



From Tromsø to Hamburg

‘Polar light adventure in Norway’

With our HANSEATIC nature from Tromsø to Hamburg
(NAT2436)

March 08, 2024 – March 20, 2024



To remember our cruise to Norway

Written and illustrated by Nadja Gerull



Our polar light adventure begins in the arctic city of Tromsø!

Over 200 people who like to travel, make their way to the north of Norway, where, on the small HANSEATIC Nature expedition ship, they will explore the fjord landscape: right the way from North Cape in the north of the country, and concluding in Hamburg, Germany.

The weather that day still leaves something to be desired. With low hanging clouds and the last of winter's snow still remaining amid the mountain peaks, the -3°C does indeed make for a more than appropriate, Arctic welcome!

A thrill of anticipation is in the air! Little by little the first planes arrive from Zurich and Oslo. After a chaotic journey accompanied by numerous strikes in Germany, in the end each of us caught a flight to Tromsø! The buses reach the small pier just outside Tromsø and through the small white welcome tent we can catch the first glimpse of our HANSEATIC nature. The suitcases are scanned and after a small security check we wind our way up the gangway, finally into the belly of the HANSEATIC nature.



A beautiful arctic atmosphere welcomes us to Tromsø today. The sea is calm and the snow covers the mountains with a white winter coat.

We are welcomed by our General Expedition Manager Ulrike Schleifenbaum and Hotel Manager Tiziana La Rocca. Helping hands are available which accompany us into the cabins, show the way and give initial tips and information.

At 20:00 in the HanseAtrium on deck four the obligatory sea rescue exercise is on the programme for everyone already on-board. A sea of orange life-jackets beckons, as Safety Officer, Markus Henseler explains everything we need to know about rescue equipment and escape routes.

Of course, we all never want to experience a serious emergency!

The last remaining guests arrive safely around 22:30, while at 01:00 p.m. sharp, we finally set sail.

The HANSEATIC nature leaves Tromso through the wide Grotsund into Fugløysund. There are 193 nautical miles ahead of us, before reaching North Cape the following afternoon, from where we will continue our journey on towards Kirkenes. The massive, over 300-hundred-meter-high cliffs are an impressive sight from the water.



During the obligatory sea rescue exercise, we sit tightly packed in thick orange life jackets in the HanseAtrium. Our safety officer Markus Henseler explains safety features while fitness coach Ronny demonstrates how to properly buckle on the life vests.

Some people enjoy a nightcap at the bar or spend the rest of the evening listening to relaxed piano music. Others are probably bust unpacking and getting settled into their cozy cabins. The long trip to Tromsø is probably on everyone's minds and so things will quickly become quiet on the ship this evening.

For now, it's time to say: Good Night!

Saturday, March 9, 2024 **At sea towards Kirkenes, Norway**

Sunrise: 06:16 a.m.		Sunset: 04:42 p.m.		
Position: Latitude	Position: Longitude		Nautical miles total	
71°08,7' North	023°55,3' East		146	
Pressure (hPa)	Temp. Air (°C)	Temp. Water (C°)	Wind (Bft)	Weather
1023	5	5	5	cloudy

* All data taken at noon

A wonderful “Good morning!” from the snowy fjord world of Northern Norway! We left Tromsø pier promptly at 1:00 a.m. last night and are currently on our way towards Kirkenes.



This morning we are greeted by a wonderful fjord panorama and the many snow-covered mountains pass us by.

At 9:32 a.m. our captain Ulf Sodemann reports from the bridge with the latest report: We have already travelled 113 nautical miles since leaving Tromsø last night. We have just pressed the ship's typhoon to say goodbye to the pilot who has accompanied us until now. We will now tackle the next section alone, without a pilot. There are still 60 nautical miles ahead of us until we want to reach the North Cape around 3:00 p.m. There is little traffic and you will see very few ships. A large “Nordic Response” NATO exercise took place here two days ago, which explains the huge warship on our starboard side. The bridge is open to visitors from 10:00 a.m. and anyone who is interested can look over the shoulders of our officers at work!

The weather this morning is a bit mixed, low clouds hang between the snowy mountains, the sun flashes through briefly every now and then. We are currently level with the island of Sørøya on our port side and the small town of Hammerfest on our starboard side.

In the next few hours, we will leave the protective fjords and head out to the open sea, from where we can hopefully marvel at the North Cape.



These chic rubber boot models are available to us. From small to large, all desired sizes are available and with a thick profile, the boots are loyal companions in wet weather.

After comfortably waking and enjoying an invigorating breakfast our General Expedition Manager Ulrike Schleifenbaum introduces the entire expedition team in the HanseAtrium at 10:00 a.m. for our international guests and at 10:30 a.m. for all German-speaking guests.

From guest relations manager to fitness coach, experts and cruise sales, everyone is trying to convince who has the best place to work on board!

This is followed by the issuing of the chic, blue expedition parka and the fitting of the rubber boots. The cozy, blue clothes will accompany us through the frosty Norwegian cold and provide at least a little extra warmth - and they are also extremely chic!

The expedition team gathers in front of the stacked jackets and then we set off. Everything from XS - 5XL is available and with the help of our experts' trained fashion eyes and we can find the right size almost immediately. The matching olive-green rubber boots are also easy to find.

In the afternoon we can explore the Ocean Academy. Our three experts explain the various functions of the large touch wall and anyone who is interested has the chance to discover the world of microscopy with our biologist Nadja Gerull.

Various exhibits, from sea urchins to eider duck down or lichens, are quickly placed on the small glass plates and when you look through the eyepiece you are immersed in a completely different world that is otherwise hidden from us.



The mountain landscape around the North Cape is beautifully highlighted by the evening sun. Bottom left: The legendary North Cape. The steel globe can be seen tiny on the cliff.



The mountain trio Storstappen, Kjerkestappen and Bukkstappen in the warm rays of the evening sun.

From 2:00 p.m., Shore Excursion Manager Sara Benkirane will give us an insight into the excursions on offer on this trip. From a dog sled tour to a snowmobile safari, crab tasting, ice fishing or a leisurely city tour - there will be suitable excursions for each and everyone of us.

At around 2:30 p.m. a particularly beautiful interplay of sun and clouds appears in the sky. The sun's rays brilliantly illuminate the mountain scenery in front of the North Cape. Especially the mountain trio consisting of the Storstappen, Kjerkestappen and the Bukkstappen, which is beautifully lit and which we can observe for quite a while from our starboard side. We slowly pass through the most northern point of the Norwegian coast, Knivskjelodden, where at 3:30 p.m., we finally reach the North Cape. We can see the small steel globe and the adjacent North Cape Center on the over 300-meter-high cliff. The day after tomorrow we will take a closer look at the North Cape again when we drive up there from Honningsvåg on one of the many trips. For now, there is a first, impressive impression from the water side.

As we cruise along the coast, we are surprised by several groups of white-beaked dolphins jumping happily through the icy ocean. The white-beaked dolphin is the largest dolphin species in the North Atlantic and shares a distribution area with the slightly smaller white-sided dolphin up to the Arctic ice up to Spitsbergen. The animals grow up to 3 meters long and are considered extremely active and acrobatic, which we can observe particularly well today. The dolphins are usually found in large schools of well over 30 animals.



A group of white-beaked dolphins accompanies our ship. The lively animals are known for their acrobatic jumps and somersaults. We can easily spot the black-gray-white bands along the body that are typical for this species

In the afternoon the first PREcap of this trip is on the daily program. The so-called PREcap (i.e., a preview) is about the destinations and cities of the coming days. Our Norway expert Heinz Strathmann explains to us the two calls in Kirkenes and Honningsvåg. What can we do there? Are there shuttle buses? We also get exciting facts about the cities, history and people so that we are well prepared for our shore leave.

The evening begins slowly and before dinner at 6:30 p.m., Captain Ulf Sodemann traditionally invites us to the captain's welcome cocktail and introduces his officers and then himself. Peppered with wit and humor, Ulf Sodemann gives a brief overview of our itinerary and about the many exciting things await us. We are full of anticipation and are now enjoying our well-deserved welcome dinner with caviar and all sorts of delicacies in the various restaurants. Bon appetit!



The officers introduce themselves. From left to right, back row: Roland Neuhauser (Chief purser), Timon Lohrengel (Executive chef), Thomas Miatke (Staff captain), Dr. Rüdiger Reichel (Doctor), Lars Walter (Chief engineer). From left to right, front row: Chiara Hartung (Executive houskeeper), Anna Gessler (Maitre), Tiziana La Rocca (Hotelmanager), Ulf Sodemann (Captain), Ulrike Schleifenbaum (General expedition manager). Foto © Michèle Imahorn, 2024

Sunday, March 10, 2024

Kirkenes, Norway

Sunrise: 05:46 a.m.		Sunset: 04:37 p.m.		
Position: Latitude	Position: Longitude		Nautical Miles Total	
69°43,7' North	030°03,8' East		359	
Pressure (hPa)	Temp. Air (°C)	Temp. Water (C°)	Wind (Bft)	Weather
1014	4	3	2 – 3	cloudy

Welcome to Kirkenes! This morning we reach the eastern outpost of Norway in clear weather.

In case you're awake early this morning, you can follow the journey through the Bøkfjord, which quickly becomes as smooth as glass, until we pick up the pilot at around 6:30 a.m. At 7:00 a.m. the time has come and the HANSEATIC nature quickly docks quietly in Kirkenes.



The view from our pier in Kirkenes. The rugged fjord landscape has retreated and the landscape here in the north consists of shallow hills. The Hurtigruten also regularly stop at Kirkenes with their mail ships.

Kirkenes is located in the very northeast of Norway on the Bøkfjord, an arm of the Varangerfjord, near the border of Russia. The city is about 400 kilometers north of the Arctic Circle and actually just as east as St. Petersburg. The majority of the approximately 10,000 residents have a Norwegian background. However, there is a minority of Sami people. Other residents originally come from Finland, while around 500 people recently immigrated from Russia.

Strong cultural influences from Russia can be seen throughout Kirkenes. A prominent example of this is the Russian Monument - a memorial to the liberation of Sør-Varanger by the Red Army in autumn 1944. A Russian market is held in Kirkenes once a month. Road signs are written in Norwegian and Russian. The border with Russia can be visited either by bus, riverboat or quad bike. The 'Grenselandmuseet' museum has permanent and temporary exhibitions on the border region.

As part of a special regulation made possible by the Schengen Agreement and which was previously unique in Europe, Russians and Norwegians living in a 30-kilometer zone were allowed to travel from April 2010 to February 2022 (until the hostile attack on Ukraine by Russia) back and forth visa-free. This is no longer possible for an indefinite period of time and is a debacle for many residents.

Today it's time to explore Kirkenes and its beautiful nature on one of the numerous excursions. The first groups set off to glide through the landscape on a hovercraft. A pretty unusual way to get to know the area. The air cushion vehicle glides almost weightlessly over the frozen fjord.

Other excursions today include snowmobile-sledding to see the king crabs. The king crab, also known as the Kamchatka crab, originally comes from the northern Pacific around Alaska and Japan, where it inhabits coastal waters. From 1961 to 1969, Russian researchers released the crab into the Barents Sea near Murmansk, where its population exploded just as planned. To date it has reached as far as the Lofoten Islands.

The animals reach a body length of around 20 cm and a leg span of up to 2 meters. Male crabs can easily weigh 10 kg. The animals are considered a fine delicacy and are fished using so-called "crab pots". Today we can enjoy tasting the freshly prepared crab legs and feast until we roll out of the restaurant.



With the sleds we race through the snowy landscape. Over 100 sled dogs want to be petted by us today and enjoy our full attention.



We start with a dog team of 6. The dogs are ready and can hardly wait to run away. They jump into their harnesses again and again with excitement until the snow anchor is finally released and the power of the 6 dogs becomes noticeable.

The two sled dog groups make their way to the snow hotel in the early afternoon. Over 150 huskies are waiting for us there! In teams of two, we make ourselves comfortable on the small wooden sleighs, which are pulled by 6 - 8 dogs. Short safety briefing, camera and cell phone stowed away, hat adjusted and off we go at a piggy gallop through the snowy landscape. Afterwards we visit the legendary snow hotel, which is located a few meters up the hill. You can stay overnight here in beds made out of ice 365 days a year. Thanks to a sophisticated air conditioning system, the lovingly designed rooms remain frosty cold even in summer.

There are various rooms to choose from, each with a different theme. The bar is made of ice, tables, chairs and even small glasses are made of ice. In front of the bar there is a huge reindeer head with antlers. A bizarre place, beautifully lit and definitely worth seeing. Whether you actually want to spend a night here is ultimately up to you.

It is now 16:30 and the weather has been on our side all day. Hardly any wind, no rain and a few rays of sunshine every now and then. So we were able to fully enjoy all the wonderful excursions.

All guests have arrived safely back on board and our captain Ulf Sodemann reports shortly before departure with an update of the current situation:

You may have already noticed that the wind has slowly been picking up and the waves are gradually becoming a little more restless around the ship. We will release the lines promptly at 5:00 p.m. and head out of the Bøkfjord and out to the open sea. Tonight, waves of up to 3 - 4 meters await us coming from the front. We should store all items safely! If we progress as planned, we will reach Honningsvåg tomorrow morning at 08:00.



In the Kirkenes snow hotel we can admire a variety of glittering ice sculptures. Each hotel room has its own theme, from fairytale creatures to animals to well-known Disney characters.

Now it's time to warm up and get comfortable! We all have a lot to tell after today's exciting day.

At 5:30 p.m. our Norway expert Heinz Strathmann will officially start the lecture program for this journey with the German version of his presentation "Norway – the way north". We hear interesting facts about this interesting country, the midnight sun, people and culture. In the meantime, we enjoy a lovely sundowner with our expeditions expert and guide Matthias de Klerck in the observation lounge.

In the evening there is a spontaneous little surprise from our hotel department: at 6:30 p.m. the on-board loudspeakers sound and our General Expedition Manager Ulrike Schleifenbaum initiate the so-called "door-to-door-with".

You step in front of your cabin door and look at who actually lives in the cabins to the left, right and opposite - It doesn't matter whether you are in a bathrobe, with curlers in your hair or already neatly dressed up. The champagne glasses are filled and we get to know each other over a little chat in the hallway. A great idea!

Expert Thomas Kraupe ends the day today with his first lecture on the northern lights. Many of us chose this journey to observe the dancing and colorful veils. In "Fascination Northern Lights" we get all the important background information about the celestial phenomenon.

Full of impressions and new knowledge, we sink contentedly into our beds today. Tomorrow a new, exciting day awaits us in the North Cape

Monday, March 11, 2024

Honningsvåg, Norway

Sunrise: 06:00 a.m.		Sunset: 04:55 p.m.		
Position: Latitude		Position: Longitude		Nautical Miles Total
70°59,0' North		025°57,7' East		543
Pressure (hPa)	Temp. Air (°C)	Temp. Water (C°)	Wind (Bft)	Weather
1019	4	4	2 – 3	partly cloudy

After a somewhat wavy and restless night back towards the North Cape, we reach the fishing town of Honningsvåg shortly before 8:00 a.m. Honningsvåg is a small town in the province of Finnmark and is located in the southeast of the island of Magerøya. The town has around 2,800 inhabitants and of course the most popular attraction is the visit to the legendary North Cape, in winter and summer.

Standing on the edge of the slate plateau with the legendary globe monument and looking out over the sea is unforgettable. The clear, fresh air and the views of the sea and the surrounding horizon give you the feeling of being at the end of the world. No wonder the rock is a major tourist attraction. In fact, the first tourist arrived there in 1664 and the North Cape has been a tourist magnet ever since. It is known as the northernmost point of Europe and a destination for all world travelers.



From a viewing platform over Honningsvåg you can get a good overview of the small port town and the surrounding fjord landscape.

Kinnarodden and Knivskjellodden are both geographically a little further north, although the North Cape is more accessible and much more dramatic due to the steep cliffs.

The small visitor center houses a museum and a restaurant, as well as a large souvenir shop; according to rumors it is even one of the largest in Norway.

The first buses leave in the morning heading to the North Cape. It takes about an hour through the barren, arctic tundra along a partly snow-covered road.

On our way we pass ptarmigans and dolphins that swim in the distant bay and you slowly feel the loneliness and isolation of this place.

However, when we arrive at the North Cape, we find a wonderful atmosphere. A play of clouds, wind, snowfall and sun rays that make the globe shine again and again.



The legendary North Cape with the 300 meters high cliffs. On top of it sits the large steel globe, which is supposed to symbolically mark the end of mainland Europe.

At the same time, some of us go hunting for king crabs in a RIB boat, a small, maneuverable rigid inflatable boat.

With 600 hp it gallops through the mostly calm sea. We drive along the snowy coast for a good half hour until we see the position of one of the crab pots on a buoy. The line is grabbed with a hook and the basket is hoisted on board. And indeed, big crab eyes look at us in surprise. After another 5 minutes of driving, we reach the small settlement of Sarnes. In a modern lavvo, the freshly prepared animals are appropriately served with white wine. The RIB takes you back to Honningsvåg. A little extra lap past our HANSEATIC nature and the small inflatable boat is back on the wooden pier.

We probably notice, especially today, the many funny troll figures that are scattered all over the city. You can also find some of these sometimes cute, sometimes scary characters up on the North Cape.

In Norse folklore and storytelling tradition, the troll is described in the form of various supernatural creatures rooted in old Norse mythology.

Both appearance and characteristics can vary, but in many cases the creatures are not only dangerous, but also strong and evil and usually not particularly clever. They live in wilderness inaccessible to humans, such as mountain caves, dense forests and the ice-cold ocean.

Basically, it has always been important not to mess with these creatures, but rather to be on good terms. Because in the past, if this wasn't the case and they were even provoked, they could easily take revenge, for example by cursing the farmers' animals with illness or even death.

But don't worry at this point, because the opposite is also possible! If you get along well with the trolls, they are also very nice and helpful creatures!



Cute or a little scary? Trolls can be found all over Norway. For thousands of years, mysterious rock formations and mountains with troll-like shapes have fascinated people across Norway.

Some people might stroll through the town and enjoy the clear air before it's time for everyone to head back to ship at 5:30 p.m.!

At 6:00 p.m. our HANSEATIC nature sets off again because we want to reach Alta on time the following morning.

The evening is peppered with a program from 6 p.m. the PRE and REcap starts in the HanseAtrium. We look forward to the days ahead in Alta and look back on the things we have already seen and experienced.

Norway expert Heinz Strathmann provides us with important background knowledge on the city of Northern Lights. Northern Lights expert Thomas Kraupe then gives us an overview of the chances of seeing the dancing lights, while biologist Nadja Gerull explains which dolphins we saw two days ago while cruising in front of the North Cape cliffs.

Another highlight follows dinner, when our musical trio Gondolatjel play their first concert. Since our trip is a so-called music journey, the musical contributions have a correspondingly high priority and we are looking forward to the first evening of full musical beauty.

At “A MUSICAL JOURNEY” we can look forward to a varied concert with Gregor Büdenbender on the transverse flute, Judith Opperl on the violin and Zsuzsanna Pènzès-Büdenbender on the viola. A journey from rag through romantic and imaginative music to the classical music of Ludvig van Beethoven.



The surrounding mountains are sometimes illuminated by the sun and the next moment they are covered by thick rain and snow clouds. A game of different weather today.

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Alta, Norway

Sunrise: 06:04 a.m.		Sunset: 05:11 p.m.		
Position: Latitude		Position: Longitude		Nautical Miles Total
69°58,8' North		023°20,0' East		653
Pressure (hPa)	Temp. Air (°C)	Temp. Water (C°)	Wind (Bft)	Weather
1014	0	3	4 – 5	cloudy

We reach Alta this morning with a short delay. Our position today is a few minutes' walk from the airport and an incoming plane that crosses our path in the fjord has priority for its landing approach. So today we reach the pier around 8:15 a.m. and the gangway is ready at 8:30 a.m.

Alta is located in the province of Finnmark and with around 12,000 inhabitants it is the northernmost town with more than 10,000 inhabitants. However, the population density is relatively low, with an average of five inhabitants per square kilometer. The town of Alta is located on the southern bank of the Altafjord, just west of the mouth of the Altaelv River north of the Arctic Circle. In the city of Alta, the sun does not set from mid-May to the end of July and does not rise from the end of November to mid-January. In the winter months, Alta is considered one of the best areas for observing the northern lights, as there is no light pollution a few kilometers outside the city and the dark night sky can be seen particularly well. Since Alta was quickly completely destroyed in the Second World War, the cityscape is characterized by modern architecture. One of the few remains that was not destroyed during the war is the small wooden altar church (Altakirke).



The Northern Lights Cathedral is one of the highlights and should not be missed when visiting the city of Alta. The shape is supposed to be reminiscent of dancing northern lights.

Today's motto is all about excursions, getting to know the country and its people, and enjoying nature and wildlife. On numerous excursions we spread out in all directions in the afternoon.

On a short tour of the city, we would of course like to visit Alta's most famous building: the Northern Lights Cathedral!

The Northern Lights Cathedral, also known as Alta Church, is the largest church in the northern Norwegian city of Alta.

The sacred building of this particular Norwegian church was built between 2011 and 2013 according to plans by Kolbjørn Jenssen and was inaugurated on February 10, 2013 by Bishop Per Oskar Kjølaas in the presence of Crown Princess Mette-Marit and numerous representatives of public life.

The church is built entirely of concrete and clad on the outside with around 40,000 titanium plates. The altar wall was treated with a blue glaze to better show off the figure of Christ standing in front of it.

The interior of the church is also made of concrete, all wooden details, chairs and the floor are made of solid oak. The interior walls of the church were covered with a total of 800 meters of vertical strips that are illuminated by light-emitting diodes. This creates a warm and soft light. The strips therefore contribute equally to a pleasant atmosphere and good acoustics.



The winner of this year's junior discipline crosses the finish line. The participants are received with great applause in the pedestrian zone of Alta. Photo © Finnmarksløpet, 2024

Anyone who explores the small town individually will come across shopping centers, small cafés and an overall small city center. The highlight at the moment is the world-famous Finnmarksløpet. The Finnmarksløpet is Europe's largest and longest dog sled race and takes place every year around March. The start and finish line are the pedestrian zone in the middle of Alta. As we stroll through the city we notice the many gates, flags and dog transport boxes.

The race was organized for the first time in 1981 - back then with only 3 teams at the start. Over time, the race has grown in size and gained international attention. The disciplines are currently divided into three different categories:

- Junior class: 205 km with a maximum of 6 dogs
- 600 km race: 600 km routes with a maximum of 8 dogs
- 1,200 km race: 1,200 km route with a maximum of 14 dogs

With around 80 participants, the 600 km race is the most popular discipline this year. Today, successful mushers are gradually arriving in Alta with their dogs and we can watch them rush through the finish line. Today, however, we are taking a much quieter approach to our excursions and would like to get to know dog sledding in a leisurely manner on a short excursion.



There are over 150 dogs impatiently waiting for us at the Holmen Husky Farm. The animals are mixed breeds that have proven to be particularly enduring and robust.

A visit to the popular Alta Museum is also worthwhile and gives an impression of the history of this region.

In a slate quarry we get an impressive demonstration of how the durable material was processed back then and today. Alta is known for its high-quality slate tiles, which are used worldwide as floor tiles, stair coverings and roof tiles.

Alternatively, you can now explore the surrounding area by horse-, reindeer- or dog sleigh on one of the various tours.

Our northern lights fans also go hunting for the dancing lights in the evening. Because Alta is the ultimate spot for connoisseurs to observe the natural spectacle.

Alta lies north of the Arctic Circle. Year after year, the midnight sun can be observed from May 16th to July 26th. As a result, there will be no sunset and no sunrise from November 24th to January 18th.

This time, also known as the blue season, offers excellent opportunities to observe the Northern Lights. At the end of the 19th century, the first observatory to observe the northern lights was built. Alta is therefore nicknamed the “City of the Northern Lights”. Unfortunately, the cloud cover is particularly stubborn today, making it very difficult for us to spot the lights. It shouldn't happen this evening, but maybe it will work one of the next nights!

Wednesday, March 13, 2024			Alta, Norway	
Sunrise: 06:00 a.m.		Sunset: 05:16 p.m.		
Position: Latitude	Position: Longitude		Nautical Miles Total	
69°58,8' North	023°20,0' East		653	
Pressure (hPa)	Temp. Air (°C)	Temp. Water (C°)	Wind (Bft)	Weather
1018	-6	3	3 – 4	sunny

Since the small town and the region have so much to offer, we stay at the Alta pier for another half day.

Various excursions in all directions start again today. And now it's time to have some fun, cuddle with sled dogs, go ice fishing, get to know reindeer and Sami or enjoy nature in a sporty way on a fatbike.



You have to take a break now and then. The cold temperatures don't bother the dogs. With a warm coat and a thick undercoat, they are well adapted.

At the Holmen Husky Farm, we get information about the life of a musher and after a long cuddle time with the friendly animals, we set off on the sleigh in pairs.

The so-called double team has become established for most trips these days. The dogs run in pairs to the left and right of a central leash (gang line). They are connected to this on the collar via the neck line and on the harness via the tug line. The neck leash is used to keep the dog on track, the tug line is used to transfer the pulling forces

to the central leash. The team is divided into so-called sections. Each section consists of two dogs running side by side. The front section is the lead section with the lead dogs. The lead dogs are usually the smartest dogs in the team and implement the sled driver's commands.

The rearmost section directly in front of the sleigh is the so-called wheel dogs, in which the strongest dogs typically run. In between there are team and swing dogs who consistently ensure speed and steer the sled into the curves.

Just like with snowmobiles, dog sledding also requires full physical effort. Pushing up the mountain, hanging into the curves, keeping your balance - the practice of the musher, as the sled driver is called in technical jargon, is more demanding than you initially think!



Today we get to know Sami Johan and his two sons. With the reindeers we glide through the forest in traditional sleighs. We then hear exciting stories from Johan around the campfire.

If you are more interested in reindeer, you might have decided to visit the Sami family with the humorous head Johan. After a good hour's drive through the beautiful landscape, birch forests and gorges, we reach the small Sami settlement in Maze.

Johan greets us in traditional clothing made of colorful fabrics and reindeer boots. Shortly after arriving, the first group climbs onto the small wooden reindeer sleighs and begins the journey through the forests. Reindeers are definitely a little more stubborn when it comes to pulling sleighs. Johan's two sons lead the two sleigh convoys with the leading reindeer, because without guidance and direction the animals would not move at all. While some are traveling on the sleigh, others are practicing throwing the lasso. For the Sami, it is essential to be able to catch the animals with a rope in order to be able to control such a large, free-roaming herd.

After a short exchange between both groups, we then gather in a lavvo - a traditional Sami tent. The fire is blazing, the coffee is hot and we are enjoying a delicious piece of homemade maze cake.

After a communal Joik, the singing of the Sami, we start the journey home to Alta. Today, other excursion groups explore a family-run farm on a sleigh ride with the pretty fjord horses. The animals pull our sleigh through the romantic Mattistal. The small horse breed comes from the Vestland of Norway and has always been a popular leisure and work horse because of its good-natured, docile and persistent character. After we have visited the sheep and stables on the farm, we receive a few delicious cinnamon rolls.



Two people fit in one sleigh. The reindeer must be led by one person, as the animals are somewhat more stubborn and unwilling than sled dogs.

Full of impressions, we all return to our HANSEATIC nature in the early afternoon. At 2:00 p.m. the lines are released and we continue our journey south. The fjord landscape will remain with us for the next few hours as we want to get as close to and between the islets and the inside passage as possible.

The afternoon program is varied. Expert Thomas Kraupe gives the English version of his Northern Lights lecture in the HanseAtrium, while Norwegian Heinz Strathmann offers a small Norwegian course in the Ocean Academy. At 5:00 p.m., biologist Nadja Gerull explains the wild animals of Scandinavia to us and from 6:00 p.m. it's "PREcap time" again. We are excited to see what tomorrow's call in Svolvær on the Lofoten has to offer!

In the evening the traditional "chefs' dinner" awaits us. Today's dishes in the Hanseatic Restaurant as well as the Lido were exclusively designed, seasoned and cooked for us by different chefs from our HANSEATIC nature.

We enjoy spring rolls with Filipino notes, Japanese tartare, and Thai chicken soup. At the subsequent "Chefs Dinner Digestif" at 9:30 p.m. in the HanseAtrium, the chefs will all introduce themselves and describe their creation again. A nice idea to finally get to know the unknown faces behind the many delicacies!

In the evening the sky slowly clears and the wish to see the northern lights no longer seems completely unattainable. At around 7:40 p.m. the relieving message from the bridge: Northern lights! The dancing lights can be clearly seen behind the ship and it is worth coming out onto the open decks to watch the spectacle. The fillet steak has to wait first and so we all rush outside into the starry night. The colorful veils appear late into the evening and in the end each of us takes beautiful photos and memories with us. What a wonderful way to end the day!



Finally the sky opens up and we could see the long-awaited dancing veils in the sky. With a few tips and tricks you can also take a good photo with your cell phone. Photo © Thomas Kraupe, 2024

Thursday, March 14, 2024

Svolvær, Lofoten Islands, Norway

Sunrise: 06:28 a.m.		Sunset: 05:56 p.m.		
Position: Latitude		Position: Longitude		Nautical Miles Total
68°14,0' North		014°32,6' East		932
Pressure (hPa)	Temp. Air (°C)	Temp. Water (C°)	Wind (Bft)	Weather
985	2	3	2 – 3	cloudy

The clouds are hanging low this morning. When we wake up, we can barely see your hand outside. It's snowing, it's -2°C and we're treated to an authentic, wintry atmosphere.

At 9:15 a.m. we receive a message from our captain Ulf Sodemann through the on-board loudspeakers:

We made good progress overnight and have now covered 252 nautical miles since setting off from Alta. With an average speed of around 13.5 knots, there are still 26 nautical miles ahead of us until we want to reach the small town of Svolvær on the Lofoten at 12:00 p.m. At 11:15 a.m. we will arrive at the entrance of the narrow passage and it is worth checking out the procedure from the decks. The small archipelago islands to the left and right of us will be only 30 meters from the ship.

The air pressure has fallen significantly and is now at 984 hPa. We remain excited to see what the day has to offer today.



We pass a dramatic mountain backdrop before we reach the narrow entrance to Svolvær. Beacons, churches and lighthouses line the coasts.

The Lofoten is a region in the Norwegian province of Nordland and part of an archipelago off the coast of northern Norway, consisting of around 80 islands.

The meaning of the name could be translated as “the lynx paw,” from ‘ló’ for lynx, and ‘foten’, the paw.

Lofoten is located approximately (depending on location) 100 to 300 km north of the Arctic Circle in the Atlantic, separated from the mainland by the wide Vestfjord.

Today we want to visit Svolvær, which today serves as the municipality's largest town and administrative center. Around 5,000 people out of the total 24,000 inhabitants of Lofoten live in Svolvær today.

The pretty town is located on the island of Austvågøy and due to the direct influence of the Gulf Stream, the climate in the region is milder than places at similar latitudes, such as regions in Greenland.



The typical Lofoten fishing boats are on the move. It is currently high season for skrei – the delicate winter cod from Norway. Many fishermen try their luck at this time of year.

The gangway is being prepared, buses arrive, hikers, horse lovers and people interested in culture make their way to today's guides, who would like to introduce us to the archipelago.

For some adventurous people, you can go on horseback across the island of Gimsøya, past beaches and stockfish shelves.

Since Viking times, Norwegians have been drying fish in the fresh sea breeze to produce the sought-after cod (tørrfisk).

The production of this tasty specialty takes place almost exclusively in the north of Norway and requires the best raw materials.

It usually consists of the high-quality and only seasonally available Norwegian winter cod, also known as skrei. But other fish, such as pollock, haddock or ling, are also used for production.

To this day, stockfish is produced using the same methods and the same special ingredient – nature. From February to May the fish hangs outdoors and is exposed to the forces of nature on the coast of Northern Norway.

The head and intestines of the fish are removed and then two animals are tied together in pairs by the tail fins and hung over a stick - hence the name.

With temperatures around 0°C and an ideal balance between wind, sun and rain, the region around Lofoten offers the perfect climate for producing dried fish.

With the help of this drying method, which is thousands of years old, the fish is optimally preserved and still retains all the important nutrients. That's why stockfish was for a long time a highly sought-after product that was used to feed sailors on their long voyages. This is how Norwegian stockfish became known all over the world. Today it is a delicacy.

Today the smell of drying fish hangs over the entire city. There are a variety of large wooden shelves around Svolvær.



Stockfish in the Lofotr Viking Museum. The heads and guts were removed and the animals were tied together by their tail fins. This is how fish has been dried and preserved for thousands of years.

If you want to take a more leisurely approach, you might opt for one of the landscape trips with a visit to the Viking Museum.

The Vikings played an important role here in Lofoten a long time ago. The archipelago has been populated for around 6,000 years. Originally people lived here from fishing and hunting. During the Viking Age, several settlements with chiefdoms were formed. A replica was rebuilt in Borg. In the museum we learn exciting things about this era and culture.

Others take the RIB along the beautiful coast into the Trollfjord and watch sea eagles being fed by our tour guides. Of course, the animals know full well that it's time for a treat as soon as the little boats appear. The sea eagle is a powerful animal and the largest bird of prey in Norway. Its wingspan measures up to 2.70 meters and the largest sea eagle found weighed an impressive 7 kilograms.

The animals feed mainly on fish and other seabirds. They build their nests high up in treetops or on steep mountain slopes. From there they also track down their prey while they lie in wait for hours, motionless, from their so-called perch.



The eagle approaches its prey in the water with elegant flaps of its wings. He grabs the small frozen herring with precision and moves it to a protected place. Photo © Michèle Imahorn, 2024



The wingspan of over two meters is impressive. The animals fly just above our heads and don't seem to be afraid at all. Photo © Michèle Imahorn, 2024

The simplest hunting method is to collect half-dead or dead fish from the surface of the water. After a precise flight, the large gripping legs are extended just before the surface of the water and the prey is grabbed with a short grip.

Large fish weighing more than 2 kilograms are grabbed and held in the water near the shore. In deeper water, the eagle can lie on the water with its wings spread for a few minutes. When the fish has tired itself out, the eagle swims to land with its prey

The white-tailed eagle is found in large parts of the Norwegian coast, but 40% of the total Norwegian eagle population inhabits the areas around the Lofoten Islands. The best conditions to observe the large bird of prey!

Today, some people travel around the city on their own. The small town has a lot to offer. Cute cafés, small boutiques and a harbor mile invite you to stroll. We can easily get from the ship to the city and back again with the shuttle bus.

The last excursionists reach the HANSEATIC nature again at 6:00 p.m., so we can leave the small pier in Svolvær promptly at 6:30 p.m. The journey continues south and tomorrow morning at 8:00 a.m. we want to arrive in front of the glacier arm of Svartisen. This evening the Trio Gondolatjel presents us with another concert in the HanseAtrium. We listen to pieces by Dvorák, Fuchs and many other composers.

Friday, March 15, 2024

Svartisen Glacier, Norway

Sunrise: 06:25 a.m.		Sunset: 06:03 p.m.		
Position: Latitude	Position: Longitude		Nautical Miles Total	
66°42,4' North	013°42,4' East		1053	
Pressure (hPa)	Temp. Air (°C)	Temp. Water (C°)	Wind (Bft)	Weather
997	3	6	1	sunny

Early in the morning our HANSEATIC nature turns into the wide Skarsfjord, from there into the Arhaugfjord and finally into the Holandsfjord, where we want to find our anchorage in the first half of the day today.

Today's motto is the expedition. In the small glacier valley, we want to take the maneuverable Zodiacs ashore and explore the landscape on a short walk. The outside temperature is currently bearable at around 2°C, there is hardly any wind and the sky seems to be slowly clearing up. Perfect conditions to take the rubber boats for a little joyride!



The first Zodiac arrives at the land station and our expedition guide Emily Jahn briefs us with a few organizational information and the shore leave can begin.

Our destination today is the Svartisen glacier. The Svartisen (Norwegian for "black ice") is the second largest glacier in Norway at 370 km² and is located in the province of Nordland, just above the Arctic Circle in the Saltfjellet-Svartisen National Park south of Bodø. It has a total of 60 glacier branches. The Vesterdalen valley lies between the two main glaciers, the Østisen (148 km²) and the Vestisen (221 km²).

The small Engerbreen, which we can already recognize from the ship due to its strong blue color, is the small remnant of what was originally a large branch of the Svartisen. At the turn of the century the ice extended 2 km further into the fjord and has now retreated almost completely to the edge of the mountain.

What remains is a beautiful U-shaped glacial valley with the glacial lake Engabrevatnet in front, on the banks of which we would like to take a walk today.

Shortly before 8:00 a.m., the anchor rumbles and our HANSEATICnature comes to a stop. The Zodiacs are then lowered into the water and the "Shoreparty" takes the first boat ashore to set up our landing site. Barrels are set up; benches are opened and a good place to get out of the boats is looked for.

At 9:00 a.m. the first call sounds through the on-board loudspeakers: It's time to go, hikers please go to the side gate!

The small boats rush back and forth to get us all to shore as quickly as possible. The experts and the expedition team are ready and the hike towards the glacier tongue can begin.



We enjoy nature in this natural glacier valley. We can warm up with fresh waffles and coffee and enjoy the view.

Our way leads us through beautiful nature, past romantic birch forests, juniper bushes and mystical moss areas. The sun has now made it over the mountain ridge and bathes the forest in a glittering spectacle of warm colors.

The streams babble next to us, the snow thaws and we enjoy the silence as the blue ice gets closer and closer.

After about 3 km we reach a small plateau with a view of the lake and the small glacier tongue.

At the end of this wonderful shore excursion, we all meet in a cozy hut on the edge of the lake and are treated to coffee, tea and freshly baked waffles.

After we have all warmed up, we slowly make our way back to the landing site, where we are picked up again by the Zodiacs. Unfortunately, the sun has been replaced by clouds and snow and it's time to pack the tents.

As a little surprise, we are not dropped off where we got on the boats in the morning, but at the stern of the HANSEATIC nature at the so-called marina. The restaurant team welcomes us on the small platform with hot cocoa with or without a shot.



With the Zodiacs we finally go back to our HANSEATIC nature. The so-called marina has already been extended at the stern of the ship.

The anchor is brought back on board, all zodiacs are stowed back on deck and our HANSEATIC nature slowly starts moving again.

The anchor is brought back on board, all zodiacs are stowed back on deck and our HANSEATIC nature slowly starts moving again.

Out of the fjord and further south through Norway's Inside Passage.

The thick clouds slowly disappear and the snowfall subsides. The visibility improves and a beautiful panorama of mountains and fjords appears around us.

We turn into the Rodøyfjord and then seamlessly enter the Værangfjord, which leads us straight to the small island of Vikingen.

Shortly beforehand, our captain Ulf Sodemann reports from the bridge: We have just passed the Arctic Circle and will soon pass the symbolic Arctic Circle globe on the small archipelago island of Vikingen. This is a slightly smaller copy of the steel globe on the North Cape.

The Arctic Circle is a special circle of latitude on Earth at 66° 33' 55" north and south latitude, where the sun no longer rises or sets on the two days of the solstice. In the warm evening light, we drive close to the small archipelago island and can clearly see the steel landmark.

Little by little the sky turns pink and orange and we are delighted by a beautiful sunset atmosphere.

We continue to meander through the narrow fjord system. At around 5:00 p.m. we reach the Kvarøyfjord and then the Stigfjord.

We pass the small town of Sandnessjøen and into the night. It has now become dark and we make our way to our well-deserved dinner.



With a mix of sun and clouds, we pass the small globe that symbolizes the Arctic Circle.



In the evening the sun bathes the sky in fascinating colors. The sun's rays shine from the clouds. What a lovely end to the day.

The evening has another surprise for us today! At 9:30 p.m. we can enjoy sparkling cocktail creations at the “Officers’ Cocktail Shaking”. Freshly mixed for us by our officers.

The evening will be accompanied musically by our HANSEATIC nature on-board band. Frontman and sailor Krincee starts on the saxophone and the whole group really gets us going. Big applause and cheers!

A nice end to the day as we work our way through the narrow fjord labyrinth.

Saturday, March 16, 2024 **At sea towards Geiranger, Norway**

Sunrise: 06:35 a.m.		Sunset: 06:20 p.m.		
Position: Latitude		Position: Longitude		Nautical Miles Total
64°03,4' North		009°34,6' East		1266
Pressure (hPa)	Temp. Air (°C)	Temp. Water (C°)	Wind (Bft)	Weather
1015	5	6	4	sunny

When we pull back the curtains in front of our windows this morning, we are directly blinded by the sun's rays that greet us.

The sky is blue, there are hardly any clouds and the sun is finally shining with full power. The almost forgotten sunglasses are dug out and some early birds among us are already on deck holding their faces in the warming rays.

Fill up on a little vitamin D and your mood will immediately be cheered up!



The striking “Kya Fyr” lighthouse. It marks the southwestern end of the Folda sea area, which is often stormy and risky for shipping. The lighthouse, a 9 m high, red tower made of cast iron on a 7 m high substructure made of natural stone masonry, with the 6 m high lantern structure on top, was built in 1920 on the highest point of the “Kya” skerry, which is usually flooded by breakers in heavy seas. Despite its solid construction, the lighthouse repeatedly suffered significant storm damage over time; It has been a listed building since 2002.

We worked our way through the islands overnight and passed Rørvik in the morning hours and have now arrived in the Folda (or Folla) sea area.

The Folda is notorious for its heavy seas and has historically been feared by captains and ship crews. Many shallows, rocks and islands became fatal for dozens of ships. In the past, a number of lighthouses were built in this area to make maritime traffic safer. We can see some of them in the distance, for example the Kya fyr, which shines in the sun with its rust-red color.

Besides the beautiful panoramic cruise, we can also find out about climate history, the ice age and the greenhouse effect in a lecture from expert Thomas Kraupe. In the Ocean Academy, General Expedition Manager Ulrike Schleifenbaum, expert Heinz Strathmann and expert Nadja Gerull chat about Antarctica from the inside out.

We can take a look at the typical expedition tents that are used for overnight stays in the Antarctic wilderness. Snowshoes, a classic pulka (a pull and load sledge) and a cozy sleeping bag that keeps us warm down to -25°C can also be examined. Which time is the best to travel? Which animals can you see, when and where and is the Drake Passage really as rough as you always think? Answers will be available at 10:00 a.m.

During the iris shooting in the Observation Lounge with our photographer Michèle Imahorn, we can immortalize our irises in a unique and one-of-a-kind close-up.



The Terningen lighthouse, built in 1833. The concrete tower is 12 meters high and flashes white, red or green every six seconds (depending on the viewing angle) at a total height of almost 18 meters above sea level.

The small lighthouse was only automated in 1991.

We continue our journey and from the Folla we reach the Kråkvågfjord in the early afternoon, which leads us into Trondheimsleia. The 94 km long strait runs between several islands on one side and several mainland communities on the other. At its narrowest end, or entrance depending on the direction of travel, is the small Terningen lighthouse (Terningen fyr), which we pass at a distance of only around 200 meters. Expert Heinz Strathmann is looking forward to introducing some motivated students to his language at another Norwegian course.

Pronunciation is not that easy and the language contains some strange letters that you first have to emphasize correctly. Here are some examples and important phrases for everyday life:

- Hello – **Hei hei**
- Welcome – **Velkommen**
- Good morning – **God morgen**
- Good afternoon – **God dag**
- Good evening – **God kveld**
- Bye – **Ha det**
- See you again – **På gjensyn**
- See you tomorrow – **Vi ses I morgen**
- Thank you – **Tusen takk**
- What's your name? – **Hva heter du?**
- My name is Tom. – **Jeg heter Tom.**
- Good night – **God natt**

At 6:00 p.m. sharp, Heinz Strathmann and Sara Benkirane will guide us through today's PREcap, in which we will look at the next two calls in Geiranger and Stavanger. Outside, the evening turns into a celebration of sunset and beautiful light displays. Clouds swirl over the mountains, illuminated at the peaks by the setting sun. Many of us enjoy the evening out on deck and watch the sunset, which becomes more and more beautiful with every minute.



A beautiful evening atmosphere in Norway's fjord system. Ferries and fishing boats cross our path, the clouds rise and the sun illuminates the mountain peaks.

We are still in Trondheimsleia as the mountains pass on our port side. To starboard is the large island of Hitra. At around 570 km², it is Norway's seventh largest island. The name Hitra comes from the old Norwegian term Hitr or Hitrar, which roughly means "separated from the mainland".

At around 7:00 p.m. we finally reach the Edøyfjord and then the Ytrefjord. We continue our journey south and want to reach our anchorage at Geiranger around 8:00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

After dinner, another highlight of the day awaits us in the HanseAtrium at 9:30 p.m. At the Captain's Talk with presenter Ulrike Schleifenbaum, we can ask our captain Ulf Sodemann all the questions that have been on our minds throughout the entire trip.

How thick of ice can the ship sail through? Do the pilots actually have responsibility for the ship? Why do we need permanent pilots in Norway? Many good questions will be answered this evening with an honest answer from the captain.



We enjoy the lovely sunset from the open decks.

Sunday, March 17, 2024

Geiranger, Norway

Sunrise: 06:43 a.m.		Sunset: 06:38 p.m.		
Position: Latitude		Position: Longitude		Nautical Miles Total
62°06,4' North		007°11,3' East		1476
Pressure (hPa)	Temp. Air (°C)	Temp. Water (C°)	Wind (Bft)	Weather
1020	5	6	5	cloudy

A new day begins and with it many exciting new adventures!

It's worth taking a look outside early in the morning. In the morning hours we left the open sea and turned into the Storfjord.

The sky is shining blue and today we seem to need our sunglasses again. It is still early; the fjord is calm and the landscape is bathed in a beautiful play of blue tones.

We continue into the Sunnylvfjord, from which the Geirangerfjord branches off at the end.



Early in the morning we turn into the legendary Geirangerfjord. Rugged and steep rock faces rise to the left and right of the ship.

The Geirangerfjord is one of the most famous and most visited fjords in Norway and has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since July 14, 2005. It is located about 200 km northeast of Bergen and about 280 km northwest of Oslo. It is about 15 km long and between 0.6 and 1.3 km wide.

There are a number of abandoned farms on the mountain slopes of this impressive fjord. The most frequently visited among them are Skageflå, Knivsflå and Blomberg. Skageflå can also be reached on foot from Geiranger, while the other farms can only be seen from the fjord with a steep look up.

We drive past the two large waterfalls “Freier” and “De Syv Søstrene” – the Seven Sisters. Water falls from more than 300 meters!

Since there is less and less snow in the winter months and the waterfalls are fed by meltwater, sometimes only four sisters can be seen in the summer months.

Along with the Freier waterfall on the opposite side of the fjord, the Seven Sisters are one of the natural attractions on a trip through the Geirangerfjord.

This fame is mainly due to the legend associated with the names and appearance:

According to legend, the suitor wanted to marry each of the seven sisters one after the other. However, everyone refused and rejected his courtship. The suitor then took to the bottle and became an alcoholic. This is reflected in the shape of the waterfall, which took the shape of a bottle.

At exactly 8:30 a.m. the anchor drops with a roar and a short time later we are safely on the chain, just a few hundred meters from the town of Geiranger. The wind has picked up strongly and gusts of up to 30 knots are rushing through the fjord. At least the sun has stayed with us so far and it promises to be a wonderful day.

The small orange tender boats are launched and the expedition team is brought ashore. The landing site is set up, a brief overview is given, the paths are scouted out and off we go.



The winding road leads us up to the viewpoint. Frozen streams and waterfalls line the path. Many icicles are melting and dripping happily.

Tourism is the main income in the summer months. In winter the population here is just 250 people, which grows to up to 2000 in summer. In the high season, in addition to the regular Hurtigruten ships, around 200 other cruise ships come to the fjord and the town.

Currently 14 children attend the local kindergarten and 27 children attend the local school. The cityscape mainly consists of hotels (which are currently all closed), souvenir shops and the large fjord center at about 70m above the fjord.

Access to the fjord is actually severely restricted in the winter months because of the risk of avalanches and the resulting tsunami-like waves. But our little HANSEATIC

nature gets a special permit and we are even allowed to go on land. This Sunday, some souvenir shops and the Fjord Center are open especially for us! First, the hikers are driven ashore so that the hike to the viewpoint can start early. After all, we want to climb a good 330 meters!



Once at the top, we have a magnificent panorama of the Geirangerfjord and our small ship, which is anchored down there.

Along the Storfossen hiking trail you first go along the waterfall, which falls a good 40 meters into the depth. Small areas of the stream are still frozen from the harsh final weeks of winter. The last icicles cling to the rock walls, glittering wonderfully in the sun's rays today.

We go up the steep steel stairs and reach the Fjord Center - a small, cozy museum with exhibits about the region and history. You can warm up here with a coffee before we venture on to the next stage.

Now the real hike begins!

We trudge in single file along the road, up the mountainside, following the serpentine until after a good 2 kilometers we reach the Flydalsjuvet viewpoint at around 330 meters above sea level.



Even halfway, close to the Fjord Center there are great views and opportunities for beautiful photos.

The view is stunning, the air is clear and we can see our HANSEATIC nature tiny small in the large fjord surrounded by massive rock walls. We feel like we are on one of the many postcards. Many of us have only seen this view from the travel catalogue. The climb was definitely worth it!

We all return to our tender boats full of wonderful impressions. End of shore leave! The restaurant team is already waiting for us on the pool deck. It's time for the big fjord lunch on deck while we enjoy the magnificent trip out of the fjord system!

The party is slowly picking up speed, bratwursts, Schupfnudeln and other delicacies are being distributed. There is beer, rum punch, crepes and much more. In the end, no wishes are left unfulfilled!

The festivity is accompanied musically by our fitness coach and DJ Ronny, who conjures up well-known hits and party hits.

As we bite into our sausage with pleasure, the Seven Sisters, other waterfalls and old farms pass by next to us. Our expert Heinz Strathmann comments from the bridge. A wonderful farewell to Geiranger! Cheers!

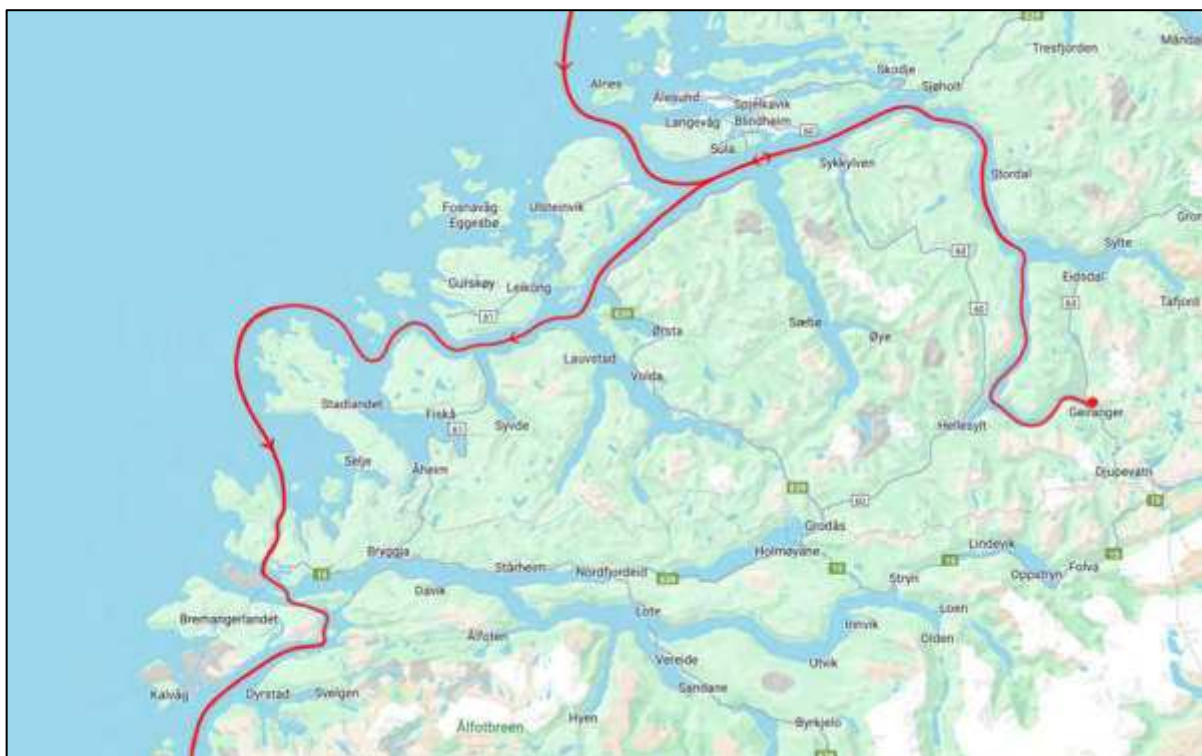
From the Geiranger the journey goes back into the Sunnlyvsfjord, from there into the Storfjord and this time further south through the wide Vartdalsfjord and the Rovdefjord, before we have to drive a short distance out to the open sea and leave the fjord system for a few hours.

Our route takes us around the so-called Stadtlandet, a peninsula between the bays Sildegap in the west and Vanylvsfjord in the east.

The outermost headland in the northwest of the peninsula is called Kjerringa and has been called "West Cape" since the 1980s to attract tourists. It is the closest part of mainland Europe to Iceland.



At the fjord lunch we feast and gourmandize. A good atmosphere is guaranteed and there is music from fitness coach Ronny.



Our route into the Geirangerfjord and out of the fjord system again around the Stadlandet peninsula.

In the afternoon we listen to our biologist Nadja Gerull, who tells us about the many adaptations of animals in the polar and other cold climate zones during her lecture “Cold adaptations in the animal kingdom”. We learn stories about thick fur, warm layers of blubber and antifreeze in butterflies, frogs and fish.

Afterwards we will enjoy a very special musical treat. At today's soirée in the Observation Lounge at 6:30 p.m., our ocean pianist Markus Baumgartl will take us on a journey through the world of water. At “Jeux d'eau” – the water plays, we enjoy the sounds of Ravel, Schubert, Liszt and Chopin as we slowly sail out of the fjord and onto the stormy open sea. A wonderful atmosphere that ends with the powerful piece “Andante Spianato et grande polonaise brillante” by Chopin. Big applause, it was beautiful!



Ocean pianist Markus Baumgartl enchants us at the evening soirée with sounds related to the theme of water. We are excited!

In the evening, the Trio Gondolatjel welcomes us at 9:30 p.m. with another concert in the HanseAtrium and classical music fans, or those who didn't know they were fans until now, will enjoy wonderful moments with the gentle sounds of violins and flutes. We enjoy the musical end of the day, while outside small towns, such as Måløy, pass close by. We want to reach Stavanger tomorrow afternoon.

Monday, March 18, 2024

Stavanger, Norway

Sunrise: 06:45 a.m.		Sunset: 06:46 p.m.		
Position: Latitude	Position: Longitude		Nautical Miles Total	
59°02,5' North	005°36,2' East		1802	
Pressure (hPa)	Temp. Air (°C)	Temp. Water (C°)	Wind (Bft)	Weather
1016	5	5	5 – 6	cloudy

We still have half a day at sea ahead of us today until we want to reach Stavanger around 1:00 p.m.

After a leisurely breakfast, our biologist Nadja Gerull starts the day with a lecture about salmon. In “Norway – the Land of Salmon” she explains everything about the biology, the fascinating migratory behavior of the animals and various breeding and fishing methods. After all, we have now driven past some aquaculture farms with their large round nets and want to find out more about them.



On our journey through Haugesund we pass funny looking vehicles. On the left is the “DoWin Epsilon” – an offshore converter station that ensures that the electricity produced at sea by wind farms can be fed into the onshore power grid. On the right is the “Penguins FPSO”, a support platform that serves, among other things, as a storage and mobile production facility at sea for the offshore industry.

Around us the sky shows itself again in all shades of gray as we pass Haugesund and enter the narrow Karmsund. Some of the houses to the left and right of us are close enough to touch. Oncoming ships pass close by, the oil industry is present with large shipyards and monstrous ship constructions. There is definitely enough to observe!

At around 1:00 p.m. the HANSEATIC nature turns around half its axis with a sharp parking maneuver and a short time later is safely moored at the Stavanger pier.

The wind has now picked up so much that unfortunately the planned helicopter flights over the Lysefjord cannot take place today. The other excursions will still be offered as planned.

The city of Stavanger is one of the oldest cities in Norway. It is believed that the city was founded by Sigurd Jorsalfarer in 1125, the same year as Stavanger Cathedral. The city is relatively small, and with more than 135,000 inhabitants it is the most densely populated city in Norway. The city has 16 inhabited islands, most of which are connected to the mainland by a bridge. The islands in Stavanger are known collectively as Byøyene (City Islands).

For a long time, Stavanger was a small and poor city. Population growth began in the early 19th century as herring fisheries increased offshore. From then on, the city was expanded several times. After herring, shipping followed, before the canning industry shaped the city.



The Stavanger Petroleum Museum opened in 1999. The futuristic shape is reminiscent of an offshore drilling platform and provides information about oil production in the North Sea.

Thereafter, the oil industry dominated the city and the region for several years. In recent years, interest in Stavanger has also increased significantly from a tourist perspective. More and more guests are vacationing in Stavanger and the region. Parts of the center have medieval features and there are small, charming pedestrian streets with a good selection of shops and several cozy restaurants. Restaurants and bars in former lake houses are located along Stavanger's harbor front. The colorful street "Fargegata" is, along with old Stavanger, one of the most famous tourist streets. Today we explore all the interesting corners of the small town on a guided stroll through the city, which ultimately takes us to the well-known "Norwegian Petroleum Museum".

The exhibition of the museum, which opened in 1999, focusses on offshore production in the North Sea. The architecture is reminiscent of a small drilling platform and is a landmark of the city, especially from the water side.

Another excursion takes you via catamaran into the breathtaking Lysefjord. The 42-kilometer-long fjord is located about 25 kilometers east of the city of Stavanger. The name means “bright fjord” and is said to be derived from the lightly colored granite rocks on its flanks.



In a stiff breeze we enjoy the journey through the narrow Lysefjord. We pass small archipelago islands until we reach Preikestolen, which is a roughly 600 meters high cliff.

The fjord is best known for the huge Preikestolen cliff overlooking the fjord, which is an important tourist destination for the region. On our boat trip we can clearly see the impressive 600-meter high Preikestolen from the water. On the way back we pick up three trays of fresh waffles with cream and strawberry jam from a small, local restaurant on our catamaran.

While some explore the rugged fjords by ship, others of us set off to climb the 350-meter high Dalsnuten mountain.

From the hiking car park, it goes about two kilometers through pretty lakes and hills before it gets really tough. The last 50 meters of altitude have to be climbed on all fours. We crawl over large boulders up to the summit and with the support of strong gusts of wind we are catapulted up the mountain almost effortlessly. Once at the top we are rewarded with a magnificent view over Sandness, the region and Stavanger in the background.

Satisfied, we all make our way back to Stavanger. If we are still in the mood, we can explore the small town on our own until 7:30 p.m., stroll through the streets or marvel at the old town with its small white wooden houses.



The hiking group on the way to Dalsnuten, which is around 350 meters high. We hike through old glacial valleys, past lakes and finally we reach the summit.



The designed nautical chart of our trip. It was drawn with great attention to detail by Edward Salilid from the service team.

At 8:00 p.m. it's time to say goodbye to Stavanger and goodbye to Norway! The leashes drop into the water and we begin our journey home towards Hamburg.

This evening our captain Ulf Sodemann invites us to the traditional farewell evening in the HanseAtrium. We gather at 9:45 p.m. and reflect on the trip with a glass of champagne.

Our captain goes through all the port stops with us again. It makes us realize how many beautiful moments we were able to experience in the last 12 days. At the end of his speech there are some statistics! Was our trip a white or red wine trip? With 520 bottles of white wine and 310 bottles of red wine drunk, the answer to the question is quickly found. 9360 eggs were consumed, 1200 kg of meat and 1100 kg of fish! Another highlight of the evening is of course the raffle of the magnificently designed sea map by our artist Eduard Salilid, who drew the map with great attention to detail!



Edward Salilid's (center) map is looking for a new home in the nautical chart raffle. In the background the HANSEATIC nature Shanty Crew choir.

The lucky winner of the nautical chart comes from the seafaring nation of Switzerland and the piece will definitely have a great place there.

The HANSEATIC nature Crew Shanty Choir is of course also on site and joins us in singing sailor classics such as "Auf der Reeperbahn", "Seaman let the dream" or a Filipino love song.

Tomorrow there will be another day at sea ahead of us, where we can relax, process impressions of the trip and enjoy the ship again. We'll end this evening with music from our guitarist David Marx.

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

At sea towards Hamburg, Germany

Sunrise: 06:32 a.m.		Sunset: 06:40 p.m.		
Position: Latitude		Position: Longitude		Nautical Miles Total
55°55,1' North		006°21,9' East		1999
Pressure (hPa)	Temp. Air (°C)	Temp. Water (C°)	Wind (Bft)	Weather
1014	7	7	5 – 6	partly cloudy

After a very restless, shaking night, we gradually wake up today, a little hesitantly. The waves hit our HANSEATIC nature and the movements were clearly noticeable. Many of us probably had a not particularly restful night.

Our captain Ulf Sodemann reported from the bridge in the morning: The winds were significantly stronger than originally expected. With an average wind force of 10 Bft and gusts of even 11 Bft, our ship fought bravely through the waves. We have covered 150 nautical miles since we left Stavanger yesterday evening and a good 180 nautical miles still lie ahead of us. At 1:00 a.m. we want to arrive at the pilot station "Elbe 1" and take the pilot on board, who will then accompany us up the Elbe to Hamburg.

Now we can enjoy another day at sea on board.



Bye Norway, Bai Bai! We have now left the coastal region and are on the open North Sea direction Hamburg.

Of course, there is also a lot of on-board program prepared for the last day at sea. Our Norway expert Heinz Strathmann reports on his adventure to the North Pole at 11:15 a.m. An exciting report about perseverance and a thirst for adventure. You can also really work out one last time throughout the day with our fitness coach Ronny.

In the afternoon, our photo and video team will present the results of our trip. With cozy music, we can review the trip with the photo presentation and then the travel film.

In the evening we enjoy the traditional final REcap from our three experts. The experts present a small, selected contribution, seasoned with humor and sometimes not taken 100% seriously. Expert Heinz Strathmann tests our acquired knowledge of Norway in a quiz, biologist Nadja Gerull explains the sea otters' favorite foods and Thomas Kraupe looks back at our northern lights experiences.

At the end, the entire expedition team says goodbye to us.

The evening becomes quiet on the ship. Many of us have retreated to our cabins to pack their bags and scurry off to bed early. The first buses and transfers will start early tomorrow and it will be a long day for everyone.

With ocean pianist Markus Baumgartl we can end the last evening on board comfortably with relaxing piano music.

Wednesday, March 20, 2024			Hamburg, Germany	
Sunrise: 06:23 a.m.		Sunset: 06:33 p.m.		
Position: Latitude	Position: Longitude		Nautical Miles Total	
53°32,4' North	09° 56,1' East		2342	
Pressure (hPa)	Temp. Air (°C)	Temp. Water (C°)	Wind (Bft)	Weather
1020	14	4	1	cloudy

For logistical reasons, the following paragraphs are purely fictional, but based on experience they reflect the approximate sequence of events:

You feel a certain rush to leave this morning. You get up early, you can hear suitcases rumbling, there is a lot of activity on the pier of the Hanseatic city, luggage carts and buses drive up. There's a lot going on in the hallways and at reception!

Saying goodbye is never easy, especially after such a moving journey. But then the time has come: the first color groups are called and we step on the gangway and say goodbye to our HANSEATIC nature, which has grown on us over the last two weeks. The last hugs, wild waves and farewell greetings. You made contacts and found new friends.

Then we start the return journey from Hamburg. Some people are picked up by friends or family by car, others travel by train or plane to their homeland.

We take home many memories, images that no one can take away from us. We have experienced a lot and can tell you a lot.

Cruise NAT2436

We all hope that this logbook will help to make your journey from Tromsø, up through the snowy winter world to the North Cape and the small outpost of Kirkenes, back south to Alta, to the Lofoten Islands through the fjord world to Stavanger and finally to Hamburg in - hopefully a good one! - to keep memory.

Nadja Gerull (our biologist) wrote it and is therefore responsible for any shortcomings for which we ask for leniency.

Colleagues have kindly contributed information and photos relating to the activities they supported. And they helped copy the work onto the USB-sticks and unpack, bag and deliver them.

On behalf of Hapag-Lloyd Cruises, the expedition team, the ship's management and the entire crew, we would like to thank you for your support for our trip "Polar Lights Adventure in Norway".

Come home safely, please stay healthy! Goodbye and see you next time on the HANSEATIC nature (or one of the sister ships)

