

Norway: Travel from UK

Several air and all direct sea routes from the UK to Norway were discontinued in 2008; more air and some Denmark-Norway sea routes closed in 2009; other routes may close owing to increased fuel costs and air passenger duty and falling passenger numbers. Most air and sea fares are cheaper if you book early and cheaper via the Internet. Special bargain price offers are for fixed times and specific destinations and available for only a few days, but to access them you have to click past other apparently attractive offers which are full price. Visit <<http://www.flightmapping.com/Europe/Norway/>> for up-to-date information on current air routes. Use comparison websites to find real bargain offers: <<http://www.flightchecker.co.uk>>, <<http://www.kayak.co.uk>>, <<http://www.skyscanner.net>>, <<http://www.travelsupermarket.com>>, <<http://www.moneysavingsexpert.com>>.

Booking: Nearly all the travel industry makes hefty surcharges for using credit cards; some charge also for using debit cards; a few make no surcharge for using Electron or prepaid cards. The surcharge is usually per ticket rather than per transaction and far in excess of the actual cost of the transaction. Weigh this up against using credit or Visa debit cards to pay for tickets which makes the card company jointly liable if your carrier or travel company goes out of business. This is especially important when booking direct with an airline or ferry company as the ATOL and ABTA compensation schemes apply only to companies offering all-inclusive holiday packages. The EU has proposed a new scheme to cover independent operators but it will be some years before it's available. Ensure that names on tickets are exactly as spelled in passports; many carriers, especially airlines, won't let you travel if ticket and passport have slightly different names and charge megabucks for amending tickets or even force you to pay again (full price) for a new ticket.

Air: BA and SAS are the main scheduled airlines; budget airlines are Norwegian Air Shuttle and Ryanair but cheap fares have many compulsory extras, adding significantly to costs. Weekend fares can be up to five times the price of midweek ones. Always check baggage size/weight limits and the restricted articles list. Most airlines have fly-drive packages. There are flights from the UK to the following destinations:

Ålesund: from London Gatwick (Norwegian)

Bardufoss: from London Heathrow (SAS, from 31 May)

Bergen Flesland [BGO]: from London Gatwick (SAS, Norwegian), from London Heathrow (BMI), from Aberdeen Dyce, Birmingham, Cardiff, Durham Tees Valley, East Midlands, Humberside, Newcastle and Norwich (Eastern), from Aberdeen Dyce (Widerøe) and Edinburgh Turnhouse (Widerøe?), from Birmingham International (SAS via Copenhagen)

Haugesund [HAU]: from London Stansted and Edinburgh Turnhouse (Ryanair)

Oslo Gardermoen [OSL] (30 miles N of city centre; high speed rail link): from London Heathrow (BA, BMI, SAS), from London City (SAS), from London Gatwick and Edinburgh Turnhouse (Norwegian), from Manchester International (SAS), from Durham Tees Valley, East Midlands, Humberside, Leeds, Newcastle, Norwich (Eastern), from Birmingham International (SAS via Copenhagen)

Oslo Rygge [RYG] (at Moss, 40 miles SE of city; rail and busy road links): from London Gatwick and London Stansted (Ryanair)

Oslo Torp [TRF] (at Sandefjord, 80 miles SW of city; rail and very busy slow road links): from Birmingham International, Glasgow Prestwick, Liverpool John Lennon, London Stansted (Ryanair)

Stavanger Sola [SVG]: from London Heathrow (BMI, SAS), from London Gatwick (Norwegian), from Aberdeen Dyce (SAS, Eastern, Widerøe), from Birmingham International (SAS via Copenhagen), from Newcastle (Widerøe), from Aberdeen, Durham Tees Valley, East Midlands, Humberside, Liverpool, Newcastle, Norwich, Southampton (Eastern)

Tromsø/Langnes [TOS]: from London Gatwick (Norwegian), from Aberdeen Dyce (Widerøe, summer only)

Trondheim Værnes [TRD]: from London Gatwick (Norwegian) and Edinburgh Turnhouse (Norwegian?)

British Airways (T: 0844 493 0787, daily 06.00 - 20.00)
 <<http://www.britishairways.com>> <<http://www.ba.com>>

Eastern Airways, Schiphol House, Humberside Airport, Kirmington, DN39 6YH (T: 01652 680 600 or 0870 366 9100, fax: 0870 366 9909, Mon - Fri 0530-2000, Sat: 0900-1700, Sun 1000-1800) <<http://www.easternairways.com>> <reservations@easternairways.com>. There are connecting flights to Aberdeen Dyce and Newcastle from other UK airports.

BMI (T:0870 6070 555) <<http://www.flybmi.com>> £4.50 credit card surcharge.

Norwegian Air Shuttle (T: +47 21 49 00 15) <post@norwegian.no>
 <<http://www.norwegian.no>> <<http://www.norwegian.com/en>>

Ryanair (T: 0871 2460 000, expensive rate) <<http://www.ryanair.com>>

SAS Scandinavian Airlines System (T: 0208 990 7159, 0871 521 2772, daily 08.00 - 22.00, fax: 0208 990 7127) <<http://www.flysas.co.uk>> Note that 0871 numbers are charged at a more expensive rate.

Widerøe (T: +47 81 00 12 00, fax: +47 67 11 61 95) <marketing@wideroe.no>
 <<http://www.wideroe.no/?language=en>> <<http://www.wideroe.co.uk>>

Air Transport Users Council <<http://www.auc.org.uk>> for information on delayed flights and other problems.

Check available routes at <<http://www.skyscanner.net>>.

Check airline destinations, fares at <<http://www.traveljungle.co.uk>>

Check airports, weather at <<http://www.flightstats.co.uk>>.

Check baggage limits at <<http://www.flylite.uk.com>>; the airline limits section links directly to the baggage section of airline websites. Flylite (01932 219 194) has 34-litre 1.4kg wheeled hand luggage with dimensions compatible with Ryanair's limits.

Check meal quality at <<http://www.airlinemeals.net>>.

Carparks: On-site airport long stay ones are very expensive, off-site ones are expensive but both are discounted if you book in advance; going by train or coach is even cheaper. Cheaper flights often have very early departures or very late return arrivals; an overnight stay at a nearby hotel may cost more than the flight saving.

Budget airline extra charges: EU law requires airlines to quote the final price including air fare, taxes, charges, surcharges and other fees that are unavoidable, but they get round this by clever wording. There is an extra charge to pay by credit or debit card (Ryanair £5 credit and debit card surcharge per person per flight); cash and cheque are not accepted; Ryanair gets round the law by making no charge (thus avoidable) when paying by Visa Electron card (which few banks issue) or prepaid MasterCard. You can get the prepaid Travelex Cash Passport Electron card from Thomas Cook or Co-op travel shops; you pay 2% to load money onto the card, a fraction of the airline booking fee. Details from: <<http://www.moneysavingsexpert.com/flightextras>>. Ryanair intends to install £1 coin operated toilets.

Meals: Scheduled airlines usually include one in the ticket price, but budget airlines charge (markup over 400%, Ryanair over 500%) and meals must be booked in advance. If you require a special diet, book in advance, check the day before you go and check again on arrival at the airport. Take your own food to eat on the journey instead of buying expensive airline food; Ryanair charges 30 - 50% more than other budget airlines.

Insurance: EU rules state that you must actively opt in to the airline's own (expensive), but the online booking form usually has the insurance box already ticked, so make sure you opt out. Annual insurance policies are cheaper elsewhere and sports/adventurous activities require special policy cover.

Airport checkin: an extra charge (Ryanair £40 per person each way), so make sure you check in online (Ryanair £5 per person each way) and print your boarding passes for all legs of the journey in both directions at least 4 hours before departure. If you set up an email address accessible by web mail, you can forward copies of your e-tickets and boarding passes to this address so they are accessible at an internet café in case of loss.

Hold luggage: must be booked in advance (Ryanair £15 - but £20 in July/August - for one

15kg bag via the Internet); booking it in on arrival at the airport is at a higher price (Ryanair £35, but £70 for a second 15kg bag). Baggage above your weight allowance (Ryanair 15kg per bag; most other airlines more) is charged at £10 (Ryanair £20) per kg. Sports equipment, musical instruments, child car seats and other bulky items may be charged at special higher rates (Ryanair £10 - 40 per item per flight), usually even more for the return journey. Weigh your bag beforehand and don't get too close to the limit. On the return journey, souvenirs may take you over the limit, so dump anything that costs less than £10 (or £15) per kilo if you can buy it again when you get home.

Hand luggage: free if carried on board and stowed in the compartment above the seat unaided; allowance is one bag up to your weight allowance (no limit for British Airways, BMI; 10kg for most other airlines) and you can buy special cases that are designed to fit. The maximum legal size (including protruding wheels, handles and external pockets) is 56 x 45 x 25 cm (British Airways) but most airlines have lower limits (Ryanair 55 x 30 x 30 cm, BMI 55 x 40 x 20 cm); check for changes before flying, oversize bags are charged (expensively) as non-prebooked hold luggage. To reduce the size of bulky clothing and sleeping bags, use a compression sac from an outdoor equipment shop or <<http://www.eagle-creek.co.uk>>. Use cunning to reduce the baggage weight by wearing your heaviest shoes, coat, jumpers etc and filling your pockets, then take them off and put them under your seat for the journey. Take a spare clear polythene bag with sealing strip (maximum capacity 1 litre) for makeup and liquids (less than 100ml each) which have to be shown at airport security (only one bag per person); if you have no suitable bags, you may be charged £1 each.

<<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Foreigntravel/AirTravel/index.htm>> for the list of items banned in hand luggage, click on Travel and Transport, then Air Travel; also check with your airline which may ban additional items. For very lightweight backpacks and bags, see <<http://www.onyabags.co.uk>>.

Extra weight saving tips at <<http://www.gotiny.co.uk>>, <<http://www.onebag.com>>, or <<http://www.moneysavingsexpert.com>> then search for budget airlines.

Sea: If you are taking a car, the only options are the DFDS car ferries from Harwich to Esbjerg, Denmark, or Newcastle to Ijmuidin, Netherlands, P&O from Hull to Rotterdam, Netherlands, and Stena Line (cheapest and quickest North Sea crossing) from Harwich to Hook of Holland, Netherlands.

The Newcastle and Hull routes are more convenient for those living in Scotland or North England. For the Netherlands routes, UK driving distance is less, the sailing is shorter and cheaper, but the driving distance to North Denmark is greater. The overall journey takes about the same time as the DFDS Esbjerg route but the total cost for ferry fares and petrol is cheaper.

Harwich - Esbjerg: 17.45 W, F; 17.15 Su (alternate days June to mid-Sep), crossing 18h 15m

Esbjerg - Harwich: 18.45 Tu, Th, Sa (alternate days June to mid-Sep)

Newcastle - Ijmuidin: 17.00 daily, crossing 15h 30m

Ijmuidin - Newcastle: 17.30 daily

Harwich - Hook of Holland: 09.00 (but 10.30 on Sun), 23.15 daily, crossing 6h 45m, overnight 7h 30m; free Wi-Fi access

Hook of Holland - Harwich : 14.30, 22.15 (but 22.00 on Sun) daily

Hull - Rotterdam: 21.00 daily, crossing 10h 15m (11h on Sat, Sun)

Rotterdam - Hull: 21.00 daily

Sailings are often fully booked in high season (mid June - late August), so early booking is advised and always cheaper. DFDS and P&O offer cheaper package prices for car with passengers and DFDS also has also car/accommodation packages with pre-booked hotels or self-catering cabins. There are supplementary charges for long, high or wide vehicles and also surcharges for booking by phone or using a credit card.

Embarkation starts 2h 30m and closes 40m before departure (DFDS) or 2h 30m and 90m (P&O) or 2h 45m and 45m (Stena). Cars arriving late will not be loaded and no refund of ticket price is given; plan to arrive early, allowing for traffic delays. Before leaving home,

check <<http://www.highways.gov.uk>> for UK roadworks and traffic delays. Early arrivals embark first and usually disembark first. The car deck will be locked during the voyage so take what you need for the voyage to your cabin. DFDS ship time is Central European time, one hour ahead of UK.

There are several standards of en suite cabin, restaurants, cafeterias, bars and a children's play area. Currencies accepted are Danish krone/sterling for the Esbjerg route and euro/sterling for the Netherlands routes, but the DFDS sterling exchange rate is poor. Restaurants/cafeterias are expensive and eating your own food on board is prohibited; eat before you embark or use dinner and breakfast all-you-can-eat buffets (with vegetarian options) which are good value – a breakfast brunch may suffice for the day with a snack on the way to your destination. There is a discount on meal price (up to 20% DFDS, 10% P&O) if paid in advance with your ticket.

On arrival, drive to one of the North Denmark ferry terminals or to SE Norway via the Øresund toll bridge (between Denmark and Sweden, Dkr245 per car, 2007) or the quicker and cheaper Helsingør car ferry. You can reach Hirtshals (346km, 3h 10m from Esbjerg; 997 km, 9h from Ijmuidin; 1021 km, 9h from Hook; 1079 km, 9h 40m from Rotterdam) for an evening sailing, or stay overnight in Denmark for a morning/lunchtime sailing next day. Order a free Denmark road map with camping, youth hostel and car ferry information from <<http://www.visitdenmark.com>>. If you use an online route planner, try more than one — they are not all up-to-date; <<http://www.viamichelin.com>> and <<http://www.theaa.com>> are usually reliable.. Most ferries offer a package price for car with passengers; in high season, book in advance. Check-in closes 60 or 90 min before sailing. The Skagerrak, between Denmark and Norway, can be very rough; if you suffer from sea/travel/motion sickness, take an appropriate remedy with you but remember it can affect your driving reaction time.

Frederikshavn - Oslo, 8h 30m (Stena Line) 20 Jun - 24 Aug, daily at 10.00, return 19.30

Hirtshals - Kristiansand, 3h 15m (Color Line) daily: 12.15 and 20.45, return 08.00 and 16.30, except 3x Sat, Sun 24 Jun - 18 Aug.

Hirtshals - Kristiansand, 2h 15m (Fjordline) runs 2x daily 14 Apr - 18 Sep only, except 3x daily 24 Jun - 14 Aug.

Hirtshals - Larvik, 3h 45m (Color Line) daily 12.45 and 22.15, return 08.00 and 17.30

Hirtshals - Stavanger, 11h 30m, - Bergen, +8h (Fjordline) Sa (to Stavanger only), Su, Tu, Th; return Sa, M, W, F.

København - Oslo, 16h 30m (DFDS) 17.00 daily, return 17.00

Color Line T: 0800 931 0801 <<http://www.colorline.com>>. Fares are cheaper midweek.

DFDS Seaways Ltd, Royal Quays, North Shields NE29 6EE. T: 0871 522 9978 for bookings (£20 fee), brochures and enquiries, M-F: 09.00 - 17.30, Sa: 09.00 - 17.00; 0871 882 1777 for departure/arrival confirmation 24 hours before scheduled time; <<http://www.dfds.co.uk>> for online bookings (no booking fee) and information. YHA members receive a 10% discount off passenger and vehicle fares booked on 0871 522 9955 quoting code X0102 (£10 booking fee) or online at <<http://www.dfds.co.uk/YHA>>. Note that 0871 numbers are charged at a more expensive rate.

Fjordline T: +47 815 33 500 <<http://www.fjordline.eu/index.php>> <booking@fjordline.no>

P&O Ferries T: 0871 664 5645 (information), 0871 664 2642 (bookings), 0845 832 8888 (departure/arrival information), 020 201 3919 in Netherlands. Note that 0871 numbers are charged at a more expensive rate. <<http://www.poferries.com>>

Stena Line Ltd, Stena House, Station Approach, Holyhead LL65 1DQ. T: 08447 70 70 70 for bookings (£10 fee), brochures and enquiries; 0870 575 5755 for departure/arrival confirmation 24 hours before scheduled time; <<http://www.stenaline.co.uk>> for online bookings (no booking fee) and information. £5 charge for credit card booking.

Bus & Rail: Travel from London to Oslo is possible via National Express coaches (30 hours) with several changes or via rail (29 hours) with a Scanrail pass. Both are long tiring journeys and are more expensive than travel by air.

Detailed info on rail travel <<http://www.seat61.com/Norway.htm>>

Customs (*toll*): Duty free allowances entering Norway are 1l spirits (over 22% alcohol, maximum 60%) and 1.5l wine (2.5% to 22% alcohol) and 2l beer (2.5% to 4.7% alcohol), or 3l wine and 2l beer, or 5l beer; 200 cigarettes or 250g tobacco, 5kg sugar, 1kg sweets/chocolate; total value of imports kr 6000 maximum. Alcohol is expensive in Norway, so you may wish to take in your allowance, but buy it in a UK shop or airport; on board planes and ships it is more expensive. Age limits are 20 for spirits, 18 for wine, beer and tobacco. You can also take in for your immediate needs up to 10kg of fruit, berries and vegetables (but not potatoes) and up to 10kg of meat, meat products, fish, eggs, cheese and other dairy products (provided that they are stamped with an EEA country of origin); honey is prohibited because of bee disease; arms, ammunition, narcotics, plants and plant parts are prohibited. You can take in up to 600l of motor fuel in your vehicle tank (for those who drive trucks!) plus 10l in an approved spare can. Weight limits and liquid restrictions determine what you can take for air travel.

Customs Directorate <<http://www.toll.no>>

Duty Free Shops: The discount prices in Norway and onboard ships are similar to normal UK shop prices; the real bargains are Norwegian foods and speciality products.

Passport (*pass*) & Visa: Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, UK and USA citizens need a valid passport but no visa for stays of less than three months. Check well beforehand that your passport is up-to-date and renew it if necessary. Be aware that photo requirements are now much stricter and many automatic photo booths do not provide acceptable photos. The Post Office 'check and send' service (at an additional fee) does not guarantee acceptability of photos; Jessops has staff trained in the new requirements. In case of loss or theft, make photocopies of the personal information page – leave one at home, keep one in your car and one in your luggage. No immunisation certificates are required. Changes in entry, visa, immunisation requirements for all countries can be checked at <<http://www.fco.gov.uk>>.

Travelling with children: Single parents and non-parent adults travelling with children must carry documentary evidence of parental responsibility to be allowed to enter Norway or to allow the children to leave the country.

Pets and other animals are admitted only with licences which must be applied for well in advance. Vaccination certificates may be required. <<http://www.mattilsynet.no>>

<<http://www.iatatravelcentre.com>> for advice on passport, visa, health, customs and currency regulations.

Norway: Travel in Norway

The free NRI Guide to Transport & Accommodation lists all principal air, rail, bus and ferry services but for detailed itinerary planning, you can purchase the *Rutebok for Norge* (900pp, several editions per year) which lists every service with fare prices. Tourist offices have the local and regional timetable (*ruteplan*) for buses, trains and ferries. Schedules vary by season and day; in remote areas, weekend services including Saturdays are greatly reduced.

Norsk Reiseinformasjon A/S (NRI), Jernbanetorget 4A, N-0154 Oslo (T: 22 47 73 40, fax: 22 47 73 69) (+47) 22 47 73 40 <nri@reiseinfo.no> <<http://www.reiseinfo.no>>
Online timetable: <<http://www.rutebok.no/>>

Air: There are 50 airports (*flyplass*) with scheduled commercial flights and 48 others. The main domestic airlines are SAS, Norwegian and Widerøe. There are special discount fares: a standard *minipris* return ticket is only 10% more than the single fare and some promotional return fares are less than the single. There are 50% discounts for children under 16, an accompanying spouse or partner and people over 67; those under 26 can fly stand-by at substantial discounts. SAS divides Norway into two sectors at Trondheim; and a Visit Norway Pass, available between 1 May and 30 September, charges a fixed discounted fare between any two points in one sector and double between the two sectors; seats are limited so early booking is advised. Widerøe offers visitors a Summer Pass from 1 June to 31 August for flights within any of three sectors, divided at Trondheim and Tromsø and fixed fares across two or three sectors; there are Explore Norway tickets from 20 June to 28 August that allow unlimited flights during a 2-week period within one or over two or three sectors and the price includes connecting flights from Aberdeen, Edinburgh or Newcastle. A commuter tax is added to all fares to towns served by train, except Bodø.

Norwegian Air Shuttle (T: 815 21 825) <post@norwegian.no> <<http://www.norwegian.no>>
SAS Norge, Oksenøyveien 3, Fornebu, Oslo (T: 05 400) <<http://www.sas.no/en>>
Widerøe (T: 810 01 200, fax: 67 11 61 95) <internetbooking@vias.no>
<<http://www.wideroe.no/?language=en>>

Sea: In coastal areas, 130 scheduled car ferries (*bilferje*) sail to islands and across fjords with more expensive express boats (*hurtigbåt*) for foot passengers only; advance booking is not required except on major island routes. The vehicle charge includes the driver; passenger fares are extra; 50% discount for children under 16. *Rutebok for Norge* lists schedules for all routes but is expensive to buy; free local summaries are available at tourist offices or visit <http://www.fjord1.no/en/> for passenger routes.

There are also tourist routes on some lakes and the Telemark canal in the summer.

The coastal steamer (*Hurtigruten*) leaves Bergen for Kirkenes every night calling at 34 ports on its 6-day voyage north. The return journey visits the same ports but daytime calls on the northward voyage are night calls on the southward and vice versa. There are some shore excursions and in winter, there can be good views of the Aurora Borealis. The fleet includes traditional steamers and more modern ships. Deck class fares include sleeping lounges, shower rooms, baggage room; one en route stopover is allowed. There is a 24-hour cafeteria and coin laundry. Advance booking is recommended. Cars can be taken to nearly all ports, allowing you to drive one way. A 50% discount is available for accompanying spouses, children under 16 and people over 67. Off-season fares (1 September to 30 April) are 40% cheaper, except voyages starting on Tuesdays. There is an under-26 off-season pass giving unlimited travel for 21 days. Cabins are also available and the 11-day round trip can be booked as a cruise including meals.

Hurtigruten ASA, Havnegata 2, PO Box 43, N-8514 Narvik (T: 76 96 76 00, fax: 76 96 76 01; bookings: 810 30 000) <booking@hurtigruten.com> <<http://www.hurtigruten.com/en/>>
or for port to port <<http://www.hurtigruten.no>>
Hurtigruten ASA, Jernbanetorget 2, N- 0154 Oslo

Hurtigruten ASA, Nøstegt. 30, Hurtigruteterminalen, N- 5010 Bergen (T: 81 03 00 00)
Hurtigruten Ltd, 3 Shortlands, London W6 8NE (T: 0845 225 6640, fax: 0208 846 2678)
<<http://www.hurtigruten.co.uk>> <<http://www.visitnorthernlights.co.uk>>
<sales@hurtigruten.co.uk>

Rail (*jernbane*): The 4114 km network is good but not extensive owing to the mountainous terrain. 227 km is double track and 64 km high-speed (210 km/h); 62% is electrified. Main lines radiate from Oslo to Kristiansand - Stavanger, Bergen (spectacular mountain/glacier scenery), Åndalsnes (dramatic waterfalls after Dombås), Trondheim - Bodø and Sweden. There are also lines from Oslo, Trondheim and Narvik to Sweden. Services interconnect with coach and ferry services. There are local commuter lines (*puls*) around Oslo, Trondheim, Bergen and Stavanger. All lines are operated by Norwegian State Railways except for the Gardermoen airport high-speed line and the private Flåm line. Central Oslo has an 8-line underground tunnel (*T-bane*) network. NSB *Togruter*, free from stations, lists all train (*tog*) times with linking bus routes. Trains are clean and second class travel is comfortable with reclining seats on long distance routes; first class at 30% higher price isn't usually worth the extra. New long distance tilting trains are replacing older rolling stock.

The Norway Rail Pass offers unlimited travel anywhere on any 3 or 5 days within a 30-day period with 30% discount on the Flåm line and discounts on some ferries and coaches. Scanrail and Inter-Rail passes include travel in other countries and discounts on some internal bus routes and internal and international ferries. Limited numbers of heavily discounted *minipris* single tickets at kr 199, 299 or 399, purchased between 5 days and 3 months in advance only via the web site, are available only for departures marked with a green dot in *Togruter*. En route stopovers are allowed except with *minipris* tickets. Children under 4 travel free; there is a 50% discount for children under 16 and those over 67; student discounts are available only to those enrolled at Norwegian institutions. Seat reservations are available at extra charge and are mandatory on some long distance routes – no standing for hours like Virgin Rail sardine cans! Most long distance routes have a restaurant/buffet car; others have refreshment trolleys brought through the train at intervals; slower trains may have longer stops at large stations to use platform cafés. Sleeping berths (*køye*) are available on overnight trains and the price includes breakfast. Most stations have luggage lockers and may have a storage room.

Norges Statsbaner (NSB) (T: +47 815 00 888, then 4 for an English operator)

<http://www.nsb.no/?lang=en_US>

Flåm Railway (T: 57 63 21 00, fax: 57 63 23 50) <flaamsbana@visitflam.com>

<<http://www.flaamsbana.no/eng/>>

Bus (*buss*): Cities and large towns have frequent local buses; Oslo and Trondheim also have trams (*trikker*) with a system under construction in Bergen. In Oslo, booklets of tickets are available at a cheaper rate and you can transfer between bus, tram and underground on the same ticket within one hour. There are infrequent services to outlying villages. Bus services are run by private companies with a kr 3.7 billion annual subsidy from the government but all are co-ordinated by the county authority. In rural areas, buses have large luggage compartments to take skis and bikes. Most bus routes have discounted student, senior and family fares – always ask; 1- and 7-day tickets are available in cities. Passes for bus, free or discounted entry to museums and other attractions are available in Bergen and Oslo. Some bus services require the exact fare as change is not given.

Nor-Way Bussekspress operates about 40 long distance coach routes with reclining seats and fares charged by distance including all toll and ferry charges; 25% discount for children under 16. There are 7- and 14-day passes which also offer 40% discounts on train fares from Oslo to Bodø or Åndalsnes. The free *Rutehefte-Timetable Inn og Utland* lists coach schedules.

For bus schedules in the county you are in: phone 177 or

<<http://www.ruteopplysningen.no>>.

Nor-Way Bussekspress, Karl Johans gate 2, N-0154 Oslo (T: 22 33 01 90); Information/ booking:

Bus Terminal Galleri Oslo (T: 22 17 52 90 or 815 44 444) <rtinfo@nor-way.no>
<http://www.nor-way.no/?lang=en_GB>

Taxi (*drosje*): There are ranks at stations, ferry terminals and town centres; taxis do not cruise streets for custom — you can order one from a central office by phone. Fares are expensive and include a basic charge plus a distance charge; these are higher at night and weekends. **Tipping:** A service charge is included in the bill; an additional tip is not expected.

Car Rental (*bilutleie*): The major international companies have offices at airports and in city centres. Diesel cars are much cheaper to run as they use fuel more efficiently than petrol and diesel fuel is cheaper in Norway. Campervans can be rented in most cities. Rental is expensive (about three times UK prices); weekend rates are slightly cheaper; peak holiday times are more expensive and often fully booked. It is cheaper to book and pay in advance in the UK (including both Collision Damage Waiver and Loss Damage Waiver insurance, breakdown recovery and any other extras) and cheaper still to take your own car via the car ferry for visits of 2 weeks or more. Some fly-drive packages are good value. Prices locally may be quoted exclusive of VAT (always ask) and check that the rate includes unlimited distance – some don't, especially small rental companies. Ask about any special deals, eg a week's hire may be cheaper than 5 days. Always read the small print which is usually in both Norwegian and English. Check thoroughly for bodywork and tyre damage (including the spare) both at the start and at the end of the rental and record it on the hire documents; use a camera with date/time stamp to record any scratches or other damage present at the start. Return the vehicle with a full fuel tank unless the agreement states that the car must be returned with the tank empty. Note the nearest fuel source when you collect the car, ready for your return.

It may be impossible to rent if you are under 21 and difficult if under 25 or over 65. There may be age-related surcharges and a maximum permitted age. You will need both photo and paper parts of your driving licence; check that the photo card hasn't expired or isn't about to – it's valid only for 10 years, unlike the former non-photo licence which was normally valid until age 70. Insurance for a second person to share driving can be expensive, but there may be special offers. You also need a credit card for pre-authorisation of extra charges; Visa debit cards are also accepted by most rental companies. You may not be able to top up insurance to cover a large excess (typically £500) when booked in advance from the UK; it may be possible to do so when picking up the car locally in Norway but at a very high daily rate; excess cover usually excludes liability for windscreen, underside and wheel damage. You can purchase European excess cover on either an annual basis or for your holiday period from several car hire insurance specialists at around £50 for visits of up to 31 days; this does include cover for windscreen, underside and wheel damage and may include additional drivers.

If you book car hire before leaving the UK, obtain the phone number of the Norwegian airport office so that you can report any flight delay before you leave. Your car may be given to others if you don't turn up on time. Take a printed copy with you of the options you have booked and paid for.

Auto Europe <<http://www.autoeurope.com>> acts as a clearing house for cheap rates from major companies and offers different pick-up and drop-off points.

Avis (T: 0844 581 0136 for Brit O member discount - quote AWD number X225261 - or 0844 501 0147 or 0870 6060 100) <<http://www.avis.co.uk/>>

Budget (T: 0844 544 3439) <<http://www.budget.co.uk>>

Europcar (T: 0870 899 9900) <<http://www.europcar.co.uk>>

Hertz (T: 0870 846 0011) <www.hertz.com/uk>

National Car Rental (T: 0870 400 4560) <www.NationalCar.co.uk>

Argus broker (T: 0844 330 2581) <<http://www.arguscarhire.com>>

Car Hire 3000 broker (T: 0800 358 7707) <<http://www.carhire3000.com>>

Holiday Autos broker (T: 0871 472 5229) <<http://www.holidayautos.co.uk>>

Motorhome/caravan rental: <<http://www.gocaravanning.com>> or <[norway infob2 © JBCS 2010](http://www.lei-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

bobil.no/engelskstartside3.html>

Hire price comparisons: <<http://www.carrentals.co.uk>>,
<<http://www.travelsupermarket.com/c/cheap-car-hire/>>

Daily Excess(T: 0844 892 1770) <<http://www.dailyexcess.com>>

Insurance4carhire (T: 0844 892 1770) <<http://www.insurance4carhire.com>>

Questor Insurance < <http://www.questor-insurance.co.uk>>

Worldwide Insure (T: 01892 833 338) <<http://www.worldwideinsure.com>>

Books: Hurtigruten, the Norwegian Coastal Voyage, by Berit Liland (Forlaget 67°N 2008
ISBN 978 829 972 064 9) £34.95, detailed voyage guide.

Norway: Driving

Vehicle preparation: Before you go, if your car is nearing time for a service, get it done early. Check your lights, tyre tread depth (including the spare), oil and coolant levels and fill the screen wash bottle; increase the screen wash concentration to cope with dead insects on your windscreen. Make sure you have a jack and wheel brace and a spare set of keys. Fire extinguisher, first aid and spare bulb kits are recommended — you can be a long way from any assistance. Fix your GB sticker on the back if you don't already have one; if you don't have a headlamp beam deflection switch, get the deflectors and check how they fit — fit them while waiting to embark as you leave the UK. A lockable roof box is more secure than a roof rack and is aerodynamically efficient, reducing fuel costs. Don't overfill your fuel tank immediately before embarking on a car ferry as a rough crossing may cause fuel leakage. While there, if you use gravel roads, check tyre pressures and look for damage daily.

Insurance & Documents: Third party insurance is compulsory, but fully comprehensive is essential as repair costs are very expensive – apply for a green card and European Accident Statement form from your insurer well in advance. Check that you are covered for scheduled car ferry services. When driving, you must always carry your insurance and car registration (or lease or hire) documents, MOT certificate and your UK driving licence (both photo card and paper part) but check that the photo card hasn't expired or isn't about to - it's valid only for 10 years unlike the former non-photo licence which was normally valid until age 70. Not producing them at the time of asking by a police officer is an offence. If you still have a non-photo driving licence, upgrade well before you go. Make photocopies in case of loss or theft; leave one at home, keep one in the car (not the originals) and one in your luggage. Minimum driving age is 17 and you must have held a full driving licence for at least 1 year.

Road Maps (*veikart*): Capellens publishes a wire-bound large scale atlas of the whole country with town centre street maps (£35) and also five regional folding maps at 1:335 000 or 1:400 000 (£10.95 each), available in book shops. Hallwag and Michelin maps are less detailed. Buy before you travel from Stanfords, 12 Long Acre, London WC2E 9LH (T: 0207 836 1321 or 0207 434 4744) <<http://www.stanfords.co.uk>> or, generally cheaper, from The Map Shop, 15 High Street, Upton-on-Severn, WR8 0HJ (T: 01684 593 146, fax: 01684 594 559) <<http://www.themapshop.co.uk>>. They also have 1:50 000 topographical maps. A route planning map of main roads can be ordered free from Innovation Norway <<http://www.visitnorway.com>>.

Online route planners are at <<http://kart.gulesider.no>>, <<http://www.viamichelin.co.uk>> and <<http://visveg.vegvesen.no>>.

Fuel: Self service (*selvbetjening*) unleaded petrol (*blyfri bensin*) 95 octane (kr13.20/litre), premium 98 octane and diesel (kr11.40/litre) are available everywhere but LPG availability is very limited. Prices are June 2009 averages and vary with location. If you use diesel, ensure you recognise the difference between diesel and petrol pumps; don't rely on pump colour. You can fit your car with a FuelSure device that stops you inserting a petrol nozzle. Few petrol stations accept credit cards; expect to pay cash. Some fuel stations have only card-operated pumps (*kort*) that accept Norwegian debit cards, not UK debit cards or cash. Major brands are Esso, Hydro Texaco, Shell, Statoil. In the mountains and remote areas, the distance between petrol stations can be very great and they may be open only during the working day. Don't wait until your tank is nearly empty; fill up whenever you can.

Road System: There are 92 946 km of public roads, 72 033 km paved (including 664 km of motorway) and 20 913 km unpaved (2007). Because of the terrain, most main roads follow valleys; those that cross mountain passes are steep with hairpin bends – engage low gear on long descents to avoid your brakes overheating and fading; check your temperature gauge on long ascents. Be prepared for buses and trucks to swing round tight bends on the

wrong side of the road.

On many roads it is difficult to overtake and your visibility is restricted in a right-hand drive car when driving on the right — be patient. Long distance journeys will take very much longer than you expect. In coastal areas cut by deep fjords, scheduled car ferries add to journey times and cost; some are very busy in summer with long queues - arrive early. Over 530 tunnels cut journey times by going straight through mountains instead of round them and there are also undersea tunnels to major islands and under some fjords; only 40 have fume extraction fans so most are unsuitable for cyclists and motorcyclists. The E16 Lærdal-Aurland tunnel is 24.5km, the world's 10th longest road tunnel. Until the 1970s, roads between towns were mostly narrow gravel (*grus*) roads with dips and bends winding through the rocky terrain, but oil revenues have been used to improve the road system enormously and main roads are now well-maintained straight wide tarmac roads.

Roads are numbered, prefixed with E for trunk roads; main roads prefixed with Rv (*riksvei*) have 1 or 2 digits (equivalent to UK A roads) or 3 digits (equivalent to B roads). Road numbers change often – don't rely on the map! Road signs show distances in kilometres. Major routes have lay-bys with picnic tables and toilets; overnight stays are not permitted. In city and town centres, there may be pedestrian streets (*gågate*); many old narrow streets are one way (*enveiskjøring*).

Scenic roads are being designated as National Tourist Routes with frequent picnic lay-bys, viewpoints and information boards. Currently six are complete; by 2015, there will be 18, totalling 1850km. <<http://www.turistveg.no/index.asp?lang=eng>>

Tolls (*bompenger*): Cities and some large towns have entry tolls during the working day (2010: kr 10 - 15, Monday to Friday, 06.00 - 18.00); Bergen (kr 15) and Oslo (kr 26) entry tolls operate 24 hours, except Sundays and holidays. Elsewhere, tolls on tunnels and bridges (kr 28 - 200) and some major roads (kr 15 - 40) pay for improvements; once the capital expenditure has been recovered, many tolls are removed. The Oslofjord tunnel toll (kr 55) is cheaper than the petrol used to drive all the way round the fjord. Road signs give advance warning of charges; there are coin-operated barriers or traffic lights. On major roads, there are lanes signed 'Mynt/Coin' in yellow for exact change dropped into a basket funnel, *Manuell* in grey for a manned booth giving change and *Abonnement* in blue, always on the left, for vehicles with prepaid electronic tags. Most roads now have a non-stop lane signed AutoPASS or '*Ikke stopp/Do not stop*' in blue, using both prepaid tags and number plate recognition; advance signs show a camera and radio wave. Some roads are AutoPASS only and tolls must be paid at specially signed nearby petrol stations within 3 days. If you fail to pay you will be invoiced at your home address by Euro Parking Collection plc, the UK agent.

AutoPASS tag/camera system (T: 02 012) <<http://www.autopass.no/Visitors>> where you can download the current list of toll roads and charges and register your Visa or MasterCard credit card for automatic payment.

Some non-through roads in rural areas have an honesty box toll system to help pay for their upkeep. Many are still gravel – adapt your steering and braking as if driving on snow; on slopes, keep away from the edge of these roads as they may be unstable (*svake kanter*).

Traffic Information: Road signs display the frequency of the local radio transmitter for traffic news, usually NRK's P1. Along major routes in mountain areas and in road tunnels, reception is enhanced by repeater transmitters. The Road Information Centre (*Vegmeldingssentralen*) (T: 22 65 40 40 in Oslo or 175 or 815 48 991 elsewhere) <<http://www.175.no>> and <<http://www.vegvesen.no>> give 24-hour information on road conditions throughout the country, including roadworks and snow.

Driving Regulations: This is not a complete list. Further details on driving in Norway can be obtained from your UK motoring organisation or the Norwegian Public Roads Administration <<http://www.vegvesen.no/en/Home>>. Police can issue on-the-spot fines (with no sympathy for foreign drivers) and confiscate licences for serious offences.

Foreign-registered vehicles must display a GB (or other country) sticker on the back and also

on trailers and caravans.

All vehicles must use dipped headlights when moving; as in all Scandinavian countries, engine on = lights on. If you see a stationary vehicle with its lights on, you know it could move out. Headlights must be adjusted to dip to the right by using clip-on deflectors or a stick-on kit to prevent glare to oncoming vehicles; some cars have a switch to do this automatically. When parking at night on a road without street lights, you must leave parking lights on.

Driving is on the right hand side of the road. It's easy to forget when starting out each day on a road with no traffic to provide a visual clue or after stopping for a meal or fuel; you then pull out on the wrong side of the road. If you have passengers, get them to remind you every time you start the engine — children can be very good at this.

On roads which are not marked with a priority sign (yellow diamond), drivers must give way to traffic coming from the right. This applies particularly in towns where there may be 'End of priority' signs or roads have no give way signs; other vehicles may emerge from what appears to be a side road. You must also give way to pedestrians already on or about to use a pedestrian crossing or disembarking from/embarking on a tram. You must stop before, not on, a pedestrian crossing.

Vehicles must give free passage to emergency vehicles with a flashing blue light and to trams and trains, stopping if necessary. You must not obstruct pedestrian processions, funeral processions, military or civil defence convoys.

When overtaken by another vehicle, you must facilitate the overtaking vehicle, moving to the right if possible and slowing if necessary.

Use of seat belts is compulsory; children under 4 must have their own safety seat (penalty kr 750). Child seats are available with car rentals; book in advance.

For motorcyclists, helmets are compulsory.

It is an offence for drivers to smoke in built-up areas and to use a handheld mobile phone while driving.

Tyre tread depth must be a minimum of 1.6 millimetre on summer tyres and a minimum of 3 millimetres on winter tyres.

You must carry at least one high visibility vest/jacket and a red warning triangle to warn others in case of breakdown or accident. This must be placed at least 150m from the vehicle. Carrying a fire extinguisher is highly recommended and compulsory for heavy vehicles.

On narrow roads with a passing place (signed *møteplass* or white M on blue background), you must give way to oncoming traffic if the passing space is on your (right) side.

Off road driving is not permitted.

Maximum permitted vehicle width is 2.55m.

Speed Limits (*fartsgrenser*): 80km/h (50mph) on the open road and 90km/h (56mph) or 100km/h (62mph) on some motorways; the limit for vehicles over 3.5 tonnes gross and for towing caravans and trailers is 80km/h or 60km/h for caravans/trailers without brakes. In towns and villages it's 50km/h (31mph) or 30km/h (18mph) in residential areas. Speed humps and ramps are not always signed. Speed cameras (*automatisk trafikk kontroll*) are small; when you see them, it's too late! ... and if you drive too fast, you'll miss the scenery. Fines for exceeding the speed limit are high, and the car registration number will be traced back to the UK.

Drink & Driving: Don't – penalties are severe. The maximum permitted blood alcohol level of 0.02% (0.2ml/litre) is much lower than the UK. Over 0.05% will incur a substantial fine; over 0.08% results in an automatic 21-day prison sentence and licence confiscation. If you have a drink in the evening, you will still be over the limit the next morning.

Road Signs: Many are similar to the UK's triangular, circular and rectangular signs but some are different. You may see the following:

<i>All stans forbudt</i>	No stopping	<i>Løs grus</i>	Loose gravel
<i>Ikke møte</i>	No overtaking	<i>Omkjøring</i>	Diversion
<i>Kjør sakte</i>	Slow down	<i>Veiarbeide</i>	Roadworks

Caravans/Trailers: Wide or long vehicles and caravans are prohibited on some mountain roads and many others are not recommended; a map showing these roads is available from Vegdirektoratet, Postboks 8142 Dep, N-0033 Oslo (T: 22 07 35 00).

You must use extended mirrors when towing a caravan; they must be folded back or removed when not towing. There are regulations specifying maximum vehicle/trailer length and width.

Parking (*parkering*): Cities and large towns have short stay on-street parking meters (*P Mot avgift*) — yellow 1h maximum, grey 2h, blue 3h — and long stay car parks with ticket machines which are usually cheaper; signs display times that charges are in force, typically the working day (with Saturday times in parentheses). Meters and car parks are patrolled and fines imposed for staying longer than the paid period. In cities, it's cheaper to park outside the central area and walk in, or park at the outskirts and use public transport. In some areas, parking is reserved for residents with permits (*P sone*). In small towns and villages, parking is usually free but there may be time restrictions. No vehicle, including a motorcycle, may be parked on, or partly on, a pavement, footpath or cycle track or less than 20m from the sign for a bus, tram or taxi stop, or in a passing place on a narrow road.

Driving Conditions & Hazards: Most drivers do not exceed the speed limit and tailgating is rare. Because the sun is low in the sky for much of the day, reflections from light lenses make it difficult to see when brake lights come on – stay back. Traffic is mostly light except near cities and on major trunk roads, eg E6 Sweden-Oslo-Trondheim, E16 Oslo-Bergen and E18 Sweden-Oslo-Kristiansand. Avoid the Friday afternoon rush from cities to the countryside. Drivers are more impatient the closer you get to Oslo.

Most cycles are fitted with a horizontal reflector arm that juts out into the carriageway to ensure that vehicles overtake giving a wide berth.

In rural areas, watch out for sheep, goats, reindeer and other animals crossing the road or even an elk standing in the road, especially in the north. Stop and wait for it to move away — it's bigger than you and can cause considerable damage to your car.

Road Safety: In 2007 there were 242 road deaths in Norway, ie 5.0 road deaths per 100 000 people (5.5 in the UK). In terms of deaths per 10 000 vehicles, Norway has one of the world's best safety records. Both serious injuries at about 1000 per year and minor injuries at 10 000 are at the lowest levels ever.

Winter Driving: Taking your own car or hiring in winter is not recommended unless you are experienced in driving on snow and ice — take a training course on a skid pan. The Trucker's Guide from <<http://www.vegvesen.no/donnadiesel>> contains good advice on winter and mountain driving for all drivers, as well as lists of all ferry crossings and main roads closed in winter.

Because of heavy winter snowfalls, many mountain roads close (October - December) and reopen in spring or early summer (May - June); major highways are kept open throughout the year, eg E6 Oslo-Kirkenes and E16 Oslo-Bergen. Some rural roads close overnight or whenever heavy falls make them dangerous. Stranded vehicles that block roads may be impounded against payment of costs incurred in clearing the road.

During the winter, winter tyres with or without studs (*piggdekk*) are compulsory; special tread all-year tyres can also be used. Studded tyres are not allowed from the first Monday after Easter up to 31 October; in Nordland, Troms and Finnmark, the prohibited period is 1 May to 15 October. If studded tyres are fitted to a car weighing under 3.5 tonnes, they must be fitted to all four wheels. Vehicles with a total weight of 3.5 tonnes or more, must carry snow chains (*kjetting*) that match the vehicle's tyre size if ice or snow is expected on the road. A flat layby for fitting/removing chains is provided before and after difficult road sections. ABS braking systems must be switched off when using chains and the maximum safe speed is reduced. Winter tyres and snow chains can be hired at reasonable prices — don't accept worn chains or any with a broken link; ask for a demonstration of fitting them. An alternative to snow chains is Autosock, textile wheel socks developed in Norway, that are far easier to put on than chains; they are cheaper and grip is better than

winter tyres, ABS can remain switched on and the maximum safe speed is greater than with chains; but chains are better for hill starts. They are approved by most car manufacturers and legal in many countries including Norway, but not yet in the UK.

There is a move away from studded tyres as they cause airborne asphalt particles and the grip is only slightly better than unstudded winter tyres. If studs are used, you must pay a daily kr 30 air pollution charge in Bergen, Oslo and Trondheim city centres. You can buy a daily sticker from vending machines at some petrol stations, car parks or on approach roads or order a weekly or seasonal sticker valid in all three cities.

Bergen: <www.bergen.kommune.no/piggfritt>

Oslo: <<http://www.samferdselsetaten.oslo.kommune.no/piggdekkgebyr/english/>>

Trondheim: <<http://www.trondheim.kommune.no/content.ap?thisId=1117616970>>

Snowchains Europroducts (T: 01732 884 408) <<http://www.snowchains.co.uk>>

Autosock (T: 01539 621 884) <<http://www.autosock.co.uk>>.

Accidents: Do not move any casualty unable to walk. You must phone the police if anyone is injured or if there is significant damage; it's best to phone even if there are no injuries or only minor damage. Switch on hazard lights (if working), put on your high-visibility jacket and place your warning triangle at least 50m back on the same side of the road to warn other drivers. Do not leave the scene and do not move vehicles before the police arrive; take photographs if you have a camera. Try to ensure that witnesses do not leave before they can be interviewed by the police. Do not admit blame (this is required by your insurance policy); complete the European Accident Statement form in as much detail as possible and ensure that you obtain the other driver's name, address, registration number and insurance company.

All accidents involving animals must be reported to the Road & Traffic Information Service (T: 175).

Inform your insurer or its Norwegian agent within 24 hours. If you or anyone in your party is injured, get a written statement of injuries and any treatment given by a doctor to submit to the insurer.

Breakdown & Assistance: Nearly 5% of UK drivers need assistance while abroad and recovery services (*redningstjeneste*) are expensive; extend your UK breakdown policy to cover the Norway visit or take out insurance with one of the UK specialists. These provide a freephone number to call out the Norwegian breakdown recovery organisations Falken or Viking, additional accommodation expenses, a hire car during repair and vehicle recovery to the UK if necessary. AA and RAC members have a reciprocal breakdown recovery arrangement with NAF, the Norwegian equivalent. Ask at one of your car manufacturer's UK showrooms for a list of agents in Norway so you know where to find spare parts if needed. Car service/repair garages are usually separate from filling stations.

Norges Automobilforbund (NAF), Østensjøveien 14, Postboks 6682, Etterstad, NO-0609 Oslo (T: 92 60 85 05 or 085 05, emergency service: 810 00 505, fax: 22 33 13 72)

<<http://www.naf.no/en>> <medlemsservice@naf.no>

Falken Redningskorps (T: 33 13 80 80 or 815 68 888; emergencies 02 222)

<<http://www.falck.no/en/home>> <kundeservice@falck.no>

Viking Redningstjeneste, (T: 22 08 60 00; emergencies 06000)

<<http://www.vikingredning.no/English.aspx>> <marked@vikingredning.no>

Norwegian Motorcycle Union, NMCU Sekretariatet, Postboks 351, NO-1502 Moss (T: 69 20 46 46, fax: 69 20 46 40) <<http://www.nmcu.org/english>> <nmcu@nmcu.org>

Books: *Motoring in Norway*, by Erling Welle-Strand (Nortrabooks 2004 ISBN 978 829 010 383 0) £19.99, gives information on tourist sites accessible when touring by road.

Norway: Accommodation

All accommodation is kept scrupulously clean. Advance booking for all types is recommended in the high season (mid-June - mid-August); you can book direct in English by post, email, phone or fax. Some tourist offices have a local reservation service. In winter, campsites and many cabins, youth hostels, guest houses and B&B rooms are closed.

Camping: There are over 1000 campsites which are inspected, licensed and classified with 1 to 5 stars; pitch fees vary from kr 80 to about kr 420 per tent or per caravan per day, sometimes additionally per vehicle and per person. Camping cheques are available that pay for 1 overnight stay in a tent/camper van/caravan for up to 5 people at some sites. There are strict rules about noise on-site and distance between tents. All sites have toilets and showers (coin operated or free); there may be coin-operated washing machines and dryers and a kiosk with basic groceries. Some have cycles, canoes and boats for hire. Many also have cabins classified from 1 to 5 stars with cooking facilities rented at kr 250 to kr 1000 per night or on a weekly basis; simple ones do not provide linen, so take a sleeping bag. A free camping guide is available from tourist offices and campsites, listing all sites and facilities; it can also be ordered from NHO. NAF also publishes a free guide with full details of their 300 sites and listing 800 others, available from Shell stations, their sites, some tourist offices or <<http://engelsk.nafcamp.com>>. The Camping Card Scandinavia can be purchased at campsites for kr 120 (2010) or in advance from NHO and makes check-in easier, provides on-site accident insurance and discounts on Hydro/Texaco petrol and diesel and at some shops and attractions. If staying at a Danish campsite en route to Norway, the camping card is compulsory. Sites with sewage disposal points for caravans/camper vans are listed in the camping guide.

Wilderness camping is allowed for two nights in any one place at least 150m (preferably more) from any house, leaving no trace of stay – take all your rubbish away with you. In some areas, local by-laws restrict where you can camp and there are also restrictions in protected areas. Fires in the open, including paraffin/petrol stoves, are prohibited from 15 April to 15 September.

Butane cartridges for camping stoves are available at sports shops. Propane bottles are available only at some Esso, Shell, Statoil and YX petrol stations. Norwegian maintenance requirements mean that foreign propane bottles cannot be filled in Norway. Buy a bottle in Norway and return it with purchase receipt to an AGA dealer in Norway for a kr 400 refund within 6 months of purchase. An adapter (kr 300) may be needed to attach equipment to Norwegian bottles. A list of supplying petrol stations is available from AGA. AGA A/S (T: 23 17 72 00, fax: 22 32 14 62) <<http://www.aga.no>> <post@no.aga.com>

Norwegian Hospitality Association (NHO), PO Box 5465 Majorstua, N-0305 Oslo (T: 23 08 86 20, fax: 23 08 86 21) <http://www.camping.no/index_eng.html> <firmapost@nhoreiseliv.no>

Norsk Caravan Club, PO Box 104, NO-1921 Sørumsand (T: 63 82 99 90) <post@nocc.no> <<http://www.nocc.no>>

Plus Camp, association of campsites <<http://www.pluscamp.no/english>> has discount cards with camping free or a discount on *hytter* every 8th night.

Camping cheques <<http://www.campingcheque.com>>

Cabins (*hytter*): There are thousands of these self-catering timber cabins all over the country, either individual ones or in groups with additional facilities. They vary from simple but comfortable cabins to well furnished ones with TV and sauna. You may have to take your own linen for the simple ones; they sleep at least four people and some as many as 12. The weekly price varies with location, facilities and season from kr 2 000 to kr 14 000 (2009); fishing cabins on the seashore in the Lofotens (called *rorbuer* or *sjøhus*) are also available at kr 400 - 1550 per night. Book early; a 20% deposit is required with advance bookings. You clean the cabin when you leave or pay for cleaning (from kr 150).

Norsc Holidays, The Court, The Street, Charmouth, Dorset DT6 6PE (T: 01297 560 033, fax: 01297 560 833) <<http://www.norsc.co.uk>> <post@norsc.co.uk> UK agent for Novasol.
Novasol, Postboks 309 Sentrum, N-0103 Oslo (T: 22 35 62 70)
<<http://www.novasol.co.uk/holiday-cottages/norway.html>>
Norgesbooking AS, Ylivegen 16, N-3570 Ål (T: 32 08 57 10, fax: 32 08 57 11)
<post@norgesbooking.com> <<http://www.norgesbooking.com>>
DanCenter A/S, Lyngbyvej 20, DK-2100 København Ø, Denmark (T: +45 7013 0000, fax: +45 7013 7071) <<http://www.dancenter.co.uk>>
Dansommer A/S, Voldbjergvej 16, DK-8240 Risskov, Denmark (T: +45 8617 6122, fax +45 8617 6855) <<http://www.dansommer.com/destinations/norge.html>>
<dansommer@dansommer.dk>
DinTur (T: 74 07 30 00) <<http://www.dintur.no>> <office@dintur.no>
Fjordhytter, Lille Markevei 13, N-5005 Bergen (T: 55 23 20 80)
Troll Fjordhytter, N-6140 Syvde for the western fjord area (T: 70 02 15 06, 91 59 59 72, fax: 70 02 33 19) <<http://www.fjordhytter.com/english/about-troll-fjordhytter/>>
<fjordhytter@gmail.com>.
Hytteferie, Kløkstadaasen 31, N-8016 Bodø (T: 75 51 16 50, fax: 75 51 15 00)
<<http://www.hytteferie.com>> <hytte@hytteferie.com> has cabins in North Norway.
Lofotens cabins <<http://www.lofoten.info>>
DNT has a network of mountain huts a day's walk apart. They may be large staffed lodges with 100 beds or unstaffed huts with a few bunks. See the Sports section for further details.

Hostels (*vandrerhjem*): There are 70 graded from 1 to 3 stars; advance booking is recommended. Most are run by the Norwegian YHA, some by the YMCA and a few are independent; most are closed between 11.00 and 16.00. Tourist offices have a list of local hostels in English. Some large ones are open all year, others operate only in the summer from school dormitories with two to six per room (2009, from kr 350). Large hostels may have single, double or family rooms (kr 580 - 780 per room). Take your own sheet sleeping bag or hire linen at the hostel. Most hostels provide breakfast in the overnight fee but some charge kr 45 - 70 for a buffet breakfast; some offer dinner; nearly all have self-cooking facilities but you must take your own cutlery and sometimes pans and crockery. YHA members get 10% discount; YHA (England and Wales) or SYHA can provide the Norwegian handbook, also available from
Norske Vandrerhjem, PO Box 53 Grefsen, N-0409 Oslo (T: 23 12 45 10; fax: 23 13 93 50)
<info@hihostels.no> <<http://www.hihostels.no/english/>>
Hostels and other cheap accommodation are listed at <<http://www.hostelbookers.com>> and <<http://www.backpackers.no/>>.

Farms: Over 500 farms have self-catering cabins and houses to rent with farm activities available. Some provide bed and breakfast.

Norwegian Rural Tourism & Traditional Food (HANEN) <post@hanen.no>
<http://www.hanen.no/index_en.html>.

Motels/Rooms/Bed & Breakfast: Rooms are advertised by a roadside sign (*Rom til leie* or *husrom*) or book through tourist offices. They may be in a private house or in small blocks (often with a small kitchen) designed for one-night stays (*overnatting*). The price up to kr 350 (single) or kr 450 (double) doesn't include breakfast; linen and showers may be extra. Motels are found in cities, major towns, on trunk roads and near airports. For B&B, you pay kr 350 - 500 (single) or kr 450 - 800 (double) including breakfast (2009). You can buy the Norway Bed & Breakfast Book through bookshops or from <<http://www.scandinavia-connection.co.uk>>.

Bed & Breakfast Norway, Dalsegg, N-6653 Øvre Surnadal (T: 99 23 77 99, fax: 22 19 83 17)
<rominorg@online.no> <<http://www.bbnorway.com>>

Pensions/boarding houses (*pensjonater*) & Guest Houses (*gjestgiverier*): Moderate prices,

rooms may not be en suite. Prices may be per room or per person and may include breakfast; evening meals may be available. Some pensions have cooking facilities.

Hotels: Expensive because staff are well paid, but rates are often cheaper during the summer and at weekends when business travel is less frequent, especially for major chains – always ask about cheaper rates. The Norway Fjord Pass and discount cards from some hotel chains pay for themselves after a few nights. There are single room supplements; children under 16 occupying the same room as parents receive a discount; most hotels have cots available for babies. Rooms are usually en suite with TV. Many offer an eat-all-you-want buffet breakfast. *Turisthotell* is a high standard hotel in the fjord area offering half or full board, *høyfjellshotel* is a luxury hotel in a winter sports resort offering full board; *fjellstue* or *fjellstoge* is a cheaper mountain lodge with full board. Major chains include Best Western, Choice, First, Norlandia, Radisson Blu, Rica, Scandic, Thon.

Tipping: A service charge is included in the bill; an additional tip is not expected, but may be offered for exceptional service.