

# magazine traveling

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A spring of light,  
colour and tradition



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The farms of Tyrol
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The Lofoten Islands  
Mountains and soul
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The day Vesuvius  
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# Lofoten island

Extreme landscapes, seafaring soul

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**O**n the map of Norway, Lofoten looks like a necklace of sharp islands stretching across the Norwegian Sea, above the Arctic Circle. It is not an abstract “north”, but a real territory that for centuries has lived from fishing, wind, wood and light. And that light —sometimes endless, sometimes scarce— is what ultimately gives meaning to everything: to the mountains rising almost vertically from the water, to

the narrow fjords like corridors, to the white sandy beaches one would never expect to find so far north. Lofoten captivates because it changes character with the seasons without losing its identity. In summer, the midnight sun lengthens the days until the clock almost disappears: walks become slow, almost ceremonial, and the body learns to live with a clarity that never truly fades, beneath skies that seem suspended outside ordinary time.





Roads and bridges connect the small islands

## Lofoten in 5 moments

### 1. The arrival

The first impression arrives from the road: dark mountains, cold water, bridges, tunnels and small villages that seem to cling to the edge of the sea.

### 2. The harbour

*In Lofoten, almost everything begins or ends beside the water. The boats, red cabins and drying racks remind us that these islands have lived for centuries looking towards the cod.*

### 3. The light

It is never entirely the same. It changes quickly, softens the mountains, lights the wooden façades and turns a severe landscape into something almost intimate.

### 4. The road

The E10 is not merely a road: it is the thread that stitches the archipelago together. It should be travelled slowly, allowing time to stop wherever the journey asks.

### 5. The silence

Beyond the photographs, Lofoten leaves behind a feeling of distance and calm. An ancient north, beautiful and austere,



Fishermen's cottages in Hamnøy



In winter, the polar night (or, more precisely, the low position of the sun) transforms the landscape into a restrained setting: deep blues, snow muting every sound, and the real possibility of seeing the northern lights when the sky opens. In between, spring and autumn offer what many travellers seek: fewer people, more silence, a feeling of Lofoten “for yourself”, with the sea always present and the weather reminding you that nature rules here.

To understand the archipelago properly, it helps to travel through it from east to west. Around Svolvær, on Austvågøya, Lofoten has the pulse of a discreet “capital”: harbour, services, local life that does not disguise itself for visitors. From there, scenic roads and small communities unfold where colour is not a whim, but a response to the darkness: red rorbuer (fishermen’s cabins) raised on stilts, wooden piers, boats still heading out because the sea does not understand seasons.

To plan activities (hiking, fishing, diving, rafting or even Arctic surfing) in Lofoten, the landscape allows outdoor life to be experienced in many different ways, at almost any time of year.

The great visual magnet lies further southwest, around Reine and the villages surrounding it: a landscape of bays and peaks that seems designed to force you to stop the car every ten minutes. Here, walkers find emblematic routes and viewpoints that have become symbols of the archipelago. One of the best known is Reinebringen, famous for its panoramic view earned through a steep climb: in Lofoten, beauty is gained through effort. But not

everything is about height. There are beaches such as Haukland or Uttakleiv —with pale sand, icy water and wind combing the coast— where the spectacle is horizontal: the sea opening in bands and, behind it, mountains closing the frame.

Local culture is best understood when the sea is seen as a larder. Lofoten has historically lived from cod, and that memory still survives in its cuisine. Stockfish (tørrfisk, air-dried cod) is more than a product: it is a preservation technique that shaped the trade and character of the place, and today returns as a source of gastronomic pride. And if you travel in winter or towards its end, another key name appears: skrei, the migratory cod arriving in these waters which, when in season, forms part of the finest culinary narrative of the north.

For lunch or dinner with a clear sense of territory, one reliable address is Børsen Spiseri, in Svolvær. It is not a “picture-postcard restaurant”: it is a respected table built around seafood and a local larder spoken of here with respect, without empty marketing. The restaurant itself presents it as one of the best-known dining rooms in Lofoten and highlights the use of fresh ingredients from the islands’ “larder”; it also opens every evening, making it easy to fit into a route. One piece of advice, if you travel with your palate: look for cod prepared in its different forms on the menu, and let the place tell its story without unnecessary embellishment, in a setting shaped by sea, weather and northern tradition. Here, cuisine still maintains a direct relationship with the landscape and the

View of the fishing village of Hamnøy





View of the village of Reine

fishing culture that has defined these islands for generations. If what you want is a more informal stop, but with the same guiding thread —Lofoten as a land of seafood and tradition— there are popular places linked to stockfish around Reine, where dried cod, old drying racks and local trade still form part of everyday life. Here, cod does not appear as a postcard made for visitors, but as a real presence: it is seen, smelled, bought and best understood when observing how it still shapes the rhythm of the villages.

And as a truly “spectacular” place to stay, one of the names that makes most sense is Nusfjord Village & Resort in the Flakstadøya area. Nusfjord has something many hotels try to manufacture and almost none truly achieve: atmosphere. It is an old fishing village setting, with cabins beside the harbour, sheltered from the northern wind and with a direct relationship between accommodation and landscape: you step outside and you are inside the place itself, not standing before scenery. The wood, salty smell, nearby mountains and still harbour waters create a scene difficult to imitate. In addition, its location works well for covering a large area, since it lies at a reasonable distance from Leknes airport —a practical point for entering and leaving Lofoten— and leaves you perfectly placed to explore both the heart of the archipelago and the southwestern stretch.

The best thing about Lofoten is that it does not demand a “correct” season: it demands adaptation. In summer, the region invites you to walk and enter fishing villages, link viewpoints together and descend to beaches where the water shows no mercy, though the landscape compensates for everything. In autumn, the colours become extraordinary, the days shorten and photography becomes easier because the light works in your favour. In winter, the journey turns intimate: more time indoors, more conversation, greater pleasure in a hot soup or a well-prepared cod dish; and, if the sky allows, the northern lights as a reward. In spring, when the ice loosens and the roads recover their pulse, Lofoten begins moving again with renewed energy, as if the land were breathing once more after months of withdrawal.

There are destinations sold for “what you see”. Lofoten, instead, stays with you because of what it makes you feel: that mixture of raw nature and persistent human life, of fishing tradition and cuisine with identity, of silence and horizon. The landscape is certainly impressive, but what remains is something else entirely: the feeling of being in a territory that still speaks with its past without renouncing the present. It is not merely a place to include on a wish list.



## Essential stops along the way

**A village:** Reine, for its almost perfect silhouette between mountains and sea.

**A road:** the E10, the backbone of any journey through the archipelago.

**A flavour:** stockfish, the dried cod that sums up centuries of fishing tradition.

**A moment:** sunset, when the light lowers and the mountains seem to move closer to the water.

**One piece of advice:** leave free time. In Lofoten, the best moments are rarely planned.



The old fishing village of Nusfjord with its cottages

