



Text: Knut Christian Moeng / Photo: GettyImages

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Majesties of the sea

Surrounded by towering, snow-capped royal mountains and the deep blue sea, we are just about to be wowed by something even more royal. Whale watching in Tromsø should be on everyone's bucket list.

Photo: Knut Christian Moeng

It's 07.45 at Tromsø harbour. Around 100 people are lining up in front of [Brim Explorer](#), a hybrid catamaran with a 360° panorama view. The crowd is from all over the world. You can hear Americans, Brits, Germans and Asians. And the friendly locals. Everyone is excited to see how the day turns out.

NEW KID IN TOWN

The catamaran is almost brand new. It has only been in service for half a year. The idea was launched by Agnes Árnadóttir from Iceland and Espen Larsen-Hakkebo from Tromsø, who were looking for a more ecofriendly way to handle tourism in the north.

Photo: Brim Explorer

This according to Elin Glad, one of the guides on the trip. – Whale watching is a relatively new business in town. Five years ago the whales turned up in the fjords outside Tromsø. They follow the herring. The herring follows the plankton. When it comes to the humpback whales, they are on a love trip from the Barents Sea and the Norwegian Sea all the way down to the Caribbean. And the herring-rich fjords outside Tromsø are the perfect place to make sure they have enough energy for their long, hard journey, says Elin.

BEAUTIFUL SURROUNDINGS

As we head towards the Skjervøy area, we have plenty of time to enjoy the amazing surroundings, while passing the islands of Kvaløya, Ringvassøya, Reinøya and last but not least, Karlsøy - famous for its rich flora and its colorful people. On the other side of the fjord the Lyngen Alps supply us with a breathtaking view. The boat trip lasts between two and three hours, depending on where the whales are enjoying their lunch buffet that particular day.

Photo: Knut Christian Moeng

Naturally Brim Explorer does not come with a whale watching guarantee. Nature is too whimsical for that. – Of course we cannot give our guests any guarantees. But the fun thing is that every time we've been out with Brim Explorer, we've gotten lucky. Every time, Elin explains.

BOILING WATER

And did we have any luck? Suddenly the boat slows down, switching to its totally silent electric motors, gliding slowly ahead. Everybody gathers their

cell phones and cameras, puts on their coats, scarves and gloves and run onto the boat deck for the best view possible. Which is not very difficult to find, since you have panoramic views on three levels.

Photo: Getty Images

Our host Jonas Legernes almost whispers over the speakers, «look for eleven o'clock, between the two small boats». And there. A fin. Then another one. Then many. Then the tails. We can spot their black and white bodies. It's a flock of killer whales. All we can hear is the crowd going «look there, and there - and there!». Then the humpback whales arrive. Whales are everywhere.

TEAMWORK

These animals are hunters. And obviously hungry. From the boat we can observe them hunting together in order to catch as much herring as possible. It's breathtaking. Humpback whales, these huge animals, from 12 to 16 meters in length, with a weight between 25-30 tons, are having a feast right in front of us. They swim together with a huge amount of killer whales that almost look tiny compared with their enormous lunch partners.

A THRILLED AUDIENCE

Norway and its nature is getting more and more popular as an eco-friendly tourist destination for guests from all over the world. And to be able to go «face to face» with these beautiful and mysterious creatures in these amazing surroundings is always popular with the guests at Brim Explorer, according to Elin Glad.

Photo: Knut Christian Moeng

– Most of the guests we have had on board are really thrilled and amazed with this experience. And what's not to love? They arrive with a dream of seeing the whales, and when they do, it usually results in enthusiastic outbursts and impulsive hugs with friends and even with the crew. It is so great to be able to experience this together with them. To see how it makes them feel.

The crew and I often have meaningful conversations about the environment, whaling, animal welfare and about life in general. I really appreciate this. It means a lot to me, Elin tells us.

A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE

Elin has worked ten years in London, returning to Tromsø to be a part of this magnificent adventure in her hometown. And she is just as thrilled as the passengers.

AMAZED: Megan and Chris from Suffolk, England, were flabbergasted by the close-up experience with the humpback and killer whales outside Tromsø.

Photo: Knut Christian Moeng

– The first time I joined the whale safari was totally magic. The boat was packed with people, and the whales were everywhere. They came incredibly close to the boat – killer whales and humpback whales. At one point I was standing aft on the boat, and we saw eight killer whales passing. One of them was a newborn. That was really touching. – They are so majestic and at the same time so vulnerable, she adds.

WHEN ONE BECOMES TWO

The success with eco-friendly tourism made Agnes Árnadóttir, Espen Larsen-Hakkebo and their team confident in taking the next step and order a second boat for their company. This spring Brim's brother Bard will be introduced. The plan is that he will operate both Svalbard and Troms, and that Brim will be based in Svolvær and operate Lofoten the whole year.

Photo: Getty Images

– It is so great to be able to join this adventure with eco-friendly tourism in this part of Norway. It is so important to me, and one of the things I am really passionate about, Elin tells Skyfritt. It is easy to understand her passion for these creatures. We had hoped to see a whale or two. Boy, did we get value for money.

[For more information visit Wideroe.no](http://Wideroe.no)

Widerøe er Norges eldste flyselskap med over 3700 engasjerte medarbeidere. Widerøe AS består av datterselskapene Widerøe's Flyveselskap AS, Widerøe Ground Handling AS, Widerøe Zero AS, Widerøe Property AS og Widerøe Asset AS.

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Kontaktpersoner



Widerøe pressevakt

Pressekontakt
Pressehenvendelser
presse@wideroe.no
+47 989 01 500



Silje Brandvoll

Pressekontakt
Direktør for Kommunikasjon og Samfunnskontakt
Silje.Brandvoll@wideroe.no
+47 98 90 10 03



Catharina Solli

Pressekontakt
Kommunikasjonssjef
Catharina.Solli@wideroe.no
+47 98 90 15 06



Lina Lindegaard Carlsen
Pressekontakt
Kommunikasjonsrådgiver
llc@wideroe.no
+47 45 23 20 51



Satha Sritharan
Pressekontakt
Kommunikasjonsrådgiver
satha@wideroe.no
+47 99 89 89 99