

Welcome to Tromsø - the gateway to the Arctic!



At a latitude of nearly 70 degrees north, four days' sailing from Bergen and barely a two-hour flight from Oslo, Murmansk or Longyearbyen, at the same latitude as Alaska and Siberia, between the island landscape, fjords and mountain peaks, you find Tromsø – the gateway to the Arctic and "capital" of Northern Norway.



As far back as a century ago, visitors were surprised to find culture, intellectual life and the current fashions so far north, and the city derived the name Paris of the North. That reputation lives on today visitors to Tromsø are charmed by the city's patriotic, loud and obliging residents, by a historical, compact and characteristic city centre, by a live and active cultural life all year round, by the Northern Lights, Polar Nights, Midnight Sun, by the exciting attractions, good possibilities for excursions and widely varying weather.



The experience will be complete as soon as you leave the city and visit the 1800m high Lyngen Alps to the east, go on a voyage of discovery out towards the Atlantic Ocean, experience fertile agricultural villages beneath steep mountains and learn more about Norwegian and Saami culture and that of the residents of Finnish origin.

Key Facts

Tromsø is the largest city in the Nordic countries north of the Arctic Circle and is home to the world's northernmost university, brewery and cathedral. The city lives on education, research, administration, fishing exports and satellite technology. The centre of the north has 64492 residents and the Municipality of Tromsø covers an area of 2558 km². Around 50,000 live in the centre of Tromsø, while the remainder is scattered throughout the whole municipality.

The Municipality of Lyngen has around 3200 residents, and covers an area of 810 km² on the mountain-rich Lyngen Peninsula. The outermost villages survive on fishing, while agriculture is important throughout the entire municipality. Successful, modern industry is located at Furuflaten at the very end of the Lyngen Fiord. The population has Norwegian, Saami and Finnish origins.

History

Human settlement in Tromsø and Lyngen dates back around 10,000 years, while the Saami culture here goes back at least 2000 years. Scandinavian language and culture could be found here from 300-400 AD, and Lyngen experienced immigration from Finland as early as the 1700s. A strong Norwegianising of the formerly Saami and Finnish areas of Tromsø and Lyngen started around 1900, and from the 1960s a high level of moving from the districts began.



Photo: Signe de Vries - Destinasjon Tromsø

Tromsø was founded in 1794, although the first church was built here back in 1252. In the 1850s, Tromsø became the centre for Polar sea catches in the Arctic region, while in the early 1900s the city was the starting point for a host of expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctic regions, something that gave the city the nickname Gateway to the Arctic. In 1940, Tromsø was capital of the non-occupied Norway for a few weeks, but totally avoided war damage as the only city in Northern Norway. In the years after 1960, Tromsø has experienced an exceptional growth in population, which is in part due to the establishment of institutions like the University of Tromsø and the Norwegian Polar Institute.

Climate, Midnight Sun and the Polar Nights

In spite of their location so far north, Tromsø and Lyngen both enjoy a moderate insular climate. Summer weather ranges from five degrees Celsius and rain to 28 degrees and fantastic swimming conditions for the undaunted. Winter in Tromsø is not especially cold. The record low temperature in Tromsø is minus 18 degrees Celsius, while the average January temperature is minus four, but in return there is often a lot of snow.

The Midnight Sun is visible from around May 21 to around July 21. Between November 21 and January 21, the sun disappears under the horizon and we experience the Polar Nights.



It is not completely dark during the middle of the day, and the light and colour in the sky is amazing when the weather is favourable.

Northern Lights

The Northern Lights are particles that are hurled into space after storms on the sun's surface. They are attracted by the magnetic North Pole, and enter the atmosphere in a ring-like zone around the pole. In a process that is

identical to that inside a light tube, the energy is released as light.



Tromsø is situated right in the centre of the Northern Lights zone and is, therefore, together with the interior ice in Greenland the tundra in northern Canada, among the best places on earth to observe this phenomenon. Most of the Northern Lights outbursts visible from Tromsø are green, but large outbursts can also include other colours.

In order to see the Northern Lights, it must be dark and clear – the reason that we never see the Northern Lights between May and August. The greatest frequency is between 6pm and 2am. Some visitors prefer to see the performance from a mountain top shielded from the city's lights, while others are just as impressed right in the city centre.

Student City Tromsø

"Studentbyen Tromsø" (Student City Tromsø), with its 10,000 students, is an exciting place to study. The University of Tromsø and Tromsø University College offer a wide variety of study options in a number of different subject areas. But student activity does not just comprise lectures, study groups, studying and examinations. You need a place to live, food, recreational activities and opportunities to get to know fellow students. The Student Welfare Association offers housing, operates cafés at the educational Institutes, childcare facilities, bookshops, a student centre (Driv), a student sports hall (Kraft) and its own counselling service. "Studentbyen Tromsø" offers much more, including a teeming cultural and nightlife.

The University Hospital of North-Norway is also the worlds northernmost university hospital

Recommended sight-seeing

Tromsø centre is the largest wooden city north of Trondheim, and has a rich

architectural inheritance in the Imperial style of the 1800s, richly interspersed with both beautiful and not so nice buildings from later periods.

The Arctic Cathedral, built in 1965, is the city's most recognisable feature. This distinctive structure was inspired by Northern Norwegian faith and nature. One of its features is a flaming and extremely original glass mosaic.



The Polar Museum is devoted to the city's past as the centre for Polar sea catches and the starting points for Arctic expeditions.

The University Museum of Tromsø shows the depth of Northern Norwegian nature and culture.



Aquariums with seals and fish from the region, along with a wonderful multi-media presentation on Svalbard, are attractions at Polaria, a knowledge-based experience and adventure centre for the Polar regions.

The Art Museum of Northern Norway portrays Northern Norwegian art and Northern Norwegian motives.



The cable car up Storsteinen, 420m above sea level, offers breathtaking panoramic views over the city and, if you are lucky, of the Midnight Sun or the Northern Lights.

The world's northernmost botanical garden contains hardy plants from six continents. The Perspective Museum in the city centre has exhibitions on the city's past and present. Mack's Brewery, the world's northern most brewery, welcomes visitors on a guided tour.



Cruise ship in front of Ishavshotellet.

See also Tromsø on [visitnorway.com](https://www.visitnorway.com) - the official travel guide to Norway