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“We call at extraordinary places”

The Svalbard Line is a truly special voyage, says Hurtigruten Coastal Experience Team Leader Rebekka Maria Bohrer

Over the summer, the beautiful MS *Trollfjord* sails along the Norwegian coast and across to the Svalbard archipelago, on Hurtigruten's premium, all-inclusive voyage. We call at extraordinary places that some of our guests have dreamed of visiting for decades – and it's incredibly rewarding to be able to take them there!

ARCTIC WONDERS

One place we're really lucky to visit is Ny-Ålesund, a coal mine turned international research hub on Spitsbergen, Svalbard's biggest island. It's one of the



world's most northerly year-round communities and is otherwise quite inaccessible to visitors, with small planes reserved for researchers flying here only a few times a week. We spend a few hours there, taking guests on a discovery of its fascinating history as well as the riveting research going on today. A big part of the onshore experience is about getting close to nature and embracing *friluftsliv*, the Norwegian passion for the outdoors. We take guests on specially picked hikes up the mountains, stopping to take in the fresh air and beautiful fjord views with a coffee. I love seeing the smiles on our guests' faces

and the sparkle in their eyes when we finally reach the top.

Back on the ship, I get chatting to our guests about their day, whether they've spent it on a sea eagle safari or unwinding in a shoreside sauna. Getting to experience it all through their eyes is a real pleasure!

COMMUNITY SPIRIT

A Hurtigruten cruise isn't just about soaking up the region's spectacular scenery, but unravelling the stories behind the places we visit. That's why we run onboard talks on all kinds of topics, be it the coastal culture of the Lofoten Islands or how the fjords were carved by glaciers. We also get together to share the route we're taking and what's coming up the next day, as well as a little language lesson on some handy Norwegian words.

Food is at the heart of the onboard experience, too, giving guests the chance to explore our destinations through taste. A personal favourite is our day in Tromsø, when our head chef shows guests how to prepare shrimps collected straight from the Lyngenfjord. It's always great fun.

Along with our small ships, this kind of approach to cruising creates a real family atmosphere on board. While it's sad to see our guests go, we then get ready to welcome fresh pairs of eyes – and experience the wonders of Svalbard and Norway all over again! ■