

Whales & Northern Lights, northern Norway with Mark Carwardine

Two departures: 19 & 23 January 2017

Organised by Discover the World

(All photographs were taken by Mark on this trip in January 2016)



This exclusive trip to the remote Vesterålen Islands in northern Norway is your chance to experience two incredible natural wonders: feeding whales and northern lights. Large numbers of orcas, and humpback and fin whales, gorge on herring here each winter, and there are great opportunities to encounter long-finned pilot and sperm whales, too.

You'll not only have several opportunities to witness the spectacle up-close, but you will also have some of the best guides in the business – together with Mark as guest lecturer – to enrich your experience. From whale watching by

day to aurora hunting at night, this holiday is a truly exciting experience.

Highlights

- Stay in one of Europe's best winter whale watching destinations for encounters with several species of whale
- Travel in the company guest lecturer Mark - and award-winning guides Cathy Harlow and Alexa Kershaw
- Enjoy three whale watching boat trips in search of orcas, humpback, sperm and fin whales
- Track down the northern lights as you head out on two aurora excursions with our expert guides
- Visit the Aurora Space and Northern Lights research centre





Staying in the charming village of Andenes (*above*) on the island of Andøya, this very special itinerary departs in January – prime time for whale watching and a spectacular period for photography, whether you're capturing the warm glow of low winter sunshine or the pulsing green light of the aurora borealis.

During the winter months, large groups of orcas, humpback and fin whales follow shoals of herring into Andfjord, joining pilot and sperm whales for a feeding frenzy. An unforgettable wildlife encounter, it's small wonder that Andenes is known as the 'whale watching capital of Norway'.

This itinerary has been designed to offer the best opportunities for whale sightings. You will enjoy no less than three 4-hour whale watching boat trips. Our experts, Mark, Cathy and Alexa, will share their knowledge of these magnificent cetaceans and offer top tips on photography to ensure you capture the best images while out at sea.

Back on land, you'll spend two

evenings setting out in search of the northern lights. One trip will take you by coach to the dramatic coastline at Bleik and the other, on foot, to the lighthouse and beach. Far from artificial light pollution, you will maximise your chances of witnessing the aurora borealis in all its glory – a natural phenomenon every bit as magical and mesmerising as being surrounded by a pod of orcas or humpbacks.

The holiday also features a visit to the Aurora Space Centre where you'll watch a fascinating film about the northern lights and how rockets from Andøya are used to study the mysterious lights.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive Norway

Fly via Oslo and arrive Evenes where you will meet your guide. Transfer to Andenes with dinner en route at Andøy Friluftssenter before arriving in Andenes in the late evening. Check in to the

Grønnbua Rorbu Hotel for a four-night stay.

Day 2: Whale watching and northern lights.

At breakfast meet your guest lecturer, Mark. Introduction and visit to the whale museum followed by a short talk on how to photograph whales and the northern lights. Around mid-morning get ready for your first whale watching trip.

Winter overalls will be provided on the boat. Enjoy a hot drink and biscuits whilst sailing into the fjord, keeping a look out for the playful orcas, as well as for humpback, fin, pilot and sperm whales. We aim to spend a few hours on the fjord to maximise our chances of good sightings and enjoy the amazing scenery. On the way back keep warm with a bowl of hot soup.

On arrival back at Grønnbua Rorbu enjoy a light lunch with time to catch up and discuss the day's sightings. Early evening lecture by Mark.

After dinner, join Cathy, Alexa and Mark on a northern lights chase on foot to the nearby lighthouse and beach.

Day 3: Whale watching and northern lights

Join Mark, Cathy and Alexa on your second 4-hour whale watching trip, searching the fjord for signs of feeding whales. This afternoon visit the Aurora Space Centre exhibition and meet the scientists behind the project. After dinner, another northern lights hunt, this time by coach to the beautiful and dramatic coastline at Bleik.

Day 4: Whale watching

Join Mark, Cathy and Alexa on our final whale watching day. Afternoon free before enjoying a final talk from Mark and a round-up of the highlights of the last three days. Farewell dinner with local delicacies and wine.

Day 5: Depart Norway

Early morning departure for Evenes Airport for your flight back to Heathrow (via Oslo).



PLEASE NOTE ...

- Wildlife sightings cannot be guaranteed and the boat trips are subject to weather conditions. In case of bad weather an alternative programme will be provided.
- Meals are carefully prepared using locally produced food, such as moose, arctic char, reindeer and skrei mølje (cod). It is also possible to cater for vegetarians or for special diets, please advice at the time of booking.
- This tour may not be suitable for those with walking difficulties due to some steep steps on the boat as well as walks on uneven and possibly icy ground. Shoe-grips will be provided and they are recommended to be used at all times when outdoors (but not on the boat).

PRICES

Two departures, 4 nights each, 19 & 23 January 2017

Prices per person:

Twin - £1,945

Single supplement - £171

Suite Supplement - £440

Price includes

- Return flight from UK to Evenes via Oslo; airport taxes; all transfers;
- 4 nights at Grønnbua

Rorbu Hotel with private facilities

- Full board from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 5
- 3 whale watching trips (up to 4 hours each)
- 1 northern light trip by bus
- 1 northern light trip on foot
- Visit to the Andenes Whale Museum
- Introduction to photography on whales and northern lights
- Visit to the Aurora Space Centre
- Services of Discover the World guides, Cathy Harlow and Alexa Kershaw
- Guest lecturer and specialist whale expert Mark Carwardine.

Maximum group size

50 passengers (the whale watching boat is suitable for up to 80).

Clothing

A warm overall will be provided on the whale watching boat trips. Shoe grips will be provided for the duration of your stay.

Flight times:

OUTBOUND

Depart Heathrow on SK804 at 10:20

Arrive Oslo at 13:30

Depart Oslo on SK4094 at 15:55 **Arrive** Evenes at 17:30

INBOUND

Depart Evenes on SK4083 at 10:40

Arrive Oslo at 12:20

Depart Oslo on SK805 at 13:15

Arrive Heathrow at 14:35



YOUR GUIDES (accompanying Mark)

Cathy Harlow

Our specialist guide, Cathy Harlow has been guiding for Discover the World for 25 years. Highly commended in the Wanderlust World Guide awards in both 2013 and 2014, Cathy has immense knowledge on whales and wildlife in general, as well as the local area.

Alexa Kershaw

Alexa is also a highly commended guide (2015) by Wanderlust. She is a keen wildlife photographer and passionate about conservation and sharing her knowledge of the marine environment. She has since worked as a researcher, guide, campaigner and consultant on a wide variety of marine mammal research projects, including visual and acoustic surveys in the Baltic Sea, photo-id of cetaceans in South Africa and New Zealand, and an aerial survey of the Great Barrier Reef.

M/S REINE

This beautiful wooden boat was originally built in 1949 and recently refurbished to its former glory. The boat is suitable for up to 80 passengers (Discover the World groups are a maximum of 50 passengers) and equipped with two hydrophones making it possible to locate the whales by listening to their echolocation clicks. When the whale sounds are strong and clear, they will be played through the loudspeakers for everyone to enjoy.

EXTEND YOUR STAY

You might like to consider extending your stay and exploring more of Norway or even further afield into Sweden. Perhaps take a fly drive in the neighbouring Lofoten Islands or head further north to Tromsø. Alternatively, take the Hurtigruten on a coastal voyage or cross the border to Sweden and visit the famous Icehotel, visiting Abisko National Park en route.

Please contact Discover the World (*details below*) to discuss your options.

ONE LAST THING

Here's a short film taken on the 2016 trip to give you a taster of what it is like:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtGBSDTyHB8>

TO BOOK & MORE INFORMATION

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