

NORWAY

Capital: Oslo (GEN, FBU)
Area: 125,188 sq miles/325,489 sq km
Population: 4,128,000
Religion: Lutheran
Currency: Krone (NOK)
Electricity: 220 volts
Language: Norwegian

Like the Danes and Swedes, the Norwegians are of Teutonic origin, with a history of raiding the northwestern European coasts between the 8th and 11th centuries. In 1815 Norway was acquired by Sweden, a less than harmonious situation. Finally in 1905 a peaceful separation occurred. But in 1940 during World War II, Germany invaded, remaining until the end of the war. Since the war, Norway has continued to grow economically, including increased tourism and facilities to accommodate visitors.

Norway is bordered by the Barents Sea on the north, the Norwegian Sea on the west, the North Sea on the south, Sweden to the east, and Finland and Russia in the northeast. It has two overseas areas, both of which are located north of the country. Svalbard (LYR) is approximately 400 miles/644 km north of Norway, and Jan Mayen is about 300 miles/483 km north of Iceland.

Norway is truly a spectacularly beautiful, dramatic, and impressive country. Its unique coastline contributes to its beauty and its attraction for everyone. Basically, its indented coastline follows approximately 1,100 miles/1,770 km along the three seas that form its borders. Including all the indentions caused by the spectacular fjords, the total ocean coastline is more than 12,000 miles/19,312 km. Dotting this coastline are nearly fifty thousand, mostly uninhabited, islands.

Norway is about the size of New Mexico in square miles/sq km, with an inverted "L" shape, is long, and is relatively narrow. Its northern boundary lies more than 300 miles/483 km above the Arctic Circle, farther than any other European country. Although 25 percent of the country is forested with dense evergreens and hardwoods, approximately 70 percent of Norway is uninhabitable and covered by glaciers, rivers, moors, rolling hills, and

mountains. Mountains and plateaus cover most of the country, but the coastline is characterized by rolling hills and the dramatic fjords.

Needless to say, everyone will find Norway most impressive. Travelers who enjoy the outdoors, the music of Grieg, the Northern Lights, the plays of Ibsen, hiking, downhill and cross-country skiing, ice skating, fishing, kayaking, bicycling, golfing, walking, the Land of the Midnight Sun, shopping, European history, a living culture, and absolutely spectacular, rugged, jagged coastlines will truly love Norway.

Because of the northern location, the best time to visit is from mid-May to mid-September. The rest of the year can be cooler to very cold, windier, and rainier.

Touring

You will probably arrive in Oslo (FBU, GEN), the major international airport. There are many airports throughout the country offering excellent air service to most points. The best way to see the fjords is by cruise or local boats. Norway does have good roads and rail service to many points within the country. The best way to see the entire country is by a combination of rail, rental car, air, and cruise. Try to use as many of these types of transportation as possible to get a better view of this beautiful green country.

We recommend the following itinerary to give you a good overview of Norway:

Day 1-2 Arrive Oslo (FBU, GEN).

- Akershus Fortress
- Vigeland Sculpture Park
- Edvard Munch Museum
- Holmenkollen Ski Jump
- Norwegian Folk Museum
- Ra and Kon-Tiki rafts
- Polar Ship Fam

Day 3-4 Take the "Bergen Scenic Railway" day trip to Bergen (BGO). Bergen is famous for the Hanseatic Museum, the Bryggen area, Fish Market, the Floyen funicular, and Edvard Grieg's home in Hop.

Day 5 Day cruise to Songnefjord. Overnight.

Day 6 Drive back to Oslo via the southern coastal fjord route. Overnight Oslo.

Day 7 Depart Oslo or continue seeing other towns and sites.

Should you have additional time, we suggest you visit some of the following areas or towns:

Fjord cruise—You should consider taking a fjord cruise beginning or ending in Bergen (BGO). These cruises range from 6 to 12 days. This cruise goes through some of the most beautiful, dramatic, and stark scenery in the world, and is one of the most impressive cruise trips on earth. (6-12 days)

Flaam (FBU, GEN, BGO)—This fjord town in north central Norway is a frequent stop on bus and fjord cruises because of its scenery. Waterfalls, valleys, quaint villages, and beautiful scenery are some of the reasons we would suggest Flaam. (1 day)

Honningsvag (HVG)—Located near the top of Norway, Honningsvag is famous because this is the closest airport to the North Cape to see the Midnight Sun at its best. We suggest you be here at midnight to see the Midnight Sun. The scenery is impressive, the feeling is eerie, and it's great for them to send a postcard from here. (1 day)

Stavanger (SVG)—A southern coastal city, Stavanger has several places to visit, including the Cathedral; walking through the historic section, fish market, and market place; taking a walking tour to the Pulpit Rock; and seeing the Botanical Gardens, the Cathedral, and other sites. (2 days)

Trondheim (TRD)—This ancient site, where Vikings met and Christians gathered in the Middle Ages, is interesting to see as well as the Market Place, the 11th-century Nidaros Cathedral, Royal Palace, several museums, and the wharf area. (3 days)