

Touring holidays of Scandinavia

Expressions



Oslo, the Sognefjord and Bergen touring holiday



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8 NIGHTS/9 DAYS

Oslo • Flåm Railway • Balestrand
• Fjord trip • Bergen



This luxury touring holiday will introduce you to Norway's capital and allow you to explore the beautiful scenery of the Sognefjord. You start by spending 3 nights in Oslo, which is known for its museums and green spaces. For a deep insight into Scandinavian history a visit to the Bygdøy Peninsula is essential: this area is home to five national museums, including the Viking Ship Museum and the Norwegian Folk Museum, whilst the rest of the peninsula is a haven for nature lovers. The Akershus Fortress is another famous landmark – completed in the 1300s, this castle had a strategic location at the very end of the headland and is today open for guided tours. Perhaps the most enchanting of Oslo's open spaces is the Frogner Park, home to Vigeland Sculpture park which features more than 200 sculptures and is one of the country's top tourist attractions. You travel next to the fjord town of Balestrand via the Flåm railway. Considered one of the most scenic railway journeys in the world, this will take you through towering chasms and cascades as you descend steeply from Myrdal to Flåm. Upon arrival you will have a couple of hours to explore this quiet town before taking the boat through the fjord to your next base in Balestrand. This is a beautiful town located on the northern shore of the Sognefjord. The scenery is the main attraction here, with the narrow fjord branches and incredible mountain landscape. There is a large number of varied and well-marked hiking trails around the town and the surrounding mountains which will allow you to take in the magnificent views of the fjords. One of the most popular activities here is a boat trip on the Sognefjord itself; there are options to take ferry tours to see the glaciers along the nearby Fjærlandsfjord, or perhaps go kayaking on the calm waters. Attractions in the town of Balestrand include the Norwegian Travel and Tourism Museum and the Sognefjord aquarium, entry to which includes the rental of a rowing boat or canoe. After two nights here, you will take another ferry along the wider part of the Sognefjord arriving into Bergen, the second largest city in Norway. Known as the city of the seven mountains, Bergen is a beautiful city which used to be the capital of Norway. It is possible to reach one of these mountains by funicular from the city centre, which awards spectacular views of Bergen and the surrounding landscape. Bergen is also known for the colourful façade of Bryggen with its picturesque wooden structures, now recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage site. For those more interested in the cultural attractions the Troidhaugen was the home of composer Edvard Grieg and houses a museum and a concert hall where his music is still played. After three nights here board a direct train back to Oslo through more incredible Nordic scenery, before taking a flight back to the UK.

Day one Arrive in Oslo

This touring holiday of Norway's Sognefjord and Bergen begins with your arrival by plane into Oslo, where you spend three nights.

Days two and three In Oslo

Oslo, the capital of Norway sits on the country's southern coast at the head of the Oslofjord. During your time here we highly recommend visiting the Bygdøy Peninsula, home to five national museums: the Viking Ship Museum, the Fram Museum, the Norwegian Folk Museum, the Kon-Tiki Museum and the Norwegian Maritim Museum. The Fram Museum displays the strongest wooden ship ever built which still holds the record for sailing the farthest north and farthest south. It is possible to board the ship and see how the crew and their dogs managed to survive in the coldest and most dangerous places on earth. There are also exhibitions on the Arctic and Northwest passage. The Viking Ship Museum displays finds from four different Viking burial sites around the Oslo fjord, whilst the Norwegian Folk Museum is an open-air attraction showcasing the diverse wooden architecture and history of the country and its traditions. Another major attraction is Akershus Castle and Fortress. Completed during the 14th century, this mediaeval castle had a strategic location at the very end of the headland and withstood several sieges throughout the ages. Guided tours of the fortress are available during the summer. As well as museums, Oslo is known for its green spaces, the most famous of which is the Frogner Park. Within this area is the Vigeland Sculpture Park, featuring more than 200 sculptures in bronze, granite and iron and one of Norway's top tourist attractions. Housed in some beautiful gardens of its own, the Royal Palace is the official seat of the current Norwegian King and Queen. Take a tour of the palace during the summer or stop by to see the changing of the guard at 13:30.

Day four Oslo to Balestrand by train and boat

Today you embark on one of the most scenic railway journeys in the world. Leave Oslo in the early morning on a direct train service to Myrdal, the start of the Flåm railway. This incredible journey descends 2,833 ft through mountainous terrain, passing towering cliffs, chasms and cascades. Leaving Myrdal station, the train travels down into the Flåmsdalen Valley, passing through two of the 16 tunnels en route. Following your passage through the Vatnahalsen Tunnel you will find yourself on a mountainside ledge hundreds of feet above the valley floor. Trains often



Bergen waterfront

stop briefly Kjosfossen, allowing you to take in the breath-taking 738-ft-high waterfall there. From here you pass through two more tunnels, including the longest one of Nâli, before arriving into Berekvam station 1,129 ft above sea level. Continuing downhill through five more tunnels and over the Hoga River, the valley will eventually start to widen out as you pass close by the Rjoandefossen waterfall. The journey ends in Flåm, where you have a couple of hours to explore this quiet and picturesque town before taking the boat across the fjord to Balestrand, which is your base for the next two nights. The boat journey today takes you along part of the Sognefjord, giving you more breath-taking views of some of Norway's most spectacular scenery.

Day five In Balestrand

Balestrand is situated on the northern shore of majestic Sognefjord. We highly recommend using your time here to explore the stunning scenery, and the best way to do this is by boat. It is possible to take a ferry up the Fjærlandsfjord to Mundal, where you can visit the Glacier Museum. This features interactive exhibitions on the history of the area and its glaciers, as well as a panoramic cinema showcasing the glacier from every possible angle. For those interested in more active pursuits, Fjærland also offers the opportunity to hike on the glacier itself. At the top of Flatbreen, around a 3-hour hike from Fjærland, you will find the Flatbrehytta cabin and can witness beautiful views of the fjord. There are also excellent hiking opportunities closer

to home; Balestrand offers many varied and well-marked hiking trails around the town and the surrounding mountains. In the summer you can go kayaking on the fjord and for a couple of months each year river fishing is a popular activity. Other attractions include the Norwegian Travel and Tourism Museum, which follows the tracks of the first explorers and how their discoveries led to the development of the Norwegian tourism industry which we see today, and the Sognefjord aquarium, entry to which includes the rental of a rowing boat or canoe.

Day six Balestrand to Bergen by boat

Today you travel to your final Norwegian base of Bergen by boat, a journey of roughly four hours. The Sognefjord is the longest and deepest fjord in Norway and the second longest in the world. Depart early in the morning. Upon first leaving Balestrand the mountains will press in on all sides as you stop at the town of Vik and the quiet area of Nordeide. The fjord will occasionally open up, giving you breath-taking views across the calm water with the mountains in the background, before heading into more heavily forested area, interspersed with the occasional village and picturesque Nordic architecture. The boat will continue to stop at small at various points along the banks of the fjord, including at Vardetangen, the western-most point of mainland Norway. Continue through the winding narrow routes of the fjord before it opens out again as Bergen comes into view.



Bergen railway

Check in to your hotel for three nights.

Days seven and eight In Bergen

Bergen is the second largest city in Norway and was the capital throughout some of the country's most influential periods. One of your days here should start with a visit to the iconic Bryggen wharf, first established in the 14th century and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Its colourful buildings today house a small museum, shops and restaurants. Bergen is known the city of the seven mountains, the most easily accessible of which is Fløyen, which can be reached by funicular from the city centre and awards spectacular views of the city and surrounding area. It is possible to take the funicular back, or you may want to hike back down at your leisure. For a fully immersive experience you should take the time to visit the Bergen Fish Market. Bergen has the busiest seaport in the country and the market offers an abundance of fish, shellfish, fruit and vegetables. Cultural attractions include the Troidhaugen, the former home of Edvard Grieg and today host to a museum about his life and works as well as a concert hall where you can hear his music performed. Bergen's location in the fjords also makes it an excellent base from which to explore more by boat, and there are multiple options ranging from a quick trip to an all-day experience.

Day nine Bergen to Oslo by train and flight to London

On your final day in Norway you board an early departure along the famously scenic

Bergen railway to Oslo. This route will take you through more of Norway's most stunning scenery. Emerging from the Ulriken Tunnel leaving Bergen, you will soon be travelling alongside the clear waters of the River Vossa before reaching the ski resort of Voss. Leaving here the track follows a spectacular canyon before ascending steeply along the tree line. You will pass by Myrdal, the starting station of the Flåm Railway, keeping an eye out for incredible views down a precipice into Flåmsdal and Sognefjord. Shortly afterwards the train passes through Finse, the highest railway station in Norway, and skirts along the northern shore of Lake Ustevatn, which can be frozen for three quarters of the year. The farms dotted among the hills will appear more frequently as you draw closer to Oslo before entering the final tunnel which announces your arrival into the capital. After a quick change of trains in Oslo, you will be on your way to the airport where you will board your flight home.



Oslo Akershus fortress

GENERAL INFORMATION

This tailor-made touring holiday is one of several suggested touring holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one mountain or lake resort too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.

PRICES

From £1,710 per person

Based on two people sharing a double or twin room.

Plus class on Norwegian trains at a supplement of £120 per person (not on the Flam railway).

Alternative hotel options can be offered in most locations as well as room upgrade supplements.

DATES

This holiday can be arranged throughout the year.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights with British Airways from London to Oslo
- Second-class travel on all trains (Plus class available on certain trains can be booked at a supplement)
- Flåm Railway journey
- Express boat from Flåm to Balestrand and from Balestrand to Bergen
- 3 nights' bed and breakfast in a Standard double room at Hotel Bristol, Oslo
- 2 nights' half board in a Historic room with fjord view at Kviknes Hotel, Balestrand
- 3 nights' bed and breakfast in a Standard double room at Bergen Børs Hotel, Bergen
- Concierge service and Expressions Holidays regional helpful hints

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Early check-in or late check-out at any hotels (although we can arrange this on request at additional cost)
- Any other services not mentioned above, such as transfers and meals except breakfast at hotels
- Personal holiday insurance. This is essential and cover should be in place from when you book the holiday.
- Possible local tourist tax, usually the equivalent of £1 to £3 per person per night, and payable locally to the hotel
- Transfers in any cities

TOUR CODES

SCFR01
EX338198

FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS

Our arrangements are very flexible in that you choose to travel on any day you want, subject to availability of your chosen transport and hotels. As mentioned above, additional nights can be added at any point.

OUR PRICES

The sample prices mentioned in this leaflet are generally a 'from' price based on the cheapest season of travel. However, fares and hotel rates can change (up and down depending on offers), so we give you an accurate price for your holiday when we provide you with a quotation. Our sample prices should be used as an indication of how much a particular combination will cost and to show the differences on average between the hotel categories on offer.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Our booking conditions apply to all holidays. A copy can be found on our website and a copy is also sent to you with a written quotation and when you make a booking.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Expressions Holidays offers full financial protection for all holidays you book with us. If your holiday includes a flight, the ATOL (3076) covers the costs of the holiday. If the holiday does not include a flight, it is the ABTOT bond that protects the cost of the holiday. We are also members of AITO (the Association of Independent Tour Operators) and ABTA.



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HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

01392 441250

and we can take you through the details we need and start the booking process. A deposit is required to confirm the arrangements and this can be paid by debit or credit card over the phone. The level of the deposit will be confirmed at the point of booking.