

Northern exposure

On a cruise to the top of the Earth with Hurtigruten Norwegian Coastal Express, dramatic Scandinavian landscapes are guaranteed.

Photography by Dan and Zora Avila

The stunning dancing lights flash green, yellow and magenta across the otherwise inky sky



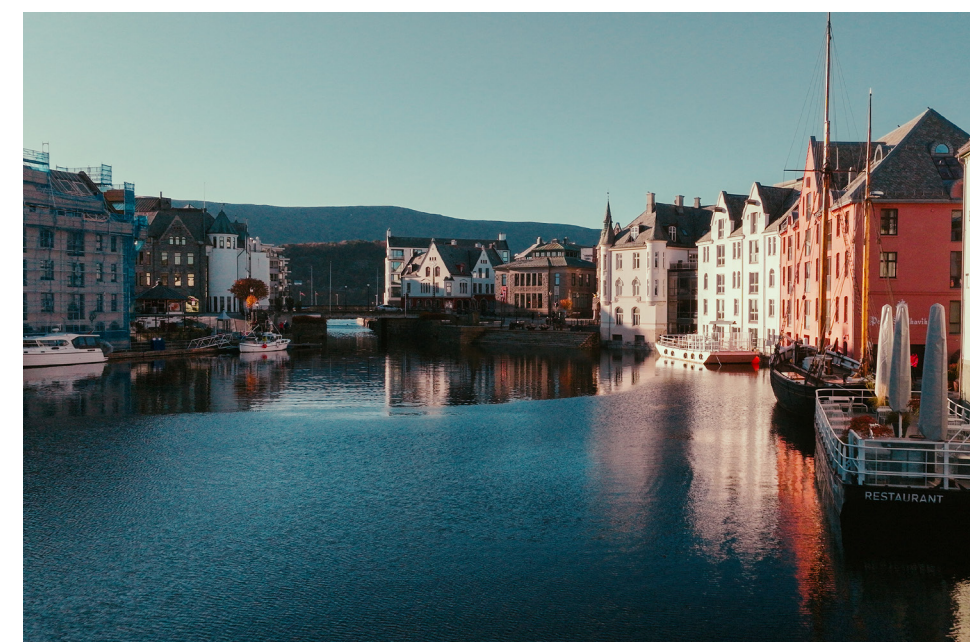
OPENING IMAGE: This Narnian-like landscape, bathed in the Arctic sun that hangs low in the late autumn sky, is on the outskirts of Honningsvåg, a Norwegian fishing town situated on the Barents Sea, known as the gateway to North Cape, where Europe meets the Arctic. The lakes are yet to fully freeze and feature beautiful striations that stretch across the surface. The region is visually spectacular, with every hairpin turn in the road revealing a new view that begs to be photographed.



LEFT: One of the major drawcards of any Norwegian fjords cruise is the chance to experience the aurora borealis. The stunning dancing lights flash green, yellow and magenta across the sky and, according to local experts, such is the extent of predicted solar activity that chances of strong sightings are very high over the next few years in susceptible areas. The confluence of perfect circumstances (minimum clouds, no moon and generally very cold conditions) set up the best chance for sightings.



RIGHT, TOP ROW FROM LEFT: This stunning stretch of the Atlantic Ocean Road, featured in 2021 James Bond blockbuster *No Time To Die*, is a mesmerising eight-kilometre stretch of Norway's Route 64. The islands and outcrops are linked by winding bridges that inspire drivers, photographers and filmmakers alike; fishing is an important part of the Norwegian economy and the country's cultural connection to the sea. The deep fjords are home to a rich bounty of marine life, and our Lødingen guide ensures we enjoy an action-packed day on the water.



MIDDLE ROW FROM LEFT: Midway along the Norwegian coast is the small town of Rorvik, with a history of habitation dating to the last Ice Age continuous through the Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Viking Age, Middle Ages ... to present day. A short boat ride from Rorvik town is Nærøya Island, a private sheep farm owned in part by Camilla Vågan, our gracious host, who channelled her inner Viking for this photo. Nærøya Island is a place of ancient religious significance, boasting an impressive medieval church, repurposed by Christian Kings; Ålesund is the quintessential example of a picture-perfect Norwegian town. This beautiful walkable village boasts historic buildings and winding waterways with centrally located Aksla mountain park offering stunning 360-degree views, for those willing to take the 418 steps to the top.



BOTTOM ROW FROM LEFT: Standing like shields against the elements, the *Children of the World* sculpture began in 1988 when author Simon Flem Devold randomly selected seven children from seven countries – Tanzania, Brazil, USA, Japan, Thailand, Italy and Russia – to visit the North Cape to dream of 'Peace on Earth.' During this visit, each child made a clay sculpture to symbolise friendship, hope, joy and working together. The designs were enlarged, encased in bronze and erected in a semi-circle at North Cape. Extreme weather at North Cape, Europe's most northerly point, provides us with a wind-blasted, minus 15-degree taste of conditions that forged the Vikings. The landscape is impressively foreboding, with cliffs marking the intersection of the Barents and Norwegian seas. 🌐

