

Magic of the Fjords

7 days | Bergen to Oslo



From breathtaking Bergen (the gateway to the Fjords) - to the picturesque Balestrand. Take a ride on the famous Flam to Oslo railway passing dramatic scenery and huge waterfalls before arriving in the captivating capital of Oslo. Discover Norway's magnificent fjords in one glorious and unforgettable week.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Oslo - immerse yourself in the capital of Norway surrounded by beautiful forests and Oslofjord
- Flamsbana - gaze at wonderful scenery on this stunning railway journey through the mountains
- Balestrand - take in this idyllic Norwegian village on Sognefjord
- Bergen - step into this beautiful Norwegian city including UNESCO listed Bryggen old wharf and wooden buildings

What's Included

- 6 nights 3 - 4 star accommodation
- 6 breakfasts & 2 dinners
- English speaking guide
- Guided sightseeing in Oslo

- Guided sightseeing in Bergen
- Train from Flam to Oslo
- Ferries between Bergen and Balestrand & Balestrand and Flam
- Airport arrival taxi on day 1

What's Not Included

- Items of a personal nature and additional meals
- International flights and visas
- Gratuity for your tour guide. Tipping your tour guide is an entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Bergen

Upon arrival into Bergen airport you have the use of a taxi to your hotel in the heart of downtown Bergen. The remainder of the day is at your leisure - explore the city, shops, bars and cafes.

Please note an additional taxi voucher is provided and should be used to redeem your taxi to your start hotel. If you have not received this voucher before you depart for your trip please contact your consultant. **Overnight - Bergen**

Day 2 : Bergen City Tour



Discover Bergen - the world heritage city. Bergen is the Gateway to the Fjords of Norway. As a UNESCO World Heritage City and a European City of Culture, the Bergen region has the ideal combination of nature, culture and exciting urban life all year around.

At 10:00, meet your local guide at the reception of your hotel and enjoy a walking tour of the city of Bergen. Pass through the most emblematic places such as the Hanseatic Bryggen, with the church of Mary, the Hakon fortress and the famous fish market. You can visit the Fløibanen Funicular, which will take you on the top of the Mountain Fløyen, for overall view of the city.

To get a real taste of Norway, you may wish to join one of the optional tours on offer:

Bergen Food tour (15:00, approx. 3 hrs.)

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Overnight - Bergen (B)

Day 3 : Cruise to Balestrand



Bergen - Balestrand. This morning we embark on a cruise to Balestrand. On board we make our way through the King of Fjords - Sognefjord. With incredible views, this is a truly beautiful journey.

Upon arrival in to Balestrand the rest of the day is at leisure for you to explore this picturesque area. There are various hiking trails as well as culture and artistic activities in close proximity. Dinner will be enjoyed at the hotel this evening.

Departure from Bergen aprox 0800 (schedule subject to change) arrival in Balestrand Aprox 11.55 **Overnight - Balestrand (B, D)**

Day 4 : Optional Fjaerland Excursion



Today is a free day for you to explore the area on your independently. Come join us on the optional round trip excursion to Fjaerland which is available from June to August. By boat we enjoy amazing views of the steep mountains, lush landscape and green fjords. Fjaerland is the village where the fjord meets the glaciers, here we also visit the Norwegian Glacier Museum.

Enjoy Ivo Caprino's panoramic film about Jostedal Glacier and the fascinating exhibition. Continue on by coach to the two glaciers two glaciers, Supphellebreen and Bøyabreen. Optional Excursion: Fjaerland cruise - 109EUR - bookable locally. **Overnight - Balestrand (B, D)**

Day 5 : Flam & Myrdal



Balestrand - Flam - Oslo. Your journey on the Sognefjord continues today, Sognefjord - the King of Norway and the longest fjord in Norway. The initial part of the fjord, called Aurlandsfjord, is a 17-kilometer arm of the world's second longest fjord, the Sognefjord (204 km). It is considered to be one of the most picturesque fjords in the world.

Arrive in Flam, where you have some free time to discover this beautiful village.

Departure to Myrdal by train. Myrdal station is a mountain railway station and junction, located about 13 km from the village Flam. Board the famous Flamsbana - one of the steepest trainlines in the world. The train journey runs through fantastic nature, past the Rallar road, steep mountains, breathtaking waterfalls, through 20 tunnels and offers so many viewpoints that many feel like travelling multiple times between the mountain and the fjord.

Schedule (*subject to change)
11:55 Cruise Balestrand Flam - arrival to Flam at 13:25
16:05 Panoramic train from Flam - arrival to Myrdal at 17:02

17:53 Bergen Railway train from Myrdal - arrival to Oslo at 22:27 or 23:00

Overnight - Oslo (B)

Day 6 : Oslo

This morning we meet our guide and embark on a 3-hour sightseeing tour of this vibrant city. We enjoy views of the medieval fortress of Akershus, the Royal Palace, Frogner Park, City Hall and Vigeland Sculpture Park where we marvel at 3 Viking Age ships. Spend the remainder of the day relaxing or independently continue exploring this amazing city. We recommend you purchase a 24-hour Oslo pass which grants access to most of the city's museums and free travel to Bygdog Peninsula. Approx. 42EUR per person for a 24 hour Oslo Pass.

Overnight - Oslo (B)

Day 7 : Oslo



Our tour ends after breakfast. Depending on your flight details, you can still enjoy some last-minute shopping for the Viking souvenirs, walk along the streets and explore the city of the royal family, and the main Karl Johan's street, with many shops, bars and cafes.

No transfers to the airport have been included, however we can offer these at an additional cost. (B)

ACCOMMODATION

Highlighted below are some of the accommodation/ hotels which we frequently use on this tour. We reserve the right to substitute these stays to ones of a similar standard.

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Please refer to your Tour Voucher for your confirmed arrival hotel or start point and further arrival information.

Hotel Augustin

Bergen's oldest family run hotel, the Hotel Augustin tastefully blends traditional style with modern design. Guest rooms are bright and tidy with big windows and en suite facilities. Complimentary Wi-Fi is provided throughout and the hotel is famed for its relaxed atmosphere and outstanding service. The hotel is also home to the Altona Wine Bar & Kitchen - a fully restored 400 Year old inn. Augustin is located in the heart of Bergen with Bergen harbour, the Floibanen funicular right on its doorstep.



Zander K Hotel

With a stunning Scandinavian design, the Zander K hotel offers spacious and comfortable accommodation in a great location, just a short walk from the Bergen Art Museum and the colourful Bryggen area of the city. Built in 2017 all rooms are ensuite with free wifi. Enjoy a bite to eat in the restaurant or sip on a cocktail in the stylish bar. In need of exercise? Not only can you use the fully equipped gym, the Zander K also has a collection of 20 free bikes for guests to use exploring the town.



Kviknes Hotel

Sitting on the edge of a picturesque lake, the Kviknes Hotel offers spectacular, panoramic views of the surrounding Sognefjord from the

comfort of an exquisitely maintained 18th century property. Rooms are simple yet pleasant and come equipped with a range of modern amenities, including a cable TV and an en suite. Some rooms also come with a balcony. Wandering through the hotel, guests can marvel at the antique art pieces in the corridors and sample delicious international flavours in the restaurant. Hiking and fishing excursions are available in the immediate surrounding area.



Clarion Hotel The Hub

With an incredible location in the heart of the city, you're within easy reach of the best bars, shops, restaurants and cafes. The hotel has a host of facilities including a large gym, relaxation and swimming pool on the lower ground floor. The Clarion Hotel The Hub has a strong focus on sustainability and green practices, not only does the hotel look to limit reduce its food waste as much as possible they also have a large field on the roof which provides microgreens and vegetables to be used in the hotel.



BEFORE YOU GO

Norway Country Guide

Please note

This tour is operated in conjunction with our trusted partner and you will join travellers

who booked through different operators, not solely On The Go

This itinerary should be used as a guide only and may vary from day to day depending on road & weather conditions.

Visas

Please be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and that visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours, therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy before travel. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 3 months from your planned date of departure from Norway.

UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and USA passport holders do not require a visa for a stay of less than 90 days

Norway is part of the borderless region known as the Schengen Area and South African residents require a Schengen visa in order to enter Norway. A passport valid for at least three months from your departure is required and a visa will only be issued if blank pages are available and if the passport has been issued in the last 10 years. Requirements for the procurement of a Norway visa are subject to change but application requirements include round-trip travel itinerary specifying entry and exit dates from the Schengen state and proof of funds to support yourself during your stay, along with a copy of your travel insurance policy. Visas are issued by the Norwegian embassy in Pretoria.

Currency

The official currency in Norway is Norwegian krone, written as NOK. Banknotes come in denominations of 50kr, 100kr, 200kr, 500kr and 1000kr. Check OANDA for the latest exchange rates.

Pound Sterling, US Dollars, Euro and other major currencies can be easily

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exchanged in Norway with banks and bureau de changes offering the better exchange rates once in destination. It's advisable to request bank notes in smaller denominations, as it can sometimes be hard to get change from large notes and smaller notes are handy for smaller purchases. Debit and credit cards are widely accepted in restaurants, shops, hotels and even taxis across Norway and you'll find ATMs throughout the country, even in smaller towns, though withdrawal fees may be charged. Traveller's Cheques are not recommended as they're often difficult to exchange and incur high fees.

Time & Voltage

Norway works on Central European Time (CET) which is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed in Norway with the clocks turning forward one hour at the end of March and one hour backwards at the end of October each year.

The standard voltage in Norway is 230 volts, 50Hz AC. Primary sockets generally require Continental or European plugs of the two round pin variety. We recommend that you pack a universal travel adaptor. You will need a voltage converter and plug adaptor in order to use U.S. appliances.

Tippling

Salaries are really good in Norway with waiters and bar staff earning a decent wage, which means tipping is not required nor expected. Restaurants and bars include the service charge in your bill though in upmarket restaurants where table service is an important part of the experience, a tip is appreciated. It's also uncommon to tip taxi drivers or hotel staff.

Food & Drink

Norwegian cuisine primarily focuses on game and fish, resources that are found in abundance in the country's pristine woodlands and surrounding seas. Traditionally meat would

feature in every main meal whether it's slow-cured lamb's leg (fenalår) served with vegetables for dinner or smoked salmon (røkt laks) served with scrambled eggs, dill, mustard sauce and bread for lunch. Norway's long winters meant that preserving food was necessary to last the season, which gave rise to a fondness for cured fish (tørrfisk), often eaten at breakfast with lefse, the national flatbread, and Jarlsberg cheese.

Preserved meat and sausages are popular and eaten as part of a spread or served in hearty stews. Norway's meat specialities include moose – said to taste similar to venison, reindeer – wonderfully lean meat, and grouse – tender with a mild gamey taste. These meats grace restaurant menus in autumn when hunting season begins. Often meat is accompanied by potatoes (mashed, boiled or pureed) and a cream-based sauce or thick gravy.

Like elsewhere in Europe, bread is an important staple in the Norwegian diet and tends to be coarse in texture and made with whole grain flour. Rye bread is typically used for open-sandwiches, known locally as smørbrød, a buttered slice of bread topped with a range of ingredients including cheese, caviar, hard boiled egg, herring, pâté, salad leaves, herbs, sliced cucumber, tomato and pickled beets.

Norway's climate and countryside are the ideal environment for wild fruits with strawberries, bilberries, lingonberries, raspberries and apples all particularly intense in flavour and used in desserts and sweet treats such as krumkake – a cross between a waffle and a pancake that's rolled up and filled with whipped cream.

The people of Norway love their coffee, so much so in fact that they are the second highest consumer of coffee in the world. This means you'll find quality barista-style coffee shops

in all of Norway's cities and larger towns. As far as alcoholic beverages go, Norway produces a number of pilsners, red beers and malt beers with a rich flavour. With a long history, mjød (mead – a famous honey wine) is a very traditional Scandinavian drink and graces the shelves of many tourist shops though it's not a commonly-drunk beverage.

In recent decades Norway's dining scene has vastly improved with a much better selection of international cuisine and in the larger cities you'll find a respectable choice of dining options. Today, Norwegian chefs lean towards the use of locally produced organic ingredients, creating modern versions of traditional dishes.

Water: Tap water is safe to drink in Norway as it is of fantastic quality and unlikely to cause any stomach upsets. Avoid drinking from river streams when out in the countryside, however, as water may contain harmful parasites

Health Requirements

You should seek medical advice from your local health practitioner before travelling to Norway and ensure that you receive all of the appropriate vaccinations. Allow yourself 6–8 weeks to do so. As a guide, vaccinations against tetanus are recommended. The medical facilities and healthcare in Norway are excellent and available for free or at a reduced cost to European Union citizens with a valid EHIC form or its replacement ID card.

During winter in Norway the main health risk is hypothermia and frostbite. With temperatures reaching well below freezing across Norway, ensure you have packed enough warm clothing and thermal under layers, as well as good quality gloves, socks and hat to keep body extremities warm and covered. In summer mosquitoes and blackflies are a particular nuisance so

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take a DEET-based repellent and keep covered up.

Shopping

With a long tradition of knitting, Norway is an excellent place to pick up a wool sweater or scarf. Knitwear is of high quality and comes in a variety of timeless, practical designs and functional colours. Wool is also used for thermals and outdoor clothing, perfectly suited to the cold temperatures of Norway's winter so it's worth looking out for quality pieces while you're here.

High-end shoppers will find ample shopping opportunities for design pieces from furniture to lighting. Scandinavian design is particularly known for its use of traditional materials and contemporary styles.

In Norse mythology and Scandinavian folklore trolls are believed to be the very first inhabitants of the region and although you're unlikely to bump into a real-life troll, you can always bring home a miniature ceramic or plastic figurine. Another good souvenir option is a Viking drinking bowl made from wood and usually hand-painted or a Bjørklund cheese slicer, Norway's most famous invention.

Prices of goods in Norway are fixed though you may be able to bargain a little off the price for goods sold at markets.

Prices of goods

Norway has one of the highest price levels for personal goods and services in all of Europe and its reputation as an expensive travel destination is well-deserved. Norwegians are paid a good living wage and there's little disparity in income but for an international visitor, the exchange rate means that Norway is a costly holiday.

To put it in some perspective, a main course at an inexpensive restaurant costs around USD\$18 while a three-course meal at a nicer restaurant will

set you back closer to USD\$50. A half litre bottle of locally produced beer purchased at a bar will cost around \$8 while a small bottle of water is around USD\$2.50 though you can save money here by drinking tap water instead.

While on a tour in which your accommodation, local transportation, breakfast and touring is included in the price, we recommend you budget USD\$50-80 per person per day for additional meals, drinks and items of a personal nature.

Wi-Fi

Norway offers good internet access across its cities and larger towns with WiFi found in cafes and public spaces across the country. Many hotels provide free WiFi access to their guests and there is often free WiFi on board buses and trains though registration is usually required and access limited by time. Cruise ships that operate through Norway's fjords usually charge for WiFi and prices can be expensive

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