

LEGEND

--- main route

○ stage stop

△ mountain range

SCALE — KILOMETRES

0 10 20 30

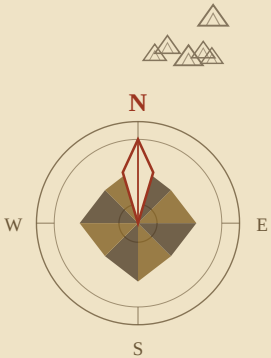


MADE TO EXPLORE

THE LOFOTEN ROAD

Eight stops on a single road, under the autumn aurora

8 stops · 250 km · by campervan



1

SVOLVÆR

The capital — where the fish is sold

THE FISH

Svolvær is the main port and the place where the trade is done. From January to April the cod come from the Barents Sea to spawn in these waters, and the town fills with boats. Above it stands the Svolværgeita, the Svolvær Goat, a rock tower with two horns between which climbers jump — a metre and a half across, with three hundred metres below.

THE CAMPER

Campsite and camper place at Svolvær and at Kabelvåg a few kilometres away. In autumn they are open and empty. It is the only place on the route with large shops — stock up here.

FREE

The harbour, the docks and the drying racks are walked freely. The Lofoten Museum at Kabelvåg has a ticket. And the Svolværgeita is seen from the town below, without climbing.

Svolvær → Henningsvær, 25 km on the E10 then the side road · ~30 min by camper. The last kilometres run over bridges, from islet to islet.

2

HENNINGSVÆR

The Venice of Lofoten — the village on islets

THE FISH

A village built on a few rocks in the sea, linked by bridges, which was the richest cod port in the archipelago. Everywhere there are wooden racks — hjell — on which the fish dried in the wind, without salt and without fire, for three months. The football pitch here, set on a shelf of rock between the sea and the buildings, is among the most photographed in the world, and it is a village pitch, not an attraction.

THE CAMPER

Camper place at the entrance to the village; inside, the streets are too narrow for a camper and there is nowhere to turn. Park and walk in, ten minutes.

FREE

The whole village. The football pitch is seen from the road and from the rock above. The art gallery and the museum have a small ticket.

Henningsvær → Leknes → Uttakleiv, 55 km on the E10, straight through Vestvågøy · ~1½ h by camper.

3

UTTAKLEIV

The white beach at 68 degrees north

THE FISH

White sand, turquoise water, granite mountains rising straight out of it — a beach that looks Caribbean and lies a thousand kilometres north of the Arctic Circle. The water is eight degrees. Next to it, Haukland, just as white and easier to reach. There was never much fishing here: the beach has no harbour, which is why it stayed empty while the fishing villages filled.

THE CAMPER

Paid parking at both beaches, with a day charge and a separate night charge — the municipality brought it in to control the crowds. Campsites at Leknes and Ballstad.

FREE

The beaches and the paths are free; only the parking costs. The ridge path between Haukland and Uttakleiv takes an hour and gives the view from above.

Uttakleiv → Ramberg → Nusfjord, 45 km · ~1 h by camper. Down the E10 to the south-west, past the beach at Ramberg.

4

NUSFJORD

The fishing village kept whole

THE FISH

One of the oldest and best-preserved fishing villages in Norway, with rorbuer — the red cabins on stilts — from the nineteenth century, still in place. The red was not an aesthetic choice: iron-oxide paint was the cheapest protection available, a by-product of copper smelting. The village was once on the UNESCO list and is today a living museum, with a bakery and a workshop still at work.

THE CAMPER

The road down to the village is steep and ends in the village; large campers are left above, in the car park at the entrance. Campsites at Ramberg and Fredvang.

FREE

The village charges entry in season. Out of season, when it is quiet, you walk in freely. The view from the road above costs nothing.

WHERE TO SLEEP

Campsite · Ramberg Gjestegård, Ramberg · GPS 68.09250, 13.23422

Nusfjord → Fredvang → Kvalvika, 30 km · ~45 min by camper. The last kilometres are on foot.

5

KVALVIKA*The beach with no road***THE FISH**

A sand beach between two granite walls, reached by no road at all. You walk in, an hour and a half over a saddle, with a steep climb at the start. There is nothing there: no kiosk, no cabin, no signal. Two men lived here for a year in a hut built from driftwood and made a film about it. In autumn the beach is empty even at midday.

THE CAMPER

Car park at Torsfjorden, where the path leaves. The camper stays there. The path is muddy after rain and not marked throughout — a head torch is essential in autumn, when it goes dark at four.

FREE

All of it. The path, the beach, the saddle above — there is nothing to pay. And from the Ryten ridge, another hour higher, you see the beach from 543 metres.

| Kvalvika → Reine, 35 km back on the E10 and on south-west, over the bridges · ~45 min by camper.

6

REINE*The classic picture***THE FISH**

A village of red cabins on the water, with the Reinebringen rising vertically behind and the fjord between. It is the photograph that appears everywhere when Lofoten is mentioned, and it is one of the few places that looks exactly as it does in the picture. Reine has been a fishing village since 1743 and still lives on cod, plus tourists. From the Reinebringen, 448 metres, you see everything — up a staircase of 1,566 steps built by Nepalese sherpas.

THE CAMPER

Campsites at Reine and Moskenes. The village car park is small and paid; campers have a separate area. The Reinebringen staircase closes in spring, during the thaw.

FREE

The village, the fjord and the bridge are open. The staircase is free but takes two hours there and back and asks for fitness. The view from the road, from the bridge towards Hamnøy, is nearly as good and asks for nothing.

| Reine → Hamnøy, 3 km. Practically the same place, but another view.

7

HAMNØY*The bridge everything is photographed from***THE FISH**

The oldest fishing village in Lofoten, and the place from which the most reproduced photograph in the archipelago is taken: the red cabins strung along the foot of Festhellinden, seen from the bridge towards Reine. It is the same view in every season, but in autumn, with the aurora above it, it is another thing altogether. Cod still dries on racks here, and the smell is part of the place.

THE CAMPER

Camper places at Hamnøy and around. The bridge has a narrow footway — park beyond it and walk; do not stop on the bridge.

FREE

The bridge, the village and the view. Nothing costs, and it is the best place on the route for aurora reflected in water: facing north, with buildings in the foreground and still water.

| Hamnøy → Sørvågen → Å, 7 km. The last kilometres of road in Europe in this direction.

8

Å*Where the road ends***THE FISH**

A village with the shortest name in the world — one letter, the last of the Norwegian alphabet — and the place where the E10 simply stops. Beyond it there is only sea. The village is preserved as a museum: the drying house, the boat workshop, the bakery of 1844 which still bakes, and the Stockfish Museum, which explains the journey of the fish from here to Bergamo and Porto. It is the end of the route and the end of the road, at the same point.

THE CAMPER

Campsites at Å and at Moskenes, next to the ferry terminal. In autumn they are open and nearly empty. The ferry to Bodø leaves from Moskenes, four hours.

FREE

The village is walked freely; the museums have a joint ticket. The beach at Tind and the light at the end of the road are free, and from there you see the island of Værøy across the sound.

WHERE TO SLEEP

Campsite · Moskenes Camping, Sørvågen · GPS 67.90072, 13.05270

| End of the route and end of the road. Back along the E10, or the ferry from Moskenes to Bodø, where the road south begins.

THE ROUTE IN BRIEF

Distance	~250 km
Driving time	~6 h in all, without stops
Recommended time	10–14 days
Stage stops	8
Countries	NO
Roads	one only, the E10
Direction	east → west
Best months	Sep–Oct

GOOD TO KNOW BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Svolvær is the only place on the route with big shops: stock up there.

In autumn it gets dark at four: on the path to Kvalvika a head torch is a must, and after rain it is muddy.

The stairs up Reinebringen close in spring, during the thaw.

WHEN TO GO

The window: from late September to early November. The nights are already long enough for the aurora, but the day still has eight to ten hours of light to see the landscape by.

Why not summer: the midnight sun is beautiful, but it never gets dark, so the aurora cannot be seen at all. And in July the villages are full.

Why not deep winter: in December there are four hours of light, the side roads to the beaches are ice, and many campsites are shut. The aurora is better, the landscape no longer visible.

The weather: autumn is wet and windy. The aurora needs clear sky, and the coast has it more often than inland — but it rains anyway. Three clear nights out of ten is a good average.

WHERE YOU MAY SLEEP NOW

Free camping has been seriously restricted in Lofoten in recent years, because the popular places were being wrecked by the crowds. The municipalities have put in barriers, overnight parking charges and explicit bans.

Uttakleiv and Haukland have a day charge and a separate night charge, paid at the machine. They are among the few places where you may legally stay overnight outside a campsite.

Elsewhere in Lofoten the camper sleeps at a campsite or on a prepared place. Where there is a sign, it is enforced and fined.

In autumn the campsites are open, empty and much cheaper than in summer. Many have a shared kitchen and a drying room, which matters when it rains for three days.

WHERE YOU SLEEP

The campsites are at Svolvær, Kabelvåg, Leknes, Ballstad, Ramberg, Reine, Moskenes and Å — all on the E10 or beside it, and all open in autumn.

The paid camper places at Uttakleiv and Haukland beaches are the only ones where you sleep with the view. They are paid at the machine and fill even in autumn, on nights with a good aurora forecast.

In autumn the coastal wind is serious. Park the camper nose into the wind, and leave the awning in.

Norway is expensive, but in autumn camping in Lofoten costs about half what it does in July.

HOW TO READ THE AURORA

What has to coincide Three things at once: solar activity, clear sky and darkness. Lofoten sits right under the auroral oval, so activity is usually enough; what is missing almost always is the sky.

The Kp index It measures the disturbance of the magnetic field, from 0 to 9. At Lofoten's latitude, Kp 2 is enough for a visible aurora; Kp 4 or more means a good night. It is forecast an hour ahead, and roughly three days ahead.

Where you look North, low over the horizon at a low Kp, and straight overhead at a high one. The stops with a good northern outlook are Hamnøy, Uttakleiv and Å.

What makes the photograph The foreground. An aurora with nothing in front of it is a green smudge; the same aurora over the red cabins at Hamnøy or reflected in the still water at Reine is another matter. That is why the route runs west, where the villages are.

The naked eye A weak aurora looks grey-green to the eye and vivid green in the camera — the camera gathers light, the eye does not. It is not a trick, it is physics. A strong aurora is seen in colour directly.

When can you see the northern lights in Lofoten?

From late September to March. The route's window is September to November, because then the nights are long enough for the aurora but the day still has eight to ten hours of light to see the landscape by.

Can you wild camp in Lofoten?

Almost nowhere. The municipalities have seriously restricted free camping, with barriers, overnight charges and bans. Uttakleiv and Haukland have a separate night charge and are among the few places you may legally stay outside a campsite.

What Kp index do you need for the aurora in Lofoten?

Lofoten sits under the auroral oval, so Kp 2 is enough for a visible aurora, and Kp 4 or more means a good night. The problem is not the activity but the clear sky — three clear nights out of ten is a good autumn average.

Why does the aurora look green in photos and grey to the eye?

Because the camera gathers light over the exposure and the eye does not. It is not a trick, it is physics. A strong aurora is seen in colour directly.

THE RULE OF THE ROAD

*“These villages were not built for the view. They were built for fish.
The cabins are red because that paint was the cheapest, and the racks are wooden because
the wind is free.
What you pay for is the parking. What you wait for is a clear sky, and that has no tariff.”*

Documentary check: September 2026. Places, hours and conditions change — check them before you leave.