

# POLAR NIGHTS

## PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

EWEN BELL  
GUIDE GUNNAR

Dedicated aurora chases and a unique itinerary for photographers who want to capture some very special moments with the northern lights.

Arctic Norway at it's most rugged, coldest and darkest. And it's most stunning.

January 13 - 26, 2025  
14 days @ AU\$18,880





# AURORA WORKSHOP

## 2025 January 13-26

Day 1-5 | Tromsø

Day 6-9 | Lyngen

Day 10-13 | Senja

Day 14 | Depart

This photographic workshop is designed around capturing a handful of amazing aurora shots. We'll be sleeping in late most mornings, scouting locations during the "daytime" and then making the most of aurora activity at night. January is not only very cold in the Arctic, but very dark as well. That means we could find ourselves shooting auroras at either 4pm or 4am. And we intend to be ready for any potentiality.

To participate on this trip you'll need to be reasonably fit, as we may be trudging through heavy snow to access some locations. Ideally you will have had some experience with Arctic conditions before joining this workshop, and appreciate the value of good snow boots and warm gloves. We intend to be out in the cold for hours at a time, and will rely on quality clothing to keep warm.

There are three main locations we stay for this workshop, but we won't be limited to shooting from our accommodation. Most nights we'll make a plan for somewhere nearby to shoot from in the event of favourable conditions. For examples, on Senja we have some mountain plateaus that we can access by snow-show, plus some low-tide rock pools where reflections might be inspiring for composition. We also know of a great little jetty with views to some amazing peaks. In Tromsø we have many favourite locations, some with zero light pollution, some where charming cabins are a feature of the scene.

This is most likely a one-off itinerary. We're keen to see if there is demand for such a dedicated aurora trip. Not everyone will enjoy the lack of sunshine for two weeks, or the narrow focus on aurora compositions. For the right people, this trip will offer not only a chance to create exceptional photography but also plenty of time in the cabin to process images and discuss your techniques with RAW files and the camera.





# AURORA CHASE

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

This particular research trip takes the concept of “aurora chasing” to an entirely new level. Not only are we choosing great locations and an incredibly experienced team, but we’re heading to Norway in the middle of January when the conditions are very very dark for most of the day and night.

Every detail of the tour is designed to take full advantage of clear skies at night, with immediate transport available to head out to special locations if conditions look promising. Accommodation along this journey has been selected to give us the best chance to act quickly and go out shooting when the aurora is on.

There are no guarantees with Aurora activity however. You need high solar activity as well as clear skies to get a good show, although even a low grade intensity Aurora over the city of Tromsø is something spectacular to see and photograph. That’s why we stay close to this part of the coast, where the aurora circle meets beautiful scenery.



# AURORA GUIDE

Local outdoors guide and auroa  
chaser, Guide Gunnar.

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

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

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

[guidegunnar.no](http://guidegunnar.no)



# MOONLIT NIGHTS

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

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

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







# MEET EWEN BELL

Photography Guide

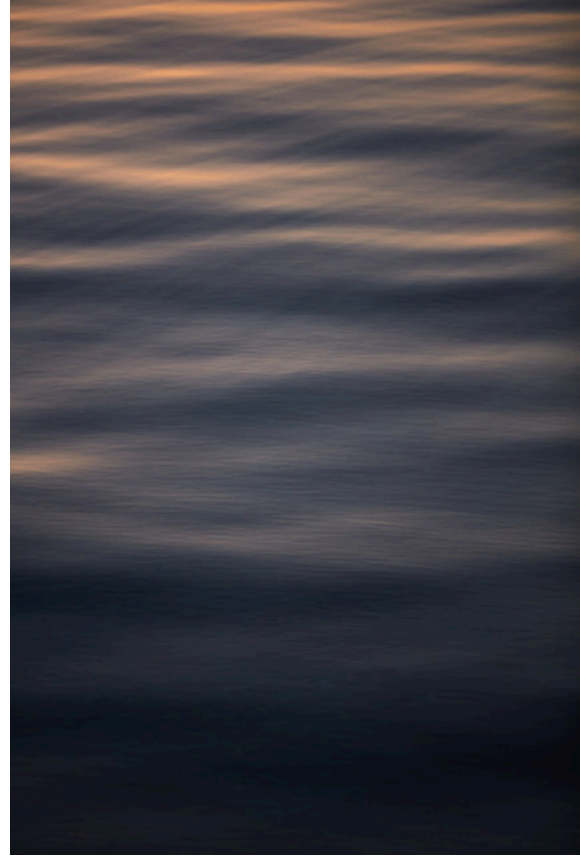
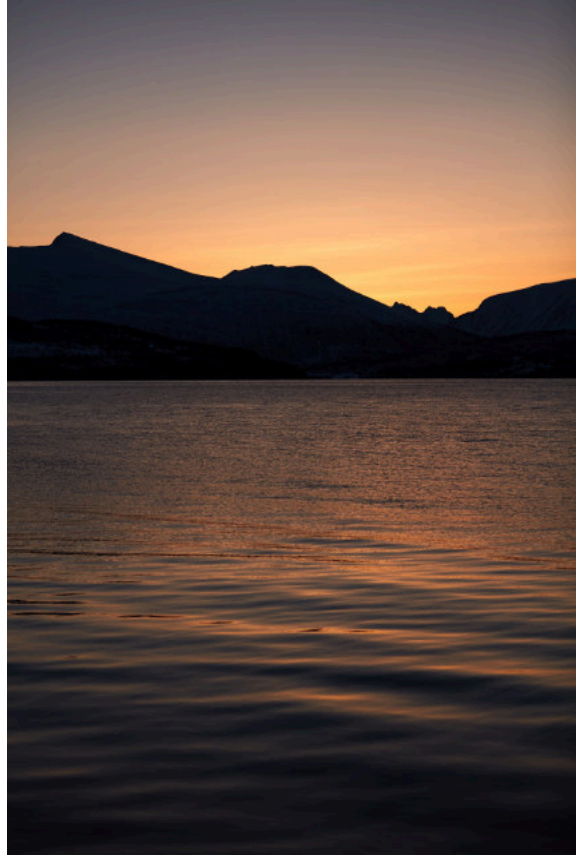
My name is Ewen Bell and I'm the guy who designs these tours so you can get great photos and experience a marvellous adventure.

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

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

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

[ewenbell.com](http://ewenbell.com)





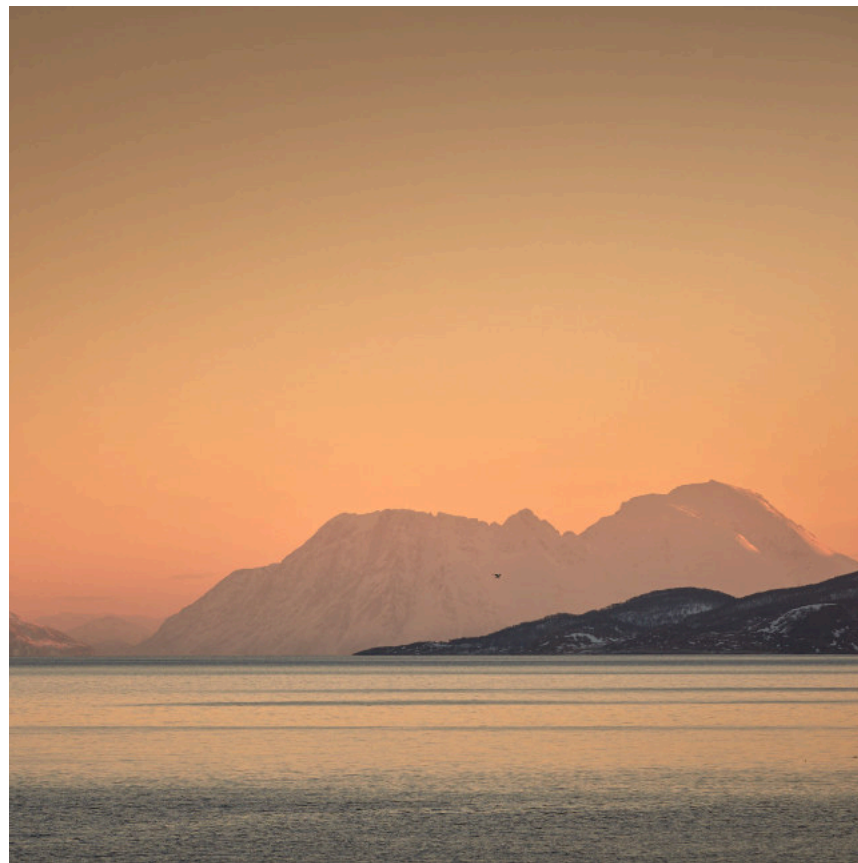
# LONG TWILIGHTS

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

There will be some daylight, but something more like "post sunset" mood. The sun officially returns to Tromsø on January 21, so it'll be just out of sight for much of this trip.

That means some lovely gentle light for slow shutter photography. We will definitely have a chance to explore our local areas during the daytime, plus time to process our photos and review images from previous nights.

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



## CABIN LIFE

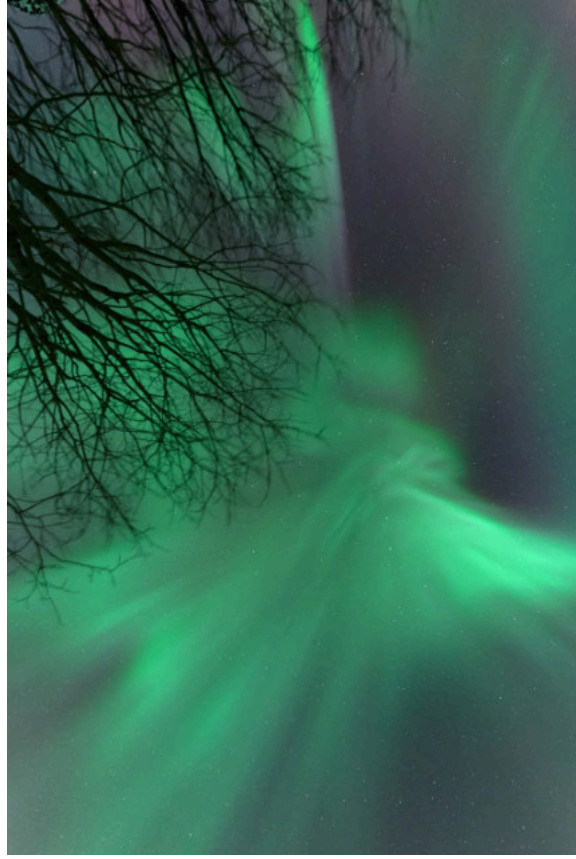
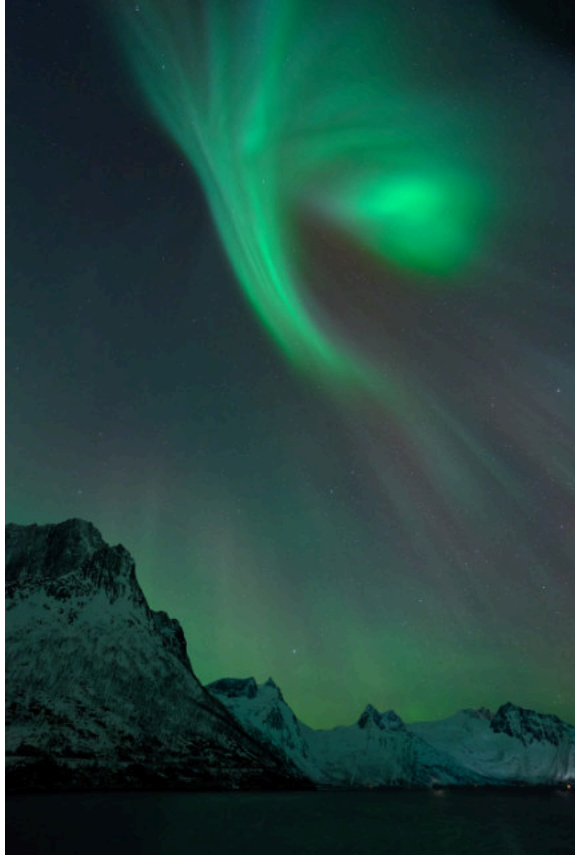
This tour is based on cabin accommodation. They tend to be very cosy, very warm and very practical for these journeys. Sometimes they are stand alone cabins stretching across a beach, sometimes they are the top floor of a Bryggen with stunning views across the harbour at night.

Always they are hand chosen by Ewen and Shellie as great places to step outside and photograph. We visit the Arctic every year and visit the latest places to stay, often with tips from our local friends. Cabins mean everyone is offered a single room for this trip, although please do not expect to have a private ensuite.

Sometimes our cabins are very very remote. That is why we have Shellie for the duration of the tour, to keep us well fed and run a flexible kitchen that allow us absolute freedom to chase the sunlight and the northern lights.







## DRESS FOR THE COLD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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











# WHAT LENS TO PACK

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

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

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



# POST CAPTURE

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

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

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



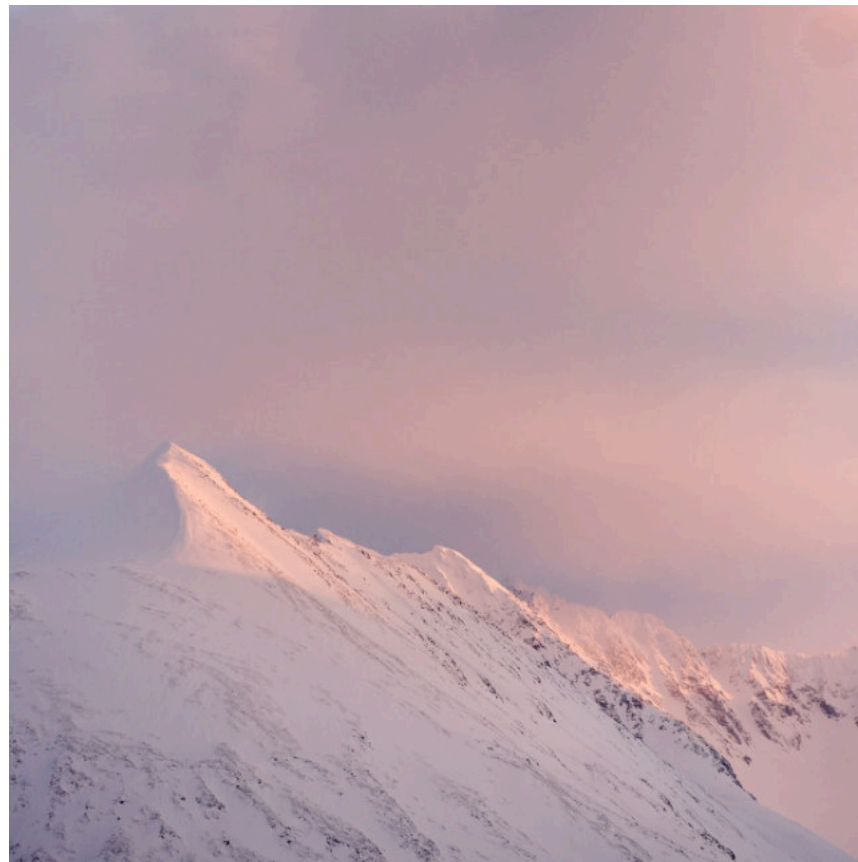




# MOODY WEATHER

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

When we get lots of snow however, that just makes for even prettier landscapes as a backdrop to our aurora photography. There will be patches of really bad weather during January, but also patches of perfection. We've scheduled lots of time at each of three major locations so we hope to get a result









# PRIVATE CHEF

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

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

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

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

[ironchefshellie.com](http://ironchefshellie.com)







# CAMERAS ARE COOL

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

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

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



# THE FINE PRINT

## Dates

January 13 - 26, 2025

## Price

AU\$18,880

## Group Size

Maximum of 8 people

## Accommodation

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

## Single Room Included

The default rooming for this tour will be single rooms instead of twin share. The nature of fisherman's cabins in Norway means that there is usually one bathroom per cabin. A discount is offered to couples sharing a room too.

## Inclusions

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

## Exclusions

- Your camera gear
- Flights into and out of Tromsø

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

# HOW TO BOOK

January 13 - 26, 2025

14 days

Max group of 8

Twin Share: AU\$18,880

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

[ewenbell.com/polar](https://ewenbell.com/polar)



Photography by Ewen Bell

