

Norway: Currency

Currency: *krone* (crown), abbreviated kr in Norway, Nkr in Nordic countries, NOK in international money markets. 1 *krone* = 100 *øre*.

Coins (*mynter*): 50 *øre* (bronze) obverse King's crown/reverse fable animal; 1 kr (cupro-nickel holed) Harald V's monogram/a fowl, 5 kr (cupro-nickel holed) St.Olav's Order/acanthi leaves, 10 kr (nickel-brass) Harald V, royal motto (*Alt for Norge*)/stave church roof, 20 kr (nickel-brass); Harald V/viking ship.

Notes (*seddler*): 50 kr Peter Christen Asbjørnsen portrait, 100 kr Kirsten Flagstad, 200 kr Kristian Birkeland, 500 kr Sigrid Undset, 1000 kr Edvard Munch.

Exchange rate (*valutakurs*): The NOK is the tenth most traded currency on the foreign exchange market. Mainly based on oil prices and interest rates, its value gradually rose over several years relative to the weakening pound, from £1 = kr 12.50 to £1 = kr 9.00 but since mid-2008 it has been fluctuating wildly, like many currencies, between £1 = kr 8.20 and £1 = kr 10.50. The pound is currently very weak; monitor the tourist rate daily on your bank's web site and order your currency on a more favourable day.

Prices in kr are written with a comma (,) instead of the decimal point and a period (.) instead of a comma separating groups of three digits; in shops, *øre* are usually written in smaller figures underlined, eg kr 12,95; the total transaction is rounded to the nearest 50 *øre*.

Conversion: Divide the price in kr by 10 for the rough equivalent in £.

<<http://www.xe.com>> for day-to-day exchange rates and currency conversion.

Payment Methods: Pay in advance for travel and accommodation, so that you don't have to take so much money with you. This is sensible only if your travel insurance policy has cancellation cover. For flexibility, it's convenient to take both credit and debit cards, cash and travellers cheques; prepayment cards are also useful. For purchases, it's best to use credit cards because of the protection that makes the card company jointly liable with the supplier of goods or services (including Visa debit cards in some circumstances). For withdrawing cash, debit and prepayment cards give best value. Travellers cheques are best for emergency needs. Use a card protection service to register all your card numbers so that only one phone call is needed to report loss or theft.

Consumer advice on card protection <<http://www.theukcardsassociation.org.uk>>

Cash (*kontanter*): Best obtained before you leave, from your own bank or American Express, Thomas Cook or Post Office exchange bureaux, but not at airports or ferry terminals or on board ferries which usually have a poor exchange rate. If you have to obtain cash by mail or online order instead of in person over the counter, use one of these reliable sources; otherwise ensure that the exchange bureau is fully FSA regulated – this ensures your money is kept in a separate account until the cash has been supplied. Many bureaux are only FSA registered which gives no protection if the bureau becomes insolvent. Buying foreign cash by credit card is also unprotected as such transactions are excluded from the law that makes card issuers jointly liable; paying by credit card is treated as a cash withdrawal and is immediately liable for interest; paying by credit or debit card also incurs a fee except for debit cards from First Direct, Halifax, HSBC and Nationwide. Note that 'commission free' exchange offers usually have poorer exchange rates. International boats accept sterling in onboard shops and restaurants but at a poor exchange rate – use Danish or Norwegian currency. Banks and post offices in Norway will exchange sterling notes, but the commission rate is high. Ensure you have sufficient cash for immediate needs on arrival, eg buying food, petrol and for road tolls. Kr 25 000 is the overall permitted total in notes/coins of local and foreign currencies that may be taken in or out of Norway; larger amounts must be notified in advance on a Customs form. There is no limit on travellers cheques. If you visit Norway often, it isn't worth changing krone back to sterling on return, as you will lose in commission charges and a poorer exchange rate. Keep the cash for your next visit.

Travellers Cheques (*reisesjekk*): Obtain sterling or euro cheques from your bank before you

leave. In case of loss or theft, make a note of their values and serial numbers; keep one copy in your car and one in your luggage. In Norway, banks and post offices exchange cheques for a commission fee per cheque, so exchanging one high value cheque is cheaper than several small value ones. Hotels and shops accept sterling, dollar and euro cheques as payment for goods and services but at a poor exchange rate. There are reports in the current financial climate of difficulties cashing travellers cheques at some banks, especially dollar cheques, although shops still accept them for purchases with change given.

Credit & Debit Cards (*kredit-, debetkort*): Inform your bank/card issuer beforehand that you will be in Norway; security monitoring may block use abroad if it is unexpected. Take with you the phone numbers for reporting lost or stolen cards and for querying blocked use. If your card is blocked, query it immediately by phone; otherwise the bank will contact your home phone/address about suspected fraudulent use – and you won't be there! You can give your mobile phone number (if activated for use in Norway) to the bank for use in emergencies, but ensure you opt out of marketing calls. Also, if your card is incorrectly blocked, ask the bank to refund any extra charges you incur, including phone calls. Electron cards may be blocked because transactions must be authorised online at the time; some card machines, particularly train and ferry ticketing machines can't do this. When using a card, keep it in view during the whole transaction to guard against fraudulent swiping; be aware of security cameras placed to record you entering your PIN.

Paying for goods and services by card has a better exchange rate when it appears on your statement. Credit cards (and some UK debit cards) are accepted at most hotels, restaurants and major shops in cities, large towns and the main tourist areas and for train tickets and the coastal steamer, but not in most supermarkets, for petrol or fjord/island car-ferry services. It is advantageous to have two cards, eg one Visa and one MasterCard, as not all cards are accepted everywhere. Refuse any offer to take payment in sterling as the local exchange rate is much worse than the rate your card provider offers; always check when signing or entering your PIN that transactions are in krone. Apart from cash, credit cards are the cheapest method of paying for goods and services, providing you pay off the complete balance each month.

ATMs (*minibank*) at banks and shopping centres issue cash with some or all of Visa, Maestro, MasterCard, Eurocard, American Express, Diners Club, Cirrus and Plus cards, but debit cards usually have cheaper transaction charges than credit cards, with no interest. The charges from both your own and Norwegian banks will appear on your statement together with any interest, but exchange rates are better than the tourist rate for exchanging sterling notes. Nationwide's FlexAccount Visa debit/credit cards (until 31 Oct 2010), the Post Office's Classic and Platinum MasterCards, Saga's credit cards, Halifax Clarity MasterCard do not make ATM or purchase transaction charges for using these cards in Europe. Other cards that previously made no transaction charge have changed their terms and now do make a charge. Even with charges, debit cards are the cheapest method of withdrawing cash from ATMs.

Visa cash machine locations: <<http://www.visaeurope.com/personal/findacashmachine>>.

MasterCard/Maestro/Cirrus cash machine locations:

<<http://www.mastercard.com/cardholderservices/atm/>>

Prepayment cards: Maestro, Mastercard and Visa cards are available from banks, the Post Office and others. They can be loaded with a chosen amount of money before you go and topped up by text, phone or online, if necessary. They must be activated before you leave home. Most are available in euros or dollars, or a global card converting local currency to sterling. Issuers do not normally block these cards when used abroad unless reported stolen. There is a foreign transaction charge of up to 3% for every use but a good exchange rate. You can withdraw cash from an ATM for a fixed fee of about £2, so one large withdrawal is cheaper (but with increased security risk) than several small ones. They can also be used for purchases like credit/debit cards but some shops and restaurants may refuse them. If there is a balance remaining when you return home, the sterling card can be used in the UK with no foreign transaction charge. Application fees, monthly or annual

charges, top-up fees vary between providers and some charge for cancelling the card; those with low or no fees include CaxtonFX, FairFX (both with no application fee and good exchange rates), Travelex, Lloyds TSB, Post Office (poor exchange rate). Although these providers are believed to be financially sound, you are not protected for refund of any remaining balance if yours goes out of business.

CaxtonFX <<http://www.caxtonfxcard.com>>

FairFX <<http://www.fairfx.com>>

Norwegian bank account: If you visit Norway regularly, consider opening an account there.

To transfer large amounts from the UK, currency specialists are cheaper than banks.

CaxtonFX (T: 0845 658 2223) <<http://www.caxtonfx.com>>

FC Exchange (T: 0207 989 0000) <<http://www.fcexchange.co.uk>>

TorFX (T: 0800 612 9680) <<http://www.torfx.com>>

Comparison site <<http://www.sendmoneyhome.org>>

Banks: Major chains are *Den norske Bank* (DnB) and *Kreditkassen*; most towns have their own independent but financially regulated local bank, usually a savings bank (*sparebank*).

Opening hours vary; usually 09.00 to 15.30 Monday to Friday, later on Thursdays; some may open and close earlier; hours are often shorter in summer.

Opening hours shown as 8 - 21 (20) mean open Monday - Friday 08.00 - 21.00 and until 20.00 on Saturday.

Norway: Shops & Restaurants

Opening Hours (*åpning tider*): Usually 10.00 to 17.00 Mondays to Fridays, except 09.00 to 18.00 or 20.00 on Thursdays, although some may open earlier and close later; Saturdays 10.00 to 13.00 or 15.00. Supermarkets are usually open 09.00 to 20.00 weekdays, 09.00 to 16.00 or 18.00 Saturdays. Most shops are closed on Sundays. Petrol stations often sell bread, milk and basic groceries, usually at a higher price than supermarkets and may be open until 23.00. Bargaining over prices is not common practice in Norway.

Units of Measurement: Metric (metres, litres, kilograms, °C). Tins and jars are often 500g, larger than the UK's 454g (1 lb) ones. Milk is in *1l* (1.75 pints) or *2l* cartons.

VAT (*merverdiavgift, mva, moms*) is payable on all purchases including food, stationery and books. The rate is 12% on food, up to 24% on other goods and services; there is no zero rate. Prices in shops, restaurants and hotels are usually quoted inclusive of *mva*.

Tax-free Shopping: If you buy goods for more than kr 315 (foods kr 285) less than one month before departure from one of the 3000 shops displaying a 'Tax Free Shopping' sign, you can obtain a cash refund (12 - 19%, foods 6 - 7.5%) when you leave the country. Ask for a Tax Free cheque which you complete with your personal details and present with your passport and the unused sealed goods at your departure point (airport, onboard ship, international train station, major frontier post) to receive the refund. The refund desk is sometimes situated in a local shop — see the website for details of all locations.

Global Refund (T: 67 15 60 10) <<http://www.globalrefund.no>>

Consumer Rights: If you have a problem, complain to the shop or service provider. If it is not redressed, contact the Norwegian Consumer Council or the ECC Office in the UK.

Norwegian Consumer Council <<http://www.forbrukerportalen.no/english>>

United Kingdom European Consumer Centre, 1 Sylvan Court, Sylvan Way, Southfields Business Park, Basildon SS15 6TH (T: 9845 604 0503, fax: 0845 608 9600) <ecc@tsi.org.uk> <<http://www.ukecc.net>>

Norwegian specialities include traditional woollen sweaters and other hand-knitted clothing, woven wall coverings, pewter ware, porcelain, crystal and glass, gold, silver and enamel jewellery, china and cutlery, Sami sheath knives, reindeer leather products, troll figures, wooden toys, woodwork with rose-maling painted or carved decoration and other handicrafts, traditional foods such as fish, cheese and cranberry (*tranebær*), bilberry (*blåbær*), cloudberry (*multe*) preserves (*syltetøy*) and aquavit (*akevitt*) made from potatoes and caraway.

Toilets (*toaletter*) are found in shopping malls, restaurants, airports, train and bus stations and many roadside lay-bys. They may be free or fee-charging.

Post Office (*postkontor*): Open 08.00 to 16.00 or 09.00 to 17.00 Mondays to Fridays, 09.00 to 15.00 Saturdays. There are offices in cities and large towns, but in small towns and villages, they may be situated in the local supermarket. There are separate rates for posting to Norway, rest of Europe, elsewhere. The lowest rate is for postcards and letters under 20g (kr 9 for Europe). Postage stamps (*frimerker*) are also available in many shops and kiosks.

Supermarket (*supermarked*): The main chains are Domus department stores (slightly dearer), Co-op, ICA, Kiwi (usually cheapest), Rema 1000, Rimi, Spar. You can expect a similar range of foods, including baby foods, and household items to UK supermarkets, but there will be less choice per item, generally one or two major brands plus an own brand. International brands, eg Kellogg's, Knorr, Nestlé, are available, but sometimes with slightly different ingredients due to differences in permitted colouring and other additives. Larger supermarkets may have an in-store bakery and a deli counter with prepared salads (*salater*). Discounts are displayed as *Lavpris* and special offers as *Tilbud*. Most aluminium

cans, glass and plastic bottles can be returned when empty for a kr 1 refund. Washing-up liquid kr25.75/0,75 litre, washing powder kr39.82/0.75 litre (average price Oct 2007).

Wine Monopoly (*vinmonopolet*): Only beer (*øl*) is available in shops, and wine in some rural supermarkets. Other alcohol must be bought in the state-owned shop usually open 10.00 to 16.30 or 17.00 Mondays to Fridays, until 15.00 on Saturdays ... and it's expensive! The legal drinking age is 18 for beer and wine, 20 for spirits. You will be asked for your passport if you look under 20.

Other Shops: Expect a similar range to the UK, but there are rarely greengrocers or butchers except in cities and large towns. Coastal towns usually have a fishmonger. Most towns have a specialist bakery (*bakeri*) with many varieties of real bread.

Laundry: Coin-operated laundries (*myntvaskeri*) are expensive and rare, but washing machines and dryers are often found at campsites and hostels; take your own washing powder. If you are staying elsewhere, take soap powder suitable for washing by hand.

Markets: Cities have open air markets for vegetables, fruit, flowers and other goods, open Monday - Saturday from 07.00 or 08.00 to 14.00 or 15.00. These are cheaper, especially towards the end of the day when fresh food prices are reduced – everything must go!

Farms: Roadside signs in the summer advertise fruit and other farm produce, especially strawberries (*jordbær*). *Ekte geitost* is 100% goat milk cheese (strong), *egg* is eggs (!), *honning* is honey, which you cannot take back to the UK as it's prohibited by Customs because of bee disease. Some farms have visitor centres with cafés and children's activities.

Restaurant opening times vary; most are closed on Sunday. Lunch is served from 12.00, sometimes as late as 17.00; dinner is served from 18.00. Eating out regularly is expensive. Most visitors (including Norwegians on holiday) buy food at bakeries, supermarkets and markets and prepare their own meals.

Norwegian foods include fish soup (*fiskesuppe*), grilled (*grillet*) or smoked (*røke-*) salmon (*laks*), cured trout (*rakørret*), boiled shrimp (*reker*) often sold ready-cooked at the quayside, lobster (*hummer*), cod (*torsk*), whalemeat (*hvalkjøtt*) and other seafood, reindeer (*reinsdyr*) steaks, dried smoked salted meat (*spekemat*), dried smoked leg of lamb (*fenalår*), meatballs (*kjøttboller*), fishballs (*fiskeboller*), potato dumplings (*raspeboller*) in lamb and cabbage stew (*fårikål*), lobscouse stew (*lapskaus*), pastry layered with cheese or brawn (*lefse*), substantial open sandwiches (*smørbrød*) with a large variety of meat, fish, cheese, salad *pålegg* (on-lay) on top, apple crumble with chocolate and cream (*tilslørte bondepiker*). Dried cod soaked in lye until it becomes like jelly (*lutefisk*) which is popular at Christmas, sheep's head (*smalahovud*) singed, smoked and then boiled (you eat the cheeks, tongue and eyes) and ultra mature cheese (*gammelost*) are acquired tastes.

Breakfast (*frokost*) can be quite substantial; the buffet has Scandinavian, English, American and Continental options including cereals, scrambled egg, bacon, tomatoes, sliced ham (*skinke*), salmon, sweet brown goats milk cheese (*geitost*) and other cheeses, pickled herring (*sursild*), pickled beetroot (*rødbete*) and pickled cucumber (*agurk*) and a variety of breads and crispbreads (*knekkebrød*). In many hotels, grease proof paper is provided for you to make your own packed lunch and a vacuum flask can be filled with coffee for an additional charge. Lunch (*lunsj*) is a light meal often from a buffet (*koldtbord*), usually good value; dinner (*middag*) in the early evening is the main hot meal of the day.

There are food festivals at Stavanger (*Gladmat*, Scandinavia's largest), Trondheim and Ålesund; Norway's Bocuse d'Or is ranked as the world's second most prestigious chef's competition.

Restaurant: Expensive; there are no exploitation wages, staff are paid well, so you are paying for the service. A main course will cost kr 195 or more. Most have a cheaper daily special (*dagens rett*). Many towns have Chinese, Indian and Italian restaurants with menus influenced by Norwegian tastes; cities have other ethnic restaurants. Some restaurants

indicate vegetarian dishes (*vegetariske retter*) on menus, but their interpretation may not be reliable. EatYrEgo, Fragrance of the Heart Cafe, Krishna's Cuisine, Vegeta Vertshus in Oslo and Markens Grøde in Trondheim are entirely vegetarian.

Kafeteria: In department stores, railway stations or hidden above shops and offices, usually closing at 18.00. Moderate prices, self-service, simpler menu, often with a cheap daily special (*dagens rett*). A main course will cost from kr 75 to kr 150.

Konditori: Moderate prices. Usually part of a bakery, providing *smørbrød* (often good value), pastries, cakes, tea and coffee. Large ones may serve hot meals.

Veikro: Roadside diner/inn. Usually cheaper than restaurants; may be waiter service or self-service.

Chains: Burger King, McDonald's, Pizzaland, Subway and coffee shops have branches in cities and large towns. Norwegian chains include Peppe's Pizza and some bakeries.

Street Stalls and Kiosks (*gatekjøkken*): These sell hot dogs (*varme pølser*), burgers, pizza and other snacks.

Bars & Pubs: Hotel bars are open to the public. Pubs are found in cities and larger towns. All alcohol is expensive; served by a barman, it's mega-expensive. In groups, everyone buys their own drink; buying a round for others is not normal practice. The legal age for drinking alcohol is 18 for beer and wine, 20 for spirits. You will be asked for proof of age if you don't look old enough.

A bottle of something is usually welcome as a gift, but do not expect it to be opened at the time – Norwegians are aware of when they will next be driving.

Drinking & Driving: Don't! The permitted blood alcohol level is much lower than the UK and penalties are severe. Norwegians use taxis on a night out or drink after returning home.

Tipping: A service charge is usually included in the bill; otherwise a tip is expected.

Norway: Food & Drink

Many basic food prices are similar to the UK, except that you pay VAT on top, making them more expensive. Some sample prices are given (Oct 2007 average). While many foods can be recognised without knowing the Norwegian names, you may need a phrase book or dictionary to translate some. Some foods like Marmite and real peanut butter (only peanuts with nothing added) are difficult to find, so if you can't survive without these, take them with you.

Allergies (*allergier*): Foods often have allergy labels but always check ingredients.

Cow's milk and derivatives	<i>ku melk, fløte, krem, smør, ost</i>	Nuts	<i>nøtter</i>
Celery	<i>selleri</i>	Sesame seeds	<i>sesamfrø</i>
Egg	<i>egg</i>	Soya	<i>soya</i>
Gluten (barley, oat, rye, wheat)	<i>gluten (bygg, havre, rug, hvete)</i>	Sulphites	
Mustard	<i>sennep</i>		

Norwegian Food Safety Authority <<http://www.mattilsynet.no>> for additives information.

Vegetarians (*vegetarianer*): The vegetarian movement in Norway is very small. Some foods may be labelled organic (*økologisk*), but very rarely vegetarian and never vegan. It is necessary to read ingredients carefully, but difficult to be certain, even with a good dictionary. Fresh vegetables, fruit, nuts and grains are easily obtained for cooking for oneself. Most towns have a health food (*helsekost*) store. Debio is the organic certification organisation <<http://www.debio.no>>.

Baby Foods: A similar range to the UK. Porridge kr14.71/370g, vegetable puree kr5.18/125g, infant formula kr71.01/90g.

Baking & Cooking Ingredients: The range is similar to the UK. Wheat flour kr7.61/kg, wholemeal flour kr9.22/kg, sugar kr13.97/kg.

Bread (*brød*): Both supermarkets and bakeries have many varieties of good quality bread, some made with rye (*rug*), always supplied fresh in a paper bag — UK-style polythene-wrapped sliced tasteless cotton wool bread is not available! Very many varieties of crispbread are available. White bread kr13.90/500g, whole grain bread kr15.00/500g, rye bread kr19.30/750g, crispbread kr11.50/400g, biscuits kr8.13/200g.

Cereals: Breakfast cereals are similar to the UK. Corn flakes kr22.54/750g, oatmeal kr9.07/750g.

Desserts, Confectionery & Snacks: A smaller range than the UK. Ice cream, vanilla kr13.50/litre, milk chocolate kr16.20/100g, crisps kr17.79/300g, unshelled peanuts kr15.40/300g.

Dairy, Fats & Oils: Milk is available in 1l cartons, some varieties also in 500ml and 2l cartons. These include full cream milk (*helveik*), semi-skimmed (*lettveik*), skimmed (*skummet*), sour milk (*surveik*), *kefir* (a type of fermented milk), yoghurt (plain or with fruit). *Fløte* is pouring cream; *krem* is whipped cream. Butter (*smør*) and several oil-based spreads, eg sunflower, are available. Some cheese (*ost*) is curdled with salts rather than rennet, giving it a hard consistency similar to Edam and Gouda. The main varieties are *fløtemysost* (cow milk and cream), *geitost* (goat cheese), the slightly sweet Gudbrandsdal (mixture of goat and cow milk), Jarlsberg, *mysost* (brown whey cheese), Norvegia, *nøkkelost* (with cloves). Some are available as reduced fat (*lettere*), mature (*vellagret* or *ekstra vellagret*). Blue cheeses are Fromage Bleu, Norzola, Normanna and Royal Blue. Other cheeses include Brie, Camembert, Cheddar (but nothing like real English Cheddar), cottage cheese, cream cheese (plain or with herbs, spices, pepper, pineapple/mandarin, onion, Thai or pesto), Edam,

Gräddost, Mozzarella, Norbo, Port Salut, Prim cheese spread and other spreads (*smørbar*) plain or with bacon, ham or prawns, *pultost* (soft fermented cheese, sometimes with caraway seeds), Ridder, St Paulin, Snøfrisk (cream cheese with 80% goat milk), Sveitser. British cheeses are not available. The range of olive and cooking oils is similar to the UK. Eggs are expensive.

whole milk kr12.22/litre	cheddar £39.90/250g	margarine kr14.84/500g
low fat milk kr11.25/litre	blue castello kr18.57/100g	butter kr15.86/300g
skimmed milk kr11.32/litre	brown cheese kr38.63/500g	olive oil kr63.00/litre
yoghurt kr12.80/0.5 litre	white cheese kr72.33/kg	soya oil kr33.16/litre
large eggs kr28.00/12		

Fruit (*frukt*) & Vegetables (*grønnsaker*): Many are the same tasteless Spanish imports as in the UK; the country of origin may not be displayed. There is usually only one variety and there seems to be little interest in what it is – you may find it on the box label. Apples, for example, are labelled merely red (*rød*), green (*grønn*) or yellow (*gul*). In summer, good local vegetables are available, especially in markets. You can pick bilberries in the countryside but this is time-consuming and messy unless you buy the special scoop with a wire comb from a hardware store (*jernvarehandel*). Tinned and frozen vegetables are also available.

oranges kr17.90/kg	aubergine kr42.81/kg	lettuce kr13.30
bananas kr16.56/kg	carrot kr8.90/kg	iceberg lettuce kr15.10,
grapes kr19.90/kg	cabbage kr8.27/kg	tomatoes kr24.12/kg
apples kr29.37/kg	chinese cabbage kr23.65/kg	red pepper kr40.43/kg
pears kr22.09/kg	onion kr13.79/kg	
pineapple fresh kr20.43	new potatoes kr9.81/kg	spinach tinned kr14.01/375g
pineapple tinned kr11.54/560g	mashed potatoes kr8.71/90g	sweetcorn tinned kr6.00/340g

Fruit Juice & Squash: Both are labelled as *saft* or *jus*, but squash for diluting is in bottles while juice and juice drinks are in cartons – read the label to determine if it's 100% juice. A juice label does not necessarily mean pure juice. *Brus* is a carbonated drink. Soft drinks kr11.05/0.35 litre bottle.

Jams (*syltetøy*) & Spreads: The range is similar to the UK. Marmalade, orange kr25.51/400g.

Meat (*kjøtt*) & Fish (*fisk*): You will find beef (*okse*), good mutton (*fåre*), pork (*svine*), chicken (*kylling*), salmon (*laks*), trout (*ørret*), cod (*torsk*), halibut (*kveite*), herring (*sild*), prawns (*reker*) and many other fish and shellfish (*skalldyr*). Fish in coastal areas is always very fresh. Seek advice on food safety if offered local coastal mussels (*blåskjell*).

rump steak beef kr189.83/kg	hamburger, raw kr41.90/500g	salmon slices kr82.24/kg
t-bone steak kr166.47/kg	boiled ham kr27.32/100g	salmon fillet, kr76.19/500g
stewing beef kr 149.89/kg	bacon, slices kr32.33/150g	herring fillet kr49.94/kg
minced meat kr36.90/450g	corned beef kr20.06/340g	cod for frying kr43.20/400g
rump steak pork kr139.04/kg	frankfurter kr50.46/560g	cod fillet kr157.92/kg
loin of pork kr79.86/kg	salami kr26.80/150g	cod fillet, frozen kr78.43/600g
pork chops kr60.98/kg	grilled chicken, whole kr29.00	deep-fried cod kr26.07/400g
minced pork kr37.31/400g	chicken fillet kr94.25/480g	mackerel fillet/oil kr11.26/110g
leg of lamb kr89.59/kg		sardines/oil kr16.14/125g

Norwegian Food Safety Authority <<http://www.mattilsynet.no>> for seafood information.

Pasta & Grains: Both fresh and dried pasta are available. Spaghetti kr9.28/500g, rice kr11.37/kg, couscous kr23.42/500g.

Ready Prepared Oven or Microwave Meals: You will find some but nothing like the variety available in the UK.

Sauces (*sauser*) & Condiments: There is a wide range of cooking sauces for barbecues,

casseroles, pastas, pizzas etc. It may be better to take your own salt, pepper, herbs (*urter*) and spices (*krydder*), rather than buy expensive large packets that you won't use up. Ketchup kr20.32/870g, sweet-and-sour sauce kr19.54/500g, pasta sauce kr15.22/500g, salt kr19.71/kg.

Soups (*supper*): Available in tins, as powder in packets and single portion cup soups, sometimes in cartons; fruit soups are also popular. Cauliflower/broccoli soup kr16.72/packet, pea soup kr17.23/packet, vegetable soup kr20.22/packet, tomato/macaroni soup kr 16.10/packet.

Tea (*te*) & Coffee (*kaffe*): Tea bags, including herbal and fruit teas are available; rosehip/hibiscus (*nype*) is popular. Tea is usually made in the cup rather than a teapot. Ground coffee (good quality but mostly strong blends, rather than single varieties) is available for filter coffee makers as well as instant coffee. Norwegians drink more coffee than any other nation. Ground coffee kr17.10/250g, instant coffee kr40.37/100g, black tea kr17.63/25 bags, green tea kr23.40/25 bags, mint tea kr17.94/20 bags.

Alcohol: Apart from the drinks available in supermarkets, the *vinmonopol* and restaurants, some Norwegians have their own illegal stills. Refuse all offers – it may have an extremely high alcohol content and a three-day hangover is not uncommon, perhaps worse! Note that in some areas, drinking alcohol in public is prohibited – with a hefty fine! Lager kr13.39/0.33 litre, malt beer kr6.62/0.33 litre, red wine kr89.90/0.75 litre.

Books: The Norwegian Kitchen, edited by K Innli (KOM Forlag 2003 ISBN 978 829 082 364 6) £19.99

Norway: Communications & Media

Post from UK to Norway: All post is sent airmail; usually delivered two working days later, 3 days in the far north and remote rural areas, but allow an extra two days. Letters may be addressed to a name, c/o Poste Restante at any post office for collection; proof of identity is required when collecting. In addresses, the building number is written after the street name; the 4-digit postcode (*postnummer*) before the town name is essential. For items sent from outside Norway, use N-xxxx.

01xx - 12xx	Oslo	5xxx	South-Western and Western Coast
13xx - 19xx	South-East	6xxx	North-West
2xxx	East and Inlands	7xxx	Mid-Norway
3xxx	South (West of Oslo)	8xxx	North
4xxx	Southern Coast	9xxx	Far North

Post from Norway to UK: Red posting boxes with a circular posthorn symbol are at post offices and in the street. All is sent airmail; letters usually arrive in 2 to 3 working days, postcards may take a week or more. After the normal UK address, write '*Stor Britannia*'.

Telephone (*telefon*): 1.99 million landline numbers are in use and 5.19 million mobile numbers (2007) with one of the most advanced telecommunications networks in Europe. There is a domestic satellite system; the large rural area encourages wide use of mobile systems instead of landline. Dialling, ringing, engaged tones differ from the UK; there are dialling instructions in English in phone boxes and at the front of directories. Long distance and local numbers are always entered in full (all eight digits, quoted in pairs). Dial 1881 for Norway, Sweden, Denmark directory enquiries, 1882 for other countries, 115 for the operator. To call UK from Norway, enter 0044, followed by the full UK number without the initial 0. To call Norway from UK, dial 0047, followed by the Norway number.

Telenor pay phones accept kr 1, 5, 10, 20 and 0.50, 1, 2 euro coins which are placed on a chute and automatically taken as time expires. Unused coins are returned but no change is given, so it's best to use small value coins. There is a single rate regardless of distance; minimum charge is kr 5 or 1 euro. The cheap rate is 17.00 to 08.00 weekdays and all day at weekends. Visa, American Express, Diners and Eurocard/Mastercard are accepted in 3000 card phones and are more convenient if you have many calls to make; the former phone cards (*telekort*) are no longer valid. You pay a surcharge for using phones in hotel rooms.

BT charge cards enable you to dial a code in Norway, enter an account number and PIN, then the UK number; the cost is charged to your BT account; this is cheaper than the Norwegian direct dial rate. ekit has global/European phone cards with cheap rates.

ekit (T: 0800 028 2402, YHA member discount quote YHAPC1108) <<http://yha.ekit.com>>

Many mobile phones (dual mode, dual-band and tri-band) work in Norway, provided you activate the service beforehand with your phone service provider, but check the charges which may be very expensive, especially for data downloads; you may also have to pay to receive calls (including voicemail, so switch off this service when you leave home). It is cheaper to purchase a separate SIM card enabling calls to UK via a local Norway number, but your phone may need to be unlocked first; it can take up to 3 weeks to get the unlocking code from your provider and there is usually a fee.

Insure your phone with a policy that covers call charges if lost or stolen; policies provided by the phone networks usually don't. Don't leave your phone unattended and check the SIM card is still in it as this is just as valuable to a thief as the handset. Protect the handset with a password and also the SIM with a PIN. If lost or stolen report it to the network proviser immediately so they can block calls and obtain a crime number from the police. You are liable for all call charges made by the thief until both phone and SIM are blocked.

0044 Ltd, 2 Chapel Court, Holly Walk, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 4YS (T: 0870 950 0044) <info@0044.co.uk> <<http://www.0044.co.uk/>>

AwayPhone (T: 0845 868 1466) <info@awayphone.com> <<http://www.awayphone.com/>>

ekit (T: 0800 376 2370, YHA member discount quote YHAMO1108) <<http://yha.ekit.com>>

Go-Sim <<http://www.gosim.com>>
Sim4Travel <<http://www.sim4travel.net>>
UK2abroad, uses your UK number <<http://www.uk2abroad.com>>

Fax: Post offices provide facilities for sending faxes; hotels charge a higher rate.

Internet & Email (*e-post*): In 1971, Norway was the first non-English speaking country on the Internet. Cable broadband became available in early 2000, followed by ADSL for private consumers in late 2000 and ADSL2+ is slowly becoming available with speeds up to 24/1.5 Mbit/s. Basic ADSL starts at kr195 per month and ADSL2+ is from kr499 per month. Major ISPs are NextGenTel <<http://www.nextgentel.no/>>, Tele2 <http://www.tele2.no>, Telenor <<http://www.telenor.no/>>, Ventelo <<http://www.ventelo.no/>> with very many smaller and local providers.

Internet accounts total 2.99 million with 4.07 million email addresses (2008). 87% of people have access to a home PC, 83% have Internet access, 64% have home broadband access. There are Internet cafés in cities and larger towns; DFDS ships and many hotels have credit card operated computers (expensive). Most public libraries (*biblioteker*) have free online computers but access may be restricted to local residents only and time must be booked in advance. If you want to take your own laptop, wireless access is available at Internet cafés, in many hotels and other hotspots by purchasing an access card. If you want dial-up access, enquire if your ISP has a local number; you will need an adapter for Norwegian phone sockets. Most UK ISPs provide web-based email access in addition to downloading email from POP or IMAP mail servers and this is usually more convenient when abroad. For security, always empty the cache via browser properties after use, if you have entered personal information or used the Internet for financial transactions on a PC which is accessible by others.

Cybercafe index <<http://cybercaptive.com>>

Directory of Wi-Fi hotspots <<http://www.hotspot-directory.com>>.

Media: Norway's public broadcaster, NRK (*Norsk rikskringkasting*), had a monopoly until 1981, when the first local radio and TV stations opened. Since then, private local and national stations have built up substantial audiences. Norwegians are avid newspaper readers (an average of two papers daily, but declining amongst young people). Much of the press is privately-owned, some by political parties and openly partisan, but all receive a government subsidy to ensure that they are viable in even the smallest municipality. Press freedom is guaranteed by the constitution and public radio and TV broadcast without government interference.

On average, Norwegians spend 50 minutes of their daily leisure time reading, 60 minutes in front of a PC screen and 150 minutes watching TV (2007). Retired people spend far more time watching TV. 53% of people listen to the radio daily for an average of 90 minutes per day; the most popular programmes are news, weather, classical music and children's programmes. 72% of people read a newspaper daily for an average of 30 minutes and 14% read a weekly magazine. Newspaper reading is declining in the youngest age groups.

Newspapers (*aviser*): There are nearly 300 newspapers with a combined circulation of more than 3 million. The Schibsted group is one of Scandinavia's largest media companies. The main national/regional publications are:

VG (*Verdens Gang*) — national mass-circulation tabloid daily (Schibsted)

Aftenposten — Oslo conservative daily, national morning and regional evening editions (Schibsted)

Dagbladet — national mass-circulation tabloid daily

Bergens Tidende — Bergen liberal daily (Schibsted)

Adresseavisen — Trondheim conservative daily (Schibsted)

Stavanger Aftenblad — Stavanger liberal daily (Schibsted)

Dagens Næringsliv — Oslo financial and business daily

Drammens Tidende — Drammen/Buskerud independent liberal daily

Fædrelandsvennen — Kristiansand daily (Schibsted)

Dagsavisen — national daily

Morgenbladet — national independent quality weekly

Nordlys — Tromsø daily

The Norway Post — English-language online newspaper <<http://norwaypost.com>>

Other newspapers are published regionally and locally. Papers are sold in shops and kiosks but most people subscribe directly with the paper which employs teenagers to deliver it to homes in towns and cities or sends it by post in rural areas. Most newspapers are also available online.

Oslo's *Aftenposten* is available in some UK city libraries, but many libraries are discontinuing newspapers that are available online. Major English papers are available in Norway at main airports, some city centre news kiosks and city centre libraries, usually a day late.

TV: The PAL system is used, as in most of Western Europe (except France). Digital terrestrial television is now available in all counties; analogue broadcasting will close on 1 Dec 2009. Some channels now broadcast High Definition TV. For terrestrial TV (30% of viewers), reception may be poor in mountain areas, so satellite TV (30%) is popular. Cable TV (40%) is available in cities and towns. Programmes are in Norwegian; UK/US imports are broadcast in English with Norwegian subtitles. Hotels may have Sky, CNN and English movie or sports channels. Like the BBC, NRK is funded by an annual TV licence fee (kr 2 335 in 2009). The 69 TV channels (2008) include:

NRK 1, national public broadcast, terrestrial and satellite

NRK 2, national public broadcast, terrestrial and satellite

NRK 3 and Super (children's TV), national public broadcast, terrestrial and satellite

SportN, commercial, satellite

TV Norge, commercial, terrestrial and satellite

TV2, commercial, terrestrial and satellite

TV3, commercial, satellite

Frikanalen, national non-profit community channel, terrestrial

Swedish TV channels can be received in many areas.

Radio: <http://radiostationworld.com/Locations/Norway/radio_websites.asp> lists all stations, including web casts. News is broadcast in English at 09.00 and 21.00 weekdays on 88.7 or 93FM in Oslo, 89.1FM in Bergen. The 5 AM, 160 FM and 1 shortwave national/local stations (2008) include:

NRK operates three main national stations P1 (with regional variations), P2, P3 and also DAB digital stations: mP3 (dance music), *Gull*, Sport, Super (children), 5.1, *Alltid Nyheter* (24/7 news), *Alltid Klassisk*, Jazz, *Folkemusikk*, *Stortinget*, *Båtvær* (24/7 weather) and Sámi Radio services.

P4, national commercial

Kanal 24, national commercial

Radio 1, music service, commercial

Radio Norge, national commercial

NRK's Radio Norway International on 1312kHz has now ceased broadcasting; a Christian evangelical station using the same name intends to broadcast to the UK on 216kHz long wave but is not yet on air.

BBC World Service can be received in Norway on 198kHz long wave from about 01.00 - 06.00 hours and 648kHz medium wave; reception is variable; details at <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice>>.