

Touring holidays of Scandinavia

Expressions



Norway Fjord Explorer fly-drive touring holiday



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Norway Fjord Explorer fly-drive touring holiday

9 NIGHTS/10 DAYS

Bergen • Balestrand • Loen •
Andalsnes • Atlantic Ocean Road
• Hurtigruten cruise overnight



Balestrand

This luxury fly-drive touring holiday takes you through some of Norway's most spectacular fjord and mountain scenery, culminating in the chance to drive the famous Atlantic Ocean Road. Start by flying into Bergen for one night. Known as the city of the seven mountains, Bergen is a beautiful city which used to be the capital of Norway. It is possible to reach one of these mountains by funicular from the city centre, which awards spectacular views of Bergen and the surrounding landscape. Bergen is also known for the colourful façade of Bryggen with its picturesque wooden structures, now recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. For those more interested in the cultural attractions the Troidhaugen was the home of composer Edvard Grieg and houses a museum and a concert hall where his music is still played. From here you drive to Balestrand, a journey of roughly three and a half hours which takes you alongside the beautiful Sognefjord. The scenery is the main attraction here, with the narrow fjord branches and incredible mountain landscape. There are many varied and well-marked hiking trails around the town and the surrounding mountains which will allow you to take in the magnificent views of the fjords. One of the most popular activities here is a boat trip on the Sognefjord itself; there are options to take ferry tours to see the glaciers along the nearby Fjaerlandsfjord, or perhaps go kayaking on the calm waters. After two nights here drive further north to the town of Loen in the inner reaches of the Nordfjord. Loen's location here makes it an excellent base to explore this beautiful region, as well as the nearby national park. The Loen Skylift cable car is a recent addition which takes visitors up 1,011 metres above sea level. From here there are many clearly marked hiking trails for all skill levels, all of which give expansive views of the mountains, lakes and even glaciers. There are also multiple options closer to the ground, from canoeing to fishing to visiting the glaciers at the nearby Josteldalsbreen. After two nights here drive the famous Trollstigen mountain road north to Andalsnes, a small town famed for the Romsdalseggen ridge, Rampestreken viewpoint and for being the starting station of the scenic Rauma Line. Romsdalseggen ridge is one of the world's most scenic hikes and rewards you with views of the majestic Trollveggen cliff and surrounding mountains. Your next base will take you across some of the most impressive roads in the world – the Atlantic Ocean Road. You spend one night in Averøy close by, giving you excellent access to the many bridges and viewing points which make up this world-famous route. Finish your holiday by spending one night on the Hurtigruten ship from Kristiansund to Bergen, a perfect relaxing ending allowing you to take in the incredible western coastline. Arrive into Bergen and take a connecting flight via Oslo back to the UK.

Day one Arrive in Bergen

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

Day two Bergen to Balestrand

Today you collect your hire car and drive along the Sognefjord to the town of Balestrand. Head out of Bergen, across the bridges which take you over the sparkling waters dotted with green islands. As you drive further north the scenery remains lusciously green and you will be rewarded with frequent views of Norway's beauty, an excellent introduction to the country's splendour. At Oppedal join the fast car ferry service to Lavik, then continue to follow the winding roads as they twist around the fjords. The remainder of the journey takes along the width of the Sognefjord, past the towns of Nordeide and Hoyanger, and eventually to Balestrand, your base for the next two nights.

Day three In Balestrand

Balestrand is situated on the northern shore of the majestic Sognefjord. We highly recommend using your time here to explore the stunning scenery, and the best way to do this is by boat. It is possible to take a ferry up the Fjærlandsfjord to Mundal, where you can visit the Glacier Museum. This features interactive exhibitions on the history of the area and its glaciers, as well as a panoramic cinema showcasing the glacier from every possible angle. For those interested in more active pursuits, Fjærland



Sognefjord

also offers the opportunity to hike on the glacier itself. At the top of Flatbreen, around a 3-hour hike from Fjærland, you will find the Flatbrehytta cabin and can witness beautiful views of the fjord. There are also excellent hiking opportunities closer to home; Balestrand offers an abundance varied and well-marked hiking trails around the town and the surrounding mountains. In the summer you can go kayaking on the fjord and for a couple of months each year river fishing is a popular activity. Other attractions include the Norwegian Travel and Tourism Museum, which follows the tracks of the first explorers and how their discoveries led to the development of the Norwegian tourism we see today, and the Sognefjord aquarium, entry to which includes the rental of a rowing boat or canoe.

Day four Balestrand to Loen

Today you drive to Loen in the inner reaches of the Nordfjord. Leave Balestrand and take the short car ferry service across the Sognefjord. The next section of your drive will have almost constant views of the fjord and the mountains, before you head away from the waters and into the more forested area leading up to Fjærland. After skirting along the edge of the Fjærlandsfjord, you will travel through the mountains themselves, emerging alongside the clear blue waters of Lake Jolstravatnet. From here you head north through a luscious green valley framed by mountains. This land becomes more agricultural as you pass through the small town of Byrkjelo, before you eventually reach the edge of the Nordfjord.

Follow the winding road along the inlet until finally reach Loen at its head, where you check into your hotel for the next two nights.

Day five In Loen

Despite its small size, Loen is known as being an excellent adventure paradise and has been attracting visitors for many decades. For the best views of the area a visit to one of the main attractions is essential: Mt Hoven is 1,011 metres high and is reachable via the Leon Skyliift cable car. There are multiple clearly marked hiking trails for all skill levels from here. For those wanting views with a more challenging hike, Mt Scala offers a difficult trail which has views of glaciers and fjords along the way. Back on the ground Lake Lovatnet will give you a very different but no less picturesque perspective of the scenery. Boat cruises are common on the lake, and there are opportunities for kayaking and fishing as well. Around 30 kilometres outside Loen you will find the Briksdalsbreen Glacier, a famous part of the Jostedal National Park. This glacier is roughly 1,200 metres high and it is possible to partake in glacier hikes, perhaps by taking a unique "Trollcar" up the glacier. The highest point of this glacier is Lodalskåka. It is a long trip of about 8-12 hours to reach its peak, but the incredible opportunity to hike across glacier and past the beautiful Lake Kåpevatnet is not one to be missed for adventure enthusiasts.

Day six Loen to Andalsnes

Start your drive to Andalsnes by following the small branch of the Nordfjord, enjoying dramatic fjord and mountain scenery on one side and the lush, sloped forest on the other. Head briefly away from the water until you reach Hornidalsvetnet, Europe's deepest lake. Cross the lake by bridge at one of its narrowest points before skirting alongside it for the next section of the journey. The scenery will become more rugged again from here, as the roads wind and twist to follow the mountain valleys. One of the most interesting parts of the journey is the hairpin bends as you descend the serpentine mountain road of Trollstigen. The scenery here is breathtakingly beautiful, with tumbling waterfalls and jagged mountains pressing in on all sides. From here you pass through dense and enchanting forest right out of a fairy-tale. The final stretch of your journey takes you alongside the Rauma River as you arrive into Andalsnes, your base for the next two nights.

Day seven In Andalsnes

Andalsnes has access to some of the best hiking opportunities in the world. Romsdalseggen ridge is one of the world's most scenic hikes, taking you up to an altitude of 970m for views of the majestic Trollveggen and the surrounding mountains. This is a relatively challenging hike but well worth the trip for those seeking an adventurous activity. The region's other most famous location for an excellent view is the Rampestreken viewpoint, reachable via a steep path from Andalsnes town centre. Andalsnes is one of the starting stations for the world-famous Rauma Railway. Travel leisurely alongside the emerald-green River Rauma, passing through mountains and fjords. The trains usually stop for photo opportunities at Kylling Bridge and Trollveggen, Europe's highest perpendicular mountain wall. The slower sightseeing trains run during the summer months, but services run along the line throughout the year. Within the town itself you will find the Norwegian Mountaineering Centre focusing on Norwegian mountaineering history and outdoor mountain activities. This includes a museum featuring interactive exhibitions about the history and development of mountaineering, as well as a unique 3D cinema and Norway's highest indoor climbing wall.

Day eight Andalsnes to Haholmen

After two nights in Andalsnes you drive to your final stop on the small fishing island of Haholmen, through arguably the most scenic locations so far. Haholmen is located extremely close to the famous Atlantic Ocean



Hurtigruten ferry on the Geirangerfjord (photo competition)

Road and is an excellent base from which to explore this beautiful area via its impressive road network. Leaving Andalsnes, drive alongside the sparkling blue water until you reach Afarnes, where a car ferry will take you across this narrow stretch of the fjord. From here the journey becomes increasingly spectacular as you cross bridges stretching large gaps between islands, with unbroken water on either side of you. You will skirt the edge of the Fraenforden as you pass through the village of Malme, and you may want to stop at Trollkirka shortly after this. From here you can explore the Trollkirka (Troll church) marble and limestone cave which features underground rivers and waterfalls. The final stretch to your hotel on the island of Haholmen takes you across a series of tiny islands connected by ingenious bridges. The views here are truly breath-taking and you will want to stop in multiple places to take pictures of this famous road and the fjord scenery. Arrive in Geitøya where you will leave your car to take either an express boat or a Viking Ship across to the hotel, a journey of roughly 10 minutes. Check in to your hotel for one night before heading out to explore more of the area. Specific highlights include the Kjeksa, a wonderful viewpoint near the fishing village of Bud, and Geitøya, where you can take a short walk both to the hilltops and down to the water. Eldhusøya is an elevated hiking path which was designed to protect the natural environment whilst providing everyone the opportunity to explore this area by foot. It will award you spectacular views of the twisting road which arcs between the islands.

Day nine Overnight on the Hurtigruten ferry

Today you continue to enjoy the amazing seascape as you travel from the island along the Atlantic Ocean Road to the town of Kristiansund. Populated for more than 10,000 years, Kristiansund is believed by some to be where the people first settled in Norway. It also has one of the country's best natural harbours in the centre of the city, where you can try the town's specialty of bacalao, dried salted cod. In the evening from Kristiansund you board the Hurtigruten service for an overnight sea journey back to Bergen. The ferry stops at the city of Alesund, a port town known for its art nouveau architectural style, and you see the beautiful Geirangerfjord, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. After exploring the fjords by road this sea voyage will provide you with a welcome opportunity to see them from a very different, yet no less scenic angle.

Day ten Bergen to London by air

You approach Bergen passing the picturesque Nordfjord beneath Jostedal Glacier. The boat crosses the majestic Sognefjord before arriving in Bergen, where you disembark to take a flight back to the UK either direct or via a short stopover in Oslo.

GENERAL INFORMATION

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

PRICES

From £2,060 per person

Based on two people sharing a double or twin room.

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

DATES

This holiday can be arranged throughout the year.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London to Bergen
- Hire of a group B car for 8 days
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in a Standard double room at Bergen Børs Hotel, Bergen
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in a Standard double room at Kviknes Hotel, Balestrand
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in a Superior double room at Hotel Alexandra, Loen
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in a Standard double room at Hotel Grand Bellevue, Andalsnes
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in a Double room at Haholmen Havstuer Hotel, Averøy
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in a Polar outside cabin on the Kristiansund – Bergen Hurtigruten
- Concierge service and Expressions Holidays regional helpful hints

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

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

TOUR CODES

SCFD03
EX338388

FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS

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

OUR PRICES

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

BOOKING CONDITIONS

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

FINANCIAL PROTECTION

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



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HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

01392 441250

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