

# TRAVEL QUEST

Winter 2016

**Norway Trips  
the Light Fantastic**

**Totality 2017: Join Us**

TRAVEL **QUEST**  
international

# TRAVEL QUEST

## Features

### Norway Trips the Light Fantastic

A relaxing cruise featuring sunning scenery and amazing northern lights. Norway 2015 was truly a trip to remember.

page 4



### Totality 2017: Join Us

Why not show family and friends why you chase eclipses by bringing them to totality in 2017.

page 8

### Were You With Us?

Check out TQ's amazing collection of unique eclipse memory books.

page 9



---

## In Every Issue

### 3 Reflections

Seize every travel opportunity you can!

### 3 Notebook

In 2017, chasing totality can be a family affair.

### 9 Travel Talk: A Travel Grab Bag

Not traveling far afield this year? Explore your own backyard and pretend you're a stranger in a strange land.

### 10 Upcoming Adventures

Seek the aurora in Iceland and explore Portugal and Spain in 2016, and join us on five different explorations of the US for Totality 2017.



Courtesy Rick Fienberg.



332 N Rush Street  
Prescott, Arizona, 86301 USA  
1-800-830-1998 (US and Canada)  
1-928-445-7754 (International)  
Fax: 1-928-445-8771  
[Travel@TravelQuestTours.com](mailto:Travel@TravelQuestTours.com)

### On the Cover:

The aurora borealis over Norway — October 2015.  
*Courtesy Fran Woodworth.*

Navigation: Click on a title or page number (on this page) to jump to a story. Click on the  symbol at the end of each story to return to the Table of Contents. Click on an underlined word/phrase to go to an external webpage or an e-mail address.

Back in March 2006, we at TQ led numerous groups of adventurers to the Mediterranean — Libya, Turkey, and Egypt — to witness a total solar eclipse. One group visited Turkey (including Istanbul) and saw many highlights of that culturally rich country. Other groups visited the Great Pyramids of Egypt and cruised the Nile, while still others traveled to Libya, explored Tripoli, and visited Leptis Magnus — in my opinion the greatest Roman ruins I have ever seen.

In recent years, we have seen these regions undergo monumental change, both socially and politically, to the point where many of us today do not consider them places we feel safe visiting.

And what a pity that is. Imagine never having the opportunity to stroll among the Great Pyramids and Sphinx; never hearing the melodic beauty of a flute playing inside Istanbul's wondrous Hagia Sophia; or never experiencing the immensity of the Libyan Sahara Desert?

TravelQuest did all that in 2006, never imagining the change and upheaval in that part of the world a mere 10 years later. And who in 2016 can imagine what our world will be like in 2026? The future is the great unknown.



TQ eclipse meteorologist Jay Anderson (left) and me at the Sphinx in Egypt while on a scouting trip prior to the 2006 solar eclipse.

Our world is beautiful in all ways. For better or worse, opportunities to experience its natural and cultural beauty come and go. So let me say to all of you: Value the lifetime experience travel embodies and seize every travel opportunity you can. Go. See. Experience. 

Aram Kaprielian

## Notebook

The March 2016 total solar eclipse will be history in a few weeks. Sadly, it's one I'll miss, though I will get to live it vicariously later on via the *Eclipse 2016 Memory Book* I'll be creating for the TQ eclipse travelers (and anyone else who wants to see what they missed).

While there are a pair of annular eclipses taking place during the next 12 months, I'm sure that everyone — particularly North American eclipse chasers — is anxiously awaiting the August 2017 totality. I know I am.

And comments I've heard from a few people — at the 2015 eclipse on the Faroe Islands and even during our Norway aurora tour last autumn — made me realize that many of you are thinking of Totality 2017 as potentially being a family affair. The idea: head for the path of totality with your spouse, the kids, the grandkids, the parents — family members who have never witnessed a total eclipse of the

Sun and who — perhaps more than occasionally — question your sanity when it comes to chasing totality!

When I first starting thinking about Eclipse 2017, I assumed that umbraphiles from Europe and Asia would be the ones filling TravelQuest's Eclipse 2017 tours. No so. The majority of travelers who have signed up for one of TQ's five different eclipse trips are from North America, and many are indeed bringing family members.

If this idea appeals, be aware that even now, more than a year before totality, TQ's trips are beginning to fill as eclipse chasers select their favorite experience that will help show their families why they chase totality. 

Paul Deans

# Norway Trips the Light Fantastic

Story by Paul Deans; images by Paul Deans unless otherwise noted.

"WOW!" "Look at that!!" "That's incredible."  
"Unbelievable!" "Never seen anything like this!"

From the exclamations and expressions of our TravelQuest/*Astronomy* magazine travelers, you might think that we were standing in awe of totality during a solar eclipse. But you'd be wrong. We were on the deck of a ship off the northern coast of Norway, watching incredulously as curtains of dancing colored lights arced overhead, stretched from horizon to horizon, filled the sky, and lit the nearby fjords and mountaintops with a delicate, ghostly green glow. But I'm getting a little ahead of myself.

## Norway Aurora and Sami Culture 2015

In early October, an enthusiastic group of 29 travelers arrived at the Oslo airport hotel for the TravelQuest/*Astronomy* magazine "Norway: Aurora, Sami Culture and Scenic Wonders" trip. For those who arrived pre-tour, the airport hotel was a convenient 20-minute ride, via high-speed train, to downtown Oslo. The city's core is very walkable, with plenty to see and do, and many of our group took advantage of the train ride to explore Norway's capital.

The first evening everyone gathered to meet. Also on hand to help kick off the trip were Aram Kaprielian from TravelQuest, Laura Gijbels of Troll Travel (our ground operator), trip astronomy leader Eric Betz from



Watching the northern lights from the deck of the *Nordnorge* in October, 2015.

*Astronomy* magazine (TQ's new promotional partner), and me as the TQ trip leader.

The next day, we were on our way to Trondheim. After a city tour highlighted by the beautiful Nidaros Cathedral and dinner at our hotel, some of us headed out to explore the city while others settled in for a quiet evening. But much to our delight, a modest display of the aurora put in an appearance, shining through Trondheim's lights for more than an hour. We hoped it was a good omen, a precursor of better sights to come.



**Left:** Nidaros Cathedral, tucked into a bend in the Nidelva River in Trondheim. **Right:** Refurbished former storehouses along the Nidelva River.

## Cruising the Norwegian Coast

Noon of the following day found us on board the *Nordnorge*, one of 11 ships in the Hurtigruten line that ply the coastal waters of Norway. The ships transport freight, vehicles, and passengers (locals and tourists) to 34 ports that range in size from villages to Norway's second- and third-largest cities. Most of the fleet ships are very similar, with more than 200 cabins to carry up to 600 passengers.

While not a cruise ship in the usual sense, the *Nordnorge's* amenities are well above what might be expected on a "coastal ferry." The cabins are simply furnished but comfortable, and the public areas have been recently updated with polished wood, brass, and intriguing Norwegian artwork. There are no televisions in the cabins, no casinos, and few organized activities (other than shore excursions). That's because the entertainment is the impressive scenery outside — Norwegian mountains, fjords, and (excluding the summer months) the northern lights.

The coastal scenery is truly spectacular. We enjoyed more than three days on the *Nordnorge*, and many of us spent much of our time in the Panorama Lounge up on Deck 7 (forward) where there is a full 180° view of the amazing coastline. Since we were there in early autumn, the rugged landscape and quaint coastal villages we sailed past were augmented by autumn colors on the lower hillsides with snow-capped peaks above.

Of course there were port stops — some as short as 15 minutes; others for several hours — and excursions, so we weren't always onboard. Our excursions included a RIB Safari to see eagles and the Saltstraumen tidal current in Bodø, a Viking feast at the Lofotr Viking Museum in the Lofoten Islands, a polar history walk in Tromsø, and a visit to North Cape, the northernmost point in Europe.



**Top:** Our ship docked in Bodø. **Middle:** Lovely autumn colors part way up the coast, before we passed the tree line. **Bottom:** The RIB safari out of Bodø, exploring the unusual rock formations at Saltstraumen; courtesy [Fran Woodworth](#).

### The Dance of the Celestial Lights

Three days onboard meant we had four nights on the ship, and what nights they were. Shortly after dinner on the first evening came the aurora announcement. The celestial dance started with gently waving curtains in the distance, then gradually picked up in intensity. By the time we approached Rørvik (our first stop out of Trondheim), rippling curtains of red-tinged green stretched overhead from east to west, with intense green curtains to the north and south. The light show continued after we left port and included bursts of corona — rayed aurora, with shafts of multicolored lights that would otherwise appear



Northern lights filled the sky as we approached Rørvik, a small port located just beyond the bridge in the foreground. Courtesy Michel Sampson.

as curtain aurora, converging at a central point overhead. Stunning. My final look at the sky about 11:30 pm showed “southern lights” — the aurora remained south of us as we sailed north.

The second night included our Viking Feast, and as we approached the Viking longhouse, the aurora broke out again. They reappeared later that evening, with some lovely light bursts and arcs of color. Near midnight the ship sailed into Trollfjord, did a slow pirouette, shone spotlights on some of the fjord walls (looking for trolls, or so I was told), and departed. For me, a

delightful part of the show was watching the ever-changing northern lights silhouette, and illuminate, the mountains that partially encircle Trollfjord.

It sounds amazing, but our third night of aurora from the ship was as spectacular as the first. No corona appeared, but incredible ripples of light and color often raced from horizon to horizon, sometimes passing almost directly overhead. The show continued, off and on, for several hours. Even after midnight there remained sky-crossing green curtains tinged in red, and a haze of pale-green aurora covered much of the sky.



*Left:* Aurora over the Viking longhouse (seen in silhouette at lower left); courtesy Allen Hwang. *Right:* The rayed arcs of a corona — the northern lights seen from directly beneath the display.

Our final shipboard night was mostly cloudy with a slightly choppy sea as we crossed the Barents Sea around the tip of northern Norway. Talking with numerous *Nordnorge* crew members that evening, I learned that even they were astounded at our good fortune — multiple nights of clear skies and brilliant aurora activity. Several remarked that they had rarely seen such vibrant displays of the northern lights.

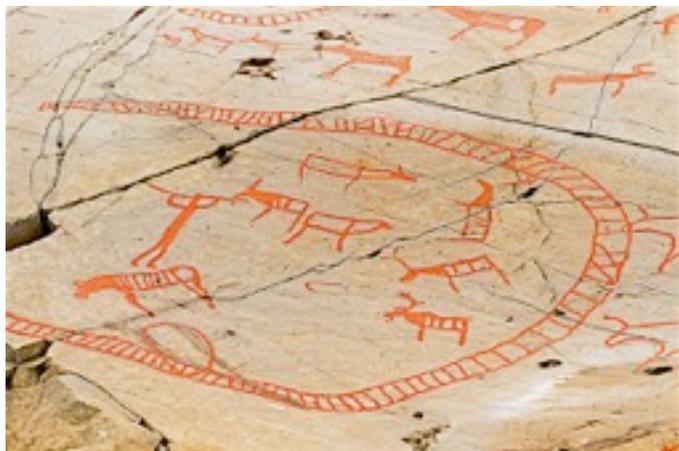


Our guide Ellinor and a local Sami from Karasjok, who entertained us with joiking (similar to throat singing) one evening.

### Sami Culture

The following morning we docked in Kirkenes, met our excellent local guide Ellinor, boarded our bus, and headed off to explore Sápmi, the cultural region of northern Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia that is home to the Sami people.

In Karasjok we enjoyed dinner — reindeer if you're curious — in a lavvu-shaped restaurant and were



Prehistoric rock carvings in Alta, courtesy Fran Woodworth.

entertained by joiking, a traditional Sami form of singing. (A lavvu is a temporary, tipi-like dwelling used by the Sami; the restaurant was rather more permanent.) We learned about Sami culture and history in Sápmi Park and visited the Sami parliament where the beautiful Assembly Hall is built to resemble a lavvu. We encountered a herd of migrating reindeer, explored the unusual house and contents of Juhls' Silver Gallery in Kautokeino (this was *not* your ordinary shopping stop), and marveled at the unique design (inside and out) of the Northern Lights Cathedral in Alta.

Even during those final evenings before we returned

to Oslo and then home-ward, and despite cloud, a slight drizzle, and a little light pollution, we managed to glimpse more northern lights. Eight nights, eight evenings of



The Northern Lights Cathedral at dawn in Alta.

successful sightings. Admittedly, the quality of viewing ranged from "OMG Look at That!" to "Are you really sure that's aurora behind the clouds?" But both the quality and quantity of the aurora borealis was simply outstanding, making this a trip to remember.

### Next Stop: Iceland

This autumn, TravelQuest and *Astronomy* magazine are again going exotic in search of the northern lights — this time to Iceland. No Sami or reindeer here. Instead we'll explore volcanoes, hot springs, and starkly beautiful landscapes that are literally out of this world — and keep watch for the aurora borealis from our hotels in the dark Icelandic countryside.

So join us, September 23-30, 2016, for **Iceland: Fire, Ice & Aurora** — in the land of trolls and elves, volcanoes and glaciers, and the beautiful northern lights. 

**Paul Deans has been to Norway and Iceland seven times as a TQ Trip Leader. He enjoys the stunning landscape of both countries, and the aurora is pretty good in both places, too.**

# Totality 2017: Join Us!



You chase eclipses. Your friends and family don't. Have you ever tried to explain why you travel thousands of miles and spend thousands of dollars to see an event that lasts one, two, three or (if you're lucky) four minutes — a short event that may be clouded out at the last minute and for which there is no do-over and no rain check? Of course you have. Do friends and family understand why you do it, even after you've done your eclipse "song and dance"? Probably not.

Totality 2017 is your opportunity to *show* them why you do it, not just talk about it. The path of totality sweeps across the United States from the northwest to the southeast.

You can, if you feel so inclined, bundle family and friends into vehicles, drive everyone into the path of totality (don't forget to book hotel rooms), constantly check weather forecasts, and hope the gods of cloud and rain don't smite your little expedition.

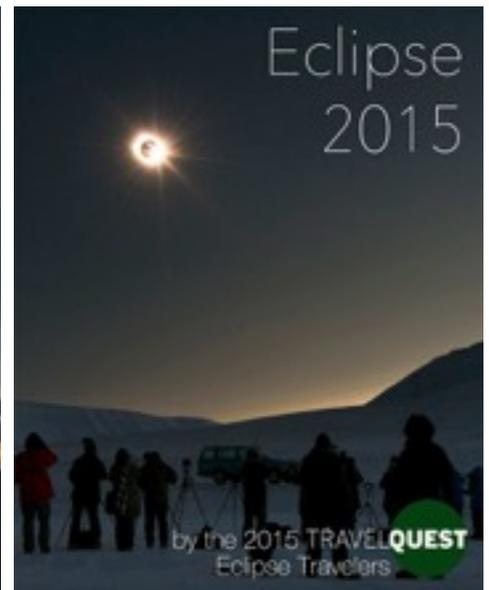
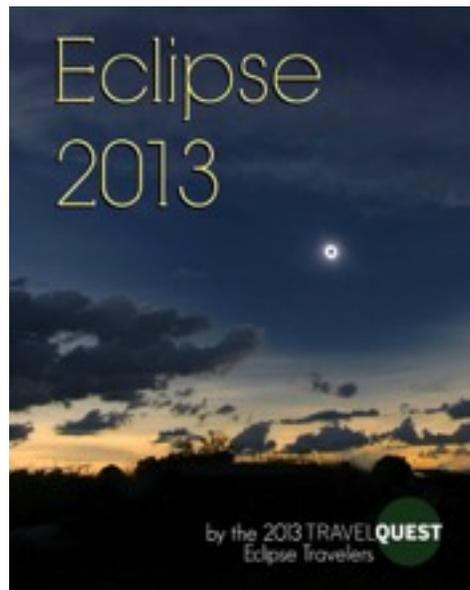
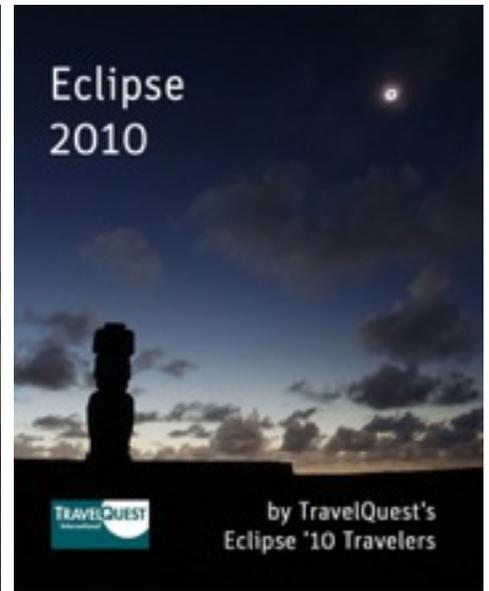
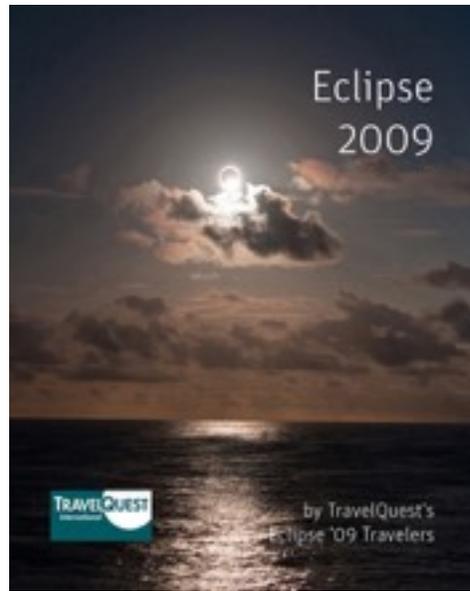
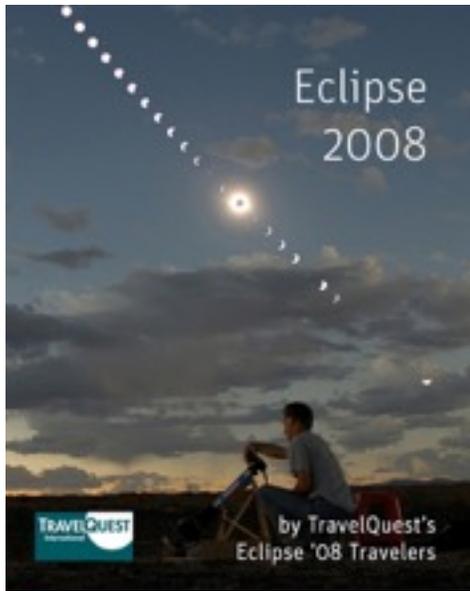
Or you can do what many others are doing: Gather family and friends together and join TravelQuest on one of our five special trips to totality. We'll explore a variety of different sights along the path including:

Some 400 people joined TravelQuest for totality in Svalbard in March 2015. Fortunately, the weather will be considerably warmer in August during the 2017 solar eclipse! Courtesy [Stan Honda](#).

[America's Music Cities](#) with totality near Nashville; the [Pacific Northwest and San Francisco](#) with totality in Oregon; and the [National Parks of the American West](#), the [Northern Parks Discovery](#) tour, and a [Yellowstone and Tetons Family Adventure](#) — these final three tips include totality viewing sites in the Jackson Hole area of Wyoming. You won't have to drive, worry about accommodations, or try to figure out the weather on eclipse day — TravelQuest has all that taken care of.

On August 21, 2017, when you and your family and friends see (weather permitting, of course) the Moon completely cover the Sun for more than two minutes, everyone will understand why you chase solar eclipses. And the first question they will ask, as totality fades and the solar crescent emerges is: When and where is the next total solar eclipse? (The answer? July 2, 2019, in central Chile/Argentina, and we're already working on that one!) 

# Were You With Us?



Complete your collection of TravelQuest's unique Eclipse Memory Books. *Eclipse 2015* is now available, as are books from five previous totalities. Visit TQ's [Eclipse Memory Book webpage](#) to preview all six books and place your order. Thank you to all those who contributed stories and images. 

## Travel Talk: A Travel Grab Bag

I'm a compulsive reader. The trouble is, I read (and speed-read) so much that I often can't recall exactly what I've read, where I've read it, or when. As a result, I make notes of interesting items (travel-related and otherwise) to bring up in conversation, mention in

presentations, or include in this e-zine. So here are a few travel ideas from my various notes.

When we live in the same place for a while, we tend to look far afield for our travels. But if you can't journey to distant lands this year, keep your travel skills sharp by

exploring your local area. If there's a guidebook (or a downloadable chapter in an e-book) that includes your city and/or region, buy it. Then take a vacation day, grab your camera and walking shoes, bring that guide, and head out. If you really want to go all out, book a night in a hotel — pretend you're an out-of-towner — and explore from there. You'll likely discover plenty of visit-worthy spots that you never knew existed in the place you've lived for years.

Another travel-related practice you can indulge in locally is photography. Imaging skills get rusty if they're not used. The nice thing about shooting locally is that you can go back and try, try again until you get that one perfect image.

As a corollary, practice being ruthless with the images you do shoot locally. Determine why some shots work while the majority don't, ditch the 95% that don't, and then apply that logic to those thousands of images you shot on your last major trip.

When you finally do venture beyond your local area, a smartphone, tablet, or even a notebook computer will likely accompany you. Before you depart, think carefully about what's on your electronic devices, and the consequences if one was lost or stolen. Obviously you'd lose documents, photos, contact details and such — some of which might be irreplaceable, so backup everything before you take the device on the road.

A scarier thought is what personal information a thief might glean from your device. At the very least its contents should be password protected, but even so don't leave personal data (passwords, passport details, bank records, etc.) on it. Move them to your backup device, then delete them from your travel device.

Finally, two packing tips. One is the "Rule of Two." It states that for a two-week trip, there should not be more than two of anything in your bag (except underwear and socks). Of course you actually have three of most things, because you'll be wearing a third set while traveling.

And those shower caps that many hotels still provide? Save them and wrap one around each shoe going into your suitcase. They'll keep your dirty shoes from coming in contact with your clean clothes. 

— PD

# Upcoming Adventures

## [Portugal & Spain: The Age of Discovery](#)

Explore the fabled Iberian Peninsula with Cesar Higuera — TravelQuest's expert guide on Iberian history and culture.

September 3-17, 2016

## [Iceland: Fire, Ice & Aurora](#)

Traverse volcanic landscapes and glaciers by day, and watch for the northern lights by night.

September 23-30, 2016

## [America's Music Cities Total Solar Eclipse](#)

Take in the music of New Orleans, Memphis, and Nashville, and experience 2 minutes and 40 seconds of totality.

August 14-22, 2017

## [National Parks of the American West Total Solar Eclipse](#)

Travel the incredibly varied landscape of the American West and enjoy totality in Jackson, Wyoming.

August 13-25, 2017

## [Northern Parks Discovery Total Solar Eclipse](#)

Yellowstone and Grand Teton provide a stunning backdrop for totality viewed from Jackson, Wyoming.

August 17-23, 2017

## [Yellowstone & Tetons Family Adventure Total Solar Eclipse](#)

Traverse the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem with expert wilderness guides, and see totality from Jackson, Wyoming.

August 19-26, 2017

## [Pacific Northwest & San Francisco Total Solar Eclipse](#)

Watch totality near Bend, Oregon, while exploring the west coast from Seattle down to San Francisco.

August 17-26, 2017

To learn more about our other trips, please visit our website:

[!\[\]\(0642e584f5339bf18fd0c448f916a29d\_img.jpg\)](http://TravelQuestTours.com)

The contents of *Travel Quest* are copyright 2016 TravelQuest International. One copy may be printed for personal, noncommercial use. Otherwise, no part of this publication may be reproduced by any means without the written consent of **TravelQuest International**.