

The Lofoten Islands and the Midnight Sun *Spring/Summer self-drive - 7 nights/8 days (May to August)*



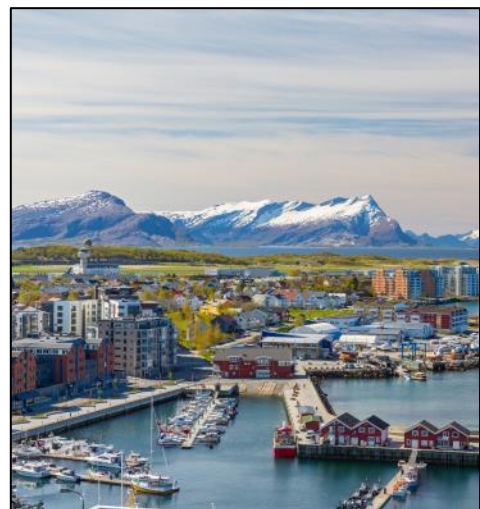
Travel far above the Arctic Circle to Norway's magnificent Lofoten Islands on this 8-day self-drive holiday. The Lofoten islands are a photographer's dream, with beautiful bays, white sandy beaches, deep fjords, and a spectacular 160km wall of mountains. Due to the warming effect of the Gulf Stream, the climate in the Lofotens is surprisingly mild. During June and July, the islands are famous for the midnight sun.

Day 1: Arrive in Bodo

Arrive Bodo Airport, collect your hire car, and make your way to the Scandic Havet Hotel, located on Bodo quayside overlooking the sea and harbour.

Home to a population of 50,000, Bodo is the largest town in northern Norway. It is built on a long, narrow peninsula at the entrance to the Salt Fjord, and serves as a gateway to the Lofoten Islands. Bodo has a long history as a fishing port, though today Bodo is largely a modern town, having lost most of its nineteenth century buildings during the Second World War.

Bodo is popular as a centre for outdoor activities, including kayaking, golfing, and fishing in the



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Saltstraumen strait, which contains the world's strongest tidal current. It also has a strong art scene attracting local artists, potters, and jewellery makers.

After checking in at your hotel, the rest of the day is free for you to explore Bodo and its surrounds. If time allows, the small coastal village of Kjerringoy makes for a lovely side excursion from Bodo.

Kjerringoy Village

Side Excursion

The village of Kjerringoy is located just 40kms up the coast from Bodo (getting there includes a short drive followed by a 10-minute ferry crossing). The dramatic coastal and mountain scenery makes the drive to Kjerringoy particularly lovely. The village itself stands out as one of Norway's best-preserved seaside trading posts, with original timber-built houses and a 19th-century church. A pleasant afternoon can be spent exploring the village and its harbour.

Day 2: Bodo – Reine in Lofoten (105kms); 3-hour ferry crossing to Moskenes

After breakfast, drive to Bodo ferry terminal and board the 11am ferry bound for Moskenes, in the southern Lofoten Islands. This is a 4-hour journey across the West Fjord, with stunning scenery en route.



From Moskenes, you can begin your exploration of the southern Lofoten islands. The nearby fishing village of Å (pronounced “oh”!) is the perfect place to start. This traditional village has a number of beautifully preserved 19th-century buildings, several of which have been incorporated into an open-air museum, the Norwegian Fishing Village Museum.

Norwegian Fishing Village Museum

Side Excursion

This “living museum” aims to recreate a traditional Lofoten fishery. It incorporates several buildings, some original and some reconstructions, including a boathouse, blacksmith's forge, cod liver oil factory, and the houses of the two fishermen merchants who presided over this region. Guided tours are available throughout the day.

From Å, continue 8km to Reine, a picturesque fishing village home to around 300 residents. Bright red fishermen's cabins dot the shoreline at Reine, overseen by the granite peaks of the Lofoten Mountains.



You stay tonight in a deluxe wooden cabin with fjord view at the Reine Rorbuer, a lovely hotel consisting of 32 restored fishermen's cottages. Supper is included during your stay. Seafood is the speciality at Reine Rorbuer, though the restaurant caters for all tastes and diets, including vegetarian.

Day 3: Reine

Today is free for you to explore the area around Reine.

A great many activities can be booked from the Reine Rorbuer, including guided treks in the western Lofoten mountains, deep sea fishing, rafting, and guided photographic tours focusing on the landscapes around Reine. If you prefer to explore independently, there are a number of scenic areas that you can access by car as well as several walks in the area ranging from 2-6 hours. The Rorbuer also offers bike hire.

In the evening, embark on a 3-hour guided kayaking excursion on Reine Fjord. Enjoy paddling in the shallow waters of the fjord, past arctic beaches and rugged mountain peaks, and enjoy spectacular views under the midnight sun.

At the end of your guiding kayaking excursion, return to Reine Rorbuer for dinner and overnight.



Day 4: Reine – Svolvær (120kms)

After breakfast, depart Reine for Svolvær, the de facto capital of the Lofotens. Today's 120km drive will see you cross several of the islands, providing endless photographic opportunities – of towering mountain spires, pristine Arctic beaches, isolated fishing villages, and, of course, incredible seascapes! – along the way. We particularly recommend a stop at Ramberg Beach, 27kms from Reine on the road to Svolvær. This is one of the loveliest beaches on the islands.



Further into your journey, you may also like to make a stop at the Viking Museum in Borg, where you can explore a reconstruction of a Viking Chieftain's home.

Lofotr Viking Museum

Side Excursion

The centrepiece of the Lofotr Viking Museum in Borg is a huge 80-metre reconstruction of an original Viking longhouse. Though a reconstruction, the building is located next to the site of the original structure that it is based upon – the largest Viking longhouse yet uncovered – which was believed to have belonged to a Viking chieftain. Alongside the reconstructed longhouse are fascinating exhibitions of Viking artifacts and history.

On arrival in bustling Svolvær, check-in at the Thon Hotel, overlooking the harbour area.



Day 5: Svolvær – Harstad (210kms)

Embark on another day of cruising and driving through the Lofoten Islands, as you journey east towards Harstad, with a few detours en route! After an early breakfast, check out of your hotel and board the 8am ferry bound for Skutvik on the Hamarøy peninsula, a journey of 3 hours across the West Fjord. From Skutvik, drive 50km through the beautiful scenery of Hamarøy to reach Bognes, where you catch the ferry to Lodingen (1 hour). From Lodingen, it is a 75km drive to Harstad.

Harstad is located on Hinnøya island and is the third largest city in northern Norway, with a population of 24,000. Sheltered by mountains on either side, the city has a pleasant, comparatively mild climate.

You stay tonight at the Thon Hotel Harstad, which is located in the centre of the city, close to the harbour area and with views out onto Vaags Fjord. Shops and restaurants are only a short walk away.

Time allowing, this afternoon we recommend a visit to the Trondenes Historical Centre.

Trondenes Historical Centre

Side Excursion

This fascinating museum presents an overview of the history of Harstad and the surrounding region, from the very early Viking settlements, through the Middle Ages and into World War II. Next to the museum is Trondenes Church, the northernmost stone church in the world, dating back to the late Middle Ages (1250). The interior is simple but beautiful, as is the scenic coastal setting.

Day 6: Harstad – Tromso (310kms)

After breakfast, depart Harstad for Tromso. En route, we recommend making a stop in Bardu (approx. 140kms from Harstad) to visit the Polar Park, the world's northernmost wildlife park.



The Polar Park

Side Excursion

The Polar Park protects a number of species native to Norway, including large predators such as bears, lynx and wolves, as well as moose, reindeer, muskox, wolverine and deer. The emphasis here is on exhibiting the animals in their natural surroundings, providing them with very large enclosures (the park boasts one of the highest ratios of land-per-animal in Europe) and an authentic environment. Visitors can walk around at their own pace or join a guided tour. The park has a small café/restaurant.

We recommend allowing at least 3 hours for a visit to the Polar Park; the closing time is 16:00 in winter and 18:00 in summer.

On arrival in Tromso, check-in at the Edge Hotel by Clarion, located on Tromso's quayside. This well-positioned hotel has a roof terrace with fabulous views of the city and harbour.

Day 7: Tromso

Today is free for you to explore Tromso at your own pace.

The largest city in northern Norway, with a population of approx. 60,000, Tromso is a lively, modern city with a spectacular setting amid the Lyngen Alps and blue fjords. Historically, Tromso was a fishing and trading port, subsequently becoming the jumping off point for Arctic expeditions, as it remains to this day.

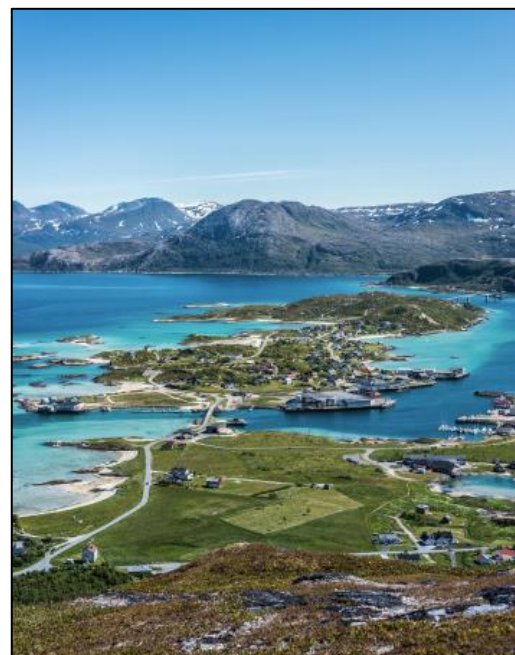


There are plenty of interesting sites to visit in Tromsø. Its most iconic building is the Arctic Cathedral, instantly recognisable by its peaked roof and beautiful stained-glass windows. Built in 1965, the cathedral can be seen from the harbour and many other parts of the city; midnight concerts of Norwegian music are held here during the summer months. In complete contrast, Tromsø Cathedral in the centre of the city dates back to 1861 and is made entirely of wood – it is the most northerly Protestant church in the world.

A ride on the Fjellheisen cable car to Mt Storsteinen will take you to an altitude of 421m above sea level. At the top of the cable car is a large outdoor terrace granting views of the islands, mountains, fjords and sea.

Finally, Tromsø's Polar Museum gives a fascinating insight into the lives of Norway's early trappers and explorers, such as Fritjof Nansen and Roald Admundsen. It is well worth a visit.

There is also much to do in the region surrounding Tromsø. Approx. 1 hour's drive (55km) from Tromsø is the island of Sommarøy. Remote and isolated, visiting Sommarøy is like stepping back in time. The island has a small fishing village, many beautiful beaches, and great walking trails. Sommarøy is worth visiting for the drive alone, which is spectacular!



Day 8: Departure from Tromsø

Breakfast at the Clarion and check out. If time allows, continue to explore Tromsø before driving to the airport (5km), where you will need to drop off your hire car before checking in for your international flight home.

Price Guide:

The cost of this itinerary is from **£1,425 per person**, based on two travellers in double/twin accommodation and travel in high season (July to August). For family and shoulder season rates, please [contact us](#).

Includes:

- Double/twin accommodation (B&B basis throughout, except in Reine, where half-board)
- Midnight kayaking excursion in Reine
- 8-day car hire with comprehensive insurance based on Toyota Auris or similar
- Domestic ferries (for passengers and car) as outlined in itinerary:
 - Bodo to Moskenes
 - Svolvær to Skutvik
 - Bognes to Lodingen

Excludes:

- International flights – please ask us for a quote
- Lunch and dinner to own account except where stated otherwise in itinerary
- Travel expenses and entrance fees
- Toll crossings (approx £10 per crossing)
- Travel insurance
- Personal expenses and tips
- Single supplement (£595)