

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE FISHING VILLAGE "GJESVÆR"

In beautiful surroundings 34 km north-west of Honningsvåg, you will find the fishing village of Gjesvær, with approx. 150 inhabitants. It was not until 1976 that a road connected the village with the rest of the island. Up until then, you had to take local boats to get to and from the site. Already in the Viking Age, Gjesvær was known as a trading post and fish station and was presumably the first site at Magerøy which had a permanent settlement.

From the early Middle Ages and up to the last century, the village was one of the largest and richest fishing villages in Finnmark. From here, you have a magnificent view to "The mother with her daughters" - Gjesværstappan - an island group with Northern Norway's largest bird rocks. In the summer season, daily bird safaris are organised - don't miss it. It is also possible to spend the night and get something to eat in Gjesvær.

There are also plenty of **cloudberries**, **mountain cranberries** and **blueberries** - down through the ages important sources of **vitamin C** for the population and delicious garnish for exquisite desserts. During the summer, one can wade in grass up to your knees in quiet oases, and pick wild chives and admire the shining yellow globeflower.

### The world's northernmost birch forest

There are not many trees, as the treeline goes approximately 150 km south of the **North Cape**, so the closest we get to a "forest" is a little mountain birch woodland at **Gjesvær** and a few instances of birch trees and other trees on the mainland!

Along the steep rocky slopes on the coast, many different species of seabird nest. Some of them come to the **bird rocks** just to brood over their eggs, while the rest of the year they look for food out on the open sea. At **Gjesvær** you will find Europe's largest bird rocks - the nature reserve "**Gjesværstappan**" with **puffin**, **razor-billed auk**, **kittiwake**, **gannet**, **cormorant**, **guillemot** and **sea eagle**. In the mountains, the dominating bird is the mountain **grouse** (*lagopus mutus*).

The sea also offers a wealth of animals to get a closer look at. There are **killer whales**, **dolphins**, **porpoises** and **minke whales**. Of the various local **seal** species, the **grey seal** with its horse like face is the most distinctive, and keeps to its resting places on the skerries around **Gjesværstappan**.

# Midnight Sun - Polar Night – Northern Lights

## What the Midnight Sun is:

The midnight sun is a phenomenon occurring in latitudes north of the Arctic Circle and south of the Antarctic Circle, where the sun is visible at the local midnight. With adequate weather conditions, the sun is visible for a continuous 24 hours. This is great for travelers planning long days outdoors, as there will be sufficient light for outdoor activities!

## If You Can't Sleep:

In [Norway](#) and [Greenland](#), locals often adjust to these changes naturally and require less sleep. If you have problems sleeping due to the daylight during Midnight Sun, try to darken the room by covering the window. If this does not help, ask for assistance - you won't be the first. Scandinavians will understand and will do their best to help eliminate light from your room.

## Locations & Times of the Midnight Sun in Norway:

Longyerbyen (Spitzbergen): Apr 20 – Aug 20

[North Cape \(Nordkapp\)](#): May 14 - July 30

Hammerfest: May 16 - July 27

Tromsø/Tromsø, Hausberg: May 20 - July 22

Narvik, Hausberg: May 25 - July 18

Lofoten & Vesterålen: Late May - Mid July

Bodø/Bodo: July 4 - July 8

## A Scientific Explanation of the Midnight Sun:

The Earth orbits the Sun on a plane called the ecliptic. The Earth's Equator is inclined with the ecliptic by  $23^{\circ}26'$ . As a result, the North and South poles are in turn inclined toward the Sun for 6 months. Close to the summer solstice, on June 21, the Northern Hemisphere reaches its maximum inclination toward the Sun and the Sun illuminates all the polar area down to latitude  $+66^{\circ}34'$ . As seen from the polar area, the Sun does not set, but only reaches its lowest altitude at midnight. Latitude  $+66^{\circ}34'$  defines the Arctic Circle (southernmost latitude in the Northern Hemisphere where the midnight sun can be seen).

## Polar Night – Northern Lights

### The Creation of the Aurora Borealis:

The Northern Lights ("Aurora Borealis") stem from when large numbers of electrons stream in towards the Earth along its magnetic field and collide with air particles. The air then lights up rather like what happens in a fluorescent light tube. The resulting colors of the Northern Lights reflect gases we find up there. The charged particles originate from the sun, and the weather conditions on the sun decide whether or not we will see the aurora.

## **The Best Time to See the Aurora Borealis:**

We associate the Aurora Borealis with dark winter nights, although this natural phenomenon happens all the time (it's just harder to see in lighter conditions). Best are **September through April** - the further south in Scandinavia you go, the shorter the Aurora Borealis season will be.

The aurora can be viewed best during early evening and at night when it's not overcast. Beautiful photos of the Aurora Borealis are available in the [Aurora Borealis Photo Gallery](#).

During other times of the year, make sure to see the [top 3 Scandinavian natural phenomena](#)!

## **The Best Places for the Experience:**

To see this phenomena, visit the auroral zone (or any location beyond the Arctic Circle) where the Northern Lights occur. Tourists' favorite viewing locations are the coasts of the Norwegian counties of Tromsø and Finnmark - especially [the North Cape \(Nordkapp\)](#)!

The Northern Lights can be viewed from other northern locations as well, but Norway and Iceland are famous for having "the best seats" for viewing the Aurora Borealis.

## **How Often You Can See the Aurora Borealis:**

This depends on your location. In [Norway's](#) city of Tromsø (Tromsø) and at [the North Cape \(Nordkapp\)](#), you can see the Northern Lights every other clear night, if not even more frequently. The same goes for locations further north.

## **The Scientific Explanation of Aurora Borealis:**

Aurora Borealis forms at around 60 miles high (around 100 km) which makes the lights visible hundreds of kilometers away. The cause for this phenomenon is electrons hitting air particles, causing them to light up.

## **Additional Information:**

When you see the Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis) for the first time, you will be amazed at the lit-up skies. Scientifically this phenomena is referred to as "polar aurora" and "aurora polaris". More commonly in northern regions is the name Aurora Borealis. In the Scandinavian region, the Aurora Borealis often appears as a red-tinted glow on the northern horizon similar to a dark sunrise.