



LOFOTEN PHOTOGRAPHY

Under Arctic Light · Lofoten & Senja

JENS KLETTENHEIMER



Jens Klettenheimer is a landscape photographer based near Heidelberg, Germany, specialising in the high north. He has led more than twenty photography workshops on the Lofoten Islands and Senja, returning each year to both islands across all seasons.

There is something about standing at the edge of a frozen beach in January, waiting for the light, that he finds nowhere else — a particular kind of quiet that keeps drawing him back.

His images are published regularly in print and online media. He runs schiefLicht Fotografie at schieflicht.de.

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JENS KLETTENHEIMER

schiefLicht Fotografie

First Edition · 2026



Lofoten Photography – Under Arctic Light · Lofoten & Senja

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GPS coordinates are given in decimal degrees (DD). They refer to the recommended shooting position; conditions and access may change – verify locally.

The companion website at schieflichT.de provides an interactive map of all locations with up-to-date notes.



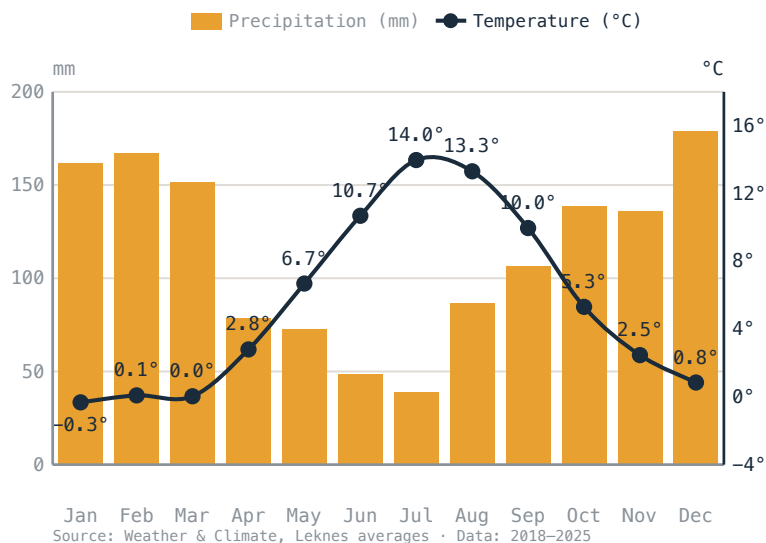
The difference between a productive trip to the Lofoten and a frustrating one rarely comes down to equipment. It comes down to timing — being in the right place when the light is right, the sky is clear, and the tide is where you need it. A little preparation goes a long way.

This chapter covers the best times to visit, how to get there, where to stay, and the tools and camera settings that make the difference between hoping for a good shot and being prepared for one.

WHEN TO GO

What is the best time of year for photographers? More than anywhere else, the answer on the Lofoten depends on what kind of light you are looking for — the difference between *January* and *July* is not a matter of degree, but of character.

The **weather** on the Lofoten is thoroughly unpredictable despite the moderating influence of the Gulf Stream. Rain and snow can set in for days at a time, and temperatures can swing from -10°C to $+10^{\circ}\text{C}$ within the space of a week — there is no guarantee of snow-covered mountains or frozen fjords in *winter*. Building in extra days always pays off.





01 • Laukvik Lighthouse

year-round • sunset • northern lights

68.39021° N

14.40806° E



The small lighthouse at Laukvik stands above a rocky shoreline on the north coast of Austvågøya, facing directly out to the open sea. It is a modest structure — weathered and inseparable from its surroundings — but its setting makes it one of the most versatile spots on the island.

At low tide, rock pools fill with seawater and mirror the sky and lighthouse above. The compositions shift with every change of angle and light — it is worth walking a short distance along the rocks in either direction before settling on a framing.

The unobstructed view to the north makes this one of the finest aurora foregrounds on the island. The lighthouse — strong, simple, well-defined against the sky — is exactly the kind of anchoring subject that northern lights images benefit from.

I recommend arriving well before sunset to explore the shoreline while the light is still good. In *winter*, the low sun grazes the rocks at a shallow angle and the reflections in the pools can be extraordinary.





MOSKENESØYA

LOFOTEN • NORWAY

As the road sweeps around towards the final bridge, the landscape shifts. The mountains rise taller now, their flanks falling steeply to the water, and the villages that cling to the narrow strips of rock between cliff and sea grow denser, more dramatic, more vivid. This is Moskenesøya — the southernmost island in the Lofoten chain and, for many photographers, its most rewarding.

Reaching the island requires a little orientation. Moskenesøya is connected to the rest of the archipelago by two separate road links, and the two sections they serve have no road connection to each other. The northern part of the island — geographically Moskenesøya, though administratively still part of Flakstadøya — is reached via two sweeping arched bridges near Fredvang, branching off the E10 before the main island boundary. The south-western part, which includes Hamnøy, Reine and Å, is reached further along the E10 via the Kakernbridge. Between these two entry points lies a stretch of wild, roadless terrain that can only be crossed on foot.

This administrative quirk means the chapter is structured geographically rather than by district. The first section covers the northern Fredvang area — six spots that reward patience and are often at their best after dark. The remaining three sections follow the main road southward through Hamnøy, Sakrisøy and Reine to the southernmost point at Å, where the E10 finally runs out of island.

January and *February* are the months when Moskenesøya rewards photographers most generously. The sun rises from the south-east, stays low, and bathes the south-facing coastline in warm directional light for much of the short day. Villages that are plunged into shadow elsewhere on the archipelago are here lit beautifully from the first hour. Add the possibility of Northern Lights on clear nights, and the appeal is clear.

Reine makes an excellent base for the southern part of the island. From here, none of the spots in sections two through four are more than thirty minutes away.



07 · Hamnøy View

sunrise · year-round

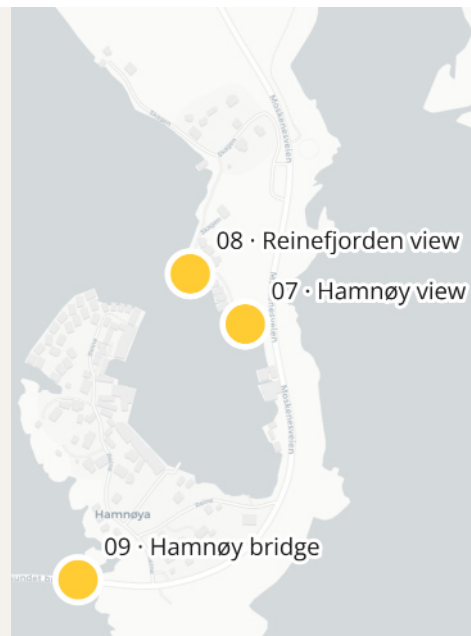
67.94876° N

13.13459° E



Immediately after the tunnel, the village sign for Hamnøy comes into view. We slow down and continue along the E10 until a turning appears on the right towards Reinefjorden Sjøhus (reinefjord.no), a modern *rorbuer* complex right on the water, offering a selection of houses and apartments around a historic main building — some with large glass fronts facing the harbour, so you can watch for the Northern Lights at night without leaving your room.

A large car park sits in front of the complex. Following the road on foot for about fifty metres, a second paved parking area comes into view — reserved for guests of the complex, but a good vantage point regardless. From here the view across the Hamnøy harbour and the mountain backdrop is open and unhurried. Clouds often sweep dramatically towards the peaks, but even in hazy or overcast conditions this is a productive spot. During the blue hour, the colours of the houses and the first window lights are particularly appealing.





SENJA

LOFOTEN · NORWAY

More than 200 kilometres northeast of the Lofoten Islands lies Senja – Norway's second-largest island and one of its best-kept secrets for landscape photographers. Situated even further above the Arctic Circle than the Lofoten, Senja falls squarely within the auroral oval, and on clear *winter* nights the northern lights put on a display as dramatic as anywhere in the country.

Much of what applies to the Lofoten holds true here as well. The Gulf Stream keeps the climate mild year-round, and the weather is equally unpredictable: sunshine and storm can follow each other within hours. But Senja has a character entirely its own. The landscape is shaped by dense birch forests that cloak the hillsides in shades of amber and gold come *autumn* – a sight with no real equivalent on the Lofoten. Rivers tumble through wide valleys and over rocky falls, the Ånderdalen National Park protects a remarkable swath of primeval pine forest – some trees over 500 years old – alongside birch woodland, peat bogs, rivers and mountain lakes, all enclosed by wild peaks that plunge steeply to the coast, and the rugged west coast is carved by deep fjords whose peaks reach close to 1,000 metres.

With fewer than 8,000 people living on the island itself, Senja is far less visited than the Lofoten – and all the more rewarding for it. There are no *rorbuer* lining the harbour here. Instead, we find a quieter, wilder Norway: one where the roads wind empty for long stretches, and where the right hillside, at the right hour, can feel entirely your own.

One note on the light: photographers who love shooting at sunrise will need to adjust their expectations on the west coast. The mountains in the island's interior block the morning sun until well into the day. Sunsets, however, are often spectacular – and well worth waiting for.

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The light here does not behave like light anywhere else. It arrives at angles that flatten mountains and set water on fire — and then, in winter, it disappears entirely, leaving the sky to the aurora.

The Lofoten Islands rise straight from the sea at the edge of the Arctic — a chain of peaks, fjords and fishing villages that has drawn landscape photographers from around the world. This guide takes you to over 80 carefully selected locations across the islands, from the open coastline of Austvågøya in the north to the dramatic fjords of Moskenesøya in the south. A dedicated chapter covers Senja, Norway's most spectacular and least-visited island for photographers.

Every spot is described with precise GPS coordinates, the best times of day and season, and practical shooting advice drawn from years of returning to the same places in different light — including the best conditions for photographing the northern lights.

All locations are also available in the web companion app at schieflicht.de, with an interactive map and filters by season, time of day, and northern lights.

80+ locations · Lofoten & Senja · GPS coordinates · Free web companion app