

AURORA NIGHTS

WEEKEND À LA CARTE



Destination Guide

A unique occasion deserves a unique experience



DEAR AURORA HUNTER,

Welcome to Weekend a la Carte's Aurora Nights website packed with some of the leading Northern Lights holidays to Scandinavia & Iceland.

As one of the leading companies specialising in trips to see the Northern Lights in the Arctic we are able to offer you once in a lifetime journeys to the following regions:

- The whole of Swedish Lapland
- Iceland - North and South
- Norwegian Lapland from Narvik to Tromsø and the majestic Lofoten Islands

Over 15 years of running northern lights holidays we have focused on what we believe are the best destinations, not only in terms of seeing the magical Aurora Borealis, but also in the experiences the destinations offer so we can provide you the most 'complete' holiday. We have worked with many of our partners since day one and are proud of the service they offer our clients.

We increasingly service an international clientele and enjoy creating lifelong memories for you in the region of the world we call our second home! We are experts in special occasion travel and have helped many people celebrate a big Birthday or Anniversary under the Aurora.

This guide is designed to give you some insight but is no replacement for speaking to an expert. Please email me directly at kevin.collins@weekendalacarte.co.uk or phone us on (0044) 1722 744695.

We look forward to creating a special Northern Lights holiday for you.

Warm Regards,

Kevin Collins
Managing Director



WHAT ARE THE NORTHERN LIGHTS?

The bright dancing lights of the aurora are actually collisions between electrically charged particles from the sun that enter the earth's atmosphere.

The lights are seen above the magnetic poles of the northern (Aurora Borealis) and southern hemispheres (Aurora Australis) and the main factor in determining the colours of any given display is the altitude at which the solar particles collide with our atmosphere.

We have a comprehensive online guide which helps you answer probably the 3 questions uppermost in your mind:

- 1. What are the Northern Lights?**
- 2. When can I see the Northern Lights?**
- 3. Where is the best place to see the Northern Lights?**



WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO SEE THE NORTHERN LIGHTS?

From September to early April when it is dark and as long as there is a clear sky.

Our breaks focus on getting you away from light pollution where possible which also helps if there is a low level aurora forecast. It also opens up the sky to the incredible amounts of stars that are visible on a clear night in the Arctic.

For more in depth insight into when is the best time to travel please refer to our Information hub on our web site:

[www.aurora-nights.co.uk /northern-lights-information/](http://www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-information/)



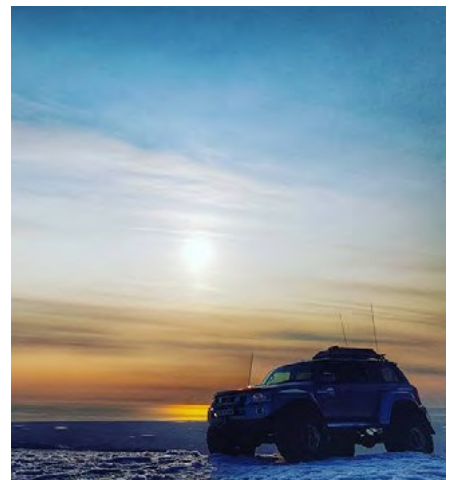
WHICH COUNTRY SHOULD YOU VISIT ON A NORTHERN LIGHTS TRIP?

It is hard to choose between the different destinations as Northern Lights trips are so much more than just about trying to see the Northern Lights at night.

The daytime is packed full of activities as well and of course different activities will appeal in different ways, with some destinations being more

physical than others. We have tried to summarise the highlights and key points of each destination – Sweden, Iceland and Norway.

Have a look at the table on the next page and decide what is important to you about your Northern Lights visit, then have a look at the more specific details on the following pages.



ACTIVITIES SUMMARY

Activities	Sweden	Iceland	Norway
Dog Sledding	Yes	North Iceland	Yes
Snowmobile Safari's	Yes	Yes	Yes
Visit to Narvik - Site of the 2nd World War Battle	Yes	No	Yes
Aurora Sky Station Visits	Yes	No	Yes
Visit/Stay at Original IceHotel	Yes	No	No
Snow-Shoe Walk	Yes	North Iceland	Yes
Cross Country Skiing	Yes	No	No
Northern Lights Photography Lessons	Yes	No	No
Hovercraft Trip	Yes	No	No
InnuIt Culture/Sami Culture and Reindeer	Yes	No	Yes
Super Jeep Adventure Tours	No	Yes	No
Blue Lagoon Visit/Stay	No	Yes	No
Ice Fishing	Yes	No	No
Ice Climbing	Yes	Yes	No
Whale Watching	No	Yes	No
Glacier hiking/Ice caves	No	Yes	Yes
Volcanoes/Geysers	No	Yes	No
Icebergs and Glaciers	No	Yes	Yes
Self-Drive Northern Lights Holidays	No	Yes	Yes
Autumn Northern Lights Holiday	Yes	Yes	Yes
City Break Extensions	Yes	Yes	Yes
Boat Adventures	Yes	Yes	Yes



MULTI-COUNTRY JOURNEYS

For those of you who want to experience it all, or at least more than just one country, we have some incredible multi-country breaks under the Epic Journeys banner.

Combine Iceland, Sweden and Norway to create a longer Northern Lights Adventure and don't forget that we can do city breaks at the beginning or end of your trip too. Stockholm, Scandinavia's capital city, Reykjavik and Tromso all compliment a Northern Lights adventure holiday in the Arctic.

It would be fair to say that putting together complex itineraries across different destinations, making the most of your time and offering the very best experiences available, is very much our specialty. With Icelandair offering a free 7 night stopover in Iceland on the way from America to Sweden on a Northern Lights trip this has become logistically much easier and better value and Norway can easily be combined with Sweden to extend even further.

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/multi-country-aurora-journeys/





SWEDEN

The Discerning Traveller's Arctic Destination

Sweden does everything small scale compared to its Scandinavia neighbours. Unique Hotels, small lodges and wilderness cabins are the typical accommodation choices whilst you have a myriad of the best arctic experiences to choose from.

From the more traditional winter break to some select autumn northern lights holidays the contrasting scenery from coastal to Forest from Fell to River Valleys provides much to explore.

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/sweden/

Swedish Lapland is fortunate enough to be home to one of the most famous places in the world for aurora watching. Abisko has a deserved reputation and with around 87% of our clients seeing the Northern Lights on a 4 night Northern Lights holiday here - we have yet to find somewhere better.

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/sweden/abisko-aurora/

We specialise in multi-destination northern lights holidays in Sweden and can combine some of the iconic locations like the amazing ICEHOTEL with the unique TREEHOTEL.

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/sweden/ice-hotel-tree-hotel-breaks/

Finally if getting off the beaten track is your mission then take a look at our range of classic breaks many of which have the option for private use of the accommodation.

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/sweden/short-breaks/

www.aurora-nights.co.uk





WHY IS THE ACCOMMODATION IN SWEDEN SPECIAL ?

Some really unusual hotels are found in Swedish Lapland.

The IceHotel and Tree Hotel really offer experiences of a lifetime whilst we offer a select choice of the best lodges and cabins.

The **Original ICEHOTEL** is built every year from ice harvested from the Torne River. A new addition is ICEHOTEL 365 which is open all year round.

Whether you visit or decide to stay and enjoy one of the individually designed art suites this is certainly one of the world's iconic hotels. There are amazing ice carvings in the art suites, an ice chapel and of course the famed Ice Bar where you can enjoy a cocktail served in an ice glass.

The **Tree Hotel** is one of the most innovative hotels in the world. Stay in a UFO, Mirror Cube, Birds nest or Dragon Fly nestled in pine trees in a Boreal Forest!

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/sweden/ice-hotel-tree-hotel-breaks/experience/

Abisko Mountain Lodge, run by our good friends Mina and Dick Johansson, is situated in the Northern Lights capital of Europe, Abisko. Mina will go out of her way to make you feel welcome, and you have an excellent chance of seeing the Aurora whilst staying here. On average 87% of our clients see the aurora on a 4 night stay in Abisko, and often the restaurant clears when the "Aurora" shout goes out!

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/sweden/abisko-aurora/

We offer the traditional **Máttaráhkká Northern Lights Lodge** for our guests visiting Kiruna. This comfortable "home from home" lodge has only 7 rooms, roof top hot tub and the best snowmobiling right from the front door! A perfect base or stop off point on an epic multi destination break.





For those looking for something a bit quirky then including the **Arctic Gourmet Cabins** in your itinerary are a must. Two cabins with a hot tub and sauna are sited next to Sweden's smallest restaurant (2 tables) where Johan the owner prepares gourmet meals.

On the Eastern Side of Swedish Lapland with its scenic archipelago and spectacular forests are 3 lodges we use to house our guests.

Pine Bay and Brandon Lodges. These two lodges, one with cabins and 1 set up as a small lodge are the perfect base to explore the Archipelago. Whether by boat in early autumn, or snowmobile and hovercraft in winter, a choice of wonderful exploration awaits.

Run by the consummate professional Goran Widen you can add in some incredible experiences including a wilderness dinner on Ice and a night in a luxurious Yurt set on the frozen seas with flat landscapes and uninterrupted views of any northern lights display.

Further inland is the very special **Arctic Retreat**. If you were to be asked what your immediate thought of a perfect arctic retreat would look like - this is it!

4 authentic log cabins set to an incredibly high standard are situated in a camp on a river bend surrounded by pristine pine tree forests.

Combine this with some terrific snowmobile, canoe or Husky experiences with some of Swedish Lapland's best guides.

Finally one must not forget that the Sami people are the indigenous people of the region and refer to their homeland as Sapmi. It is rare to come across an experience which offers traditional Sami Accommodation with a level of comfort and experience that leaves such a lasting impression.

Spending time with Lennart Pittja at his Sápmi Nature camp set on the borders of the spectacular Lapponia National Park is time well spent!

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/sweden/exclusive/



WEATHER AND WHAT WE PROVIDE TO WEAR

January to March are usually Northern Sweden's coldest months, with temperatures ranging from minus 10 to minus 30°C, sometimes even lower when you take the wind chill factor into consideration.

We provide all our clients with an outer layer comprising an all-in-one padded thermal suit with hood, hat, snow boots & thermal gloves.

In the Autumn you do not need to be issued with special gear but should still pack warm layers to cover seasonal cold spells.

For more information on what to wear on your break take a look at our Information Hub.

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-information/practicalities-aurora-trips/what-to-wear-northern-lights-trip/

DAYLIGHT HOURS

There are only 5 "daylight" hours during December and up to mid-January creating a "blue light" effect; the locals call this the Kaamos. Daylight hours steadily increase to 12 hours by the end of March.

The menu in Sweden is terrific. Local produce served with Scandinavian flair combines wholesome ingredients with style.

Arctic Char is a local specialty river fish. You will no doubt have the opportunity to try Reindeer and Moose, both of which are delicious!

Local berries, including Lingonberries and cloudberries are used extensively in desserts and match most meals especially the delicious ptarmigan.

Eating out locally you would find meatballs, crispbread and flatbreads, open sandwiches, smorgasbord which traditionally contain smoked herring and salmon, and very sweet almond or cinnamon cakes and biscuits. Swedish 'Fika' is taken regularly in hotels and out on activities and includes 'real' coffee and cinnamon buns or biscuits.

Vegetarian options are available if pre-advised.

FOOD YOU SHOULD EXPECT TO EAT





ICELAND

Superb “Soft Adventure” Aurora Trips

Iceland has a stunning volcanic landscape of glaciers, geysers, mini rift valleys, and volcanoes. The day time activities focus around exciting off roading SuperJeep tours, visiting ice caves and snowmobiling, and as they are undertaken on the Glaciers they can be enjoyed throughout the Northern Lights Season from mid Sept to early April.

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/iceland/

Our Iceland Classic range of breaks are tried and tested Northern Lights Trips that we have been offering for 15 years. Over the years we have tweaked and crafted these breaks and truly believe they offer the very best opportunity to see the Northern Lights and experience the very best of Iceland.

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/iceland/short-breaks/



These exclusive Iceland Northern Lights Holidays are for those who are looking to celebrate a special occasion and want something that little bit extra special with private accommodation, and also the option of private guiding and transfers throughout.

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/iceland/exclusive-collection/

We specialize in complex itineraries piecing together different destinations and as a result offer exceptional journeys combining North and South Iceland, and Sweden & Norway. As a result you will have the opportunity to experience the Northern Lights in Mountains, at Sea, in Forests and in amongst the Lava Fields. The day time activities range from SuperJeep tours to volcanoes to Husky Sledding and Glacial Hiking.

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/iceland/longer-aurora-trips/



WHY IS THE ACCOMMODATION IN ICELAND SPECIAL?

There are some special accommodation choices in Iceland.

You can book a boutique designer **Private Cabin** all to yourself in the wilderness, in an area that is renowned for the Northern Lights, and which has stunning views of Eyjafjallajökull Volcano. The first night the guide will cook for you and then you have a choice of eating out for dinner, or having all the ingredients pre-delivered to you so you don't waste time on your break shopping. This is perfect for family celebrations such as anniversaries and birthdays and it has seen many proposals and honeymooners since it was recently built. People love having their own space.

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/iceland/short-breaks/private-wilderness-cabin/

Hotel Rangá has the reputation of being THE best place to see Northern Lights in Iceland. The restaurant where you can enjoy gourmet meals is excellent, with a good sign being that Icelanders travel down from Reykjavik just for dinner. Who can resist a hot tub whilst looking out for the Northern Lights with a glass of sustenance in their hand?! Hotel Ranga also has its own observatory with two high quality 11-inch computerized telescopes, making it the most advanced observatory in Iceland. They have an expert in there every night that the sky is cloud-free who can teach you about the stars and the Northern Lights if they are out. The team there have a fantastic service attitude and are determined that you will have a wonderful time, and will even offer you a wake-up call if the Northern Lights come out whilst you are asleep!

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/iceland/short-breaks/blue-lagoon-paradise/

Hotel Centrum is in the heart of Reykjavik and located in one of its oldest streets, Adalstraeti. The historic building, renovated in 2005, dates to 1764, and during its renovation the remains of a Viking longhouse from the Settlement Period were found which is now on display in a museum together with related exhibits. Among the finds excavated at the site were Iceland's oldest human remains, dating from approximately 870 AD. This is a favourite for clients staying in Reykjavik on the Northern Lights and Whales break.

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/iceland/short-breaks/aurora-whale-watching/



Hotel Reykjavik Foss is a brand new build near the harbour that offers fabulous views from its tower rooms, as well as a beer garden. This hotel has gone down very well for those clients staying in Reykjavik over New Year's Eve.

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/new-year-christmas-trips/iceland-fireworks/

Hotel Fljótshlíð Smáratún is based on a working traditional family farm of around 300 hectares that has been managed by the same family for 3 generations. As it is in an isolated area it is great for Northern Lights as there are no artificial lights around to spoil the show. This small hotel has a lovely personal feel. The meat and produce produced on the farm are served in the restaurant, and the hotel is certified by the Nordic Swan Eco Label meaning it is a role model for sustainability in Icelandic tourism.

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/iceland/short-breaks/aurora-over-golden-circle/

Set in the heart of a stunning lava landscape the **Blue Lagoon Silica Hotel** is just ten minutes' walk from Blue Lagoon, and 1 admission is included in your room price. The hotel has 35 bright and spacious rooms, all with a veranda with breath-taking views of the surrounding lava fields.

The hotel offers its own private bathing lagoon available only to guests at certain times of the day. The Blue Lagoon Silica Hotel has won several design awards as it is built in harmony with the surrounding landscape and offers an oasis of calm, relaxation and healing.

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/iceland/short-breaks/blue-lagoon-escape/

The boutique **Skálakot – Manor Hotel** only has fourteen bedrooms with an excellent restaurant and personal service. 3 of the Grand Rooms have a balcony with a view down to the Ocean, and the master suite has its own fireplace so is a wonderful place to relax in the evening after your day of adventure. The hotel is an extension from the farm where the owners live and they like to "look after our visitors as guests of the family, as this is the Icelandic sense of hospitality that we have been brought up on", so expect to feel extremely welcome and pampered.

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/iceland/exclusive-collection/aurora-mecca/



WEATHER AND WHAT WE PROVIDE TO WEAR

The weather in Iceland in a single day is extremely variable and you can have all the seasons in one day with both rain and sunshine! However it is much warmer than Lapland with the winter averaging at -5 C so it is like a bad UK winter. High up the wind chill factor will make this feel colder - especially up high on the glaciers.

As it is not as cold we do not provide thermal gear and instead recommend the layer principle and sturdy hiking boots (See below). We do however provide arctic thermal overalls and helmet for any snowmobiling activities. For Glacial Hiking we will provide helmets, crampons and any ropes or ice axes required.

For temperatures expected in the winter:
<https://www.accuweather.com/en/is/hella/190700/weather-forecast/190700>

Current weather forecast:
<https://www.yr.no/place/Iceland/Suðurland/Hella/>

DAYLIGHT HOURS

There are only 4 “daylight” hours during December and early January, increasing up to 9 hours at the beginning and end of the season in October and March. As a result the timings of the tours are designed so that you travel in the dark and arrive at the activities at sunrise so you can make the most of these hours. Arriving on the top of Eyjafjallajökull Volcano for Sunrise with the stunning views of the Glaciers and Atlantic all around you is truly a special experience!

FOOD YOU SHOULD EXPECT TO EAT

The quality of organic ingredients in Iceland means that the standard of eating out is of a very high standard. Specialties are organic lamb, Skyr for pudding with fruit, the most wonderful fresh fish, vegetable and meat soup and the famed lobster feasts. The more adventurous might want to try rotted shark or puffin! Vegetarian options are available.





NORWAY

When to go to see the Northern Lights?

Norway offers the traveller a contrasting but complimentary Northern Lights holiday experience. While Sweden has the more iconic accommodation options with more small scale tourism Norway has one of the most majestic coastlines in the world. They are home to some of the most celebrated Northern Lights viewing locations on earth and combine together to create magnificent longer trips in both winter and autumn. Norway has an aurora season running from mid-September to the end of March and we have breaks that cover the season. For more traditional Arctic Northern Lights holidays we combine Tromso with the surrounding region where huskies, Snowmobiling, Sami Culture and other winter activities are possible. This is for the months of December - March.

If you are looking for a truly exceptional autumn Northern Lights hunt then the Lofoten Islands are a must. The autumn colours are breathtakingly beautiful and the dramatic landscapes when framed by the Northern Lights create spectacular shapes and shadows.

www.aurora-nights.co.uk/northern-lights-holidays/sweden/autumn-aurora/lofoten-fjords/





WHY IS THE ACCOMMODATION IN NORWAY SPECIAL?

Norway is famous for its fishing villages where Cod and Halibut have been fished for well over a millennium. Many of these villages have fisherman cabins turned into guest accommodation.

The Norwegians call it **Rorbuer** and if you are after authenticity and atmosphere then they are hard to beat.

At the other end of the spectrum many of Norway's coastal hotels are well appointed with clean designs and being modern are architecturally designed to make the most of any view (which in Norway is pretty much everywhere!).



WEATHER AND WHAT WE PROVIDE TO WEAR

Unlike Swedish Lapland, (which is at altitude), coastal Norway has a milder climate with average temperatures in the +15 to 20 range in the Autumn and +5 to -5 in the Winter.

We do not provide arctic clothing as standard but you will be kitted out if required for specific activities. So for example on the boat trips you will be issued with appropriate gear, as well as on husky or snowmobile adventures.

For temperatures expected in the winter:
https://www.accuweather.com/en/no/lofoten/84855_poi/weather-forecast/84855_poi

Current weather forecast:
<https://www.yr.no/place/Norway/Nordland/Flakstad/Lofoten/>

DAYLIGHT HOURS

It follows the regular cycle when you are north of the Arctic Circle in that December and January has a very low light and short days (+/- 5 hours of daylight) . This gives way to longer days right through to the end of March and the aurora season.

Autumn is a splendid time to go not just because of the temperatures but as you have a full 12 hours of daylight and yet dark skies for aurora hunting.

FOOD YOU SHOULD EXPECT TO EAT

Being on the coast there is an abundance of fish and it's delicious! If you want to try something traditional then the dried cod dishes are popular. Norway also produces wonderful lamb.



FLIGHTS

Departure Airports	Sweden	Iceland	Norway
Heathrow	Yes via Stockholm	Yes	Yes via Oslo
Gatwick	Yes via Stockholm	Yes	Direct and via Oslo
Luton	No	Yes	No
Edinburgh	No	Yes	No
Glasgow	No	Yes	No
Manchester	Yes via Stockholm	Yes	No
Belfast	No	Yes	No
Bristol	Yes	Yes	Yes via Stockholm
Dublin	No	Yes	No
Stansted	No	Yes	No

FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

If you are flying from other countries and not from the UK we can book the ground arrangements and internal domestic flights and you book your own international flights.

- Note if you are flying from the USA there are currently connections from most States via New York (Newark) or Chicago into Stockholm which is the hub you should use for entering Lapland.
- Likewise flying to Iceland now has been made easier through the significant increase in current routes provided by Icelandair to Chicago, New York, Denver, Washington, Boston, Seattle, San Francisco, Orlando and Minneapolis. Many of our American clients take a Northern Lights Holiday in Iceland as a stopover on a longer journey to Europe or the UK.
- Flights into Norway are more restricted but you can connect back from Oslo direct to New York at the end of one of our multi country journeys.
- See our information hub for more information on flight connections

WHAT TO PACK - ALL DESTINATIONS

To keep warm we recommend that you observe the 3 layer principle:

An inner layer:

Thermal base layer in synthetics, wool or a woollen mixture. Pure cotton should be avoided since cotton clothing cools down when it becomes wet.

A middle layer:

Clothing should strengthen and regulate the heat insulation, isolate air and hold the humidity from the body. For example a long sleeved woollen sweater/shirt, fleece or thermal sweater.

An outer layer:

Clothing of additional layers of woollen jumpers/ sweaters, fleeces or thermal sweaters made of breathable material in order to allow even distribution of body heat, which can be added if required.

This enables you to make fast and easy adjustments to the temperature. The inner layer keeps the body warm, while the outer layer is for protection against snow and wind.

Please note Jeans are not very warm when there is a wind, and we would therefore recommend you wear cords and wear thermals beneath.

For all destinations you will need a European adapter to charge your electrical devices.



ADDITIONAL PACKING - SWEDEN

Extremities - Warm gloves, hat and a scarf, Sunglasses.

Swimming costume - You will need a swimming costume if your trip includes a hot tub.

Cameras - You will require a European adapter plug to charge your cameras, tablets etc. and bear in mind that batteries will drain quicker in the extreme cold of Sweden. Also please keep your camera in a plastic bag when being transferred

from outside as the change in temperature will cause condensation that will fog the lens. We recommend you bring a good size zip lock or padded bag with you to protect it and allow it to adjust slowly to the differing temperatures.

Misc - Contact lens wearers may find it better to wear glasses outdoors as the extreme cold can affect your eyes.

ADDITIONAL PACKING - ICELAND

Waterproofs - We also recommend waterproofs, including waterproof trousers. Please take waterproof clothing with you even if it is sunny when you set out as the weather does change rapidly in Iceland.

Footwear - Please wear sturdy footwear such as hiking boots with a good grip. If Glacial Hiking

with crampons you need rigid hiking boots to attach the crampons onto.

Swimming costume - You will need this for the Blue Lagoon and Myvatn Baths, or in any Hot Tubs.

Extremities - gloves, hat, scarf, thermals, warm socks.

ADDITIONAL PACKING - NORWAY

Footwear - Please wear sturdy footwear such as hiking boots with a good grip.

Extremities - gloves, hat, scarf, thermals, warm socks.

Take a look at our information hub for further information



CURRENCY

Sweden	Iceland	Norway
Swedish Kroner	Icelandic Kroner	Norwegian Kroner

Scandinavia is moving fast to lead the world in being a cashless society so credit cards are accepted for everything. As a result be careful how much foreign cash you buy as you could end up having it in your wallet at the end of your trip!

For any trip including self-drive car hire it is critical that the named driver takes a credit card

with them. (It cannot be a debit card or the credit card of the passenger). Credit Cards need to be valid for at least 6 months after the return of the vehicle and prepaid credit cards are not accepted.

TIME ZONE

Sweden	Iceland	Norway
GMT +1	GMT -1	GMT +1

