, ferries and helicopters, meaning the plunging cliffs and wave-battered headlands of the coast are easily reached. In addition to the staggering beauty of the topography, Streymoy is also home to the ruins of the Magnus Cathedral and one of the world's oldest parliaments. The outer islands are equally impressive, and here you'll find abundant birdlife among a landscape of steep-sided fjords and empty bays, interspersed with multi-coloured cottages and grass-roofed wooden churches. Stray a little further to rugged cliffs like those at Vestmanna and you'll find vast colonies of nesting puffins, kittiwakes, guillemots, skuas and fulmars.





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CLASSIC CIRCLE  
SELF-DRIVE

## 8-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

1 day Vágur » 1 day Vestmanna »  
1 day Gjógv » 1 day Klaksvík » 1 day  
Søldarfjørður » 1 day Sandoy » 2 days  
Kirkjubøur & Tórshavn



**» PRICES FROM:** £1,275 pp incl. flights,  
6 days car hire and 7 nights guesthouse  
accommodation. Operates 1 May to  
30 Sep.

Here is the perfect itinerary to enjoy  
a week of midnight sun, discovering  
lush green valleys, high cliffs, powerful  
waterfalls, isolated villages and ancient  
Viking history. On the way you'll spot  
thousands of nesting seabirds, and cross  
the only bridge over the Atlantic Ocean.

**Day 1 » Vágur** Fly via Copenhagen  
to the island of Vágur and collect your  
hire car. From here, make for the coastal  
village of Bøur, with views across to the  
fin-shaped islet Tindhólmur. Further on is  
Gásadalur, a remote village perched on  
the clifftops and surrounded by mountains. **B**

**Day 2 » Vestmanna & Tjørnuvik** Drive in  
the tunnel under Vágafjørður to Streymoy,  
and take a cruise on the sound to see the  
birds nesting at Vestmanna. Then cross the

Atlantic's only bridge to the village of Eiði  
on Eysturoy. **B**

**Day 3 » Gjógv** Spend a day exploring  
Eysturoy's mountains and cliffs then  
overnight at this quaint harbour village. **B**

**Day 4 » Klaksvík** Drive through another  
undersea tunnel, this time to Borðoy and  
the Islands' second city, Klaksvík. From

here you can explore the other northern  
islands, Viðoy and Kunoy, connected  
by road, and gaze over the kyles to the  
dramatic islands of Kalsoy, Svíney and  
Fugloy. **B**

**Day 5 » Søldarfjørður** Return to Eysturoy  
and make for the village of Søldarfjørður,  
where you're invited for afternoon coffee  
and cake at a private house. **B**

**Day 6 » Sandoy & Tórshavn** Cross back  
to Streymoy and take the ferry to Sandoy,  
the only island that has sand dunes (hence  
the name), returning to the capital in the  
evening and dropping off your hire car. **B**

**Day 7–8 » Kirkjubøur & Tórshavn** Visit  
the historic village of Kirkjubøur, home to  
the Magnus Cathedral. Afterwards head  
back to Tórshavn to overnight before  
connecting with your return flights. **B**

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FAROE ISLANDS  
SHORT BREAK

## 4-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR

4 days Tórshavn with daily self-drive  
excursions



**» PRICES FROM:** £935 pp incl. flights  
from Edinburgh, 4 days car hire, 3 nights  
Hotel Føroyar BB, meals and excursions  
per itinerary. Operates 1 May to 30 Sep.

Like a pocket-sized Norway, the Faroe  
Islands offer stunning scenery within hours  
of the UK, and make a great destination  
for a long weekend. In the summer, the  
midnight sun, the hiking opportunities and  
great road network mean that you can  
pack a lot into a short break. **BL**

**Day 1 » Tórshavn** Fly via Edinburgh to the  
island of Vágur and pick up your hire car.  
Enjoy the scenic drive across to Streymoy  
and make your way down to the islands'

capital Tórshavn to check in at the Hotel  
Føroyar, which offers some amazing views  
of the archipelago from its traditional flat  
turf roof.

**Day 2 » Mykines** Retrace your steps back  
to Vágur and the pretty coastal village  
of Sørvágur. Catch a ferry through the  
stunning scenery of Sørvágsfjørður to  
the island of Mykines, home to a wide  
variety of birdlife and the archipelago's  
westernmost point. After, return to Tórshavn  
and treat yourself to a gourmet Faroese  
meal at your hotel. **BL**

**Day 3 » Vestmanna & Saga Museum**  
Make for Vestmanna, where you'll cruise  
through the narrow cliff-flanked sounds and  
grottos, stopping at the Saga Museum on  
the way back to Tórshavn. This evening  
we recommend a sailboat excursion to  
Nólsoy to enjoy a cave concert and  
dinner on the island, with the hanging sun  
granting impressive views even as you  
return late into the night. **BLD**

**Day 4 » Tórshavn** Take your final  
breakfast in Tórshavn, then explore  
more of the islands. A visit to the  
dramatically remote village of Gásadalur  
is recommended before returning your hire  
car to the airport at Vágur and connecting  
with your homeward flights. **B**



## Faroe Island extensions

If you have a little more time to  
spend, call one of our specialists  
on **020 7838 5869** about adding  
this tour to an Iceland break via  
Reykjavik or to a trip to Copenhagen  
and mainland Denmark.



## GREENLAND

The world's largest island is also the country with the lowest density of human population. Much of Greenland is a pristine environment with a vast ice sheet at its centre, a rugged, mountainous land packed with glaciers, fjords and creatures great and small. And yet humans have made a home in this inhospitable wilderness for some 5,000 years, as waves of incoming Inuits and Vikings have found ways to adapt to the harsh northern winters. Thankfully summer is one of the rare times when parts of Greenland actually live up to its verdant name, and the forbidding winter landscape opens up to spectacular coastal adventures on sea and land.

As the winter ice thaws, the fringes of Greenland are released from their hoary covering, exposing rock and heath surrounding colourful villages of matchbox houses dotted along the clifftops, all resplendent in the constant glare of the northern summer. Dogsleds, snowmobiles, skis and snowshoes are no longer the only way to get around. Hiking trails beat a path through bold rock formations fringed by burgeoning wildflowers, and an intricate network of fjords and sounds becomes navigable again by boat, opening up all manner of exhilarating cruising possibilities, particularly in the

south between the 'Golden Triangle' towns of Qaqortoq, Narsaq and Narsarsuaq. It is in the summer, too, that the glaciers that eject ice from the country's interior are at their most active. Calving, the process that creates icebergs, is a major attraction for those beguiled by one of nature's most extraordinary events: there is nothing quite like the crisp bluish colour of glacial ice, and no sculptor can replicate the elaborate spires and steeples that plunge down into the icefjords. You can see and hear this spectacular production line of waterfalls and icebergs for yourself with a visit to Ilulissat.



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## THE ICEBERG TOWN OF ILULISSAT



## 7-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR

1 day Copenhagen » 2 days Ilulissat  
 » 1 day Eqi Glacier » 1 day Ilulissat »  
 2 days Copenhagen



» PRICES FROM: £2,150 pp incl. flights, transfers, 2 nights Hilton Copenhagen Airport BB, 3 nights Hotel Arctic BB, 1 night Glacier Lodge BB and activities per itinerary. Operates 18 Jun to 7 Sep.

A colourful collection of bungalows dispersed over a promontory, Ilulissat resembles many other pretty Arctic towns. But just to the south, the Arctic's most productive glacier pushes billions of tonnes of ice into the Ilulissat Icefjord, creating a magical vista of bobbing icebergs that glint blue in the midnight sun of the summer.

**Day 1 » Copenhagen** Greenland is best reached via Denmark, so fly to Copenhagen and check into the Hilton airport hotel. Just fifteen minutes from the city centre, you'll be able to spend your first day enjoying the sights and sounds of the Danish capital.

**Day 2 » Ilulissat** Take an early morning flight across the North Atlantic to Greenland, touching down in Ilulissat. The remainder of the day is free for you to explore the town, with Restaurant Ulu highly recommended for its exquisite Arctic cuisine and the views over Disko Bay. 

**Day 3 » Ilulissat** Start your morning with a historic walk around the town centre, discovering the town's history from its genesis as a Danish trading port in the 18th century. In a gully just to the south is Sermermuit, a settlement showcasing four millennia of Inuit history. 

**Day 4 » Eqi Glacier** Today consists of a stunning journey up the western coast of

Greenland, its rocky peaks and headlands infiltrated by sparkling ice-saturated fjords. About fifty miles to the north, Eqi Glacier is one of the most beautiful in all of Greenland, and the lodge here is perfectly positioned for watching the giant blocks of ice breaking free into the sea. 

**Day 5 » Ilulissat** Return to Ilulissat, where you'll take a night cruise on the Icefjord, illuminated by the midnight sun. 

**Day 6-7 » Copenhagen** Spend another day, night and morning in the Danish capital before continuing your homeward journey. 

## Greenland/Iceland extension

From summer 2016, a new flight route between Keflavik and Ilulissat means you can book this tour as an add-on from Iceland. Call one of our specialists on **020 7838 5869** for details.



## GLACIER LODGE, EQI GLACIER

## SUPERIOR



Thanks to climate change news bulletins, the image we all most strongly associate with Greenland is one of a vast ice wall fragmenting into the sea in a scene of graceful destruction akin to the demolition of a tower block. This phenomenon, iceberg calving, is a regular feature as Greenland's glaciers melt into its fjords, but symbolises so much more – and there are few more dramatic places to see and hear it unfurl than Glacier Lodge Eqi.

Facing the foremost edge of Eqi Glacier (known locally as Eqip Sermia), the huts at Eqi Lodge give you front-row seats to witness the calving as ice breaks from the wall and avalanches into the fjord. Fortunately your raised veranda is well out of the way of the ensuing waves, and the



comfortable huts' solar-powered heating means you can be cosy and eco-friendly all at once. The journey around the coastal waters where whales and seals frequently sport is an excursion in itself, via remote settlements and the huge fjords of Pakitsoq, all the while listening out for the distant rumbles that signal the glaciers' movement, and passing in full view of the glacier wall on your approach to the lodge. Aside from the sea excursion, you'll have the opportunity to explore the lagoon, moraine and glacier on one of the lodge's thrilling escorted hikes. Huge flocks of geese populate the nearby lagoon during the summer breeding season. Further into the interior, a hike on inland ice gives a thrilling sense of the power of the slowly shifting mass of frozen and melting water where it meets the bedrock, forming deep wells and lakes.

## GREENLAND EXCURSIONS

Many of the images we see of Greenland are apocalyptic visions of its vast ice shelf collapsing into the ocean. You can witness the dramatic sights and sounds yourself on a sailing trip through the armada of icebergs the island's glaciers sporadically shed as they reach the coast, and afterwards explore one of the tiny remote coastal settlements that dot Greenland's shores and see how locals live harmoniously with their harsh environment.



### SAILING TO THE ICEBERGS

Board a small boat at Ilulissat's tiny harbour and set out into stunning Disko Bay to get a closer look at the huge towers of millennia-old icebergs that have calved from Ilulissat Icefjord, one of the most famous in the world. Gazing around you'll see colourful villages and appreciate the wonder experienced by the early Arctic explorers. This excursion is highly recommended by our specialists.

**» PRICES FROM:** £65 pp incl. hot drinks.  
Duration: 2.5 hrs. Operates year-round.

### OQAATSUT SETTLEMENT CRUISE

Oqaatsut is a tiny settlement of about fifty residents on a peninsula in Disko Bay. Established by Dutch whalers in the 1700s, Oqaatsut has its own school, church, grocers and restaurant but has barely grown in size since its foundation, reflecting the demanding lifestyle among Greenland's fjords. This cruise from Ilulissat shows off the beauty of Disko Bay and the bewitching simplicity of life lived among the icebergs.

**» PRICES FROM:** £95 pp incl. hot drinks.  
Duration: 5 hrs. Operates year-round



### THE OLD SETTLEMENT AT THE ICEFJORD

An Inuit settlement dating back over two millennia, Sermermiut lies just over a kilometre south of Ilulissat, and a short walking tour takes you right to the edge of the UNESCO-listed Ilulissat Icefjord. En route your guide will introduce you to the region's flora and fauna, and you'll pass Kællingekløften, a narrow chasm with a grisly past. Once at Sermermiut, you'll learn about Inuit history and culture with the Icefjord providing the backdrop.

**» PRICES FROM:** £30 pp incl. guide and hot drinks. Duration 2 hrs. Operates year-round.

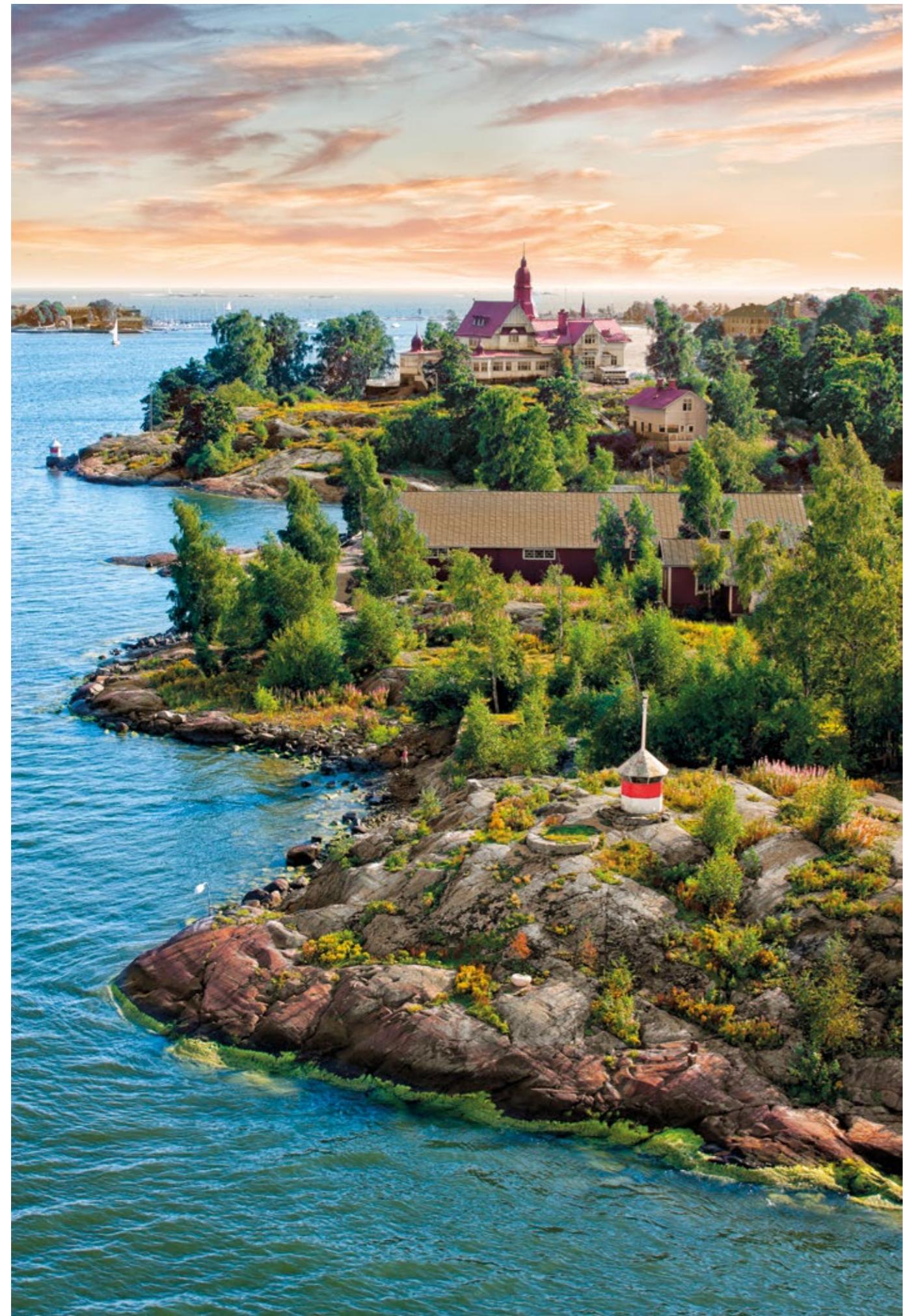


### CULTURAL & HISTORICAL CITY WALK

Founded in 1741, Ilulissat has come a long way from the tiny trading settlement once known as Jakobshavn. Meeting your guide, you'll take a walking tour around the town, learning about its role in Greenlandic history and how today's inhabitants cope with their extreme environment. On the way you'll pass the birthplace of explorer Knud Rasmussen, visit fishermen at the harbour and meet hunters at their trading post.

**» PRICES FROM:** £30 pp incl. guide.  
Duration: 2hrs. Operates year-round.





60.1708° N, 24.9375° E

## FINLAND

What first attracted Santa to Lapland wasn't the ready availability of helpful elves and flying reindeer, but the reinvigorating summer sun and a vast network of forests and lakes to explore after his whirlwind winter exertions. (You can drop in on him at his home in Rovaniemi in the Arctic Circle during his lengthy downtime.) The chic capital Helsinki is the favourite entry point, where you can explore Finnish design and enjoy excellent shopping and a lively nightlife. Turku at the mouth of the Aura River on the south coast is the gateway to a stunning archipelago that stretches into the Baltic Sea.

Finnish Lakeland can be explored from Tampere, northwest of the capital, or on a self-drive tour of the villages around Saimaa to the east. Plentiful summer activities include sailing, salmon fishing, and hiking or bear-watching in Lapland and along the eastern border with Russia.

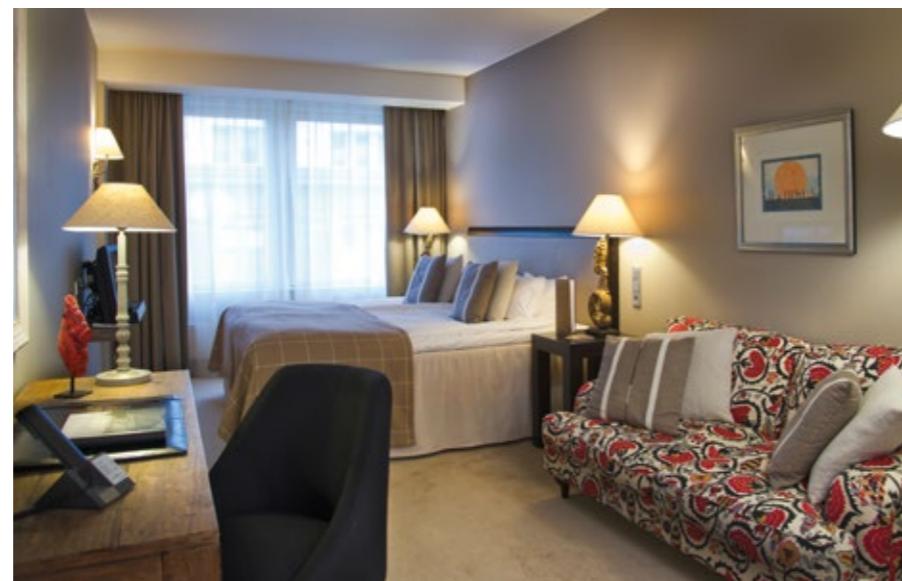
As a country, Finland is surrounded on every side by blocs to which it does not belong: it is a Scandinavian afterthought, a Russian satellite, a nation with a long Baltic coast without being considered one of the Baltic States. Its neighbours have all had a considerable impact, and like Poland the Finns had to fight both the Soviets and the Nazis during the dark times of the Second World War. But influences that once tugged the country in all directions are now a

major benefit: Finland offers Nordic cool, Russian grandeur and Baltic novelty in one neat little package. You can spend hours fishing on the forested shores of a secluded lake, stay in fabulous country manors, sip coffee or something stronger in the designer capital between museum visits, or hop on a Baltic cruise to soak up the opulence of St Petersburg or the raucous nightlife of Tallinn. Laidback and madcap in equal measure, it's a winning formula for adventure and relaxation.

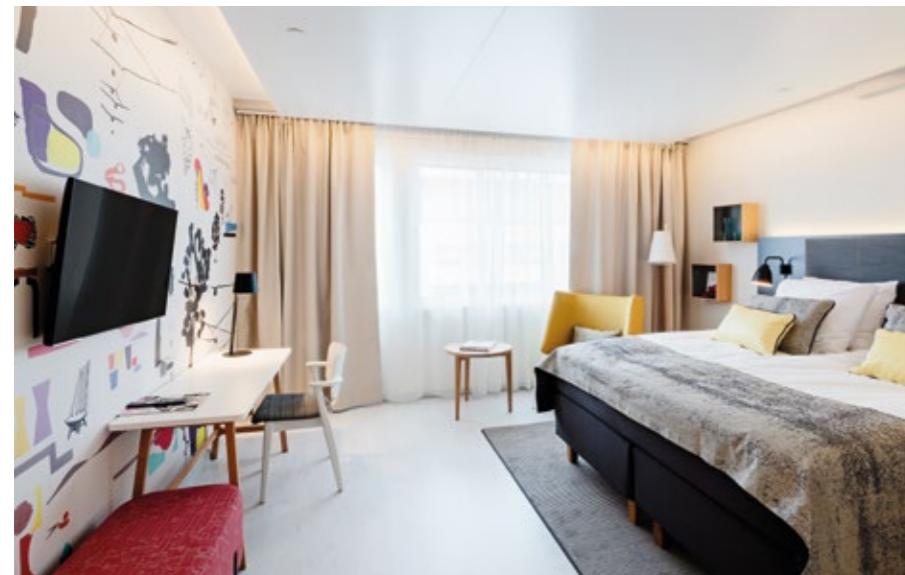


## HOTEL HAVEN

## SUPERIOR



One of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World, Hotel Haven is perfectly located right on the Helsinki waterfront, within seconds of the city's central park Esplanadi. Guests can eat gourmet Finnish cuisine next door at Havis, lounge in the trendy bar and work off any excesses in the gym. Rooms and suites are tastefully decorated with comfy furnishings, a kingsize bed and a spa-style bathroom, alongside the usual mod cons.



## HOTEL FABIAN

## SUPERIOR



A 58-room boutique residence near the Observatory, Hotel Fabian provides a range of stylish and comfortable rooms kitted out in modern Nordic fashion, arranged around a central courtyard that allows in plenty of light. While the hotel is well suited for short visits, the homely atmosphere is perfect for longer stays; 9 Lux rooms have kitchen facilities with that purpose in mind.



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BEST OF FINNISH  
LAKELAND

## 9-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR

1 day Helsinki » 2 days Rantasalmi »  
2 days Savonlinna » 2 days Anttola  
» 2 days Helsinki



» PRICES FROM: £1,195 pp incl. flights, 7 days car hire, 2 nights Hotel Haven BB, 2 nights Järvisydän BB, 2 nights Lomamokkila BB, 2 nights Anttolanhovi BB, tours and meals per itinerary. Operates 1 May to 30 Sep.

**The largest lake in Finland, Saimaa** is a huge basin riddled with thousands of tiny islets, forested strips and narrow channels. Around the bounteous waters are a plethora of charming rural villages and dense forests. This self-drive tour takes you through its best features, staying at historic lakeside cottages and imposing manor houses.

Day 1 » Helsinki Fly to Helsinki and check in at the waterfront Hotel Haven.

Day 2 » Porosalmi Collect your hire car and embark on the 4-hour journey to the Järvisydän Hotel & Spa near the village of Porosalmi. Settle in for the night in a traditional cottage on the shores of Ahvenlahti, a branch of Saimaa. B

Day 3 » Porosalmi Explore the lakeside activities available around Järvisydän, including golf, fishing and forest foraging. B

Day 4 » Savonlinna Drive through the lakelands to Savonlinna, a town spread over three islands in Saimaa, resembling a little Venice. One island is occupied by Olavinlinna, a 15th-century castle that hosts a major opera festival each summer, where you take a guided tour. BL

Day 5 » Savonlinna Enjoy a scenic cruise on the lake and, if you've booked ahead, return to Olavinlinna for one of the nightly

concerts (2016 dates 8 Jul to 6 Aug – visit [www.operafestival.fi](http://www.operafestival.fi) for more info). B

Day 6 » Anttola Make for the Art & Design villas at Anttolanhovi, another luxurious lakeside property constructed from local materials. Enjoy the use of your own private sauna, and opt to make use of your villa's kitchen or have meals cooked for you. B

Day 7 » Anttola Continue to enjoy the tranquillity of your forest setting. The woods yield a variety of edible berries, and you won't be able to resist a visit to Ollinmäki Wine Farm for a tasting tour of their pioneering berry wines. B

Days 8–9 » Helsinki Return to the capital for more cosmopolitan fun. Overnight at Hotel Haven, breakfast and transfer to the airport for your return flight. B

21

VISA-FREE CRUISE  
TO RUSSIA

## 6-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR

2 days Helsinki » overnight cruise  
» 2 days St Petersburg » overnight cruise



» PRICES FROM: £725 pp incl. flights, transfers, 1 night Radisson Blu Plaza BB, 2 nights MS Princess Maria HB, 2 nights Sokos Hotel Palace Bridge BB and tours per itinerary. Operates year-round.

The Gulf of Finland is all that separates St Petersburg from the laid-back Finnish capital Helsinki, and both look at their best in the long days of ice-free summer. Enjoy an overnight cruise to this world-renowned mecca for shoppers, foodies, culture vultures and fans of rococo extravagance.

**Day 1 » Helsinki** Touch down in Helsinki and check in at the Radisson Blu Plaza, a modern hotel close to the Finnish National Theatre and the Museum of Finnish & International Art.

**Day 2 » Helsinki, MS Princess Maria** Spend the day exploring the galleries and museums of Helsinki, including the orthodox Uspenski Cathedral, which should whet your appetite for all things Russian. Board the luxury cruise ship MS Princess Maria for the evening sailing. B

**Day 3 » St Petersburg** Arriving in Russia in the morning, check into the Sokos Hotel Palace Bridge before embarking on a sightseeing tour to the Fabergé Museum and either the Hermitage or the Peter & Paul Fortress. The former, housed in the famous Winter Palace, is one of the largest and oldest in the world, with

an extraordinary collection of paintings, decorative art and antiquities. B

**Day 4 » St Petersburg** Spend the next day touring the myriad palaces, orthodox churches and museums that pepper the city, and perhaps catch a show at the Mikhailovsky Theatre in the evening. B

**Day 5 » St Petersburg, MS Princess Maria** You have most of the day free to have a final look round St Petersburg before boarding your cruise ship for dinner. B

**Day 6 » Helsinki** The ship arrives in Helsinki in the early morning, so you will have free time in the Finnish capital before catching your flight home. B





## CANADA

'Vast' is a word that looms large in any description of this truly epic country. Forty times the size of the UK, it's the world's second largest nation, but don't let the geographer's hyperbole get in the way of those signal moments that make Canada such a wonderful holiday destination. From the backbeat backstreets of its culinary and cultural centres to tiny tundra towns circled by passing polar bears, Canada's ten provinces, from the Yukon in the west to Prince Edward's Island in the east, boast some beautiful snapshot details that put a human scale on all that sprawling enormity.

Six time zones' worth of landscape ensures there's something here for everyone. Outdoor fanatics are well catered for, with well-trodden paths and well-paddled rivers stretching across Arctic tundra, giant mountain ranges, fertile rainforest and the verdant valleys of the Pacific coast. These breathtaking habitats have certainly attracted their fair share of animal life – wildlife enthusiasts can spot grizzlies and polar bears as well as wolves, moose, elk, bison and caribou in big numbers, whilst dolphins, orcas, belugas and other great whales dominate the oceans. And despite the relative isolation of even the largest settlements, Canada's kaleidoscopic culture, readily influenced by countless others from east and west, guarantees a memorable welcome, with distinctive cuisine (including great Asian cooking in Vancouver, poutine in Quebec and Tim Horton's doughnuts on every main street) and Inuit and avant-garde art in countless city galleries.





22

ROCKIES &  
RAINFOREST

## 16-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

3 days Vancouver >> 2 days Victoria  
 >> 2 days Tofino >> 1 day Parksville >>  
 2 days Whistler >> 1 day Wells Gray  
 >> 2 days Jasper >> 3 days Banff



**>> PRICES FROM:** £3,395 pp incl. flights, transfers, 13 days car hire, 15 nights accommodation and touring as indicated. Operates 1 May to 2 Oct.

Sunset views of the Pacific Ocean, miles of lush parkland and picture-perfect lakes make western Canada one of the world's most exciting destinations. See the best

of British Columbia and neighbouring Alberta on this extensive self-drive tour, from the whale-frequented waters of Vancouver Island to the magnificent mountainscapes of Jasper National Park. Driving distances are long, but with views like this, it's well worth the effort.

**Days 1–3 >> Vancouver** Fly to Vancouver and, on arrival, transfer to the landmark Fairmont Vancouver. Spend the next few days exploring this magnificent multicultural city – regarded as one of North America's most beautiful. See the sights from Grouse Mountain – the 'Peak of Vancouver' – and visit the Capilano Suspension Bridge, Granville Island and historic Gastown, home to shops, hip bars, great restaurants and lively nightclubs.



**Days 4–5 >> Victoria** Enjoy a scenic ferry crossing to Vancouver Island, which stretches 300 miles along Canada's Pacific coast, and see the sights of British Columbia's provincial capital. Victoria is known for its pretty waterfront and historic

buildings and, increasingly, an abundance of boho boutiques and coffee bars.

**Days 6–7 >> Tofino** Head for Vancouver Island's west coast, a rugged stretch which bears the brunt of the Pacific's mighty swells and hosts great surf breaks. Enjoy a three-hour zodiac whale-watching tour and spot other wildlife including sea otters, grey whales and bald eagles.

**Day 8 >> Parksville** Spend the day winding your way to the island's east coast and check into the Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Resort in Parksville, known for its sandy beaches and mountain backdrop.

**Day 9–10 >> Whistler** Take the ferry back to mainland British Columbia and drive

the celebrated Sea-to-Sky corridor route to Whistler, Canada's best-known ski resort. En route you'll see scenic ocean vistas, dramatic peaks and waterfalls, pristine lakes and numerous parks ripe for outdoor adventure from your base at the Four Seasons Resort.

**Day 11 >> Wells Gray Provincial Park** Continue north, passing Joffre Glacier and snow-capped Mount Currie, the northernmost summit of the Garibaldi Ranges. Visit Hat Creek Ranch to explore the days of the Gold Rush or go hiking, rafting or birdwatching in the park. Spend the night at the Alpine Meadows Resort. **B**

**Days 12–13 >> Jasper** Today you'll cross the provincial line, arrive in Alberta and

visit Jasper National Park, the Rockies' largest nature park. It's a wildlife enthusiast's paradise – boasting elk, caribou, grizzlies, black bears, beavers and coyotes – and home to the must-see sights of Spirit Island and Maligne Lake.

**Days 14–16 >> Banff** South of Jasper, along the Icefields Parkway, is Banff, a small resort town in the Banff National Park, famed for its mountain views and hot springs and enormously popular with outdoor enthusiasts. There's plenty of time to head out into the surrounding wilderness – on foot, horseback or mountain bike – before heading on to Calgary to catch your flight home.



23

CARIBOU MIGRATION  
AT ARCTIC HAVEN

## 10-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

1 day Yellowknife &gt;&gt; 7 days Arctic Haven Wilderness Lodge &gt;&gt; 2 days Yellowknife



**>> PRICES FROM:** £5,575 pp incl. flights, transfers, 2 nights Days Inn & Suites, 7 nights Arctic Haven FB and guided activities per itinerary. Operates Apr-May and Aug-Sep.

Experience the vast wilds of the Canadian Arctic in style with a stay at a small wilderness lodge on the banks of Ennadai Lake, 400 miles east of Yellowknife, and witness the spring or autumn migration of birds and animals including vast numbers of Qamanirjuaq caribou. Hiking, kayaking and boating are on offer

**Day 1 >> Yellowknife** Fly from London via Calgary to Yellowknife, set on the northern shores of Great Slave Lake in the remote Northwest Territories. Check in to the Days Inn & Suites and explore the Old Town. From here it's 250 miles to the Arctic Circle, but with no real roads in between, Yellowknife is the true gateway to Canada's Arctic north.

**Days 2–8 >> Arctic Haven Wilderness Lodge** Depart Yellowknife by private charter plane and fly to the Arctic Haven Wilderness Lodge. Located along the treeline of the Arctic Barren Lands region, the lodge is perfectly placed to view the 350,000-strong Qamanirjuaq caribou herd that spreads out across the region during migration. Ecologically rich, the surrounding wilds also host grizzly bears, Arctic wolves, wolverines and black bears.

The Arctic Watch Wilderness Lodge is open for just a few weeks each year in July and August and its location, on Somerset Island in the vast Canadian territory of Nunavut, offers unforgettable wildlife encounters. Beluga whales snatch the headlines and polar bears are also occasionally seen. It's also a great place

in August and September, whilst in May, when there's still plenty of snow around, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and kite-skiing are available. What's more, miles from anywhere, the lodge's isolation lends itself to excellent evening aurora borealis viewing from the onset of autumn.

BLD

**Day 9 >> Return to Yellowknife** Spend the morning saying your farewells to the lodge and return to Yellowknife. Check back in at the Days Inn & Suites.

**Day 10 >> Yellowknife** Get reacquainted with civilisation. Visit the Bush Pilot Monument, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre and reflect on your exhaustive adventures with a stroll down Ragged Ass Road before heading to the airport to fly home.



24

ARCTIC WATCH  
DISCOVERY

## 10-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

1 day Yellowknife &gt;&gt; 7 days Arctic Watch Wilderness Lodge &gt;&gt; 2 days Yellowknife



**>> PRICES FROM:** £6,945 pp incl. flights, transfers, 2 nights Days Inn & Suites, 7 nights Arctic Watch FB and guided activities per itinerary. Selected departures 5 Jul to 7 Aug.

The Arctic Watch Wilderness Lodge is open for just a few weeks each year in July and August and its location, on Somerset Island in the vast Canadian territory of Nunavut, offers unforgettable wildlife encounters. Beluga whales snatch the headlines and polar bears are also occasionally seen. It's also a great place

for birders, amateur photographers and outdoor enthusiasts, with fabulous kayaking and hiking trips taking guests deep into the surrounding wilderness.

**Day 1 >> Yellowknife** Fly from the UK to Yellowknife via Calgary. On arrival, make your way to your hotel and, in the evening, get your bearings with a wander around the town. Yellowknife lies on the north shore of Great Slave Lake, North America's deepest and one of its largest freshwater lakes.

**Days 2–8 >> Arctic Watch Wilderness Lodge** Catch a private charter flight 4 hours north to Somerset Island and the Arctic Watch Wilderness Lodge. Surrounded by barren tundra, this spectacular lodge is perfectly located for exploring the summer Arctic at its most impressive. Activities on offer include

rafting the Cunningham River, exploring the Northwest Passage, hiking to local waterfalls, fishing for Arctic char, and sea kayaking alongside the area's famed beluga whales. Encounters with wildlife are common, with possibilities of sighting musk ox, polar bears, ringed and bearded seals and interesting birdlife – including rough-legged hawks and peregrine falcons – living among the tundra. The lodge itself offers great views, cosy rooms in safari-style tents and fine dining, and guests are invited to attend lively and informative evening lectures. BLD

**Days 9–10 >> Yellowknife** Return to Yellowknife, check into the Days Inn & Suites and spend a day slipping back into urban life before catching your flight home.



25

POLAR BEARS  
OF CHURCHILL**6-DAY ESCORTED JOURNEY**

1 day Winnipeg » 3 days Churchill  
» 2 days Winnipeg



**» PRICES FROM:** £4,695 pp incl. flights, 2 nights Sheraton Four Points HB, 3 nights Tundra Inn FB and guided activities as indicated. Various departures 27 Sep to 12 Nov.

The state of Manitoba stretches over 700 miles from its southern border with the US to its northern border with Nunavut and the curling coast of Hudson Bay. Manitoba's southern capital Winnipeg is an artsy metropolis with many cultural attractions, while the remote coastal town of Churchill in the north hosts large

numbers of migrating polar bears as summer dims to a distant memory at the onset of winter.

**Day 1 » Winnipeg** Take a daytime flight to Winnipeg, arriving in time for an evening stroll around the Manitoban capital, a colourful cultural city located at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. In the evening, meet up with your fellow travellers and enjoy dinner together at the Sheraton Four Points. **D**

**Days 2-4 » Churchill** Catch an early flight north to Churchill, an isolated town on the western shores of Hudson Bay known as the 'Polar Bear Capital of the World'. Enjoy a variety of tours of polar bear country, exploring the surrounding landscape on purpose-built Tundra Buggy or traditional dog sleds. As well as a near-guaranteed sighting of the town's

most famous animal residents, you'll likely encounter Arctic fox, caribou, belugas, Arctic hares and numerous species of Arctic birds including the gyrfalcon, tundra swan and snowy owl. Weather permitting there may even be an opportunity to catch the aurora borealis is all its ghostly glory. **BLD**

**Days 5-6 » Winnipeg** Return to Winnipeg and take the opportunity to see a little more of the riverside city. Visit the impressive Canadian Museum of Human Rights and the Winnipeg Art Gallery or soak up the atmosphere at an ice hockey or Canadian football game at one of the city's professional sports stadiums. At the end of the second day, head to the airport to join your overnight flight home. **BD**



26

BIRDS, BEARS  
& BELUGAS**8-DAY ESCORTED JOURNEY**

1 day Winnipeg » 5 days Seal River Heritage Lodge » 2 days Winnipeg



**» PRICES FROM:** £8,435 pp incl. flights, 2 nights Inn at the Forks, 5 nights Seal River Heritage Lodge, all meals and guided activities as indicated. Selected departures 11 Jul to 15 Aug.

Few holidays offer wildlife encounters as up-close and personal as this one. At Seal River Heritage Lodge, an isolated hotel on Hudson Bay, Manitoba, you are invited to take the plunge and swim with beluga whales, gaze upon polar bears and listen to the howling wilds as you sip on a glass of something special. With expert

guides on hand to offer information and instruction, this is wilderness touring at its very best.

**Day 1 » Winnipeg** Fly from the UK to Winnipeg. On arrival make your way to the Inn at the Forks, near the bank of the Red River and The Forks National Historic Site. Enjoy dinner at the hotel with your fellow travellers. **D**

**Days 2-6 » Seal River Heritage Lodge** Board an early flight from Winnipeg to Churchill and transfer by air to Seal River Heritage Lodge, deep in the wilds of the Arctic tundra. This magnificent wilderness lodge offers comfortable cabin-style accommodation and unbeatable opportunities for encounters with the local wildlife. Don a dry suit and swim with beluga whales, sit back, relax and watch polar bears walk past the lodge's

windows, or climb aboard a big-wheeled Tundra Buggy and go in search of the area's fascinating flora and fauna. An expert guide is on hand to help you locate and identify an astonishingly diverse array of birdlife. Your stay includes a series of fascinating lectures and photographic presentations highlighting the best of the region's landscapes, wildlife and people. Each evening listen out for the howling of local wolves as you gaze up at the starlit sky. In late August you may even catch a spectacular Northern Lights display. **BLD**

**Days 7-8 » Winnipeg** Depart for Churchill after breakfast and explore the trading town – highlights include the Prince of Wales Fort and the Eskimo Museum – before your flight back to Winnipeg. Enjoy your last night at the Inn at the Forks and a day's sightseeing before boarding your overnight flight home.



27

ROCKY MOUNTAINEER  
GRAND CIRCLE

## 11-DAY RAIL JOURNEY

2 days Vancouver » 1 day Kamloops  
2 days Banff » 1 day Lake Louise » 1 day Jasper » 1 day Quesnel » 1 day Whistler » 2 days Vancouver



**» PRICES FROM:** £4,665 pp (Silver Leaf)  
£5,965 (Gold Leaf) incl. flights, 10 nights accommodation, Rocky Mountaineer rail journey, meals & touring as indicated. Operates May to Sept.

Travel in style through the Rocky Mountains, exploring some of western Canada's most beautiful destinations. Enjoy fine food and exceptional service aboard Rocky Mountaineer as you visit Vancouver, Banff, Lake Louise & Jasper. For a true five-star experience, why not upgrade to Gold Leaf class.



**Days 1–2 » Vancouver** Depart the UK on a daytime flight to Vancouver. On arrival you'll transfer to your chosen hotel. Explore Vancouver at your own pace, visiting Gastown, Stanley Park and trendy Main Street. A tour of the North Shore includes visits to the Capilano Suspension Bridge and Grouse Mountain.

**Day 3 » Kamloops** Board the Rocky Mountaineer to Kamloops. Today's highlights include Hell's Gate and the spectacular Fraser Canyon. **BL**

**Days 4–5 » Banff** See Craigellachie, Rodgers Pass, Kicking Horse Canyon and the impressive Spiral Tunnels on your way to Banff. The next morning is free for you to explore Banff at your own pace. After lunch you'll enjoy a guided tour of the town and the surrounding national park.

**Day 6 » Lake Louise** A half-day tour takes you via the Yoho National Park and onwards to the shores of beautiful Lake Louise.

**Day 7 » Jasper** Enjoy a tour of the Banff and Jasper National Parks and a journey along the Icefields Parkway, one of Canada's most scenic highways. A

ride on the Ice Explorer, which takes you to the heart of the Athabasca Glacier, is included in the price. Arrive in Jasper late this afternoon.

**Day 8 » Quesnel** It's back on board the Rocky Mountaineer today, as you travel through the Rocky Mountain Trench and past Mount Robson and the Yellowhead Pass to Quesnel, gateway to the North Cariboo. **BL**

**Day 9 » Whistler** Continue south, crossing Deep Creek Bridge, one of the highest railway bridges in the world, as you make your way to the year-round mountain resort of Whistler.

**Days 10–11 » Vancouver** After a morning at leisure, rejoin the Rocky Mountaineer for the final leg of your journey, arriving into Vancouver the same evening. Spend a night in the city before transferring to the airport for your flight back to London.

## BEST SERVED SCANDINAVIA

Best Served Scandinavia is an independent, tailor-made tour operator specialising in holidays to Scandinavia, Canada and the Nordic and Baltic regions. We are proud to be part of Wexas, a family-owned, leading luxury and experiential travel company, with more than 45 years experience.

## TERMS & CONDITIONS

All prices, fares, hotels and tours described in this brochure are correct at the time of going to press (10 Dec 2015) and are subject to change and availability. All prices are per person based on two people travelling together sharing twin/double accommodation (unless otherwise stated).

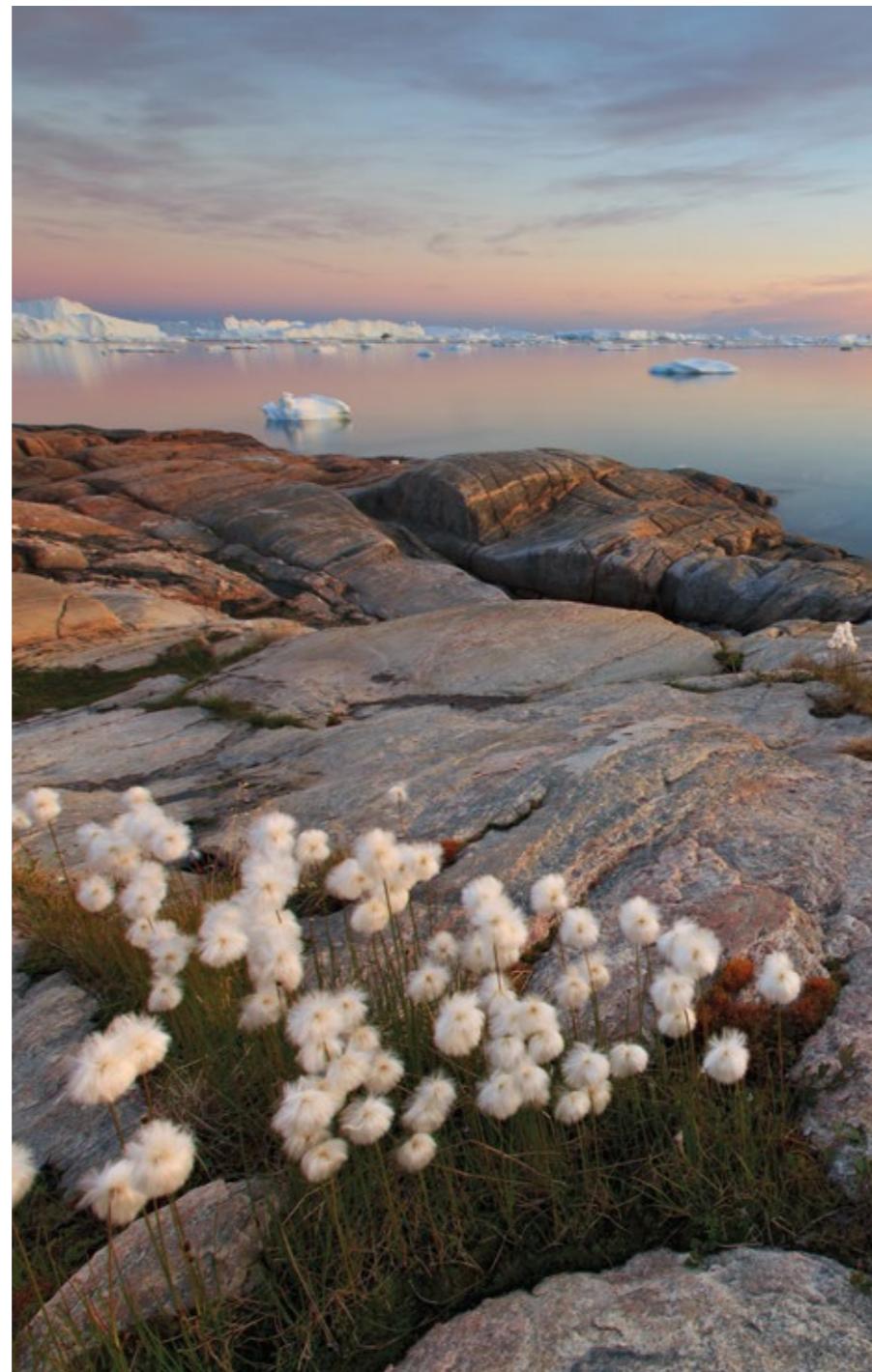
Many of the flights and flight-inclusive holidays in this brochure are financially protected by the ATOL scheme. But ATOL protection does not apply to all holiday and travel services listed. Please ask us to confirm what protection may apply to your booking. If you do not receive an ATOL Certificate then the booking will not be ATOL protected. If you do receive an ATOL Certificate but all the parts of your holiday are not listed on it, those parts will not be ATOL protected. For more information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate go to: [atol.org.uk/atolcertificate](http://atol.org.uk/atolcertificate). The Wexas/ Best Served Scandinavia ATOL number is 2873.

Full Best Served Scandinavia booking conditions can be found at [best-served.co.uk/terms-and-conditions](http://best-served.co.uk/terms-and-conditions).

## INSURANCE

We strongly advise that you take out adequate travel insurance, including cover for all activities in your itinerary, at the time of booking.

Our specialists can arrange travel insurance for you, with single trip, multi-trip and annual policies available.



## FIND US ONLINE

Our Best Served Scandinavia website, [best-served.co.uk](http://best-served.co.uk), is packed with information and advice on travelling to Scandinavia, the Baltics and Canada. You'll find an extensive range of itinerary and hotel options, our latest special offers, insightful articles and a downloadable version of this brochure. You can request a quote directly through the site and also sign up to our regular e-newsletter.

## EXPERT KNOWLEDGE

It's hard to overstate the value of talking to an expert when it comes to planning your holiday. We ensure our specialists regularly travel to the regions to find out what's new and re-evaluate the old, so you can be assured of an up-to-date opinion. They have an honest, informed approach to planning holidays, offering suggestions based on first-hand knowledge and an average of more than ten years experience in travel.



## YOUR TAILOR MADE SPECIALISTS

All of our specialists have travelled extensively in Scandinavia and/or Canada and the Nordic and Baltic regions. Their recommendations are always up-to-date, and their honest, informed approach to planning holidays, together with insightful suggestions based on first-hand knowledge of the area will ensure your Scandinavian stay is a special one.



LISA AYLING

My favourite hotel in Hardangerfjord is the Hotel Ullensvang. This is a really lovely, welcoming family-run hotel and the views from a Fjord View room are simply stunning.



LIBERTY BARRENS

Hurtigruten is a great way to see Norway by sea. You can sail from port to port seeing the fjords or do a full 6- or 12-night cruise – the choice is yours.



MIRANDA BERLIAND

St Petersburg is a fascinating city full of history and culture. The visa-free cruise from Helsinki is a great way to experience the Finnish capital and get a taste of Russia's Tsarist past.



CATHERINE BLACKBURN

There is no better place to experience the midnight sun than North Cape, Norway and you must catch the play 'Our Northernmost Life' at the Perleporten Kulturhus in Honningsvag.



FRANCESCA BROWN

The Norwegian fjords are a fantastic destination for those who enjoy nature and the outdoors. Hiking in Balestrand is a real highlight and taking a rib boat along the Aurlandsfjorden is exhilarating.



MADDALENA CARDONE

My favourite spot for the summer in Scandinavia is Gothenburg and the southern archipelago. Gothenburg is a buzzing city and the archipelago is ideal for long walks and bike rides as well as sea excursions.



MADDIE ELEINI

My favourite part of summer in Scandinavia is definitely the beautiful fjords and scenery, especially the drastic landscape of the Lofoten Islands and the Faroe Islands.



LUCY GREY

The stunning fjords offer plenty of activities throughout the summer. Hiking, cycling, canoeing, boat cruises and self-drives are all great ways to explore the vast scenery.



PIPPA MCCARTHY

A stay at Treehotel is an unforgettable experience: quirky accommodation with impeccable Swedish cuisine and hospitality. Simply savour the surroundings and scenery or take part in one of the many activities on offer.



AMY STAFFORD

For me a summer highlight is the west coast of Sweden. A flight into Gothenburg and a drive north takes you to an idyllic coastline abundant with pretty villages and incredible hospitality.

# BEST SERVED SCANDINAVIA

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