

WILD PHOTOGRAPHY HOLIDAYS



ARCTIC NORWAY

NORTHERN LIGHTS,
BIRDS & LANDSCAPES

HIGHLIGHTS

- Unique birdlife
- Steller's & King Eider
- Cormorants & Guillemots
- Puffins in the snow
- Northern Lights
- Low light photography
- Coastal landscapes
- Reindeers & arctic light
- Traditional colourful houses
- Scenic hotels
- Remote lighthouses

INTRODUCTION

Introducing an exciting new photographic adventure to The Varanger Peninsula in Norway. Varanger located in Finmark is the most northeastern part of Norway bordering on Russia and Finland. Arctic landscapes remain a firm favourite with our guests and this trip truly takes us to one of Norway's most remarkable and little visited arctic areas. Varanger is world renowned for its incredible birdlife. Our adventure begins in the small town of Kirkenes close to the Russian border. We spend a night here in a comfortable hotel before traveling over a remote mountain pass to the fishing village of Båtsfjord famed for the large numbers of Arctic birds that reside or winter there including King and Steller's Eider. Given clear

weather skies are big and the aurora common. Our next location is the tranquil, 'lost in time' Kongsfjord where we stay in beautifully restored and colourful wooden houses dotted along the seashore. The big skies here are phenomenal and there is plenty of opportunity for landscape, cultural and architectural photography. Our third location Vardø is located on the very eastern most point of this remote peninsula. Vardø is a fascinating arctic town with a rich cultural history and a former stronghold of 'witch' burning in Medieval times. One of the main attractions here is the island of Hornøya. A visit to the seabird colonies here is an astonishing experience that will certainly leave a lasting impression. The main cliff is dominated by black-legged kittiwakes, common guillemots and



mots and Atlantic puffins, interspersed by Europeans shags, Brünnich's guillemots, razorbills and a few Black Guillemots. Expect to return home with a unique collection of arctic birds and landscape images.

PHOTOGRAPHIC TUTORS

Contact the WPH office for Information regarding the tutors on your particular trip.

DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive Kirkenes

The small town of Kirkenes is located northeast in Northern Norway, close to the Russian border. Kirkenes is known as the capital of the Barents Region and the gateway to the east.

Day 2,3,4: Båtsfjord

Leaving Kirkenes after breakfast on Day 2 will spend the day travelling to Båtsfjord in a leisurely way with lots of photographic stops en route. This is a high white wilderness area with frozen lakes and trees heavy with spark-

ling frost. We will spend three nights overlooking the harbour in the comfortable and friendly Båtsfjord Brygge owned by a very hospitable local family. During the two whole days that we spend here there will be opportunities to spend time in floating bird hides where we will be able to photograph at close quarters many birds including Steller's and King Eider, Long Tail Ducks and Black Guillemots. We will also take a boat around the coast and harbour where we have excellent chances photographing these birds in flight. After dinner and given clear weather our focus will be on photographing the aurora, the colourful houses can make excellent and unusual foreground.

Day 5,6: Kongsfjord

Following a sunrise and hearty breakfast at the Båtsfjord Brygge we head to the northerly fishing village of Kongsfjord. The situation of our accommodation is gorgeous, small colourful traditional houses beautifully and lovingly restored by Ása who literally bought almost a whole fishing village on the seashore. Whilst we are here we will have an opportunity to spend time photographing around



our accommodation and also the local harbour village that is rich in landscape and cultural interest. Abandoned boats lie partially buried in the snow, the local shop is a veritable museum, a testimony to times gone by and the old snow bound houses are decked with interesting bric a brac. The harbour is still working and there is always something interesting going on here, it is common to see and photograph a catch of King Crab the local delicacy of the region. Up on the headland and close to our accommodation there is a bird hide perched precariously on the edge of the cliffs, it goes without saying that Kongsfjord is yet another excellent aurora location.

Day 7,8,9: Vardø

No doubt we will be a trifle sad to leave the tranquil Kongsfjord, although we will soon be enjoying the landscape opportunities that present themselves during our journey to our most easterly location, Vardø. One splendid location is the esoteric community of Ekkerøy where we encounter some fine local coastal architecture plus



one of the largest Kittiwake nesting cliffs in Europe. Fugleflåget is situated at the outer tip of the peninsula and is the most accessible important bird cliff in Norway, a five minutes you will bring us to a fabulous cliff face where 15,000 pairs of kittiwakes breed in a cacophony of noise and activity. Black guillemots, razorbills and cormorants can be seen here too. From Ekkerøy an interesting drive over high snowy terrain will bring us to the harbour town of Vardø. Once a thriving fishing town, the collapse of this industry in 2002 has left the town with an air of interesting and photogenic arctic abandonment. Our comfortable hotel is in the centre of all the interest and just a couple of minutes walk to the harbour where

we catch the boat to the seabird colonies on the tiny island of Hornøya. The island is dominated by a beautiful lighthouse and is home to around 150,000 seabirds including Guillemot, Cormorant, Shag, Puffin, Kittiwake, Eider, Herring and Black Backed Gulls. The noise, smell and sheer movement is truly phenomenal. The prospect of photographing these birds in a snowy arctic landscape is very special, particularly as the birds will often be actively and aggressively defending their territories. In addition to the unforgettable bird opportunities, the area is rich in photographic interest, good arctic landscapes, graffiti, abandoned houses and old fishing vessels. There is a truly spooky but touching monument to

the witches that were burnt here in medieval times, a splendid and different place to experience the aurora!

Day 10: Kirkenes

Following an early morning walk around Vardø we spend our day driving back to Kirkenes making the most of any photographic opportunities that we may encounter. In the evening we will enjoy a final celebratory dinner together at our comfortable hotel.

Day 11: Homeward Flights

WPH services finish after breakfast. Guests will be leaving on different flights and will easily be able to get a taxi for the short journey to the local town airport.



WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 10 hotel nights
- All meals
- Airport Transfer Day 1

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- International flights
- Travel Insurance
- Airport Transfer Day 11
- Alcoholic beverages
- Items not mentioned

ACCOMMODATION

Our hotels are scenically located and close to many locations. In Kirkenes we stay in a comfortable hotel convenient for the airport. Guests will have single or double rooms with private facilities.

FOOD

Breakfast and dinner will be taken at our hotel restaurants. Some days we will have a picnic lunch that will be

eaten on location or we will eat at our hotel. Please let us know when you book of any special dietary requirements.

ALCOHOL

This is rather expensive in Norway, during the holiday we can call at the local shop where wine and spirits are sold; it might be worth considering bringing a bottle of your favourite 'tippel'! Wine, beer and spirits are available in the restaurants where we eat. Beer is available in the local supermarket.

SPENDING MONEY

You probably get around 12–13 NOK to 1 GBP. Norway is expensive; a soft drink might be 15 in a supermarket, 27 in a kiosk or 30 in a touristy place. There are supermarkets close to our hotel where you can buy soft drinks/snacks and beers etc.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is essential that you take out appropriate insurance to cover personal accident, medical costs, death, repatri-



ation and loss of baggage. We will need a copy of your travel insurance at the time of booking.

PASSPORT AND VISA REQUIREMENTS

Please check on the [UDI site](#) to see if you require a visa for Norway.

LANGUAGE

Norwegian (norsk) is a North Germanic language spoken primarily in Norway. English is widely spoken and understood.

CLIMATE

Varanger is the furthest northeastern part of Norway. The North Atlantic drift carries the warm ocean water current of the Gulf Stream, which just reaches Varanger, resulting in the high biological productivity of the coasts here. The warm current also maintains an ice-free sea year-round, meaning feeding areas are accessible all year for breeding birds. The climate in the south of Varanger varies wildly between seasons, reaching -30°C in winter.

However, the climate of the Varanger peninsula is more stable, but still very cold during winter season, in March it maybe between -3°C & -10°C, although it can be colder than this. It is unlikely to rain but snow is normal.

CLOTHING

The best solution to temperature control is to have a number of layers available from lightweight thermal underwear through mid-layer insulation to a windproof/waterproof jacket/trousers. If you have any questions feel free to contact us at anytime before the trip.

SUGGESTED CLOTHING/EQUIPMENT

- Down or artificial fibre duvet jacket, we wear “Rab”
- Warm trousers that allow flexibility of movement
- Long sleeved thermal tops and leggings
- Light fleece/wool jumpers
- Thicker warm fleece type jacket
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Warm socks, a few pairs
- Warm snow boots e.g. (Sorrel type)
- Warm hat
- Neck warmer such as “Buff”
- 1–2 pairs warm gloves that enable using camera controls whilst wearing
- Casual clothes, jeans etc for hotel wear
- Indoor shoes/slippers
- Sun cream and sunglasses
- Head torch
- Small basic first aid & any personal medicines
- Small towel



- “Hot Hands”
- Wash kit
- Ice grips

MICROSPIKES

In case of ice underfoot we now recommend small crampons that attach to your boots with elastic straps such as the [Unigear Ice Snow Microspikes](#), they are very easy to pull on and off and offer good traction in icy conditions. You'll generally find them on Amazon, but it's best to check in a local outdoor store first. It's important to get

the right size that will easily fit on the boots you're planning on using.

PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION

- Camera bag or backpack such as the Flipside or Trekker series designed by LowePro.
- Any extra equipment that doesn't fit in your camera bag/hand luggage will need to go in a hard case that can be put in the aircraft hold.
- A camera with interchangeable lenses such as a digital SLR or a mirrorless system camera.



- A set of lenses to cover the whole range from wide-angle to telephoto, for example...
For full-frame cameras: 16–35mm wide-angle, 24–105mm mid-range and a 70–200mm or longer tele zoom. For crop format cameras: 10–20mm wide-angle, 17–50mm mid-range and a 70–200mm or longer tele zoom.
- For bird photography as long a telephoto lens as you own and are comfortable to carry in the field. Zooms of 80–400mm or 150–600mm are a good choice.

- Spare camera (highly recommended)
- Sturdy tripod – not only useful for low light photography but also for accurate framing and composition of landscape and close-up images.
- Cable release – mechanical or electronic remote to avoid shake on long exposures.
- Although not essential camera filters such as neutral density, graduated filters and polarisers can be useful. At least one neutral density filter in the range of 4–6 stops would be a good addition to your kit.

- Lens cloth
- Sensor cleaning device (optional)
- Lightweight ‘trekking’ absorbent towel for drying cameras and equipment
- Rain cover for camera and camera bag
- Sufficient memory cards for the whole holiday as it may not be possible to buy more during the trip.
- Film users should bring enough film, as it may not be possible to buy in many places.



- A laptop with the image editing applications of your choice, essential for checking and presenting images during the trip and for one-on-one sessions with the tutor. All of the places we stay in have Wi-Fi.
- Backup storage device (optional)
- Spare batteries and chargers
- All the electrical sockets are European two-pin, so you might need a travel plug adapter.

USEFUL LINKS

[Hurtigruten Ferry Norway](#)

[Flights to Norway with Widerøe](#)

[Scandinavian Airlines SAS](#)

[Norwegian Airlines](#)

PARTNERS

Non-photographer partners will be very welcome. Although this is primarily a photography holiday we also visit some very beautiful locations. The cost will be the same for photographers and non-photographers.

MORE QUESTIONS?

We hope that this information has answered some of your questions about the holiday; it doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.

BOOKING THIS HOLIDAY

Fill in the [online booking form](#), or give us a call on +44 (0)1270 440222.

OUTDOOR TRAVEL

This is an outdoor travel holiday and the itinerary is dependent on the weather, local conditions and other variables. Wild Photography Holidays may use their discretion to change the itinerary should conditions dictate this; your health, safety and enjoyment will always be our primary concern when making such changes.

LINKS

View [images and information for this tour](#) on the website.

Read about [our approach to teaching photography](#)

