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PLAN YOUR TRIP

YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT

Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions
to help you put together your perfect trip

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need to know

When to Go



Two Weeks
The Norwegian Coast
coastline between Tromsø and the Arctic Circle

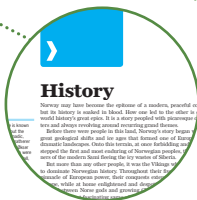
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UNDERSTAND NORWAY

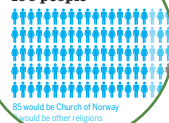
GET MORE FROM YOUR TRIP

Learn about the big picture, so you
can make sense of what you see

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if Norway were 100 people



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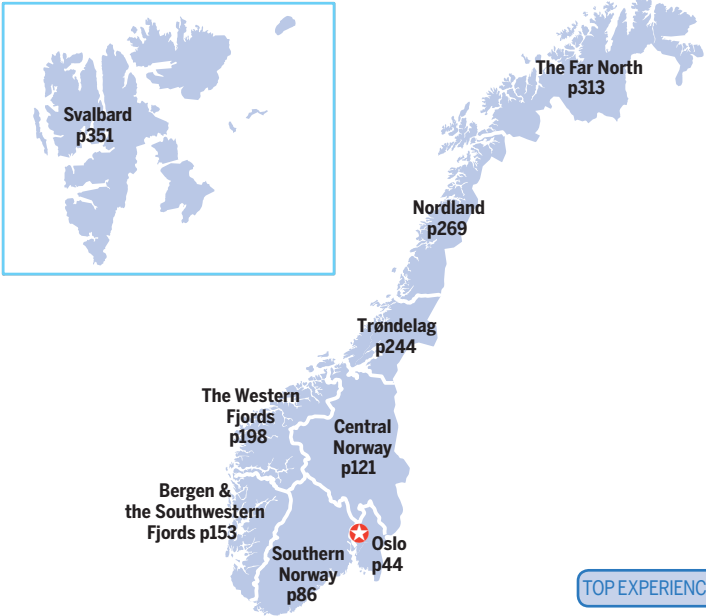
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ON THE ROAD

YOUR COMPLETE DESTINATION GUIDE
In-depth reviews, detailed listings
and insider tips



TOP EXPERIENCES MAP **NEXT PAGE**

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SURVIVAL GUIDE

YOUR AT-A-GLANCE REFERENCE
How to get around, get a room,
stay safe, say hello

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THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Anthony Ham,
Stuart Butler, Miles Roddis



Bergen

Linger amid enchanted
Bryggen buildings (p154)

Geirangerfjord

Kristiansund

Molde

Ålesund

Andalsnes

Flørø

Førde

Galdhøpiggen
(2469m)

Øvre Årdal

Fåberg

Voss

Bergen

Lervik

Kopervik

Jørpeland

Stavanger

Preikestolen
(Pulpit Rocks;
604m)

Egersund

Flekkefjord

Grimstad

Mandal

Kristiansand

Alborg

Denmark

Oslo

Drammen

Notodden

Tonsberg

Skien

Larvik

Kragerø

Arendal

Risør

Göteborg

Sweden

Latvia

Riga

Estonia

Tallinn

Helsinki

Finland

Stockholm

Geirangerfjord

Trondheim

Namsos

Steinkjer

Røros

Lynset

Dombås

Koppang

Trysil

Elverum

Hamar

Råholt

Lillestrøm

Oslo

Kongsvinger

Oslo

Drammen

Notodden

Tonsberg

Skien

Larvik

Kragerø

Arendal

Risør

Göteborg

Sweden

Latvia

Riga

Estonia

Tallinn

Helsinki

Finland

Stockholm

Sweden

Latvia

Riga

Estonia

Tallinn

Helsinki

Finland

Stockholm

Geirangerfjord

Experience Norway's number
one fjord (p227)

Jotunheimen National Park

Hike the glacier-strewn high
country (p147)

Oslo-Bergen Railway

Take Norway's most
spectacular rail trip (p176)

Oslo

Visit Norway's political and
cultural capital (p44)

ELEVATION





Look out for these icons:



Our author's
recommendation



A green or
sustainable option



No payment
required

OSLO44

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itineraries

Whether you've got six days or 60, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travellers.



10 Days

Norway in Microcosm

After a couple of days exploring the many galleries and museums of **Oslo**, take the scenic Oslo-Bergen railway, one of the most spectacular rail journeys on earth. From Oslo, the line climbs gently through forests, plateaus and ski centres to the beautifully desolate **Hardangervidda Plateau**, home to Norway's largest herd of wild reindeer and numerous hiking trails. At Myrdal, take the Flåmsbana railway down to **Flåm**, from where fjord cruises head up the incomparable **Nærøyfjord**. Travel via Gudvangen, sleep overnight in **Stalheim**, and then continue on to **Voss**, where thrill-seekers love the easily accessible activities on offer.

Voss serves as a gateway to the splendid scenery of **Hardangerfjord**, where **Ulvik** and **Eidfjord** stand out among Norway's most worthwhile fjord-side towns. Away to the south, **Stavanger** is one of Norway's most appealing cities and a base for trips to **Lysefjord**, including the walk up to the dramatic Preikestolen (Pulpit Rock).

A boat journey along the coast takes you to beautiful **Bergen**, with its stunning timbered houses and cosmopolitan air.

NORTH
SEANORWEGIAN
SEA

Two Weeks

The Heart of Norway

The dramatic high country of central Norway is simply spectacular and, provided you're willing to rent a car for part of the time, it offers some unparalleled opportunities to explore the region's quiet back roads; serious cyclists could also follow many of the same routes for a slower, but spectacular, journey.

A short train or bus ride from **Oslo**, **Lillehammer** hosted the 1994 Winter Olympics and it remains one of central Norway's most pleasing spots, with a wealth of Olympic sites and a lovely setting. Continuing north, **Ringebru** has one of Norway's prettiest stave churches, but having a car enables you to take the quiet Rv27, which draws near to the precipitous massifs of the **Rondane National Park**, before continuing northeast to Unesco World Heritage-listed **Røros**, one of Norway's most enchanting villages, with painted timber houses and old-world charm. From Røros, it's an easy detour north to **Trondheim**, a delightful coastal city with a stunning cathedral, large student population and engaging cultural scene.

Turning to the south, head past **Oppdal** and **Dombås**, gateways to the **Dovrefjell-Sunndalsfjella National Park**, which is a base for musk-ox safaris in summer. From Dombås, consider a side-trip by train or down the E136, which leads through the heart of **Romsdalen** with its sheer rock walls. Returning to the main road south, head to **Otta**, where the E15 branches west to **Lom**, a lovely wooden town with a gorgeous stave church at the confluence of two steep valleys. The E15 continues deep into the fjord country to **Geirangerfjord**, perhaps the king of all Norwegian fjords. Twist down through the network of fjords to Stryn, Olden and Fjærland, gateway towns to the dramatic glacial scenery of the **Jostedalbreen National Park**.

Travel southeast to Sogndal, then northeast along the shores of pretty Lustrafjord and up onto the **Sognefjellet Road**, which leads through the extraordinarily beautiful **Jotunheimen National Park** with its wonderful hiking trails, soaring peaks and countless glaciers. One of the most scenic roads in northern Europe, Sognefjellet Road warrants driving its length, even as far as Lom, and then returning as far as Turtagro. From there, head up a scenic road to **Øvre Årdal**, then twist your way across to the **Jotunheimvegen** scenic road, and then to another, the wonderfully quiet **Peer Gynt Vegen**, and back down to Lillehammer.



Two Weeks

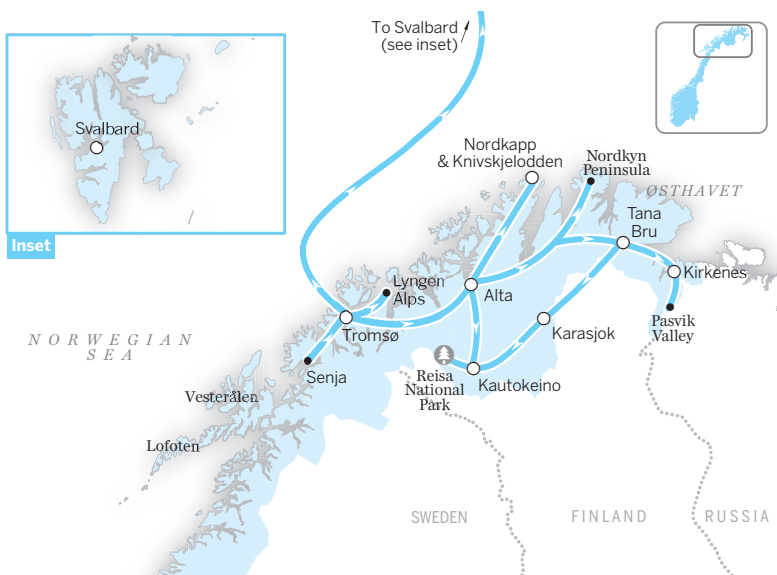
The Norwegian Coast

The coastline between Trondheim and the Lofoten Islands is magnificent, taking you across the Arctic Circle and following a shoreline fissured with deep inlets, shadowed by countless offshore islands and populated by quiet fishing villages that are the lifeblood of coastal Norway. You'll need a car to make the most of this route, although travelling aboard the Hurtigruten coastal ferry, even for just a leg or two, is another fine way to travel in a much shorter time frame.

Begin in **Trondheim** and linger for a couple of days in one of Norway's most agreeable cities. Heading north, via **Hell**, stop off in **Stiklestad**, a site of great historical significance for Norwegians. Then it's on to **Rørvik** on the coast, where a fascinating multimedia display is the perfect introduction to coastal life.

The Rv17 travels north to picturesque **Brønnøysund**, and don't miss the offshore detour to the fascinating, Unesco World Heritage-listed island of **Vega**. Back on the mainland, the extraordinary **Kystriksveien coastal route** hugs the coastline. Another candidate for Norway's most spectacular drive, this road passes an estimated 14,000 islands. It can be slow going with all the ferries and inlet-hugging stretches of road, but it is unquestionably worth it. The entire route could be done in a couple of days, but four or five is far more enjoyable. Factor in time as well for a detour to the **Saltfjellet-Svartisen National Park**, home to Norway's second-largest icefield and accessible glacier tongues. The most beautiful section of the Kystriksveien route is between Stokkvågen and Storvik, and it's along this section that you'll cross the **Arctic Circle**.

Bodø has much to recommend it, but its primary appeal is as the gateway (by ferry) to the **Lofoten Islands**. Unlike any other landscape in Norway, the Lofoten could easily occupy a week of your time, although it can be experienced much more rapidly for those in a hurry. All the islands and villages are worth visiting, but on no account miss **Å**, a charmingly preserved village at the southern tip of Moskenesøy. Like Lofoten but with far fewer visitors, **Vesterålen** is wild and beautiful and worth a day or two, including summer whale-watching off **Stø**, before you head on to journey's end at **Narvik**.



Three Weeks

The Arctic North

The mystique of the extreme north has drawn explorers for centuries. Here is a horizonless world seemingly without end, a frozen wilderness that inspires the awe reserved for the great empty places of our earth.

Tromsø, arguably Norway's liveliest medium-sized town, is a university town par excellence. Its Polar Museum captures the spirit of Arctic exploration; its Arctic Cathedral wonderfully evokes the landscapes of the north while the surrounding peaks host a wealth of summer and winter activities. Tromsø is also an ideal base for excursions inland to the **Lyngen Alps**, which are rugged and supremely beautiful with many glaciers and craggy summits. You could also visit **Senja** for a day, but it's far better to stay overnight to truly embrace the quiet of northern Norwegian nights.

Heading east, the rock carvings of **Alta** should also not be missed, and the same can be said for **Nordkapp**, although for different reasons: as far north as you can go in Norway without setting out to sea, Nordkapp is high on novelty value, if somewhat overwhelmed by visitors. Forsake the crowds and instead hike out to neighbouring **Knivskjelodden**, Norway's true north. Further east, the **Nordkyn Peninsula** has much to explore and nearby **Tana Bru** is one of the best places in the world to go salmon fishing. **Kirkenes** and the neighbouring **Pasvik Valley**, close to the Russian border, have loads of summer and winter activities, including the unusual king crab safaris.

Next, head to Inner Finnmark, the heartland of the Sami people. **Karasjok** is the undisputed capital of Sami Norway, filled with fascinating sites of Sami patrimony and opportunities for winter dog-sledding and cross-country skiing, and summer hiking. Further west, **Kautokeino** is another long-standing centre of Sami culture, and its museum is an ideal place to provide cultural context to your visit. Hiking in the **Reisa National Park** is a possibility, but only for the seriously fit.

And no exploration of the Arctic North would be complete without **Svalbard**. Return to Tromsø and catch a flight deep into polar regions where the Svalbard archipelago is one of Europe's last great wildernesses. This old whaling centre supports a rich array of Arctic wildlife, including reindeer and polar bears, not to mention epic glaciers, icebergs and icefields.



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Anthony Ham

Coordinating Author, Central Norway, Bergen & the Southwestern Fjords, Svalbard

Anthony fell in love with Norway the first time he laid eyes on it and there aren't many places in Norway he hasn't been, from Lindesnes in the south to the remote fjords of Svalbard in the far north. His true passion is the Arctic North, whether dog-sledding and spending time with the Sami around Karasjok or, for this edition of the guide, drawing near to glaciers and scouring the horizon for polar bears in the glorious wilderness of Svalbard. When he's not travelling for Lonely Planet to the Arctic (or, his other great love, the Sahara), he lives in Madrid and writes and photographs for magazines and newspapers around the world.

Read more about Anthony at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/anthonyham



Stuart Butler

Oslo, Southern Norway Hailing from southwest England, Stuart grew up surrounded by both the sea and stories of travel and adventure. By his late teens he had managed to combine the two into a life spent travelling to the remoter coastlines of the globe in search of unknown surf spots. It was this that first led him, in a frozen November, to the far north of Norway where he surfed almost within the shadow of Nordkapp. Fortunately, the very short days meant he didn't

have to spend long in the water. He now lives in the much warmer southwest of France, but has returned to hike in the beautiful mountains of Norway a number of times.



Miles Roddis

The Western Fjords, Trondelag, Nordland, the Far North A distant camping holiday in Finland, an even more distant Swedish girlfriend, and a need to refresh his northern European roots: such are the three pulls that draw Miles back to Scandinavia. He heads for the sheer, unrivalled majesty of Norway's central fjords and journeys beyond the Arctic Circle, exploring offshore islands and relishing the space and emptiness of the far north. Based for more than 20 years in Valencia,

Spain, he and his wife, Ingrid, have explored the lands north of Sognefjord for the last three editions of this guidebook.

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