

# Norway

## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Bergen** For a picturesque coastal locale and charming wooden buildings, you can't beat this lively city and its proximity to fjords (p854)
- **Tromsø** Drink your fill watching the aurora borealis in this lively college town above the Arctic Circle (p863)
- **Best journey** The Oslo–Bergen train boggles eyeballs as it rushes past snowy plateaus, spectacular fjords and spotless wilderness (p854)
- **Off-the-beaten track** Bike downhill from the icecap near Finse to the fjord at Flåm (p859)

## FAST FACTS

- **Area** 324,220 sq km
- **ATMs** Widespread, even in Arctic towns
- **Budget** Nkr450 per day (excluding transport costs)
- **Capital** Oslo
- **Country code** ☎ 47
- **Famous for** cod, Vikings
- **Head of state** King Harald V, Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg
- **Languages** Norwegian, English and Sami
- **Money** Norwegian krone (Nkr); A\$1 = Nkr4.72, CA\$1 = Nkr5.60, €1 = Nkr7.96, ¥100 = Nkr5.41, NZ\$1 = Nkr3.86, UK£1 = Nkr11.49, US\$1 = Nkr6.25
- **Phrases** *hei* (hello), *takk* (thanks), *ja* (yes), *nei* (no), *stengt* (closed)



- **Population** 4.6 million
- **Time** GMT/UTC + 1
- **Visas** Not required for most visitors for stays up to 90 days.

## TRAVEL HINTS

Pack booze before arrival. Student ID equals big discounts on transport and attractions. Bring hip clothes. Buy *minipris* (see p843) rail tickets.

## ROAMING NORWAY

Hop on the train from Oslo to Bergen, stopping to ski in Geilo or Finse. Drink beer in Bergen clubs, then explore a nearby fjord. Spend a day in Trondheim, race to Lofoten and make your way to Tromsø, a university town in the far north.

You're going to spend a lot of money and you'll like it. Norway's laid-back cities provide stylish cafés, impressive coastal scenery, and museums displaying Viking ships, slick Scandinavian designs and horrifying wax zombies doing things to seals that cause most to wince. From Stavanger to Tromsø, wilderness is always present and always staggering. Enjoy fjords, glaciers and mountains, all linked by a huge network of skiing and hiking trails, and dotted with scenic huts that provide some of Norway's cheapest lodging. Along the way you'll eat a lot of fish.



## HISTORY

Norway's greatest impact on history was the Viking Age, usually dated from the plundering of England's Lindisfarne monastery by Nordic pirates in 793. Over the next century, the Vikings made raids throughout Europe. The Viking leader Harald Hårfagre (Fairhair) unified Norway in 872. Norwegian naval power was finished off when Alexander III, King of Scots, defeated a Viking force at the Battle of Largs in 1263.

In 1397 Norway was absorbed into a union with Denmark that lasted over 400 years. Denmark's defeat in the Napoleonic Wars caused it to cede Norway to Sweden in January 1814. Tired of forced unions, on 17 May 1814 a defiant Norway adopted its own constitution. In 1884 a parliamentary government was introduced and a growing nationalist movement eventually led to peaceful secession from Sweden in 1905.

Norway stayed neutral during WWI. During WWII it was attacked by the Nazis on 9 April 1940. King Håkon established a government in exile in England and placed most of Norway's merchant fleet under the command of the Allies. Although Norway remained occupied until the end of the war, it had an active resistance movement. The royal family returned in June 1945.

Norway joined the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in 1960, but has been reluctant to forge closer bonds with other European nations. In 1972 Norwegians voted against joining the European Community (EC) amid a divisive national debate. Sentiments continue to favour staying outside the EU, though opinions have wavered recently.

## THE CULTURE

With 4,600,000 people, Norway has one of the lowest population densities in Europe and one of the world's best standards of living. The largest cities are Oslo with 500,000 residents, then Bergen, Trondheim and Stavanger.

Most Norwegians are of Nordic origin, and are thought to have descended from central and northern European tribes who migrated northwards around 8000 years ago. In addition, there are about 40,000 Sami (formerly known as Lapps), the indigenous people of Norway's far north who make up the country's largest ethnic minority. Many still live a traditional nomadic life, herding reindeer in Finnmark.

Some Norwegians shoot grenade-tipped harpoons at Minke whales. Others like to eat the by-product. This is legal.

## SPORT

'Ski' is a Norwegian word and Norway makes a credible claim to having invented the sport. Other spectator sports include skiing, speed skating and football. Empathetic winter visitors will experience displaced vertigo as they witness ski jumping during the Holmenkollen Ski Festival (see p847), among other places.

## ARTS

Norway's best-known artists include Edvard Munch, landscape painter JC Dahl, classical composer Edvard Grieg, sculptor Gustav Vigeland and playwright Henrik Ibsen.

Norway's stave churches are some of the oldest wooden buildings on the planet. Named for their vertical supporting posts, these structures are distinguished by dragon-headed gables resembling ornately carved prows of Viking ships. Other significant architectural features in the country include the romantic 'dragon style', found in some historic hotels, and the Art Nouveau style, best observed in Ålesund.

Norwegians Sigrid Undset and Knud Hamsun (a Nazi collaborator) won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1928 and 1920, respectively. Undset is best known for *Kristin Lavransdottir*, a trilogy portraying the struggles and earthy lifestyle of a 14th-century Norwegian family, while Hamsun won the Nobel Prize for his novel *The Growth of the Soil*.

Not traditionally a cinematic powerhouse, Norway has recently produced several excellent films, including *Elling* (2001), *Beautiful Country* (2004) and *Free Jimmy* (2006). For a Norwegian classic, try *Ni Liv* (1957).

Norway's rock scene thrives, with Bergen producing most of the bands. Some of the Bergen Wave's most popular artists include Ralph Myerz and the Jack Herrend Band, Sondre Lerche and Røyksopp.

## ENVIRONMENT

Norway's coastline is deeply cut by fjords – long, narrow inlets of the sea bordered by high, steep cliffs. Mountains, some capped with Europe's largest glaciers, cover over half of the landmass. Only 3% of the country is arable.

The typically rainy climate of the mainland is surprisingly mild for its latitude. Thanks to the Gulf Stream, the coastal ports remain ice-free all year, though much of Norway lies above the Arctic Circle.

## TRANSPORT

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

#### Air

Norway's main international airports:

**Gardermoen Airport** (code OSL; ☎ 81 55 02 50; www.osl.no) Norway's principal international airport is 50km northeast of central Oslo.

**Torp Airport** (code TRF; ☎ 33 42 70 02; www.torp.no) Ryanair flies to Sandefjord, 123km south of Oslo.

Other airports with limited connections to international destinations:

**Bergen** (code BGO; ☎ 55 99 80 00; www.avinor.no)

**Stavanger** (code SVG; ☎ 51 65 80 00; www.avinor.no)

**Tromsø** (code TOS; ☎ 77 64 84 00; www.avinor.no)

**Trondheim** (code TRD; ☎ 74 84 30 00; www.avinor.no)

Airlines flying to and from Norway:

**Aeroflot** (code SU; ☎ 23 50 20 01; www.aeroflot.no)

**Air France** (code AF; ☎ 23 50 20 01; www.airfrance.no)

**British Airways** (BA; ☎ 81 53 31 42; www.britishairways.com)

**British Midland** (code BD; www.flybmi.com)

**Finnair** (code AY; ☎ 81 00 11 00; www.finnair.com)

**Icelandair** (code FI; ☎ 22 03 40 50; www.icelandair.com)

**KLM** (code KL; ☎ 22 64 37 52; www.klm.com)

**Lufthansa** (code LH; ☎ 81 52 04 00; www.lufthansa.com)

**Nordic Airlin** (code LF; ☎ 24 14 87 58; www.flynordic.com)

**Norwegian Air** (code DY; ☎ 81 52 18 15; www.norwegian.no)

**Ryanair** (code FR; ☎ 82 00 07 20; www.ryanair.com)

**SAS Braathens** (code BU; ☎ 91 50 54 00; www.sasbraathens.no)

**Spanair** (code JK; ☎ 81 52 40 00; www.spanair.com)

**Sterling Airlines** (code NB; ☎ 81 55 88 10; www.sterling.dk)

#### Boat

##### DENMARK

**DFDS Seaways** (☎ 22 41 90 90; www.dfdsseaways.com) runs overnight ferries between Copenhagen and Oslo; fares range from €80 to €400.

**Color Line** (☎ 81 00 08 11; www.colorline.com) runs ferries between Hirtshals and Kristiansand (4½ hours, two to five daily), Stavanger (12 hours, three weekly) and Bergen (21 hours, three

weekly). Oslo ferries run to Frederikshavn (9½ hours, one daily) and Kiel (5½ hours, five weekly). Fares are the same for all routes, ranging from €24 to €65 for deck passengers.

**Fjord Line** (☎ 55 54 88 00; www.fjordline.com) sails from Hanstholm to Bergen (Nkr340 to Nkr920, 17 hours, one daily most of year). Cabins, cars and folding deck chairs cost extra.

**Stena Line** (☎ 23 17 91 00, 02010; www.stenaline.com) operates daily ferries between Frederikshavn and Oslo (€47, 12 hours, six weekly).

##### ICELAND & THE FAROE ISLANDS

**Smyril Line** (☎ 55 32 09 70; www.smyril-line.com) runs from May to early September between Bergen and Seyðisfjörður in Iceland (25 hours, one weekly), via Lerwick and the Faroe Islands.

##### SWEDEN

**DFDS Seaways** (☎ 22 41 90 90; www.dfdsseaways.com) operates overnight ferries between Helsingborg and Oslo (passenger/car €65/120, 14 hours, one daily) and between Gothenburg (Göteborg) and Kristiansand (passenger/car €22/55, seven hours, three days weekly).

#### Bus

##### DENMARK

The **Själlibus** (☎ 771-15 15 15; www.sjallibusen.se) from Copenhagen to Oslo (Dkr250, eight hours, five daily) runs via Malmö in Sweden.

##### FINLAND

**Eskelisen Lapin Linjat** (☎ 016-342 2160; www.eskelisen-lapinlinjat.com) runs buses from Rovaniemi to Nordkapp (€96, 12 hours, summer only) and Tromsø (€68, eight hours, summer only).

##### SWEDEN

**Nor-Way Bussekspress** (☎ 81 54 44 44; www.nor-way.no) runs between Oslo and Gothenburg (Skr200, 4¼ hours, five daily) and Malmö (Skr340, 7½ hours, twice daily).

#### Train

##### DENMARK

Trains from Copenhagen to Oslo (nine hours, two daily) require a change in Gothenburg, Sweden; book cheap tickets at least seven days in advance.

##### SWEDEN

Daily trains run to Oslo from Stockholm (1st/2nd class Skr778/642, six hours), Gothenburg

(1st/2nd class Skr698/392, 7½ hours) and Malmö (1st/2nd class Skr945/794, 8½ hours); book discounted tickets at least seven days in advance.

### GETTING AROUND

Norway's public transport is efficient, with trains, buses and ferries timed to link effectively. The *NSB Togruiter* has rail schedules and information on connecting buses. Boat and bus departures vary daily and are seasonal, so pick up the latest *ruteplan* (timetable) from regional tourist offices. Most buses, boats and some trains have student discounts – always ask ('Er der en student tilbud/rebatt?').

#### Air

Norway has 50 airports, most listed on www.avinor.no. Air travel is worth considering due to the great distances involved in overland travel. The following airlines fly domestic routes:

**Coast Air** (code BX; ☎ 81 54 44 42; www.coastair.no)

**Norwegian Air** (code DY; ☎ 81 52 18 15; www.norwegian.no)

**SAS Braathens** (code BU; ☎ 91 50 54 00; www.sasbraathens.no)

**Widerøe** (code WF; ☎ 81 00 12 00; www.wideroe.no)

#### Bicycle

Given its geography, Norway is not ideally suited for extensive bicycle touring. The *Sykkelguide* series of booklets (Nkr120), available at larger tourist offices, has maps and English text.

#### Boat

A comprehensive network of ferries and express boats links Norway's islands, coastal towns and fjord districts; see specific destinations for details.

##### HURTIGRUTEN COASTAL STEAMER

For more than a century Norway's *Hurtigruten* (☎ 81 03 00 00; www.hurtigruten.no) has been the lifeline for villages scattered along the remote coast. One ship heads north from Bergen each night, pulling into 34 ports on its six-day journey to Kirkenes. With good weather, expect spectacular scenery.

The ships accommodate deck-class travelers, and on most you may sleep in public areas (free, but uncomfortable and noisy). Most passengers can rent cabins for overnight trips.

Accompanying spouses, children, students and seniors over 67 all receive a 50% discount. Sample fares from Bergen include Nkr1705 to Trondheim, Nkr3499 to Tromsø and Nkr2927 to Svølvar. Shorter port-to-port trips are often the easiest and cheapest way to get from one coastal city to another (for example, the fare from Svølvar to Tromsø is Nkr954).

From September to April, passengers get 40% off fares on any day except Tuesday, with return journeys at a further 50% reduction on the return portion of the ticket.

#### Bus

The main operator, **Nor-Way Bussekspress** (☎ 82 02 13 00; www.nor-way.no), has routes connecting every major town. It offers passes valid for 21 consecutive days (Nkr2300). Smaller outfits provide local service.

Fares are based on the distance travelled, averaging Nkr150 for the first 100km. Several routes offer half-price fares to holders of Eurail, InterRail and ScanRail passes between Tromsø and Bodø. InterRail and ScanRail passes get half-price bus tickets for the Western Fjords and other routes in southern Norway.

#### Car & Motorcycle

The **Road User Information Centre** (☎ 175) tells you the latest road conditions throughout Norway.

For a full list of ferry schedules, fares and reservation phone numbers, grab *Rutebok for Norge* (Nkr210), available in larger bookshops. For motoring information, contact the national automobile club, **Norges Automobil-Forbund** (NAF; ☎ 22 34 14 00; www.naf.no).

Major car-rental companies have offices at airports and in city centres. Rates include MVA and insurance.

#### Hitching

Hitching is legal and relatively safe, but it is uncommon.

#### Train

Norway has an excellent, though limited, national rail system. **NSB** (Norges Statsbaner; ☎ 81 50 08 88; www.nsb.no) operates most lines. Ordinary-class travel is great. Komfort-class travel isn't worth the extra Nkr75. Hugely discounted *minipris* tickets are sometimes available. These tickets are only available online, at least a day in advance. Buy early – they sell out.

High-standard sleeping compartments cost Nkr750 and have two beds.

### TRAIN PASSES

The Norway Rail Pass (US\$218/258/298 for three/four/five days' travel within one month) allows unlimited train travel for three to eight days within Norway. The Flåm line isn't covered (there's a 30% discount) but there's a 50% discount on Bergen–Stavanger ferries.

## OSLO

pop 522,000

Norway's capital stands apart because of its stupendous combination of urbanity and wilderness. Here, cool cafés abound, the subway connects to a mountainous forest laced with numerous ski and hiking trails, and there are also nearby islands to explore. While not as picturesque as Bergen, Oslo has the famous Vigeland sculpture park and the city is eminently strollable. For a particularly good urban walk, follow the Akerselva River's banks to find several waterfalls and the converted factory buildings that comprise the edge of the trendy Grünerløkka district, where you will undoubtedly spend your time drinking.

### ORIENTATION

Oslo's central train station (Oslo Sentralstasjon, or 'Oslo S') is at the eastern end of the city centre. From there the main street, Karl Johans gate, runs through the heart of the city. Reach the Grünerløkka neighbourhood by following Storgata across the Akerselva. The Grønland immigrant district is east of Oslo S.

Most central city sights are within a 15-minute walk of Karl Johans gate.

### GETTING INTO TOWN

Gardermoen airport has high-speed **airport express trains** (Flytoget; ☎ 177 or 22 177 30; www.flytoget.no) Adult/student fares are Nkr180/90 and they run every 20 minutes; the trip takes 19 minutes. Or you can take a bus (adult/student Nkr120/80, 40 minutes, three hourly) or taxi (Nkr450). **Oslo Taxi** (☎ 02323) sometimes offers discount rates.

Torp airport times **buses** (TorpExpressen; ☎ 81 50 01 76) to Ryanair flights, even when delayed (adult/student Nkr130/70). Otherwise, take an hourly Telemarksekspressen bus (or a taxi; from Nkr150, 10 minutes) between Torp and Sandefjord station for trains to Oslo.

Trains arrive at Oslo S; buses at the nearby Galleri Terminal.

### INFORMATION

#### Bookshops

**Nomad** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 56 25 40; Uranienborgveien 4; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat) Travel guides and maps.

#### Discount Card

**Oslo Card** (1/2/3 days Nkr195/285/375) Provides entry to most museums and attractions, as well as travel on public transport. Students, who get half-price entry at most sights, usually do better buying a just a dagskort (or even just walking) and paying separate museum admissions.

#### Emergency

**Jernbanetorget Apotek** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 41 24 83; Fred Olsens gate; ☎ 24hr) Opposite Oslo S.

**Oslo Kommunale Legevakten** (Map pp848-9;

☎ 22 11 80 80; Storgata 40) Medical clinic with 24-hour emergency services.

#### Internet Access

**Deichmanske Bibliotek** (Map pp848-9; Henrik Ibsens gate 1; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat Sep-May, 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat Jun-Aug) Free internet; sign up in advance.

**WTE Internet Café** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 87 01 60; Thorvald Meyers gate 85; per hr Nkr30; ☎ 10am-9pm Mon-Fri, 11am-9pm Sat & Sun)

#### Money

ATMs are everywhere in Oslo. Change money at the **bank** (☎ from 5.30am Mon-Sat, from 6.30am Sun) at Gardermoen airport.

**American Express** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 98 37 35; Fridtjof Nansens plass 6; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat) Best deal for those changing small sums. Offers best rates with no commission on Amex travellers cheques and around 1% for most other brands of travellers cheques.

#### Post

**Main post office** (Map pp848-9; Dronningens gate 15; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri)

### Tourist Information

**Den Norske Turistforening** (DNT; Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 82 28 22; www.dntoslo.no; Storgata 3; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Wed & Fri, 10am-6pm Thu, 10am-2pm Sat) Book wilderness huts and get info on hiking.

**Oslo Promotion** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 24 14 77 00; www.visitoslo.com; Fridtjof Nansens plass; ☎ 9am-7pm Jun-Aug, 9am-5pm Mon-Sat Apr-May & Sep, 9am-4pm Mon-Fri Oct-Mar)

**Use-It** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 41 51 32; www.unginfo.oslo.no; Møllergata 3; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri Jul & Aug, 11am-5pm Mon-Fri Sep-Jun) This youth information office gives honest advice and info about Oslo's goings on. It publishes *Streetwise*, an invaluable and free guide to Oslo.

### SIGHTS

In addition to those mentioned below, Oslo also has museums dedicated to skating, mail and architecture. See the *Oslo Guide*.

For a freakish sensory overload, enter the **Emanuel Vigeland Museum** (Map p846; ☎ 22 14 57 88; www.emanuelvigeland.museum.no; Grimelundsveien 8; admission Nkr30; ☎ noon-4pm Sun), the life work and mausoleum of Gustav Vigeland's brother. As you adjust to the dark of the windowless nave, you'll discern enormous frescoes depicting human life from conception to death (sometimes erotically). The bizarre chamber has such incredible acoustics that visitors are required to wear cloth booties to silence their footsteps. Finger clicks sound like gunshots.

For more nudity, head to **Frognerparken** (Map p846; ☎ 24hr) and the central walkway, **Vigeland Park**. A processional walkway lined with statues of screaming babies, entwined lovers and other naughty people leads to a giant phallus. Crowds flock to its monumental elegance and surrounding green spaces, ponds and shady trees on sunny days.

To make fun of Norwegian security measures, come to the **Munchmuseet** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 23 24 14 00; Tøyengata 53; adult/student Nkr65/30, free Oct-Mar; ☎ 10am-6pm daily Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm Tue-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun Sep-May), where you can admire important works, including *The Scream*, which loves to be stolen and recovered. Exit to wander around the surrounding **botanical gardens** (☎ 24hr), vibrantly growing in the long summer light.

The **Nasjonalgalleriet** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 20 04 04; Universitetsgata 13; www.nasjonalgalleriet.no; admission free; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Mon) houses Norway's largest collection of Norwegian art, including another version of *The Scream* (also stolen, but

later recovered) and 19th-century landscape paintings by Dahl.

Head inside the new **Nobels Fredsenter** (Peace Centre; Map pp848-9; ☎ 48 30 10 00; www.nobelpeacecenter.org; Brynjulf Bulls plass 1; admission Nkr60; ☎ 10am-7pm Jun-mid-Sep, 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, 11am-6pm Sat & Sun mid-Sep-May) for flashy high-tech screens exploring themes of peace and conflict. View exhibits on winners of the Peace Prize from 1901 to present.

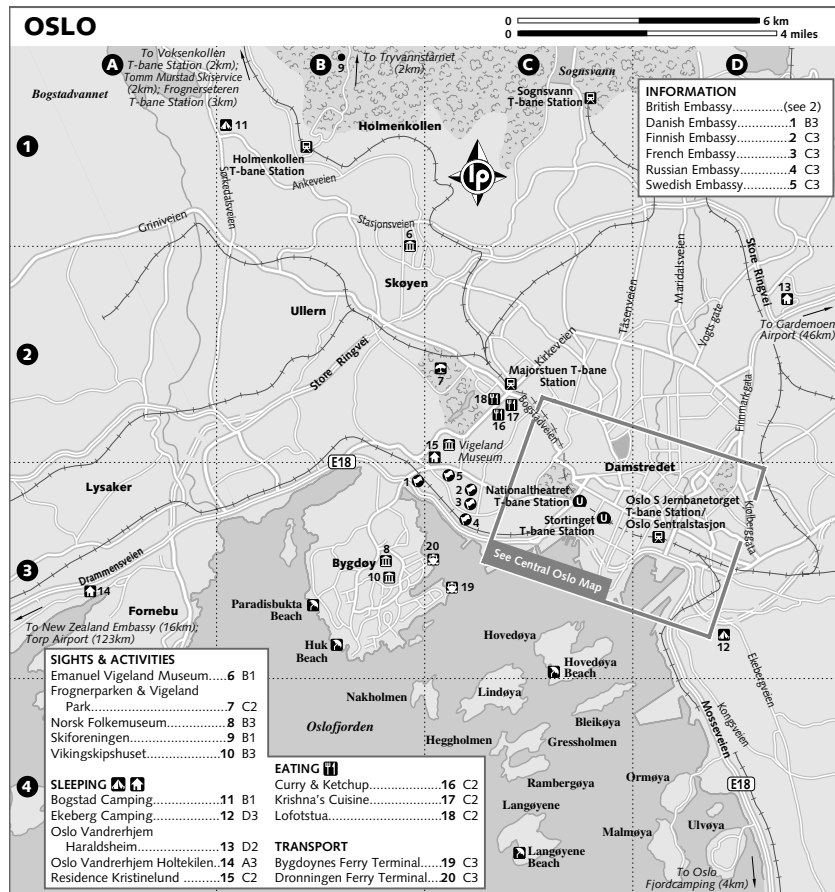
For explorations of a medieval fortress, visit **Akershus Festning** (Akershus Fortress; Map pp848-9; admission free; ☎ 6am-9pm), begun under King Håkon in 1299, with excellent views of the Oslofjord from a strategic position on the eastern side of the harbour. Within the park-like grounds, **Akershus Slott** (Akershus Castle; Map pp848-9; ☎ 23 09 35 53; admission Nkr40; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Sat, 12.30-4pm Sun May-mid-Sep) is a medieval palace with Renaissance modifications. In its dungeons you'll find dark cubbyholes where outcast nobles languished, while the upper floors have banquet halls and staterooms. During WWII the Nazis used Akershus as a prison and execution grounds, and today it's the site of **Norges Hjemmefront Museet** (Norwegian Resistance Museum; Map pp848-9; ☎ 23 09 31 38; www.nhm.mil.no; admission Nkr30; ☎ 10am-3pm Mon-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat & Sun), providing a vivid account of life under German occupation.

Want to see thousands of tiny bottles of booze? The **Mini Bottle Gallery** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 23 35 79 60; www.minibottlegallery.com; Kirkegata 10; admission Nkr85; ☎ noon-4pm Sat & Sun) displays them in a setting that combines elements of architectural elegance, haunted-house gadgetry and the crass overtures of a puerile club. You're bound to wonder if the place is a joke. The answer comes readily in the bathroom.

### Bygdøy

The Bygdøy peninsula holds excellent attractions, particularly the **Vikingskipshuset** (Viking Ship Museum; Map p846; ☎ 22 13 52 80; Huk Aveny 35; admission Nkr50; ☎ 9am-6pm May-Sep, 11am-4pm Oct-Apr), which houses three 9th-century ships excavated from the Oslofjord region, two of them amazingly intact. These were drawn ashore and used as tombs for nobility, who were buried in blue clay with everything they needed in the hereafter (jewels, furniture, food and servants).

Nearby, the **Norsk Folkemuseum** (Map p846; ☎ 22 12 37 00; Museumsveien 10; adult/student mid-May-mid-Sep Nkr75/45; ☎ 10am-6pm mid-Jun-mid-Sep,



11am-3pm Mon-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat & Sun mid-Sep–mid-May) displays 140 buildings clustered according to region, mostly from the 17th and 18th centuries. Dirt paths wind past sturdy barns, *stabbur* (storehouses on stilts) and sod-roofed farmhouses sprouting wildflowers. On summer Sundays, there's usually folk music and dancing at 2pm.

Ferries run to Bygdøy (Nkr22, 15 minutes, every 20 to 40 minutes) from mid-April to early October, leaving from Rådhusbrygge 3. Bus 20 runs to Bygdøy from the National Theatre.

### Islands & Beaches

Ferries to half a dozen of the islands in the Oslofjord leave from Vippetangen quay. These islands make great scenic day trips

for picnics and swimming. **Hovedøya**, the closest island, has a rocky coastline but its southwestern side is a popular sunbathing area. Boats to Hovedøya leave from Vippetangen quay once or twice every hour between 6am and midnight from late May to mid-August, with fewer services during the rest of the year.

Further to the south is the undeveloped island of **Langøyene**, which offers far better areas for swimming. Boats to Langøyene depart every day from late May to mid-August.

Bygdøy has two popular beaches, **Huk** and **Paradisbukta**, which are reached by taking bus 30 from Jernbanetorget (outside Oslo S) to its last stop.

## ACTIVITIES

A network of ski and hiking trails leads into Nordmarka from Frognerseteren, northwest of the city at the end of T-bane line 1. One fairly strenuous walk is from Frognerseteren to Lake Sognsvann, where you can take T-bane line 5 back to the city. If you're interested in wilderness hiking, contact the DNT office (see p845).

Oslo's ski season is roughly December to March. **Tomm Murstad Skiservice** (☎ 22 13 95 00; www.skiservice.no; Tryvannsveien 2), at Voksenkollen T-bane station, hires out snowboards and skis (from Nkr190). Cross-country trails are free, downhill lift tickets cost Nkr230. **Skiforeningen** (☎ 22 92 32 00; www.holmenkollen.com; Kongeveien 5) can provide more information.

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

**Inferno Metal Festival** (www.infernofestival.net) Heavy metal hits Oslo in April.

**Constitution Day** Oslo's most festive annual event takes place on 17 May, when city residents descend on the Royal Palace in traditional garb.

**Holmenkollen Ski Festival** (☎ 22 92 32 00; www.skiforeningen.no) Nordic skiers and ski jumpers from around the world converge on Holmenkollen in March.

**Oslo International Jazz Festival** (☎ 22 42 91 20; www.oslojazz.no) Held in August.

**Films from the South** (☎ 22 82 24 80; www.filmfrasor.no) October film festival.

## SLEEPING

When things get hopeless, Use-It (see p845) can usually book double rooms in private homes for Nkr300 to Nkr500 (excluding breakfast). There's no fee. Oslo Promotion (p845) books rooms for a Nkr35 fee. Visit www.bbnorway.com for a dozen B&Bs in the city.

## Camping

Though finding a spot can be a pain, you can camp for free in Nordmarka, 150m from any building or fence. You can also camp for free on the island of Langøyene, which has crowded beaches and sea breezes (along with quite a bit of bird poop). You'll be constrained by the ferry schedule.

**Oslo Fjordcamping** (☎ 22 75 20 55; fjordcamping@yahoo.no; Ljansbruksveien 1; camp sites per tent from Nkr130, on-site caravan Nkr300) This family-friendly camping ground located by the Oslofjord, about 8km south of the city, doesn't have the droves of loud revellers found in the other main

options in Oslo. To get here take bus 83. Also try:

**Ekeberg Camping** (Map p846; ☎ 22 19 85 68; www.ekebergcamping.no; Ekebergveien 65; camp sites per tent from Nkr150; ☎ 7.30am-11pm Jun-early Sep) Take bus 34 or 46.

**Bogstad Camping** (Map p846; ☎ 22 51 08 00; www.bogstadcamping.no; Ankerveien 117; camp sites per tent Nkr140) North of the city; take bus 32.

## Hostels

**Permalen** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 23 09 30 81; perminalen@statenskantiner.no; Øvre Slottsgate 2; dm/s/d Nkr295/495/650) This central 55-room *pension* caters to military personnel, but is open to everyone. All rooms have private bath and are completely spotless. Rates include linens.

**Anker Hostel** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 99 72 10; www.anker.oslo.no; Storgata 55; 4-/6-bed dm Nkr145/170, 2-person r Nkr430) You'll find this utilitarian hostel on a cheerless intersection of wide streets. It is, however, excellently located in the centre near Grünerlokka. Breakfast costs Nkr60.

**Oslo Vandrerhjem Haraldsheim** (Map p846; ☎ 22 22 29 65; www.haraldsheim.oslo.no; Haraldsheimveien 4; dm/s/d Nkr205/380/515, dm/s/d with shared bathroom Nkr185/310/430; ☎ closed Christmas) Big and busy, this modern hostel is surrounded by acres of athletic fields. Though it's 4km from the centre, you can still make out the Oslofjord in the distance (the rumbling freeway is much closer). Take tram 13 or 17 to Sinsenkrysset.

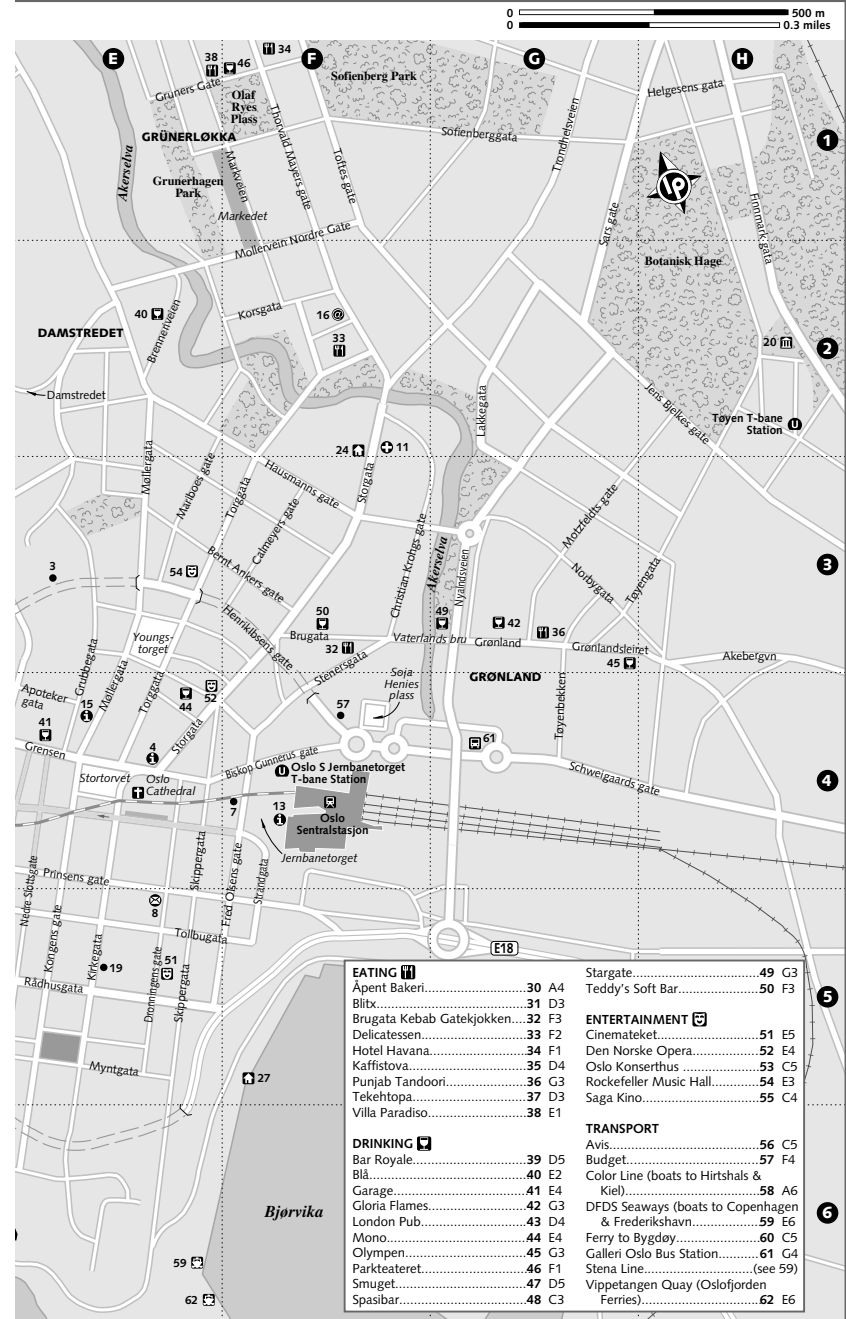
**Oslo Vandrerhjem Holtekilen** (Map p846; ☎ 67 51 80 40; www.vandrerhjem.no; Micheletsvei 55, Stabekk; dm/s/d Nkr185/285/470; ☎ mid-May–early Oct) The 195-beds here sit amid a quiet enclave of trees close to the edge of the Oslofjord. It's far enough from the centre (8km) that day cards and Oslo passes won't cover bus fare. Take bus 151, 153, 161, 162, 252 or 261.

## Pensions & Hotels

**Curpick Ellingsen's Pensjonat** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 60 03 59; ep@tiscal.no; Holtegate 25; s Nkr300-420, d Nkr490-590; ☎ 8am-9pm) This homy pension set in a quiet neighbourhood dates from 1890 and many original features (high ceilings, rose designs, tall thresholds) remain. Rooms are bright and airy. Bathrooms are shared.

**Residence Kristinelund** (Map p846; ☎ 40 00 24 11; www.kristinelund.no; Kristinelundveien 2; s/d Nkr525/870; ☎ 8.30am-11pm) In an upmarket neighbourhood of mansions and embassies, this impressive turn-of-the-century building and its flowering grounds provide hospitality and quiet.

**CENTRAL OSLO**



NORWAY

NORWAY

**MS Innvik** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 41 95 00; www.msinnvik.no; Langkaia; s/d Nkr400/700) Once a car ferry and travelling theatre, the vessel has been reincarnated as a B&B docked in the harbour. It's still a cultural centre, so don't flush your toilet during puppet shows or theatrical events below deck.

**Cochs Pensjonat** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 23 33 24 00; fax 23 33 24 10; Parkveien 25; s/d from Nkr400/560) Near the Royal Palace, Cochs' plain pleasant rooms occupy a large turn-of-the-20th-century building with a fine corner location overlooking a beer garden across the street.

**P-Hotel** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 23 31 80 00; www.p-hotels.no; Grensen 19; s/d Nkr595/695) Supremely central and supremely generic, the P-Hotel provides competitively priced hotel rooms during the business week. No breakfast buffet: instead you get a bag of snacks.

## EATING

Oslo is super expensive. One way to save money is to frequent bakeries, many of which sell reasonably priced sandwiches and hearty breads. Otherwise, visit grocery stores: Kiwi and Rema 1000 have branches everywhere. You can find fruit stands (some open Sunday) on Storgata and Grønland. Good-value meals can often be had at cafés, where filling dishes run between Nkr80 and Nkr120 – a price you might be glad to pay after one too many hot dogs.

## Cafés

**Blitx** (Map pp848-9; Pilestredet 30c; sandwiches Nkr8-15; ☎ 11am-5pm Mon-Fri) Inside a barricaded, graffiti building, this activist institution has 25 years of squatting history. The volunteer-run café serves unbelievably cheap vegetarian and vegan food. Coffee costs Nkr5.

**Tekehtopa** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 20 33 52; St Olavs plass 2; mains Nkr89-139) A former pharmacy, this café serves espresso and salads under a beautifully moulded and painted ceiling.

**Delicatessen** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 71 45 46; Søndre gate 8; sandwiches Nkr55-75) One of Grünerløkka's cool-kid cafés, it features sturdy tables and big windows that fold away in the summer to overlook a riverside park across the street. Good Italian sandwiches and tapas.

## Quick Eats

**Åpent Bakeri** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 44 94 70; Inkognito Terrace 1) Try this elegant bakery and café for stellar breads and grainy rolls loaded with

berry jam and butter (Nkr12). Enjoy sidewalk seating on a tree-lined street.

**Hotel Havana** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 23 23 03 23; Thorvald Meyersgate 36; dishes Nkr49-89; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Sat) A Grünerløkka delicatessen serving great takeaway food. Try the substantial fish burgers with homemade aioli or the Brie sandwiches.

**Punjab Tandoori** (Map pp848-9; Grønland 24; mains Nkr55-65) Oslo's favourite turbaned man dishes out curries from steam baskets. Immensely popular, the stuff moves so fast that it's always fresh. The room is no frills and sometimes the unlucky get more bones than meat.

**Brugata Kebab Gatekjokken** (Map pp848-9; Brugata 10; falafel & kebab Nkr29-35; ☎ 10am-midnight Sun-Thu, 10am-5am Fri & Sat) This fluorescent-lit hole bucks the trend and turns out excellent falafel and properly cooked lamb on freshly made pita.

There are numerous cheap pizza, burger and kebab joints along Grønland and Storgata.

## Restaurants

**Frognerseteren** (☎ 22 46 93 96; Holmenkollveien 200; apple cake Nkr54) On a mountainside overlooking the city, this 19th-century eatery has big fireplaces and kick-arse apple cake in a building combining rusticity with the delicacy of 'dragon-style' ornamentation. Take T-bane 1 to Frognerseteren.

**Curry & Ketchup** (Map p846; ☎ 22 69 05 22; Kirkeveien 51; mains Nkr75-99) Waiters wearing black rush through an intimate room to serve quality specials (coconut duck), kormas and curries (mostly chicken and lamb with a few vegetarian dishes). There is no ketchup.

**Villa Paradiso** (☎ 22 35 40 60; Olav Ryes plass 8; mains Nkr115-145) Eat Norway's finest pizza (a true find in the land of soggy pies) surrounded by big windows and wainscoting.

**Krishna's Cuisine** (Map p846; ☎ 22 60 62 50; Kirkeveien 59b; daily meal/plate Nkr90/70; ☎ noon-8pm Mon-Sat) Krishna's serves daily vegetarian meals where you might eat corn soup, cucumber salad and a pile of broccoli in yellow curry. Portions are so huge that most just buy a plate of the hot dish.

**Kaffistova** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 23 21 42 10; Rosenkrantz gate 8; mains Nkr80-100; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun) This cafeteria serves traditional Norwegian food, including reindeer or elk carbonades (locally defined as meat cakes) and fish cakes.

## DRINKING

Many thrifty backpackers just drink the bottle they brought from home. Vigeland Park and the botanical garden both have pleasant beer gardens.

## Pubs & Bars

**Ourpick Spasibar** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 11 51 90; St Olavs gate 22; beer Nkr46) Psychedelic tablecloths provide the backdrop for an enormous beaded portrait of the Spasibar's artist/workers. It and everything else in this gallery/café/music venue is for sale, with all the proceeds going to a Russian orphanage. Consume chorizo and beer, which is discounted for those who can speak Russian with a convincing accent. Enter the Kunstacademe on Wergelandsveien and head straight for the rear of the yellow building.

**Parkteateret** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 35 63 00; Olav Ryes plass 11; beer Nkr48) The yellow and black lobby of this cool performance space serves espresso and beer to the fashionable. Excellent pavement seating overlooks one of Grünerløkka's English squares.

**Olympen** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 17 28 08; Grønlandsleiret 15; beer from Nkr29) A freakish, century-old worker's beer hall, now populated by a mix of students, artists and drunks, Olympen features cheesy cover bands in a cavernous space full of wooden booths and oil paintings of faded cityscapes. The bathrooms are disgusting.

**Teddy's Soft Bar** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 17 36 50; Brugata 3a; beer Nkr52) This place provides a view into the 1950s via its thoroughly unchanged interior and ancient Wurlitzer. While good burgers are served, most come here for the suds.

**Stargate** (Map pp848-9; Grønland 2; beer Nkr36) Low prices at this ordinary watering hole attract youthful cheapskates, immigrants and guys with too-red noses.

## SPLURGE

**Lofotstua** (Map p846; ☎ 22 46 93 96; Kirkeveien 40; mains Nkr170-220; ☎ 3-10pm Mon-Fri) Run by a family from the Lofoten Islands, this place turns out a changing menu of fantastic traditional fish dishes (including whale in season) in a room that crosses a 'brown bar' (an old-fashioned drinking den) with a tackle shop.

## Live Music

**Mono** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 41 41 66; www.cafémono.no; Pløensgate 4) For indie acts (Gruff Rhys from Super Furry Animals), head to this bar where every surface is black.

**Garage** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 17 16 00; www.garage.no; Grønland 18) Garage books Norwegian bands and international rock acts like the Beautiful People. While the sound system is good, the view is not thanks to a too-low stage.

## CLUBBING

In addition to the following, you'll find several cool nightclubs on Grønland. Use-It's *Streetwise* (see p845) lists good stuff.

**Blå** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 20 91 81; Brenneriveien 9) A cultural centre inside an old industrial building where you will meet Oslo's best-dressed hipsters. Blå also books a tonne of jazz acts.

**Bar Royale** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 42 28 88; Rådhusgata 25) Inside a former public toilet, this cave-like club (previously Skansen, deemed by *Face* to be the world's greatest club) spins house and techno.

**Gloria Flames** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 17 16 00; Grønland 18; ☎ 4pm-3am Sat-Thu, 3pm-3am Fri) King of the Grønland nightclub scene, the DJs and bartenders here play a heavy mix of rock and indie in a sceney blonde wood room.

**Smuget** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 42 52 62; Rosenkrantz gate 22) Huge crowds line up outside like Vikings assembled to behold the ferocity of Odin or to drink mead from the skull of an enemy to better slack their Viking thirst.

## Gay & Lesbian Venues

There are few strictly queer clubs in Oslo. Several attract mixed crowds and some venues offer a weekly gay night. For details, pick up the free *Pink Planet* at the tourist office or look in *Streetwise*.

**London Pub** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 70 87 00; J Hambros plass 5) Oslo's oldest hang-out for the studs, where you can shoot stick and feed jukeboxes. If you feel like serious dancing, head downstairs where DJs spin every night of the week.

## ENTERTAINMENT

The tourist office's *What's on in Oslo* lists concerts, theatre and special events.

**Den Norske Opera** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 81 54 44 88; Storgata 23) Oslo's opera company stages opera, ballet and classical concerts, and offers a 50% student discount.

**Oslo Konserthus** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 23 11 31 11; www.oslokonserthus.no; Munkedamsveien 14) The emphasis is on fine jazz and classical music.

**Rockefeller Music Hall** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 20 32 32; www.rockefeller.no; Torggata 16) Books big-name international contemporary rock and jazz in a medium-sized venue.

Cinemas include the art-house **Cinemathek** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 47 45 00; Dronningens gate 16; tickets Nkr70) and the more mainstream **Saga Kino** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 41 51 90 00; Stortingsgata 28; tickets Nkr70).

## SHOPPING

For fashionable clothes, independent book-sellers, record shops and plastic spectacle frames, head to Bogstadveien, a retail thoroughfare that extends from just north of Slottsparken to Majorsteun. For more cool Scandinavian fare, try poking around Grønnerløkka's boutiques.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### Air

Most flights land at Gardermoen, 50km north-east of the city. **Ryanair** (code FR; ☎ 82 06 11 00) flies to Oslo Torp, 123km south of the city.

### Boat

Boats to and from Copenhagen are operated by DFDS Seaway. Those travelling to Frederikshavn (also in Denmark) are operated by Stena Line, and both companies use the docks off Skippergata. See p842 for more details.

Color Line boats to and from Hirtshals (Denmark) and Kiel (Germany) dock at Hjortneskaia.

### Bus

Long-distance buses use a terminal at Galleri Oslo, just east of Oslo S.

## Car & Motorcycle

Unless you're on a motorcycle you'll have to pay a Nkr15 toll each time you enter Oslo.

All major car-rental companies have booths at Gardermoen airport.

Recommended city-centre agencies:

**Avis** (☎ 81 56 90 44; Munkedamsveien 27)

**Budget** (☎ 23 16 32 40; Oslo Spektrum)

## Train

All trains arrive and depart from Oslo S, including direct services to Stavanger, Bergen, Trondheim and more. The **information desk** (☎ 81 50 08 88) has details of travel schedules throughout

Norway. The station has various sizes of lockers for Nkr20 to Nkr50 per 24 hours.

## GETTING AROUND

### Public Transport

Oslo has an efficient public-transport system. A ticket on any service costs Nkr20 if you buy it from a station agent or from kerbside machines. You can also buy your ticket from drivers for a Nkr10 surcharge. An unlimited *dagskort* (day ticket) costs Nkr60, but can't be used between 1am and 4am. **Trafikanten** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 81 50 01 76; Jernbanetorget; ☎ 7am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm Sat & Sun) provides schedules and transit maps.

Bus and tram lines extend to the suburbs. Most converge at Jernbanetorget in front of Oslo S. Most westbound buses, including those to Bygdøy and Vigeland Park, also stop on the southern side of the National Theatre.

The T-bane, Oslo's five-line metro train network, is faster and goes further than most bus lines.

Service frequency drops dramatically at night but, on weekends only, *Nattlinjer* night buses 200 to 218 follow the tram routes until 4am (tickets Nkr50; passes not valid).

### Boat

Ferries to Bygdøy leave from Rådhusbrygge every 20 to 40 minutes, while ferries to the islands in the Oslofjord leave from Vippetangen.

### Taxi

Taxis charge up to Nkr90 at flagfall and from Nkr12 to Nkr18 per kilometre. Any taxi with a lit sign is available for hire. Otherwise, phone **Taxi2** (☎ 02202) or **Oslo Taxi** (☎ 02323). Meters start running at the point of dispatch, adding to what will become a gigantic bill.

## SOUTHERN NORWAY

The curving south coast is a magnet for vacationing Norwegian families, who come to the area for its beaches, islands and sailing opportunities. Unless they are here to pilot masted vessels, first-time foreign travellers generally visit the coast's sleepy wooden towns as a pit stop en route to more exciting locales. The notable exception is Stavanger, a lively international city conveniently positioned for explorations of surrounding fjords and surfing spots.

## STAVANGER & AROUND

pop 115,000

Don't be misled by Stavanger's title 'Oil Capital of Norway' – this is a picturesque city of narrow cobbled streets and small white houses. The centre is lively, containing a fine stock of bars, cafés and places to stroll. It's an excellent point from which to begin exploring the Lysefjord.

The adjacent bus and train stations are a 10-minute walk from the harbour. The **tourist office** (☎ 51 85 92 00; www.visitstavanger.com; Domkirkepllassen 3; ☎ 9am-8pm Jun-Aug, shorter hours Sep-May) is near the church.

## Sights & Activities

The most popular outing is the two-hour hike to the top of the incredible **Preikestolen** (Pulpit Rock), 25km east of Stavanger. You can creep up to the edge of its flat top and peer 600m straight down to the Lysefjord. The tourist board details public transport to the trailhead.

Piloted by old salts, the **Fjord Tours** (☎ 51 53 73 40; www.fjordpanorama.no) sightseeing boat departs from May to August, cruising the lovely steep-walled Lysefjord. Purchase tickets (Nkr280) at the tourist office.

Purists are attracted to Stavanger's unpopulated (and C-O-L-D) surf breaks. For rentals (Nkr350 per day), lessons and advice, visit **Surf Centrum** (☎ 51 33 11 22; Breigata 6; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat). The closest surfable spot is 15km to the south.

A fun quarter for strolling about is **Gamle Stavanger**, where cobblestone walkways lead through rows of very well-preserved 18th-century whitewashed wooden houses.

The cool **Norsk Oljemuseum** (☎ 51 93 93 00; www.norskolje.museum.no; Kjerfingholmen; admission Nkr75; ☎ 10am-7pm Jun-Aug, shorter hours Sep-May) nicely balances the technical side of oil exploration with archive footage of significant moments in the history of Norwegian oil.

Visit the fishy **Canning Museum** (Øvre Strandgate 88a; admission Nkr40; ☎ 11am-4pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug) to learn about soul-destroying jobs of the 19th-century.

## Sleeping

The tourist office books rooms in B&Bs (Nkr30 fee). Rooms start at Nkr300.

**Stavanger Camping Mosvangen** (☎ 51 53 29 71; www.mosvangencamping.no; Tjensvoll 1b; camp sites per tent Nkr80, dm Nkr120, 2-person cabins Nkr350-400; ☎ May-Sep)

In a clearing near lake Mosvangen, you'll find a large field with minimal shade trees and some mass-produced cabins. There's also a dormitory. Nearby trails lead to town (3km).

**Rogalandsheimen Gjestgiveri** (☎ 51 52 01 88; Muségata 18; s weekday/weekend Nkr495/450, d weekday/weekend Nkr595/550; ☎ ) Paintings cover every surface of this charming 19th-century guesthouse. Rooms share bathrooms, and attract artists and musicians.

**Preikestolhytta** (☎ 97 16 55 51; www.preikestolhytta.no; dm/r Nkr210/580; ☎ Jun-Aug) Trees grow from this isolated turf-roofed hostel, 25km out of the city and within walking distance of Pulpit Rock and other amazing hikes. The cafeteria works with a local culinary school.

**Stavanger Vandrerhjem Mosvangen** (☎ 51 54 36 36; stavanger.hostel@vandrerhjem.no; Henrik Ibsens gate 19; dm/d Nkr170/340; ☎ Jun-Aug) Lakeside and private, two- and four-bed rooms enjoy access to trails around Lake Mosvangen and its ducks. Breakfast costs Nkr60.

## Eating & Drinking

**Café Sting** (☎ 51 89 38 78; Valberget 3; smaller dishes Nkr75-129, mains Nkr155-175) With a hilltop position next to the Valberg Tower, Sting serves an excellent Creole pasta with shrimp. The clientele is mostly gay on Friday and Saturday nights, when there is often a DJ.

**Resept** (☎ 51 55 39 80; Østervåg 43; mains Nkr49-99) This café's décor involves minimal couches and solid coloured walls recalling the supergraphics of the 1970s. Enjoy vegetarian pasta (Nkr79) and Asian noodle soup.

**Cementen** (☎ 51 56 78 00; Nedre Strandgate 2) Bartenders play quality tunes and sometimes better bands. Pick up a used book (Nkr5) and Sunday beer special (Nkr31).

There's a fish market at the harbour. Inland, **Våland Dampbakeri & Conditori** (☎ 51 86 19 23; Nygaten 24) bakes flaky pastry.

**Checkpoint Charlie** (☎ 51 53 22 45; www.checkpoint.no; Lars Hørvigsgate 5) See rock happen on a small stage. Happy-hour beer sells for Nkr36, and it also shows football matches.

**Taket** (☎ 51 84 37 01; Nedre Strandgate 15) Stavanger's biggest disco plays pop hits to a crowded space whose sense of décor is lost in blackness. Sticky floors.

## Getting There & Away

The train runs to Oslo (Nkr833, 7¼ hours, two to four daily) via Kristiansand (Nkr383, three hours, three to seven daily).



Nor-Way Bussekspress offers connecting services to Oslo (Nkr700, 10¼ hours, one to three daily) and direct to Bergen (Nkr420, 5¼ hours, approximately hourly). **HSD Flaggruten** (☎ 05505; www.hsd.no) runs to Bergen (one way/return Nkr640/840, 4¼ hours, two or three daily).

## KRISTIANSAND

pop 79,000

Summertime Kristiansand offers urban life and a small bathing beach right in the city centre. Strollers will enjoy poking around **Posebyen**, a district containing a large concentration of white houses from the 17th and 18th centuries. It's a busy seaside holiday resort for Norwegians, but foreign tourists with limited time generally prefer Oslo, Bergen and Stavanger. The exception is when Kristiansand hosts the week-long **Quart Festival** (☎ 38 14 69 69; www.quart.no), when hundreds of top bands play (Depeche Mode and Björk, for example).

The train, bus and ferry terminals are together on the west side of the city centre near the **tourist office** (☎ 38 12 13 14; destinasjon@sorlandet.com; Vestre Strandgate 32).

The modern **Kristiansand Vandrerhjem Tangen** (☎ 38 02 83 10; kristiansand.hotel@vandrerhjem.no; Skansen 8; dm Nkr205, s Nkr315-395, d Nkr415-450; ☹ mid-Jan–mid-Dec) sits in a quiet, industrialised part of town a short walk from a beach. **Frosbusdal Rom** (☎ 91 12 99 06; www.gjestehus.no; Frobusdalen 2; s Nkr350-400, d Nkr500-700) comes with stained glass and period character in a romantic home dating from 1917.

Trains run to Stavanger (Nkr383, three hours, three to seven daily) and Oslo (Nkr569, 4¾ hours, three to seven daily). Nor-Way Bussekspress goes to Stavanger (Nkr340, four hours, two to four daily), Oslo (Nkr320, 5¼ hours, eight to 10 daily) and Bergen (Nkr610, 12 hours, one daily). Regional buses depart hourly for towns along the south coast.

## BERGEN & THE WESTERN FJORDS

The Western Fjords' steep crystalline walls drop with sublime force straight into blue water, often decorated with waterfalls and small farms that blend harmoniously into the natural landscape. Summer hiking opportunities exist along the fjord walls and on the enormous Jostedalsglacier. Bergen,

with its 15th-century waterfront, is pleasing to behold and contains fine nightlife and restaurants. For regional information, contact **Fjord Norge** (☎ 55 30 26 40; www.fjordnorway.com).

## OSLO TO BERGEN

The Oslo–Bergen train line provides a seven-hour journey past forests, alpine villages and the starkly beautiful **Hardangervidda** plateau.

Midway is **Geilo**, a ski centre where you can practically walk off the train and onto a lift. There's good summer hiking in the mountains around Geilo, which has a **hostel** (☎ 32 08 70 60; www.oenturist.no; Lienvegen 137; dm Nkr160, d Nkr400-500, breakfast Nkr60) near the centre.

From Geilo the train climbs 600m through a tundra-like landscape of high lakes and snow-capped mountains to the tiny village of **Finse**, near the **Hardangerjøkulen** icecap. Finse has year-round skiing and is in the midst of a network of summer hiking trails. One of Norway's most frequently trodden trails winds from the Finse station down to the fjord town of **Aurland**, a four-day trek. There's breathtaking mountain scenery along the way, as well as a series of DNT mountain huts a day's walk apart – the nearest is Finsehytta, 200m from Finse station.

**Myrdal**, further west along the railway line, is the connecting point for the spectacularly steep **Flåm railway**, which twists and turns its way down 20 splendid kilometres to Flåm (see p 859).

## BERGEN

pop 231,000

Norway's second-largest city might be its most beautiful. Set on a peninsula surrounded by mountains and the sea, the compact centre offers a tangle of crooked streets, picturesque wooden neighbourhoods and hilltop views. There are ample opportunities to linger in cafés and bars, while a large university population helps to secure Bergen's claim as western Norway's cultural capital, supporting theatres, a philharmonic orchestra and a notable rock scene. Drawback: expect rain or showers at least 275 days of the year.

## Orientation

The bus and train stations lie a block apart on Strømgaten, a 10-minute walk from the express boats (ferry terminals). Most of the restaurants, hotels, museums and sites cluster around Vågen, the inner harbour.

## Information

### INTERNET ACCESS

**Byens Gørste Spillehall** (Håkonsgaten 15; per min Nkr0.50; ☎ noon–2am Sun–Thu, noon–4am Fri & Sat) Cheaper than the internet cafés, with slot machines.

**Library** (Strømgaten 6; ☎ 10am–6pm Mon–Thu, 10am–4.30pm Fri, 10am–4pm Sat Oct–mid-May, shorter hours mid-May–Sep) Free internet access.

### MEDICAL SERVICES

**Legevakt Medical Clinic** (☎ 55 56 87 00; Vestre Strømkaien 19) Medical clinic with 24-hour emergency services.

**Pharmacy** (☎ 55 21 83 84; ☎ 8am–11pm Mon–Sat, 10am–11pm Sun) At the bus station.

### TOURIST INFORMATION

**DNT office** (☎ 55 33 58 10; Tverrgaten 4; ☎ 10am–4pm Mon–Wed & Fri, 10am–6pm Thu, 10am–2pm Sat) Hiking information.

**Tourist Office** (☎ 55 55 20 00; www.visitbergen.com; Vågsallmenningen 1; ☎ 8.30am–10pm Jun–Aug, 9am–8pm May & Sep, 9am–4pm Mon–Sat Oct–Apr)

### Sights & Activities

**Bryggen**, location of the old medieval quarter and World Heritage site, contains long timber buildings housing museums, restaurants and shops. The alleys that run along their less-restored sides offer an intriguing view into the stacked-stone foundations and rough-plank construction of centuries past.

The **Hanseatic Museum** (☎ 55 54 46 90; Finnegårds-gaten 1a; admission Nkr45; ☎ 9am–5pm mid-May–mid-Sep, 11am–2pm Tue–Sat, 11am–4pm Sun mid-Sep–mid-May) occupies a timber building (1704) with some of Norway's creakiest floors. Its character and beds give a glimpse of the austere living conditions of Hanseatic merchants. The entry ticket is also valid for **Schøtstuene** (Øvregaten 50), where the merchants met for business and beer guzzling.

The eclectic collection of the **West Norway Museum of Decorative Art** (☎ 55 33 66 33; Nordahl Brunsgate 9; adult/student Nkr50/40; ☎ 11am–5pm mid-May–mid-Sep, noon–4pm Tue–Sun mid-Sep–mid-May) has all sorts of displays, including a Lego set, an armchair shaped like a tarantula, Edvard Grieg's table setting and a quilt made from children's raincoats.

A one-room reconstruction of a clandestine Resistance headquarters, uncovered by the Nazis in 1942, the **Theta Museum** (☎ 55 55 20 80; Enhjørningssgården; admission Nkr20; ☎ 2–4pm Tue, Sat & Sun mid-May–mid-Sep) is hidden in an upper storey at

the rear of the Bryggen warehouse with the unicorn figurehead.

Wash your hands before and after visiting the **Leprosy Museum** (☎ 55 32 57 80; Kong Oscars gate 59; adult/child Nkr30/15; ☎ 11am–3pm mid-May–Aug), an enclosed wooden complex (1754) whose wards, church and kitchen surround a tranquil cobbled, tree-shaded interior court.

For an unbeatable city view, take the **funicular** (admission Nkr35; ☎ from 7.30am–11pm Sep–May, 7.30am–midnight Jun–Aug) to Mt Floyen (320m) and its restaurant. Well-marked hiking trails lead into the forest.

The **Ulriksbanen cable car** (admission Nkr45) up Mt Ulriken (642m) offers a panoramic view of the city, fjords and mountains.

## Sleeping

### CAMPING & HOSTELS

**Lone Camping** (☎ 55 39 29 60; www.lonecamping.no; Hardangerveien 697, Haukeland; camp sites per tent Nkr110, 4-person cabin Nkr545) Tent sites lie along a long grassy lakeshore, 16km east of Bergen by bus 900.

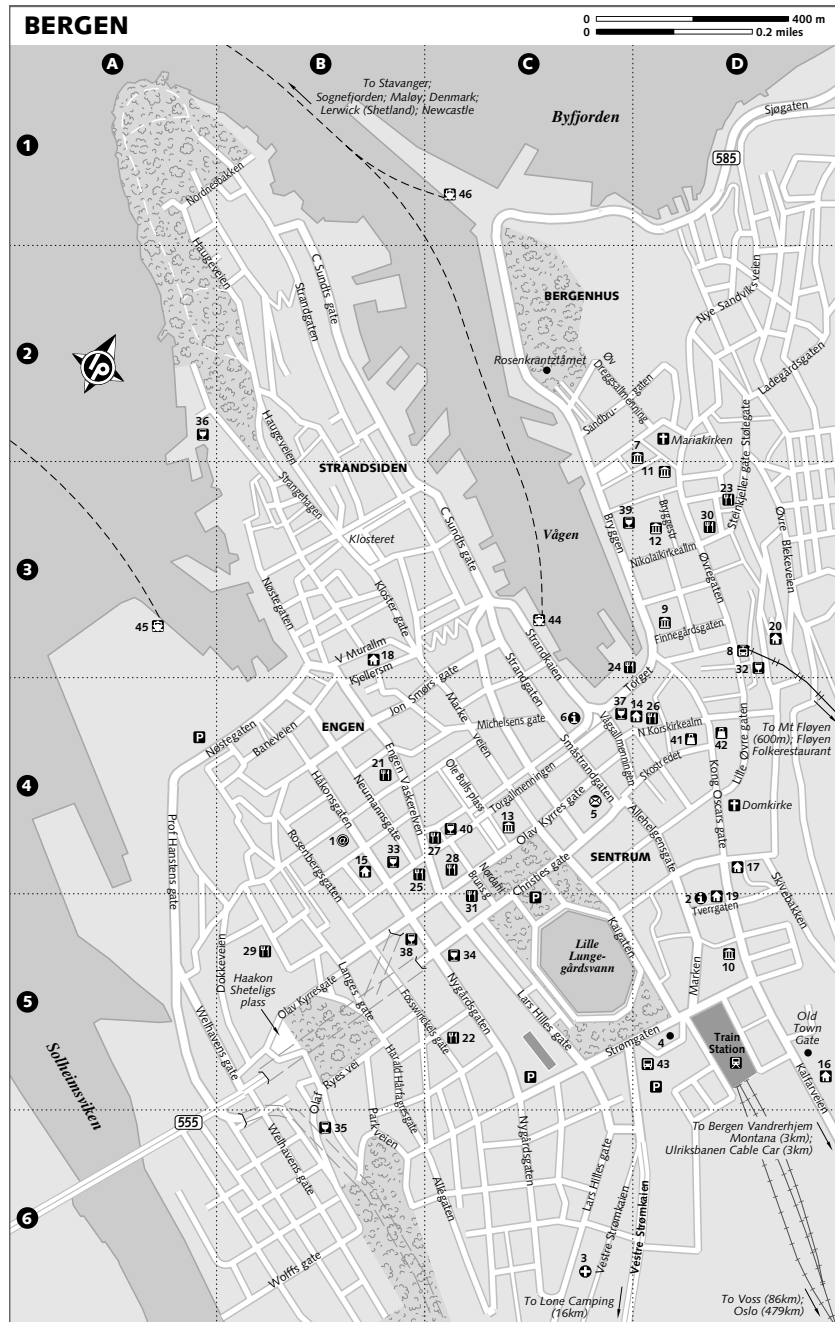
**Marken Gjestehus** (☎ 55 31 44 04; www.marken-gjestehus.com; Kong Oscars gate 45; 4-/6-/8-person dm Nkr155/175/195, s/d Nkr380/490) Rooms have wooden floors, spiffy Ikea furniture of recent vintage and big windows, often with a decent view. No breakfast.

**Dorm.no** (☎ 98 23 86 00; www.dm.no; Kong Oscars gate 44; dm Nkr165; ☎) Offers 16 beds in an attractive dormitory with linens included. There's a rockabilly café/pub, a wood terrace with flowers and a good-looking shared kitchen. Breakfast is Nkr55.

**Intermission** (☎ 55 30 04 00; Kalfarveien 8; dm Nkr150; ☎ mid-Jun–mid-Aug) This old white house has 37 beds, where the hospitable Christian Student Fellowship serves waffles to guests on Monday and Thursday nights. Breakfast is Nkr50.

**Bergen Vandrerhjem YMCA** (☎ 55 60 60 55; www.bergenhostel.com; Nedre Korskirkeallmenningen 4; budget/4-/6-/8-person dm Nkr125/160/170, d Nkr600; ☎ reception 7am–midnight) Perfectly central, dorm dwellers reside in plain, linoleum-floored bunk rooms sleeping four to six, or in windowless caverns (it gets noisy here) sleeping 15 or 32. Rooftop decks provide views over surrounding garrets. Breakfast is Nkr50.

**Bergen Vandrerhjem Montana** (☎ 55 20 80 70; www.montana.no; Johan Blyttveit 30; 20-/4-person dm Nkr160/225, s/d Nkr440/660; ☎ 3 Jan–20 Dec) A large hostel with mountain views, 5km away by bus 31.



## PRIVATE ROOMS & PENSIONS

The tourist office books single/double rooms in private homes from Nkr250/400 (plus Nkr50 booking fee); it sometimes finds last-minute hotel discounts.

**Skansen Pensjonat** (☎ 55 31 90 80; www.skansen-pensjonat.no; Vetrilidsalmenningen 29; s Nkr350-400, d Nkr550-650) Trudge up steep cobbled streets through a pretty neighbourhood to this hilltop house dating from 1918.

**Jacob's Apartments** (☎ 98 23 86 00; www.apartments.no; Kong Oscars gate 44; 1-person apt Nkr590-790, 2-person apt Nkr790-890; ☑) Simple apartments come with light wood floors and unadorned neutral-toned walls. All have private kitchen and bathroom.

**Kjellersmauet Gjestehus** (☎ 55 96 26 08; www.gjestehuset.com; Kjellersmauet 22; 1/2-/4-person apt Nkr500/800/1400) A number of homy apartments come with private bathroom and kitchen.

**Crowded House** (☎ 55 90 92 00; www.crowded-house.com; Håkonsgaten 27; s/d Nkr390/590) The 82 spacious, tidy rooms come with modern furniture. Bathrooms are shared, and the 1st floor holds a lively bar.

## Eating

**Pingvinen** (☎ 55 60 46 46; Vaskerelven 20; mains Nkr89-129) This brick-walled pub's blackboard announces the day's four offerings. Reacting against the trend towards international food fads, cooks embrace traditional cuisine, preparing hearty meals (meatloaf with leeks; fish soup) with finesse. Come here for exceptional fare at half the price of the tourist traps.

**Café Opera** (☎ 55 23 08 15; Engen 18; light meals Nkr89-116, sandwiches Nkr30-40) A continental vibe

permeates this early-20th-century café, serving brown rolls with Brie, walnut butter and cherries, salads and daily soups. Big corner windows stare at the opera house.

**Curry Nam Nam** (☎ 55 96 40 76; Steinkjeller gate 8; mains Nkr55-99) Eat rich curries and vegetarian items (spinach dal) at the convergence of several pretty cobbled alleys. At an outdoor table, smoke a post-meal water pipe for Nkr50.

**Viva las Vegas** (☎ 97 19 72 33; Steinkjeller gate 2; meals Nkr79) Enter this neon-green and Elvis-themed vegetarian restaurant to eat veggie burgers and fabulous baked chips covered in sesame seeds and herbs. Cheap wine (Nkr35).

**Chaos Coffee Bar** (☎ 55 32 15 50; Fosswinkels gate 16; light meals Nkr50-60) This neighbourhood café and its thrift-store assortment of tables and lamps serves coffee, beer and peppery vegetable pasta dishes to chatting students. Charming service.

**Zupperia** (☎ 55 55 81 44; Nordahl Bruns gate; soup Nkr50-100) From fish to gazpacho, Zupperia serves 11 kinds of soups, such as Huse-nottsuppe (oxtail boiled with vegetables).

**Godt Brød** (☎ 55 32 80 00; Nedre Korskirkealmenningen 12) This bakery does organic breads, pastries and delicious herb-dough pizzas topped with marinated vegetables (Nkr35). Also at Veste Torggata 2.

**Søstrene Hagelin** (☎ 55 32 69 49; Olav Kyrres gate 33; dishes Nkr35-89; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat) Enjoy fish pudding, fish casserole and other staples. Filling takeaway fish balls (Nkr35) come with potatoes.

**Studentkafeeene** (☎ 55 54 50 50; Ivar Aasens gate; lunch Nkr30-40; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Mon-Thu, 9.30am-4pm Fri late Aug-early Jun) The university's cafétéria

INFORMATION		EATING ☑		DRINKING ☑	
Byens Gårstø Spillehall.....	1 B4	Crowded House.....	15 B4	Det Lille Kaffeкомпаниet.....	32 D3
DNT Office.....	2 D5	Dorm no.....	(see 17)	Fotballpuben.....	33 B4
Legevakten Medical Clinic.....	3 C6	Intermission.....	16 D5	Garage.....	34 C5
Library.....	4 D5	Jacob's Apartments.....	17 D4	Hulen.....	35 B6
Main Post Office.....	5 C4	Kjellersmauet Gjestehus.....	18 B3	Kafe Kippers.....	36 A2
Pharmacy.....	(see 43)	Marken Gjestehus.....	19 D5	Kameleon.....	37 C4
Tourist Office.....	6 C4	Skansen Pensjonat.....	20 D3	Legal.....	38 B5
				Sjøboden.....	39 C3
				Studenten.....	40 C4
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES					
Bryggen.....	7 D2	Café Opera.....	21 B4		
Funicular.....	8 D3	Chaos Coffee Bar.....	22 C5		
Hanseatic Museum.....	9 D3	Curry Curry Nam Nam.....	23 D3	SHOPPING ☑	
Leprosy Museum.....	10 D5	Fish Market.....	24 C3	Boogaloo.....	41 D4
Schotstuene.....	11 D3	Godt Brød.....	25 B4	Tilsmans.....	42 D4
Theta Museum.....	12 D3	Godt Brød.....	26 D4		
West Norway Museum of Decorative Art.....	13 C4	Pingvinen.....	27 C4	TRANSPORT	
		Søstrene Hagelin.....	28 C4	Bus Station.....	43 D5
		Storsenter.....	(see 43)	Express Boats.....	44 C3
		Studentkafeeene.....	29 B5	Ferry Terminals.....	(see 44)
		Viva las Vegas.....	30 D3	Hurtigruten Quay.....	45 A3
		Zupperia.....	31 C5	International Ferries.....	46 C1
<b>SLEEPING ☑</b>					
Bergen Vandrerrhjem YMCA.....	14 D4				

might look ugly but you can grab pasta with fish (Nkr39) or a big sandwich with juice (Nkr30) at low prices. Enter the courtyard of the large yellow brick building behind the red church.

Storsenter, at the bus station, has fast-food outlets, a Vinmonopolet, and Rimi and Spar supermarkets. Torget's fish market has fresh fruit and seafood snacks, including salmon rolls for Nkr15, or boiled crab legs or shrimp for Nkr35 to Nkr75.

### Drinking

**Legal** (Christies gate at Nygårdsgaten; bar menu Nkr45-72) The design theme comes from 1960s English rock. Find red lighting, retro flooring, period lamps and tattooed university graduates.

**Det Lille Kaffekompaniet** (☎ 55 32 92 72; Nedre Fjellsmug 2) Hidden on a narrow cobbled street behind the funicular station, this intimate coffee shop brews with skill and serves cake.

**Sjøboden** (☎ 55 31 67 77; Bryggen 29; ☎ 6pm-1am Sun-Thu, 6pm-2am Fri & Sat) In a Hanseatic-era building, squeeze through crowds, dodge ceiling-suspended barrels and bump into a bad two-piece passionately playing 'County Road'.

**Kafe Kippers** (☎ 55 31 00 60; Georgernes Verft) Part of a cultural centre and former sardine cannery, enjoy outdoor, harbourside tables filled with beer drinkers. Jazz on many nights.

**Fotballpuben** (☎ 55 90 05 79; Vestre Torggate 9) This sports bar provides plenty of scarves and fans to ensure quality match watching.

### Live Music & Clubbing

**Garage** (☎ 55 32 19 80; www.garage.no; Christies gate 14) Norway's rock headquarters consistently books top bands, including international acts. Concerts are held in a big, black basement.

**Hulen** (☎ 55 33 38 38; Olaf Ryes vei 47) Carved into the bowels of a hill, Hulen occupies a former bomb shelter. The renowned rock club is over 30 years old.

**Kameleon** (☎ 40 00 59 15; Vågsallmenningen 16) Some of Norway's most famous (DJ Torske) spin under the distant ceiling of this old bank, now reinvented as a disco and music venue.

**Studenten** (☎ 55 90 23 90; Vaskeriveien; ☎ 10pm-3.30am Thu-Sat) Enter through a dark alley and forbidding steel door near a huge sign proclaiming amazing drink prices (shots Nkr30 to Nkr40 Thursday through Saturday). The disco faithfully attracts a young and loud crowd.

### Entertainment

For details and schedules of entertainment events, including classical concerts, contact the tourist office. Classical concerts are held nightly in summer (Nkr160) atop Mt Fløyen.

### Shopping

Intimate Skostredet has two blocks of independent boutiques, many selling goods made by designers and arty types from Bergen.

**Boogaloo** (☎ 55 32 83 99; Skostredet 16) Hand-sewn bags and feminine skirts with strong silhouettes by local designer Stina Lunde.

**Tilsammans** (☎ 55 32 55 55; Kong Oscars gate 26) Trendy shoes, hats and silk-screened T-shirts of famous dead Italian football referees.

### Getting There & Away

#### BOAT

A daily boat runs to Balestrand (Nkr425, four hours) and Flåm (Nkr585, 5½ hours). South-bound express boats go to Stavanger (one way/return Nkr640/840, 4¼ hours, two daily). These leave from Strandkaierterminalen on the western side of Vågen.

The *Hurtigruten* docks at the newly built terminal east of Nøstegaten. Sample fares include: to Ålesund (Nkr1022, 14 hours); to Trondheim (Nkr1705, 36 hours); to Svølver (Nkr2927, three days); and to Kirkenes (Nkr5426, 5½ days).

International ferries dock north of Rosenkrantzårnet.

#### BUS

Buses run to Ålesund (Nkr545, 10 hours, two daily), Trondheim (Nkr719, 14½ hours, two daily), Stavanger (Nkr420, 5¼ hours, seven daily) and destinations in the Western Fjords.

#### TRAIN

Trains run to Oslo (Nkr716, 6½ to 7¼ hours, three to five daily).

### Getting Around

City buses cost Nkr20, while fares beyond the centre are based on the distance travelled.

### SOGNEFJORDEN

Sognefjorden is Norway's longest and deepest fjord and it cuts a slash across the western side of the country. In some places sheer lofty walls rise more than 1000m above the water, while in others there is a much gentler

shoreline dotted with farms, orchards and small towns.

The broad main waterway is impressive, but by cruising into the fjord's narrower arms, such as the lovely Nærøyfjorden (so pristine and classic that it's a Unesco site) to Gudvangen, you'll have idyllic views of sheer cliff faces and cascading waterfalls.

Tourist information is available at **Sognefjorden** (☎ 57 67 30 83; www.sognefjorden.no).

### Getting There & Away

**Fylkesbaatane** (☎ 55 90 70 70; www.fylkesbaatane.no) operates year-round express boats between Bergen and 10 Sognefjord towns. Students and InterRail pass holders are eligible for a 50% discount.

There are numerous local ferries linking the fjord towns and a network of buses.

### FLÅM

#### pop 400

A village of orchards and buildings scenically set at the head of Aurlandsfjorden, Flåm sees 500,000 visitors every summer. It's a jumping-off spot for travellers taking the Gudvangen or Sognefjorden boats, a turnaround point for the 'Norway in a Nutshell' tour and the base station for the dramatic **Flåm railway**. Adventurous visitors arrive from Finse by mountain bike. It's a five- or six-hour ob-scenely picturesque downhill ride and you can return your rental bike in Flåm's centre. The **tourist office** (☎ 57 63 21 06; www.visitflam.com) has details.

Friendly **Flåm Camping & Hostel** (☎ 57 63 21 21; flaam.hostel@vanderhjem.no; dm/s Nkr135/225, d Nkr345-395; ☎ May-Sep) has just 31 beds – book early. If they're full, they might install you in a large dollhouse. Yup, at least one lucky Japanese guy was short enough to fit inside when the dormitory was fully booked.

The Flåm railway runs between Myrdal and Flåm (Nkr175) numerous times daily, in sync with the picturesque Oslo–Bergen service. At Flåm, buses and boats head out to towns around Sognefjord.

### BALESTRAND

#### pop 800

This genteel farming community enjoys a mountain backdrop, fjord views and eerie summer light. The road that runs south along the fjord has little traffic and is a pleasant place to stroll. It's lined with orchards, gardens and

Viking burial mounds. One mound is topped by a statue of the legendary King Bele, erected by Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II who spent his holidays here regularly until WWI.

The **tourist office** (☎ 57 69 12 55; www.sognefjord.no) rents bikes.

At **Sjøtun Camping** (☎ 57 69 12 23; www.sjotun.no; camp sites per tent from Nkr50, cabins Nkr230; ☎ Jun-Sep), a 15-minute walk south along the fjord, you can pitch a tent amid apple trees or rent a rustic four-bunk cabin. **Balestrand HI Hostel** (☎ 57 69 13 03; www.kringsja.no; dm/d Nkr190/580; ☎ late Jun–mid-Aug) is a pleasant lodge-style place perched near the water.

There's a supermarket and café near the dock.

Buses run to Sogndal (Nkr95, 1¼ hours, three to five daily). Express boats run to and from Bergen (Nkr385, 3¼ hours, one to two daily) and Sogndal (Nkr120, 45 minutes, one daily).

### ÅNDALSNES

#### pop 2000

Åndalsnes, by the Romsdalsfjord, is the northern gateway to the Western Fjords. Most visitors arrive by train from Dombås, a scenic route descending through a deeply cut valley with dramatic waterfalls. Just before Åndalsnes, the train passes **Trollveggen**, a sheer 1500m-high rock face whose jagged and often cloud-shrouded summit is considered the ultimate challenge among Norwegian climbers.

Åndalsnes itself is nondescript, but the scenery is top notch. Contact the **tourist office** (☎ 71 22 16 22; www.visitandalsnes.com) about hiking in surrounding mountains and valleys.

The turf-roofed **Åndalsnes Vandrerhjem Setnes** (☎ 71 22 13 82; aandalsnes.hostel@vanderhjem.no; dm/s/d Nkr205/370/550; ☎ late May–early Sep) offers rustic accommodation 2km from town – just far enough to be surrounded by idyllic flowering pastures with fine mountain views.

The train from Dombås runs to Åndalsnes (Nkr193, 1¼ hours, two to four daily), in sync with Oslo–Trondheim trains. Buses to Ålesund (Nkr182, 2¼ hours) meet the trains.

### ÅLESUND

#### pop 44,000

Lucky for you, this pretty coastal town burned to the ground in 1904. The amazing rebuilding created a fantastical city centre unlike

## SPLURGE

**Kvikne's Hotel** (☎ 57 69 42 00; www.kviknes.no; s/d Nkr1200/1500; ☹ Apr-Sep) This pristinely preserved 19th-century timber hotel boasts a fabulous collection of art and superb craftsmanship in its 'dragon-style' lounges. As you sit in a chair once owned by JC Dahl, staring at the summer-lit fjord, your mind will struggle to comprehend the vast interior and exterior beauty. Many rooms have lovely, fjord-oriented balconies – you want one of these. Avoid the newer concrete wing.

anything else in Norway – a harmonious collection of pastel buildings almost entirely designed in the Art Nouveau tradition. On top of that, it is well staged on the end of a hilly peninsula.

The **tourist office** (☎ 70 15 76 00; www.visitalesund.com; ☹ 8.30am–7pm Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm Sat, 11am–5pm Sun Jun–Aug, shorter hours Sep–May) books excursions to coastal islands which are covered with nesting birds.

In town, puff up Aksla's 418 steps up for a splendid view of Ålesund and the surrounding islands or visit the brilliant **Art Nouveau Centre** (☎ 70 10 49 70; www.jugendstilsenteret.no; Apotekergata 16; adult/student Nkr50/40; ☹ 10am–7pm Mon–Fri, 10am–5pm Sat, noon–5pm Sun Jun–Aug, shorter hours Sep–May), which occupies a splendid Jugendstil pharmacy. The centre presents the work of well-known continental Art Nouveau masters alongside their Norwegian counterparts.

The tourist office keeps lists of private rooms that start at around Nkr250 per person. The tidy and central **Ålesund Hostel** (☎ 70 11 58 30; alesund.hostel@vandrerrhjem.no; Parkgata 14; dm/s/d Nkr225/415/535; ☒) offers somewhat industrial rooms but touches of old charm show through in the impressive barrel-vaulted breakfast room.

There are several cafés and bakeries. If you feel like a drink, visit the **Lille Løvenvold** (☎ 70 12 54 00; Løvenvoldgata 2), where a young crowd drinks beer in a pleasant red-lit room.

The bus to Åndalsnes (Nkr172) is conveniently timed to meet arriving and departing trains. The **Hurtigruten** docks at Skansekaia Terminal. There are services to Bergen (Nkr1022, 14 hours) and Trondheim (Nkr942, 23 hours).

## NORTHERN NORWAY

From barren tundra to Lofoten's jagged islands, the Arctic north offers remote terrain enlivened by the supernatural midnight sun and aura borealis. Tromsø, the world's northernmost university town, parties year-round, while medieval Trondheim (Norway's third-largest city) provides plenty of culture and charm. On the freezing inland mountains you'll find Røros, a Unesco-protected copper mining town.

An interesting travel alternative is the **Hurtigruten**, which pulls into every sizable port and passes some of the best coastal scenery in Scandinavia. A good thing too, since trains only run as far as Bodø. Inter-Rail and Scan-Rail pass holders usually get a 50% discount on bus travel north of Bodø.

## RØROS

pop 2590

Røros is an old copper-mining town with a Unesco-protected historic district. The first mine opened in 1644, but in 1977, after 333 years of operation, the company went bankrupt.

Røros' main attractions are turf-roofed miners' cottages, as well as other centuries-old timber buildings, and a prominent 1784 **church** (Kjergata; tours Nkr25; ☹ 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 2–4pm Sun, mid-Jun–mid-Aug, tours 2pm) with an excellent baroque interior. The old smelting works are part of the **Rørosmuseet** (☎ 72 40 61 70; Malmplassen; adult/student Nkr60/50; ☹ 10am–7pm mid-Jun–mid-Aug, shorter hours mid-Aug–mid-Jun). The **tourist office** (☎ 72 41 11 65; Peder Hiortsgata 2; ☹ 9am–3.30pm Mon–Fri, 10.30am–12.30pm Sat) advises on fishing, hiking and subterranean tours of the defunct **Olavsguva mine** (☎ 72 41 11 65; Kojedalen; tours adult/student Nkr60/50; ☹ 10am–5pm mid-Jun–mid-Aug), 13km northeast of town.

Family-run **Idrettsparken HI Hostel** (☎ 72 41 10 89; www.idrettsparken.no; Øra 25; camp sites per tent Nkr145, dm/s/d Nkr250/395/500, s/d cabins Nkr420/650, s/d from Nkr500/650) occupies a modern building surrounded by soccer pitches. Rooms are tidy and comfortable, and some have traditional furniture. Head to **Thomasgården Kafé-Galleri** (☎ 72 41 24 70; Kjergata 48; snacks Nkr35–50) for apple cake and a nice read in a rustic room filled with ceramics.

Røros is 46km west of the Swedish border, via Hwy Rv31. Trains run between Oslo

(Nkr629, 5½ hours, three or four daily) and Trondheim (Nkr270, 2½ hours, two to three daily). Buses run to Trondheim (Nkr245, three hours, two to four daily) and overnight to Oslo (Nkr470, six hours, one daily except Saturday).

## TRONDHEIM

pop 145,000

Norway's third-largest city and its original capital, Trondheim is a lively university town with a rich medieval history. It was founded at the estuary of the winding Nidelva River in 997 by the Viking king Olav Tryggvason. After a fire razed most of the city in 1681, Trondheim was completely redesigned with wide streets and Renaissance flair by General Caspar de Cicignon. The steeple of the medieval Nidaros Cathedral dominates the city centre.

## Orientation &amp; Information

The train station and coastal steamer quay are across the canal, a few minutes' north of the centre.

**Library** (Kongens gate; ☹ 9am–4pm Mon–Fri, 10am–3pm Sat Jul–mid-Aug, closed Sat mid-Aug–Jun) Free internet.

**Space Bar** (☎ 73 51 55 50; Kongens gate 19; per hr Nkr40; ☹ 10am–2am Sun–Thu, 24hr Fri & Sat) Late-night internet.

**Tourist office** (☎ 73 80 76 60; www.visit-trondheim.com; Torvet; ☹ 8.30am–10pm Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm Sat & Sun Jul–Aug, 9am–6pm Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm Sat & Sun mid-May–Jun, 9am–4pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat & Sun Sep–mid-May)

## Sights

**Nidaros Cathedral** (☎ 73 53 91 60; Kongsgårdsgata; admission Nkr40; ☹ from 9am Mon–Sat, 1–4pm Sun May–mid-Sep, noon–2.30pm Mon–Fri, 11.30am–2pm Sat, 1–3pm Sun mid-Sep–Apr) is Scandinavia's largest medieval building. The oldest wing dates to the 12th century, and popular belief holds that the altar lies over the grave of St Olav, the Viking king who replaced the worship of Nordic gods with Christianity. Also view the Norwegian crown jewels.

The **Ringve Museum** (☎ 73 87 02 80; www.ringve.no; Lade Allé 60; adult/student Nkr75/50; ☹ 11am–3pm or 5pm mid-May–mid-Sep, 11am–4pm Sun mid-Sep–mid-May) is a music-history museum set in an 18th-century manor and botanical garden. Music students give tours, demonstrating the antique instruments on display. Take bus 3 or 4.

**Trøndelag Folk Museum** (☎ 73 89 01 00; Sverresborg Allé; adult/child Nkr75/25; ☹ 11am–6pm Jun–Aug, 11am–3pm Mon–Fri, noon–4pm Sat & Sun Sep–May) is set around the ruins of a medieval castle and displays 60 period buildings, including a small 12th-century stave church (visit in winter to understand how dark and miserable services must have been). Catch bus 8 or 9 from Dronningens gate.

## Sleeping

The tourist office books rooms in private homes, mostly on the city outskirts, averaging Nkr300/400 for singles/doubles plus Nkr20 fee.

**Trondheim InterRail Centre** (☎ 73 89 95 38; www.tirc.no; Elgesetergate 1; dm Nkr135; ☹ mid-Jun–mid-Aug; ☒) University students operate this crash pad. Yeah, you'll sleep on an assortment of military cots with 15 to 40 others, but the place attracts convivial people. The café sometimes offers backpacker beer specials (Nkr25).

**Trondheim HI Hostel** (☎ 73 87 44 50; trondheim.hostel@vandrerrhjem.no; Weidemansvei 41; dm Nkr215, s Nkr400–450, d Nkr500–575; ☒) About 2km east of the train station, this is a plain, comfortable hostel with concrete walls and small windows.

**Singsaker Sommerhotel** (☎ 73 89 31 00; www.sommerhotell.singsaker.no; Rogertsgata 1; dm/s/d Nkr155/485/690) In a lovely residential neighbourhood, sleep either privately or in a dark 12-person bunkroom. During the school year only dorms are available.

## Eating

**Café Edgar** (☎ 73 89 95 00; Elgesetergate 1; dinner Nkr40; ☹ from 5pm Sun–Fri, 3pm Sat) Volunteers prepare a filling daily meal. It's one of many enterprises inside the Studentersamfundet.

**Mormor's Stue** (☎ 73 52 20 22; N Enkelts Killingsveile 2; mains Nkr62–97) Eat sandwiches and pasta in a house full of lace and dusty pictures of grandma. Visit on Sunday, when a calorifically evil cake and coffee buffet (Nkr54) ensures every jittery seat is filled.

**Baklandet Skysstasjon's** (☎ 73 92 10 44; Øvre Baklandet 33; dishes Nkr58–169) Set on a charming street, this café's wood-burning stove and fish soup keep people warm in the winter.

**Ramp** (Strandveien at Gregus gate; dishes Nkr50–135) This neighbourhood café serves 'ecological' fair (meaning organic and/or vegetarian). Well furnished with vintage furniture, the bohemian joint often books experimental bands. Follow

E6 east; pass the Scandic Hotel and pick up Strandveien on the left side of the rotary.

**Uffa** (☎ 72 52 48 50; www.uffahus.org; Innherredsveien 69c) Hosts informal political meetings and organises monthly punk and experimental shows in a squat white house with innards covered in graffiti. You can often pick up a vegetarian dinner (Nkr20 to Nkr35) around 5pm. To find it, go east on E6; it's opposite a green-steeped church.

There's a **Rema 1000** (Torvet) and the Ravnkloa fish market. For baguette sandwiches and pastries, try **Godt Brøt** (Thomas Angells gate 16).

### Drinking

**Den Gode Nabo** (☎ 73 87 42 40; Øvre Bakklundet) This bar occupies the lower level of an ancient warehouse. Admire several centuries of patchwork carpentry.

**Bruk Bar** (☎ 73 50 37 08; Kongens gate) A dark room with pod-like green chairs, candles and interesting lights illuminating a crowd with hipster hair.

**Studentersamfundet** (☎ 73 89 95 00; Elgesetergate 1) The ideal student centre features a maze of bars and an excellent calendar of film screenings, DJs and bands – during the school year.

### Getting There & Away

The airport is in Værnes, 32km east of Trondheim. Airport buses cost Nkr54.

Trains go to Oslo (Nkr797, 6½ to 7½ hours, three to five daily), Bodø (Nkr924, 9¼ hours, two daily) and Røros (Nkr270, 2½ hours, two to three daily). If you're in a hurry to get north, consider taking the overnight train from Oslo, tossing your gear into a locker and spending the day exploring Trondheim before continuing on an overnight train to Bodø.

Nor-Way Bussekspress services run to and from Ålesund (Nkr500, 7¼ hours, one to three times daily), Bergen (Nkr735, 14½ hours, one to two daily), Oslo (Nkr620, nine hours, one to three daily) and Røros (Nkr245, four hours, two to four daily).

The *Hurtigruten* docks in Trondheim and serves Ålesund (Nkr942, 14 hours) and Svolvær (Nkr1896, 34 hours).

### BODØ

pop 45,000

In addition to being the terminus for the northern railway line, Bodø is Nordland's largest town and is mostly visited as a jumping-

off point for Lofoten. Because the town was flattened during WWII air raids and completely rebuilt in the 1950s, Bodø is really quite ordinary in appearance – but it does have a lovely mountain backdrop.

The **tourist office** (☎ 75 54 80 00; www.visitbodo.com; Sjøgata 3; ☎ 9am–8pm Mon–Fri, noon–8pm Sat & Sun Jun–Aug, shorter hours Sep–May) is near the waterfront.

Friendly staff operate the **Bodø HI Hostel & Bodø Gjestegård** (☎ guesthouse 75 52 04 02, hostel 75 52 11 22; bodo.hostel@vandrerhjem.no; Storgata 90; dm/s/d Nkr150/250/350), a cluttered, weatherboard guesthouse full of small, homy rooms (breakfast Nkr60). A tourist occupies an adjacent building. The tourist office books private rooms from Nkr200 per person.

A 2nd-floor café/terrace above a fisherman's outfitter, **Løvdal's** (☎ 75 52 02 61; Tollbugata 9; dishes Nkr35–115) bustles at lunchtime, offering daily specials of traditional Norwegian grub to a crowd of sea dogs and old-timers.

**Kafé Kafka** (☎ 75 52 35 50; Sandgata 5b; food Nkr69–139) serves marinated vegetable sandwiches and light fare to people reading on upholstered couches. Bands play some weekends.

Bodø is Norway's northern rail terminus, where you can connect to Trondheim (Nkr924, 10 hours, twice daily). If you're continuing north by bus, get off before Bodø at Fauske, where express buses to Narvik (Nkr467, six hours) meet the train.

The *Hurtigruten* travels to and from Lofoten. There are also car ferries and express boats that travel to Lofoten. See the tourist office for schedules.

### LOFOTEN

These spectacular glacier-carved mountains soar straight out of the sea. From a distance they appear as an unbroken line known as the Lofoten Wall. Up close, their dramatically scenic fishing villages prove excellent bases from which to climb and cycle. Fishing is particularly good in winter when the warming Gulf Stream draws spawning Arctic cod from the Barents Sea, followed by migrating farmer-fishermen.

The four main islands are all linked by bridge or tunnel. **Nordtraffikk Buss Lofoten** (☎ 76 06 40 40) is the regional transport company.

### Svolvær

pop 4300

A compact town of old wooden buildings and modern concrete blocks, the principal

seat of Lofoten might be two notches less picturesque than its brothers but it's still a pretty spot from which to base your explorations. It has the best of what passes for nightlife. On the square you'll find banks, car rental and the regional tourist office, **Destination Lofoten** (☎ 76 06 98 00; www.lofoten.info; Torget; ☎ to 9.30pm Sun–Fri, to 8pm Sat mid–Jun–mid–Aug, shorter hours mid–Aug–mid–Jun). The staff can tell you about the incredible bird islands of Værøy and Røst, and fishing excursions.

Daredevil mountaineers like to scale **Svolværgeita** (Svolvær Goat), a distinctive, two-pronged peak visible from the harbour, and jump from one horn to the other. A graveyard at the bottom awaits those who miss. There's also a rough route from the Goat over to the extraordinary **Devil's Gate**. Or ride a boat (Nkr300) into the **Trollfjord**, so spectacularly steep and narrow that you might experience the kind of terror and awe associated with the Romantic Sublime.

On stilts projecting over the water, the 100-year-old **Svolvær Sjøhuscamping** (☎ 76 07 03 36; www.svolver-sjohuscamp.no; Parkgata 12; r Nkr440–490) has small rooms with bunks and pleasant views. Guests share bathrooms and a kitchen. You'll also find bakeries and a handful of pubs and restaurants here.

Buses run to Å (Nkr205, 3½ hours, two to four daily). The Narvik–Lofoten *Ekspressen* runs to and from Narvik (Nkr410, eight to 9¼ hours, one to two daily).

**OVDS** (☎ 75 54 80 30) boats run to Bodø (Nkr260, 3½ hours, daily) and Narvik (Nkr300, 3½ hours, daily except Saturday).

The *Hurtigruten* stops at Svolvær.

### Stamsund

pop 1000

The quiet fishing hamlet of Stamsund makes a fine destination largely because of its dockside hostel, **Justad HI Hostel/Rorbuer** (☎ 76 08 93 34; fax 76 08 97 39; dm/s/d Nkr115/250/300, cabins Nkr600–800; ☎ mid–Dec–mid–Oct), which attracts many repeat customers drawn by the old beach house, friendly manager (ask about hiking routes), and free loans of fishing gear and row boats.

The *Hurtigruten* stops en route between Bodø (Nkr398, 4½ hours) and Svolvær (Nkr132, 1½ hours). In July and August buses run to Leknes (Nkr30, 25 minutes, up to eight times daily), where you can make connections.

### Å

A preserved fishing village, Å's shoreline is lined with red-painted *rorbuer* (fishing cabins), many of them sticking into the sea, perched on forbidding rocks connected by wooden footbridges. Racks of drying cod are placed nearly everywhere and picture-postcard scenes of haunting beauty occur at every turn.

The **Tørrfiskmuseum** (Stockfish Museum; ☎ 76 09 12 11; adult/student Nkr40/25; ☎ 10am–5pm mid–Jun–mid–Aug, 11am–5pm Mon–Fri early Jun & late Aug), situated inside a 1920s cod plant, details the history of the stockfish industry. Many of Å's 19th-century buildings are set aside as the **Norwegian Fishing Village Museum** (☎ 76 09 14 88; admission Nkr40; ☎ 10am–5pm late Jun–Aug, 11am–3pm Mon–Fri Sep–mid–Jun), which comes complete with old boats and boat-houses, a bakery from 1844 as well as Europe's oldest cod-liver oil factory.

**Moskenesstraumen Camping** (☎ 76 09 13 44; camp sites from Nkr60, huts Nkr300–500) sits near a cliff with good views of Værøy Island, which lies on the other side of Moskenesstraumen, the swirling maelstrom that inspired the fictional tales of Jules Verne and Edgar Allan Poe.

**Å-Hamna Rorbuer** (☎ 76 09 12 11; www.lofotenferie.com; dm/d Nkr100/350, rorbuer Nkr600–950) has pleasant dorms in a restored 1860s home and cosy *rorbuer* (shanty), usually with magnificent views, containing four to eight beds each. During the low season you can get the best *rorbuer* for around Nkr350, firewood included.

You can buy fresh fish from local fishers, visit a small food shop for supplies and drink beer in Brygga Restaurant.

Nordtraffikk runs one to three daily buses to Leknes (Nkr107, 1¼ hours), Svolvær (Nkr200, 3¼ hours) and Sortland (Nkr312 plus Nkr30 for a ferry, 5¼ hours).

OVDS runs car ferries from Bodø to Moskenes (car and driver/passenger Nkr440/140, 3½ hours, five to six daily in summer, less low season), 5km north of Å.

### TROMSØ

pop 52,000

Tromsø, at latitude 69°40'N, is the world's northernmost university town. In contrast to some of the more sober communities dotting the north coast of Norway, it's a spirited place with street music, cultural happenings and more pubs per capita than any other Norwegian town. A backdrop of

snow-topped peaks provides spectacular scenery, excellent hiking in summer, and great skiing and dogsledding from December to April, with which the **tourist office** (☎ 77 61 00 00; www.destinasjontromso.no; Kirkegata 2; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10.30am-5pm Sat & Sun Jun-mid-Aug, 8.30am-4pm Mon-Fri mid-Aug-May) can help.

### Sights & Activities

Take a midnight sun stroll through the **botanical garden** (☎ 77 64 50 78; Breivika; admission free; ☎ 24hr), which blooms brightly despite its northern locale (take bus 20).

You might think twice before visiting the creepy wax figures beating seals in the odious **Polar Museum** (☎ 77 68 43 73; Søndre Tollbugata 11; adult/student/child Nkr50/45/10; ☎ 10am-7pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug, shorter hours mid-Aug-mid-Jun). You can also tour the **Mack Brewery** (☎ 77 62 45 00; www.mack.no, in Norwegian; Storgata 5; tours Nkr100; ☎ tours at 1pm), established in 1877.

### Sleeping

**Tromsø Camping** (☎ 77 63 80 37; www.tromsocamping.no; camp sites per tent Nkr150, 2-bed cabins Nkr400, 4-bed cabins Nkr500-600) Some spots lie next to a small, slow-moving river; others have leafy pitches. It's on the mainland, 2km away.

**Ami Hotel** (☎ 77 68 22 08; www.amihotel.no; Skolegata 24; s/d Nkr550/650, s/d with shared bathroom Nkr450/590; ☎) Ami's plain rooms vary in quality: some are bright and cheery, others are worn and drab with bathrooms that look like utility closets.

**Tromsø HI Hostel** (☎ 77 65 76 28; tromso.hostel@vandrerhjem.no; Åsgårdveien 9; dm/s/d Nkr170/300/400; ☎ mid-Jun-mid-Aug) A university student house the rest of the year, this short concrete tower contains rooms with bunk beds. It's located 1.5km west of the city centre.

### Eating & Drinking

**Aunegården** (☎ 77 65 12 34; Sjøgata 29; dishes Nkr118-135) Serving amazing cakes (try the chocolate truffle with meringue and syrup hazelnut crust), this café operates out of a former general store from 1830. It makes salads out of greens that are actually green!

**Driv** (☎ 77 60 07 76; Tollbugata 3; dishes Nkr75-117) This student culture house occupies an old warehouse and serves pizza, big burgers and beer (discounted on presentation of student ID). It books bands and sometimes operate a disco. There are also harbourside hot tubs in winter.

**Kaos** (☎ 77 63 59 99; Strandgata 22) Hidden in a low-ceiled basement with ripped up brick walls, this bar hosts art-house DJs and bands. It only lets 90 people inside, so make sure you show up early. Beer costs Nkr30 before midnight.

**Blå Rock Café** (☎ 77 61 00 20; Strandgata 14) Live bands and DJs (playing rock, naturally) cause hearing damage in this black décor club with Elvis pinball and 50 kinds of beer spilling on the floor. Good burgers.

**Strøket** (☎ 77 68 44 00; Storgata 46) Packed and sweaty on weekends, the three levels of this large disco attract a young crowd with pop-dispensing DJs.

### Getting There & Away

Tromsø is the main airport for northern Norway. Airport buses (Nkr45) depart from the Radisson SAS Hotel.

Express buses run to Alta (Nkr460, 6½ hours, one daily) and Narvik (Nkr360, 4½ hours, three daily), some of them timed to continue to Bodø.

The *Hurtigruten* stops here, serving Svolvær (Nkr921, 17hours) and Honningsvåg (Nkr519, 17 hours).

### NORDKAPP

Nordkapp (North Cape), a high rugged coastal plateau at 71°10'21"N, claims to be the northernmost point in Europe and is the main destination for most visitors who travel to the far north. The sun never drops below the horizon from mid-May to the end of July.

To many visitors, Nordkapp, with its steep cliffs and stark scenery, emanates a certain spiritual aura – long before other Europeans took an interest in the area, Nordkapp was considered a power centre by the Sami people.

Nowadays, there's a rip-off Nkr190 entrance fee and a touristy complex. If you want to really appreciate Nordkapp, take a walk out along the cliffs.

The continent's real northernmost point, **Knivskjellodden** (latitude 71°11'08S) can't be reached by vehicles, but you can hike 18km return (five hours) to this promontory from a car park, 9km south of Nordkapp.

From June to August, local buses run at least twice daily between Honningsvåg (a stop for the *Hurtigruten*) and Nordkapp (Nkr90, 45 minutes).

## NORWAY DIRECTORY

### ACCOMMODATION

During summer, it's wise to reserve all accommodation, particularly at hostels.

### Camping & Cabins

Tent space costs from Nkr80 at the most basic sites to Nkr150 in Oslo. Many camping grounds rent simple cabins from about Nkr300 a day, usually with cooking facilities. Bedding is rarely provided.

Norway has an *allemannsretten* (Right of Common Access) dating back 1000 years. This lets you pitch a tent anywhere in the wilderness for two nights, at least 150m from the nearest house or cottage (leave no trace of your stay). From 15 April to 15 September, lighting a fire in the proximity of woodlands is forbidden.

**Den Norske Turistforening** (DNT; www.dntoslo.no) maintains an extensive network of staffed and unstaffed huts, a day's hike apart, in much of Norway's mountain country. At unstaffed huts, keys must be picked up in advance at DNT offices in nearby towns (deposit Nkr150); at staffed huts hikers simply show up – no-one is turned away, even if there's only floor space left. Nightly fees for members/nonmembers in a room with one to three beds are Nkr185/240; rooms with four to six beds Nkr145/210; and dormitories Nkr95/160. Basic membership for one calendar year costs Nkr425/250 per adult/student.

### Hostels

Norway has 72 *vandrerhjem* (hostels) affiliated with Hostelling International (HI). Many operate in summer only and most have private rooms at higher prices. Bring your own sleeping sheet and pillowcase, or hire linens for around Nkr50. Nearly all hostels have kitchens for guests and provide breakfast. The Norwegian Hostelling Association is **Norske Vandrerhjem** (☎ 23 13 93 00; www.vandrerhjem.no). You can book hostels via the website.

### Hotels

Although normal hotel prices are high, many places substantially reduce their rates on Saturday and Sunday, in the summer season (mid-June to the end of August) or when occupancy rates are low. Many chains offer passes that give discounts, such as **Choice Club** (www.choicehotels.no) and **Fjord Pass** (www.fjordpass.no).

### Pensions & Private Rooms

Private rooms, usually bookable through tourist offices, average Nkr300/400 for singles/doubles. Breakfast isn't normally included. Along highways, you may see 'Rom' signs, indicating informal accommodation for around Nkr250 (without breakfast).

### ACTIVITIES

#### Fishing

No licence is required for saltwater fishing. In fresh water, a national licence (available from post offices for Nkr90 to Nkr180) is mandatory and often a local licence (available from tourist offices, hotels and camping grounds for Nkr50 to Nkr300 per day) is required.

#### Hiking

Norway has unsurpassable hiking, ranging from easy trails in the forests around the cities to long treks through the mountains. Due to deep winter snows, hiking in many areas is seasonal; in the highlands it's often limited to the period from late June to September. The most popular wilderness hiking areas are Jotunheimen, Rondane and Hardangervidda, but attractive walks are everywhere. For more information contact DNT (see opposite).

#### Rafting

Norway's wild rivers are ideal for rafting. Trips range from short Class II doodles to rollicking Class V punishment. **Norges Padleforbund** (☎ 21 02 98 35; www.padling.no) provides a comprehensive list of operators.

#### Skiing

Norway has thousands of kilometres of maintained cross-country ski trails and scores of resorts with excellent downhill runs. The Holmenkollen area near Oslo, Geilo, Finse, Narvik and Lillehammer are some of the more popular spots.

### BUSINESS HOURS

Usual business hours in Norway are as follows:

**Banks** ☎ 8.15am-3pm Mon-Friday

**Bars & Clubs** ☎ 10pm-3:30am; if it also operates as a café ☎ 10am-3:30am.

**Museums** ☎ 11am-3pm is common

**Post offices** ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Friday, 10am-2pm Sat

**Restaurants** ☎ 8am-11am, noon-3pm and 6pm-11pm

**Shops** ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat  
**Supermarkets** ☎ 9am-9pm Mon-Friday, 9am-6pm on Sat

## CLIMATE

The typically rainy climate of mainland Norway is surprisingly mild for its latitude – thanks to the warming effects of the Gulf Stream, all coastal ports remain ice-free throughout the year.

Average July temperatures are 16°C in the Oslo area and 11°C in the north. In January, the average maximum temperature is 1°C in the south and -3°C in the north. However, it can get much colder, especially in areas away from the coast.

## EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

### Embassies & Consulates in Norway

**Australia** The UK embassy handles Australian consular affairs in the absence of an embassy.

**Canada** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 99 53 00; www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca; Wergelandsveien 7, 0244 Oslo)

**Denmark** (Map p846; ☎ 22 54 08 00; www.amboslo.um.dk; Olav Kyrres gate 7, 0244 Oslo)

**Finland** (Map p846; ☎ 22 12 49 00; www.finland.no; Thomas Heftyes gate 1, 0244 Oslo)

**France** (Map p846; ☎ 23 28 46 00; www.ambafrance-no.org; Drammensveien 69, 0244 Oslo)

**Germany** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 23 27 54 00; www.oslo.diplo.de; Oscars gate 45, 0244 Oslo)

**Ireland** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 12 20 00; osloembassy@dfa.ie; Haakon VII's gate 1, 0212 Oslo)

**Netherlands** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 19 71 90; Oscars gate 29, 0244 Oslo)

**New Zealand** (☎ 66 77 53 30; fax 66 77 53 31 Billingstadsletta 19b, Postboks 113, 1376 Billingstad)

**Russia** (Map p846; ☎ 22 55 32 78; www.norway.mid.ru; Drammensveien 74, 0244 Oslo)

**Sweden** (Map p846; ☎ 24 11 42 00; www.sweden.abroad.com; Nobels gate 16, 0244 Oslo)

**UK** (Map p846; ☎ 23 13 27 00; www.britishembassy.gov.uk; Thomas Heftyes gate 8, 0244 Oslo)

**USA** (Map pp848-9; ☎ 22 44 85 50; Henrik Ibsens gate 48, 0255 Oslo)

### Norwegian Embassies & Consulates Abroad

Find up-to-date listings at [www.norway.info](http://www.norway.info).

**Australia & New Zealand** (☎ 02-6273 3444; emb.canberra@mfa.no; 17 Hunter St, Yarralumla ACT 2600)

**Canada** (☎ 613-238 6571; www.emb-norway.ca; Royal Bank Centre, Ste 532, 90 Sparks St, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5B4)

**Denmark** (☎ 33 14 01 24; emb.copenhagen@mfa.no; Amaliegade 39, DK-1256 Copenhagen K)

**Finland** (☎ 09 686 0180; emb.helsinki@mfa.no; Rehbindervägen 17, FIN-00150 Helsinki)

**France** (☎ 01 53 67 04 00; emb.paris@mfa.no; 28 rue Bayard, F-75008 Paris)

**Germany** (☎ 030-505050; emb.berlin@mfa.no; Rauchstrasse 1, D-10787 Berlin)

**Ireland** (☎ 01-662 1800; emb.dublin@mfa.no; 34 Molesworth St, Dublin 2)

**Netherlands** (☎ 70 311 7611; emb.hague@mfa.no; Lange Vijverberg 11, NL-2513 AC The Hague)

**Sweden** (☎ 08-665 6340; emb.stockholm@mfa.no; Skarpögatan 4, SE-11593 Stockholm)

**UK** (☎ 020-7591 5500; emb.london@mfa.no; 25 Belgrave Sq, London SW1X 8QD)

**USA** (☎ 212-333 6000; www.norway.org; 2720 34th St NW, Washington DC 20008)

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Norway is chock-a-block with special festivals, which take place in every city, town and village. Most of these take place during the summer. For information about the country's biggest festivals, check out [www.norwayfestivals.com](http://www.norwayfestivals.com).

## HOLIDAYS

Constitution Day, 17 May, is Norway's biggest holiday, with events throughout the country and many Norwegians taking to the street in traditional folk costumes. The biggest celebration is in Oslo, where marching bands and thousands of schoolchildren parade to Det Kongelige Slott to be greeted by the royal family.

Midsummer's Eve, celebrated by bonfires on the beach, is generally observed on 23 June, St Hans day.

On 13 December, Christian children celebrate the feast of Santa Lucia by dressing in white and holding a candlelit procession.

Norway practically shuts down during Christmas and Easter weeks, when you'll be fortunate to find an open bar or grocery store.

**New Year's Day** 1 January

**Maunder Thursday** Thursday before Easter

**Good Friday** March/April

**Easter Monday** March/April

**Labour Day** 1 May

**Constitution Day** 17 May

**Ascension Day** The 40th day after Easter

**Whit Monday** The eighth Monday after Easter

**Christmas Day** 25 December

**Boxing Day** 26 December

## INTERNET RESOURCES

**Explore Fjord Norway** ([www.fjordnorway.com](http://www.fjordnorway.com)) All about the star attraction.

**Norway Post** ([www.norwaypost.no](http://www.norwaypost.no)) News in English.

**Visit Norway** ([www.visitnorway.com](http://www.visitnorway.com)) Comprehensive tourist site.

## LEGAL MATTERS

The legal drinking age is 18 years to drink beer and wine, 20 years for spirits. Penalties for possessing drugs and controlled substances are severe. The age of consent is 16 years. It is illegal to smoke in public spaces, including bars.

## MONEY

The Norwegian krone is written NOK in international money markets, Nkr in northern Europe and kr within Norway. One krone equals 100 øre. Coins come in denominations of 50 øre and one, five, 10 and 20 kroner, and bills in denominations of 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1000 kroner.

ATMs are available in every town mentioned in this chapter.

All banks will exchange major foreign currencies and accept all travellers cheques, which command a better exchange rate than cash. You can change money in hotels and post offices, but the rate won't be as good.

Tipping is not required or expected.

## POST

Cards and letters up to 20g cost Nkr6.50 within Norway, Nkr8.50 to Nordic countries, Nkr9.50 to elsewhere in Europe and Nkr10.50 to the rest of the world. Mail can be received

c/o poste restante at almost all post offices in Norway.

## TELEPHONE

To make international calls from Norway, dial ☎ 00, then the country code and phone number. The country code for calling from abroad is ☎ 47. Norway has no area codes; domestic numbers consist of eight digits.

Most pay phones accept Nkr1, Nkr5, Nkr10 and Nkr20 coins, and will return unused coins but won't give change, so only insert the minimum amount (Nkr5 for all calls) to ensure a connection. Directory assistance (☎ 180) costs Nkr9 per minute. A peak-rate national call costs Nkr7 then Nkr0.60 per minute. It is more expensive to call a mobile phone than a landline. Using a hotel room's phone carries prohibitive charges.

*Telekort* (phone cards) are sold in Nkr40, Nkr90, Nkr140 and Nkr210 denominations and work out cheaper than coins. Find them at post offices and 7-Eleven stores. Private cards (Eurocity, Unity) provide cheaper rates for international calls, but are almost impossible to find. Try 'ethnic' groceries in Oslo or Bergen.

## VISAS

Citizens of the USA, Canada, the UK, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand need valid passports to visit Norway, but do not need visas for stays of less than three months. The same is true for EU and European Economic Area (EEA – essentially EU and Scandinavia) countries, most of Latin America and most Commonwealth countries.

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