

YOUR GUIDE TO THE AURORA BOREALIS

Considered the greatest show on earth, viewing the Aurora Borealis is high on many travellers list of must do experiences. We have listed a few of our favourite places to view the Northern Lights, however it is worth keeping in mind the further you go from any light pollution, the better your experience will be!



WHEN TO GO

The lights can generally be viewed between September and April in the northern hemisphere with travellers being able to enjoy winter activities such as dog sledding, snow mobile tours, skiing, snow shoeing, and igloo building.

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation options include traditional chalets, igloos and of course the famous ice hotels which are carefully reconstructed every year. To increase your chances of seeing the Northern Lights, we always suggest travellers spend 2 to 3 nights at their chosen destination to increase chances of experiencing this phenomenon.

WHAT ARE THE NORTHERN LIGHTS?

An Aurora is caused by collisions between electrically charged particles from the sun and gases in our atmosphere such as oxygen and nitrogen. The lights are seen in areas around the magnetic poles of the northern (Aurora Borealis) and southern (Aurora australis) hemispheres.

The most common Auroras are pale yellow-green, produced by oxygen molecules about 100km above the earth. Rare all-red Auroras are produced by high-altitude oxygen at heights of up to about 320km. Nitrogen produces blue or purple-red Auroras.

WHERE CAN YOU SEE THE AURORA?

- Alaska (*Fairbanks and above the Arctic Circle*)
- Canada (*Yellowknife, Northwest Territories; Whitehorse, Yukon; Jasper & Banff National Parks, BC & Alberta*)
- Sweden (*Abisko National Park*)
- Norway (*Alta, Tromsø, Trondheim, Svalbard*)
- Finland (*Finnish Lapland*)
- Iceland (*around Reykjavik, the Westfjords, north Iceland, Akureyri*)
- Greenland (*Outskirts of Nuuk, Kangerlussuaq, Disko Bay, East Greenland*)

ALASKA

OUR TOP PLACES TO VISIT

FAIRBANKS

Located beneath the Arctic Circle and one of the most popular bases for Aurora watching with remote wilderness lodges offering a range of activities during the day and night.



BETTLES LODGE

Bettles Lodge is a 1 hour flight from Fairbanks and located 35 miles north of the Arctic Circle. It is one of the best places to see the Aurora in Alaska as it officially has the most clear weather days in the entire state. Packages include flights from Fairbanks, all the Arctic gear you will need to stay warm, skiing, and snow shoeing. Guests can sit back and enjoy bonfires in the evening while waiting for the light show to start!



CHENA HOT SPRINGS

Chena Hot Springs is located 60 scenic miles from downtown Fairbanks and is an excellent place to view the aurora from late August to May. The resort's remote location creates a beautiful environment for viewing wildlife up close. Chena Hot Springs is also famous for its legendary healing mineral waters, renewable energy projects and the Aurora Ice Museum, a year round geothermal technology wonder.



COLDFOOT

This remote Alaskan wilderness area is located directly under the Aurora Oval, the line circling the globe where the lights originate, so your chances of viewing them are very high! Located approximately 7 hours from Fairbanks, the drive takes travellers along the Dalton Highway and crosses into the Arctic Circle. Coldfoot Camp is open year round and provides rustic yet clean accommodation. Travellers have the option of heading up to Prudhoe Bay then onto Barrow for a full high Arctic experience!



WHEN TO GO

The Northern Lights can be seen from Fairbanks and north of Fairbanks from September to April.

CANADA

OUR TOP PLACES TO VISIT

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

An area which is known as the 'Aurora Capital of the World'. Here you will find the city of Yellowknife which is close to the Aurora Oval, the band of energy which circles the magnetic north pole.



BLACHFORD LAKE LODGE

Blachford Lake Lodge is only accessible by 30 minute ski plane trip from Yellowknife offers the beauty of vast open spaces and spectacular aurora viewing. During the day guests can enjoy snow shoeing, ice skating, ice-fishing and igloo building. Each night after dinner choose your Aurora viewing spot whether it be from the deck, spa pool or the lake and enjoy the light show!

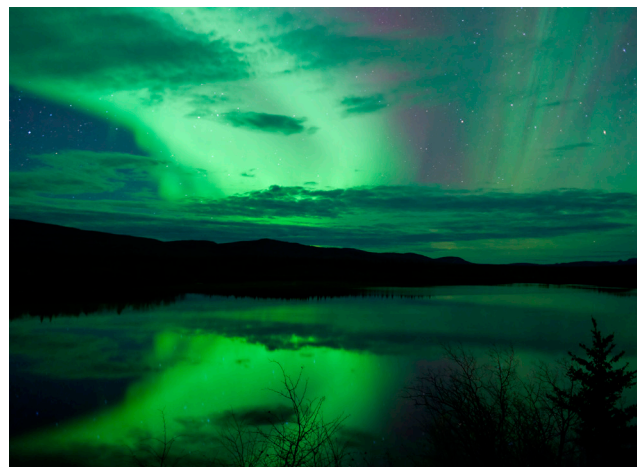


WHEN TO GO

The best time to see the Aurora in and around Yellowknife is from mid-August to the end of September, and from mid-November to mid-April.

WESTERN CANADA

Visitors to Canada's Western States can often catch a glimpse of the lights, the further north you travel with less light pollution, the better your experience will be.



WHEN TO GO

In BC and Alberta, December through March offers the longest hours of darkness; whereas further north in Yukon the lights can be viewed from mid-August through mid-April.

SCANDINAVIA

OUR TOP PLACES TO VISIT



SWEDEN

Sweden offers visitors an incredible aurora experience especially in Abisko National Park which is located 195km inside the Arctic Circle. One of the largest National Parks in Sweden, the park sits within a bowl of mountains protecting it from cloud or rain along with a 70km long lake which creates a consistent clear skies – otherwise known to the locals as ‘the blue hole’. For the best chance at Aurora viewings it is worth taking the chairlift to the Aurora Sky Station which is located within the park 900m above sea level with little light and sound pollution.



NORWAY

Travellers wishing to experience the Aurora in Norway can travel to Alta known as ‘The City of the Northern Lights’. The world’s most northern ice hotel, Sorrisniva is accessible from the city of Alta where guests have the choice of ice bedrooms which are carefully carved each year by locals and artists. The hotels also features an ice bar, ice chapel for weddings and numerous beautifully lit ice sculptures. Tours to view the Northern Lights can be done by reindeer sled with a local Sami Guide including a stop at a local lavvo (Sami Tent) for coffee and snacks by the fire – a very romantic setting for Aurora viewing!



FINLAND

In northern Lapland the lights can be seen on approximately 200 nights a year. In the city of Rovaniemi you won’t have to walk far from the city centre to find a great spot with the Aurora visible in the evening with little interferences from artificial light. For travellers looking for unique ways to experience the lights, Finland offers Aurora flights, ice floating, igloo stays, reindeer & husky tours. The warmest option would have to be the igloo village at Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort in the Finnish Lapland. Accessible by flight from Helsinki, these en-suite, glass-roofed igloos are specially designed to not frost or steam up. Located in forest clearings, enjoy beautiful vistas of the lights.



WHEN TO GO

The best time to see the Northern Lights around or inside the Arctic Circle is anytime between September and April. The further south you go, the shorter the Aurora season will be, between mid-October and March is the best time to see the lights in more southern areas. The Aurora Borealis is visible much more often in the northern areas of Scandinavia than toward the south.

NORDIC ISLANDS

OUR TOP PLACES TO VISIT

ICELAND

Iceland has an incredibly unique landscape of thundering waterfalls, lava fields, glacial lagoons, and black sand deserts which makes Aurora viewing even more spectacular!



For visitors staying in Reykjavik it is possible to view the lights, however as the city is quite widespread, finding a place with no light pollution may be a challenge.

HOTEL RANGA

Our suggestion is Hotel Ranga, a boutique hotel located in south Iceland approximately 90 min drive from Reykjavik, and a fabulous place for Aurora viewings.



WHEN TO GO

The phenomenon of the Northern Lights is best viewed in remote places, so Iceland is ideal, and viewings are possible from mid-September to mid-April (November/December is best).

GREENLAND

With stunning scenery and a plethora of untouched wilderness, Greenland truly is off the beaten track. See awe-inspiring mountainscapes, glaciers, and fjords, and be spell-bound by the Northern Lights.

NORTHERN LIGHTS ARCTIC CRUISING

Quark Expeditions offers a 10 day round trip, flying into Greenland from Reykjavik and cruising the world's largest fjord system with the possibility of viewing some of the world's most vivid displays of Northern Lights!



WHEN TO GO

Experiencing the Northern Lights requires a winter trip to Greenland sometime around October through March. Enjoy some classic Greenlandic dogsledding while you're there!



CONTACT YOUR TRAVEL PROFESSIONAL