

Kirkenes

Northern Norway · Norway

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Kirkenes is a small town in the far northeast of Norway. It sits on the Barents Sea, close to the Russian border. The town was almost destroyed in the Second World War and was freed by the Red Army in October 1944. The border and the war still shape what you see and learn here.

People come for the Arctic setting. Winter brings northern lights, snow activities and king crab safaris on the Barents Sea. Summer brings the midnight sun. The town itself is compact and can be seen in a few hours. It suits a short stop on a Hurtigruten voyage or a base for Arctic activities.

When to visit

Summer is the mild season, with long days and the midnight sun from mid-May to late July. Winter is cold and dark. The polar night lasts from late November to mid-January. Northern lights and snow activities are the main reasons to come in the dark months. Spring has bright, snowy days.

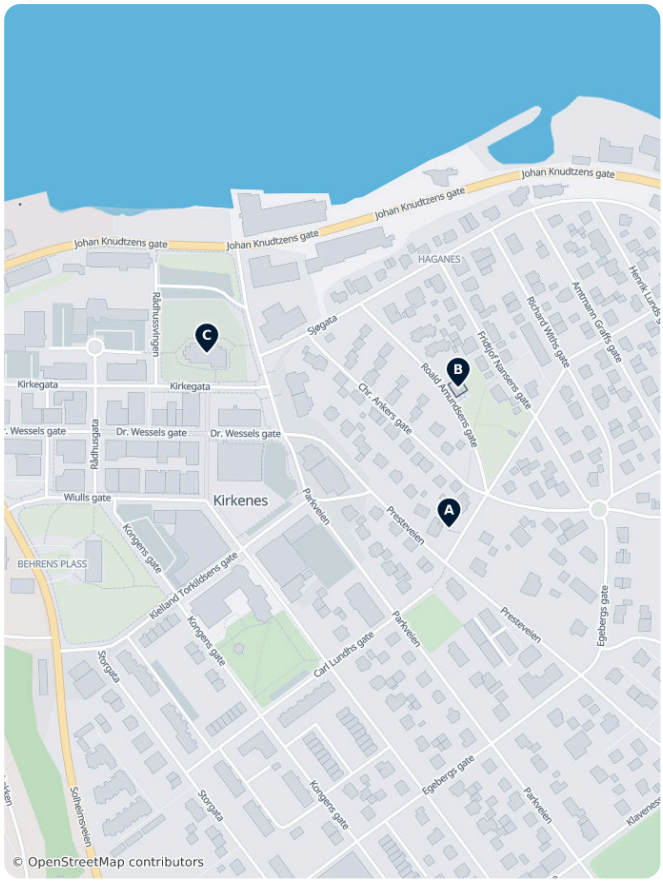
MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Good Good for aurora viewing	-7° / 1° Feels like -13°	-12° / -23°	Dry air · Calm winds
February	Good Good for aurora viewing	-7° / 2° Feels like -13°	-12° / -24°	Dry air · Calm winds
March	Poor Poor for aurora viewing	-3° / 3° Feels like -9°	-8° / -18°	Dry air · Calm winds
April	Poor Poor for aurora viewing	2° / 7° Feels like -3°	-4° / -11°	Dry air · Calm winds
May	Poor Poor for aurora viewing	7° / 17° Feels like 3°	1° / -4°	15 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Fair Fair for sightseeing	12° / 21° Feels like 9°	6° / 2°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
July	Good Good for sightseeing	16° / 25°	10° / 6°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
August	Good Good for sightseeing	15° / 23°	9° / 5°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
September	Poor Poor for sightseeing	10° / 17°	6° / 1°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
October	Good Good for aurora viewing	3° / 10° Feels like -1°	0° / -6°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
November	Good Good for aurora viewing	-2° / 4° Feels like -7°	-6° / -16°	Dry air · Calm winds
December	Good Good for aurora viewing	-5° / 2° Feels like -10°	-10° / -21°	Dry air · Calm winds

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land · 1996–2025

Top sights

Kirkenes is small, and most sights are in the centre. They focus on the war and on life at the border.

- A Andersgrotta is an air-raid shelter from the Second World War. Guided tours are booked in advance, last about 30 minutes and show how the town's people survived the bombing. Check current times and prices.
- B Monument to the Soviet Soldiers honours the Red Army soldiers who freed the town in 1944.
- C Kirkenes kirke is the main church in the town centre.
- The Border Land Museum (Grenselandmuseet) is about 1 km from the centre. It covers industry, wartime and everyday life at the Norwegian-Russian border, and has a shop and café. Opening hours are seasonal, so check before you go.
- The Pasvik valley lies south of the town. The point where Norway, Finland and Russia meet is deep in Øvre Pasvik National Park. Allow most of a day: a drive of 2.5 to 3 hours from town, then a marked walk of about 5 to 6 km each way, usually possible from June to October. Only the Norwegian side is open to the public, because Finland and Russia keep border zones closed. Treat these figures as approximate.
- Winter packages from Snow Resort Kirkenes, outside town at Bjørnevatn, include king crab safaris and husky sledding. Check the operator for current seasons and prices.



Kirkenes – Plan Your Trip

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Getting there

- **By air**: Kirkenes Airport (Høybuktmoen) is about 12 to 15 km west of town. There are direct flights from Oslo and Tromsø. Regional flights connect Kirkenes with Alta, Vadsø and Vardø. An airport coach meets arrivals and departures. Taxis and rental cars are also available.
- **By sea**: Kirkenes is the end of the Hurtigruten coastal route from Bergen. The voyage from Bergen is a long one, with stops in many ports.
- **Russian border**: The Storskog crossing is the only road crossing to Russia, about 16 km east of town. It is not a sightseeing route or a day trip. Crossing into Russia needs a Russian visa, and rules change at short notice, so check the Norwegian Police border information before you make any plans.
- **Time**: Kirkenes uses central European time, the same as Oslo. This is one hour behind nearby Finland.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Norway at a glance:

CURRENCY
NOK kr

ELECTRICITY

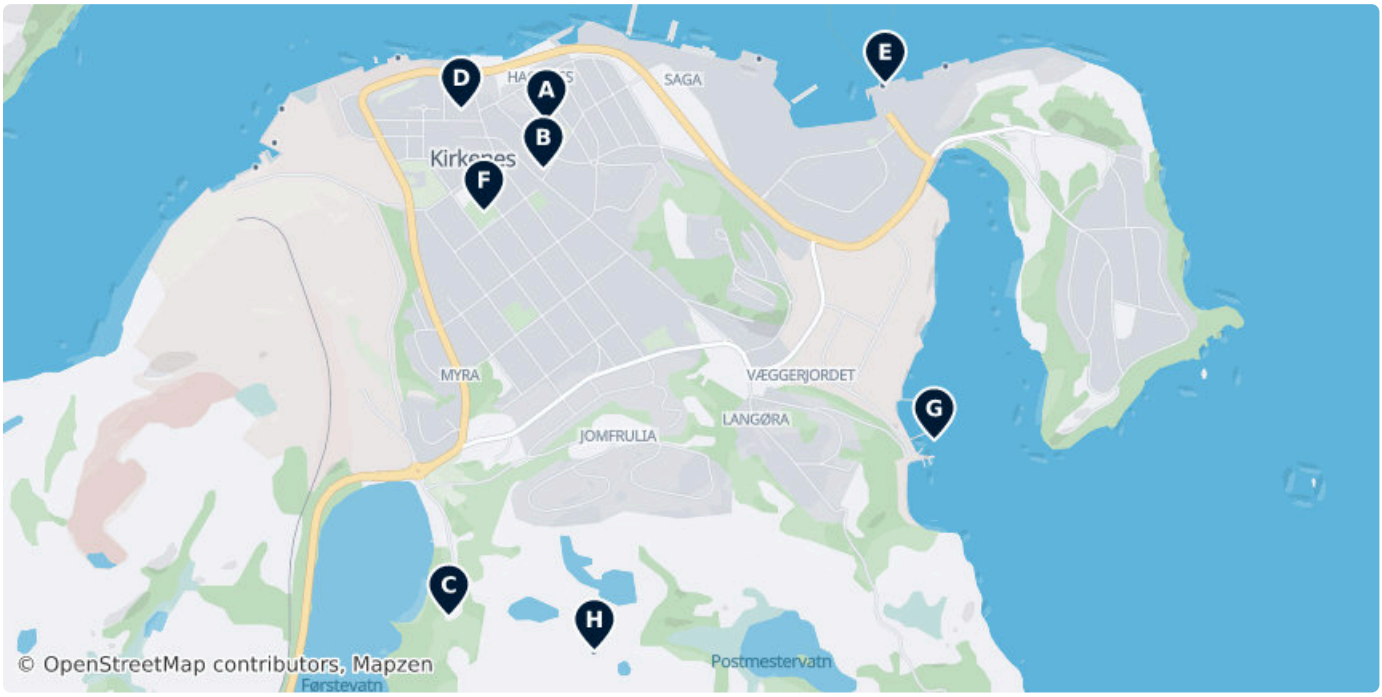
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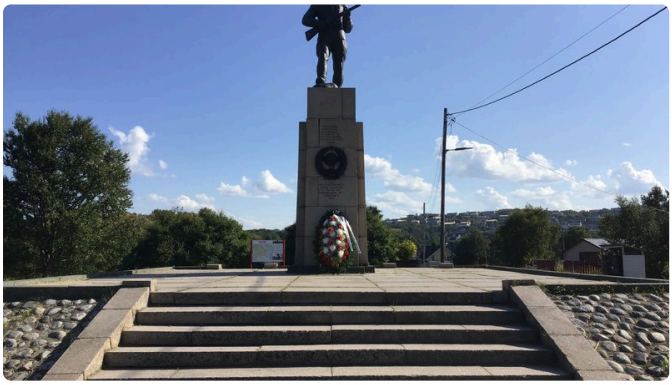
LANGUAGES
Norwegian Bokmål,
Norwegian Nynorsk

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Kirkenes Essentials

Kirkenes serves as the northern terminus of the Hurtigruten coastal voyage and a key gateway to the Barents region. The town's identity is defined by its strategic border location and its survival of intense World War II bombing. This selection highlights significant historical sites, including the Andersgrotta air-raid shelter and the Monument to Soviet Soldiers, alongside cultural landmarks like the Savio Museum, which showcases indigenous Sami art, and the 1959 concrete church rebuilt after the war.





A Monument to the Soviet Soldiers

Commemorates the 1944 liberation of Kirkenes by the Red Army. The bronze statue of a Soviet soldier stands on a high stone pedestal overlooking the town center.

3A Roald Amundsens gate, Kirkenes 9900, Norway
(69.72803, 30.04980)



B Andersgrotta

A World War II air-raid shelter carved into the rock. It provided refuge for the local population during heavy bombardment and now hosts historical film screenings.

Haganesveien, 9900 Kirkenes, Norway
(69.72693, 30.04960)

C Saviomusea / Saviomuseet

Located within the Border Area Museum, this gallery is dedicated to the woodcut prints and life of John Savio, the first internationally recognized Sami artist.

(69.71662, 30.04331)



D Kirkenes kirke

A concrete church completed in 1959. It replaced the previous 19th-century wooden structure that was destroyed during World War II air raids.

5 Kirkegata, Kirkenes 9900, Norway (69.72830, 30.04414)

E Hurtigruten Kirkenes

The northernmost port of call for the Norwegian coastal voyage. Ships dock here at the end of the northbound route before beginning the return journey to Bergen.

Kirkenes - Vadsø, Norway (69.72889, 30.07234)

global.hurtigruten.com/ports/kirkenes/

F Thorvald Stoltenberg

A monument honoring the Norwegian diplomat and politician, recognized for his instrumental role in establishing the Barents Euro-Arctic Region cooperation.

Carl Lundhs gate, 9900 Kirkenes, Norway (69.72595, 30.04566)



G Kirkenes

Waterfront facility providing berths for private vessels and local boats, situated near the town's commercial center.

9900, Norway (69.72069, 30.07560)

H Bunker

Concrete ruins of a defensive fortification dating back to the German occupation of Kirkenes during World War II.

(Unnamed Road), 9900, Norway (69.71582, 30.05300)

DATA SOURCES

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