

Norway – August 2010

Day 1, August 21: Oslo/Lillehammer

Our group will arrive in Oslo by air from Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Our private motor coach will be there to arrange the transfer to Lillehammer. Travel along the shores of Lake Mjøsa to arrival in Lillehammer. Check in at your hotel at the center of town, relax and get accustomed to the time change. Evening free to relax or explore the charming main street of Lillehammer - Storgata.

Overnight at your hotel.

<http://www.lillehammer.com/>

Day 2, August 22: Lillehammer

Buffet breakfast at your hotel. Spend the day exploring the sites of the 1994 Winter Olympics. Climb the stairs or take chair lift to top of Olympic ski jump and enjoy a panoramic view of Lillehammer, Lake Mjøsa and the hill's amphitheater. There is an alpine downhill and bobsleigh simulator on the landing area of the ski jumping hill. Charge down the downhill course at Kvitfjell, or take a trip in a virtual bobsleigh down the Bobsleigh and Luge Track – all in safe and comfortable surroundings.

If folklore history is your interest, take a tour Maihaugen Museum. Maihaugen ranks as the largest open-air museum in Europe and houses 185 buildings plus more than 40000 objects. Maihaugen presents a rural society through churches, homes, farm yards and tools from the Gudbrandsdalen valley which extends north from Lillehammer. Traditional farming methods and handicrafts are also on show.

<http://www.maihaugen.no/>

The centre of Lillehammer -- with its award-winning pedestrian street Storgata at its hub - is famous around the world. Charming and historically important buildings serve as the backdrop for a modern and bustling shopping environment with a number of specialist shops and an excellent range of products to choose from. Shopping on the charming main street – Storgata

Overnight at your hotel. Evening free to relax and savour the local cuisine at one of Lillehammer's many nearby restaurants.

Day 3 August 23: LILLEHAMMER- SOGNDAL

Buffet breakfast at your hotel. Our private coach will meet at the hotel at 8:00 a.m. to load the luggage and start the overland tour through the mountains and into the fjord country.

Today travel along the beautiful Gudbrandsdal valley by way of the E6 main road. At Otta, continue on along Lake Vaagaa, ascending through the Boverdal valley. From here ascend into the Jotunheimen mountain region across the Sognefjell Mountain with some of the highest mountains at a distance - such as Glitretind and Galdhøpiggen arriving at Skjolden at the end of the Sognefjord.

Drive through Lusterfjord passing several villages and towns before arrive in Sogndal and check in at the LAEGREID HOTEL situated in the center of the town and overlooking the spectacular fjord.

Overnight with dinner included at the Laegreid Hotel, Sogndal.

Day 4, August 24: SOGNDAL-LAERDAL-FLÅM-STALHEIM.

Buffet breakfast at your hotel.

This morning drive from Sogndal drive past Kaupanger to Mannheller ferry. Embark and cross the fjord to Fodnses. From here drive along the fjord past Laerdal and up along the river to Borgund for an inside visit to the Borgund Stave Church dating back to the 12th century.

Then drive back to Laerdal through the world's longest tunnel (24.5 kms) along the Aurlandsfjord to Flam. Here board the Flam Railway (Flamsbana) and travel up the Flam valley with impressive views at all angles. The train journey provides some of Norway's wildest and most magnificent scenery. On the 20 km-long train ride you can see rivers that cut through deep ravines, waterfalls cascade down the side of steep, snow-capped mountains and mountain farms clinging dizzily to sheer slopes.

<http://www.visitflam.no/default.asp>

The Flåm Railway is one of the world's steepest railway lines on normal gauge. The gradient is 55/1000 on almost 80% of the line, i.e. a gradient of one in eighteen. The twisting tunnels that spiral in and out of the mountain are manifestations of the most daring and skilful engineering in Norwegian railway history.

The train will make a stop at the Kjosfossen waterfalls where passengers may get off to take photographs or just to admire the cascading water. Be sure to look for the "dancing maiden"!

Upon the return of your train ride, continue the tour by coach through two tunnels to Gudvangen and then continue up to Stalheim and check in at the beautiful and historic Stalheim Hotel. The beautiful view over the Nærøy Valley, from Stalheim Hotel, has for nearly 200 years been one of the highlights in many a traveler's visit to Western Norway.

<http://www.stalheim.com/>

Relax and take in the spectacular views from the hotel lounge or stretch your legs with a short walk around the grounds.

Dinner included with your overnight stay at Stalheim Hotel.

Day 5 August 25: STALHEIM

Buffet breakfast at your hotel. This day is reserved for hiking opportunities through the fjords and mountains of western Norway. Whether you chose a 2 hour easy walk or a more demanding 6 to 8 hour trek, you are sure to see why people around the world have been flocking to this location since the hotel was first built in 1885.

Dinner included with your overnight stay at Stalheim Hotel.

Day 6, August 26: STALHEIM-BERGEN

Buffet breakfast at your hotel.

Drive past the picturesque Tvindefoss (Twin Falls) to Voss. Make a stop here for a couple of hours to explore the charming community of Voss.

<http://www.visitvoss.no/en/>

Continue along past Kvandal along the Hardanger Fjord. With a length of 179 km (111 miles), the spectacular Hardanger Fjord is the second largest in Norway. The surrounding district is called Hardanger

<http://www.bergenfjords.com/>

Afternoon arrival in Bergen – also known as the Gateway to the Fjords of Norway. Afternoon free to explore this historical and charming harbor city.

<http://www.visitbergen.com/en/>

Check in at your hotel for an evening of relaxation or exploring the city.

Overnight at your hotel.

Day 7 August 27: BERGEN

Buffet breakfast at your hotel.

Tour includes roundtrip tickets to ride the Floibanen Funicular to the top of Mount Floien. The views of Bergen and the harbor below are spectacular and the hiking trails are well marked and interesting.

Afternoon free to tour the many historical buildings on Bryggen Wharf and the Torget (market) on Fish Square at Vagen Harbor.

Overnight at your hotel.

Day 8, August 28: Bergen-Oslo by train

Buffet breakfast at your hotel.

Our local bus will be waiting outside for transfer to the train station.

Morning departure from Bergen by train to Oslo on The Bergen Railway, voted one of the world's most beautiful train journeys.

<http://www.visitnorway.com/us/Articles/Theme/Getting-here-and-around/The-worlds-best-train-ride/>

Arrive in Oslo and check in at your hotel. Evening free to relax or explore Karl Johans Gate, the main thoroughfare of Oslo. Overnight at your hotel.

Day 9, August 29: OSLO

Buffet breakfast at your hotel.

Walking tour of Oslo – your hosts will lead a private walking tour of Oslo. Our walking tour will include both historic and cultural sights of Oslo.

<http://www.visitoslo.com/en/>

Oslo is the biggest city in Norway, and has been the country's capital since 1814. The Government and Parliament are located here, and at the end of Oslo's main street, Karl Johans Gate, you'll find the Royal Palace. Just a short walk away is the Akershus Castle and fortress.

Evening free to relax or explore Oslo's nightlife. Night clubs, bars, jazz and blues clubs, pubs and cafes' – to classical music and theatre. Oslo has a little bit of everything. Overnight at your hotel.

Day 10, August 30: Oslo-Gardermoen Airport.

Buffet breakfast at your hotel. Leave Oslo this morning and arrive at Gardermoen Airport for departure to Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Our coach will meet at the hotel for transfer to the airport for departure home.