

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@wias.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.