

AURORA CHASE

POLAR NIGHTS PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

EWEN BELL
GUIDE GUNNAR

A unique workshop itinerary to photograph northern lights in Norway's most aurora generous landscape. Passionate local experts, dedicated aurora chases and privately catered meals are fully included in the package.

January 28 - February 10, 2026
14 days @ USD12,488



AUROLA CHASE

2026 January 28 - February 10

- Starts and Finishes in Tromsø
- All accommodation, meals and ground transport included
- Pre-tour advice for your cameras and clothing

The exact itinerary will vary according to weather conditions. Accommodation during the workshop will be near Tromsø for the first four nights, the edge of the Lyngen Alps for three nights, and then six nights south of Bardu before returning to Tromsø for onward flights.

We Love Tromsø

The Aurora Oval goes right over the top of Tromsø, which is why even a modest aurora event looks spectacular from this part of the Arctic. Lots of other places will tell you that auroras are seen through the winter, but they need a bigger event to kick off before the lights move higher above the horizon. Tromsø is a great city to fly into from lots of international airports, but best of all it's a central location for chasing into other regions. When there's cloud on the coast, we head for higher ground in the mountains.

Photography First

This photographic workshop is designed around capturing a handful of amazing aurora shots, and getting you in the right place when the aurora arrives. We'll be sleeping in late most mornings, and then making the most of aurora activity at night. There will be some opportunity to shoot scenery in the daytime, but likely very limited as our schedule is focused on night photography. January has long nights and short days. That means we could find ourselves shooting auroras at either 5pm or 3am. And we intend to be ready for any potentiality.

Arctic Conditions

To really enjoy this trip you'll need to be comfortable with cold conditions. We will help you prepare and shop for good gear before joining this workshop, with an emphasis on good snow boots and warm gloves. We intend to be out in the cold for hours at a time, and will rely on quality clothing and an open fire to keep warm. When you book on the tour we'll send you a packing list with information about what to expect, and some suggestions on stores in Oslo that sell excellent gear at great prices. Having a few days in Oslo before the tour gives you a chance to shop around and choose from lots of quality outdoor winter gear. And it's a lovely city too!



THE CHASE ISON

This photography workshop is designed from the ground up to make the most of any opportunity to photograph the aurora borealis.

Not every evening will be a chase night, but we plan for a maximum of 8 slots during the trip when we can drive far from our accommodation if required. Each day we evaluate the conditions and forecasts, and make plans based on the best data available.

In 2025 we had 5 chase nights and captured aurora on every one of those. We also shot aurora at our accommodation on two nights we didn't chase. The first half of that tour was dreadful weather with lots of cloud and even rain. Arctic conditions are highly variable, which is exactly why we plan the workshop for 14 days and feature aurora chases.

Most chase trips are 2-3hrs from our accommodation. We pack dinner in the bus and bring fire wood so we can enjoy the camp fire and heat up our picnic meals.

The bus is never far away in case anyone starts to feel the cold, and has automated heating systems to provide instant warmth for anyone who has reached their limit for the night. The bus is designed for 19 seats, but we limit the group size to 8 photographers plus guides. There's plenty of room inside.



FIFTEEN YEARS

Ewen Bell has been capturing the Arctic since 2010. Norway is his second home, literally.

Ewen and Shellie have a small house half-way between Tromsø and Lofoten where they escape the Australian summer and enjoy the drama of Arctic winters.

This is a part of the world Ewen and Shellie really really love, and really understand. They also love joining the locals for waffles at the local community centre every Wednesday!

When you arrive in Tromsø for the start of this workshop, Ewen and Shellie will already have been preparing for your arrival. Shellie designs a menu to explore local ingredients and Arctic flavours, while Ewen will have run through the weather forecast and current conditions with Gunnar and planned out how best to fine tune the itinerary.







AURORA GUIDE

Local outdoors guide and auroa
chaser, Guide Gunnar.

Gunnar has been working with us in Norway for over a decade now, but his career in Aurora chasing goes back decades. His knowledge of the weather and terrain in northern Norway is unmatched.

Gunnar does a lot more than drive the bus for us. He helps us plan the itineraries to stay ahead of changes with roads, ferries and avalanche conditions. Every year is different. Local knowledge is essential.

He's pretty handy with a camera, but even more handy with a fishing line and an axe. If the schedule allows we'll ask Gunnar to take us onto the frozen fjords, catch some fish, and cook it on the spot. We can't promise a 2 metre cod, but he'll make sure you stay warm and have some fun.

guidegunnar.no



MOONLIT NIGHTS

We schedule our tours so that we enjoy a variety of night time conditions, from pure darkness to full moonlight. Each has its own benefits, but if the objective is to capture beautiful compositions then a moonlit night allows for both aurora activity as well as the amazing Norwegian fjords.

The key moonlit auroras are to pick the right place. Locations too far away from the aurora circle get less of the action, but close to Tromsø is the perfect combination of longitude and latitude to give you brilliant events high in the sky even when the solar activity is otherwise modest.

The colours of a moonlit aurora are different also. With the blue sky coming through the brilliant green really shines, without the need of massive manipulation in Photoshop that leads to a very fake looking scene. With the moonlight on your side, you get the real colours, better tonal range and more creative options.





MEET EWEN BELL

Photography Guide

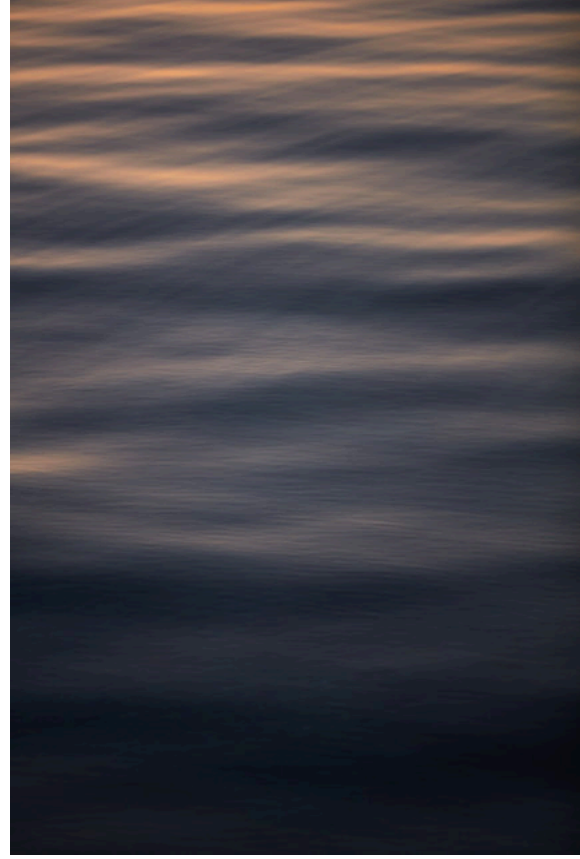
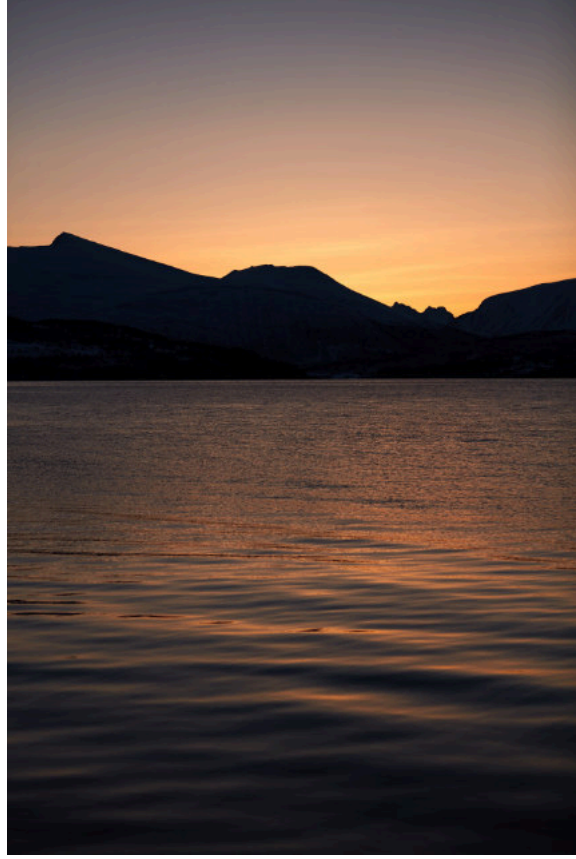
My name is Ewen Bell and I'm the guy who designs these tours so you can get great photos and experience a marvellous adventure.

My work is published all over the world in travel brochures, the travel media and photography magazines including National Geographic in the USA and Food & Travel in the UK. My depth of experience with leading tours is impressive, with over 50 tours and workshops completed in recent decades across Asia, The Himalayas, Australia, Antarctica and Scandinavia.

“A hidden gem in the world of photography, Arctic Norway is beautiful in all kinds of light. Bright sunshine in winter makes it bright with colours, heavy overcast skies make it moody and powerful. Northern lights above at night make the skies dance with electric hues.”

It's kind of weird talking about myself and “selling” myself to you here! But really, I do know a thing or two about photography and how to teach photography. Perhaps most importantly, I care about making sure YOU go home with great photos.

ewenbell.com





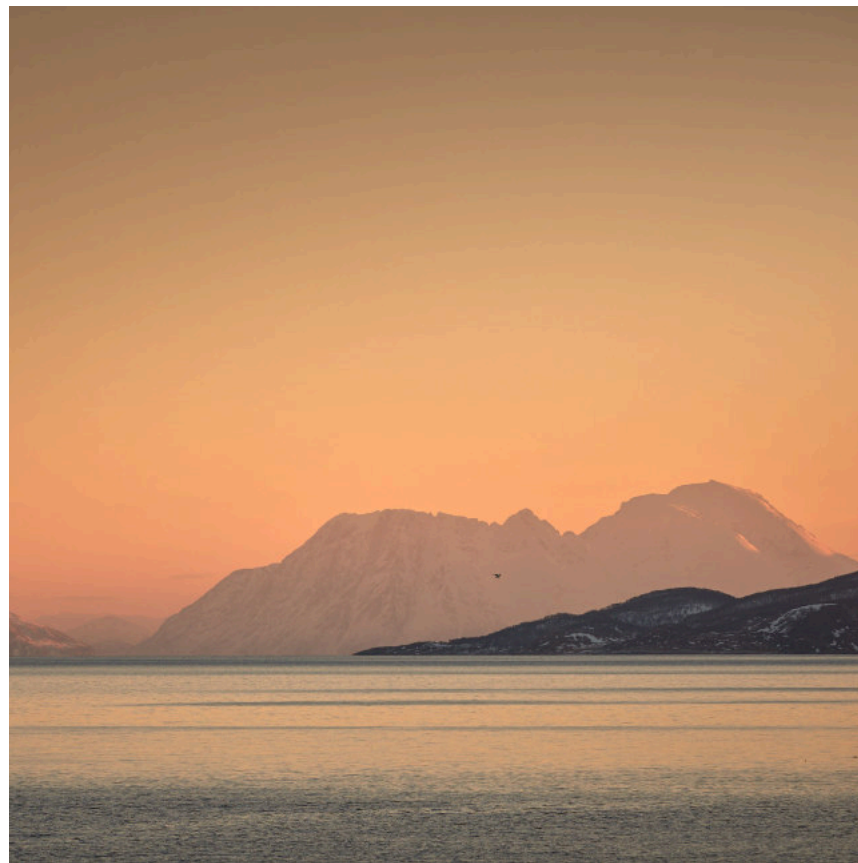
LONG TWILIGHTS

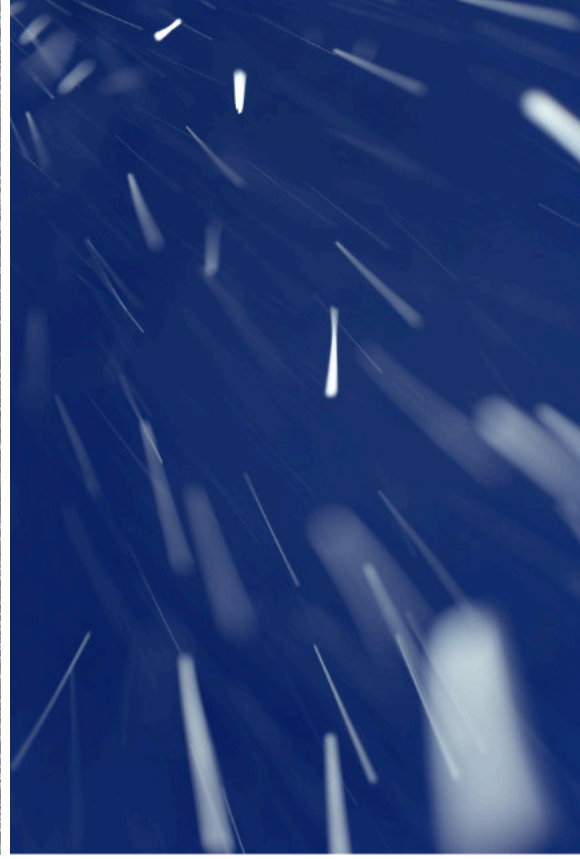
The first question I get asked for this itinerary is whether we'll have any daylight to work with at all?

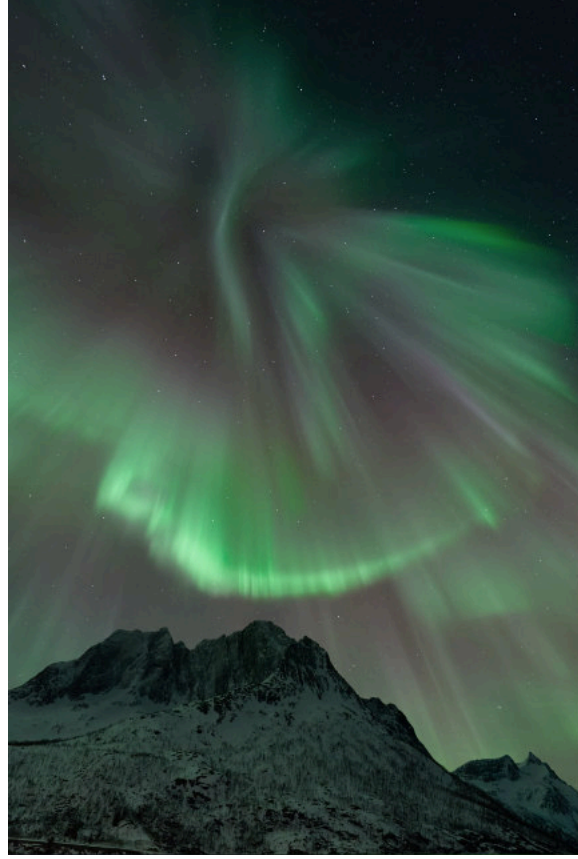
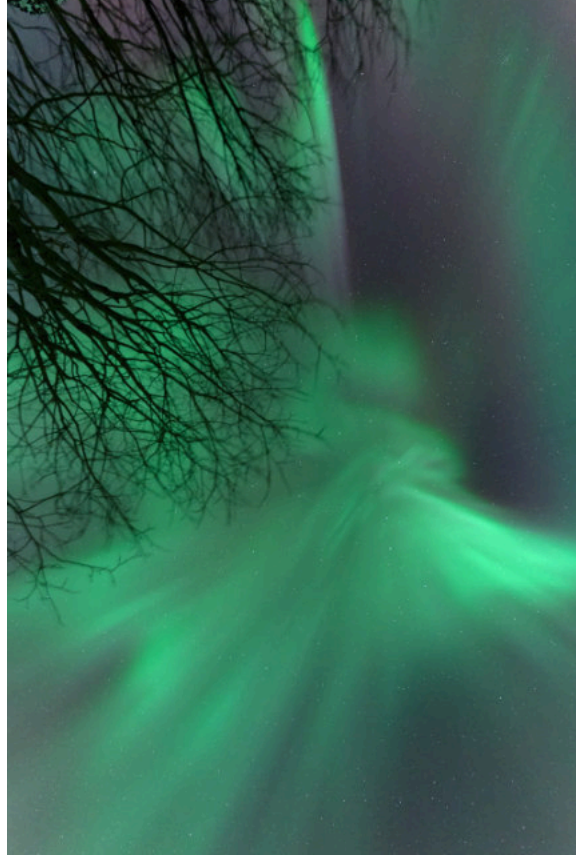
There will be some daylight, but something more like a "post sunset" mood. The sun officially is over the horizon for our tour dates, but depending on mountains and the time of day it will be just out of sight for much of this trip.

We will definitely have a chance to explore a few local areas during the daytime, plus time to process our photos and review images from previous nights.

This tour design runs in January so we get maximum aurora opportunities. We are planning for late nights and late checkouts so we can get a sleep-in after chasing aurora into the small hours.







DRESS FOR THE COLD

This is not an expedition to the North Pole – you will not freeze to death when visiting Arctic Scandinavia. There's always a warm cabin and a hot cup of chocolate just around the corner, we make sure of it.

A full guide of warm gear to pack is supplied before the tour, but here's a sneak peak of what will get you through the journey:

A big puffy down jacket: You can quickly go from toasty temperatures inside the cottage to mega minus degrees outside. The hood is great in windy conditions, and fluffy edges help keep your face warmer too.

Windstopper gloves: Essential for operating your camera on sub-zero days.

Big boots: Leave room in the boots for extra air and you'll always have warm feet. Buy a bigger size and then stomp through knee deep snow without a worry.

Dry pants: We often romp through fresh snow to reach a shot, so a thin layer of dry pants simply keeps the snow and wind off your legs.

Thermals: A layer of thermals will keep a warm core close to your skin on the coldest of nights.

“There is no bad weather, only bad clothing.”







WHAT LENS TO PACK

You don't need a full-frame mirrorless or DSLR to enjoy this journey, but you do need a good lens. We've run dozens of trips like this one before and have a good understanding of which lens will give your camera the best results.

The most important lens for this trip will be an **ultra-wide angle** that is suitable for night photography. We need a seriously wide angle to capture the Northern Lights because the biggest and best events take up all of the night sky. The same ultra-wide perspective is also ideal for capturing the majestic nature of the landscape.

In full-frame terms, an 18mm lens is good, but 14mm is way better. We'll be happy to chat with you in advance of the tour about which lens is right for your camera and this adventure.



POST CAPTURE

Ewen like to emphasize the creative side of photography that takes place in the digital darkroom.

Every day of this adventure will allow for opportunities to discuss, refine and learn about post-processing techniques.

Please bring your laptop and your preferred processing software. A photo is never finished at the moment of the shutter, and as you learn different ways to process your images you can also adjust your technical approach to the camera accordingly.









MOODY WEATHER

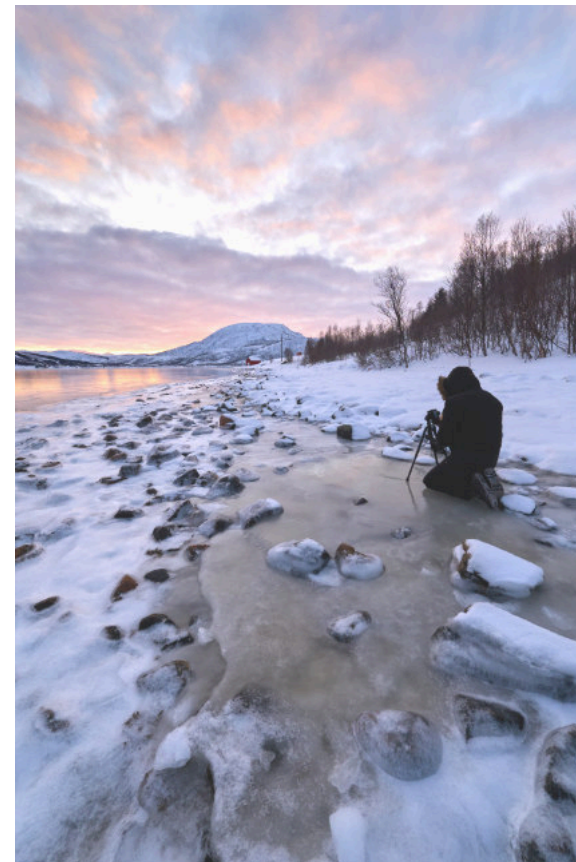
The Arctic winter can be blizzard one day and stunning clear skies the next.

When we get lots of snow however, that just makes for even prettier landscapes as a backdrop to our aurora photography. There will be patches of really bad weather during January and February, but also patches of perfection.

We've scheduled quality time in three major regions to give us maximum opportunity for success.

Warm weather from the south can also bring wet weather for several days at a time. This is why we don't design 5-day workshops, rather we stay for two weeks to improve our chances of good weather across the workshop itinerary.

Our other mitigation is "Aurora Chasing" of course. When there's clouds on the coast, often we can find clear skies across the mountains. Gunnar does the driving and you do the photography.







PRIVATE CHEF

All meals are included in this trip and they're fabulous!
Meet Shellie Froidevaux.

The most valued member of the leadership team for this tour is Shellie Froidevaux, a wonderful photographer and recipe developer, who will be our private chef for the journey. No other tour can match our ability to stay in remote locations, because no other tour has Shellie. She's friends with a few local cafes too, so we also get to enjoy some strategic stops for freshly made cinnamon buns with the locals.

We've heard horror stories from our travellers about other Arctic workshops that do not include any meals, and leave you to either self cater from a local supermarket or pay extra for meals at a very expensive restaurant. If you're spending time sorting basic meals it means you're not spending time enjoying your photography.

With the help of Shellie Froidevaux we not only make sure you get great meals along the way, but expect a few special treats for those cold nights standing out in the cold waiting for an aurora. Shellie loves to go the extra mile.

ironchefshellie.com







CAMERAS ARE COOL

We hear a lot of fuss about taking cameras into the Arctic conditions and how to prepare for the freezing temperatures. If you're shooting with a modern DSLR or mirrorless camera then you need no special equipment, modifications or protection. Snow brushes off when everything is cold, but take care to avoid it melting on a warm camera body.

On a recent journey in a colder region of the Arctic we spent hours with our gear shooting the Northern Lights in -32 temperatures. No problems. Your camera will go colder than that and still keep shooting. Your batteries won't last quite as long as when warm, but it's no drama. Really.

Heading outside at night to shoot the aurora does require that you take care of yourself, and ensure you keep your feet and fingers warm. We will provide a very detailed packing list to help you prepare for Arctic conditions, including advice on where to shop in Oslo for the best winter gear.



THE FINE PRINT

Dates

January 28 - February 10, 2028

Price

USD12,488

Group Size

Maximum of 8 people

Accommodation

The price is based on accommodation in cabins and fisherman's cottages of a contemporary standard. They are essentially the nicest available accommodation for our remote regions, and are always toasty and warm.

Single Room Included

The default rooming for this tour will be single rooms instead of twin share. A discount is offered to couples sharing a room too.

Inclusions

- All meals are included and will be delicious
- All transportation on arrival
- Airport transfers when travelling with the group
- Expert tuition from Ewen
- Aurora Chases when local skies are cloudy
- Endless inspiration from the scenery of Norway

Exclusions

- Your camera gear
- Flights into and out of Tromsø

The itinerary information may vary slightly for your specific departure, as we continuously research and develop each trip. Inclement weather or other factors outside our control may also necessitate alterations.

HOW TO BOOK

January 28 - February 10, 2026

14 days

Max group of 8

Twin Share: USD12,488

Hit the website to book online. Deposits are required to confirm your place and can be paid via credit card or bank deposit.

ewenbell.com/polar



Photography by Ewen Bell

