

# Norway's Fjords, Fells & Railways

**Tour Style:** European walking holidays

**Destination:** Norway

**Trip code:** NRLCL

**Trip Walking Grade:** 3



## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

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With thundering rivers, sky-blue fjords, and frostbitten peaks punctuated by a flurry of fascinating cities, this trip to Norway ups the ante for natural beauty and standout sightseeing opportunities. We'll lead you coast to coast across wild mountains and majestic fjords by rail and boat, visiting royal Oslo, UNESCO-listed Bergen, and the historic port of Stavanger along the way. Not only will we take the Bergen Railway to its summit station, ride the famous Flåm Railway, and climb Mount Fløyen by funicular, but we'll also sail through the fjords and along Norway's coastline. And it doesn't end there. Stay in a remote mountain wilderness for walks by waterfalls and lakes to stunning viewpoints over the glacier-encrusted landscape and top it all with a final trek to Preikestolen (Pulpit Rock) to take in what's arguably Norway's most wow-worthy scenery.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

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- Return flights from London Heathrow, including baggage and transfers
- Guided walks & sightseeing with a local leader
- 9 nights' accommodation in Norway
- 9 breakfasts, 1 lunch & 7 dinners
- All in-destination transport

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## HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

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- Visiting the contrasting cities of Oslo, Bergen & Stavanger
- Riding the Bergen Railway to the 'roof of Norway'
- Staying in the unspoilt wilderness at Vatnahalsen and Balestrand
- Hiking to mountain viewpoints at Hardanger Glacier & Pulpit Rock
- A journey on the Flåm Railway from the mountains to fjordside
- Sailing Norway's fjords & rugged coastline
- Ascending Mount Fløyen on foot and by funicular railway

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## TRIP SUITABILITY

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On the walks on this holiday, the only steep edges will be at the view points on Preikestolen (Pulpit Rock) and Brekkefossen Waterfall - otherwise the hikes are through closed plateau areas or valleys. Our hardest walk is on Day 9 to Pulpit Rock, which is at the high end of our Grade 3 in some places. This is also our highest elevation at 604 metres.

The longest walk will be to the Hardanger Glacier, which is approx 7 miles (8 km). Guests also need to transport their own luggage between hotels and ports / stations as we join ferry / train services between resorts.

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## ITINERARY

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### Day 1: Arrive In Oslo

On arrival to Oslo, you'll be met by our local HF Holidays Tour Manager who'll introduce you to the city on a guided tour of Norway's proud capital and royal seat. Our tour will be partly on foot and partly by coach, to ensure we see the most spectacular sights in this green city, set at the head of the Oslofjord. We'll take a walk in Frogner Park, with its beautiful sculptures and visit the interesting Fram Museum. We'll then go on to our hotel, to unpack and settle in before our set-course evening meal.

### Day 2: The Bergen Railway To 'The Roof Of Norway'

Distance: 10km / 6.5 miles

Ascent: 50 m / 165 feet

Descent :50 m / 165 feet

Our first full day takes us on one of Europe's most spectacular railway journeys. The Bergen Railway, departs Oslo, climbing gently through green pastures before ascending beyond the tree line to a beautiful wilderness. Our destination is Vatnahalsen where we'll stay for two nights. In the afternoon, there's the option of an easy 3.5-hour walk alongside lakes Reinunga and Seltuft – a great introduction to the region. This hike takes us along the gravel rallar road and the lakeside. Though mainly flat, there is some ascent and descent as we switch between them. We'll continue to our hotel in Myrdal where we'll stay for two nights, enjoying a delicious set local menu each evening.

### Day 3: The Hardanger Glacier

Distance: 11km / 7 miles

Ascent: 150 m / 495 feet

Descent: 150 m / 495 feet

After a 30-minute walk to Myrdal station, we take the Bergen Railway to nearby Finse, the highest point on the

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line. Finse lies in the Hardangervidda (Hardanger Mountain Plateau), the largest plateau of its kind in Europe. Today's highlight is a walk to the viewpoint over the Hardanger Glacier - one of Norway's biggest. This walk will take around five hours, but the views are worth the effort. We'll start heading eastwards along the Finsevatnet where our route takes us through terrain which is rough and rocky in part. Surefootedness is required as we cross a suspension bridge, enjoying the surrounding landscapes of mountains and streams.

#### **Day 4: The Flåm Railway & Norway's Fjords**

Distance: 5 km / 3 miles

Ascent: 155 m / 510 feet

Descent: 155 m / 510 feet

The world-famous Flåm Railway twists and turns through rocky landscapes as we descend from high mountains to breath taking fjord scenery. On arrival in Flåm we'll walk from the town alongside the river, then up the mountainside to the Brekkefossen waterfall. As the trail opens up onto a grassy ledge, we will have a lovely view of the fjord and valley. We'll make our way back down to the village, where our ferry then sails along awe-inspiring Aurlandsfjord and into Sognefjord, where we stay for two nights in Balestrand.

#### **Day 5: Fjord Country**

This morning is free for you to enjoy a walk along the shore of Sognefjord, passing white and red coloured wooden villas nestled against grassy slopes. If weather permits, you can take a refreshing dip in the fjord at Gamleheimsfjæra's beautiful beach. An afternoon boat trip explores Fjærlandsfjord. After a visit to the Glacier Museum a coach takes us to Bøyabreen Glacier and back to Balestrand.

#### **Day 6: Fjords And Seascapes**

After a relaxing morning at leisure in charming Balestrand, we take the afternoon ferry sailing westwards along Sognefjord, then down the scenic coastline to Bergen, Norway's second city. Arriving this evening, our hotel will provide a small plate for our dinner.

#### **Day 7: UNESCO-listed Bergen & Mount Fløyen**

Distance: 6 km / 3.5 miles

Descent: 320 m / 1050 feet

A morning sightseeing tour uncovers Bergen and its UNESCO World Heritage harbourfront, Bryggen. After a small taste of the local produce from Bryggen's harbour, we'll embark on another of Norway's great rail experiences. The Fløibanen Funicular takes us to the top of Mount Fløyen. From here we'll enjoy spectacular views over Bryggen, Bergen, and the surrounding mountains. We return to Bryggen on foot, making the walk down via Blåmanen and Rundemanen, taking in the scenery as we go.

#### **Day 8: Along The Coast To Stavanger**

After some free time to explore Bergen this morning we'll board the coastal ferry to complete our route down Norway's coastline. Today we will have a packed lunch provided, with buffet dinner on board the ferry, or during the high season this will be a buffet lunch on board the ferry, with a late dinner provided at our hotel this evening. Our guide will be able to confirm the arrangements locally.

#### **Day 9: Pulpit Rock**

Distance: 8 km / 5 miles

Ascent: 600m / 1970 feet

Descent: 600m / 1970 feet

Our last day is one of the highlights of our Norwegian adventure, also our most challenging walk, with our experienced leader on hand to guide us through some of the steeper sections on one of the country's most famous mountain hikes. From our start point, we'll make the ascent to Preikestolen – the rocky plateau and iconic rock formation known as Pulpit Rock that sits majestically 604 metres above Lysefjord and offers knockout views over the Norwegian fjords. In the evening we'll enjoy our final meal together in Norway.

## Day 10: Return Home

Enjoy our final breakfast this morning. We return today to Stavanger International Airport for the return flight home.

## ACCOMMODATION

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### Comfort Hotel Grand Central, Oslo

For a stay in central Oslo, The Comfort Hotel Grand Central offers easy access to all the city's sights as well as the newly-opened Østbanehallen – a former 18th century railway station transformed into a modern retail space packed with shops, bars, and restaurants. Inside, compact but comfortable rooms come with TV, Wi-Fi, and an en-suite bathroom with shower.

### The Hotel Vatnahalsen, Flåmsdalen

Only accessible by train, The Hotel Vatnahalsen is a remote retreat situated amidst a vast mountain wilderness known as the 'roof of Norway'. Its enviable location makes it an ideal base for a host of outdoor activities including walking, mountain biking, and ziplining. Simple yet cosy rooms all come with excellent views of the surrounding landscape and the welcoming lounge area is great for catching up with fellow guests or curling up with a good book by the open fireplace. In the restaurant, you'll find panoramic windows overlooking Reinunga Lake and traditional Nordic dishes using local organic vegetables and meat from animals that have grazed on the mountain.

### Midtnes Hotel, Balestrand

A simple hotel overlooking the beautiful Sognefjord, the Midtnes offers spacious, comfortable rooms with free Wi-Fi, plus a private pier for swimming. As for location, you'll be in easy reach of main sights including the town's charming church and the Norwegian Travel Museum.

### Zander K Hotel, Bergen

Since its opening in March 2017, the Zander K has established itself as one of Bergen's trendiest hotels. Sleekly designed rooms come in a contemporary Nordic style while the restaurant showcases dishes made with local produce. The hotel is located just a stone's throw from Bergen railway station.

### Hotel Grand Terminus, Bergen (8 June & 14 July Departures)

Affectionately known as Bergen's 'Grand Old Lady', this classic property offers an excellent base for city sightseeing, just a 15-minute walk from the UNESCO-listed Bryggen Wharf. Rooms come in a sleek Scandi-style, while breakfast is served in a traditional brasserie setting. Take a stroll in two acres of beautiful gardens and after a day of exploring, be sure to call by the hotel's historic Bar Amundsen which has won awards for its whisky collection.

## Hotel Thon Maritim, Stavanger

Located in the centre of Stavanger overlooking Breivatnet Lake, the Thon Maritim puts you within walking distance of the city's main hub for shopping, nightlife, culture, and entertainment. Guest rooms are bright and modern, equipped to ensure your comfort, including tea & coffee making facilities, hairdryer & fridge.

## Hotel Thon Stavanger, Stavanger (8 June & 14 July Departures)

For a stay in central Stavanger, the Hotel Thon offers easy access to all the city's sights and sits just steps from the beautiful 12th century cathedral. The hotel retains an air of traditional style but comes with modern elements and facilities throughout, including comfortable rooms complete with all mod cons. There's a warm and welcoming dining room and the hotel's second-floor lounge is a wonderful spot to enjoy views over the city, with a morning coffee.

## USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

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### Joining Instructions (With Flights)

Book your holiday 'with flights' and you can choose to depart from a range of UK airports\* to your destination. For latest flight times and prices please call us on 0203-974-8865 or email [reservations@hfholidays.co.uk](mailto:reservations@hfholidays.co.uk)

If you choose to book your flights with us, we automatically include return transfers between the destination airport and hotel.

### Joining Instructions (Without Flights)

Alternatively, tailor your journey to suit you by booking your holiday 'without flights' and you'll have the freedom to book your own flights from your local airport.

\*Subject to availability

## Essential Information

Please note that as transport between resorts will be by rail / boat, we will be required to carry our own luggage between hotels and departure / arrival points. A coach is included for airport transfers.

On Day 4, we will take the train to Flam where we can store our luggage in a locker at the station whilst we go on our excursion. This will cost approx. €15 per locker / case.

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing.

### Essentials

- Walking boots
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Insulated jacket/top
- Walking clothing
- Walking socks (plus spares)
- Sunhat
- Gloves/mitts and warm hat
- Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)
- Headtorch
- High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)
- Sunglasses with a dark lens



- Rucksack (15-30 litres)
- Mobile phone
- Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy
- UK Global Health Insurance Card (**formerly known as EHIC**)

### Recommended

- Collapsible walking poles
- Swimwear and travel towel
- Snacks
- Dry bags
- Rubbish bags
- Insect repellent

### Optional extras

- Camera
- Sit mat
- Flask for hot drinks
- Durable lunch box
- Gaiters
- GPS device

## Useful Information

### Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so, and advise us of the insurance company and policy number.

We work with Campbell Irvine to provide you with competitive single and annual multi-trip insurance. Please see our website for more information and details of how to contact them for a quote:

<https://www.hfholidays.co.uk/about-us/booking-information/insurance>.

For more information about healthcare abroad and its costs, please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/>.

## TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

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These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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