

Country Guide for

NORWAY



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1 CONTACT ADDRESSES

Location: Northern Europe, Scandinavia.

Norwegian Tourist Board (Norges Turistrad)
Drammensveien 40, PO Box 2893 Solli, NO-0230 Oslo, Norway
Tel: 22 92 52 00. Fax: 22 56 05 05.
E-mail: norway@ntr.no
Web site: <http://www.ntr.no> or <http://www.visitnorway.com>

Royal Norwegian Embassy
25 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8QD
Tel: (020) 7591 5500. Fax: (020) 7245 6993.
E-mail: norway.london@mfa.no
Web site: <http://www.norway.org.uk>
Opening hours: 0900-1600 Monday to Friday (general enquiries); 1000-1230 Monday to Friday (visa section).
Consulates in: Edinburgh and Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Norwegian Tourist Board
Charles House, 5 Lower Regent Street, London SW1Y 4LR
Tel: (020) 7839 6255. Fax: (020) 7839 6014. E-mail: infouk@ntr.no
Web site: <http://www.visitnorway.com>

British Embassy
Thomas Heftyesgate 8, 0244 Oslo, Norway
Tel: 23 13 27 00. Fax: 23 13 27 41. E-mail: britemb@online.no
Web site: <http://www.britain.no/>
Consulates in: Ålesund, Bergen, Harstad, Kristiansund (N), Kristiansand (S), Stavanger, Tromsø and Trondheim.

Royal Norwegian Embassy
2720 34th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008
Tel: (202) 333 6000. Fax: (202) 337 0870.
Web site: <http://www.norway.org>
Consulates general in: Houston, Minneapolis, Miami, New York (tel: (212) 421 7333) and San Francisco.

Norwegian Tourist Board
65 Third Avenue, 18th Floor, New York, NY 10017
Tel: (212) 885 9700. Fax: (212) 885 9710.
Web site: <http://www.goscandania.com> or <http://www.visitnorway.com>

Embassy of the United States of America
Drammensveien 18, 0255 Oslo, Norway
Tel: 21 30 85 32. Fax: 22 44 04 36.
E-mail: irc@usa.no
Web site: <http://www.usa.no>

Royal Norwegian Embassy

Royal Bank Centre, Suite 532, 90 Sparks Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5B4

Tel: (613) 238 6571. Fax: (613) 238 2765.

E-mail: emb.ottawa@mfa.no

Web site: <http://www.emb-norway.ca>

Consulates in: Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Montréal, Québec, Regina, St John, Toronto, Vancouver, Victoria, Ville de la Baille and Winnipeg.

Canadian Embassy

Wergelandsveien 7, 0244 Oslo, Norway

Tel: 22 99 53 00. Fax: 22 99 53 01.

E-mail: oslo@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

Web site: <http://www.canada.no>

Country dialling code: 47.

2 GENERAL

Area: 323,758 sq km (125,050 sq miles).

Population: 4,417,599 (1998).

Population Density: 14.5 per sq km.

Capital: Oslo. Population: 750,404 (1998).

Geography: Norway is bordered to the north by the Arctic Ocean, to the east by Russia, Finland and Sweden, to the south by the Skagerrak (which separates it from Denmark) and to the west by the North Sea. The coastline is 2735km (1700 miles) long, its most outstanding feature being the fjords. Most of them are between 80-160km long (50-100 miles), and are often very deep and surrounded by towering mountains. Much of northern Norway lies beyond the Arctic Circle and the landscape is stark. In the south the landscape consists of forests with many lakes and rivers.

Government: Constitutional monarchy. Declared independence from Sweden in 1905. Head of State: King Harald V since 1991. Head of Government: Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg since 2000.

Language: Norwegian (Bokmål and Nynorsk). Lappish is spoken by the Sami population in the north. English is widely spoken.

Religion: 89% Evangelical Lutherans; plus other Christian denominations.

Time: Norway Mainland: GMT + 1 (GMT + 2 from last Sunday in March to last Saturday before last Sunday in October).

Jan Mayen Islands, Svalbard: GMT + 1.

Electricity: 220 volts AC, 50Hz. Plugs are of the European round 2-pin type.

Communications:

Telephone: IDD is available. Country code: 47. Outgoing international code: 00.

Mobile telephone: Most major dual band networks work across Norway. Mobile phones cannot be hired.

Fax: This service is available at major hotels.

Internet/E-mail: There are many cybercafés throughout Norway and the Internet can also be accessed via public libraries.

Telegram: Telenor's headquarters are at Teledirektoratet, Universitetsgt 2. It is easiest to send telegrams by telephone. The telephone directories give instructions in English on page 16.

Post: Hotel receptions, shops and kiosks selling postcards will sell stamps. Airmail within Europe takes two to four days. There are Poste Restante facilities at post offices in all major cities. Post office hours: These vary from place to place but are generally from 0830-1600 Monday to Friday, 0800-1300 Saturday.

Press: The national newspapers published in Oslo are Aftenposten, Verdens Gang, Dagsavisen and Dagbladet. There are no English-language newspapers although English newspapers are readily available (one day later than in the UK).

BBC World Service and Voice of America frequencies: From time to time these change.

BBC:

MHz17.6415.5712.099.410

Voice of America:

MHz15.489.7601.1970.792

3 PASSPORT

	<i>Passport Required?</i>	<i>Visa Required?</i>	<i>Return Ticket Required?</i>
British	Yes	No	No
Australian	Yes	No	No
Canadian	Yes	No	No
USA	Yes	No	No
OtherEU	1	No	No
Japanese	Yes	No	No

PASSPORTS: Passport valid for at least 3 months beyond the intended period of stay required by all except:

- (a) 1. EU nationals holding a valid national ID card for tourist purposes only;
- (b) nationals of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland holding a valid national ID card.

VISAS: Required by all except the following for stays of up to 3 months:

- (a) nationals of the countries referred to in the chart above;

(b) nationals of Andorra, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda (only holders of BDTC (Bermuda) passports), Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Jamaica, Kiribati, Korea (Rep. of), Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Namibia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, San Marino, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Swaziland, Switzerland, Trinidad & Tobago, Tuvalu, Uruguay, Vatican City, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

Types of visa and cost: Entry: £12; no fee for nationals of Bulgaria, Egypt, China (PR), Kuwait, Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Federation and Turkey. Spouses of citizens of the European Economic Area and Hong Kong also receive visas free of charge.

Validity: Up to 3 months in any 6 months. For renewal or extension apply to Embassy.

Application to: Consulate (or Consular section at Embassy); see address section.

Application requirements: (a) Valid passport. (This should not be submitted until the applicant is informed that a visa has been granted.) (b) 2 application forms. (c) 2 passport-size photos. (d) Further documentation such as a letter of invitation, a bank statement or a letter from an employer may be required, depending on purpose of visit.

Working days required: 24 hours minimum, otherwise 3-8 weeks by post or in person.

Temporary residence: Apply to Embassy for residence and work permit if the stay exceeds 3 months.

4 MONEY

Currency: Norwegian Krone (NOK) = 100 øre. Notes are in denominations of NOK1000, 500, 200, 100 and 50. Coins are in denominations of NOK20, 10, 5 and 1, and 50 øre.

Currency exchange: Eurocheque cards allow encashment of personal cheques. Cash dispensers are widely available.

Credit cards: All major credit cards are widely accepted. Check with your credit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other services which may be available.

Travellers cheques: Accepted in banks, hotels, shops and by airlines.

Currency restrictions: The import of local and foreign currency is unlimited. The export of local currency is limited to NOK5000. The export of foreign currency is unlimited, provided proof is shown that the currency was imported or obtained by conversion of other currencies.

Banking hours: 0815-1530 Monday to Wednesday and Friday (1500 in summer), 0815-1800 Thursday.

5 DUTY FREE

The following items can be imported into Norway without incurring customs duty by:

(a) Residents of European countries:

200 cigarettes or 250g of tobacco products and 200 leaves of cigarette paper (travellers over 18 years of age); 1 litre of spirits and 1 litre of wine (travellers over 20 years of age) or 2 litres of wine and 2 litres of beer (travellers 18-20 years of age); other goods to the value of NOK1200.

(b) Residents of non-European countries:

400 cigarettes or 500g of tobacco products and 200 leaves of cigarette paper (travellers over 18 years of age); 1 litre of spirits and 1 litre of wine (travellers over 20 years of age) or 2 litres of wine and 2 litres of beer (travellers 18-20 years of age only); 50g of perfume and 50cl of eau de cologne; other goods to the value of NOK3500.

Prohibited items: Spirits over 60% volume (120° proof) and wine over 22% volume, certain foodstuffs (including eggs, potatoes, meat, meat products, dairy products and poultry), narcotics, firearms and explosives.

6 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Jan 1 2001 New Year's Day. Apr 12 Maundy Thursday. Apr 13 Good Friday. Apr 16 Easter Monday. May 1 Labour Day. May 17 Constitution Day. May 24 Ascension Day. Jun 4 Whit Monday. Dec 25 Christmas Day. Dec 26 Boxing Day. Jan 1 2002 New Year's Day. Mar 28 Maundy Thursday. Mar 29 Good Friday. Apr 1 Easter Monday. May 1 Labour Day. May 9 Ascension Day. May 17 Constitution Day. May 20 Whit Monday. Dec 25 Christmas Day. Dec 26 Boxing Day.

7 HEALTH

	<i>Special Precautions</i>	<i>Certificate Required</i>
Yellow Fever	No	No
Cholera	No	No
Typhoid and Polio	No	-
Malaria	No	-
Food and Drink	No	-

Rabies is only present on the islands of Svalbard.

Health care: There are reciprocal health agreements with most European countries. The agreement with the UK allows free hospital in-patient treatment and ambulance travel on presentation of a UK passport. The cost of other treatment (including tooth extractions) may be partially refunded under the Norwegian social insurance scheme. Before leaving Norway, receipts should be presented at the social insurance office (Trygdekasse) of the district where treatment was carried out. Chemists are called Apotek. Standards of health care are high.

Travel - International

AIR: Norwegian air travel is served by Braathens SAFE (BU) and Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS), a Scandinavian airline. Air France, British Airways, Air UK, Finnair, Icelandair, KLM, Lufthansa, Northwest Airlines, Ryanair Sabena and Swissair also operate services to Norway.

Approximate flight times: From London to Oslo is 1 hour 45 minutes, to Bergen is 1 hour 40 minutes and to Stavanger is 1 hour 30 minutes.

From New York to Oslo is 10 hours 45 minutes (including stopover in London).

International airports: Oslo International Airport (OSL) (Gardermoen) (web site:<http://www.osl.no>) is 47km (30 miles) north of Oslo. It was opened in October 1998 and is the largest land based development project in Norway. The high-speed airport express trains Flytoget leave every 10 minutes to/from Oslo's central station (journey time 20 minutes). Buses serving the airport include the SL buses and Bussekspress which stop in front of the terminal building and take approximately 45 minutes to Oslo. There is a new bus station for regional services located within walking distance of the terminal. Access by car is also facilitated by the construction of new roads (regional no. 174 from Jessheim) and the widening of two others (regional no. 120 from Erpestad and national no. 6 from Tangerud). There is a taxi rank at the terminal building. In addition to regular taxis, there are 'airport taxis', cheaper taxis which must be ordered in advance by groups of up to 3 people, and wheelchair taxis. Airport facilities include duty-free shopping, banks/bureaux de change, restaurants and cafés, car hire, lost luggage, information kiosks as well as laundry/dry cleaning, shoe repair and key cutting services.

Stavanger (SVG) (Sola) is 14.5km (9 miles) southwest of the city (travel time - 20-30 minutes). Airport facilities include duty-free shops, bar (1300-2000), restaurant (1000-2000 Sunday to Friday, 1000-1700 Saturday), snack bar (0615-2100 Monday to Saturday, 0800-2200 Sunday), many shops, 24-hour tourist information, post office (0830-1600 Monday to Friday, 0830-1200 Saturday), banks/bureaux de change (0745-1730 Monday to Friday, 0745-1630 Saturday and 1100-1630 Sunday), left luggage (0800-2200), 24-hour lockers and car hire (Avis, Budget, Hertz and InterRent/Europcar). There is a coach to the Royal Atlantic Hotel, Jembaneveien 1. Bus no. 40 goes every 20 minutes 0620-2400 for a fare of approximately NOK21 (travel time - 30 minutes). Taxi services are available to the city with a surcharge after 2200 (travel time - 15 minutes).

Bergen (BGO) (Flesland) is 19km (12 miles) south of the city (travel time - 25 minutes). Airport facilities include left luggage (0730-2400), lockers (0600-2400), banks (0730-1530; until 1730 in summer), bureaux de change, post office (0830-1630 Monday to Friday, 0900-1230 Saturday), duty-free shops, bar (1200-2200), cafés, shops, tourist information (0900-1800 Monday to Friday, 1100-1800 Saturday to Sunday), nursery (0600-2400) and car hire (Avis, Budget, Hertz and Europcar). Bus (Flybussen) service leaves for the city every 20 minutes 0645-2130. Return is from various points in the city centre. Taxi services are available to the city for a fare of approximately NOK170 with a surcharge after 2200 (travel time - 25 minutes).

SEA: The main passenger ports are Oslo, Larvik, Stavanger, Kristiansand and Bergen. The main sea routes from the UK, operated by Fjord Line and DFDS Seaways respectively, are from Newcastle to Bergen (travel time - 25 hours 30 minutes) and to Kristiansand (travel time - 19 hours). Services from Newcastle to Bergen via Stavanger are also operated by Fjord Line, a Norwegian line operating a number of Fjord cruises within Norway. Fjord Line also operates services from Bergen to Hanstholm (Denmark). Smyril Line operates services from Bergen to Iceland via the Shetland Islands and the Faroe Islands in the summer (tel: (55) 320 970; fax: (55) 960 272; e-mail: office@smyril.line.no).

RAIL: Connections from the UK are from London via Dover/Ostend (via The Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and Sweden) or Harwich/Hook of Holland, or from Newcastle to Bergen via Stavanger. There are two principal routes to Sweden, with daytime and overnight trains from Malmö and Stockholm.

Cheap fares: Reduced fares on rail services have vastly increased the use and range of internal services. Scanrail cards allow 21 days' unlimited travel in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland on railways and selected ferries, and a 50% reduction on other ferry services. InterRail tickets are valid in Norway and are now also available for those aged over 26 years.

ROAD: The only international routes are from Sweden or Finland in the far north. Camping trailers up to 2.3m (7ft 6 inches) wide, with number plates, are permitted on holiday visits.

Travel - Internal

AIR: Domestic flights are run by Braathens SAFE (BU), Widerøe's Flyveselskap (WF) and Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS). Fifty airports with scheduled services exist in the fjord country of western Norway and along the remaining coast. Charter sea or land planes are available at most destinations. Reduced airfare tickets are available for families, children under 12 years (who pay half price), groups and pensioners. For further information, contact Widerøe Flyveselskap A/S, Torpveien 128, 3233 Sandsfjord (tel: 81 00 12 00; fax: 33 48 26 91).

SEA: All coastal towns are served by ferries, catamarans and hydrofoils. The Hurtigruten (express) from Bergen to Kirkenes (near the Russian border) takes 11 days round trip, leaving daily and stopping at 35 ports on the west coast. Various ferry trips are available (half price in spring and autumn). There are also a number of companies operating cruises on Norway's spectacular Fjords, one of which is Norway Fjord Cruise AS, PO Box 110, 6361, Leikanger, Norway (tel: (57) 656 999; fax: (57) 656 990; e-mail: nfc@fjordcruise.no; web site: <http://www.fjordcruise.com>).

RAIL: All services are run by NSB (Norwegian State Railways) (tel: 81 50 08 88; fax: 61 27 90 97; web site: <http://www.nsb.no>). The main internal rail routes are: Oslo-Trondheim (Dovre Line); Trondheim-Bodø (Nordland Railway); Oslo-Bergen (Bergen Railway); and Oslo-Stavanger (Sorland Railway). There are also services to Charlottenburg (Stockholm) and Halden (Malmö) on routes to Sweden. Seats on express trains must be reserved. There are buffet/restaurant cars on some trains, and sleepers on long-distance overnight services. Heavy luggage may be sent in advance. Children under 4 years of age travel free; children 4-14 years pay half fare. The ScanRail Pass, valid for all of Scandinavia, offers a substantial reduction. For further information, contact NSB (Norwegian State Railways) (telephone number above) or the Norwegian Tourist Board (see address section).

ROAD: Traffic drives on the right. The road system is of variable quality (especially under freezing winter conditions in the north), but supplemented by numerous car ferries across the fjords. Bus: Principal long-distance internal bus routes are from Bø (in Telemark) to Haugesund (8 hours); from Ålesund-Molde-Kristiansund to Trondheim (8 hours); and from Fauske to Kirkenes (4 days) with links to the Bø line in the north. Inter-Nordic runs from Trondheim to Stockholm. There are also extensive regional local bus services, some of which are operated by companies with interests in the ferries. Visitors can contract NOR-WAY Bussekspress AS for seat reservations and route information (tel: (81) 544 444; fax: (23) 002 449; e-mail: ruteinformasjon@nor-way.com; web site: <http://www.nor-way.no>). The official Rutehefte is a must for anyone using public transport, and gives extensive timetable information and maps of all bus, train, ferry and air routes. Taxi: In most cases fares are metered. Taxis can be found at ranks or booked by telephone. Car hire: Available in airports and most towns, but costly; in general, problems of cost and parking make public transport more practical and convenient. It is also possible to hire bicycles. Regulations: The minimum age for driving is 18. Tolls, ranging from NOK5-50, are charged on certain cross-country roads, underwater tunnels and in certain cities such as Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim. There are severe penalties for drink-driving and illegal

parking. Seat belts are compulsory. Children under 12 must travel in the back of the car. It is obligatory for all vehicles to drive with dipped headlights at all times, even on the brightest summer day. This includes motorcycles and mopeds. Carrying spare headlight bulbs is recommended. Speed limits are 80-90kph (49-56mph) outside built-up areas and 50kph (31mph) in built-up areas. Snow chains or studded winter tyres are advised during the winter. Petrol stations are numerous, although tourists are only able to use credit cards in some of them. The contact for AIT (Alliance Internationale de Tourisme) is the Norwegian Automobile Association (NAF), PO Box 494 Sentrum, 0105 Oslo (tel: 22 34 14 00; fax: 22 34 14 20; e-mail: nafmaster@publicis.no; web site: <http://www.naf.no>). Documentation: International Driving Permit or national driving licence and log book are required. A Green Card is strongly recommended (for those with more than Third Party cover on their domestic policy). Without it, visitors with motor insurance in their own countries are allowed the minimum legal cover in Norway; the Green Card tops this up to the level of cover provided by the visitor's own policy. The maximum legal blood to alcohol ratio is 0.5%.

URBAN: Good public transport systems operate in the main towns. Oslo has bus, rail, metro and tramway services. Tickets are pre-purchased and self-cancelled, and there is one hour's free transfer between any of the modes. Meters on taxis are obligatory.

JOURNEY TIMES: The following chart gives approximate journey times (in hours and minutes) from Oslo to other major cities/towns in Norway.

	Air	Road	Rail
Bergen	0.35	9.00	8.00
Kristiansand	0.30	5.00	5.00
Lillehammer	0.20	3.00	2.30
Stavanger	0.35	7.00	8.00
Tromsø	1.40	20.00	-
Trondheim	0.40	10.00	8.00

8 ACCOMMODATION

HOTELS: First-class hotels are to be found all over the country. Facilities in all establishments are classified, as hotels must come up to official high standards; for example, there must be a reception service, dining room, and a minimum of 30 rooms, each with full bath or shower. Many hotels are still family-run establishments. Full en pension terms are available to guests staying at the same establishment for at least three to five days. Hotels usually allow a reduction on the same en pension rate for children according to age. This reduction may only apply when the child concerned occupies an extra bed in the parents' room. There are several schemes which offer visitors reduced rates in selected hotels. A Fjord Pass (which covers two adults with special concessions for children under 15 and is available from the Norwegian Tourist Board in the UK) is accepted by 250 hotels in the period May 1-September 30; reductions of 20% or more are possible. The Nordic Passepåtur is a pan-Scandinavian card accepted by over 50 hotels in Norway in the main summer period and at weekends; the visitor's fifth night is free. A Scandinavian Bonus Pass (which covers two adults with special concessions for children under 16) is accepted by 45 hotels in Norway between May 15-September 1 and at weekends during winter; a Scanrail railway pass will also be accepted. Scandinavian Hotel Express is a travel club which enables visitors to have reductions of 50% in certain hotels. Roughly 50% of establishments belong to the Norwegian Hospitality Association, PO Box 5465, Majorstua, 0305 Oslo (tel: 23 08 86 20; fax: (22) 23 08 86 21; e-mail: firmapost@rbl.no; web site:

<http://www.lbl.no>). Grading: There is no grading system, but establishments designated turisthotel or høyfjellshotell must meet specified standards.

GUEST-HOUSES & MOUNTAIN LODGES: Guest-houses (pensjonat) and mountain lodges are generally smaller in size and offer less elaborate facilities than hotels, although many establishments can offer the same standard as those officially listed as hotels. Further information is available from Bed & Breakfast Norway AS, Osterdalsgalen 1 J, NO-0658 Oslo (tel: (88) 002 313; (22) 198 317; e-mail: bbnorway@online.no; web site: <http://www.bbnorway.com>).

FARMHOUSE HOLIDAYS: Farms selected are working farms and anyone who wants to can join in the work, but guests are at liberty to plan their own day, and the hosts will generally be able to suggest tours, excursions and other activities. Contact the Norwegian Tourist Board for further information. The tour operator Trollysykling offers many farmhouse holidays, and a programme printed in Norwegian, German and English is available from Trollysykling A/S, PO Box 373, Elvegaten 19, 2602 Lillehammer (tel: (61) 289 970; fax: (61) 269 250; e-mail: info@norske-bygdeopplevelser.no; web site: <http://www.norske-bygdeopplevelser.no>).

SELF-CATERING: Chalets, log cabins and apartments are available for rent by groups and will generally work out less expensive per head than other kinds of holiday. Most chalets have electric lighting, heating and hot plates; some have kerosene lamps, calor gas for cooking and wood fires, while water will often have to be fetched from a nearby well or stream. Chalets are grouped near a central building which may contain such facilities as a cafeteria, lounges, TV rooms, sauna, a grocer's shop, and in some cases a swimming pool. All chalets and apartments are regularly inspected by responsible rental firms. Bookings can be made by writing to various firms. Den Norske Hytteformidling A/S organises chalet holidays all over Norway, with full board or self-catering. Contact PO Box 309, 0158 Oslo (tel: 23 35 62 70; fax: 23 35 62 75; e-mail: novasol@novasol.no). Further information can also be obtained from the Fjordline office in the UK (tel: (0191) 296 1313; fax: (0191) 296 1540; e-mail: fjordline@fjordline.co.uk) or the Norwegian Hospitality Association in Norway (tel: 23 08 86 20; fax: 23 08 86 21; e-mail: firmaapost@RBL.no; web site: <http://www.champing.no>).

Rorbu holidays: A rorbu is a hut or shelter used by fishermen during the winter cod-fishing season. Equipped with all the necessary facilities, these are leased to holidaymakers during the summer, providing an inexpensive form of accommodation. They will often be actually over the water. Catching your own fish will further reduce the cost of the holiday. For more information on Rorbu holidays, contact Destinasjon Lofoten, PO Box 210, 8301 Svolvær (tel: (76) 07 30 00; fax: (76) 07 30 01; e-mail: tourist@nl.telia.no).

CAMPING/CARAVANNING: Offsite camping is permitted in uninhabited areas (not lay-bys), but fires are illegal in field or woodland areas between April 15-September 15. Farmers must be asked for permission for farmland camping. Further details and a manual are available from the Norwegian Automobile Association (NAF) (see Road section above for contact details). Grading: There are over 1000 authorised sites in Norway, classified according to standards and amenities from 1- to 5-star camps, with charges varying accordingly. Notice of available amenities is posted in each camp.

YOUTH HOSTELS: There are some 100 youth hostels spread all over Norway, some of which are open all year round. Others are in apartment houses attached to schools or universities and are open only during the summer season. Sleeping bags can be hired if necessary. Groups must always make advance bookings. All are welcome, but members of the Norwegian Youth Hostel Association (NUH), or similar associations in other countries, have priority. International membership cards can be bought at most youth hostels. Hostels vary from 1- to 3-star establishments. Breakfast is usually NOK50-60. Detailed information can be obtained from the

Tourist Board's Camping/YH list, or direct from Norske Vandrerhjem, Dronningensgt 26, 0154 Oslo 1 (tel: (23) 13 93 00; fax: (23) 13 93 50; e-mail: hostels@online.no; web site: <http://www.vandrehjem.no>).

9 RESORTS & EXCURSIONS

For the purpose of clarity this section has been divided into several sub-sections. These do not necessarily reflect cultural or administrative boundaries.

The Oslo Fjord

The region surrounding the 110km-long (70-mile) Oslo Fjord is the most popular in Norway. The coast is fringed with islands, while the interior is criss-crossed with rivers and dotted with lakes.

Its a good place to go boating or bathing. There are many traces of early civilisation: rock carvings, burial mounds, ships' graves, stone churches, manor farms and fortresses.

Oslo: Oslo, the capital, is Norway's most important industrial, commercial and shipping centre. Of the city's total land area, some 12% has been developed while the remainder is a network of woodland trails, islands and countless lakes offering good fishing and bathing. Oslo is also the focus of national art and culture, with major collections, maritime museums, theatres, opera, concerts and restaurants of every category.

SIGHTSEEING/EXCURSIONS: Oslo: SIGHTSEEING/EXCURSIONS: Oslo Akershus Castle; Munch Museum; Holmenkollen ski jump, museum and restaurant; Norwegian Folk Museum; the Viking ships; Fram Museum; Kon-Tiki Museum; Norwegian Maritime Museum, Vigeland's Park and Museum and sightseeing boat trips on the fjord.

Further afield: Further afield: The Tertitten narrow gauge railway at Sørumsand, open-air zoo at Ski, 17th-century fortress town and Kongsten Fortress at Fredrikstad, Vansjø inland waterway system and recreational centre, the Road of the Ancients between Fredrikstad and Skjeberg (Bronze Age rock carvings and Viking burial mounds), the Naval Museum at Horten and the Whaling Museum at Sandefjord.

RESORTS: RESORTS: Holmestrand, Horten, Tønsberg, Sandefjord, Larvik, Oslo, Sarpsborg, Fredrikstad and Halden.

The Eastern Valleys

This part of Norway comprises several of the largest and most picturesque valleys in the whole country. This is a typical inland region, bordered to the north, west and south by the mighty massifs of the Rondane, Dovrefjell and Jotunheimen ranges and the Hardanger plateau. Further south the country slopes down to the lakes. This area is notable for its stable climate. Hedmark is a county of extensive forests and has Norway's longest river, the Glomma. There are several major tourist resorts in this area, often placed close to recreational facilities and offering varied and up-to-date accommodation. Mountain hikes, riding, glacier rambles, summer ski racing, canoeing and fishing are popular activities and larger resorts offer varied programmes of amusements.

SIGHTSEEING/EXCURSIONS: SIGHTSEEING/EXCURSIONS: Paddle steamer trip across Lake Mjosa; Railway Museum at Hamar; 17th-century Kongsvinger Castle; Norwegian Forestry Museum at Elverum; boat excursions on Lake Femund; north Europe's biggest open-air museum

at Lillehammer; Norwegian Historical Vehicles Museum and glassworks at Gjøvik and Jevnaker; 12th-century stave churches at Valdres; summer skiing on Veslejuvbreen near Juvasshytta; Blue Dye Works at Modum; Folk Museum at Hallingal; and the chair lift to Geilohøgda at Geilo.

RESORTS: RESORTS Winter & Summer: Geilo, Gjøvik, Fagernes, Lillehammer, Otta, Dombos and Tynset. Summer only: Rena, Elverum, Hamar, Kongsvinger, Hønefoss, Drammen and Kongsberg.

Telemark and the South Coast

This region comprises the coastal strip running from Oslo Fjord round the southern tip of Norway, a region of skerries, bathing beaches, sheltered anchorages, picturesque little harbours and villages. Further inland the country is wooded, intersected here and there by valleys running up to extensive moors and mountain ranges which have marked trails and tourist lodges for those wishing to tour on foot. This area is renowned for its cultural crafts including silverware. The Telemark Waterway links Skien on the coast with the interior by a system of locks and canals which can be negotiated by boat.

SIGHTSEEING/EXCURSIONS: SIGHTSEEING/EXCURSIONS: The Victoria, sailing from Skien to Dalen through 18 locks and canals; canoeing on lakes and canals; Lakeland Amusement Park in Skien; Berg-Kragerø Museum and excursions among the islands at Kragerø; stave church from 1240 at Heddal; Krosso cable railway at Rjukan; old town at Arendal; Ibsen Museum at Grimstad; silverworks at Setesdal; skerry excursions, Christiansholm Fortress and the zoo at Kristiansand; Maritime Museum at Mandal; museum at Farsund; and ancient monuments, rock carvings and burial mounds at Litalandet.

RESORTS: Winter & Summer: RESORTS: Winter & Summer: Bykle, Dalen, Hovden and Rjukan.

Summer only: Summer only: Skien, Porsgrunn, Kragerø, Risør, Arendal, Grimstad, Lillesand, Kristiansand, Mandal, Farsund, Flekkefjord and Evje.

The Western Fjords

This spectacular fjord region covers the area from Stavanger in the south to Kristiansund in the north, and from the North Sea in the west to the mountain ranges in the east. Many of the fjords are only 100m (330ft) wide in places, with vertical cliffs rising over 1000m (3300ft) on either side. The longest, Sognefjord, runs for over 200km (124 miles) into the interior. Others include the Ryfylke Fjords, Hardanger Fjord, Sunnfjord, Nord Fjord, Geiranger Fjord and Romsdal Fjord. In the mountain region of west Norway, the glaciers often reach right down to the bottom of the adjacent valley. The whole region offers excellent river and lake fishing, as well as hiking, boat and cycling tours.

SIGHTSEEING/EXCURSIONS: SIGHTSEEING/EXCURSIONS: The city of Bergen is a good starting point for exploring the area. Bergen's Tourist Board, associated with the Norwegian Tourist Board, can provide helpful advice on regional accommodation and excursions. The city is also a European City of Culture in the year 2000 and co-ordinate a wide range of cultural events throughout Norway (see Special Events in the Social Profile section). There are also a number of museums and other attractions (including an aquarium) in Bergen, whose busy port serves an increasing number of cruise ships operating in the area. For further details contact Bergen Tourist Board, Vågsallmenning 1, 5014 Bergen (tel: (35) 321 480; fax: (55) 321 464; web site: <http://www.bergen-travel.com>). Attractions at Stavanger include the cathedral, an Iron Age farm, the Norwegian Petroleum Museum and boat excursions on the fjord; from Bergen town centre a cable-car ride reaches Fløyfjell; Mjørdalen is a good base for excursions to the Hardanger Fjord

and the Vøringfoss Falls; Borgund Stave Church (AD1150) at Laerdal; the Flåm railway line, dropping 900m (2952ft) in 20km (12 miles); Sunnmøre Museum and Atlantic Park at Ålesund; the Romsdal Museum, the new football stadium and jazz festival at Molde; the lighthouse safaris to three of the lighthouses of Florø (every Friday between Jun 15-Aug 15).

RESORTS: Winter & Summer: RESORTS: Winter & Summer: Voss.

Summer only: Summer only: Egersund, Stavanger, Haugesund, Bergen, Sogndal, Florø, Ålesund, Andalsnes, Molde and Kristiansund.

North Norway

In the extreme north of Norway there are majestic mountains, rolling moors, deep fertile valleys, sheltered fjords and thousands of islands. There is also continuous daylight from April to August. Owing to the Gulf Stream which sweeps up the coastline, the climate is exceptionally temperate. Fishing, often combined with farming, is still the main source of livelihood. The main attraction in northern Norway is the scenery, but there is also very good sea fishing, salmon rivers and thousands of lakes and rivers well stocked with trout, as well as whale-watching trips.

SIGHTSEEING/EXCURSIONS: SIGHTSEEING/EXCURSIONS Tromsø Museum, Tromsø Marine Aquarium, Polar Museum and Cathedral in Tromsø; North Norway and International Deep-Sea Fishing Festivals (June/July) in Harstad; Tromsø War Museum in Bardu; rock carvings (2500-4500 years old) in Blasfjord; primeval pine forests, cliffs and waterfalls in Reisadalen; sea fishing excursions in Bodø; the Glom Fjord; the Grønnli Grotto (stalactite cave with a subterranean waterfall); cable-car to Fagernesfjell Bird Colony at Røst and Vørøy; Samic collections at Karasjok; riverboats to Sauvtso; church and Meridian stone at Hammerfest; North Cape (viewpoint in the extreme north of Norway); the King Oscar and St George's chapels at Kirkenes; and fishing villages and outdoor activities in the Vesterålen island group.

RESORTS: Winter & Summer: RESORTS: Winter & Summer: Harstad, Narvik and Svolvær.

Summer only: Summer only: Rana, Mosjøen, Bodø, Finnsnes, Tromsø, Kautokeino, Karasjok, Alta, Kirkenes, Vadsø, Hammerfest, Vardø and Nordkapp.

Trøndelag

The Trøndelag counties are bordered to the west by the Norwegian Sea and a screen of islands and skerries, past which the Trondheim Fjord passes into rich farmland and the interior. To the east there are extensive moors dotted with well-stocked lakes, while to the south and southeast the mountain massifs of Trollheimen and Sylene dominate the scene. A number of rivers flow through rolling farm country. The region offers most outdoors activities with a special emphasis on sea and freshwater fishing, in particular salmon fishing. The climate is mild and warm enough for bathing.

SIGHTSEEING/EXCURSIONS: SIGHTSEEING/EXCURSIONS Nidaros Cathedral, 12th-century Archbishop's Palace, and Ringve Musical Museum in Trondheim; Trollheimen range with marked trails, pony trekking, salmon and trout fishing and riding camps; Kongsvold Botanical Mountain Garden at Oppdal og Orkdalen; Rein Abbey in Rissa; good fishing in the sea or rivers everywhere; prehistoric monuments including burial mounds, monoliths and stone circles at Eggekammen and Tingvoll; Helge Farm at Byafossen; the Olav drama at Stiklestad; fortress ruins from 1525 at Steinviksholm; rock carvings and burial mounds at Skogn, Hell, Leirfall and Lekaøya.

RESORTS: Winter & Summer: RESORTS: Winter & Summer: Røros and Oppdal. Summer only: Orkanger, Trondheim, Stjørdal Levanger, Verdal Steinkjer, Namsos and Rorvik.

10 SPORT & ACTIVITIES

Norway's dramatic scenery and extensive wilderness areas offer scope for a variety of exciting activities.

Hikers: Hikers are well catered for in Norway. The Norwegian Mountain Touring Association (DNT) (tel: 22 82 28 22; fax: 22 82 28 55; e-mail: turinfo@dntoa.no; web site: <http://www.turistforeningen.no>) offers guided trips, and maintains more than 300 mountain huts, both staffed and unstaffed. Membership can be bought at a DNT office, a hut or at tourist offices. The DNT also sells maps, and provides information. Glaciers are another attraction for outdoor enthusiasts. The largest mainland glacier in Europe is at Jostedalbreen, near Stryn. Daily glacier walks are organised in summer in the company of experienced guides. It is important to remember never to venture onto a glacier without an experienced guide. For information about organised glacier walks, contact the glacier centre at Jostedalbreen (tel: 57 87 72 00; fax: 57 87 72 01; e-mail: jnasona@online.no; web site: <http://www.fjordinfo.no/reiseliv/jns>) or consult the following web sites: <http://www.bre.no> (for glacier tours) and <http://www.museumsnett.no> (for general tourist information). Horseriding holidays are becoming more popular. There are riding schools and clubs throughout the country with horses for hire and instruction provided. Also a number of hotels keep horses. Despite its often mountainous terrain, Norway is a popular destination for cycling holidays. Many old roads have been made into cycling routes. For further information, contact Sykkelturisme i Norge, SND, PO Box 448, Sentrum, 0104 Oslo (tel: 22 00 26 46; fax: 22 00 25 70). Fishing is popular on Norway's many inland waters and surrounding sea. There are over 100 salmon rivers flowing into the fjords, where reasonably priced sport is offered. A national fishing licence is necessary, obtainable from post offices. A permit is required for freshwater fishing. Norway claims to be the birthplace of skiing. The country has about 30,000km (18,750 miles) of marked ski trails, winding their way through unspoiled scenery. Both cross-country and downhill skiing are available from November until the end of May. Although skiing is at its best just before Easter, when the days are getting longer, it is possible to ski for long hours in the winter, since many of the tracks are illuminated. In summer, it is possible to go skiing in several parts of Norway. For further information about summer skiing, contact Stryn Sommerskisenter (tel: 57 87 11 15; e-mail: norfjord@ss.telia.no). Oslo (Bogstad links), Stokke (between Tønsberg and Sandefjord) and Meland (36km north of Bergen in the fjord landscape by the Herdla fjord) all have 18-hole golf courses; there are shorter courses in Bergen, Sarpsborg, Hamar, Kristiansund and Trondheim. Altogether, Norway has 25 18-hole golf courses. Most clubs are open to visitors. The Norwegian Golf Federation can provide **further information** (tel: 22 73 66 20; fax: 22 73 66 21; e-mail: ngfo@golfforbundet.no). A number of resort hotels have their own tennis courts. A number of hotels, campsites and chalets have boats for use by visitors on the coast and inland waters. Hotels and campsites located near stretches of water often hire out equipment for windsurfing or water-skiing and offer instruction. Norway's coast and inland waters are ideal for bathing in warm months. There are several specially designated beaches for naturists.

11 SOCIAL PROFILE

Food & Drink: Breakfasts are often enormous with a variety of fish, meat, cheese and bread served from a cold buffet with coffee and boiled or fried eggs. Many hotels and restaurants serve

lunch from a koldtbord (cold table), with smoked salmon, fresh lobster, shrimp and hot dishes. Open sandwiches are topped with meat, fish, cheese and salads. Other dishes include roast venison, ptarmigan in cream sauce, wild cranberries, multer (a berry with a unique flavour), lutefisk (a hot, highly flavoured cod fish) and herring prepared in various ways. Drink: Aquavit (schnapps) is a popular drink, but in general alcohol is limited and expensive, although beer and wine are generally served in restaurants. Bars have table and counter service. Licensing laws are strict and alcohol is sold only by the State through special monopoly. Licensing hours are also enforced and only wine and beer are served Sunday.

Nightlife: Several hotels and restaurants in Oslo stage cabaret programmes and floor shows. Venues change so it is best to check in the local newspaper. Theatres, cinemas, nightclubs and discotheques are located in major centres. Resorts have dance music, and folk dancing is popular.

Shopping: Most towns and resorts have a shop where typical Norwegian handicrafts are on sale. Silversmiths and potteries are numerous and worth visiting. Traditional items include furs, printed textiles, woven articles, knitwear, woodcarving, silver, enamel, pewter, glass and porcelain. Tax-free cheques can be obtained from any of the 2500 shops carrying the sticker 'Tax free for tourists'. These shops save visitors 11-18% of the price paid by residents. VAT refunds are paid in cash at airports, ferries, cruise ships and border crossings. Shopping hours: 0900-1700/1800 Monday to Friday; 0900 - 2000 Thursday; 0900-1300/1500 Saturday.

Special Events: For a full list, contact the Norwegian Tourist Board (see address section). The following is a selection of major festivals and other special events celebrated in Norway: Jan 17-21 2001 International Film Festival, Tromsø. Jan 25-28 Northern Light Festival, Tromsø. Feb 15-18 Winter Arts Festival (music, theatre, art exhibitions), Lillehammer. Mar 10-18 Finnmarkslopet (Europe's longest dog sled race), Alta-Alta. Apr 13-15 Bergen Spring Hat Festival. May 9-13 Mayjazz (International jazz festival), Stavanger. May 17 Constitution Day Celebrations, countrywide. May 23-Jun 3 Bergen International Festival,(music and culture festival). Jun 14-16 Viking Festival (markets, historical play, concerts, viking camp), Kopervik. Jul 7 Midnight Sun Marathon, Tromsø. Jul 26-29 Glad Mat (food festival), Stavanger Harbour. Aug 3-6 Telemark Folk Festival (international folk music, dance, workshops), Bø I Telemark. Aug 4-11 Peer Gynt Festival, Vinstra/Gala. Sep 1 Oslo Marathon. Oct 20-27 Bergen International Film Festival.

Social Conventions: Normal courtesies should be observed. It is customary for the guest to refrain from drinking until the host toasts their health. Casual dress is normal. The main meal of the day, lunch, generally takes place between 1200 and 1300 and dinner usually takes place at 1700; however, if invited out Norwegians will generally be happy to dine in the evening. If invited to the home the visitor should bring flowers for the hostess. Punctuality is expected. Smoking is prohibited in most public buildings and on public transport (although there are often special spaces for smokers to indulge in cafés, bars and restaurants. Tipping: It is not customary to tip taxi drivers. Waiters expect a tip of no more than 5% of the bill; porters at airports and railway stations charge per piece of luggage. Hotel porters are tipped NOK5-10 according to the number of pieces of luggage.

12 BUSINESS PROFILE

Economy: The Norwegian economy is dominated by its oil and gas industry which accounts for nearly 20% of GDP and 45% of export earnings. There is little cultivable land in Norway, but many farmers breed livestock, combining this with tree-felling to supply Norway's numerous sawmills. Wood products and paper are consequently both thriving industries. Offshore fishing

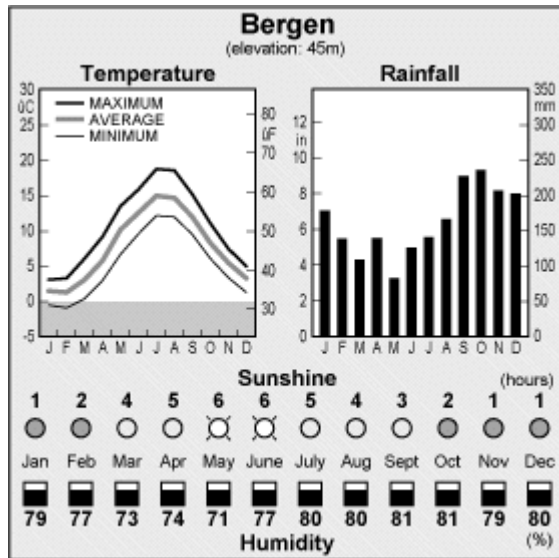
has been in decline for some time, but a large number of fish farms have been established, making Norway by far the world's largest supplier of salmon. Heavy engineering industries, principally ship building and machinery, have also declined (although Norway retains a large merchant fleet). However, the country has sustained its economic prosperity through development of an exceptionally strong energy sector. The country has abundant resources for hydro-electric power, the development of which has allowed much-reduced overheads for larger industries, such as aluminium production. In addition, from the mid-1970s Norway has, like the UK, been a major oil exporter, having discovered large deposits of both oil and natural gas in the North Sea. The country also has deposits of various iron ores plus copper, lead and zinc which feed the country's metallurgical and chemical industries. Recent years have seen the emergence of advanced technological industries. Only the service sector has so far remained fairly limited in both scale and scope. The UK, Germany and Sweden are Norway's principal trading partners. Norway is a member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and hence the so-called 'European Economic Area', which is an amalgam of EU and EFTA members united in a free trade zone and created in 1991. Concern about the possible effects on the fishing and farming industries lay behind the Norwegians' decision - registered in two referendums in 1973 and 1994 - to refuse membership of the EU. Nonetheless, with the exception of these two industries, Norway enjoys a wholly liberalised trade regime with EU members.

Business: Business people are expected to dress smartly. Prior appointments are necessary. Norwegian business people tend to be reserved and formal. English is widely spoken. Punctuality is essential. Calling cards are common. The best months for business visits are February to May and October to December. Office hours: 0800-1600 Monday to Friday.

Commercial Information: The following organisation can offer advice: Norwegian Trade Council, Drammensveien 40, 0243 Oslo (tel: (22) 926 300; fax: (22) 926 400 e-mail: oslo@ntc.no; web site: <http://www.exportnet.ntc.no>); or Norwegian Trade Council, 5th Floor, Charles House, 5 Lower Regent Street, London SW1Y 4LR (tel: (020) 7389 8800; fax: (020) 7973 0189; e-mail: london@ntc.no; web site: <http://www.norway.org.uk>).

Conferences/Conventions: Information is available from the Norwegian Tourist Board (see address section).

13 CLIMATE



Coastal areas have a moderate climate owing to the Gulf Stream and North Atlantic Drift. Inland temperatures are more extreme with hot summers and cold winters (November to March). In general, the lowlands of the south experience colder winters and warmer summers than the coastal areas. Rain is distributed throughout the year with frequent inland snowfalls during the winter. The northern part of the country inside the Arctic Circle has continuous daylight at midsummer, and twilight all day during winter.

Required clothing: European according to the season. Light- to mediumweights are worn in summer. Warmer weights are worn during the winter. Waterproofing is advisable throughout the year.

14 HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

History: During the Napoleonic Wars (1813-1815), Norway entered into a union with Sweden, which lasted until the declaration of independence in 1905. The Norwegians then elected King Haakon VII, who reigned for over half a century and was succeeded by his son, Olav V. For 30 years, from 1935, the Labour Party formed the government, apart from an interruption during the war during which the country was under the control of a Nazi puppet government headed by Vidkun Quisling, who gave his name to the English language ('quisling' is now a term for traitor). After the war, Norway dispensed with its traditional neutrality to join NATO. In 1965, a centre-right coalition unseated Einar Gerhardsen's Labour administration, but from 1973-81 minority Labour governments were in power. In 1981, another centre-right group under Prime Minister Kåre Willoch took over. Elections in 1985 kept Willoch's coalition in office, although the largest single party was the Labour Party under Mrs Gro Harlem Brundtland. Instability and severe political difficulties caused by the attempted introduction of an austerity budget brought down Willoch's Government. Brundtland took office at the request of the King until elections in 1989, which produced a hung parliament. A centre-right coalition under Jan Syse governed until falling apart in October 1990 over the most divisive contemporary issue in Norwegian politics: the relationship between the country and the European Community (now the European Union). A minority Labour Government then took office under Mrs Brundtland. Its position was confirmed

by the September 1993 general election in which Labour polled the largest proportion of votes and established a second minority government with the de facto support of socialist and centrist parties. An insular tendency appeared among Norwegian voters during the 1990s, reflected by the anti-EU vote (see below) and a strong showing by the far right anti-immigrant Progress Party in September 1995 local elections. The most recent national election in September 1997 produced another coalition, grouping Christian Democrats, the Centre Party and Liberals, which was able to form a government despite holding just one-quarter of seats in the Volketing. Christian Democrat leader Kjell Magne Bondevik assumed the premiership. Norwegian foreign policy has been dominated by the European issue. The 1991 agreement between the EC and EFTA (the European Free Trade Association) of which Norway is a member, brought Norway closer to the former. In November 1992, the Norwegian parliament voted to apply for full membership. However, the Government received a rude shock when, in November 1994, it put the issue to a national referendum which returned a decisive 'no' vote. Norway will not, therefore, be joining the EU for the foreseeable future (although there is mounting evidence that popular opposition has significantly declined - a December 1998 poll recorded 55% in favour of membership). Further afield, the Norwegians may claim credit for one of the major foreign policy coups of recent years: this was the key role which they played in the groundwork which led to the 1994 the Israeli-Palestinian peace accord (see Israel section). Closer to home, Norway has been greatly concerned by developments in Russia, with whom it shares a common border, and keeps a close watch on its giant neighbour.

Government: Norway is a constitutional monarchy with a unicameral 165-seat parliament, the Storting, elected by proportional representation in multi-seat constituencies for a four-year term. The Prime Minister is the supreme executive authority. The monarch, currently King Harald V, is head of state.