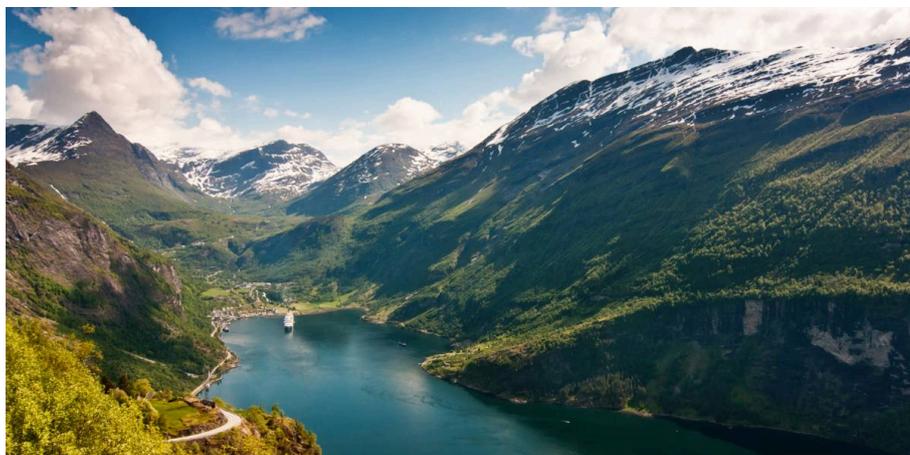


# Fjords, Charms & Traditions

8 days | Starts/Ends: Oslo



*PRIVATE SELF DRIVE TOUR: Take a self drive holiday through Norway's stunning fjords. Explore Norway's capital Oslo, visit open air folk museums, spectacular fjords, beautiful towns, tall mountain peaks and endless glaciers.*

## HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

### Trip Highlights

- Oslo - capital of Norway surrounded by beautiful forests and Oslofjord.
- Begnadalen Fagernes - fourth longest fjord in the world.
- Bergen - beautiful Norwegian city including UNESCO listed Bryggen old wharf and wooden buildings
- Balestrand - idyllic Norwegian village on Sognefjord
- Briksdal Glacier - walk or take the troll car onto the glacier.
- Geirangerfjord - cruise past waterfalls, towering cliffs and stunning scenery.
- Lillehammer - home to the 1994 Winter Olympic Games
- The road of trolls - famous road with 11 hairpin bends!

### What's Included

- 7 buffet breakfasts
- 7 nights in 3 star hotels

- Cruise on the Geiranger Fjord (1.5 hours)
- Car hire for 8 days. Type A Vauxhall UP or similar. Picked up and returned at Oslo airport.

### What's Not Included

- Items of a personal nature and additional meals
- International flights to/from our tour start/end points and visas
- Ferries:
  - Manheller - Fodnes - 106NOK (price includes car and passengers)
  - Hella - Dragsvik - 87NOK (price includes car and passengers)
  - Eidsdal - Linge 73NOK (includes driver) and 30NOK per passenger
- Gratuity for your tour guide. Tipping your tour guide is an entirely personal gesture

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Day 1 : Oslo



Upon arrival in Oslo International Airport you will collect your rental car and drive into Oslo. On your journey in you'll be met with views of beautiful forests and the Oslofjord which surround the vibrant city. Check into your hotel and why not 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.

Distance covered: 50km/32 miles **Overnight - Oslo**

### Day 2 : Fjords & Museums



Oslo - Geilo. After breakfast you hit the road again as you drive along the Tyrffjorden and cross the road to Begnadalen Fagernes. Why not stop at Valdresmusea Fagernes - an open air folk museum which has been open since 1901! This impressive museum has a fascinating collection of more than 70 houses, traces the history of Norway over the years. This afternoon head to the small villages of Gol and Geilo. Continuing on to the

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desert plateau Hardangervidda and stop the impressive waterfall Voringfoss.

Distance covered: 350km/218 miles  
**Overnight - Geilo (B)**

## Day 3 : Bergen



Lofthus - Bergen. Today you'll head to Bergen. On the way you'll cross the bridge over the fourth longest fjord in the world - Hardangerfjord. Once in Bergen soak up the atmosphere of the old harbour - Bryggen, listed as a World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. You can also take a funicular to the top of Mount Fløien where you can really admire Bergen - the city of seven hills. We also recommend a visit to the house of the great composer Greig as well as the stave church Fantoft.

Distance covered: 170km/105 miles  
**Overnight - Bergen (B)**

## Day 4 : Fjords to Balestrand



Bergen - Balestrand. This morning your road trip starts with a stop at Gudvangen - a small village in the heart of the fjords. Here you can take an optional two hour cruise on the Sognefjord and Naeroyfjord - its narrowest arm - in order to get to Flam - you will also need to get a shuttle back to Gudvangen to get your car again. From Gudvangen you'll take the road along the fjord and two ferries between Mannheller and Fodnes

(106NOK includes car and passengers) and then between Hella and Dragsvik (87NOK includes car and passengers) before you get to your destination for the day - Balestrand.

Distance covered: 200km/125 miles  
**Overnight - Balestrand (B)**

## Day 5 : Briksdal Glacier



Balestrand to Loen. Continuing north you'll drive along the Sognefjord and through Forde. Take a stop along the way to see the Briksdal glacier before reaching the village of Loen. At the Briksdal glacier you can choose between walking along the glacier or you can take a troll car and enjoy a ride to the glacier.

Distance covered: 175km/108 miles  
**Overnight - Loen (B)**

## Day 6 : Cruising the fjords



Loen - Geiranger and Lillehammer region. This morning you head towards Geiranger to cruise past half of one of the most impressive and narrow fjords of Norway. You will see numerous waterfalls and abandoned mountain farms along the way, which are listed as UNESCO world heritage sites. On your return to Geiranger continue to Eidsdal and take a ferry over to Linde (73NOK for driver and 30NOK per passenger). Once across the fjord you will take the famous road of Trolls. This hair-raising road has no less than 11 hairpin bends and is certainly a

highlight of your driving days! Later on you will reach Skeikampen where you will overnight.

Distance covered: 275km/170 miles  
**Overnight - Vinstra (B)**

## Day 7 : Olympic Lillehammer



Vinstra - Oslo. Today is an Olympic day as you travel from Vinstra to Lillehammer - the host of the 1994 Winter Olympics. You should definitely go to see the Olympic ski jumping hill as well as the open air museum in Maihaugen. Continuing back to Oslo you can explore the impressive Frogner Park with 212 sculptures made by Gustav Vigeland and the national symbol - the Arkehus fortress. You can also take a ride on the Bygdøy Peninsula, visit the Viking Museum with three preserved Viking ships, or the Farm Museum and its ships left from their polar expeditions.

Distance covered: 260km/162 miles  
**Overnight - Oslo (B)**

## Day 8 : Oslo



After breakfast and check out at your hotel it is time to head back to the airport to return your car and pick up your flight home.

Distance covered: 50km/32 miles(B)

**KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**

**Norway Country Guide**

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## 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.

## 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

## 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 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.

## Tipping

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 specialties 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

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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 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.

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