

My journey to Norway (by MS Trollfjord)
Hurtigruten-Cruise: Bergen - Kirkenes - Trondheim
15th March – 28th March 2008



Journey-overview:

15th March 2008	ICE Transfer	(Köln HBF – Kiel HBF)
15th March – 16th March 2008	MS Color Fantasy	(Kiel – Oslo)
16th March 2008	Bergen Railway	(Oslo S – Bergen)
16th March – 26th March 2008	MS Trollfjord	(Bergen – Kirkenes – Trondheim)
26th March 2008	Dovre Railway	(Trondheim S – Oslo S)
26th March – 27th March 2008	Royal Christiania	(Overnight stay at Oslo)
27th March – 28th March 2008	MS Color Magic	(Oslo – Kiel)
28th March 2008	ICE Transfer	(Kiel HBF – Köln HBF)

15th March 2008 Journey to Kiel, Color Fantasy

Journey from Cologne to Kiel

Finally the day arrives on that our journey to Norway begins.

Early in the morning at about 4.45 am, our booked shuttle by the company NRW Shuttle brings us to the train station at Cologne. We arrive there at 5.30 am.

At the train station are a lot of people, even if it is so early in the morning because they want to go on their holidays. We wait 30 minutes before our ICE to Kiel arrives at Cologne. Punctually at 6.09 am the ICE to Kiel departs from Cologne as scheduled.

The railway track to Kiel is quiet uninteresting and in fact of that there is nothing special I can talk about. Without any delays we arrive at Kiel at about 11.20 am.

After arriving at Kiel we leave the train station to the right and there it is. It is unbelievable how huge this ferry is. Its name is Color Fantasy and is a ferry by the company Color Line. This impressive ferry will bring us to Oslo during the night. You need circa ten to fifteen minutes to go from the train station to the terminal. We get our boarding cards at the terminal and have to wait until 1.15 pm to go onboard. At 1.00 pm there is a long queue because everyone wants to go onboard now. The queue looks really horrible but it disappears really fast when the check in starts.

At circa 1.30 pm we are onboard and fascinated by the size of the ferry. There are a lot of stairs and elevators but the ferry is build in an easy way and so we have no problems to find our cabin.



Our cabin

The cabin where we are going to stay the following night is on deck 10 with the number 521. It is an inside-cabin and it has all what you will need for one night. It has two beds which are hidden in the walls during daytimes and because of that the cabin looks much bigger. The cabin is clean and it is a nice stay for that night.



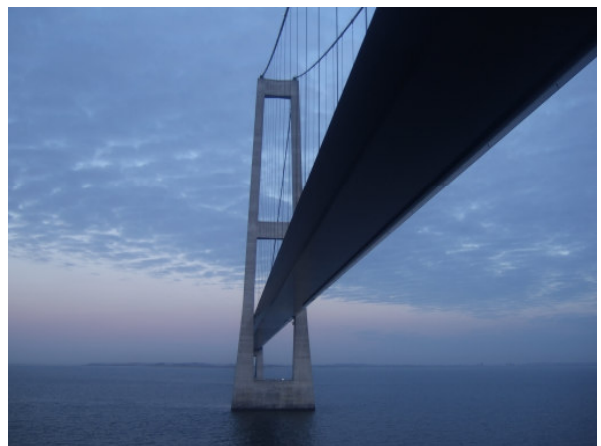
Firth of Kiel and the “Big Belt”

Punctually at 2.00 pm our ferry leaves the terminal of Kiel accompanied by a lot of passengers at the uppermost deck. We just enjoy the first minutes of our journey like I ever did before at my cruises.

While we cruise through the Kiel-Canal we see several nice building and ships. We leave the Firth of Kiel and cruise into the Big Belt along the coast of Denmark. At the evening we arrive at the first sight of our journey because we are in the near of the popular “Storebælt-Bridge”. The bridge connects the Danish island Fünen with Seeland. The construction and size of the whole bridge is very impressive.

It is 6,790 metres long and the highest part of the bridge is 70 metres above sea level.

At about 6.00 pm Color Fantasy passes the bridge during a few seconds and this is really important to see! You have to notice that the Storebælt-Bridge is the second-biggest suspension bridge of the world. In fact of the clouds at the sky we suddenly do not see any sunset this evening except for an idea of red-orange sky at the horizon. We finish this evening with the impressions of this gigantic bridge. We had the best view of the bridge while Color Fantasy slowly passes it and we looked up to it. Yes! – Tomorrow we will arrive at Oslo!

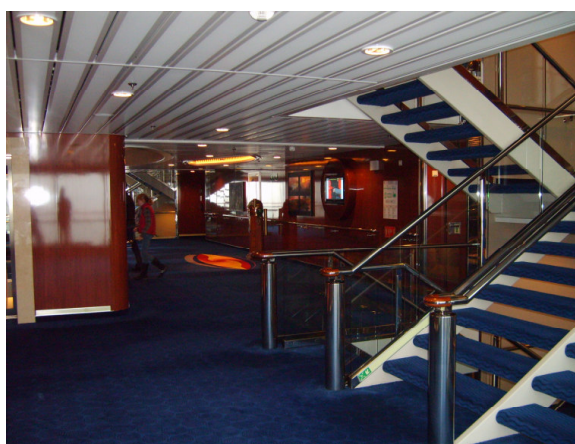


Impressions of Color Fantasy

When the twilight begins and there is nothing to do outside, it is time to use the facilities of one of the biggest ferries of the world. Color Fantasy is able to transport nearly 2,667 passengers and has fifteen decks. Two and a half of these decks are suited for cars and trucks. Very impressive at both of the two Color Line ferries are the popular promenades which are named by the ferry name. You call the promenade of Color Fantasy the "Fantasy Promenade". It is 3 decks high and 163 metres long. It is like a pedestrian precinct with bars, a cafe and shops. The reception is located here, too.



There are enough possibilities to get a meal at the two ferries which are partly comparable to the facilities of cruise liners. At the back of the ship you can visit the most luxury restaurants of with the names "Cosmopolitan Gourmet" and "Oceanic a la carte". Impressive are the big windows at the back of the ship and the accommodation of the restaurants which make a very luxury atmosphere.



If you do not want to spend so much money you are free to make a reservation at the "Grand Buffet" or you go to the "Sports and Burger Bar" on deck 14. Here you will get "normal" meals which are not so expensive but with good quality. I eat there during my stay, too.

If you want to relax a little bit you have the opportunity to go to the "Spa & Fitness Centre". In addition to that you can visit the casino, the night club, the Aqualand and a duty free shop. There is also a special entertainment for children.

In my opinion the whole accommodation of the ship fits perfectly together and you will feel like in holidays on a cruise liner up to the first minute of your journey.

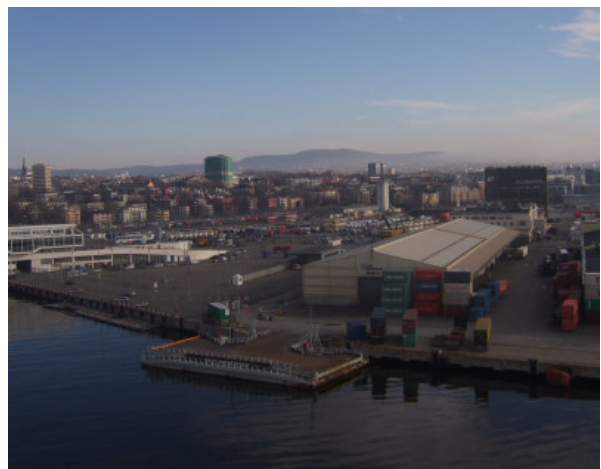


The passage with Color Line from Kiel to Oslo is a nice and relaxing way to start a journey of Hurtigruten but because I love to fly by plane I will prefer the flight next time.

16th March 2008 Arrival at Oslo – Bergen Railway – MS Trollfjord

Oslofjord and arrival at Oslo

Today we get up early in the morning because we do not want to miss the cruise through the Oslofjord on our way to Oslo. The weather is not so nice and we have fog all around us so that we are not able to see the landscape at the moment. We go outside to the upper deck and suddenly the sun gets strong enough and shines through the fog. In fact of the sun, the fog and the water of the Oslofjord we get wonderful reflections on the water and we are happy to see that the fog clears up. The appearing blue sky colours the water into a deep blue while Color Fantasy swims through the fjord completely without any sound. At the shores we see houses and huts in different colours as well as forests and rocks. We even spot islands with single buildings on them and a defensive building on the left side of the ferry. It looks a little bit like an old castle. The sun which is shining very strong now makes this passage very nice and of course we enjoy this. At 9.30 am we have the first view of Oslo in front of Color Fantasy and a few minutes later we arrive at the terminal. You should never miss the Oslofjord when the weather is nice.



Transfer to Hønefoss

Before we started our journey from Norway we got the information that Color Line changed the arrival time at Oslo and that we have to make a transfer to Hønefoss for reaching the train to Bergen.

Next to the exit of the terminal our coach is already waiting for us. At 10.30 am we are on our way to Hønefoss and the transfer will take approximately about one and a half hour. It is a really nice track with the view of the Holsfjord to our left side. The water of it is deep blue and mountains with green forests surrounded it. Next fjord to our left side is the Tyrifjord it for a few minutes. The last minutes before arriving at Hønefoss is characterized by fields and forests. We reach the train station of Hønefoss at 11.35 am.



The Bergen Railway to Bergen

Now we have some time to wait for the train and make the first conversations with the other travellers who are on their way to MS Trollfjord, too. Then the train arrives at the station and we are happy to go inside and start the journey on that special railway track to Bergen. The local train is really comfortable because there is enough legroom for everyone and the windows are very big. There is also an restaurant onboard if you get hungry or thirsty. At about 12.35 am the train starts to move and we are on our way to Bergen and our ship MS Trollfjord.

First we pass lowlands with fields, trees, a small river and see some snow on the ground. After 30 minutes the landscape gets more hilly and we reach the first deep forests and towns. It is a beautiful contrast to see the blue sky with the green forests and even some small lakes are visible. On the right side of the track we spot the first small waterfalls which are partly frozen.

At about 2.00 pm we see the first higher mountains and the track goes uphill and downhill now while we have a view of the tree line at the mountains. He train brings us through tales with wild rivers and high mountains around us before we arrive at Gol at about 1.54 pm which is the first interesting stop during our way to Bergen. After leaving Gol the track goes higher and higher and even the blanket of snow grows. Our highest point will be the train station of Finnse which is 1,222 metres above sea level where we will arrive later. We have at 2.30 pm a snow blanket which is circa one and a half metres high and from a few trees you can only see the top because the tree above is covered by snow. That is really impressive to people from Cologne and the surrounded areas.

Before we finally arrive at Finnse the blanket of snow is so high that we only are able to see roofs of the huts next to the railway track. It was impossible to see a window or a door.

Suddenly it starts to snow very intensive and in fact of that we only see one white wall outside of the train. I never saw a snowfall like that before and that is our first impressive adventure in the winter of Norway. At Finnse the blanket of snow is circa two to two and a half metres high but at some places much higher because of snowdrifts. We reach the next important station of Myrdal at about 3.58 pm.

At Myrdal some tourists leave the train to go on by bus or by the popular Flåm-train, which waits at the other side of the platform. Our train goes on and the track goes constantly downhill now.



After nearly 20 minutes we are some hundred metres downhill in comparing to the station of Finnse and it is impressive how difficult it is to see any blanket of snow. We pass again tales with small rivers, forests and the snow-covered mountains in the background. Next we see the station of Evanger which is only 16 metres above sea level and it starts snowing a little bit.

The landscape now gets less spectacular because with every metre we come nearer to Bergen the landscape has less mountains but only some hills.



Only the Veafjord to our right side looks interesting and a few minutes after the begin of the fjord we see a big bridge in that direction. The weather gets more bad now and we have low clouds with a mix of snow and rain. We passed the last stations (Dale, Vaksdal and Arna) and arrive at the train station of Bergen punctually at 5.50 pm.

After reaching the station we leave it to the right and see several coaches which wait for us to bring us to MS Trollfjord.

Impressions of MS Trollfjord

It takes only a short drive from the train station to the harbour where the coastal steamers arrive and after a few minutes we see our ship the MS Trollfjord on that we will spend our next ten days. The check in works fine and soon we enter the ship and our cabin. Before I go on with writing about the evening onboard I want to describe my impressions of MS Trollfjord to you. MS Trollfjord is one of the newest and biggest ships by Hurtigruten and cruises since May 2002 along the Norwegian coast on the route from Bergen to Kirkenes and back. The ship is build by a lot of natural material like stone or wood and has got nine decks for passengers. It has a passenger capacity of 822 passengers and this is more than the most of the coastal streamers by Hurtigruten have. Very special is the entrance area which is vitreous and the modern panorama lounge. This lounge is two decks high and for watching out is has got huge windows to see the landscape in a comfortable and warm atmosphere. You will only have a problem if there is a intensive snowfall coming because then you will not see anything through the snow covered windows.



I personally prefer the outside areas of the ship because when you visit Norway you should try to get as much as possible from this country, even the fresh air.

In addition to the main restaurant where you have to eat most of the time in two sessions you are free to eat in the bistro, too. There you get meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner for acceptable prices.

MS Trollfjord also has two whirlpools outside, a sauna, an exercise room, bars, a shop for general products – but mainly for souvenirs. It has also a reception and an information area on deck 8.

The service staff on board is really friendly and you get help when you need it every time. The service at the reception is fantastic too because you can ask there for shutting up the lights at the back of the ship during the winter seasons when you see Northern Lights.

That is a pleasure for everyone who likes to look at the stars and the colourful lights.

The quality of the meals is important too and I have to say that it is really fantastic. The range of food during the breakfast buffet is very good and I can compare it to the breakfast of cruise liners.

Only by having dinner you will remember that you are not on board of a cruise liner because there is only one three-course menu and the portions are not really filling to me and I am often hungry afterwards. This is no criticism because when you book the journey you have to think about the differences to real cruise liners. The ships by Hurtigruten are originally cargo ships! Very interesting and important too is the possibility that you are able to go around the complete ship by using one deck at the outside area. At MS Trollfjord you have the possibility at deck 6 and it is important for special passages. The area for go around is mostly roofed and that is really nice when the weather is not nice and it is raining or snowing. Of course you are welcome to use the uppermost deck of MS Trollfjord to have a look at the landscape, called sundeck.

Our cabin

Our cabin is located on deck 7 with the number 710. We booked the “winter special” and are very happy that we get a cabin on one of the upper decks because the only thing that was guaranteed was the ocean view.

The cabin is very comfortable and has two beds (one folding bed, one bed for making a couch at daytime) and a huge round window for having a wonderful view of the landscape.

It is really nice to have the cabin on deck 7 because you are centrally located then. One deck below you are able to go completely around the ship and three decks above you are outside on the sundeck.

Even the restaurant is not far away and in fact of that you can reach all places in a few minutes.

I really feel like home in this cabin and it is still clean and has all needed facilities.



Departure from Bergen in the evening

After we discovered the whole ship we visit the sundeck for having a look at Bergen. We have already past 8.00 pm and because it is dark the city is already well-lighted. We take our tripods with us and take some very nice pictures with long exposure and without blurring. From the sundeck you have a nice view of Bergen, of course even by daylight. At about 9.15 pm we have the last view to Bergen and go inside because it starts snowing and our winter clothes are already in our luggage. We go back to our cabin and relax there the rest of the evening.



17th March 2008 Florø – Måløy – Tørvik – Ålesund – Molde – Kristiansund

Florø

Tonight we get some waves which hit our ship but they helped me to fall into sleep soon.

It is a very nice feeling when you sit behind a huge window in the warm and see the icy wind and the snowfall at the outside.

At 5.00 am this morning we arrive at Florø but I am not able to see anything because the next snow shower falls. Florø is the westernmost city of Norway at has nearly 10,000 inhabitants. It is the management of the commune Flora and its main industry is fishing together with the production of oil and gas. After a short stop we leave the harbour of Florø.



Frøysjøen and Gulen

We cruise now through the Frøysjøen northwards and the weather really could be better for going outside but instead we drink a warm tea in our cabin and look through our window. At 6.30 am we are able to see the rocky and snow covered landscape around our ship because the sky gets brighter for a moment.

Sometimes we see some small trees on the islands and walls.



Maløy

Punctually at 6.15 am we reach the next harbour, the harbour of Maløy. In fact that the weather gets better and we are able to see the landscape we decide to go on the sundeck for having a look at the small town.

Maløy has circa 7,000 inhabitants and the people here get their money with fishing and the further processing.

At the city you will find a museum for fishing and 20 kilometres in the north of the town is the Western Cape. In the near of the city is a bridge which crosses the Ulvesund. It is 1,224 metres long and if the wind blows from a special direction you are able to hear a special clay that sounds like top C. We have no luck with that today and do not hear anything like a top C. The small town is really lovely and the few houses are built at the begin of a hill and some are on the hill.

They have different colours and the snow covered landscape make it special, too. So you should get up early and have a look at this lovely place.



Sildegapet and Stadhavet

MS Trollfjord goes on cruising along the rocky coast with some separated coloured houses and forests and mountains in the background. We pass next the Stadhavet which is not protected by islands and a part of the sea. Here it is possible to have heavy sea or higher waves. We go outside for looking at the landscape and not far away from us the next snow shower appears.

A few minutes later we only see a white wall in around us and go back into the cabin. I look out of the window and I am fascinated by the low clouds which seem to lie on the water and are rounded up into the sky.



Tørvik and the Herøybridge

After these spectacular impressions we are not far away from our next harbour. Before reaching the harbour of Tørvik we pass the Herøybridge by standing outside again. In fact that it does not stop snowing we look like snowmen a few minutes later.

At 10.30 am we arrive at Tørvik, a small town with nearly 8,500 inhabitants. The people here work most of the time for fishing and farming. You will see a lot of fields around the city and some ship yards where people are able to work, too. We are ready for departure after 5 minutes and leave that lovely and silent place. We go back into our cabin and have a cup of tea.



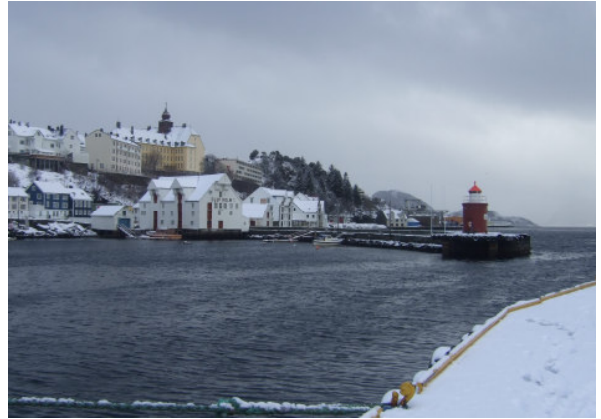
Ålesund (with sightseeing walk)

While we arrive at Ålesund at noon the snowfall declines. Ålesund has got nearly 42,000 inhabitants and is located on several islands. It is known for its Art Nouveau houses and the famous viewing point on the city-mountain "Åksla". The city is covered today by a blanket of snow with an altitude of 10 centimetres. Because it is our first visit at Ålesund we booked the sightseeing walk through the city for getting a lot of information about the city. We prepare us for the excursion and go out into the snow. During the time where we have to wait for all travellers who booked that excursion we use the time to take some pictures of our ship. We are happy that the next upcoming snow showers take another direction and do not hit the city and with full visibility we start our sightseeing walk guided by a German guide. We walk through the centre of Ålesund with its painted houses. On the houses we see different paintings like heads of dragons, colourful flowers and special constructed roofs. We see the narrowest house of Norway too, but it is even to narrow for me to live in it 😊.

We walk along the Kongens gate and the Løvenolggata and arrive at the centre of Art Nouveau. There we get a lot of information about Ålesund and its history. Some minutes later we go outside and take some pictures of the Brosundet with some colourful houses along of it. You will be able to take the best pictures by standing on the bridge near the centre of Art Nouveau. It is always recommendable to look behind by walking through the streets because you can take nice pictures of houses with the city-mountain in the background.

A few minutes later we are back at MS Trollfjord. I can recommend this excursion to you if you visit Ålesund for the first time because you get the most important information about the city and see the main sights, too. The second time you should visit the city on your own.

At about 3.00 pm we leave the harbour of Ålesund with a nice view of the city.



Harøyfjord and Milfjord

Before we arrive at the harbour of Molde we have to pass the Harøyfjord and Milfjord. The landscape is characterized by mountains which party go down very steep to our right side and a lot of small islands to our left side. We admire several colourful houses along the coast which are conformist to the mountains and hills. At the moment the sun seems to be more interesting because the sun shines through the clouds and makes nice reflections on the water. It looks really nice when the snow showers pass the sunlight and we take some pictures of that. But the weather gets better.

At 4.30 pm we see some coniferous forests at some mountains which are partly wild but also planted by people. The tree line is interesting too because it starts in Norway at about 700 to 800 metres above sea level in due to the climatic conditions. Above the tree line we spot some small plants and the very rocky landscape. Until we arrive at Molde the sun creates more and more reflections.



Molde

We reach our next harbour for today at about 5.30 pm. Molde has got nearly 24,000 inhabitants and is located at the northern coast of the Romsdalsfjord. The industry is fixed mainly furniture and the production of (neon) tubes. Also the flower industry find a place to grow here because of the mild climatic conditions. You see roses and other plants grow here which are untypical for Norway.

In Molde you will find a lot of sights, for example the church of 1957 with its separated bell tower.

For having a nice view of the city you can visit the mountain Vaden on 407 metres above sea level.

The mountain Tusten (696 metres high) is some kilometres away from Molde but has a spectacular view of the city and the landscape, too. We use the stopping time for walk through the streets in the near of MS Trollfjord and return back after 30 minutes.

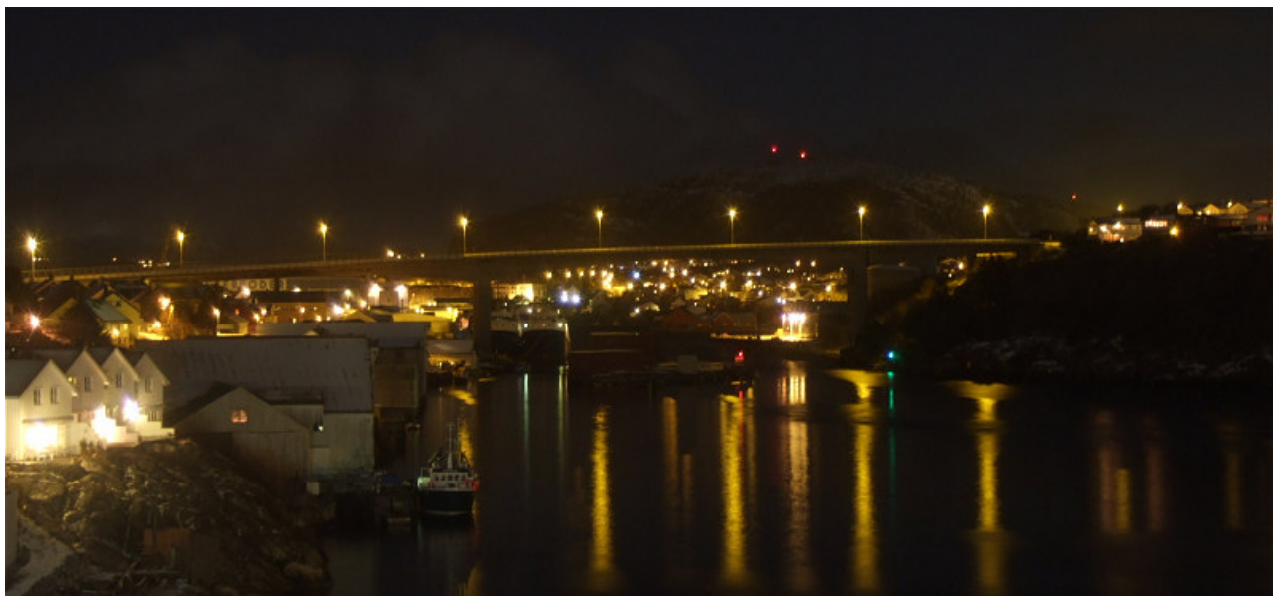
Punctually at 6.30 pm our ships departs from Molde by passing the popular Rica Seilet hotel. The hotel is a glass construction and has the form of a sail.

Today we see only a little bit of the sunset and so we get hungry and go inside for having diner.



Kristiansund

We arrive at the last harbour for today at Kristiansund at about 10.20 pm. Kristiansund has got nearly 17,000 inhabitants and is located at an island which is connected to the mainland by three bridges. The city is only 190 kilometres in the west of Trondheim where we will arrive tomorrow morning. The most important industry of Kristiansund is the production of dried cod but also building ships and oil industry at the coast are interesting to work. If you have time you should visit the church of Kristiansund with its popular glass paintings. In addition to that you can visit the Northland-Church, the opera and a museum for the history of dried cod. In fact that our stopping time is too short we have no possibilities to make a walk through the city. We use the time to have a look at the well-lighted city from the sundeck and take some pictures. You have the possibility to take very nice pictures of the city, even if it is dark. We leave the harbour punctually and cruise in direction of Trondheim.



18th March 2008 Trondheim - Kjeungskjær Fyr - Stokksund - Rørvik

Arrival at Trondheim – MS Trollfjord and MS Misnatsol

I get up early in the morning to view the arrival at Trondheim and the passage of Trondheimfjord. At 5.00 am I stand outside on the sundeck but it is too late, because we have already arrived at the harbour of Trondheim. I use the time to take some pictures of the lighted city. The city is covered in snow too but it is not as much as it was yesterday at Ålesund. A few minutes later the next snow shower begins and go back inside. Before I reach the cabin I see the sun rising through the window of the panorama lounge and I take some pictures of that, too. I use the time before breakfast for going out into the snow and to take pictures of MS Midnatsol which is directly next to our MS Trollfjord at the quay. MS Midnatsol is the sister ship of our MS Trollfjord and it is a nice picture while the two ships at the quay. Then I am happy that I can go for having breakfast.



Trondheim with sightseeing tour

Trondheim is the third-biggest city of Norway and has got about 165,000 inhabitants. Only the cities Bergen and Oslo of course are bigger. It is located 70 kilometres from the ocean at the province of Sør-Trøndelag. In fact of that the city is so big and we visit Trondheim the first time we decided to book the excursion by coach.

The excursion starts at about 8.45 am and we go directly into the old town of Trondheim where we see the old coloured storehouses and the famous river Nidelva. The river makes a really nice atmosphere to the lovely old town of Trondheim. Only a few minutes later we pass the very popular old wooden bridge "Gamble bybro" and drive along the storehouses. Fifteen minutes later we arrive at the world-famous Nidaroscathedral. The Nidaroscathedral is the most important cathedral of Norway because the coronations of the kings take place here every time. The history of the cathedral goes back to the year 1070 and the eastern part of the cathedral is really old and well-preserved. The western part was renewed. We have a special guide for visiting the cathedral and he tells us nearly 30 minutes interesting information about the cathedral. We get another 30 minutes to go around on our own. I enjoy the stone sculptures and the coloured windows in the western part very much. You should visit the eastern part too, because of its



original construction and design. It is a really special atmosphere to go through this historical place which history is still going on. It is very important to know that it is forbidden to take any pictures inside the cathedral! Next stop of our excursion is a viewing platform on a small hill not far away from city centre. We have a wonderful view of the city and the island Munkholmen from here. We even are able to see the two ships MS Trollfjord and MS Midnatsol. During the stay of fifteen minutes we enjoy the fantastic view of the region and then the coach brings us back to Trondheim again. On our way to the next place of visit we pass several positions for looking at the Nidaroscathedral and reach the exclusive residential area. I am sure that everyone says with a minimum of one time "this should be my house" because every house is different from the other house but they all are very nice! Afterwards we drive back to MS Trollfjord and arrive at 11.00 am. I only can recommend this excursion to you if you visit this big city the first time. You will get a lot of information about the city and its history and see the most important sights.

Before I go onboard I take again some pictures of our ship. This time without MS Midnatsol because it is already on its way to the south.

Departure from Trondheim and the island Munkholmen

We leave the harbour of Trondheim at noon as scheduled. Immediately after the departure you will see the island of Munkholmen on the right side of the ship. In the past on the island there was a monastery and it changed during the time to a base for rocket defending and storing ammunition.

Today it s a museum and you are free to visit the island by boat in the summertime. The boat needs circa 30 minutes to reach the island from city centre. You are able to see the island from the viewing platform which we visited on top of the hill, too.



Trondheimfjord

To reach the ocean again for cruising to the north we have to go through the Trondheimfjord. This fjord is really broad and we have low mountain ranges on both sides of our ship. We see small forests and even some separated houses at the coast or on the mountains. One our after leaving the third-biggest city of Norway we spot a snow shower in front of MS Trollfjord and it is easy to see in which way the landscape disappears slowly behind the clouds. Only a few minutes later the snow shower catches our ship and all around us gets white. We go inside for a warm tea.

After 30 minutes the snow shower is over and we see a lighthouse on our left hand side. It is the lighthouse "Agdenes fyr" which was built in 1804. It is the fourth-oldest lighthouse of Norway and it is white with a small red roof. Then we have to pass the Frohavet which is very open to the sea and you have often a heavy sea here but today it is calm. The landscape gets lower now and we spot some houses on several islands around us. Before we reach the Arctic Ocean again we see the first wind power station of our journey.



Frohavet with Kjeungskjær fyr and the Stokksund

While we cruise through the region of the Frohavet we pass the next famous lighthouse. It is called "Kjeungskjær fyr" and it has an unusual location at an individual island, alone in the ocean. The lighthouse is 21 metres high and is located in the region of Ørland. It is classified as a historical monument and in spite of its location, two people come out of the lighthouse and start to wave.

After passing the lighthouse we go inside again to drink some tea.

Nearly one and a half hour later we arrive at the Stokksund. This passage is interesting because of the bends which the ship has to pass. At the beginning we pass a bridge. The shipping channel through the Stokksund is very narrow with a rocky landscape and impressive views of higher mountains in the background. At the end of the Stokksund we spot some white "balls". We get to know that these "balls" are sheep which sit next to some small houses. The passage takes about 20 minutes and it is really worthwhile.

We leave the Stokksund and the sun starts again to produce wonderful reflections on the water. Only a few minutes later it is snowing again. We will pass the Folda next.



Rørvik

At 8.45 pm we arrive at our second harbour of today, which is at once the last one for today. Rørvik is a small town with at least 3,800 inhabitants and is the most important town of the commune Vikna. The main industry here is fishing and agriculture. Interesting for tourists is the coastal museum not far away from the harbour. MS Trollfjord is not the only ship in the harbour of Rørvik because the coastal steamer MS Vesterålen is here, too. In fact of that we use the stop of 30 minutes to take pictures of both ships. Then we go onboard again to take some pictures of Rørvik from the uppermost deck. We get some pictures of the museum, the church and the Nærøysundbride which is 701 metres long and 41 metres high. It is a nice motive at night and even during the day. Of course it is already dark and we are not able to see the landscape around the town.



19th March 2008 Nesna – Polarkreis – Ørnes – Bodø – Stamsund – Svolvær

During the night we pass the harbours of Brønnøysund (0.45 am) and Sandnessjøen (3.45 am) which we will be able to see during daylight on our southbound route.

Nesna

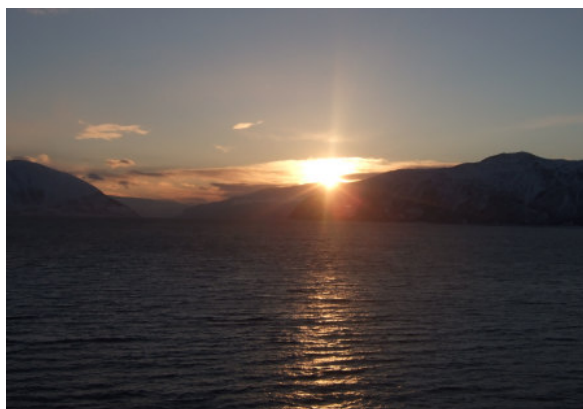
Everyone who went to bed early the evening has to get up early in the morning of course. I get up this morning at 5.15 am and we arrive at the harbour of Nesna during the twilight at 5.50 am.

Only a hand full of people come out to have a look at the lovely town with a very nice surrounded region. I take some pictures of the landscape and of the town, too. Nesna has got circa 1,800 inhabitants and I see only a few colourful houses. Around the small town are some higher mountains and the harbour affords a very cosy atmosphere. The absolutely highlight of this morning is the moonset between to mountains. The moon is coloured in a deep orange and gets slowly in touch with the two mountains until he completely sets. This makes a touch of warmth in the early cold morning hours because it feels like we have at least minus fifteen degrees now. At 6.00 pm we leave Nesna.



Stigfjord and other fjords

We cruise now towards the Arctic Circle by passing the Stigfjord and some other fjords at the west coast of Norway. The passage is characterized by some mountains and even flat landscape which are partly only a few minutes above sea level. Most of the mountains are covered by snow and make a wonderful motive with the blue sky above and the deep blue water. Suddenly we see the first sunlight of today which shines at MS Trollfjord and the mountains. We are happy too about getting some warming sunlight because we are still outside since the arriving at Nesna.



Crossing the Arctic Circle

At 7.30 am I spot the island Hestmannøy on our left side. I remember the island from a picture which I saw during my preparations for this journey and so I know that we will cross the Arctic Circle soon. The mountain on the island is called Hestmannen and it is 586 metres high. On another smaller island to our left I see the famous globe which marks the crossing of 66°33'39" and in fact of that we cross the Arctic Circle now. The sky is still blue with some small clouds and in fact of that we have the best conditions to feel like in the Arctic.



Røðøyløven

Only a few minutes after crossing the Arctic Circle we pass the next popular mountain which is called Røðøyløven. This mountain is 440 metres high and famous for its appearance. It is on our left side too and with some imagination you will see the similarity to the Egyptian "Sphinx". The mountain is most admired during the summertime when the midnight sun colours the mountain red.



On the way to Ørnes

MS Trollfjord goes on in northern direction to reach the harbour of Ørnes. Before we arrive there we pass a lot of snow covered mountains and islands which have intensive colours because of the sunlight. The sunlight at the water looks really nice too and we cruise through the Vaerangfjord.



MS Trollfjord meets MS Nordkapp

At 8.25 am we meet the coastal steamer MS Nordkapp and a lot of travellers come out to take pictures of the ship. We get some nice pictures with a very nice landscape in the background.



Meløyfjord

You have to cruise through the Meløyfjord to reach the harbour of Ørnes and this fjord is amazing! The wild Norwegian landscape with small houses and huts is wonderful. You will find countless possibilities of taking pictures in the wintertime, but I am sure it is the same during the summertime. You should never miss that passage!



Ørnes

At 9.30 am, two hours after crossing the Arctic Circle we arrive at the lovely town Ørnes. Ørnes is very special because of its colourful houses which are built along the mountains and a lot of houses also along the slopes. It has got an idyllic small harbour, too. Ørnes is located in the commune Nordland and has only about 1,300 inhabitants. Not far away from the town you will find the second largest glacier of Norway, the Svartisen-Glacier. The lovely town is really liked by photographers and I have to agree that Ørnes is a very nice motive. At 9.45 am MS Trollfjord departs from the harbour of Ørnes.



Departure from Ørnes

The second part of the Meløyfjord after leaving Ørnes is as beautiful as the first part before the arrival at the harbour. We get the idyllic atmosphere of the region with typical Norwegian motives for taking pictures. Some small coloured huts are reflected on the surface of the water, small coniferous forest and high mountains are visible at the coasts.



We pass several islands like Fugløya, Fleina, Sørarnøy and Arnøy on our left side and on our right side we see the big island which is called Sandhornøy. Next we cruise through the Saltfjord.



Bodø and excursion to the Saltstraumen

Next city we will visit is called Bodø. Bodø is the capital of the province "Nordland" and has about 46,000 inhabitants. Near the city live a lot of bald eagles and if you have luck you will see perhaps an eagle during your stay. At Bodø you have the possibility to visit the aeronautic museum, a church built in 1956 with very nice glass paintings and the townhall.

Not far away from Bodø in about 30 kilometres you will find the Saltstraumen, one of the strongest tidal currents of the world.

After the arrival at Bodø I decide to make the excursion to the Saltstraumen. The excursion costs 310 NOK and I pay it directly on board. I have luck and the excursion isn't booked out.

We first drive through Bodø and our guide shows some interesting sights to us. We see the town hall and the above-mentioned old church. Then we finish the city-sightseeing and drive into the landscape around Bodø. There we visit an old church and stay there for some minutes.

We go on with the excursion to the Saltstraumen and pass a snowy landscape with some wonderful views to the coast.



We arrive reach the Saltstraumen after about one hour.

The Saltstraumen is circa 150 meters wide and when there is tide or flood the mass of water (350 Mio m³) will be pressed through the narrow sound.

At that time the speed of the water is 29 kilometres per hour and it flows into the Skjerstadvjord. The tidal current is strongest in the time by the time of full moon and new moon. You have the possibility to watch that spectacular event from the bridge over the sound or you can go to the coast of the Saltstraumen.

Unfortunately we visit here during the time between tide and flood and so we see only a small moving of the water.

The landscape in this region is very nice and it is a great pity that we stay here at the sound only 20 minutes. On our back passage to MS Trollfjord we watch a very interesting movie about the Saltstraumen and can imagine how the Saltstraumen looks like during its strongest periods.

The excursion takes about two hours and we are punctually back at our ship for the departure at 3.00 pm.

Landegodefjord

After the departure from Bodø our ship travels through the Landegodefjord and passes the island of Landegode. At the left we see the typical Norwegian skerry islands and at the right we see the Norwegian mainland. The mainland here has changing heights with some high mountains, covering of snow. At the northern bank of Landegode you can see the famous lighthouse, which marks a dangerous location of the Norwegian coast.

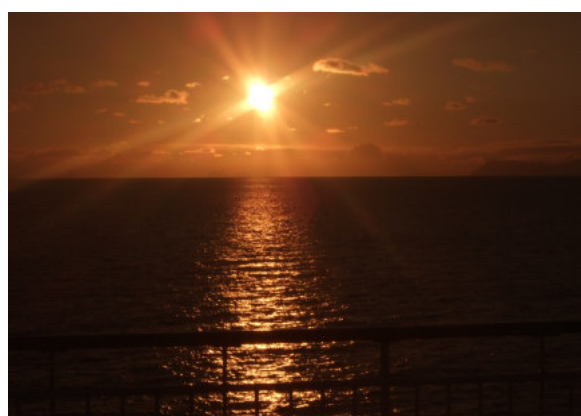
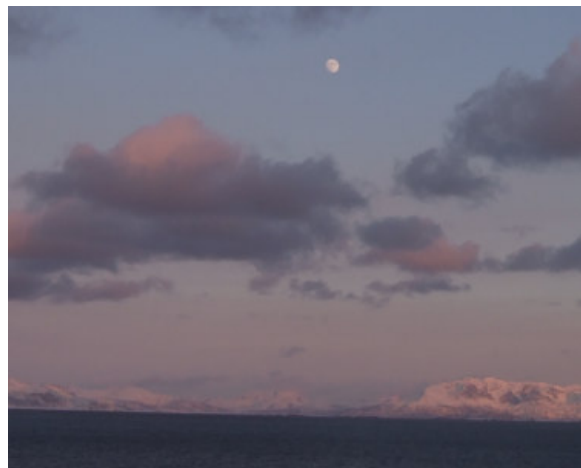
Vestfjord and sunset

Now we leave Landegode behind and reach the wide Vestfjord with a little bit more heavy sea.

Some kilometres away we see a snow shower which is not high above from the water surface and even the fjord is so wide, we are able to see some mountains covering of snow.

High above the fjord we find the moon, because there are not so many clouds this time.

Today we will watch the sunset here at the Vestfjord, but it seems to be an ordinary sunset at the ocean if there won't be the Lofoten westward. At about 6.00 pm the sun disappears behind the m mountains of the Lofoten and this looks really nice. Now it is time to have dinner.



Stamsund

Sadly we weren't able to see the popular scarp of the Lofoten at daylight because you know we already had the sunset today.

The next harbour we visit at about 7.10 pm is at Stamsund which is located at the island of Vestvågøy, a province of the Lofoten. Stamsund is one of the biggest towns here in the region although it has only circa 1400 inhabitants. The main livelihood is the fishing industry, the stockfish production and the production of codliver oil and guano.

At Stamsund you can visit a war museum, where you will find weapons and other discoveries of the past world wars.

For the reason that is it already dark we only go on the upper deck of MS Trollfjord with the cameras and tripods to take some pictures of Stamsund. The town is beautiful nestled in some small mountains and even one big mountain in front of us. That makes this place here very cosily.

It is always important to look into all directions because in the opposite direction of Stamsund we view some beautiful red clouds resulted by the sunset one hour ago. The moon shines bright over the city and makes beautiful reflections to the water surface. The light house next to the city assists the moon in lighting up the region. Punctually at 7.30 pm, after 20 minutes at Stamsund, we leave the harbour for going on with our journey to the north.



Meeting with coastal steamer MS Finnmarken

On our way to Svolvær we don't see the landscape around us because it is dark. So we go below for drinking some warm tea in our cabin.

At 8.19 pm we meet the coastal steamer MS Finnmarken which passes MS Trolldfjord to the left side.

By day the coastal steamers of Hurtigrute welcome each other by using the horn of the ship, but later in the evening and during the night they send light signals to each other. I go out for watching the meeting but I am almost alone outside.



Svolvær and excursion to “Magic Ice”

At 9.00 pm we finally arrive at the last stop for today, Svolvær. Svolvær is surrounded by mountains and water of course, but it is already dark and we can't see this nice landscape very detailed.

At Svolvær we make a small excursion to the “Magic Ice”, which is the first permanent ice-gallery and you will find there on about 500 m² animals and sculptures made by ice. It is a really nice atmosphere, provided by some light effects and lovely music. For a manageable surcharge you can drink some Norwegian wine by using a glass made by ice. The wine tasted very good but you have to be careful that the glass doesn't slip away. It is really funny to hold this glass in your hands. It is important that you take warm clothes if you want to visit the gallery because there is a reason for the description “art under the freezing point”. The entrance fee is 90 NOK without the wine and you pay 125 NOK for drinking wine out of the glass made by ice. These prices are for adults.

I just can recommend you to visit “Magic Ice” because it is a nice atmosphere, you can see a lot of nice sculptures and drink some delicious wine.

While going back to MS Trollfjord we receive a fantastic message from other guests because they saw Northern Lights when we arrived at Svolvær at 9.00 pm. We go back on board and take our tripods and cameras to the upper deck.

Before you get to know if we are able to see Northern Lights, I want to tell you something about Svolvær. Svolvær is the biggest city at the Lofoten and has about 4000 inhabitants. The landmark of the city is the Svolværgita, which is above the city in the mountains. In detail Svolværgita is made by two off-standing rocks which are very famous to photographers and climbers. When it is dark, it is very difficult to see Svolværgita and we actually don't find it today. The people at Svolvær live on the fishing industry (especially codfish) and the production of dried cod / stockfish. At Svolvær you also can visit the popular war museum of the Lofoten, a church, galleries by several artists and the above mentioned ice-gallery “Magic Ice”.



Northern Lights !

Do you think we see any Northern Lights? Yes of course, we do ☺. Just after some minutes of looking at the lighted, beautiful city we detect a weak green light over the mountains of Svolvær.

That's the first Northern Light that I see in my life! It is a really nice picture and I am so happy that my camera is able to take the picture, as it really looks like. For the reason that I have astronomy as my hobby since 6 years, I was very interested in watching Northern Lights during this journey.

At 11.00 pm we leave the wonderful harbour of Svolvær while we are watching some stronger Northern Lights in northern cardinal direction. Taking photos is very difficult because of the moving of the ship but I get some nice pictures.

The phenomenon "Northern Lights" or "aurora borealis" is almost indescribable. On the one hand the mysterious appearance, the intensive colours and on the other hand the moving of the lights. They seem to be swimming across the sky.

The incurrence of Northern Lights is very physical of course, and I like to give you the link to Wikipedia where it is described in a good way:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aurora_%28astronomy%29

Today we see green and red lights with different intensity and size, moving across the cloudless sky.

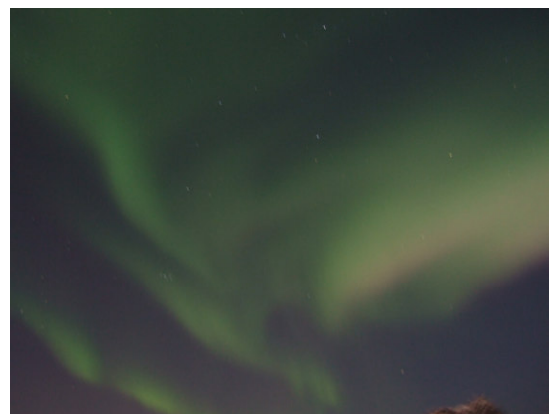
The combination of Northern Lights and the stars in the background is a really gorgeous atmosphere, which is enjoyed by all people on our ship. For a while the sky to our north is completely green and the lights appear in different shapes.

The light at the back of MS Trollfjord is very bright and I go to the reception to ask if they are able to reduce the intensity. That was a great idea, because when I arrive at the back of the ship again, the light is turned off. For that reason we get a very dark sky and more intensity of Northern Lights and its colours. Sometimes the loudspeaker of the ship informs the guests about the appearance of Northern Lights and a lot of people visit the outside area for having a look at it. As soon as the mentioned light appeared they go inside again and some of them think it is over now. Northern Lights appear from time to time and are sometimes visible the whole period at strongest levels.

We are only five people staying outside for taking photos and watching this nature spectacle from 10.00 pm to 11.40 pm. The activity of the lights increases at about midnight and today we are not able to see any lights after 11.30 pm. In addition to look at the sky we notice the wonderful landscape near the famous Trollfjord by passing through the Raftsund. For the reason that the almost full moon shines so bright we can see the landscape in dark colours and see the bridge of Raftsund, too.

After some hours at the outside area it is time to warm up inside with a cup of tea. The out there is about minus five degrees with a cold wind. Just after drinking some tea and talking about this incredibly experience we decide to go to bed.

In addition to the colour of Northern Lights in the sky and on pictures it is very impressive to think about the incurrence of these lights. They came far away from the sun and hit our atmosphere with an unbelievable speed. It is a nice thought that they made their way through the universe.



20th March 2008 Harstad – Finnsnes – Tromsø

During the night we pass the following cities: Stokmarknes (1.00 am), Sortland (3.00 am) and the harbour of Risøyhamn (4.30 am).

Harstad and MS Polarlys

At about 6.45 am our ship arrives at the harbour of Harstad. We are going to stay here until 8.00 am and the weather is very nice. After that cloudless night we have a deep blue sky today and the sun warms up the guests who are standing outside. In fact that I am tired because of the last night I decide to stay at MS Trollfjord and take some pictures of this nice city from the upper deck. While we reach the harbour we meet the coastal steamer MS Polarlys, arriving at Harstad too, on its way back to Bergen.

In comparison to the cities which we saw yesterday, Harstad is a big city with almost 23,000 inhabitants. The city is located at the island of Hinnøya and its main industry is trading, the shipyards in the near of Harstad and the oil production.

At Harstad you can visit the Trondenes Kirke which was build in 1250 and the canon of Adolf, the biggest canon (on the ground) of the world. The city looks really nice because of the coloured houses and the hilly landscape in that region. You can also see the ski-jumping hill near the city.

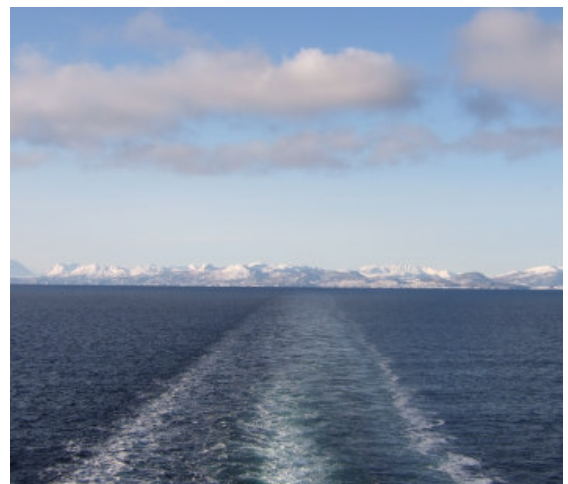
At 8.00 am we move on northwards.



Vågsfjord

Before arriving at Finnsnes we cross the wide and long Vågsfjord. The landscape here is characterized by some higher mountains, but mainly of medium height. The holy landscape is covered by snow and it is a nice contrast to the deep blue water. All in all this passage reminds me a little bit of the landscape in the region of Svalbard, which I visited last summer.

The calm sea, the softly blowing breeze and the meanwhile warm air are the best aspects to make some arctic relaxation on the cot in the outside. Before I start to lie on the cot, I take some pictures of this nice landscape. The passage of Vågsfjord takes about one and a half hour.



Polar baptism

While we cruise through the fjords in direction to Finnsnes there is an upcoming event which is typical for journeys to the north by ship. The polar baptism starts today at 10.30 am and is a funny event that you should not miss. The permission that you need to go on to north is a trowel filled with cold water and ice cubes which are putted into your neck under the clothes. Today it is very funny, because the temperature is almost at the freezing point and the ice cubes don't defrost at any time. In fact of that they tumble out of the clothes to the ground and roll across the deck. Don't be afraid, you don't have to do this but I have to recommend it because it is really funny!



Finnsnes

After getting the allowance to go on by ship we reach the harbour of Finnsnes at 11.09 am.

The city has 4,000 inhabitants and the main industry is the services sector. Popular for Finnsnes is the large bridge which spans the fjord named Gisund. The bridge is the biggest pier-bridge in whole Europe and is 1,500 meters long. It connects Finnsnes with Silsand and Senja, which is the second biggest island in Norway. The city has a cosy harbour, some colourful houses and some higher mountains behind. All this makes Finnsnes to a lovely place.

We use the stop of 30 minutes for make some walking in the snow next to our ship, and of course for taking some pictures of MS Trollfjord.

With a short delay we leave the harbour of Finnsnes ten minutes after noon.

Only a few minutes after leaving Finnsnes the ship passes the above-mentioned bridge and a lot of people want to see that passage by standing on the upper deck.



Passing the Gisund on our way to Tromsø

If the ship passes the bridge without any damage, of course it will pass without damage ☺, you pass the fjord which is named Gisund during the next two hours. The Gisund is a really beautiful passage which you never should miss. Last year I went through the Gisund by MS Albatros in the summer and it was a really nice part of the journey.

Today it is almost similar because the weather is nice, the water is very calm but the landscape is covered by snow of course. During the passage you will see a lot of houses at the coast and some higher mountains. We get the arctic feeling with a perfect blue sky and the warming sun by looking at the coast at the colourful houses. I just stop dreaming for a very short moment when there is a wind gust because the wind is really cold during this season. MS Trollfjord passes silently the Gisund and we have a very nice time. We see nice reflections of houses and mountains on the water and because the water almost doesn't move, we have copies of the things at the coast on the water surface (mirror-inverted).

The upper deck is well patronized and all are looking around in the fact that the landscape in every direction is so beautiful. Then we point two groups of harbour porpoises (four and five animals) swimming southwards. The Gisund is about 35 kilometres long at is a unique passage.



Rystraumen and Straumsfjord

Before we arrive at Tromsø we travel through the Rystraumen (a tidal current) which is situated in the Straumsfjord. Depending to tide and flood the speed of the Rystraumen rises up to 11 kilometres per hour and is able to have effect on the coastal steamers. We pass the city Anshes to our right side and take some pictures of it because of its nice location along the mountains. You can see some coloured houses but no other sights. The Straumsfjord blends into the Balsfjord and from there you almost can have the first look at Tromsø with its island Tromsøya.



Tromsø

We arrive at Tromsø at 3.00 pm with a delay of 30 minutes. Almost 65,000 inhabitants live in the biggest city in North Norway and the whole city has the surface of the German Saarland.

Important sights are the Tromsdalen kirke with its special look, the Polaria and the famous Polar Museum. The world-famous bridge of Tromsø is a sight, too. It is 1,036 meters long and up to 38 meters high and connects the district Tromsdalen with the city centre at the island Tromsøya.

You will have the best panorama by using the cable car to the top of the Storsteinen. The Storsteinen is 420 meters high and allows a nice view of Tromsø and the surrounded landscape.



Excursion: Dogsledding at Tromsø Villmarkssenter

While we booked the excursions before the journey, this excursion was my personal favourite by comparison to the others. The dog sledding sounded very interesting to me and I read a lot about it and I am full of anticipation now to start this excursion.

The excursion is booked out and we have to drive to the Villmarkssenter with two busses. First we drive through the city and use the underground road network (which is lighted) to leave the island Tromsøya. After a ride of 40 minutes along the fjord we arrive at the Tromsø Villmarkssenter.

We get out of the bus and hear immediately the huskys barking and yowling for starting with the next sledge as soon as possible. We are guided into a big tent where a bonfire is burning. The guides tell us interesting details about the Villmarkssenter, the dogs, the dogsledding and their own experiences while we eat some cake and drink a cup of coffee / tea.

In fact that we are so many guests they separate us into three groups, because it isn't possible to make dogsledding with so many people at one time. We are members of the last group and stay in the tent until it is our turn. The atmosphere is really nice and so it is no problem to wait at the end almost one hour.

First of all we get warm clothes and go out to the dog-yard to have the first contact to huskys. It is really nice and we say hello to all of them who have to stay at their cottage. We go on to the younger dogs who love to play and jump to you. In addition to that they love it to get stroked and are very happy to see the tourists. The guides show some puppies to us, which are only a few months old and are allowed to carry one puppy in our arms.

Then finally the time arrives and we got to the sledges where the dogs are waiting impatiently to start moving the sledges.

The team of dogs can have about 12 dogs which are divided in different groups. The two dogs in front are the "leaders" and they have to determine the speed of the team. They have to find the right way and translate the instructions of the musher into action. Behind the leaders



are the swing dogs, which help the team to get the right direction. The next in the team are the team dogs who help the team to get the needed speed for dogsledding. The last dogs, directly in front of the sledge are the wheel dogs. They have to start the sledge with their power and brake the sledge more than the other dogs.

Our team today consists of eight dogs and we have to dogs who already were part of the longest dogsledding race of the world, the "Iditarod". Two more dogs are going to be members of the team in an upcoming competition and one dog has its first dogsledding tour ever.

Our female guide is a very nice and explain some additional details to us, partly even in German.

The atmosphere is very comfortable and we also make some jokes and laugh a lot. Then finally we start the tour across the hilly landscape covered by snow. With an amazing power the dogs pull the sledge almost silently and we enjoy the nice time. The weather is nice because we only see a few clouds but more blue sky and the sun shines to the mountains to our left side. The almost full moon rises over the high mountains and the polar wind wafts into our faces. It is very nice!

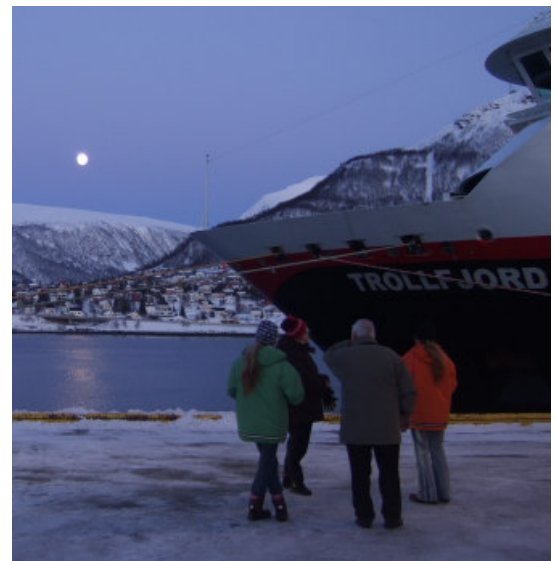
The dogs are able to pull the sledge with a speed of up to 40 kilometres per hour and we feel sometimes the hilly landscape under the sledge ☺.

Our guide praises the inexperienced dog from time to time and it is very amazing that we can see how the dog reacts with more efforts. The track goes up and down and at the end we only drive down with a view of the large fjord in the direction of Tromsø. The dogs get faster and faster at the end and our guide tells us the reason for that.

At the end of our tour the dogs will get something to eat and this is the reason for their additional power. Then the sledge stops and the guides help us to get out of the sledge. We thank the dogs for their great work and of course our very pleasant guide. We give the borrowed clothes back and visit the gift shop.

After about 15 minutes we have to go back to the bus and say goodbye to the lovely guides of the Tromsø Villmarkssenter. Then the bus drives back to MS Trollfjord and before we go on board we take some photos of MS Trollfjord and the moon.

We leave the beautiful city Tromsø at about 7.00 pm and go on cruising in northern direction.



We reach the harbour of Skjervøy at 10.30 pm and stop here for fifteen minutes, but we went to bed before arriving there.

**21st March 2008 Øksfjord – Hammerfest – Havøysund – Honningsvåg –
Kjøllefjord – Mehamn – Berlevåg**

During the night we pass the following cities:
Øksfjord (2.00 am) and Hammerfest (5.15 am).

Meeting with coastal steamer MS Richard With

The weather this morning isn't nice as it was yesterday because it is mostly cloudy but sun shines sometimes and makes nice reflections to the water surface.

At 9.00m we meet the coastal steamer MS Richard With to our left side and the two ships greet each other with

blowing the horn. On MS Richard With we can't see anyone and so we don't wave this time.

We take some pictures of the ship with the landscape in the background. Then we go inside for having our breakfast.



Havøysund (with the wind farm)

Today it is a short breakfast because we arrive at Havøysund at about 9.40 am.

Havøysund is located in the famous Finnmark and has circa 1,200 inhabitants. You find the small town almost at the 71th latitude and the biggest fishing fleet of the Finnmark is resident at Havøysund.

The main industry is the fishing of course. Not far away from the town you find the northernmost birch forest. Next to the harbour we see one rank of houses and in front of the ship, a few kilometres away there is the town centre with a church and more houses. The houses are in different colours and for that reason it is a nice picture, which should be taken with the camera.

In front of our ship we point the bridge of Havøysund but we don't pass it because we have to go another direction. Our ship turns around and we leave Havøysund after a few minutes.

Now we are able to see the wind farm of Havøysund with its sixteen wind turbines to our left. They are very useful because of permanent wind at this region.



Our way to Honningsvåg

Even when you leave Havøysund you can see the island of Magerøya where we will arrive at noon for making the excursion to the North Cape. The landscape here is very jagged and barren. We pass the island of Mesøya and the Koppfjord and two hours after leaving Havøysund we go past a rock which looks a little bit like another version of the known „North Cape horn“.



Honningsvåg with excursion to the North Cape

We arrive at Honningsvåg on schedule at noon. Honningsvåg has about 3,500 inhabitants and is situated in the Finnmark, too. The main industry is the fishing and the tourism, by reason of the North Cape which is 40 kilometres away. You can visit a church, the only building that survived the Second World War at Honningsvåg. The city has some coloured houses and looks very cosy. The pier is next to the city centre and it isn't a problem to make a short walk through the streets.



Today there is no time for a walk at the city, because we booked the excursion to the North Pole again. Last year we visited that place too and the weather was so bad. We had foggy and rainy conditions with strong winds with wind gusts up to 100 kilometres per hour. The weather now looks better than that, because there is only a moderate breeze and it is cloudy without any rain. We begin to drive by bus through the city and then to the hilly landscape with is covered by snow.



On our right-hand side we see the Kamøyfjord and drive along it. The landscape looks really nice with the white snow and the deep blue water. To our right after leaving the fjord we spot a large red building which is a hotel. While we drive on to the North Cape the snow blanket gets higher and we pass Skarsvåg, the northernmost fishing village of the world to our right-hand side. The inhabitants live on the fishing industry, the tourism and other service industries.



We see the cottage of Nils (a Sami) and two of his reindeers next to his house.

Our bus stops now in front of a gate and have to wait there together with some cars and a few other coaches. We can go on with in a convoy with a snow blower in front of all vehicles because the road to the North Cape is remarkable and more safety without so much snow on the road. In direction to the North Cape the weather gets worse because there are snow showers all around. The snow showers at Norway are really spectacular in fact that the clouds are so low.

We finally arrive at the North Cape and go out and have to walk on nearly 30 centimetres of snow.

The snow showers stay at the moment over the sea and we go to the famous globe at the plateau.

Here we take several pictures of the landscape, ourselves and of course the globe.



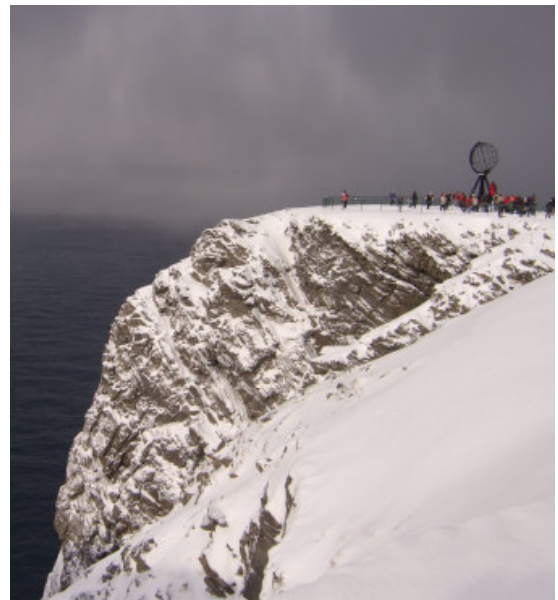
Today are only the guests of our ship and some other guests at the North Cape and so we have enough time to take a picture of us in front of the globe without any stress. We stay at the North Cape for one hour and today I am successful in taking the popular picture of the globe with the sun in it, because the sun is visible between the clouds for a short time. I have to take that picture on my knees but the result is very nice.

A few minutes later it gets darker and darker because the snow shower from the sea moves towards us. At the moment it is just a spit of snow and in fact of that we stay outside covered by our winter clothes. Some minutes later we go into the hall of the North Cape because the snowfall is very heavy and the wind gets freezing cold. Inside the hall we have a look at the post office counter and the gift shop. You have the possibility to eat something, watch the famous North Cape movie (about the different seasons) or buy the famous certificate of the North Cape. It is interesting to know that the North Pole is only 2,100 kilometres away from here. Then we have to leave the North Cape and it is really a fight to reach our bus because of the heavy snow shower. While we sit in the coach we are not able to see anything outside.

On our back passage we don't see anything not even the Tulfjord to our right-hand side with its precipitous slopes which I know from my excursion last year. All looks only white. We only see a Sami colony and one skier with his dog in front. Thank goodness that the snow blower drives in front of the coaches because that makes all people feel more save in this exciting situation.

After about 30 minutes we reach Honningsvåg and its harbour and go back on board of MS Trollfjord. I try to take some pictures of Honningsvåg from the upper deck but the snow showers covers almost the whole city into clouds and falling snow. Now it is time to warm up inside and at 3.15 pm MS Trollfjord leaves the current invisible city named Honningsvåg.

During the next hour there is nothing to see outside because of snow showers and even the sea gets a little bit more heavy. Some other passengers and I go to the outside areas for looking at the surf at the top of our ship.



Finnkirka

Only a few minutes past 5.00 pm we notice a remarkable rock formation which is only visible to me because of the white background. Immediately I know that this is the Finnkirka and take a snapshot of it through our window. For the coastal steamers which go to the north the Finnkirka is visible at the right-hand side only a few minutes before reaching the harbour of Kjøllefjord. The Finnkirka is a rock formation which looks like a church. It is very famous and one of the most beautiful cliff of the world and was a place for sacrifices.



Kjøllefjord

We reach our next harbour at Kjøllefjord at circa 5.40 pm. The town has about 1,200 inhabitants and is dominated by a high mountain in the back of the houses. Kjøllefjord is stretched along the whole end of the fjord and so it looks like more than a small town. At Kjøllefjord you find a church built in 1951 and not far away from the town centre is the second wind farm of the province Finnmark. The light isn't perfect for taking pictures but the town looks really nice and in fact of that I take some pictures where you can guess the coloured houses. We make a stop of fifteen minutes and then go on with our journey.



The Barents Sea

We cruise along the coast and pass the Kinnarodden, the northernmost point of the continental Europe. Unfortunately we are not able to see it. In fact that it is already dark there is nothing to tell you about the landscape around but the sea gets more and more heavy. Maybe the reason for that is that we left the Norwegian Sea and cruise on the Barents Sea now. The Barents Sea is partly iceless during the winter months and 10 to 100 meters deep. I am sure you know the famous king grabs which live at the Barents Sea.

Mehamn

At about 8.15 pm we have calm sea because we arrive at the harbour of Mehamn.

The town Mehamn is friendly to guests in a special way because of one house is painted in beautiful colours "Velkomme til Mehamn".

Mehamn has circa 1,400 inhabitants and is the northernmost harbour for the coastal streamers.

The supply for the inhabitants is more concentrated on the airport of Mehamn where planes arrive and depart about three to four times a day. There are not so many sights at Mehamn but anyway a church and a bunker from olden times which is situated at the edge of the town. If you stay here at Mehamn you have the possibility to make tours by snowmobile to the region of Kinnarodden.

The town is wonderful motive for pictures in the late evening although the houses are not as colourful as we saw it in other towns. At about 8.30 pm we go on eastbound.



Slettnes fyr

On our way from Mehamn to Berlevåg we pass the lighthouse "Slettnes fyr". Unfortunately we can't spot his light because of the snow showers around us. The lighthouse hasn't got a special appearance but it is supposed to be the northernmost lighthouse of the world.

Berlevåg

Accompanied by snow showers we reach the harbour of Berlevåg at 11.30 pm. Even the sea in the area of the harbour isn't calm and we can't see details of the town. Berlevåg has got a workshop for mechanics, a church built in 1960 and the lighthouse "Kjøllnes fyr". You find the lighthouse next to the popular "Polar-Sea-Road 890" (?) with its impressive landscape and rock formations. We have a stop here at the harbour for fifteen minutes and cruise back to the sea which isn't really calm this evening. We feel the movement of the ship but I like it and have no problems with it.



22nd March 2008 Båtsfjord – Vardø – Vadsø – Kirkenes – Vardø – Båtsfjord – Berlevåg

While we are sleeping MS Trollfjord passes the following cities: Båtsfjord (0.45 am) and Vardø (4.00 am).

Vadsø

The first harbour which we see today is the harbour of Vadsø. For the reason that the coastal steamers stop here only on their northbound route you should not miss to have a look at this wonderful city. Vadsø has about 6,000 inhabitants and is the capital of the province Finnmark.

The city is situated at the Varangerfjord and because of its position often the beginning of expeditions to the North Pole. At Vadsø we see the famous church with its two towers which are connected by a roof. The church was inducted in 1958. Not far away from Vadsø is the rock named Ekkerø on which a lot of birds have their home. On the rock you will find an old fortress, built during the Second World War. Vadsø also has a cultural park.

We have luck and the weather is really nice with only some separated clouds and in fact of that the city shows all its colours. A lot of colourful houses, a cosy harbour and the above-mentioned church make this city to an interesting motive for taking pictures. The houses are built along the Varangerfjord and its end, similar to the town Kjøllefjord which we visited yesterday. Don't miss to have a look at it!

We leave this nice place circa 8.30 am.

The first time during our journey we are going to cruise southwards for reaching Kirkenes. Of course we don't see or feel that we do it. A workman dispenses the upper deck from snow with the snow blower.



Bøkfjord (our way to Kirkenes)

A few minutes past 9.00 am we arrive at the Bøkfjord, the fjord before we will arrive at Kirkenes which is the reversal point of our journey.

The landscape is characterized by jagged rocks, some skerry islands and the deep blue water.

It is a nice passage with a lot of arctic motives and you should not miss it, too.

Shortly before we arrive at Kirkenes we see the first drift ice of our journey, which isn't very thick but very nice to observe. Passing through the Bøkfjord takes about 45 minutes.



Kirkenes (with excursion to the Russian border)

Our ship MS Trollfjord lands at the harbour of Kirkenes at about 11.00 am. The city is the final destination for a lot of tourists of our ship but for us it is the turning point, because we will cruise with MS Trollfjord southwards to Trondheim. Kirkenes has about 5,000 inhabitants and is situated only 10 kilometres from Russia. Near the city is the largest mine of whole Norway and the famous Andersgrotta. The Andersgrotta is a bunker from the Second World War and today it is a museum.

Immediately after arriving at Kirkenes the one and a half hour excursion "tri-border Finnmark" starts.

The coach drives us through the centre of Kirkenes but a few minutes later we leave Kirkenes and pass the very nice landscape around the city. We see a lot of snow because the depth of the snow is about 15 centimetres. The landscape is characterized by frozen lakes, little woods and some trees and bushes of medium height. We see the famous Kirkenes Snowhotel to our left but we do not stop there.

You have the possibility to visit the hotel by booking another excursion or stay a night there when your journey ends at Kirkenes.

During our drive in the direction of the Russian border we cross the border river Pasvikelva, which separates Norway and Russia. Next to the road are very nice houses with different colours and wonderful gardens.

Then we reach the Russian border at the border crossing point Storskog.

Directly by arriving at the border you will see the sign "No admittance except on business" and another sign with a crossed person, because it isn't allowed for tourists from Hurtigrute to cross the border.

We leave the coach and walk around at the Norwegian territory and expect a border guard with its dog at the border line in front of us to make sure that we are not going to cross the border. Our guide tells that we don't have to be afraid because on the back of us are the houses of the Norwegian soldiers and we feel much better now ☺. You are able to buy gifts of this popular place at the small kiosk in the near of the coach. We stay at the border around 15 minutes and go on with the excursion. We drive back by crossing the river Pasvikelva again and arrive at Bjørnevatn. The town is called mine-city because Bjørnevatn was originated with the mine company AS Sydvaranger. Today live about 1,500 people here. The mine next to the town is the biggest one in Northern Europe and during the Second World War about 2,500 people were hidden in that mine.

Unfortunately we are not allowed to have a look at the mine because of the weather conditions but nevertheless see some vehicles of the past times which look very impressive. We leave the mine territory and go back to Kirkenes with passing the town Hesseng.

Before we drive to the city centre the coach brings us to the top of a hill not far away from the city.

We have a wonderful view to Kirkenes and the surrounding area with the Bøkfjord. Certainly we make a stop here for taking a lot of pictures. Due to the fact that the weather is so nice we see the city under blue sky and very colourful.



Kirkenes has a lovely building structure which you see best from above.

We stay here around ten minutes and pass the Snowhotel before we arrive at Kirkenes for a small round trip. The coach brings the tourists back to the ship. A few minutes before you arrive at the ship you are able to take nice pictures of your ship, but only if you sit at the left side in the coach.

The excursion took nearly two hours today and it was really fantastic. The beautiful landscape, the nice weather and the great tourist guide made this excursion to a special one. You should not miss the possibility to make this nice excursion.



Leaving the Bøkfjord

At about 1.15 pm we leave the harbour of Kirkenes and start our southbound cruise back to Trondheim. In order that there won't be any confusion I want to explain that we cruise first to the north until we reach the northernmost point of Norway. After leaving the Bøkfjord we see the Russian mainland to the east because the weather is so nice.



Hornøya island, Reinøya island and Vardø fyr

We are en route to the next harbour of the city Vardø which we left once already this morning. Before we reach the town we pass the island Hornøya with its remarkable lighthouse "Vardø fyr". The island is the easternmost and oldest seabird reserve of Norway and about 80 000 couples of seabirds have their breeding area at Hornøya island. We are able to see some seabirds next to the lighthouse and the coast of the island. The highest point of the island is about 65 metres above sea level and the easternmost point of Norway is the eastern coast of Hornøya. Immediately western of Hornøya you will find the island Reinøya.



Vardø with a beautiful sunset

At circa 4.15 pm we arrive at the harbour of Vardø. The town has about 2,300 inhabitants and is situated at a small island. In addition to that it is the easternmost town of Norway.

The main industry is the fishing, the tourism and the service industry. The highest mountain of the area is the Grythaugen which is about 495 metres high. One of the most popular sights is the fortress "Vardøhus festning". It was built 14th century and is the northernmost fortress in the world. In fact that MS Trollfjord stays one hour at Vardø you have the possibility to visit the fortress with its furniture from past times, old paintings, four bastions and ten artilleries which are only used to welcome the sun when she rises in February after a long "sunless" winter. The church of Vardø from 1985 looks nice, too. Vardø is build along the harbour and you will find a lot of postcard pictures at this nice place.

The houses are painted in pleasant pastel shades and ordered in a beautiful way. The blanket of snow makes that combination very impressive and of course the partly blue sky, too.

Today we get to know the cosy place in a very special way because the sun is setting in the next minutes. A few minutes later the sky gets a beautiful red colour and the snow assumes the colour with a light red. In western direction fog is rising and covered the sun a little bit. Through the fog we are able to see the solar disk and take some gorgeous pictures of this special atmosphere. The sun sets slowly behind the landscape and sends a last warming light to MS Trollfjord, before the sun disappears. After the sunset the fog spreads out at Vardø and we follow that natural spectacle from the sundeck. All people are enjoying this special moment.

Then all tourists who visited the fortress and the town go aboard (also my father visited the fortress).

At about 5.15 pm we are ready to leave the harbour of Vardø – of course MS Trollfjord is in time.





Båtsfjord

Before we arrive at Båtsfjord, we have a nice dinner and make a rest in our cabin.

At 8.15 pm we arrive at Båtsfjord with its 1,100 inhabitants. The small town is located at the Barents Sea and the main industry is fishing. During the summertime you will find in the harbour the biggest fleet of fishing boats of the whole Finnmark. Båtsfjord is a very old place because researcher found places which go back to the Stone Age. The town has a church from 1971 (with a glass painting which is 85m² large) and a televisual tower which is 241 metres high (the highest one in Norway).

Not far away from the town there is a lighthouse which is called "Makkaur fyr" from year 1928.

In fact that it is already dark we only see some details of Båtsfjord like the televisual tower with its red warning lights and the church. The lighthouse isn't visible. We take some pictures of the lighted town and after 15 minutes MS Trollfjord leaves the harbour of Båtsfjord.



Northern lights (and arrival at Berlevåg)

The sky this evening is cloudless again and because of that it would be wasted time to think about going to bed earlier today. We whip on some warm clothes and go on the sundeck to search some northern lights.

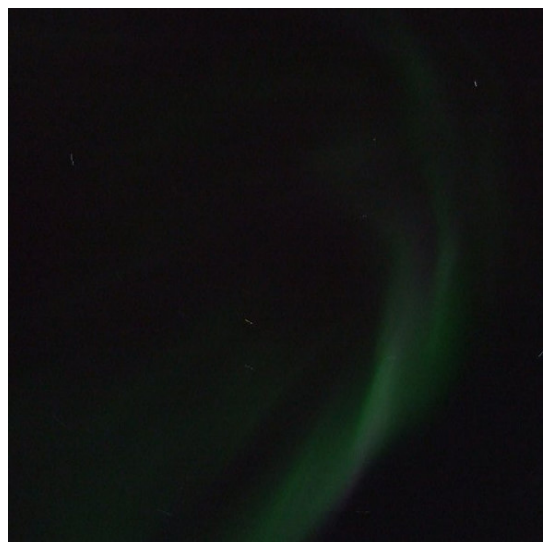
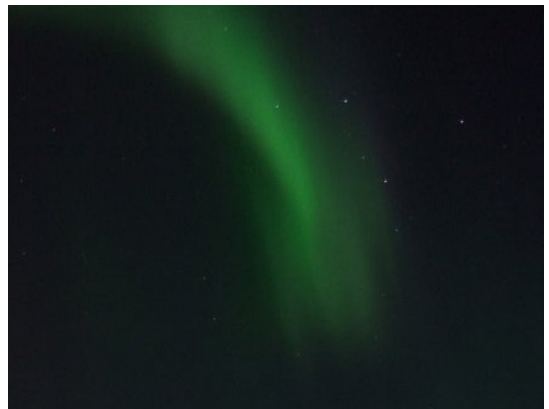
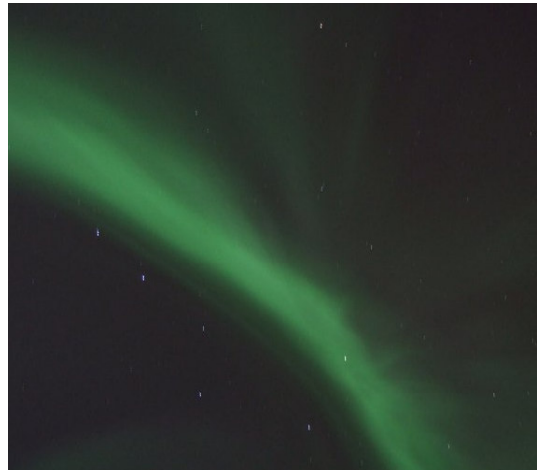
Only 20 minutes after we left Båtsfjord we spot the first green lights in the sky next to the stars.

Immediately I go to the reception and ask for turning off the tail light of the ship. When I arrive at the sundeck the light is turned off and the sky looks much darker. Today we have the activity level 1 which is enough for getting sometimes brighter lights. We take some pictures with the mountainous landscape in the background. At 10.30 pm we are able to see the most beautiful lights of this journey because we get some very bright northern lights in the zenith over us. The light goes to different directions, partly from the horizon to the zenith and this is very fascinating. The

name of this phenomenon is (northern lights-) corona / aureole. This is the most impressive northern light that I have ever seen. We notice activity from 8.40 pm until 11.07 pm.

At about 10.15 pm we make a stop at Berlevåg where we take only a few pictures of the town, because we use the time when the ship isn't moving for taking nice pictures of the northern lights.

Back in cabin I chase the very low activity of northern lights though the window during the time from 0.35 am to 1.00 am. It was an impressive day with a lot of nice experiences.



23rd March 2008 Mehamn – Kjøllefjord – Honningsvåg – Havøysund – Hammerfest – Øksfjord – Skjervøy – Tromsø

During the night MS Trollfjord passes the harbour of Mehamn (1.00 am) where I try to take some pictures of the city and Kjøllefjord (3.15 am).



Honningsvåg in the morning

In the early morning at about 5.45 am we arrive at the harbour of Honningsvåg.

In fact that I am still sleeping after a long night my father takes pictures of the nice city. The weather is really nice because after the cloudless night the sky is still cloudless and blue.



Havøysund (and the wind farm)

xWhile we are having breakfast our ship is arriving in the harbour of Havøysund (8.15 am). In fact that we saw the town during our way to north, we are not in a hurry and go out on the sundeck after the breakfast at about 8.52 am. MS Trollfjord already cruises next to the wind farm.

The wind farm looks really like an arctic wind farm because of the blue sky and the snow.

Main reason for going on the deck is not the wind farm but the coastal steamer which we will meet in a few minutes. And there it is coming towards our ship. It is the traditional coastal steamer MS Lofoten, which was built in 1964. MS Trollfjord was built in 2002 and so it is a meeting of generations.

We take a lot of nice pictures of MS Lofoten and the landscape with its rough sea and the mountains and islands. A lot of people want to have a look at the small ship MS Lofoten and a few minutes later the ship-meeting is over and they go back inside. Next we cruise through the Sørøysund in direction to Hammerfest, the next harbour of our journey.



Hammerfest (Royal and Ancient Polar Bear Society and sightseeing walk)

We arrive at Hammerfest at 11.15 am as scheduled. Due to the fact that we stay for one and a half hour at Hammerfest I only can recommend to you to make a sightseeing walk through the city.

Hammerfest has about 9,400 inhabitants and has got right to advertise with the title of the northernmost city of the world but of course that isn't true. The main industry is the fishing and the tourism. Interesting general information: Hammerfest is located at the same latitudes like the northern part of Siberia, the northernmost point of Alaska (Point Barrow) and the central areas of Greenland.

The world-famous Royal and Ancient Polar Bear Society is only one point in Hammerfest which you should visit. Additional to that other sights are several churches in the centre and the famous viewpoint "Salen" which is located on a hill 80 metres above the city. Because of the snow we don't find the way to the Salen but you will see the uphill track from the sundeck at the mountain behind Hammerfest.

My first sight for visiting is the Royal and Ancient Polar Bear Society, because I want to become a member of this famous society. I have to pay a charge of 160 NOK (circa 21,00 €) and the club has now 224,303 members including me. The charge is used useful for the city. For joining I get a certificate, a stick pin, a sticker and the membership card. You only have to pay this charge once and then you are member of the society for life. Don't miss to have a look at the small exhibition about fishing and hunting in the area of Hammerfest in past times. There is also a special room for members which is decorated in a very nice way. Attention: No entry for non-members! ☺

Only a few minutes of walking distance away I visit the known church of Hammerfest. It has a remarkable construction and was designed by the architect Hans Magnus who designed the churches of Øksfjord and Berlevåg, too. Hammerfest is located along the coast at a bay in Sørøysund and because of that you are able to take nice pictures of the city and the landscape.

The weather is nice and the sun shines from a cloudless

sky down to Hammerfest. At about 12.45 pm we leave Hammerfest and go on along the coast to the south.



Sørøysund

Immediately after leaving Hammerfest we cruise through the Sørøysund. It is a wide sound with a varied mountain landscape at the coast of several islands.

The mountains are snow-covered, not very high and this makes a strong arctic atmosphere.

On the left hand side we see the island Sørøya and on the opposite side the island Seiland. Next to the island Seiland you will have a look at the island Stjernøya.

The passage is very nice because we have calm sea, a breeze of cold wind and the sun shines down from an almost blue sky.

Most of the passengers are outside on the sundeck to enjoy the weather in their cots or taking photos while enjoying the nature. The passage through the Sørøysund takes about 3 hours.



Øksfjord

At about 3.40 pm we arrive at the small town called Øksfjord. It has about 800 inhabitants and is situated in the area of Finnmark. The town has a beautiful location at the bottom of a high mountain and you are able to see the popular glacier Øksfjordjøkulen which is 43 km² big. The area around Øksfjord offers to visit an old street from 1910 with the name Øksfjordbotn, but also the highest mountain of the Finnmark. It is 1166 metres high and is named Svartfjelljøkulen.

The main industry is the fishing and the town is really cosy because of its location and the colourful houses. I only can recommend you to take pictures of this place, even when the ship leaves the town.

We stay at Øksfjord only for 10 minutes and leave it at 3.50 pm.

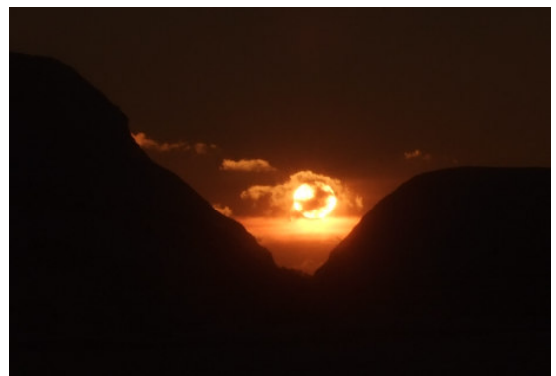


Stjernfjord and Lophavet

Only a few minutes later MS Trollfjord cruises out of the Stjernfjord and reaches the Lophavet.

The Lophavet is a open part of the high sea and so the sea sometimes gets rough. Today it is calm and at the left hand side we have a look at the mainland with some gorgeous mountain formations.

In fact that the weather is still sunny we decide to stay outside until the dinner. We take some pictures and appreciate the landscape with the light blowing wind. Before the dinner we are able to see a beautiful sunset. During the sunset the sun comes out from behind some separated islands and is partly covered by a few clouds which allows us to take wonderful pictures of the setting sun. Now it is time for having dinner.



Skjervøy

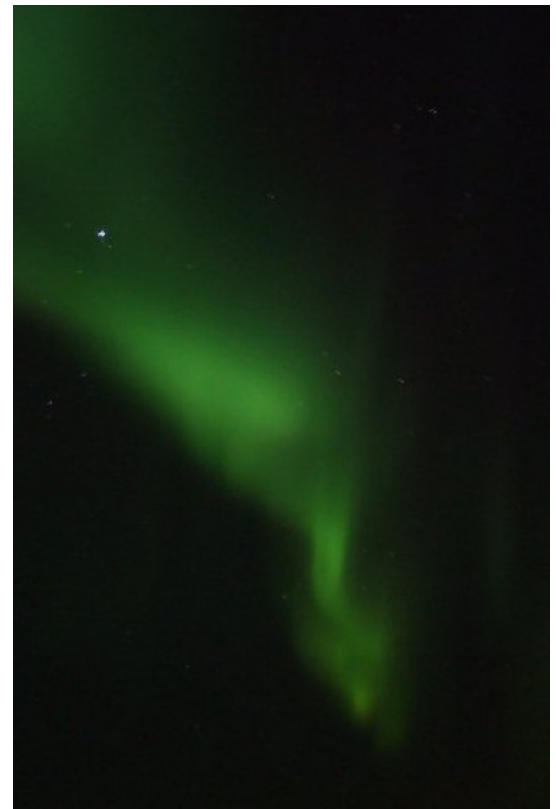
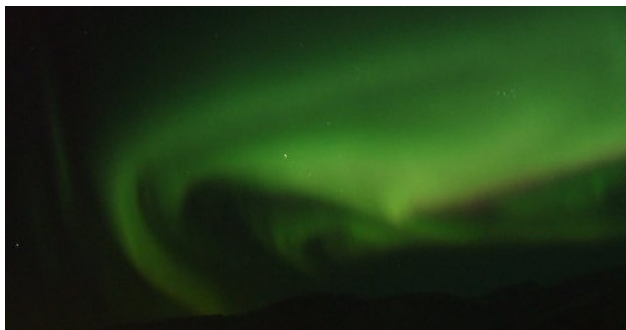
While we are having dinner the ship reaches the harbour of Skjervøy at 7.15 pm. About 3,100 inhabitants live here and the town is located in the area of Troms. The main industry is the fishing and you will find here the oldest wooden church of the region from 1721.

Due the fact that we didn't see Skjervøy on our journey in northern direction it will be the only town which we never see during the hole journey.

Northern lights

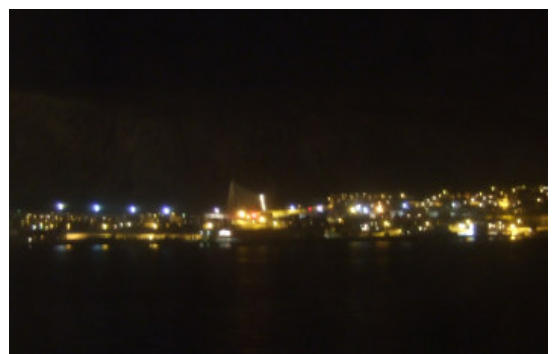
Directly after having dinner we decide to go outside for watching northern lights. At about 8.10 pm we see the first northern lights at the sky and the atmosphere is very nice. You are able to spot small towns at the coast and the snow-covered mountains.

Today we have some extraordinary northern lights because one light goes visually out of a cloud and then across the sky to the zenith. Some lights are very bright and others cross the whole sky by flaring sometimes. We are only four people who take pictures outside in the cold but because the lights today are so fascinating, we don't feel any cold at all. We even see northern lights coloured in red and yellow. Today we stay with the northern lights from 8.10 pm until 11.15 pm.



Tromsø

We arrive at the harbour of Tromsø punctually at 11.50 pm. I want to recommend to you to go outside a few minutes before arriving there because you will be able to pass the famous bridge of Tromsø, the Tromsøbrua. In fact that we stayed outside for hours we go inside for having some tea in our cabin and I take some pictures of the city through the window. It is impossible to overlook the well illuminated cathedral with its unique construction. During the stop at Tromsø I think most of the time back to the adventure with the huskies but because of the time in the cold air outside I am very tired and go to bed, even before we leave Tromsø at about 1.30 am.



**24th March 2008 Finnsnes – Harstad – Risøyhamn – Sortland – Stokmarknes
– Raftsund – Svolvær – Stamsund**

Unfortunately we miss the wonderful passage during the night, where I stayed outside last summer all the night on my cruise to Northern Europe by MS Albatros. The Rysstraumen / Straumfjord and the Gisund, which we passed by having wonderful weather conditions on our northern route is passing the ship during the night.

In the early morning (4.15 am) we arrive at Finnsnes and still most of the people are sleeping of course. We stop here for 15 minutes and because it is dark and we had a look at the city during our northern route we go on sleeping, too.



**Harstad (excursion “island world of Vesterålen),
MS Vesterålen in Harstad**

Today we will have our last excursion of this journey and it will start in Harstad. After having breakfast we arrive at Harstad at about 7.37 pm. In the harbour we meet the coastal steamer MS Vesterålen and take some pictures of the ship. The weather looks quiet good because we have a blue sky and the sun shines really powerful.

We have to wait a few minutes and then we go to our coach. The excursion starts at 8.10 am.

First of all the coach takes us through the small but cosy centre of Harstad not far away from the harbour. We are a little bit confused because the city looks a little bit like a ghost town. Our guide tells to us that the people have their Easter holidays and that most of them go away during that time.

Our first stop is the Trondenenes church where we arrive after a short time of driving through the landscape. We go out of the coach and have a look at the Vågsfjord because MS Trollfjord left Harstad a few minutes ago and passes by a few kilometres away. It is a strange feeling while look at our ship which goes away but I



don't feel any fear that it leaves us alone here, because I would love to stay at Norway now ☺.

We visit the Trondenenes church, the northernmost stone church which was built in 1250. The construction of the church isn't special but the history and the age make it a very interesting place.

Inside of the church the furniture is very simple but there is some gold at the altar and we see a few colourful paintings. The visitors participate at a small mass where the priest speaks in Norwegian, English and German.

We go on and visit the “Trondenenes Historiske Senter” which is only 10 minutes away from Trondenenes church by feet. It is a very nice museum about the time of the Vikings to the present. The museum is well structured with a lot of interesting things to discover.



The entrance fee is included in the price of the excursion.

The coach drives along the Street 83 and passes the last houses of Harstad for reaching the nice landscape around the city with its lakes and some high mountains. In contrast to the region more north we see the first trees which have the altitude like the trees in Central Europe. Out of the window we spot some footprints of animals and even of elks. We drive long the Kvæfjord which fits beautifully into that mountainous landscape. We have a nice view of green fir forests which make a very nice contrast to the blue water and the snow.

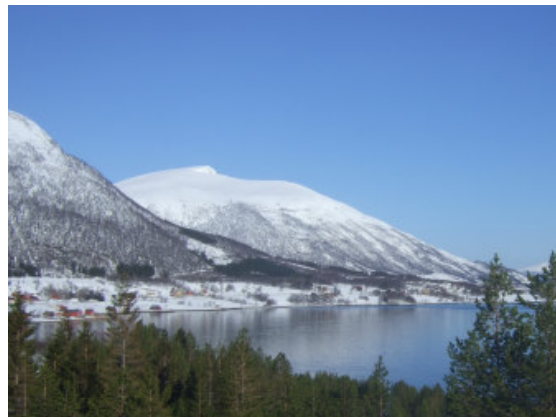
In fact that we drive already two hours the coach stops in front of a bridge which crosses the Kvæfjord and we get the possibility to walk some minutes over the bridge. Exactly everyone leave the coach and decide to walk, of course. We have a nice view of the Kvæfjord which is mainly frozen. The colour of the fjord is a deep blue which allows us to take some pictures together with the snow-covered mountains around it. Our guide shows the oysters to us, which we see at the coasts of the Kvæfjord and under the bridge. We go on by bus along the fjord.

On our way to Kjengsnes we often find small coloured houses between the fir and broadleaf forests.

At Kjengsnes we get the ferry to Flesnes.

The crossing takes about 30 minutes and we get some tea / coffee and typical Norwegian cakes. The cakes are very, very sweet but delicious. At 11.25 am we arrive at Flesnes.

After arriving at Flesnes the coach drives again along the Kvæfjord which is still surrounded by high mountains. We are still able to see some houses and forests while looking at the huge fjord to our left hand side. Our guide shows the most popular lying troll to us which is very easy to spot if you find him once. The rock formation looks really like a face with eyes and a special hairstyle, too. This is very entertaining. The landscape at all is so beautiful and reminds me a little bit at the pictures of Canada which watched in TV. We leave the street 83 now and change to street 82. On our left hand side we see a frozen lake which is completely covered by snow. On our way to Sortland where the excursion will end we pass the small towns Auspollen and Sigerfjord. From here you have a nice look to the Sortlandsund and the Hadsselfjord. We even spot some small coasts with sandy beaches.



In front of us now the city Sortland which will be the end of the excursion but before arriving there our bus parks at the roadside and waits. Only a few metres away we see the famous bridge of Sortland which is 991 metres long. After a few seconds of wondering what we are waiting for, we get the idea of our guide who waits for our ship MS Trollfjord, coming from Risøyhamn to stop at Sortland. Suddenly there it is! We spot our ship cruising through the Sortlandsund and it comes nearer and nearer to the bridge. The coaches slowly start driving to the bridge and the drives in their cars behind the coaches get crazy and start overtaking and honking. I have to say that we drive really, really slowly ☺.

MS Trollfjord passes under the bridge exactly while we use the bridge for crossing the Sortlandsund and so we start to wave to the passengers who stayed at MS Trollfjord. It is a nice atmosphere and they even wave back from the Panoramalounge and the sundeck. Of course we take some pictures of MS Trollfjord from this position. A few minutes later our excursion ends by arriving at the ship after four hours of wonderful landscape.

I definitely have to recommend this excursion because you will be able to see a lot of the landscape that you can not see from the ship. The nature is beautiful and you will have several views to the Kvæfjord. You even have a small “Canada adventure” with a wild mountainous landscape, green forests and the fjord.



Sortland

After arriving at MS Trollfjord we go onboard and take some pictures from the sundeck.

I want to give you some information about the city Sortland. The city has about 4,000 inhabitants and it is located at the region of the Vesterålen. The Norwegian coastguard has one of its base in Sortland and we are able to see two ships of them in the harbour, not far away from our ship.

Sortland has a church from 1901 and an old church tower from 1401 which you can spot from the sundeck of your ship. You will see some houses painted in blue because of the anniversary event “Vesterålen 2000 thanks the Gulf Stream”. The whole city centre will be painted in blue during the economic development and the state promotes this campaign.

The surrounded landscape is really nice, too. From sundeck you will be able to see the deep blue fjord and the mountains with the famous wall of the Lofoten. We even have a got view of the bridge of Sortland from the upper deck. We leave the harbour of Sortland at 1.00 pm.



Hadselfjord and Stokmarknes

MS Trollfjord cruises through the Hadselfjord circa one hour and 15 minutes and arrives at Stokmarknes at 2.15 pm. We have a stop of one hour here and many passengers use the time to explore the town. I am a little bit tired of the last excursion and go on the sundeck to have a view of the town and surrounded area. Stokmarknes has about 3,000 inhabitants and is located at the region of Vesterålen, too. The town

is the place of birth for the company Hurtigruten and in fact of that you are able to visit the museum of Hurtigruten where you can visit the old ship MS Finnmarken. The landmark of the town is the bridge (not far away from centre) which we even see from the sundeck.

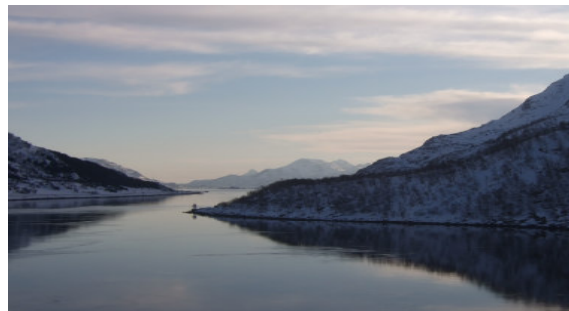
The town is characterized by red fish huts in opposite direction to the centre, coloured houses and mountains behind the town.

Our departure from Stokmarknes is at 3.15 pm and on our way to the Raftsund we pass a very long bridge. Unfortunately I am not at the upper deck but in my cabin. I take some pictures through the window of the cabin.



Raftsund and Trollfjord

This subsection of the cruise is one of the most famous ones because we will arrive at the Raftsund and perhaps have a look into the Trollfjord. This area belongs to the Lofoten and we reach the first small island of this region at about 3.15 pm. The weather is really nice and a lot of people meet at the sundeck. The temperature is comfortable in fact that the wind is blowing and the sun warms in the same moment.



At the level of the first higher mountains we see at our right hand site the bridge of Raftsund, which connects the Lofoten with the mainland. The bridge has a long arch-construction and we pass the bridge to enter the Raftsund. Now we are surrounded by high mountains, some old commercial centres and some fishing huts. It is a really nice atmosphere and we enjoy this by watching at the mountainous landscape which is still snow-covered. Even the planted fir forests make a nice picture.

At about 45 minutes after entering the Raftsund our ship reaches the highlight of this passage, the famous Trollfjord. Our ship MS Trollfjord is named after this small fjord. A lot of people are outside for looking at this passage of the two kilometres long fjord. The mountains tower here and get very steeply. Unfortunately we are not allowed to drive through the Trollfjord because of the risk of



avalanches, but of course it has to be "safety first!". To have a view of the fjord our ship stops in front of it and turns around completely, so that everyone can have a look at this tight fjord. I have to say that the Trollfjord looks much better in the summer season when the water is deep blue and the mountains are green because today there are only dark colours. The only thing that looks really nice is the sun on the top of one mountain because we are able to see the sunbeams which shine into the fjord. We take some pictures of this and then go on cruising in southern direction to Svolvær.

Searching some trolls

After leaving the Trollfjord and Raftsund we just pass time in our cabin for relaxing with a cup of tea. At about 5.30 pm we start a very funny activity which I have to recommend to everyone because it makes so much fun. Especially the mountains between the Raftsund and Svolvær are well suited for the search of trolls. To find them, you have to look at the mountaintops and if you have some fantasy you will find several faces. These faces show sometimes different feelings and perhaps they are of trolls that were surprised by the sun. I take some pictures of faces for you and in this way you can imagine what I mean. The only thing you need for this activity is your own fantasy! The troll-searching is also possible in other regions of Norway except the north, because the mountains are too blunt there.

Svolvær

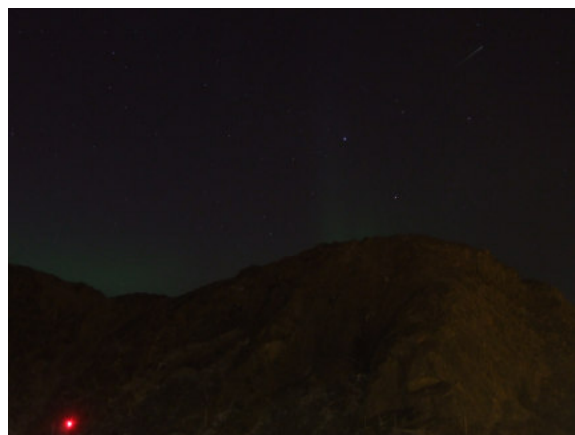
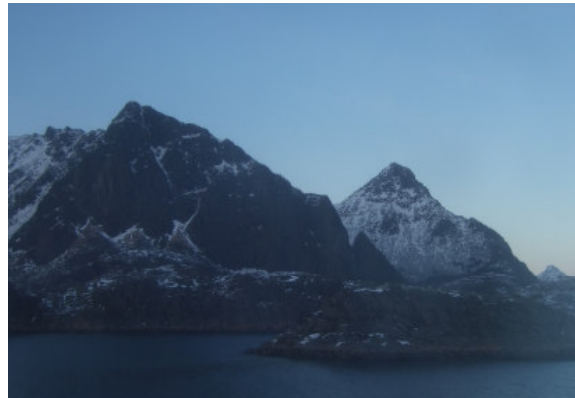
We arrive at Svolvær at about 6.30 pm. As against the northbound journey now we have the last moments of daylight and are able to have a look at the nice structure of the city. Several houses are built on planks over or next to the water which shows the obligation to the fishing industry. In the twilight we also see the landmark of the city, the Svolværgita which you will find in the mountain next to the city. After a stop of one hour we leave Svolvær.

Stamsund and Northern Lights

MS Trollfjord cruises through the darkness to our last harbour for today and we land at Stamsund at about 9.00 pm. In fact that we had a closer look at the city on the northbound journey we decide to observe the nearly clear sky for finding Northern Lights today, maybe the last of our journey.

At circa 9.10 pm we see the first lights above the mountain at the right of Stamsund. Unfortunately the show of the light is behind the mountain but we still watch the barely visible Northern Light above the mountain. We leave the harbour at 9.30 pm but at this time no Northern Lights are visible.

We go out for searching the lights again at 10.35 pm and observe a long green curve of barely visible green light at the horizon. That are the last Northern Lights of our journey and we really enjoy this natural spectacle. At 11.40 pm we decide to go into our cabin.



25th March 2008 Bodø – Ørnes – Polarkreis – Nesna – Sadnessjøen – Brønnøysund – Rørvik

During the night we pass Bodø at 1.30 am and stay there for two and a half hours. I think that no one decided to look at the city at this time and they all were sleeping like me.

MS Trollfjord went on during the night southbound and arrived at about 7.10 am at Ørnes. Even at that time I was sleeping because we saw the city during our northbound journey. After five to ten minutes MS Trollfjord went on to the south.

Meeting with coastal steamer MS Finnmarken

But now it is time to go outside for looking at the coastal steamer MS Finnmarken because we get the announcement at about 8.00 am that we will meet MS Finnmarken in a few minutes. I just arrive at the sundeck and immediately see MS Finnmarken to our left. The ships welcome each other and I use the time to take some pictures of the ship with a fantastic mountainous background. The sky is blue, the sun is already shining and this allows beautiful pictures.



Crossing the Arctic Circle

Everyone from Germany who crosses the Arctic Circle one time has to cross it again another time to come back to Germany. Unfortunately we cross the Arctic Circle at about 9.30 am in southern direction. I have to say that I would prefer to change the ship and go back to North Norway again but I am sure that is not only my idea.

By passing the Arctic Circle southbound the globe is further away from the ship than on the northbound journey but you are able to have a better look at the island Hestmannøy. The sundeck is well-filled because of this passage and the wonderful weather. In fact that we cross the Arctic Circle there are some people who feel much warmer than a few minutes before ☺.



Stigfjord and Tomfjord, Nesna

On our way to the south we cruise through the Stigfjord and Tomfjord before we arrive at Nesna at circa 11.10 am. We saw the small town at dawn during the northbound journey and we enjoy the view of the cosy harbour with some houses in the city-centre and the mountains in this region.

MS Trollfjord departs from Nesna at 11.30 am.



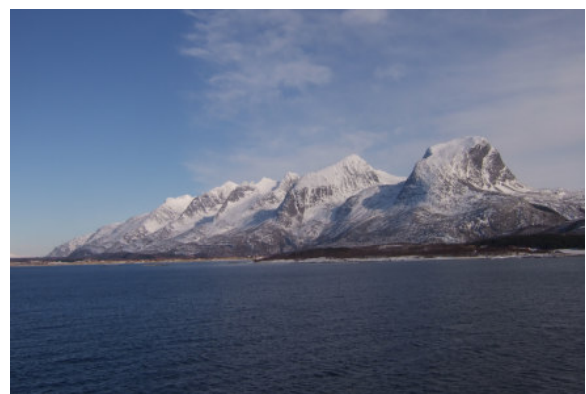
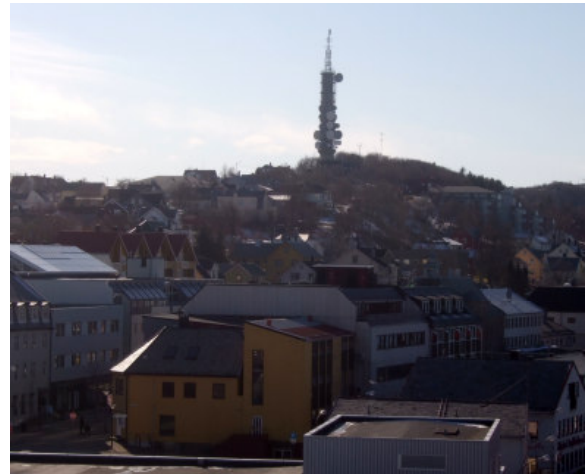
Ulvangen and Sandnessjøen (with city walk)

We pass the Ulvangen before we reach the harbour of Sandnessjøen at about 12.30 am.

In fact that we stop one hour here we decide to have a closer look at the city and make a walk through the city and buy some foods.

Sandnessjøen has about 6,000 inhabitants and is situated 50 kilometres south of the Arctic Circle in the region of Nordland. Not far away from the city you will see the Helgelandsbrücke which is 1,073 metres long and 45 metres high. Sandnessjøen is also known for the mountain range “the Seven Sisters” only a few kilometres in the south. The legend says that the seven mountains were virgins who were hunted by King Hestmannen and fell to the ground because of exhaustion. Then the sun rose and they became to stone. Today the mountain range is a famous motive of photographers.

At Sandnessjøen we go along the main street (Torolv Kveldulvs gate) where we find some shops. In addition to that the city centre has some old houses which are partly painted in a nice way and so we have a nice walk through the city. Only a few areas are snow-covered because the sun shines without any cloud again. We follow the streets Prestmarkveien and Hereks gate back to the ship. Before we arrive at the ship we decide to buy some foods at the supermarket Remo 1000, which is only a few minutes away from the harbour. Back at MS Trollfjord we go on the upper deck for taking some pictures of the city. We have a nice view of the city, the surrounded mountains and the blue water around us. At about 1.40 pm all passengers are back and MS Trollfjord leaves Sandnessjøen.



The Seven Sisters

Only a few minutes after leaving Sandnessjøen you are able to see the first mountains of the Seven Sisters. Please don't be confused about the name because you will find the famous waterfall “The Seven Sisters” in the Geirangerfjord, too.

We have the very famous view of the mountains at 2.30 pm, the time when we look at the mountains from south to north. The similarity of them is impressive and you really can suppose that they are related to each other – maybe they are sisters.

Vega Islands

On the southbound way we pass the Vega Islands. The Vega Islands are circa 6,000 islands and they are protected by the UNESCO. They host a botanical and zoological variety and a history that goes 10,000 years back to bygone times.

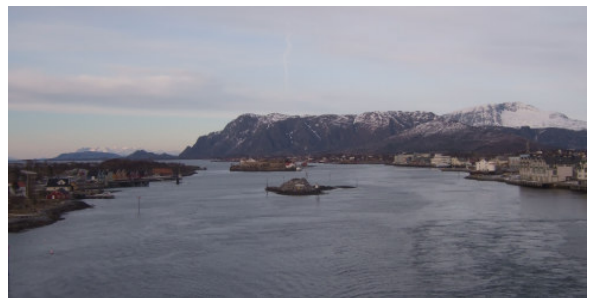
Brønnøysund

We reach the next harbour at Brønnøysund at about 4.15 pm. Brønnøysund has about 7,500 inhabitants and is located at the popular "Golden Route" of Norway. The city centre has some old houses and a conspicuous television pylon. Some passengers use the 45 minutes of time to walk through the city but there are also a lot who stay onboard and look at the city from the sundeck. If you look from the harbour to the south you can see the island Torget with the famous Torghatten on it. If you stay at Brønnøysund you are able to go to the island by using a footpath which takes about 30 minutes from the city centre. MS Trollfjord goes on to south at 5.00 pm.



Tagsfjord – Bridge

Only a few minutes after leaving Brønnøysund (circa 5.10 pm) the ship cruises through the Tagsfjord and will pass the Tagsfjord-Bridge. The bridge is 550 metres long and there are often people on the bridge to welcome the coastal steamers. The bridge is constructed in a very nice way and you have to take pictures of it because of the construction and the background.



Torghatten

At about 5.25 pm we see the famous Torghatten. The Torghatten is a mountain which is 258 metres high and there is a hole in the middle of it. The hole is made by the past glacial period by the surf of the ocean when the ice melted away. It is 35 metres high and 160 metres wide and you can walk through it by the footpath from Brønnøysund. Of course there is also a myth of the Torghatten:

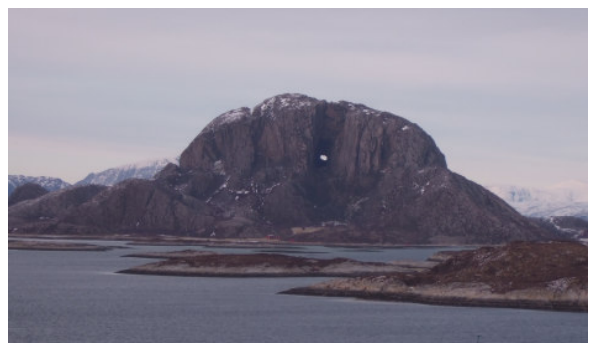
The king Hestmannen hunted the son of the Vagakallen, the Seven Sisters and the virgin Lekamøya.

The king realized that he won't get Lekamøya and shut an arrow towards her. The king of the Sømnamountains saw that and threw his hat at the arrow to protect the virgin. The arrow hit the hat and the hat fell down to the island of Torget. In fact that the summer nights are really short they were to stone.

From the ship you will not see the hole immediately because it has to make a bend. Many passengers come outside to see the hole but there are some people who are impatient and think the hole is not there anymore. All start to laugh and finally MS Trollfjord makes a bend and we see the hole in the mountain. The upper deck is full of people and all are taking pictures without pause because they do not want to miss the best position to take the picture.

After that event the ship goes its natural route and most of the passengers go inside.

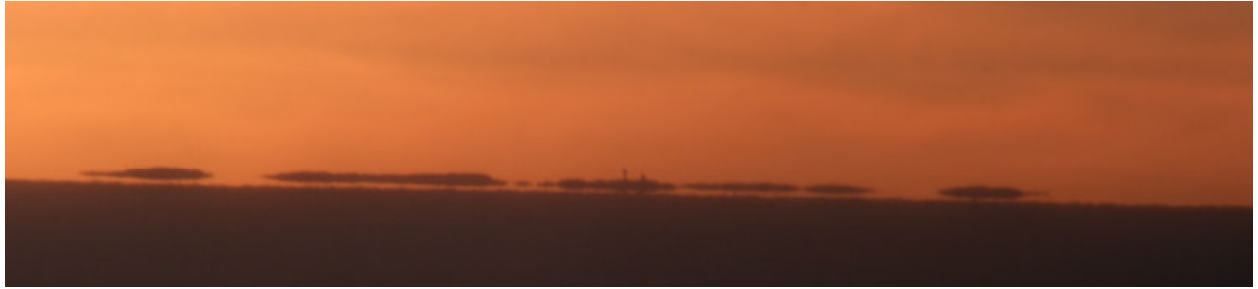
I stay outside for looking back to the Torghatten and have some conversations with other passengers.



Sunset

We enjoy our last evening onboard of MS Trollfjord with today's sunset. There are a lot of people who want to enjoy their last special moments of the journey and together we see the sun moving slowly towards the horizon. Also the blowing wind takes his part in that special moment.

At the horizon we spot some islands which look like they hover above the water because of reflections of upcoming sunset. It looks really strange at the beginning, but we take some nice pictures of it.

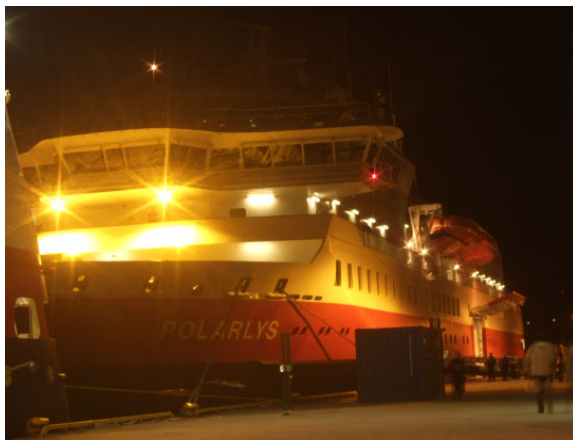


Rørvik

This evening we reach our last harbour for today at Rørvik. At about 8.30 pm we stop there and I take some pictures of the well-lighted city from the upper deck.

MS Trollfjord is not alone at Rørvik because the coastal steamer MS Polarlys stops at Rørvik, too. We decide to use the time for taking pictures of MS Polarlys together with MS Trollfjord. We enjoy stepping through the snow even if it is not as much as we know from North Norway.

At 9.45 pm we leave our last harbour for today and go on direction to the last harbour of our journey where we will arrive tomorrow in the morning.



26th March 2008 Trondheim – Oslo (Dovrebahn)

Actually we want to see the arrival at the harbour of Trondheim because of the nice passage through the Trondheimfjord, but MS Trollfjord arrives already at Trondheim before 5.30 am.

Transfer to the train station of Trondheim

Then unfortunately the time arrives where we have to leave MS Trollfjord. We check out of our ship at about 7.45 am and a few people of the crew say good bye to us in a very friendly way.

Train station of Trondheim and description of the train

Only a few minutes later we arrive at the train station. There we looked at the table where we have to go to reach the train to Oslo. Soon we arrive at the platform and get in the train immediately because the train waits already next to the platform.

If you compare the German regional trains to the Norwegian train, the Norwegian train is very comfortable. You have so much legroom, the seat cushion is very pleasant and the windows are huge and clean. Furthermore the trains are not greasy from the outside and very tidy even inside.

The local train on this track even has got a railway carriage for families with facilities for children to play during the journey and the train has got an on-board restaurant where you can buy something to eat or to drink.



By Dovre Railway to Oslo train station

Punctually at 8.25 am the journey from Trondheim to Oslo starts and we will see the original railway of the Dovre Railway.

First we pass the station of Heimdal at about 8.37 am. After a stopping time of a few minutes our train goes on by driving through the snow-covered landscape and we have wonderful weather. We pass some fir forests and bald deciduous trees. Our train crosses a small river from right to left and ride at the left of the river. There are some small towns with coloured houses which create a rural atmosphere. We arrive at Støren (on 66 metres) and spot the old station building from 1864 but it was refurbished and because of that it looks recent today. Støren is the transportation hub of the region Gaudal.

The continuation of the journey guides us through some populous region and afterwards through deep green forests on an altitude of 445 metres where we arrive at the town Berkåk. The train station was built in 1921 and you have a wonderful view of the mountains and tales to the right hand side.

The track afterwards goes uphill and we have still a very nice view of the region. We spot some animal



tracks in the snow next to the rail track and pass again some forests. At about 9.58 am we see to our right the first higher mountains, including the mountain Snøfjellkollan with an altitude of 1,790 metres.

The mountain is completely snow-covered and creates a wonderful panorama.

We reach the next station at Oppdal at about 10.03 am with its painted station from 1921. Oppdal is a popular skiing centre of the region and is an

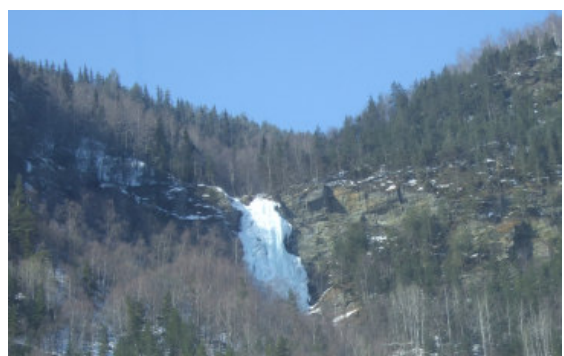
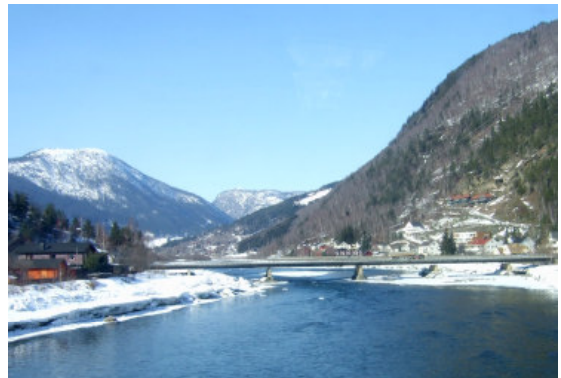
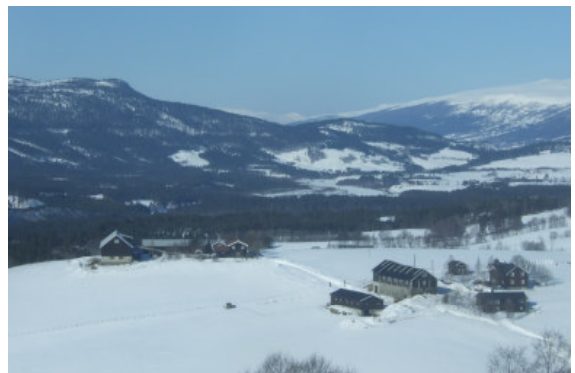
important traffic hub for the area with connections to Kristiansund. The river Driva crosses the city. The track goes steadily uphill and after some minutes we have the Dovrefjell Sunndalsfjella National Park to our right hand side with the mountains Snøhetta (2,286 metres) and Skredahøin (2,004 metres). We have a nice view of the mountainous panorama and some small towns and green forests. The fascinating view to the tale and the huge mountains goes along with our railway track.

We arrive at Drivstua at 10.20 am and see the old station building and post building. Both buildings are protected by monument protection and the town Drivstua had some mining activities in the past.

The track goes steeply uphill and the snow blanket gets higher and higher. We only see some bushes at this altitude of nearly 1,000 metres and the snow blanket covers mostly half of the bushes. The broad snow covered landscape next to the track is very nice and at 10.31 am we look at the highlight of this track. On our right hand side at the end of the broad landscape the peak of the mountain Snøhetta appears. In the outside of the train there is a winter wonderland with a nice atmosphere and we enjoy this by sitting in the well-heated train. We reach the highest train station of our journey by the Dovre Railway at an altitude of 1,017 metres. The name of the station is Hjerkin and it has a very nice station building. Hjerkin is know as the driest place in Norway because there is only 222 millimetres of precipitation during the year. After leaving the highest point of the journey the track always goes downwards and soon we go through the next fir forests. We often pass places with spectacular views of the mountainous region and arrive at Dombås. Dombås is also a very important transportation hub of this region and the famous track of the Rauma Railway branches away to Åndalsnes from here. You have a spectacular view of the highlands from here.

The train goes on downhill and we pass the town Dovre while the mountains get higher and higher, of course because we are getting more and more downhill. Next to the track we see some original farms until we arrive at the train station of Otta at about 11.33 am at an altitude of only 288 metres. The station building was built in 1896 and the town is an important one for this region, too.

Only eight minutes after leaving Otta we have a rocky and steeply landscape to our right hand side and I spot a frozen waterfall. ^



We pass several farms and houses with the high mountains in the background. The track guides the train along the appearing river which is frozen most of the time.

We stop at the train station of Vinstra at noon and this town is the mark that nearly the half of the train journey is over. After leaving the town we ride along the river again and then finally there is more water than ice visible. The next stop is at Ringebu at about fourteen minutes after noon. This region is known for its winter activities because of the guaranteed snow

conditions. If you visit the town you should not miss to visit the stave church from 1221 which is not visible by looking out of the train.

The track goes on in southern direction through a hilly landscape and a lot of forests. We reach the next train station of Hunderfossen at 12.45 am. The station is located right in the known family and adventure park of Hunderfossen. The train goes along the river Losna again and we pass several fir forests until we arrive after 369 kilometres the train station of the famous city Lillehammer at about 12.55 am. Lillehammer was the scene of the Winter Olympics in 1994 and you are able to see the jumping hill on the left hand side. The city is the biggest city of the region Oppland.

We leave Lillehammer after a few minutes and spot at our right hand side the lake Mjøsa, which is mostly frozen. Only in the middle of the lake we detect some ice-free water. The lake is crossed by some bridges and you can see the bridges through the window of the train.

The next train station where we arrive at 1.50 pm is the station of Hamar. Before you arrive at Hamar you will see the popular "Viking ice hall" which was used during the Winter Olympics in 1994, too. The train station of Hamar was opened in 1862.

Only a few minutes after leaving Hamar the trains uses a bridge and a dam to cross a wetland and a small river. The landscape is only partly hilly and after ten minutes we see a white church at our right hand side which is very interesting constructed. A few minutes later at about 2.25 pm we are going to cross the lake Mjøsa by using one of three bridges. By crossing the lake you have a look at the other two bridges to your right which is really nice. The snow here gets fewer and fewer and our next stop is the Airport Oslo Gardermoen at 2.43 pm. The landscape at this area is not really interesting anymore and I look at the planes that start at the Airport.

Before we arrive at the final train station we pass the train station of Lillestrøm which is not interesting, too. Punctually at 3.10 pm we reach the train Station of Oslo and are happy that we are able to walk around and enjoy the fresh air now.

The lesson is clear: The Dovre Railway is not for nothing one of the best railway tracks in Norway because it has a wonderful and varied landscape all the time!



Hotel Royal Christiania / the hotel room

Immediately after arriving at Oslo train station we leave the station building in direction of our hotel. We booked the Hotel Royal Christiania for one night which is located only a few metres away from the train station. We cross the Biskup Gunnerus gate and reach our hotel. Surprisingly we have some snow here at Oslo.

We get the room 403 and it is pretty nice. It is roomy and we have all what we need for one night. Two beds, a water boiler, a mini-bar and a television. The bathroom is roomy and well-provided, too.



Sightseeing walk at Oslo

In fact of this nice weather and that we have a half day of time today we decide to make a sightseeing walk at Oslo. I think everyone who booked the transfer from Trondheim via Oslo to Germany use the half day for an excursion and don't stay in the hotel all the time.

First of all we take a look at the Cathedral after following the street Biskup Gunnerus gate.

Unfortunately the cathedral is being renovated and so we only see a blue blanket which covers it.



We follow now the Kirkegate in southern direction and pass old several old buildings until we arrive at the Akershus Fortress. The fortress was built in 1299 and enlarged during the 14th century. It was built on a spit and because of this the fortress had some strategic advantages.

The Akershus Fortress is well-preserved and even now there are two soldiers who guard the fortress, but of course they are friendly and not dangerous ☺. You can visit the fortress with its nice public park and see some canons, make a walk and should enjoy the impressive view of the harbour, the Oslofjord and the surrounded areas. By walking through the whole park you will be able to have a wonderful look at the town hall and the city centre. Everyone one who likes to get more information about the fortress should visit the information centre or the museum of resistance.



After we conquer the fortress we visit the Rådhusplassen, of course in front of the town hall. The Rådhusplassen is only a few minutes away by feet from the fortress and you will find the wharves of the adventure and round trip cruises here. The town hall is a special one because it has got two towers with bells, which sound regular all days. It is recommended to visit the inside of the town hall because of the decorated and colourfully painted walls. Normally it is opened from 9.00 am to 6.00 pm.



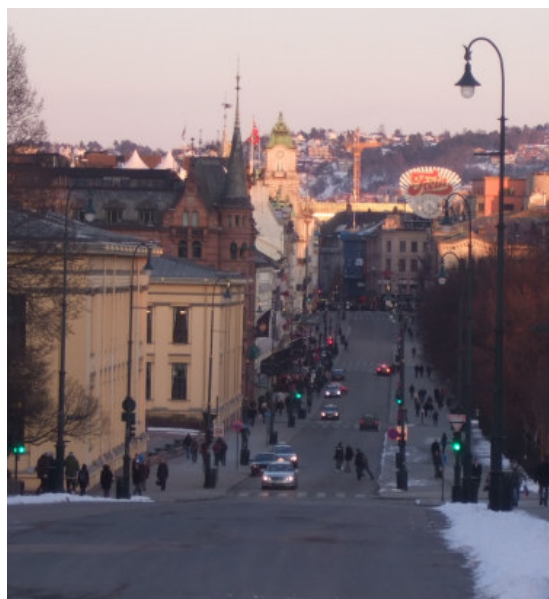
We pass the wharves and go to the district Aker Brygge. Once it was a district for shipyards but today it is one of the most popular elegant promenade for strolling. You will find a lot of cafes, restaurants, stores and a few big malls. Conspicuous is also the yacht harbour with its yachts and small boats. From Aker Brygge you have a wonderful view of the harbour and the Akershus Fortress at the opposite side of the harbour.



Next we follow the Olaf V's gate to the Stortingsata and go there to the left and have a look at the next sight of the city, the royal palace. The palace was built in 1849 and you are allowed to visit it only by guided tour which you have to book before. The royal palace is protected by some soldiers but you are free to visit the park behind the palace for a walk. It is a very nice place to relax a little bit.



If you turn around while standing in front of the palace you will immediately see the wide street which goes straight away from the palace to the train station. This is one of the most famous streets in Norway, the Karl Johans gate. By walking along this street you will pass first the national theatre which was opened in 1899. It is the biggest and most important straight theatre of Norway and is under monumental protection since 1983. The front of the theatre is really nice and you should have a look at the dome. At the other side of the street is the university of Oslo.



We follow the street in direction of the train station and the next remarkable building is the parliament. This building was built in 1866 and is the home of the Norwegian National Assembly. At Saturdays and in the summer season you are free to visit the inside of the building by booking a guided tour. The parliament is constructed in an impressive way and you should have a look at it during your stay at Oslo. Now the twilight begins and we walk for a few minutes along the streets in the near of our hotel. Then we are tired and go to our hotel for sleeping. The above described sightseeing walk takes about 3 hours and it is nice to get a first overview about the city during a short stay at Oslo.



27th March 2008 Ferry passage with MS Color Magic

Having breakfast and transfer to MS Color Magic

Today we have our breakfast at the Hotel Royal Christiania and it is a really good one. We have a wide choice for eating and drinking. We enjoy the breakfast at the hotel very much! Rested and sated we are ready for the transfer to the harbour where MS Color Magic is waiting for us. At noon we check out of the hotel and wait for the coach which will bring us to the harbour. The coach should arrive at 12.15 am but is not still there at 12.35 am. The first travel passengers are getting worried because the ferry will leave Oslo at 2.00 pm. Then something very funny happens. A city bus with the label "Color Line terminalen" stops a few metres away from the hotel and we all decide to go by this bus to the harbour. It is hard to get all of us into the bus but it works and the surprised bus driver brings us to the terminal of Color Line. There we check in and get our boarding cards. During the waiting time some passengers who know us from the MS Trollfjord visit us and tell us that the right coach for the passengers of Hurtigruten passes the hotel a few minutes after the city bus. The bus driver of the coach was worried and went into the hotel to ask where his passengers are. In fact that the comfortable coach arrived nearly empty at the terminal because we are already here. We all start to laugh and have some nice conversations until we are allowed to go onboard of Color Magic.

Short description of Color Magic

You can compare the Color Magic to Color Fantasy which I described at the beginning of the journey. When you go by Color Magic it is only a little bit more feeling of a cruise trip. Color Line abandoned at this ferry place for cars and instead of that they enlarge the areas for passengers, for example the Showlounge, the Observation Lounge and the Color Spa & Fitness Centre. The centre is very copious and has several sports and spa possibilities at about 1,000 m². This are 400 m² more than Color Fantasy has. The outside areas are modified, too. The railing is completely vitreous and nearly two metres high. So it is absolutely safe for families with their children. In addition to that it is most of the time windless at the upper deck. This construction is only bad for taking pictures. Very nice is the new panorama deck at the bow of the ferry because you have nice view in cruising direction.

Our cabin

Our cabin is located at the fifth deck and has the number 620A. To our surprise this cabin is an outside cabin even if we booked inside cabins for both ways.

The cabin has three beds and two beds of them can be used as sitting facilities and because of this the cabin looks really roomy. The window is not as big as at MS Trollfjord but in fact that we booked an inside cabin we enjoy that we have this window. The furnishings of the cabin is really nice. Nearly everything is made by wood and in bright colours which make a cozy atmosphere.

The cabin is also clean and looks as if it is a new one. Of course you have all what you need for the passage.



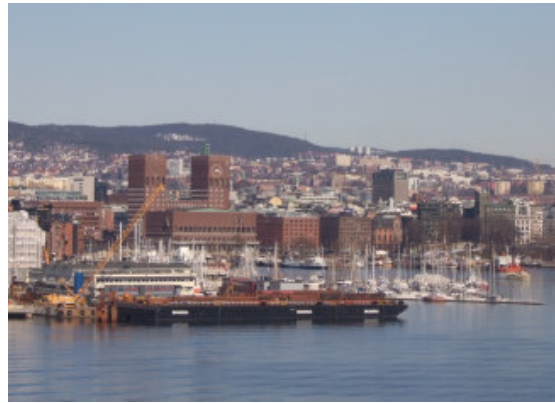
Departure of Color Magic, evening programme

Punctually (as we know it from Color Line) at 2.00 pm our ferry Color Magic leaves the harbour of Oslo. A lot of passengers meet at the upper deck and enjoy the view of the city while the sun is shining. During the departure you should have a look at Akerhus Fortress again because you can take some nice pictures from this position. At about 2.20 pm we pass a small white single building to the right side of the ferry. It is a small lighthouse or something like this and a very popular motive.

While we cruise through the Oslofjord in southern direction we have a look at the coasts and often see small houses and huts in different colours. Small towns with harbours are also visible.

We meet the ferry of Stena Lena and it passes at our left side with its direction to the harbour of Oslo.

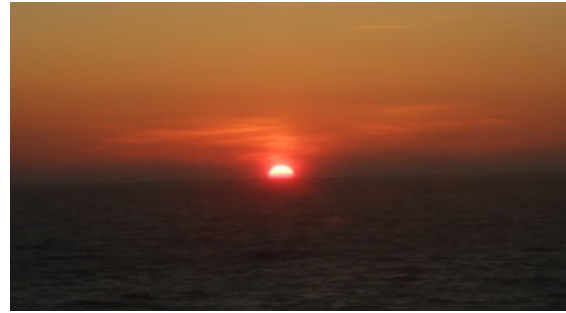
At about 5.00 pm we leave the Oslofjord in direction to Kiel and we use the evening hours to eat something. We eat at the Burger Bar because the other restaurants are too expensive and we have to become accustomed to the typical German meals. The meals at the Burger Bar are very good.



28th March 2008 Arrival at Kiel – way back to Cologne

Sunrise

Today morning I wake up at about 5.30 am. The first activity that I am going to do when I am on holiday in a ship is to open the curtain immediately after waking up. The day welcomes me with red-coloured horizon and only a few clouds are visible. At 5.45 am the sun is rising and shines in red through the window into my face and I enjoy one of the last moments of my journey.



Firth of Kiel and the arrival at Kiel

We reach the Firth of Kiel during our breakfast and see the first cargo vessels on their way to the North Sea. Now there are more clouds than during the sunrise this morning.

A few minutes later Color Magic make the typical turn around (180 degrees) to go to the Color Line terminal backwards. To our right we have a look at the city centre of Kiel and to our left there are some shipyards. We are able to see a submarine boat in a ship yard.

At the upper deck we meet a lot of passengers which we got to know at MS Trolljord and we enjoy the last minutes of our journey by having some conversations.

After arriving at Kiel the passengers leave the ferry in the usual small jam but it works great and there are no accidents ☺.



Way back to Cologne

First of all we go away from the harbour of Kiel and reach the train station of Kiel at about 20 minutes later. Here we eat something and wait for our ICE to Cologne in the warming sunshine. The ICE arrives at noon and we go in. We search our reserved seats but we can not find the wagon which is marked by our number. The friendly employee of the Deutsche Bahn tells us that there were problems with the wagon and that they transferred the reservations of the first class to another wagon. With this information we find our seats soon. In fact that we are in Germany, there are the first people who get angry because of this technical problems, even if the Deutsche Bahn reserved the same seats in another first class wagon for them. I just have to laugh and shake my head. Because the track from Kiel to Cologne is not very interesting I will not tell you something about it. We have no delays and an undisturbed journey to Cologne and arrive at the train station punctually at 5.46 pm. We go to the Lufthansa counter where one employee of the shuttle company (NRW Shuttle) is already waiting for us. He brings us home by passing the chaotic rush-hour traffic at Cologne and we arrive at home very regained but a little bit tired.



Important notice about the pictures I've used in that travelogue

*Please note that the pictures that I used in this travelogue **ALL pictures** have been taken by myself and it's not allowed to use this pictures without asking me before and after getting my permission to that use of the pictures!*

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frankrinas@outlook.de = *Feel free to contact me for suggestions and feedback to my website or the travelogues. I will reply as soon as possible.*

I hope you've enjoyed to read that travelogue !

Best wishes, yours Frank