

**Alcohol:** Purchasing alcohol in the Nordics is expensive, and wine and liquor is only available in special stores. At the hotels and onboard the ships, you can only consume alcohol bought outside the hotel / ship in your room / cabin, not in the public areas or in the dining room.

**Bank matters:** Most places in the Nordic countries prefer cards over cash. American Express is not accepted everywhere, but VISA and Mastercard yes. ATMs are numerous in the major cities. Travelers Checks are not accepted in Scandinavia. Contact your bank in advance and advise them that you will be traveling in Norway and Finland. Take a copy of your passports and credit cards before departure, and make sure you have valid pins for your cards.

**Covid-19:** There is no covid regulations to enter the country or mandatory use of mask in public spaces, do it is recommendable, especially on crowded areas. Please check the info sent by GCT/OAT on the steps we need to take in case you contract covid during the trip.

**Dress code:** Casual and convenient are the lead words! As we travel from south to far north, the weather can vary a lot. Along with comfortable summer clothes I highly recommend also bringing a warm sweater, a good rain jacket, waterproof pants, hat to protect both from the wind and the sun, thin gloves, and sturdy walking shoes. For special dinners you can pack something nicer if you wish, but keep it casual, no need for jackets, ties, or high heels. Swimming gear if you want to enjoy the hotel sauna or have a swim at the beach.

**Electronic devices:** The electric sockets require the round two prong European type (220 V).

**Flights:** We will have one domestic flight in Finland. The usual weight allowance on your suitcase is 23 kg/50 lbs. and 8 kg/17 lbs. for hand luggage.

**Gifts:** Many travelers wish to bring gifts with them to the families for the Home Hosted Meal, which is

a nice gesture (but not required). A useful gift that represents your home region or something edible or drinkable is usually highly appreciated.

**Hurtigruten:** Is not a cruise line, the ships are merchant ships, serving 34 coastal communities transporting people, goods, and mail along the Northern coast of Norway. Along the way we will see a lot of birds and with a bit of luck even whales, so you might want to bring your binoculars to have a closer look.

**Internet access:** Wi-fi is available (and usually good) in all hotels, and onboard the ship.

**Just me:** Here is a picture of me and my family at our home in Lapland from last February.



**Kilometers:** We love the metric system in Scandinavia. If you want help with conversions, there are loads of apps for smartphones and tablets to download. I use one called "Unit Converter Pro".

**Laundry:** There are washing and drying machines available for a low-cost price on the Hurtigruten ship. Detergent is included.

**Mosquitos:** In the period between June and August, there are a lot of Mosquitoes in Lapland, so please bring mosquito repellent and if you are allergic, some antihistamine or similar allergy medication

**Necessities:**

- **Ear plugs: The ship can be a bit noisy at night.**
- **Sleep mask:** As the Nordics are used to sleep under the midnight sun, blackout curtains might not be available everywhere along our journey.
- **Motion sickness pills:** We will be traveling on open stretches of sea, and it can get rocky, although usually in summer it's calmer.

**Options:** There are many included features on this trip, but you always have the option to pass activities if you feel like. For the free time available I will offer alternatives where you can come with me or explore on your own.

**Pharmaceuticals:** Make sure you have all the important medications in your carry-on luggage.  
**Pharmacies here require prescriptions for most things, but motion sickness pills, mild painkillers and similar are sold over the counter.**

**Questions:** If you have any questions regarding this list, or anything concerning the trip, don't hesitate to contact me!

**Rooms:** Most Nordic hotels have a clean, simplistic design and the rooms tend to be small. The hotels and ships are often environmentally conscious and don't provide small bottles of toiletries or wash cloths, instead soap and shampoo are available in dispensers on the wall. Hair dryers are often available in the room, or to be borrowed at reception.

**Ship:** Our ship **MS Nordlys** has a capacity of 590 passengers. The ship has her own on-board Expedition Team with daily lectures and activities. We will have walks and activities scheduled for most ports but if you're interested in doing one of Hurtigruten's excursions, please let me know. The cabins on board Hurtigruten are small. The cabins have what you need to be comfortable but there is limited space. One bed usually folds to be a couch, and the other can be folded against the wall. It is possible to unpack and store the empty luggage during the trip, to free up space in the cabin. Inside cabins do not have windows.

**Tap water:** The tap water is free and clean (and often tastes very good!) all over the Nordic countries, including on the ship. I recommend bringing a water bottle you can refill during the trip.

**Unpredictable weather:** The weather in the Nordic region varies a lot. We will travel from the south to north and temperatures will likely range between 50 and 90°F. Apart from sunshine we can also expect some rainy days, and possibly strong winds. Our program might have to be adjusted based on the weather.

**Valuables:** There's often a safety box in the room, but it is always possible to store things safely in the reception. In general, the Nordic countries are very safe to travel to, but popular touristic areas might attract pick pockets.

**Whispers:** We will be using a whispers system for our guided walks. There is an earpiece that comes with it, but I recommend bringing your own headset, as it is more comfortable. Any headset with a standard headphone connection will work.

**Xchange:** I recommend checking the exchange rates. In Norway the currency is Norwegian kroner (NOK), and in Finland we use Euro (€). Exchange rates are usually better in ATMs than in exchange offices.

**Yr.no:** For the best weather forecast for the Nordic countries, check yr.no or en.ilmatieteenlaitos.fi.

**Zen:** Time to relax and get into your best vacation mode. See you soon in **Helsinki**