Sortland - Northern Lights on the Norwegian Coast

**HOLIDAY TYPE:** Small Group  
**VISITING:** Norway

**BROCHURE CODE:** 4000  
**DURATION:** 4 nights

"Knowing exactly the best places to see the Northern Lights invariably comes down to local knowledge and experience. Every holiday provided by The Aurora Zone has been designed in conjunction with our local partners in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Iceland to ensure that we are providing the best possible Aurora hunting experience. Similarly, during daylight hours when you are not Aurora hunting, we want you to experience the absolute best of your chosen destination. To achieve this goal, we have again engaged local experts and guides to ensure that your entire stay is an unforgettable experience."

Ali Mclean
Key facts

Pace: Active

Suitable for:
Ages 15+. See our terms for further information

In Brief
Whale watching, husky sledding, a reindeer farm visit and a range of Aurora hunting activities will keep you busy during your five day visit to Sortland, one of Northern Norway’s largest towns. You get all the amenities of a thriving city, easy access to pristine Norwegian wilderness and an excellent chance to see the Northern Lights during your dedicated evening activities.

Our Opinion

“This trip offers the perfect mix of activities to experience Sortland in a number of ways. The different Aurora hunting activities each night are great fun and practical. In particular the Aurora hunt by minibus - if there is cloud cover in your immediate area the guides will drive you out of town to (hopefully) clearer night skies. The whale watching activity is a highlight of this trip and you will certainly not forget getting up close to a whale in a hurry!”

Ali Mclean
What's included?

ALL OF THE ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES LISTED BELOW ARE INCLUDED IN THE HOLIDAY PRICE

- Return group airport transfers from Evenes
- 4 nights' accommodation in a double or twin room at the Sortland Hotell (based on two people sharing)
- Meals: 4 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 3 dinners
- **The following activities are included in the price:** Aurora Hike, whale safari at Andenes, scenic drive, Aurora search by minibus, dog sledding, Aurora camp and minibus hunt, day time hike, Aurora snowshoeing, Sámi reindeer visit (the order of activities is subject to change)
- Services of expert local guides
- Winter clothing and equipment during activities

A note on flights: Flights are not included in the holiday price so that the best possible fares and schedule can be found at the time of booking. There are low cost and scheduled flights operating on this route and our travel experts will happily provide a quotation and arrange the flights as part of the package.

Trip Overview

The town of Sortland is situated on the coast of Northern Norway. It offers guests a wonderful combination of modern amenities and the chance to experience how people go about their lives in this region. This holiday couples these elements with incredible wilderness experiences, wildlife encounters and excellent Northern Lights opportunities to give guests an unforgettable Norwegian break.

Every night of your holiday is filled with a dedicated Aurora hunt. Your local guides will offer the best possible opportunities to see the Northern Lights – on foot, snowshoes, and in a minibus. There will also be a special Aurora beach camp where you can relax and watch the skies.

We also like to keep you nice and busy during the daylight hours, so your trip to Sortland also includes some unforgettable daytime activities and experiences. Each is designed to offer a real insight into the area.
One highlight is sure to be the visit to the local husky farm, where you will learn traditional mushing techniques and head out on a dog sled safari. You will also have the opportunity to take to the water on board a whale watching rib boat in the hope of viewing some of these wonderful creatures.

One of the best ways to learn about the local traditions and culture is by visiting a local Sámi reindeer farm, so we have included this on the final day. During your visit you will learn about the daily life of a herder and the importance of the reindeer to the region's heritage.

In your free time, you will be able to explore the town and enjoy the sights and sounds of life in the North. You will also be able to see why this city has been labelled ‘The Blue City’ as you take in the local architecture.

Image credits: Marten Bril & Robert Finn Novak

**Agenda**

Please note the order of activities is subject to change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY 1</th>
<th>Arrival and introduction</th>
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Upon arrival at Evenes Airport you will greeted by your local guide who will transfer you to your hotel. The scenic drive lasts around two hours and will give you a wonderful introduction to the beautiful Norwegian coastline if you land during daylight hours.

If your flight gets in later in the evening, your guide will incorporate an Aurora hunt during your transfer. If you are arriving on a later flight, we would recommend eating at Oslo airport as if the Northern Lights are dancing your transfer may take slightly longer than planned!

As some flights arrive later we have not included tonight’s evening meal at the hotel but if you wish to add it in please just ask one of our travel experts for a quotation. We can also add an additional Northern Lights hunt (supplement applies) to ensure you do not miss out on any potential viewing opportunities or you can choose to just relax in the hotel ready for the next few days of adventure.

**Included Meals:** None

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<tr>
<th>DAY 2</th>
<th>Whale watching and minibus hunt for the Northern lights</th>
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After breakfast you will be collected from your hotel and driven north to Andenes, which is roughly an hour and a half away.

Andenes is historically a fishing village and many of the local traditions are still practised today. This is the starting point for your whale watching tour, during which you will hopefully view an array of whale species in their natural habitat. You will take to the water on a rib boat, which can take up to 12 passengers, for a thrilling experience lasting around one and a half hours. Rib boats offer exceptional views and up-close encounters with these gentle giants should you be lucky enough to see them.

Following your whale excursion you will be able to enjoy a buffet lunch of local Norwegian food. Next you will be driven along the west coast of Andoy, a beautifully scenic area of Norway. Your guide will stop along the way at some great photo spots.

Back at the hotel you will enjoy dinner before your next dedicated evening of Aurora hunting gets underway.

Utilising a minibus to hunt down an Aurora allows you to travel greater distances and hopefully outrun any potential cloud cover. Your local guide will use their knowledge, experience and the most up to date Aurora forecasts to give you the best possible chance of catching a glimpse of an Aurora.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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**DAY 3**

Husky sledding, Aurora camp and minibus hunt

A highlight for many of our guests is the chance to try their hand at dog sledding. Today you will be transferred to a local husky farm where the mushers will be waiting to show you around. You will be given an insight into the lives of these working dogs and the people who work with them every day.

Next you will be shown how to harness the dogs before your lesson on how to handle a sled and team of eager huskies. Each person will drive their own sled with their own team of huskies for roughly one hour, however, if you would prefer to ride as a passenger this is not a problem as we can also arrange this.

After a morning with the huskies we have left the afternoon free for you to explore the local area on your own. There are many ways to keep busy such as downhill skiing (payable locally) which your guide can help you arrange or we can pre-book a photography tour around the island with a local expert photographer. Please see the ‘personalise’ section of the holiday page for details or ask one of our Travel Experts for their recommendations. Lunch is not included today so you may like to try one of the local restaurants.

After this evening’s meal at the hotel you will be collected by a local guide for a very special evening of Aurora spotting, combining a minibus hunt with an enchanting Northern Lights camp on the beach. Unwind next to an inviting fire as you look to the stars.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

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**DAY 4**

Hiking and snowshoe hunt for the Northern Lights

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Company Registration No. 4482022 VAT Registration No. 865938172
Ensure you fill up on a hearty breakfast as this morning you will be exploring Sortland on foot during a daytime hike.

You will head to Steiroheia, one of the mountains which forms the city’s backdrop, with your local guide for a hike in this spectacular scenery. There will be many opportunities to stop for photographs and an outdoor lunch will be cooked over an open fire. You will hike for roughly three and a half hours (including breaks). Your guide will determine the exact route and terrain to fit with the group. The views from this peak are stunning and you will look out across the beautiful Fjord scenery.

Following your hike you will make your way back to your hotel where you can freshen up before dinner in the hotel restaurant.

Later on this evening you will put on your hiking boots again, this time along with your snowshoes, and make your way to a wonderful Northern Lights viewpoint. Your evening hike will last roughly three hours and you will be provided with hot drinks along the way.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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**DAY 5**

Sámi reindeer visit and departure

Today is your final day in Sortland and we have arranged for a visit to a traditional Sámi reindeer farm where you will meet the herder whose entire life has been dedicated to looking after these animals. You will be able to feed the reindeer and try your hand at lassoing. Guests are able to listen, learn and ask questions about traditional Sámi culture during this fascinating visit. It is an ideal way to top off your holiday.

After one last lunch around an open fire, your guide will transfer you directly to the airport for your return flight home.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

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**Included Accommodation**

Sortland Hotell (Nights: 1-4)
During your visit to the coastal town of Sortland you will be staying at the centrally located Sortland Hotell.

This hotel has welcomed guests for over 100 years and has a rich heritage and links to some of the area's most famous residents.

It is a comfortable base from which to explore the town and is in easy walking distance of all the main attractions in the town.

Please note these images are artist impressions. The refurbishments will be completed by 16th Jan 2016.

Hotel facilities

- Enjoy a freshly cooked meal with local in-season ingredients in the restaurant, known as the 'culinary library' located within the hotel. The hotel once played host to Nobel Prize winning author Knut Hamsun and they have very proudly dedicated their restaurant and library to the author
- Enjoy the Hamsun Lounge which was opened in honour of the famous writer and provides an insight into this author's life
- Take a seat in The Retro Bar and enjoy a drink after a busy day exploring the local area

Double/twin rooms

During your stay you will reside in either a twin or double bedroom at the hotel all of which have been renovated recently. All rooms are en suite and feature either a bath or shower. The rooms also provide guests with complimentary wireless internet, flat screen TV and telephone. Each bedroom features a piece of artwork by a local artist.

Image credits: Robert Finn Novak

The Specifics

Holiday group size (approximate)

Minimum group size 2 people, maximum group size 8 people (approximately)

Group Size

As a requirement the majority of our holidays must reach a minimum number of participants to go ahead, minimum numbers can be found on each individual holiday's page however they are always approximate numbers. Tailor made holiday group sizes will vary for all activities. Unless you have discussed and agreed specific private activities whilst on a Private Departure booking you might be joined by other guests on an activity. So that you are aware you will be informed at the time of booking if your selected date has not yet reached minimum numbers. In the unlikely event that your chosen date has not reached the required minimum numbers nine weeks before your scheduled departure date we will contact you and discuss the various options available to you.

We will always do all we can to operate a holiday and in some cases we may be able to operate the holiday by combining your itinerary with that of other guests for some activities (this may mean that the maximum group size is increased for some activities but this will be discussed in full with you).
You will be offered the chance to transfer to an alternative holiday or date (subject to availability) if we are unable to operate the holiday. If the alternative is more expensive you will be asked to pay the difference, if it is cheaper then you will be reimbursed. You will also be offered the option to cancel and receive a full refund of all monies paid.

Guides & Safety

When partaking in any activity it is imperative that everyone in your group listens very closely to the instructions provided by the guide and that they are abided by. Our guides are experts in their field and no one knows the environment better than these highly knowledgeable and experienced activity providers.

Please make it clear to our guides prior to starting any activity if you are unsure of anything mentioned during the safety briefing.

Our guides will always take local conditions into account when considering the suitability of an activity to go ahead. This is why your itinerary is subject to change at short notice this rarely happens however if it does we will always endeavor to go ahead the activity on the day when conditions change or if time allows, to provide the activity on another day during your holiday. If the activity cannot be carried out during your stay due to adverse conditions you will be refunded on your return home. Our guides’ word on activities is always final and your safety is their principal concern at all times, please respect their decisions. By following their instructions, your safety and enjoyment during each activity will be greatly enhanced.

Minimum and maximum age

You can find the minimum age for any of our holidays in the key facts. Whilst we will never provide a holiday to the age stated, it is possible that on occasion there may be younger participants travelling with the local suppliers. There is no maximum age for our holidays but please note our sections on fitness and pre notification of any medical issues or disabilities

Booking activities locally

Additional activities can be booked locally in almost all of our destinations, however, please note that we cannot be held responsible for any injury or loss that occurs through any activities that are booked at your destination (see our terms and conditions for further details).

When arranging any such activity please always ensure that your safety is your primary concern.

Medical History and Advice
If you or any member of your party is pregnant or has any medical condition or disability which may affect your holiday or has any special requirements as a result of any medical condition or disability (including any which affect the booking process) you must inform us at the time of booking.

You must also promptly advise us if you become pregnant or any medical condition or disability which may affect your holiday develops after your booking has been confirmed. It is imperative that you do this as we cannot be held accountable for any situation which may arise out of your failure to disclose any such information.

Experience and Fitness

All of our activities that are included in your itinerary have been designed for beginners who have no prior experience and are of all age ranges and fitness levels. Our guides provide expert advice, tuition and instructions prior to any activity going ahead. If you are unsure as to whether your fitness levels match our highlighted level of fitness on certain itineraries please get in touch and talk to one of our experts.

If you or any member of your party is pregnant or has any medical condition or disability which may affect your holiday or has any special requirements as a result of any medical condition or disability (including any which affect the booking process) you must inform us at the time of booking.

You must also promptly advise us if you become pregnant or any medical condition or disability which may affect your holiday develops after your booking has been confirmed. It is imperative that you do this as we cannot be held accountable for any situation which may arise out of your failure to disclose any such information.

Snowmobile Safety

We are extremely proud of our safety record and believe this is entirely due to the excellence of our activity providers.

It is absolutely essential when partaking in any activity that you listen very closely to, and abide by, the instructions provided. Nobody knows the environment better than our activity providers who work here almost every day. Consequently, their knowledge and experience are unsurpassed.

If there is anything that you are unsure of during a safety briefing, or that you would like to clarify with the guides, please make this clear to them immediately.

Please always respect any decisions made by our guides. Your safety is their principal concern at all times. By following their instructions, your safety and enjoyment during each activity will be greatly enhanced.

If you or any member of your party is pregnant, or has any medical condition or disability which may affect your holiday, or has any special requirements as a result of any medical condition or disability (including any which affect the booking process), please tell us before you confirm your booking so that we can assist you in considering the suitability of the arrangements and/or making the booking. In any event, you must give us full details in writing at the time of booking and notify us if any change in the condition or disability occurs. You must also promptly advise us if you become pregnant or if any medical condition or disability which may affect your holiday develops after your booking has been confirmed.
There may be rare occasions when our guides consider local conditions unsuitable for a certain activity, e.g. if temperatures drop below -25°C some activities will not be operated. Hence, your itinerary may be subject to change at short notice but we will always endeavour to, firstly find a replacement on the day and, secondly, to provide the cancelled activity later in your stay whenever possible. Very occasionally it proves impossible to provide the activity, in which case you will be refunded when you return home.

**Snowmobiles**

Driving a snowmobile should be considered the same as driving a hire car. The owner of the vehicle will have third party motor liability cover in place which complies with the local legislation and extends to include hire and reward. If you (as the hirer of the snowmobile during any safari) injure someone or damage someone else’s property, then the owner’s third party liability cover will cover such risks.

Any damage to the snowmobile you are riding will also be covered under the owner’s motor insurance policy; however you as the driver will have to cover the policy excess. In most cases this will be somewhere between £400 - £1200 (the equivalent in local currency) but it can vary in each destination. Please ask the local activity provider for their own individual excess before taking part in any snowmobile safaris.

Drivers of snowmobiles should be in possession of a full driving licence. The minimum age for driving a snowmobile varies but, for insurance purposes, you generally need to be 18 years old to drive a snowmobile. You must ensure that the snowmobile driver(s) takes a valid driving licence (either the old paper licence or the photo card licence). This is not necessarily to show your instructors or guides but for spot checks by police which occur regularly. There are strict rules governing snowmobiles and alcohol consumption and therefore, alcohol should not be consumed at all before participating in a safari.

**Snowmobile safety briefings**

Snowmobile accidents are rare but the driver should take extra care throughout. You will be provided with a full briefing on how to use a snowmobile. If you are unsure of any instructions or aspect of operating of the machine then you must inform a guide immediately and get clarification.

In some cases children under the age of 16 will travel in a sled pulled by the guide’s snowmobile. If sleds are unavailable, as is the case with some safaris, children over a certain height will ride as pillion passengers. In our opinion children under the age of 12 are typically too young to travel on the back of a snowmobile. Discretion may be applied in resort by our expert guides based on the individual child.

Almost all of our snowmobile safaris are based on two people sharing a snowmobile. There is usually the opportunity to swap drivers during the safari, assuming that both people have a valid driving license.

If you are a single traveller or if there is an odd number of people in your party, then in the majority of destinations (excluding Luosto where an obligatory single snowmobile supplement will apply), you will be paired up locally with either another person taking part in the activity or you will ride pillion with the guide. As this all depends on the number of people doing the activity on the day this will be decided locally. The only way to avoid this is by paying a single snowmobile supplement which guarantees you your own machine.

By agreeing to share with another member of the group you are acknowledging that you are responsible for alerting the driver and the guide if at any time during the activity you feel unsafe either as a driver or passenger.

Your guide will provide a comprehensive safety briefing before every activity including hand signals to attract attention – you must use these during the activity if you are unhappy at any point and the guide will answer any questions you have or do anything within their power to make the activity more enjoyable for you.
Insurance

As the rider or passenger of the snowmobile, you must take out adequate travel insurance to cover yourself for medical costs in the event you sustain an injury requiring medical treatment overseas. If you are a UK resident travelling in the EU you should also ensure that you carry with you your EHIC card (European Health Insurance Card). Please see our insurance documents for further details. Drivers of snowmobiles should be in possession of a full driving licence. The minimum age for driving a snowmobile varies but for insurance purposes you generally need to be 18 years old to drive a snowmobile.

To our knowledge (and we have searched extensively) there is no travel insurance policy which can be purchased in advance of travel that will cover you for the snowmobile excess. Some of our local partners offer an excess waiver cover which can be arranged locally and if you choose to partake in this, it is a direct agreement between yourself and the activity provider so please ensure you read all information very carefully.

Unscheduled activities in your free time

In some of our destinations you are able to borrow or hire equipment such as cross country skis and snowshoes for use in your free time. Participation in these activities is entirely at your own risk. You must ensure that you are properly prepared, have the necessary maps of the trails and ensure that you stay on the marked trails. We recommend discussing your route with the local guides who will be able to advise on the most suitable routes based on your level of fitness and the amount of time you wish to be out exploring.

Always let the reception desk know where you are planning to go and take a torch and mobile phone (with the hotel phone number stored) so you are able to call them should you get lost. It is also a good idea to leave your contact number and the time you expect to return to the hotel should the hotel need to contact you.

Please also read the section in our terms and conditions which refers to booking activities locally.

What to take

Standard Packing List

For each and every one of our holidays we will provide you with a list of items that you need to take with you when you travel. These will vary depending on the country you are visiting and the time of year. Country specific packing information can be found below. This information will also be uploaded into your online account at the time of booking.

There are however some items which, irrelevant of your holiday, you need to make sure that you pack.

Speak to one of our travel experts, call us on 01670 785012, or email info@theaurorazone.com

- Passport and visas: Please see our passport and visa section for more information.
- Final travel letter: This contains vital information and your emergency contact numbers.
- Airline tickets: Approximately two weeks prior to your departure your tickets will be uploaded into your online account for you to print and download (if we are arranging your air travel).
- Trip dossier: This contains vital information. The order of all itineraries is subject to change however and you will be provided with your final itinerary upon arrival at your destination.
- Travel insurance: This is a pre-requisite to travelling with us. Please see our section on Travel Insurance for further details.
Full driving licence: If you are hiring a car or wanting to drive a snowmobile then please ensure that you take your licence with you. You either need to take your old paper licence or the photocard part of the new licence.

Money or credit cards: Most major credit cards are accepted in our destinations. However, we would recommend you avoid depending on American Express or Diners Club as these are less widely accepted. Cash points are not generally available in our destinations. It is worth advising your bank that you are travelling overseas to ensure that you do not have issues using your cards abroad.

Glasses/Contact Lenses if required: You are going to see some spectacular places and it would be a shame to miss any of it!

First aid kit and medication: You should always carry a first aid kit with you when you travel and ensure that any medication you require is carried in your hand luggage. You will need to ensure that you have the relevant accompanying documentation for any medication and that it complies with all of the rules and regulations regarding items that you are allowed to carry on board an aircraft.

Toiletries: Although some accommodation may provide the basics this is not the norm and so you should take all that you need with you.

Chargers for cameras and phones

Travel plug adapters: Suitable for the country you are visiting.

Luggage: Please see your flight confirmation for your luggage allowance. Suitcases are fine for travelling, but if your trip includes an overnight safari you will need to pack your belongings into a soft large backpack or bag that can be easily transported on a sled. On such trips luggage should be kept to a minimum as space in the wilderness cabins is limited. Any items that you do not wish to take with you can be stored at the hotel specifically for this trip.

Clothing – the essentials

What to travel in: You should travel in comfortable clothes and sensible shoes with a good grip. If you have access to a hat and gloves in your hand luggage this is advisable. We recommend dressing for a cold winter day in the UK and having a warm jacket available to you on arrival. Generally, you only need to cross from the airport terminal to the transfer vehicle but you should be prepared.

What we provide: As many of our holidays in Norway also include time in towns or cities then the cold weather clothing is not provided for the duration of your stay and you will need warm clothing appropriate for exploring these areas. For any activity we include in the itinerary you will, however, be provided with all appropriate winter clothing for the duration of the activity. Winter clothing will not be provided for any bus tours, etc.

Winter Holidays

As many of our holidays in Norway are based in slightly more built up areas, it is not necessary to include the heavy duty winter clothing for you to keep for the duration of your stay. Cold weather clothing will, however, be provided for you for each of the daytime activities and any evening excursions which are 'activity-based' such as snowmobiling, dog sledding, etc. Winter clothing is not normally provided for any bus tours or activities including a special meal (for example visiting Sorrisniva Igloo Hotel in Alta for a gourmet dinner). If the clothing is not included it may be possible to request it in advance (supplements may apply). The clothing provision is clearly outlined in the 'what's included' section of the holiday page and if you would like any more detailed information then please contact our Travel Experts.

What you need to take:

During the winter months, guests should take warm, comfortable clothing and we also suggest the following items which we find very useful when travelling to Norway. The majority of these items are applicable to the autumn months as well as conditions can be exceedingly changeable. We recommend taking the following items with you:

Thermal underwear: Forget sartorial elegance and invest in some thermal long Johns and long-sleeved tops to wear
under your overalls. You should take more than one set if you are travelling for a week as you will wear them every day.

**Sweaters:** Wool is the best material. We recommend wearing one or two such garments in sub-zero temperatures. They give you added flexibility should temperatures drop or rise.

**Fleece jacket:** A fleece is an excellent addition to your winter clothing and provides excellent flexibility and warmth.

**Gilet:** Either a fleece or down gilet is always a good item to pack as during activities it will keep your body warm during any stops or when sitting on a snowmobile or husky sledge.

**Windproof and waterproof outer layers:** These items are essential as a top layer to your clothing. You need a windproof and waterproof outer layer under which you can fit layers appropriate to the temperatures. Ski clothing could also be a good alternative if you prefer as it is less bulky than the equipment provided for activities and provides good thermal properties.

**Tracksuit bottoms or walking trousers:** These are ideal for relaxing in the evenings and an excellent additional layer for under your overalls and over your thermals. Please do not take Denim jeans to wear during activities; they are not appropriate during the very cold temperatures.

**Socks:** Again, wool is the best material. You should take several pairs - both thin and thick.

**Mittens & Gloves:** Our local partners recommend mittens over gloves for taking part in activities as they keep your hands warmer but we also recommend a thin pair of gloves which can be worn when taking pictures at night and also outside of activities. You should also have access to gloves in your hand luggage on arrival.

**Hat:** Hats may be available to borrow for activities however we recommend taking your own just in case and also for outside of the activities. You should take something that covers your ears fully and provides protection from the cold wind should you require it.

**Glove liners and hand warmers:** Thin glove liners can provide an excellent extra layer of warmth on really cold days as they fit easily underneath mittens. Hand warmers can be excellent for added comfort, especially during longer or night time activities.

**Sturdy shoes or boots:** You will be provided with winter boots for activities but we recommend taking alternatives that are suitable for snowy/icy conditions. Shoes or boots with good grip are essential for the icy conditions (you may want to consider adding some additional shoe grips/crampons but these should be packed into your hold luggage). To save space you may want to travel in the boots (minus the additional grips). Foot warmers can also be very useful in colder temperatures.

**Thermal neck warmer:** A neck warmer (fleece tube or similar) is excellent for keeping out the cold and keeping your neck and face warm.

**Balaclava:** Freshly washed balaclavas are occasionally provided by our activity providers but we would also recommend taking your own as they can be very handy in cold temperatures and make activities such as snowmobiling much more enjoyable.

**Head torch:** These can be very useful especially if you want to be out Aurora hunting. Ensure you have enough battery life or spare batteries with you.
Slippers and warm comfy clothes: These are excellent for lounging around in after a day of winter activities. Scandinavians generally are quite informal and it is not uncommon for people to remove their outdoor winter boots upon entry to smaller accommodations or cafés.

Swimwear: Some destinations have swimming pools or hot tubs so be sure to take your swimwear. Although swimwear is generally not worn in saunas in the Nordic countries we find many clients like to take theirs with them to wear.

Ski goggles: Although not essential these are especially useful during husky safaris and if you wear glasses or contact lenses. They provide excellent protection from the cold, snow and wind should you need it.

Small rucksack: You should take a small rucksack to carry any extra clothing during activities and plenty of water and snacks if required.

Sunglasses: The glare of the sun on snow can be blinding and so you should ensure that you have a good pair of sunglasses that are practical for the activities. In late December and early January, this is less of a problem as the sun is rarely above the horizon during this period.

Suntan lotion and lip balm: You need to take these products with you but you should always take the advice of your guide before applying them. At very low temperatures guides will recommend the best course of protection as products may freeze and it can be dangerous to have these on the skin. High factor sun cream which is waterproof is best. Those which are designed for skiing tend to be ideal as they are designed for doing activities in cold and snowy conditions.

Tissues: These are very useful during safaris, as are wet wipes (although unless you keep them close to your body they will freeze!).

What to wear in the evenings: This depends a little on the holiday you choose but the vast majority of our destinations are very relaxed and people are there to enjoy the Great Outdoors and stay warm when outside. Typically all restaurants outside of the cities are very relaxed and casual.

If you are dining out in a city such as Tromsø for example, there are some high-end restaurants available and so you may prefer to take some smarter attire. The city hotels are also fairly relaxed with jeans/smart casual being the choice of many.

Camera
You won't want to miss out on the photo opportunities so here are a few hints!
- Ensure you have plenty of film or memory card space before you set off
- Make sure you remember your battery charger and a travel adapter
- Ensure you have spare batteries as they will be difficult to replace in more remote areas (and probably more expensive!)
- Batteries perform poorly in cold temperatures so take multiple batteries and store the spares in a warm place (a pocket next to your body is ideal). NiCad and Li-ion have better performance characteristics than alkaline batteries but are still affected. There are some restrictions on carrying certain Li-ion batteries onboard aircraft. Please see the IATA website for current and up to date information:
  [http://www.iata.org/whatwedo/cargo/dangerous_goods/pages/lithium_batteries.aspx](http://www.iata.org/whatwedo/cargo/dangerous_goods/pages/lithium_batteries.aspx)

Survival suits: You will be provided with wind and water resistant survival suits during activities. These are one piece overalls which are designed to keep the worst of any wet and windy weather from you. You should plan to layer up underneath these suits as they are not the same thermal style provided elsewhere in Scandinavia.

We do suggest a list of clothing and equipment to bring with you which will make your stay more comfortable and help
you get maximum enjoyment out of your time in Norway.

Additional items for Norway

Clothing – the essentials:

What to travel in:

You should travel in comfortable clothes and sensible shoes with a good grip. If you have access to a hat and gloves in your hand luggage this is advisable. We recommend dressing for a cold winter day in the UK and having a warm jacket available to you on arrival. Generally, you only need to cross from the airport terminal to the transfer vehicle but you should be prepared.

What we provide:

As many of our holidays in Norway are based in slightly more built up areas, it is not necessary to include the heavy duty winter clothing for you to keep for the duration of your stay. Cold weather clothing will, however, be provided for you for each of the daytime activities and any evening excursions which are 'activity-based' such as snowmobiling, dog sledding, etc. Winter clothing is not normally provided for any bus tours or activities including a special meal (for example visiting Sorrisniva Igloo Hotel in Alta for a gourmet dinner). If the clothing is not included it may be possible to request it in advance (supplements may apply). The clothing provision is clearly outlined in the ‘what's included’ section of the holiday page and if you would like any more detailed information then please contact our Travel Experts.

What you need to take:

During the winter months, guests should take warm, comfortable clothing and we also suggest the following items which we find very useful when travelling to Norway. The majority of these items are applicable to the autumn months as well as conditions can be exceedingly changeable. We recommend taking the following items with you:

**Thermal underwear:** Forget sartorial elegance and invest in some thermal long johns and long-sleeved tops to wear under your overalls. You should take more than one set if you are travelling for a week as you will wear them every day.

**Sweaters:** Wool is the best material. We recommend wearing one or two such garments in sub-zero temperatures. They give you added flexibility should temperatures drop or rise.

**Fleece jacket:** A fleece is an excellent addition to your winter clothing and provides excellent flexibility and warmth.

**Gilet:** Either a fleece or down gilet is always a good item to pack as during activities it will keep your body warm during any stops or when sitting on a snowmobile or husky sledge.

**Windproof and waterproof outer layers:** These items are essential as a top layer to your clothing. You need a windproof and waterproof outer layer under which you can fit layers appropriate to the temperatures. Ski clothing could also be a good alternative if you prefer as it is less bulky than the equipment provided for activities and provides good thermal properties.

**Tracksuit bottoms or walking trousers:** These are ideal for relaxing in the evenings and an excellent additional layer for under your overalls and over your thermals. Please do not take Denim jeans to wear during activities; they are not appropriate during the very cold temperatures.

**Socks:** Again, wool is the best material. You should take several pairs - both thin and thick.

**Mittens & Gloves:** Our local partners recommend mittens over gloves for taking part in activities as they keep your
hands warmer but we also recommend a thin pair of gloves which can be worn when taking pictures at night and also outside of activities. You should also have access to gloves in your hand luggage on arrival.

**Hat:** Hats may be available to borrow for activities however we recommend taking your own just in case and also for outside of the activities. You should take something that covers your ears fully and provides protection from the cold wind should you require it.

**Glove liners and hand warmers:** Thin glove liners can provide an excellent extra layer of warmth on really cold days as they fit easily underneath mittens. Hand warmers can be excellent for added comfort, especially during longer or night time activities.

**Sturdy shoes or boots:** You will be provided with winter boots for activities but we recommend taking alternatives that are suitable for snowy/icy conditions. Shoes or boots with good grip are essential for the icy conditions (you may want to consider adding some additional shoe grips/crampons but these should be packed into your hold luggage). To save space you may want to travel in the boots (minus the additional grips). Foot warmers can also be very useful in colder temperatures.

**Thermal neck warmer:** A neck warmer (fleece tube or similar) is excellent for keeping out the cold and keeping your neck and face warm.

**Balaclava:** Freshly washed balaclavas are occasionally provided by our activity providers but we would also recommend taking your own as they can be very handy in cold temperatures and make activities such as snowmobiling much more enjoyable.

**Head torch:** These can be very useful especially if you want to be out Aurora hunting. Ensure you have enough battery life or spare batteries with you.

**Slippers and warm comfy clothes:** These are excellent for lounging around in after a day of winter activities. Scandinavians generally are quite informal and it is not uncommon for people to remove their outdoor winter boots upon entry to smaller accommodations or cafés.

**Swimwear:** Some destinations have swimming pools or hot tubs so be sure to take your swimwear. Although swimwear is generally not worn in saunas in the Nordic countries we find many clients like to take theirs with them to wear.

**Ski goggles:** Although not essential these are especially useful during husky safaris and if you wear glasses or contact lenses. They provide excellent protection from the cold, snow and wind should you need it.

**Small rucksack:** You should take a small rucksack to carry any extra clothing during activities and plenty of water and snacks if required.

**Sunglasses:** The glare of the sun on snow can be blinding and so you should ensure that you have a good pair of sunglasses that are practical for the activities. In late December and early January, this is less of a problem as the sun is rarely above the horizon during this period.

**Suntan lotion and lip balm:** You need to take these products with you but you should always take the advice of your guide before applying them. At very low temperatures guides will recommend the best course of protection as products may freeze and it can be dangerous to have these on the skin. High factor sun cream which is waterproof is best. Those which are designed for skiing tend to be ideal as they are designed for doing activities in cold and snowy conditions.

**Tissues:** These are very useful during safaris, as are wet wipes (although unless you keep them close to your body they will freeze!).
**What to wear in the evenings:** This depends a little on the holiday you choose but the vast majority of our destinations are very relaxed and people are there to enjoy the Great Outdoors and stay warm when outside. Typically all restaurants outside of the cities are very relaxed and casual.

If you are dining out in a city such as Tromsø for example, there are some high-end restaurants available and so you may prefer to take some smarter attire. The city hotels are also fairly relaxed with jeans/smart casual being the choice of many.

**Camera**

You won't want to miss out on the photo opportunities so here are a few hints!
- Ensure you have plenty of film or memory card space before you set off
- Make sure you remember your battery charger and a travel adapter
- Ensure you have spare batteries as they will be difficult to replace in more remote areas (and probably more expensive!)
- Batteries perform poorly in cold temperatures so take multiple batteries and store the spares in a warm place (a pocket next to your body is ideal). NiCad and Li-ion have better performance characteristics than alkaline batteries but are still affected. There are some restrictions on carrying certain Li-ion batteries onboard aircraft. Please see the IATA website for current and up to date information: [http://www.iata.org/whatwedo/cargo/dangerous_goods/pages/lithium_batteries.aspx](http://www.iata.org/whatwedo/cargo/dangerous_goods/pages/lithium_batteries.aspx)

**Flights & Transportation**

**Special requests & in-flight meals**

Due to the remote locations of our holidays, especially those above the Arctic Circle, flight availability can be exceptionally limited. In order to ensure that you can travel on the seats that we have pre allocated to a certain holiday, flight options might be restricted. Please discuss this with our Travel Sales Experts at the time of booking.

Generally we are unable to assign specific seating on flights although we can make requests on your behalf. We cannot guarantee this however and if a request is unable to be actioned then this is not classed as a breach of contract on our part.

We do recommend you check in online as soon as possible to ensure you are allocated seats next to your travelling companions.

If you require special seats or assistance at the airport due to a medical condition, reduced mobility or disability then please let us know at the time of booking (or as soon as possible prior to travel if the issue occurs after booking). You may be required to provide written confirmation of your fitness to travel from your doctor.

Flights within Europe and on domestic flights may not provide meals or snacks onboard so it is always worth remembering this if you are due to land late in the evening when opportunities to buy food may be limited.

We always forward any dietary requirements to the airlines but we cannot guarantee the availability of the chosen diet onboard so please confirm at check in. You may want to consider bringing your own food on board the plane if you do have any specific requests to guarantee there will be something you will be able to eat. This is the approach our staff with any dietary requirements take when flying within Europe.

**Flight schedule changes and connecting transportation**
On your confirmation documentation we will confirm your flight schedule. Sometimes the flight number, routing and timings might change prior to your departure. If the change is classed as a significant change and we will contact you as soon as possible to discuss this. Please see our terms and conditions for further details.

Flight schedule changes can impact on your pre and post-holiday travel arrangements if these have been booked separately to your holiday. We strongly recommend that you do not book transport (such as trains or transfers), car parking or non-connecting flights to the departure point for your holiday until you have received your final voucher with the confirmed travel times.

We are not responsible for the effect of any schedule change on your pre or post travel arrangements. We strongly recommend that you do not purchase non flexible or non-refundable tickets to avoid cancellation and penalty charges.

Land only prices

In some cases we are able to offer our holidays on a land only basis (i.e. not including flights). If you choose to book your holiday on a land only basis it is vital you do not finalise any arrangements until we have confirmed you are able to do so. Once your trip reaches minimum numbers of bookings it is guaranteed to run so we will write to you to confirm this. As soon as your trip is ‘guaranteed to run’ you will be free to make your flight arrangements. Before you book your flights you should check whether airport transfers are included in your trip. If they are then please ask us for the transfer times that you will be required to meet. If you do not meet the planned transfers then private transfers can be arranged for an additional cost. Once your flights are booked, please send us a copy of your detailed flight itinerary.

We cannot be held liable for losses incurred relating to any flight booking you have made yourself if in the unlikely eventuality that we should be forced to amend the itinerary or even cancel the holiday. Please be aware that most of the cheaper airline tickets available for sale on the internet or from low cost carriers are non-refundable in the case of cancellation. For this reason we strongly advise you check the rules of the ticket when you make a flight booking and check the limitations of any cancellation insurance policy you have. Should your holiday be cancelled and you no longer wish to use the flights it is important that you are able to amend or cancel your booking and receive a booking. It is with regret that we are unable to accept liability for any travel arrangements that you make (including change or cancellation costs) in the event of any change to, or cancellation of, our holiday; or for any other reason that makes you unable to use your booked travel arrangements.

Banned airlines

The list of banned airlines is available for inspection at http://europa.eu we must bring this to your attention as due to an EU Directive, (EC No 2111/2005 Article 9) some airlines are banned from operating within the EU. In accordance with European regulations we will also inform you of the carrier or carriers which will operate your flights at the time of booking. If we are unable to confirm this at the time, we will do so as soon as we are made aware of the carrier following confirmation. We will also notify you of any changes to your carrier after booking as soon as possible. If the airline then becomes subject to a ban, our terms and conditions will apply. Please see sections 8 and 19 of our booking terms for further details.

UK foreign office advice

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) continuously updates us with travel advice which we follow 100%. Rarely they issue warnings advising not to travel to a certain country or area and if such a warning was issued we
would act appropriately which might result in a cancellation, rumination or an amendment of an itinerary. Our clients’ safety is paramount and such decisions will be made with this in mind. If for any reason our local partners suggest an amendment due to a situation developing locally then we may also make the decision to amend an itinerary appropriately. Safety is non-negotiable here at The Aurora Zone. In the unfortunate circumstance where we have to cancel your holiday prior to your departure you will be offered with an alternative trip (where any price variance will either be refunded to or covered by the guests) or a full refund of the monies paid. If we have to curtail a holiday then you will be refunded for any costs for the part of the holiday that we have been unable to deliver where we have been able to secure a refund from our suppliers. If we have to re-route a holiday then any basis for refund is determined on a case by case basis and dependent on whether the central holiday experience was provided or not.

Below you will find FCO advice for the country/countries that you are visiting which is applicable to British passport holders only. We always recommend that our clients access this advice themselves as the content includes details on entry requirements, embassy information, local laws and customs as well as specific safety and health advice. Most governments will issue their own travel advice for a region and, if you are resident outside of the UK, then you can find some helpful links below:

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/
New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade http://www.safetravel.govt.nz/
Canadian Consular Affairs Bureau http://voyage.gc.ca/
The U.S. Bureau of Consular Affairs http://travel.state.gov/content/travel/english.html

Norway

Entry requirements – valid for British passport holders only

Visas

If your passport describes you as a British Citizen you won't need a visa to enter Norway. If you have another type of British nationality, you should check the current entry requirements on the website of the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) and if necessary confirm with the Norwegian Embassy.

For stays of longer than 3 months, contact the Norwegian Embassy for further information about entry requirements.

Passport validity

Your passport should be valid for the proposed duration of your stay; you don’t need any additional period of validity on your passport beyond this.

The Norwegian authorities have confirmed they will accept British passports extended by 12 months by British Embassies and Consulates under additional measures put in place in mid-2014.

UK Emergency Travel Documents (ETDs)

UK ETDs are accepted for entry, airside transit and exit from Norway.

Local laws and customs

Drugs and drink driving laws are stricter in Norway than in the UK. Don’t become involved with drugs of any kind. Possession of even small quantities can lead to heavy fines and/or imprisonment.

Health

Contact your GP around 8 weeks before your trip to check whether you need any vaccinations or other preventive
measures. Country specific information and advice are published by the National Travel Health Network and Centre, and useful information about healthcare abroad, including a country-by-country guide, is available from NHS Choices.

If you're visiting Norway you should get a free European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) before leaving the UK. The EHIC isn't a substitute for medical and travel insurance, but it entitles you to state-provided medical treatment that may become necessary during your trip. Any treatment provided is on the same terms as Norwegian nationals. If you don't have your EHIC with you or you've lost it, you can call the Department of Health Overseas Healthcare Team (+44 191 218 1999) to get a Provisional Replacement Certificate. The EHIC won't cover medical repatriation, on-going medical treatment or non-urgent treatment, so you should make sure you have adequate travel insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment and repatriation.

Seek local advice if you intend to eat mussels harvested off the coast and certain types of fish from lakes and fjords.

If you need emergency medical assistance during your trip, dial 112 and ask for an ambulance. If you are referred to a medical facility for treatment you should contact your insurance/medical assistance company immediately.

Time Zone

Norway is 1 hour ahead of GMT so if you are in the UK count forward 1 hour.

The finer details

Financial Protection

We know that your holiday will be one of the most important investments you make in a year and we understand how important it is for you to know that you are financially protected and that your money is secure. Alongside our ATOL financial protection (ATOL 6865) you may book with confidence as we are a fully bonded member of ABTA (ABTA number Y6261) which means that you have the benefit of ABTA's code of conduct and your money is fully protected regardless of whether we are arranging your flights for you or not. We also offer our clients our Peace of Mind Promise to really help put your mind at ease. Please see the following link for full details:

Responsible Travel

Responsible Travel is at the heart of our business and our approach is based on ensuring that our holidays are environmentally, socially and economically responsible. We work in some of the most pristine environments in the world and with suppliers who we class as friends; protecting and providing for both is central to our ethos. Full details of our responsible travel policy can be found on our website

Insurance

Insurance is not included in your holiday and so you will need to ensure that you have cover for all of the activities that you will be participating in during your holiday. Details of our preferred provider, who will cover you for all activities we offer, can be found on our website

Terms and Conditions
Terms & Conditions

Terms

Minimum age

The minimum age for participation in our itinerary is 15 years old, however, for some activities and shared transfers, our guests may be joined by others and these may include those of a younger age. Any younger participants will be fully supervised by an adult and the guides will ensure that they are only able to participate if there will be no effect on the activity experience.

To drive a snowmobile you must have a full driving licence and be over 18 years old.