

Arctic Norway

Orcas and Aurora Winter Expedition

November 17 to 27, 2024



Orcas
© Scott Davis

SAFARI OVERVIEW

Adventure to the northern reaches of Norway's Arctic in an exploratory winter setting for a chance to observe orcas and humpback whales and walk under the dazzling colors and spectacles of the Northern Lights. Navigate through stunning fjords and coastlines by boat in search of orcas and humpback whales that come to feed on the herring fish aggregations in the area and capture the misty blows of whales that shatter the ocean water surface in mystical display. Led by professional photographer and leader, Scott Davis, you have opportunity to focus on astral and aural photography while immersed in the awe and beauty of Norway's unique winter landscape. Intermixed with exciting opportunities to dogsled, snowmobile, and hike under the polar night while the Aurora Borealis dances across the sky, you will surely see your own breath come alive and swirl in tandem amidst the chilly air for a bucket-list expedition not to be missed.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 8 days and 7 nights exploring Arctic Norway waters, fjords, and coastlines.
- Zodiac cruise and witness orcas and humpbacks feeding up close in surrounding waters.
- Photograph the stunning Northern Lights display at peak time.
- Enjoy island hikes and explore remote northern towns of Norway through a host of winter activities.
- Dogsled, snowmobile, and experience a traditional hot sauna.

LEADER: Scott Davis.

DAYS: 11, including estimated travel time. 7 nights aboard the ship.

GROUP SIZE: 12.

COST: \$8,900 per person, single occupancy for lower deck cabins and double occupancy for main deck cabins, not including airfare. See the *Costs* section on page 5.

Date	Description	Accommodation	Meals
Nov 17-18	Travel to and arrive in Tromso, Norway.		
Nov 19	Embark on our ship in Tromso.	Aboard our ship	D
Nov 20–Nov 25	Voyage throughout the fjords and coastlines of Norway’s Arctic and enjoy seven arctic nights aboard with zodiac cruises, landings, and additional activities by day.		B, L, D
Nov 26	Disembark in Tromso for flights homeward.		B
Nov 27	Arrive home.		

LEADER

Scott Davis



Scott is a professional photographer specializing in wildlife, nature, and travel. Originally trained as a wildlife and marine biologist, his research and photo assignments have taken him to the far corners of the globe and all seven continents. National Geographic, BBC, Animal Planet, NY Times, and renowned magazines have used his photography. His patience for teaching and love of capturing the essence of his subjects make him one of our most popular tour leaders. He has extensive experience working in the polar regions having led expeditions and guided in both Antarctica and Svalbard for 15 seasons. His great fondness for these remote polar regions is evident in every expedition he leads, and he loves sharing this enthusiasm with all his guests.

SHIP

We chose the most well-equipped and comfortable vessel in the small ship class. The ice-strengthened hull and shallow draft enables you to explore and photograph channels and inlets other ships simply cannot navigate. The ship is equipped with Zodiacs for cruising and shore excursions. Enjoy excellent wildlife and scenic viewing from a large, dual-level observation deck at the front, and large



windows in the social areas. The spacious and comfortable lounge provides room to relax, gather socially, edit photos, and attend informative lectures. You have your own private cabin for lower deck cabins (or shared for main deck cabins), all with private bathroom facilities. With only twelve passengers, this ship is perfect for exploring places bigger ships cannot navigate. See the *Deck Plan* on page 9.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Nov 17–18 ~ Travel to and arrive in Tromso, Norway

Travel to Tromso, Norway and arrive by November 18 for your choice of an overnight stay before boarding the ship the next day.

Nov 19 ~ Embark on our ship

Enjoy the freedom of the morning to explore Tromso, considered a modern city with traditional history and the gateway city to Northern Norway. You will meet your leader, load your luggage for transfer, and take the short walk to the marina to board the ship in the late afternoon.

Delight in your first dinner prepared by our onboard French chef as you leave the sparkling city of Tromso behind. Settle in to begin your expedition into the polar night where you will spend the next 7 nights and 8 days in awe and adventure navigating through Norway's Arctic. The waters around this region are very calm compared to the Antarctic. During this in-depth exploratory expedition, you will have ample opportunities to Zodiac cruise, land ashore, hike, participate in wintertime activities, and view the natural wonders and wildlife from the decks of our ship.



Tromso

Nov 20–25 ~ Voyage through and explore Norway's Arctic waters, fjords, and coastlines

Embrace the nature of expedition and an incredible amount of freedom with a small group size and flexible itinerary. Emphasis will be on exploring the arctic landscape through various outings and wildlife observations that give you a sense and feel of the natural wonder of the high Arctic, while flexibility allows for opportune positioning to enjoy the best displays of the Northern Lights dancing overhead on a clear night.



Northern Lights
© Scott Davis

You will devote numerous days and nights to seek out whale interactions and observe humpbacks and orcas that inhabit the area to feed on the aggregations of herring in the surrounding waters. Witness and capture whale encounters up close (sometimes only meters away).

Priority will be given to capture unique astral and aural photography opportunities under the guidance of leader and professional photographer, Scott Davis, but make sure to keep your eyes open and shutter ready by day. The sun sits at the horizon or just below for several hours to cast beautiful pink and golden light, giving way to captivating dusks and dawns that span across the water and scenic landscape while setting the stage for a host of wintertime activities.



Humpback Whale
© Scott Davis

Zodiac cruising, backcountry snowmobiling tours, dogsledding, and ice fishing excursions are some of the more adventurous and winter-oriented activities sure to cut through the chill of the Arctic air. You are free to participate as you wish, but please let us know in advance if a particular opportunity does not suit your goals or thrill-seeking needs.

Indulge in numerous opportunities for winter walks and hikes, local culinary treats and libations, explorations of remote fishing villages and towns including a visit to a small island museum, and an evening of traditional sauna to round your breathtaking experience in Northern Norway in a balance of discovery, enchantment, and comfort under the spectacle of the Aurora Borealis.



Orcas
© Scott Davis

Flexibility is paramount in expedition travel. Our itinerary depends on the weather, sea, and ice conditions. We emphasize photography and observation of whales and other Arctic wildlife along with unique and beautiful landscapes, complying with local regulations regarding wildlife sightings in Norway. Our small group size gives us the flexibility to stay at a perfect photographic moment for however long needed according to the wildlife behavior and reactions. Participation in excursions such as snowmobiling and dogsledding are optional depending on your comfort level and interest, however, we ask that you please inform us in advance if you do not wish to participate in a specific activity so we can plan ahead.

Nov 26 ~ Disembark and flights homeward

Disembark the ship around 9:00am. Scott can call a cab so you can transfer to the airport, into town, or to your choice of hotel.

Nov 26 ~ Arrive home

COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)

Cost

Type	Cost per Person
Trip Cost, single occupancy on lower deck	\$8,900
Trip Cost, double occupancy on main deck	\$8,900

Costs are per person, single occupancy for lower deck cabins and double occupancy for main deck cabins, not including airfare. See *Included* and *Not Included* sections for more details.

We cannot guarantee a specific cabin number, but if changes occur, we will assign a cabin of equal or greater value.

Payment Schedule

Payment	Due Date	Amount per Person
Deposit	Due now to reserve your space	\$2,000
Final	June 10, 2024	Remaining Balance

Payments are due based on the schedule above. All reservations require a deposit to confirm reservation of your space.

Cancellations

Until the Final Payment due date, deposits are refundable except for a cancellation fee of \$150 per person, which can be applied toward another trip if reserved within six months of the cancelled trip's departure date. Cancellations are non-transferrable. No refunds are given after the Final Payment due date.

Included

- Carbon offsets for the duration of this trip.
- All leaders, transport, park entry fees, landing fees, dock and port fees, and permits for all activities unless described as optional.
- Seven nights on board our ship.
- Meals from dinner on November 19 through breakfast on November 26.
- A group luggage transfer from town to the ship on November 19.
- Guided snowmobiling tour excursion, equipment, and instruction.*
- Guided dogsledding excursion, equipment, and instruction.*
- Evening at a traditional hot sauna with libations.*
- Trip Planning Materials – information about entry requirements, flights, hotel recommendations, packing, gratuities, etc.

*Your participation in these excursions is optional, however all activities are included in trip cost; please let us know in advance if you do not wish to participate in certain activities so we can plan ahead.

Not Included

- Carbon offsets for your flights to/from this trip.
- All airfare, airport and departure taxes, and excess baggage fees. Round-trip airfare is approximately \$800 to \$1,500 between the US and Tromso, depending on origin.
- Passport and visa fees.
- Meals and lodging in Tromso, before and after the expedition.
- Airport and hotel transfers and any extra hotel nights.
- Gratuities – tipping is always discretionary. However, we suggest budgeting about \$300 to \$350 total per participant for Scott and the ship’s crew, accepted in Euros or USD (not Kroner). Scott will collect the tip at the end of the trip.
- Mandatory [emergency evacuation insurance](#).
- Optional [trip cancellation insurance](#).
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone calls, medical costs or hospitalization, room service, alcoholic beverages aboard the ship unless noted otherwise in the itinerary, items not on the regular menu, etc. If you have special dietary needs, please indicate them on your Traveler Reservation Form.

SIGN UP

Please contact us first to check availability, reserve your space, and obtain a Traveler Reservation Form. To confirm your reservation, we require a deposit and signed form from each participant.

[Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris](#)

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OTHER DETAILS

Climate

You will visit the Arctic at the beginning stages of the Polar Night Season. Due to high mountain ranges, you may not see the sun rise at all as it sits just at or below the horizon line, but there are still a few hours of beautiful pink and golden light that give subtle twilight light. Expect temperatures in the upper 20s°F (-2°C) at night and mid 30s°F (2°C) during the day. Skies are usually variable with a mix of clear and cloudy days. Weather patterns can be highly variable, so bring appropriate gear to handle a mix of conditions including wind, snow, and rain.

Fitness Level

You must be able to get in and out of the Zodiacs from the ship, via a short four-foot rope ladder with wooden rungs spaced about a foot apart, with staff assisting above you from the ship and below you on the Zodiac. Some upper body strength and coordination is required. Once ashore, you must be also able to get in and out of the Zodiacs onto the beach. You’ll have opportunities for a range of activities from easy, short hikes to

longer, more vigorous hikes and activities for those interested. There are various roads and trails along the coasts and villages and most terrain is not too technical, however spikes, winter boots, and poles are recommended, and snow depth can affect the level of difficulty. Most walks are less than a mile and often loop. Dogsledding requires one to jog alongside the sled for periods of up to a minute, however, you can opt to sit and enjoy as a passenger. Please contact us if you have any health concerns that may make this trip challenging.

Accommodations

Land accommodations are not included in the trip cost, and you are welcome to stay at any hotel in the area. This allows for maximum flexibility and freedom of choice in your arrival to Tromso. We will provide you a list of recommended hotels in your Trip Planning Materials that offer a mix of good value, comfort, and ideal location close to the meet-up location on embarkation day. If you are concerned about the standard of accommodations being below your expectations, please ask us before booking.

Motion Sickness

Don't let a fear of motion sickness keep you away! For all but the most sensitive, seasickness is rarely a problem in this region. It's a good idea to bring medication if you get seasick or are unsure, but you may find that you do not need it after a couple days once you have your "sea legs." Even those who have experienced seasickness reported that the incredible wildlife and overall experience were well worth the temporary discomfort. If you are susceptible to seasickness or are concerned that you might be, please come prepared! The key to avoiding seasickness is to act before you experience nausea. Do your own research and consult your doctor before taking any medications. A good night of sleep, eating well, limiting alcohol, and using your favorite seasickness remedy is sufficient for most travelers. Find more information on our [Coping with Seasickness](#) webpage (this information is applicable to any form of motion sickness) and contact us if you have any questions.

Flights

Detailed logistical information is included in the Trip Planning Materials we will send you.

Flights you book

- Arrive in Tromso, Norway (TOS) by 11:59pm on November 18.
- Depart from Tromso, Norway (TOS) after 12:00pm on November 26.

Terms and Conditions

Read our current [Terms and Conditions](#).

Conservation

Our company ethos has always regarded conservation as inseparable from responsible tourism. We struggle with the dilemma that traveling worldwide expends climate-changing carbon. However, we wholeheartedly believe that traveling with us will cultivate your passion for conserving our beautiful world while stimulating each destination's local economy. We encourage you to explore the various ways in which Cheesemans' operates within this context:

- **Ecotourism and Conservation for Norway.**
- **Cheesemans' Trips are Carbon Neutral.**
- **Offsetting your Travel to/from our Trip:** We ask you to pledge to offset the carbon emissions for your travel to and from our trips. You can purchase offsets with most airlines (Delta includes them automatically), use our handy [carbon calculator](#) and donate to Sustainable Travel International, or contribute to your favorite offsetting organization.

FAQS

Why travel on a small ship?

With only twelve passenger cabins, our ship is smaller than most cruise ships in Norway, allowing you to travel farther into smaller inlets. Our small group size gives you the flexibility to seize the moment and enjoy special wildlife encounters, and allows you to receive plenty of individual attention.

Are we guaranteed to see the Northern Lights?

We cannot 100% guarantee the Northern Lights will be observed as we cannot control the conditions, however, being in the proper place at the right time helps. Our flexible itinerary allows the ship to seek out the best viewing areas by night and northern Norway is a great destination to be in late November to seek out the natural phenomenon. In addition, Norway's Arctic is one of the best places to witness the Aurora Borealis and 2024 is predicted to be an exceptional year.

There are also forecasts available and the Kp Index is considered the most reliable. Measured on a scale of 0 to 9 with, 0 indicating low auroral activity and 9 being extremely high, the Geophysical Institute of University of Alaska-Fairbanks offers a [website](#) to view auroral activity and up to 27 day forecasts in all the auroral regions of the world, including Europe and the areas of Norway in which you will be.

How do I photograph the Northern Lights?

There is a little bit of trial and error involved, but your leader and professional photographer, Scott Davis, is there to provide tips and guidance as needed. It is important to remember that no two aurora events are the same and there are many variables involved. Be prepared and know that your camera settings may change from one night to the next. An attitude of exploration, experimentation, and having fun as part of the process are key to your success!

DECK PLAN



Deck plan and cabin sizes are not to scale and shows the number of beds, not actual bed arrangement.

Cabins 101, 102, 107, and 108 have one twin bed with a private bath.

Cabins 103–106, 109, 110, 201, and 202 have one double bed with a private bath.