

NORWAY

SENJA

March 16 - 23, 2025

northern lights | arctic mountains
fishing villages | wild seascapes

7 nights, GBP 3100

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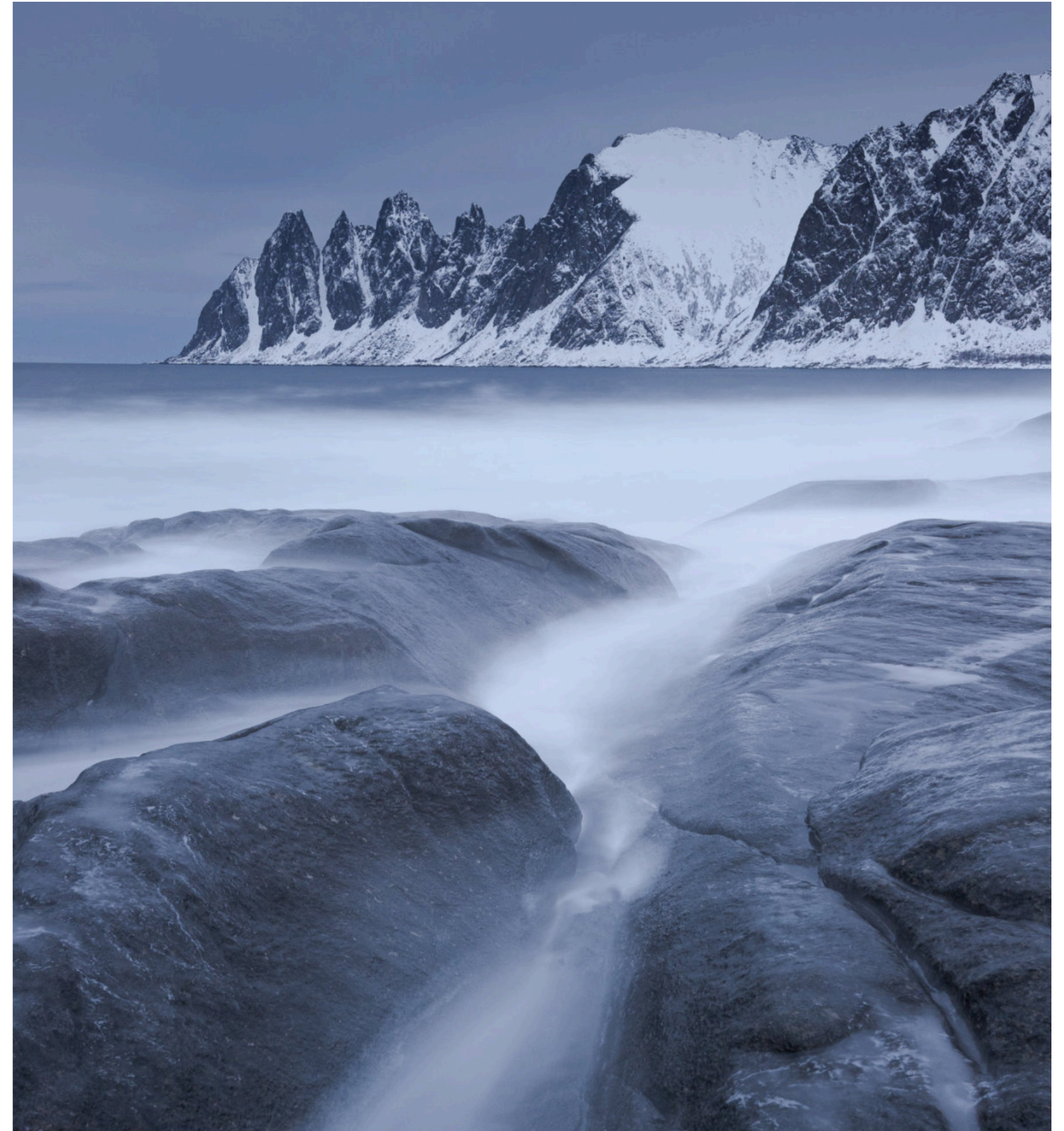
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our formula

FOOD AND PHOTOGRAPHY RETREATS combines a high standard of hospitality with the sharing of professional photographic experience accumulated over 30 years. We create a home-from-home for you in the large comfortable houses we rent for the Retreats, freeing you of the restrictions of hotels. Over the course of the week, this space and our field locations become the settings for learning, sharing and enjoying good food and conversation with like-minded people.

Maybe it helps that we enjoy our work with guests. We take a lot of pleasure in seeing the lights go on in the eyes of someone who realises they have just made something special. Or who has understood a setting properly for the first time. Or whose expression is pure delight as a plate is set down before them.

We enjoy sharing because, in one way or another, it always rewards. We know how ideas go out into the world from our Retreats, grow and develop with other guardians only to return to us later, mature and fully-formed. And how recipes are taken home and meals recreated for the enjoyment of friends and families we will never meet.

We hope you will join us to make some new stories together.



Charlotte and Niall Benvie, your hosts and directors of Food and Photography Retreats Ltd.

Lying at around 70 degrees N, Senja is the Lofoten archipelago's large neighbour to the north. Like the Lofotens, it boasts precipitous peaks, colourful fishing villages and deep fjords. What is lacking are the crowds at popular locations. And while there are more photographers in winter than when we first took a group there in 2011, it hasn't turned in to the circus that, sadly, the Lofotens has become today.

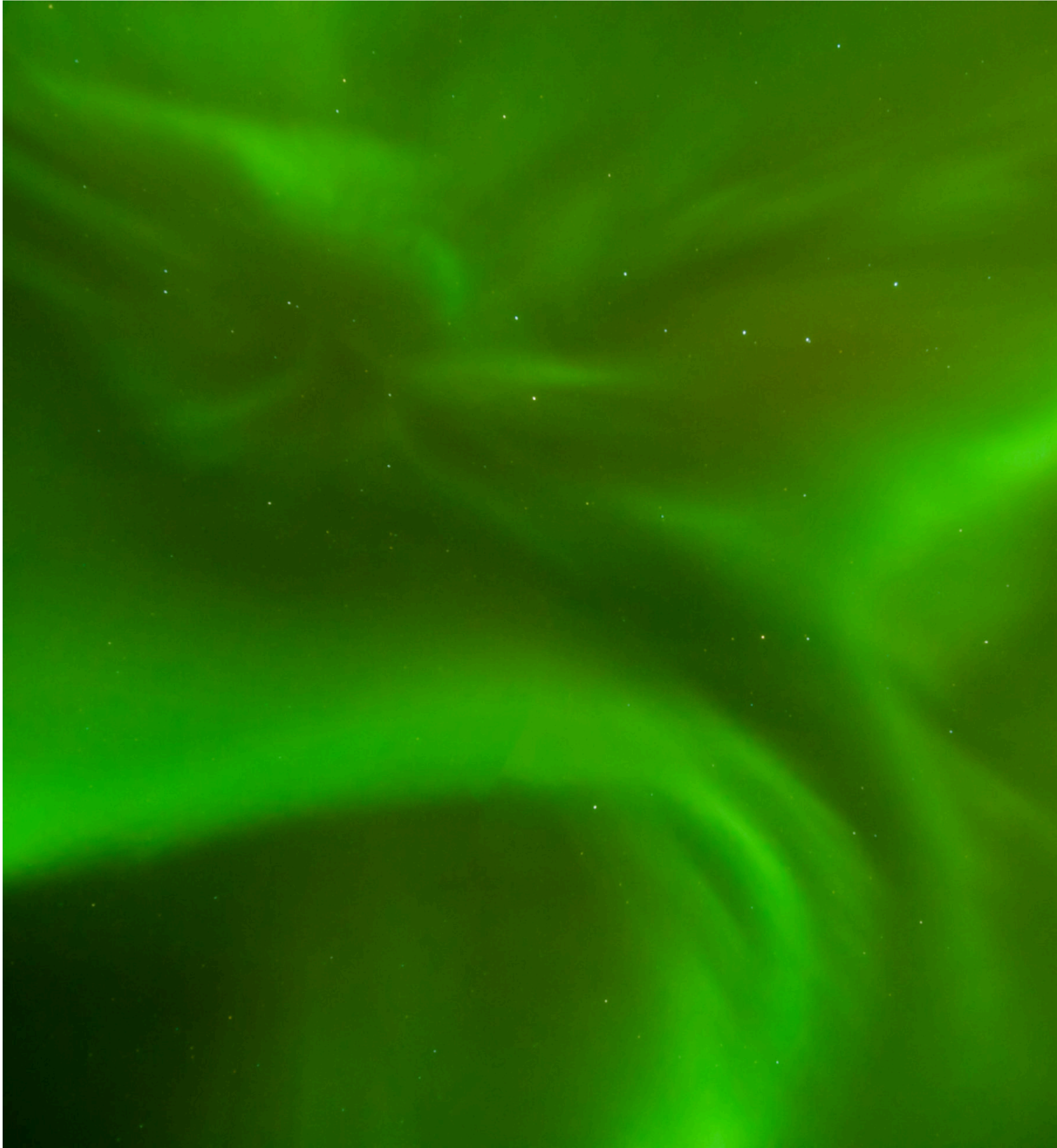
As elsewhere in rural Norway, the patina of modernity and prosperity scarcely conceals its hardscrabble history. It's a common story throughout the north where poor, shallow soils and begrudged summers have forced people for millennia to look to the sea to sustain themselves or indeed as a route of escape. The landscape itself displays evidence of a violent past: valleys gouged out by glaciers; rocky promontories sheered by passing ice surges; summits shattered into spires by eons of freeze-thaw, freeze-thaw; granite beaches reluctantly smoothed by the sheer persistence of the Norwegian Sea. This is an elemental landscape - but one that happens to look like the photographer's idea of the sublime.

And while we can't promise it - how many nights have our hopes been dashed by clouds? - there is a reasonable chance of being able to photograph the aurora borealis - be it a faint, wispy celestial corridor or a full-blow rippling silk curtain.

the location







THE FOCUS DURING THIS RETREAT IS THE LANDSCAPE, coastline and fishing villages of north and west Senja. If the forecast is good for an aurora and the conditions clear, we will make that an after-dinner priority. Our modern, en-suite accommodation is centrally located at Hamn-i-Senja and from here we will drive out each day, the location depending on prevailing conditions. Expect snow. In addition to tuition - if required - in the field, there will be the opportunity to review and discuss our work as we go along. Niall will also show demonstrate some of his signature techniques and help you with get to grips with them.

Locations we will visit include:

- Tunganaset for Senja's most famous spectacle, The Devil's Teeth mountains
- The rugged, colourful shoreline near Vikan
- Fishing villages including Skaland, Flakstadvag and Mefjordvaer
- The beach at Ersfjord
- The shoreline and mountains at Flakstadvag
- The mountains of Bergsfjorden
- The coast at Stamnesvika
- Another classic view - Tortenberget summits across Ballesvika
- If the weather allows, we will make an approach towards the dramatic Hesten mountain

what's on offer

The photography is just one aspect of the Retreat, though and Charlotte is dedicated to making sure you have meals to remember. After a long, cold day in the field, dinner is something to look forward to. She uses local ingredients whenever possible so you can expect seafood and fish to feature once or twice on the menu. If, however, this isn't your thing, just let us know on the booking form. Her dishes that are delicious and imaginative without being fussy. Food allergies and intolerances are catered for sensitively when notified in advance. Expect to eat well, for breakfast, lunch and dinner. And in between times too.



our venue

The lovely apartments at Hamn-i-Senja will be our base for the Retreat. Centrally located on the west coast of Senja, the closest airport, Bardufoss, is about 100 minutes away. It is served by direct flights from Oslo. We have timed the Retreat to coincide with flight days, although you will need to book accommodation in Bardufoss for the night preceding the very early departure flight to Oslo. Each apartment we have rented has two or three rooms, each with its own bathroom. We will eat and meet in the largest of them.





Price: GBP 3100 per person

starts: 17:00, 16th March, finishes 17:00, 23rd March 2025

What's included:

- 7 nights' accommodation at Hamn-i-Senja
- All meals during the Retreat from dinner on Sunday 16th March until lunch on Sunday 23rd March, 2025
- Transfers from and to Bardufoss Airport (BDU)
- Transportation during the Retreat
- Tuition from Niall

What's not included:

- Your travel to and from Bardufoss, from home
- Alcoholic drinks
- Travel insurance
- Entry fees

To book

Visit www.foodandphotographyretreats.com, click on the MAKE A RESERVATION button in the top right, scroll down to read our Terms and Conditions, then complete and send us the booking form below. At that point will you be invoiced for the deposit, amounting to 19% of the total. The balance is due 5 weeks before departure.

Travelling to and from the Retreat

Since guests typically arrive from different parts of the world we will have one pick-up time, at Bardufoss airport, late-afternoon on the 16th March 2025. We will let you know the exact time closer to departure. We aim to return you to the airport at Bardufoss by late afternoon on 23rd March. There are no flights that day from Bardufoss and the next one is at 06:30 the following morning. The Retreat starts with dinner on the 21st and finishes after we drop you off in Bardufoss on the 23rd.

The journey from and to the airport, takes about 100 minutes, some of it over high ground that's prone to blizzards. It's better, therefore to undertake this return journey the day before, especially give the very early return flight.

Where we will go

During the Retreat, we will travel by minibus to the locations listed earlier in this leaflet. Roads mostly follow the coast and owing to it being deeply indented by fjords, it can sometimes take a while to reach our destination. Many are within 30 minutes of Hamn, most are within an hour and only a couple take a little longer. We many return at least once to a location with good potential if the conditions we're ideal the first time.

The daily routine

Whatever we are shooting, it tends to look more attractive in the

early morning or late evening when low-angled light shows relief and colours better. With dawn at around 06:00 and sunset just about 18:00, the days are maybe longer than you would expect north of the Arctic Circle in winter. If we plan a dawn shoot, we will have a snack first then proper breakfast on return. We will make our plan for the following day the evening before and announce it at dinner, outlining the weather forecast, the locations and ideas for the next day, drive times, walking distances, where and when we'll eat and what gear you'll probably need. Experience has taught that it's more productive—and satisfactory for you—to have a plan to follow rather than improvising.

We've learned over the years, too, just how much guests value being able to discuss the work they are creating, with Niall and other guests and to this end, we'd urge you to bring a laptop. While the emphasis is on review, Niall will advise on post-production too. We have a follow-up Zoom meeting a couple of weeks after the Retreat for a final review, to avoid eating into time on the Retreat.

Safety

We take your safety seriously during our Retreats. At locations with known risks—such as drop-offs, tree-roots, ambush ice (black ice under snow) - we will draw your attention to them before leaving the vehicle. Thereafter, you are responsible for your own safety and that of your equipment. We provide guests

with a hi.-vis. vest to attach to their camera pack; it makes you, and it, easier to locate. We also issue guests with a two-way radio in order that we may keep in touch in a situation where the group can scatter. This also makes it easier to access help or guidance from Niall. We do not recommend leaving any equipment in our vehicle overnight . We can accommodate various levels of fitness as most of the walking on this Retreat is at low levels, on trails. If we decide to make an approach towards Hesten, Niall will need to be confident that everyone is fit enough to do so.

COVID

At the time of writing April 2024, the threat from COVID has receded. Nevertheless, if there is a resurgence, we will require guests to conform to the statutory guidelines pertaining at the time.

Spending money

If you would like to carry cash (although Norway has long since “gone plastic”), you can withdraw some during the journey from the airport.

Insurance

It is a requirement of booking that guests provide evidence of personal travel insurance to cover cancellation and curtailment, medical and emergency expenses (including repatriation), per-

sonal accident, injury and death in addition to loss of/damage to luggage and possessions, personal possessions and flight cancellations/ delays.

Passport and visa requirements

Norway is a member of the Schengen Agreement area and as such, there are no visa requirements for citizens of that area. Visitors from the UK, US, Canada and Australia do not currently require a visitor’s visa but this is under review and you should check before booking. A passport valid for at least six months beyond the length of the stay is required for non-Norwegian visitors and the passport you present must not have been issued more than 10 years before the date of your return. You should also check your insurance in respect of COVID claims.

Language

Norwegian is the native language but English is spoken widely.

Climate

It’s safe to assume it will be cold and most likely there will be frost and snow on the ground. The March averages for the area, daytime, range between 0°C and a high and -10°C with a 33% chance of rain on any given day.

Clothing

Prepare for cold weather and icy conditions underfoot. You

should have: proper walking boots or, ideally, neoprene wellingtons - we recommend [Muckboots](#); [micro-spikes](#), *not* Yaktrax; waterproof trousers; a waterproof shell; a down jacket or fleece; and thermals. A [windproof hat](#) and liner and fold-down mitt/liners combination will keep head and hands warm. We ask that guests wear slippers or indoor shoes in the accommodation. It's the Norwegian way, after all.

Equipment

If you are travelling by air (as we will be), you may be concerned about carry-on luggage restrictions. The way round this Niall has used for many years is to pack as much gear as you reasonably can into a photographer's waistcoat. This counts as a garment, not hand luggage, and you can still take your carry-on allowance into the cabin. Equipment you'll need during the Retreat:

- If possible, please bring a laptop with Lightroom/PS, CaptureOne or Affinity Photo
- A telephoto zoom, eg. 100 - 400 mm, is very versatile for landscape and building details whereas For a 24 -70 mm or similar fine for grand vistas. If we encounter reindeer, the longer end of the 100 - 400 will be valuable. A wider wide-angle can be useful for the aurora but there is no longer a need to worry about it being especially fast. F4 is fine
- You'll need a tripod, especially for work at dusk and at night

- Please pack a head torch, for safety and navigation
- Bring all the chargers, cards, batteries and backup media you need, plus appropriate adaptor if you're travelling from outside the EU. Norwegian power sockets deliver 220 volts and accept the Europlug types C and F
- A polarising filter if you are planning to shoot landscapes (graduated ND filters are largely redundant now)
- Hand warmers—which help to prolong your battery's life. And make your work more comfortable.

About us

After many years leading tours and workshops for other companies at home and abroad, Niall and Charlotte Benvie incorporated Food and Photography Retreats in 2018. Our offer combines the cultivation of your creativity in attractive locations with great hospitality, conversation and food.

Niall has been a professional photographer, writer, designer and guide for 31 years with a massive publication record including seven books and hundreds of articles. He has been involved in founding and running several of the biggest outdoor photographic initiatives of the last 15 years, including Meet Your Neighbours, Wild Wonders of Europe and 2020VISION and is recognised for the innovative nature of his work – and capacity for re-invention.

For 28 years, Charlotte combined a career in the Civil Service with freelance catering and hosting roles before coming to work with husband, Niall. Guests value not only her expertise in the kitchen and dining room but her attention to detail and warmth. She has a keen eye for a picture too and can also assist with Lightroom processing. She is a trained chocolatiere and between Retreats sells her work in France.

Contact Niall and Charlotte:

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with the Benvies



**NIALL
BENVIE**
artwork

