



Attend a midnight concert at the haunting Tromsø Cathedral

Kingdoms of the North

4 – 20 May 2021

With Iceland extension

4 May – 23 May 2021





Cruise through the spectacular Lofoten Islands

Norway is a remote land possessing otherworldly beauty, ancient history and a thriving arts and cultural scene. It is a land of Viking heritage, beautiful music, magnificent fjords and rich medical and military history. Travel with Dr Paul Luckin through some of the most breathtaking scenery in the world and experience Norway's music, folk culture and long history – and the midnight sun - on a journey to the Arctic Circle and back. Continue to the gracious city of Edinburgh with its long history and culture and onto the remote Orkneys with their ancient Neolithic and Viking heritage.

This is a tour that touches deep time and passes through some of the most startlingly beautiful landscapes on the planet. Ancient human history in the high north have produced cultures unlike anywhere else – where humanity thrives only by understanding and respecting these remote, icy realms. There is softness here too, like the northern 'city of roses' that flourishes on the Gulf Stream, beautiful Art Nouveau towns and green wooded hills.

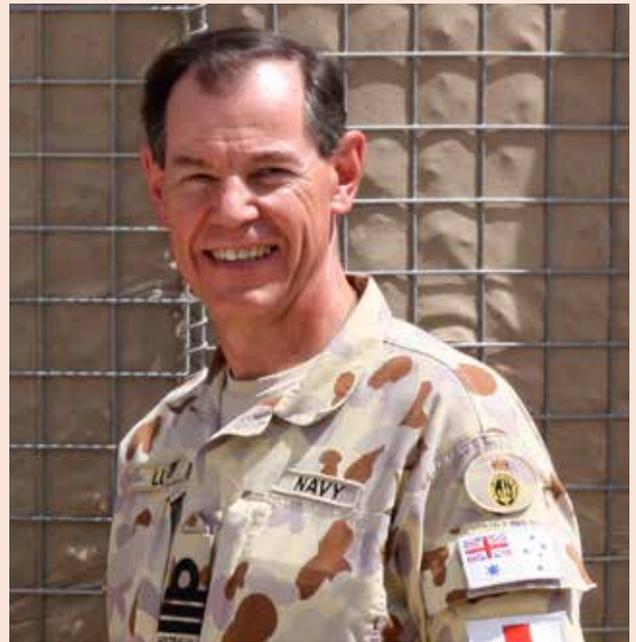
Follow the journey of the Vikings from Norway, continuing west to Scotland, to Edinburgh and where they settled in the Orkneys. There is the option to continue the journey in the footsteps of the Vikings to Iceland after the main tour.

Tour Leader

Dr Paul Luckin is an anaesthetist in Brisbane. Warm and engaging, Dr Luckin is a sought-after speaker and has a keen understanding of history as well as many extraordinary personal anecdotes from his own experience. He has led successful tours to South Africa, Vietnam and Cambodia and is a popular and experienced tour leader.

Paul was only eight years old when he decided he wanted to be a doctor, and joined St John Ambulance at eleven. He began his life in emergency medicine as a teen paramedic in Tasmania and, after his medical degree, went to South Africa where he finished his medical training and worked in search and rescue in remote and mountainous locations. Dr Luckin now provides advice on survivability during Search and Rescue operations to the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, and Police Search and Rescue teams across the nation, in PNG and the Solomon Islands.

As a Captain in the Royal Australian Naval Reserve, Paul has served in Bougainville, East Timor, the Solomon Islands, in the Resuscitation and Retrieval Team for the victims of the Bali



bombs, in the first medical team into Banda Aceh following the tsunami, and in Afghanistan. He is Medical Director, Medical Services Branch, St John Ambulance Queensland, and has been invested as a Commander of the Order of St John (CStJ). For his work in SAR, in 2006 Paul received the Australian National Search & Rescue Award, and in 2015 he was made a Member of the Order of Australia, AM, for significant service to the community through emergency medicine, and as an authority on survivability in search and rescue operations.

'Simmer dim' – an Orkney/Shetland word that literally means summer-dusk and describes the endless twilight of days around the summer solstice, when true dark never falls.

"Paul Luckin – excellent. So knowledgeable, so humble, so kind, so empathetic – exceptional human being. Most professional. Great!!"

Medical and Military History in South Africa, Jan 2018

The green spaces of Trondheim



1 night Oslo – 1 night Kirkenes – 5 night cruise – 2 nights Bergen – 3 nights Edinburgh
– 3 nights Orkney – 1 night Edinburgh



Day 1: Oslo (Tues, 4 May) **D**

Am: Arrive in Oslo and check into the hotel.
Pm: Settle in at leisure.
Eve: Enjoy a welcome dinner with the group.

Day 2: Oslo / Kirkenes (Wed, 5 May) **B D**

Am: Explore Oslo's Viking Museum, home to the world's best-preserved Viking ships.
Pm: After lunch transfer to the airport to fly to Kirkenes, which is farther east than Istanbul and just 15km from the Russian border. This location plunged the remote town into frontline hostilities during WWII as it became the focus of the battle for Murmansk and was bombed over 300 times. Transfer to the Thon Hotel Kirkenes.

Day 3: Kirkenes / Berlevåg (Thur, 6 May) **B D**

Am: A relaxing morning before boarding the MS Nordkapp.
Pm: At leisure on board the ship.

Day 4: Mehamn / Tromsø (Fri, 7 May) **B L D**

Am: Spend the sunlit night cruising through magnificent sub-Arctic landscapes to disembark at Honningsvåg. Visit the North Cape – the northernmost point of Europe, where dramatic cliffs rise 1,000m from the ocean. Continue to the fishing port of Hammerfest, where there has been a settlement since the Stone Age. The UNESCO-listed Meridian Column commemorates the first precise measurement of the globe.
Pm: Cruise to Tromsø, the Arctic capital and the northernmost town in the world, and hear a talk on the sinking of the German battleship Tirpitz in a nearby fjord during WWII. This striking city is set on an island with its spectacular landmark Arctic Cathedral. There is perhaps no more beautiful way to experience the white painted cathedral, with its impressive glass mosaic, than attending a

midnight concert of Norwegian folk music, classical and sacred selection.

Day 5: Tromsø / Stamsund (Sat, 8 May) B L D

Am: Cruise through the narrow Risøyrenna channel towards the Lofoten Islands, known for their wild beauty and picturesque fishing villages.

Pm: Stop at the tiny village of Risøyhamn and continue to Stokmarknes before continuing south into the narrow Raftsund passage, flanked by the soaring peaks of the Lofoten Wall, rising 1,000m out of the sea. Sail into spectacular Trollfjord, where the fjords seem close enough to touch.

Eve: Talk: *“Norwegian folk tales, trolls and legends”*.

Day 6: Bodø / Rørvik (Sun, 9 May) B L D

Am: Cross the Arctic Circle, celebrating the occasion on deck with a traditional spoonful of cod liver oil. Sail past Torghatten mountain, with the distinctive hole through its centre, and the Seven Sisters, which inspired ancient legends of seven troll sisters caught out at sunrise and turned to stone.

Pm: Stop at the idyllic trading post of Nesna before continuing to Sandnessjøen. There is an optional excursion to the UNESCO-listed Vega Islands, famed for their centuries-old eiderdown tradition. In Brønnøysund, join an excursion to the Norwegian Aquaculture Centre.

Day 7: Trondheim / Ålesund (Mon, 10 May) B L D

Am: Disembark in Trondheim. Colourful warehouses, waterways and green wooded hills make this historic capital a pleasure to wander through. Take a guided walking tour and learn about its Viking kings. Visit Nidaros Cathedral and the 12th century Archbishop's Palace, which contains the crown jewels. See the 'Kuli Stone', a unique runestone, and medieval skeletons. Stop at the monolithic Kristiansen Fortress and visit the open-air museum, built around the ruins of the

oldest stone castle in Norway.

Pm: Sail along the coast to Kristiansund, Norway's 'dried cod capital'. Here you can join an excursion along the spectacular 8km Atlantic Road, a National Scenic Route surrounded by open sea.

Day 8: Ålesund / Bergen (Tues, 11 May) B L D

Am: Pass Nordfjord beneath Jostedal Glacier, where the fjord widens and forges 90 km inland. Dock at Florø and then onto the mouth of the mighty Sognefjord.

Pm: Disembark in Bergen and check into the hotel.

Day 9: Bergen (Wed, 12 May)

Am: Explore Norway's historic second city, starting with the official royal residence in Bergen, Gamlehaugen, set amidst beautifully landscaped grounds. Continue to the cottage and gardens of famous Norwegian composer, Edvard Grieg, and hear a concert of his music in his home.

Pm: Take a funicular up Mt Fløyen for magnificent views. Descend to explore Bryggen, Bergen's medieval wharf, which reflects its Hanseatic League heyday. Visit Bergen Fortress and the Maritime Museum

Day 10: Bergen / Edinburgh (Thurs, 13 May) B D

Am: At leisure.

Pm: Fly to Edinburgh and transfer to the hotel.

Eve: Tasting and dinner at the Scotch Whisky Society.

Day 11: Edinburgh (Fri, 14 May) B D

Am: Edinburgh is a beautiful city in a stunning natural setting with a long Norse, medieval and Enlightenment history. Next morning take a tour with a local guide, starting with a visit to imposing Edinburgh Castle, perched on a hilltop above the city. View Scotland's Crown Jewels before taking a panoramic tour of the city by coach, passing by the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the Scottish Parliament and the Georgian New Town.

Pm: Take a walking tour of Enlightenment Edinburgh.

Eve: Dinner at the hotel.

Day 12: Edinburgh (Sat, 15 May) B D

Am: Visit beautiful Rosslyn Chapel, founded in 1446, and Holyrood Palace, the official residence of the British monarch in Scotland, founded in the 12th century.

Pm: Afternoon at leisure

Day 13: Edinburgh / Orkney (Sun, 16 May) B D

Am: Fly to the Orkney Islands, an archipelago comprising approximately 70 islands with a rich Norse heritage. Visit the famous Italian Chapel, a beautiful building constructed by Italian POWs in WWII, who were brought to Orkney in 1942 to build a giant causeway - today known as the Churchill Barriers - to seal off access to the vast naval base at Scapa Flow.

Pm: Orkney's human history stretches back 10,000 years. Explore its Neolithic heritage with a visit to Standing Stones of Stenness and the Ring of Brodgar.

Eve: Hear a talk by local guide Patricia Long on Australian Orcadians. Check into the hotel.

Day 14: Orkney (Mon, 17 May)

Am: Visit Skara Brae and Skail House, Norse

remains at the Brough of Birsay island and Barony Mill.

Pm: Have lunch at Orkney Brewery before visiting Kirbuster Farm Museum.

Day 15: Orkney (Tues, 18 May) B L

Am: Walk through Stromness, learning about its lively history and exploring some of its shops and lanes. Visit Stromness Museum, which puts the history of Orkney into context with the wider world. Stop for lunch at Standing Stones Hotel before visiting Ness Battery, which once defended Scapa Flow against enemy attack.

Pm: Visit the Maeshowe Chambered Tomb, the home of the largest collection of Runic graffiti in the world.

Day 16: Orkney / Edinburgh (Wed, 19 May) B D

Am: At leisure in Orkney.

Pm: Fly to Edinburgh.

Eve: Enjoy a farewell dinner accompanied by a piper and a traditional Address to the Haggis from the Robert Burns poem.

Day 17: Edinburgh (Thur, 20 May) B

Am: Transfer to the airport for departure flights or join the Iceland extension.





MS Nordkapp cruising the fjords (above); MS Nordkapp cruising through Trollfjord (middle); MS Nordkapp docking in Bodo (bottom)

Hurtigruten MS Nordkapp

MS Nordkapp is named after the northernmost point on mainland Europe: North Cape (71°N) - one of the geographical highlights you will visit.

MS Nordkapp was refurbished in 2016 and now features a modern, Arctic-inspired interior. On board are three different restaurants, a bakery and ice cream bar, a sauna and fitness room. Out on deck you can enjoy the view from one of the two hot tubs. There is also a cosy bar at the front of the ship where you can enjoy a traditional drink. The ship additionally has a large compass area with reception, a tour guide, conference room and shop.

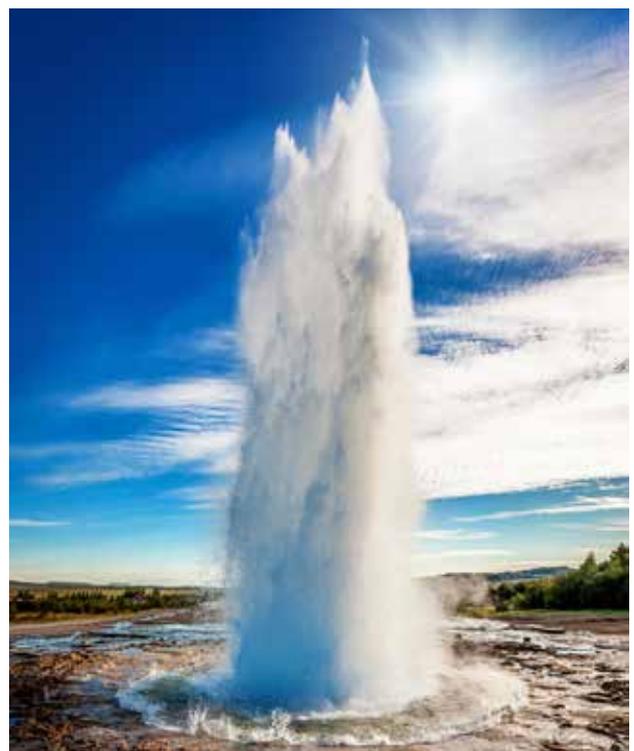
MS Nordkapp was christened by Norway's Queen Sonja in 1996 and her maiden voyage was to the Shetland Islands. The ship started sailing the Norwegian coast in April 1996. She has also sailed in Antarctica. Since 2007, the vessel has been part of Hurtigruten's fleet of ships dedicated to sailing the Norwegian coastline.



The landscapes of Iceland (above);
Strokkur Geyser in full flow (right)

Iceland extension

Iceland is a magical island humming with energy and natural phenomena that turn everyday experiences - a walk, a drive, a dip in a pool - into something that will take your breath away. Its beauty comes from a vast volcanic landscape where mighty forces shape the earth. It also has an ancient Viking history and rich Nordic culture.



Day 17: Edinburgh/ Reykjavik (Thur, 20 May)

B D

Am: Transfer to Glasgow for a direct flight to Reykjavik. The city combines colourful buildings and a cosmopolitan, creative feel with excellent museums and vibrant nightlife.

Pm: Immerse yourself in the Blue Lagoon hot springs, set in a magnificent black-lava field. Continue onto Viking World before transferring to Fosshótel Barón.

Eve: Dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 18: Reykjavik (Fri, 21 May)

B D

Am: Set out for the 'Golden Circle', a circuit that includes the meeting-point of the continental plates, the site of the ancient Icelandic parliament (Þingvellir), Strokkur Geyser, spurting hot water and steam 30 metres into the air, and a roaring waterfall (Gullfoss).

Pm: Visit the ruins of a Viking Settlement-Age farm, excavated in 1939 after being

buried for 835 years under massive layers of tephra.

Eve: Continue to Hafnarfjörður for a Viking dinner.

Day 19: Reykjavik (Sat, 22 May)

B D

Am: Drive to Borgarnes village and visit the Settlement Centre, which tells the story of the Viking settlement of Iceland. Continue to Reykholt, an important historical site and cultural centre.

Pm: Return to Reykjavik to visit the fascinating Settlement Exhibition in Árbær open air museum. Built around ancient relics found during an excavation in 2001, it explores life in Viking times.

Eve: Farewell dinner.

Day 20: Reykjavik (Sun, 23 May)

B

Am: Transfer to the airport.

NB: The Iceland extension can be taken as a stand-alone tour.

Reykjavik





Skara Brae, Orkney

Hotels

Thon Hotel Slottsparken (Oslo)

Thon Hotel Slottsparken is a bright, very comfortable and spacious apartment hotel. It offers excellent customer service, a central location and superb breakfasts.

Thon Hotel (Kirkenes)

Renovated at the end of 2017 with a bright and modern décor, this comfortable, light filled hotel is perched on the quay in central Kirkenes with unimpeded views of the fjord.

Thon Orion Hotel (Bergen)

Thon Hotel Orion has been recently renovated with a bright, contemporary décor. This comfortable hotel has a superb location right by the Bryggen waterfront.

Apex Hotel Waterloo (Edinburgh)

Built in 1819, this elegant Georgian building was the first purpose-built hotel in Edinburgh and today combines contemporary furnishings, a stylish bar and restaurant, a complimentary swimming pool and gym with timeless style. At the east end of Princes Street, this hotel enjoys a desirable New Town location.

Ayr Hotel (Orkney)

The Ayr Hotel is one of Orkney's finest hotels and is situated in the principal town of Kirkwall. The hotel is in a charming whitewashed building with harbour views, clean and cosy rooms with good facilities and friendly service.

Iceland Extension

Fosshótel Barón (Reykjavik)

A historic hotel with a sleek, contemporary décor situated in the heart of Reykjavík, near the seafront and a short walk from Reykjavík's harbour.



The Italian Chapel, Orkney



Bergen (top); The North Cape; St Magnus' Cathedral, Kirkwall; Puffins in Iceland (above)

The cost per person sharing is:

In an I grade cabin: **US \$6,286**

Single supplement: **US \$1,932**

In an N grade cabin: **US \$6,846**

Single supplement: **US \$2,149**

In an O grade cabin: **US \$7,532**

Single supplement: **US \$2,460**

In a P grade cabin: **US \$77,56**

Single supplement: **US \$2,484**

The cost includes:

- Comprehensive pre-departure information
- The services of experienced tour leader and speaker, Paul Luckin
- Eleven nights' accommodation in twin bedded rooms in medium grade hotels (Oslo, Kirkenes, Bergen, Orkney and Edinburgh)
- Five nights' accommodation in twin bedded cabins aboard the MS Nordkapp
- Breakfasts and dinners daily on land
- All meals at sea
- Scotch whisky tastings in Edinburgh
- A full programme of sightseeing, walks and talks as per the itinerary
- Admission fees and tips
- Services of experienced English-speaking guides (including the popular Sheila Devlin Thorpe in Edinburgh and Patricia Long in Orkney)
- All transportation services including flights (Oslo to Kirkenes, Bergen to Edinburgh, Edinburgh to Orkney return)

The extension to Iceland costs **US \$2,239 per person sharing and includes:**

- Transfer from Edinburgh hotel to Glasgow Airport and flight from Glasgow to Reykjavik on Iceland Air
- Three nights' accommodation in twin bedded rooms in a medium grade hotel in Reykjavik

Single supplement is: **US \$308**

- Breakfast and dinner daily
- A full programme of activities as per the itinerary including all transport and admission fees and tips
- Services of experienced English-speaking guide throughout

The cost excludes:

- International flights
- All personal extras such as drinks, laundry, telephone calls etc.

About Us

To travel with us is to dig below the surface, revealing the deeper destination. Of course, you will visit the great historical sites; marvel at the wonders of architecture and engineering; be moved by the riches of culture and art; and experience the most spectacular landscapes in the world. What we also do is make sure that you see the country as it is today, giving you privileged access that independent travel and other tour companies rarely get close to. We give you a variety of experiences, from the sublime to the humble, in the company of intelligent, curious, like-minded people. And while we can be worthy, we also make sure that you have a lot of fun.



Sail through Trollfjord (top); Spectacular Lofoten Islands; The Ring of Brodgar, Orkney; Bathe in the Blue Lagoon, Iceland - extension (above)

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