



PICTURES: Marth Giskjerga/Olein; Marne Bech Dahle

Havila Polaris

Havila Voyages

OVERVIEW: *Havila Polaris* is one of four ships in the Havila Voyages fleet that operate the Norwegian Coastal Express route along the fjord-lined coast, stopping at 34 ports between Bergen and Kirkenes. The hybrid-powered ship, built in 2023, doubles as a cargo ship and a ferry for local foot passengers as well as hosting cruise guests. The use of liquefied natural gas and battery power allows it to sail for up to four hours silently and emission-free. In December 2025, the ship was the first in the fleet to use biogas and battery power for a carbon-neutral sailing, and the line intends to use this alternative fuel to further reduce emissions.

CABINS: *Polaris* can hold up to 640 passengers across 179 staterooms. Most cabins have sea views and range from 16 to 45 square metres. The Premium Suites have floor-to-ceiling windows, private balconies, a separate living area and entitle guests to breakfast and lunch in the Hildring Fine Dining restaurant. The ship's decor is inspired by its surroundings, with artwork and artefacts reflecting the landscapes and furnishings that are in keeping with Scandinavian minimalism.

FOOD AND DRINK: Havila Voyages gives passengers a taste of Norway using sustainable ingredients while minimising food waste, so advise clients not to expect the big buffets or portion sizes found on many mainstream ships. Havrand is the main restaurant where breakfast and lunch buffets are served, with table service for dishes such as pancakes with local berries. On the

same deck, Havly Cafe offers tasty pastries and coffee, with lunch and dinner for an extra fee. Hildring is offered to every passenger once during their stay; my highlight was a king crab platter served with fresh bread and melted butter. The Havblikk Bar & Lounge at the top of the ship has wraparound windows so clients can admire the scenery while sipping a cocktail. There are no drinks packages, so any drinks are in addition to the fare.

FACILITIES: There are two hot tubs, two saunas (one each for men and women; swimwear is permitted) and a separate weights room and gym with cardio equipment. There is free Wi-Fi on board, but it is worth noting this is not suitable for streaming or downloading large files. Excursions range from active, such as sea kayaking in Alesund, to historical and food-focused tours.

USP: Havila Voyages suits those looking for something different from a traditional cruise. It has a very pragmatic vibe on board and a tangible focus on doing cruise differently that spans everything from its cuisine and onboard experience to the excursions on shore.

BOOK IT: Havila Voyages offers a 10-night voyage from Bergen to Kirkenes and returning to Trondheim, from £1,547 per person based on two sharing a Seaview cabin in November or December. havilavoyages.com

Reviewed by Ella Sagar