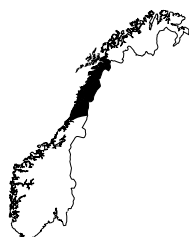


# Nordland



There's a difficult choice to make as you head north. The spectacular Kystriksveien coastal route, ferry hopping and perhaps detouring to take in a glacier and offshore island or two? Or the almost-as-stunning inland Arctic Highway, more direct but still lightly trafficked?

Whichever you choose, try to build in time to take in Lofoten, a necklace of offshore islands with razor-sharp peaks and Caribbean-coloured bays. Here, cod is still king, as manifested in the small fishing museums, *rorbuer* (fishing cabins – literally 'rowers' dwellings') and rickety drying frames. Connected by bridges and with reasonable public transport, the islands are easy to hop around. Then again, you may want to linger and hire a bike or pull on your boots; the cycling can even be done by softies and the hiking is as gentle or as tough as you care to make it. Push further north to Andenes, at the northern tip of Andøya, a continuation of the Lofoten archipelago, and you'll enjoy the best whale watching in all Norway.

As you move northwards through the long, narrow Nordland region, the crossing of the Arctic Circle is almost palpable; fields give way to lakes and forests, vistas open up, summits sharpen and the tree line descends ever lower on the mountainsides. In summer, this is where northbound travellers get their first taste of the midnight sun; in winter, the northern lights slash the night sky.

In addition to Nordland, this chapter also includes the northeastern section of Vesterålen, a continuation of the Lofoten archipelago that belongs to the county of Troms.

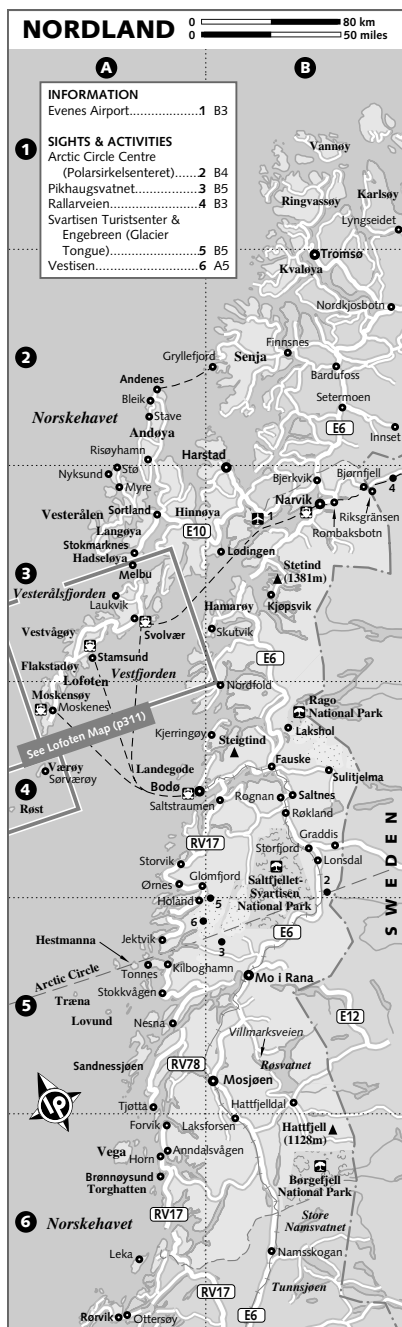
## HIGHLIGHTS

- Ferry hop and hug the splendid **Kystriksveien coastal route** (p303)
- Learn to respect eider ducks and feel their down float from your fingers at Vega's **E-Huset museum** (p304)
- Be a wide-eyed kid again at the **Norwegian Aviation Museum** (p307) in Bodø
- Linger in the tiny, preserved fishing village of **Å** (p320) in Lofoten
- Hike the coastal **Queen's Route** (p326) to Stø in Vesterålen
- Take time out to explore the historic **Sjøgata** (opposite) in Mosjøen, including its galleries, museum and cafés
- Get cold feet on one of the glaciers in **Saltfjellet-Svartisen National Park** (p296)



■ POPULATION: 235,450

■ HIGHEST ELEVATION: OKSSKOLTEN (1916M)



## Getting There & Away

Although it's in Norwegian, you'll have no problem interpreting times and schedules on [www.177nordland.com](http://www.177nordland.com) – a comprehensive listing, together with links, of all bus, boat, ferry, train and plane timetables throughout Nordland. Alternatively, phone ☎ 177 within Nordland or ☎ 75 77 24 10 beyond.

At Steinkjer, to the south in Trøndelag (p287), those with wheels have a binary choice: the swifter Arctic Highway to Narvik, or the slower, less-frequented, more expensive but much more beautiful E17, the 650km-long Kystriksveien (Coastal Route) with Bodø at its northern end. Go the latter if you can spare the time and cash. If you're without wheels, going along the Arctic Highway, by either bus or train, is the only practical choice.

## ARCTIC HIGHWAY

### MOSJØEN

pop 9900

When arriving in Mosjøen (pronounced moo-cher-en), along the E6, you may be put off by the industrial face of this aluminium-producing town. Don't be. About 1km south, along lake-like Vefsnfjorden, historic Sjøgata and a street or two nearby are among the most charming in northern Norway and well merit a browse.

The town has a strong historical connection with the UK; in the mid-19th century, five Englishmen imported technically advanced steam engines and sawmill machinery and established the North of Europe Land & Mining Company Ltd to provide timber for Britain's burgeoning industrial towns and cities. What was a tiny coastal settlement quickly became the region's first registered town.

Mosjøen's **tourist office** (☎ 75 11 12 40; [www.visthelgeland.com](http://www.visthelgeland.com); ☎ 9am-7pm Jul, 10am-5pm Mon-Fri Jun & Aug, 10am-3.30pm Mon-Fri rest-of-year) is at Sjøgata's southern end. It has internet access (per 15 minutes Nkr20).

## Sights & Activities

### SJØGATA

A stroll around the Sjøgata area, with over 100 listed buildings, takes you past galleries, coffee shops, restaurants and private homes in attractively renovated former warehouses, workshops and boat sheds. *The History of a*