

Norway: Sports & Activities

Be aware that some activities may not be covered by standard travel insurance policies.

Sports Centres (*idrettshaller*): These are found in cities and large towns and provide many of the following facilities: gym with weightlifting and exercise machines, dance studio, swimming pool, sauna, jacuzzi, squash, tennis, volleyball, basketball, climbing wall, football pitches.

Sports Clubs: These are usually based on municipalities (*kommuner*) with subsidy from the local authority and sponsorship from local businesses. They have sections for many different sports. Some independent single-sport clubs exist. Many clubs own buildings in the countryside with showers, training and cooking facilities; some have simple accommodation.

Amusement Parks: The five largest are Tusenfryd near Oslo, Hunderfossen near Lillehammer, Kojbeparken near Stavanger, Telemark Sommerland near Bø and Kristiansand Dyrepark. All the usual rides and many other attractions to keep children occupied all day.

Aero sports: There are facilities for flying light aircraft, gliding, parachuting, tandem parachuting with experienced instructor, hang-gliding and paragliding, ballooning or flying model aircraft.

Norges Luftsportforbund, Rådhusgaten 5 B, inngang Dronningens gt, Postboks 383 Sentrum, N-0102 Oslo (0830-1500 Mon - Fri) (T: 23 01 04 50) <<http://www.nlf.no>> <post@nlf.no>

Athletics (*friidrett*): Bislet stadium in Oslo stages international competitions. Marathons take place annually in Oslo, Honningsvåg (North Cape Marathon) and Tromsø (Midnight Sun Marathon). Many places have marked jogging trails with information boards suggesting exercises; some are lit at night.

Cycling: There are well-developed cycle routes, especially in Rogaland and Vestfold, but cycle touring in mountainous areas can be strenuous. When roads are improved by re-routing or tunnels, the old road is often designated for cycles only. Cyclists are prohibited in longer tunnels because of exhaust fumes; good lights are required in others. *Sykkel Norge* detailing some long-distance cycle routes is available free from tourist offices. Many areas have mountain bike trails. Bikes can be rented at some tourist offices, hostels, campsites and sports shops by the hour, day or week. Most towns have a repair shop. Cycles are carried on non-express trains (reservation required) and Hurtigruten at 10% of the adult fare, on Bussekspress at 50% of adult fare, on most rural buses at the child fare and express ferries and some planes.

Stiftelsen Sykkelturisme, Fylkeshuset, N-3724 Skien <info@bike-norway.com>

<<http://www.bike-norway.com/default.asp?lang=eng>> for maps of cycle routes, details of road conditions, tunnels, repair shops, accommodation with safe cycle storage and tools.

Syklisternes Landsforening, Storgata 23C, Oslo (T: 22 47 30 30)

Statens Vegvesen (T: +47 815 48 991) for brochure 'Tunnel Guide for Cyclists'.

Books: 5 definitive regional cycling guides with route maps, descriptions and information on localities, in Norwegian only (Tun Forlag <<http://www.boktunet.no>> 2009, ISBN prefix 978 825 2932, then 584, 669, 577, 591, 560 for Nord-, Midt-, Vest-, Sør-, Øst-Norge respectively) kr 339,- each

Diving: Crystal clear waters on both the west and south coasts attract many diving enthusiasts. There are diving centres along these coasts. Equipment can be rented and local clubs provide information on wrecks, particularly in More og Romsdal. Enquire at tourist offices.

NDF – Norwegian Diving Association, Servicebox 1, Ullevål Stadion, N-0840 Oslo (T: 21 02 97 42) <dykking@nif.idrett.no> <<http://www.ndf.no>>

Fishing (*fiske*): There are 69 freshwater and marine fish species. A sea fishing licence is

needed if using nets, but not for angling by rod or hand line; fishing is prohibited in conservation areas. Cod, saithe and whiting are found in fjords; also out at sea along with catfish, haddock, hake, halibut, ling, plaice and conger eel; there are minimum size limits. For fresh water lakes and rivers, an annual national licence is compulsory for all over 16 (kr 220 or kr 355 per family, 2010), available at post offices or online, and in most places an additional local licence for day, week or season, available at tourist offices, hotels, sports shops, news kiosks and campsites which provide details of the local rivers and lakes it applies to. The fishing season is from 15 May to 1 October, but varies by location, some opening later or closing earlier. Fishing tackle can be hired in some places. Owing to fish disease in several rivers, disinfecting tackle is compulsory when moving between different water systems; major fishing areas have disinfection stations. Carp, arctic char, eel, grayling, perch, pike, pollan, tench, sea trout, brown trout and whitefish are found in most rivers and lakes. There are over 600 registered salmon rivers available; the best ones are in Finnmark. Seek local advice on food safety before eating the fish you catch.

Directorate for Nature Management for fishing regulations <direktoratet@dirnat.no>.
<<http://www.dirnat.no/fritidsfiske>>

Fishing licence information <<http://www.dirnat.no/fiskeravgift>>, online payment
<<http://www.inatur.no/fiskeravgift>>

Norwegian Association of Hunters and Anglers (*Norges Jeger- og Fiskerforbund*)
<<http://www.njff.no>>

Book: Angling in Norway, by John Berge (Nortrabooks 1996 ISBN 978 829 010 369 4) £19.98

Football (*football*): Very popular for both men and women; sports clubs and sports centres have pitches.

Geology: There are historic mining areas at Røros and near Kongsberg and Evye with visitor centres.

Glaciers (*breer*): There are information centres and exhibitions near major glaciers. Nigardsbreen at Sogndal, Hardangerjøkulen at Hemsedal and many others have glacier walks under expert guidance. Never venture on glaciers on your own – fissures can open without warning. Ice climbing is also available.

Book: Ice Fall in Norway, by Ranulph Fiennes (Mandarin 1995 ISBN 978 074 931 908 3) £5.99

National Park Centre <<http://www.nasjonalparksenter.no/english>> for general information
Jostedalbreen Nasjonalparksenter, N-6799 Oppstryn (T: 57 87 72 00, fax: 57 87 72 01)
<post@jostedalsbre.no> <<http://www.jostedalsbre.no/engelsk/senter.htm>>

Norsk Bremuseum on Rv. 5, N-6848 Fjærland (T: 57 69 32 88, fax: 57 69 32 87)
<post@bre.museum.no> <<http://www.climatechannel.no/>>

Breheimsenteret, on Rv. 55/604 Jostedalen, N-6871 Jostedalen (T: 57 68 32 50, fax: 57 68 32 40)
<jostedal@jostedal.com> <<http://www.jostedal.com>>

Folgefonna Breforlag/Jostein Bakke, N-5627 Jondal (T: 55 29 89 21 or 95 11 77 92)
<post@folgefonna-breforlag.no>

<<http://www.folgefonna-breforlag.no/UK/home.htm>>

Olden Aktiv Briksdalsbreen, N-6792 Briksdalsbre (T: 57 87 38 88)

<infi@oldenaktiv.no> <<http://www.oldenaktiv.no/index.php?action=&lang=English>>

Golf: There are over 170 courses near cities and a few large towns that welcome visitors. Most are 9- or 6-holes only. Some have clubs for hire and instruction.

Norges Golfforbund, N-0840 Oslo (T: 21 02 91 50, fax: 21 02 91 51) <post@golfforbundet.no>
<<http://www.golfforbundet.no>> <<http://www.golfguiden.no>>

Horse Riding (*hest ridning*) & Pony Trekking: There are stables near cities and in major tourist areas; charges are per hour with instruction available. Some arrange day tours or trekking on the Hardangervidda and elsewhere using sturdy *fjording* or *dølahest* ponies with overnight camping or other accommodation. Trotting/horse and trap racing is popular; there are circuits in many areas.

Hest i Turistnæring, v/Anders Johnsen, N-4990 Sønderled (T: 37 15 45 05, fax: 37 15 46 10)
<andejohn@online.no> <<http://www.hest.org>>

Mountain & Rock Climbing (*klattring*): Romsdalen with Europe's highest vertical rock face Trollveggen (1812m), the Jotunheimen with Norway's 29 highest peaks including Galdhøpiggen (2469m) and Glittertind (2464m), the Lyngen peninsula in Troms, Vesterålen and the Lofoten Islands are the main centres. Gausta (1883m) in Telemark is also a popular tourist walk. Mountain weather can change rapidly with Arctic conditions even in summer – seek local advice. Some sports centres have climbing walls.

Norsk Tindeklub (T: 22 50 54 66) <<http://www.ntk.no>>

Books: Climbing in the Magic Islands, by Ed Webster. Climbing in the Lofotens.

Scandinavian Mountains, by Peter Lennon (West Col 1987 ISBN 978 090 622 732 9) £14.95

Orienteering: see separate information document.

Racket Sports: Squash and indoor tennis are available at many sports centres; some sports centres and large hotels have outdoor tennis courts.

Shooting: There is clay pigeon shooting in some areas. The minimum age for hunting large game and trapping lynx is 18; for hunting small game and other trapping, it is 16. Hunters must pass an annual shooting proficiency test but foreigners with experience and documentary evidence of licences and permits can apply in advance for exemption. A national hunting licence fee must be paid to the Wildlife Fund, but does not confer rights on any land. Private landowners own two-thirds of the land and have sole hunting rights; they may issue permits to others. Anyone can apply for a permit to hunt elk, red deer and roe deer on common land; on other state-owned land, anyone can apply to hunt small game; permits are issued on a quota basis with preference given to residents. Local hunting (*jakt*) associations arrange shoots for willow grouse, ptarmigan, black grouse, capercaillie, hazel grouse and small game. The hunting season varies by location but is at most from 10 August to 23 December for birds and large game animals and shorter for some species; at most 15 July to 15 May for small game animals and shorter for some species. Apply well in advance for a police permit to bring your own gun into the country; air and sea carriers also require advance notice.

Directorate for Nature Management <<http://www.dirnat.no>> <direktoratet@dirnat.no> for hunting regulations.

<<http://www.brreg.no/english/registers/hunter>>

Norwegian Police <<http://www.politi.no>> for gun regulations.

Norwegian Association of Hunters and Anglers (*Norges Jeger- og Fiskerforbund*)

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

Skiing & Winter Sports: Norway claims to have invented the sport – ski is a Norwegian word – and Norwegians have dominated the Winter Olympics. There are downhill centres at Holmenkollen in Oslo, Geilo, Voss, Lillehammer and the surrounding Gudbrandsdalen and many other places. The season runs from November to April; Easter is very busy. Many places have ski jumps (*hoppbakker*). Summer skiing takes place on glaciers near Finse, Stryn and the Jotunheimen. Nordic (cross country) skiing (*langrenn*) is found everywhere with 20 000km of maintained trails (*skiløyper*); some are lit at night (*lysløyper*); the annual *Birkebeiner* long distance race takes place at Lillehammer with thousands of entrants. DNT (see Walking below) has information on skiing throughout Norway. Both downhill and cross country skis can be hired at most centres; instruction is available. Some areas have dog sled tours. Cities have ice skating rinks (*ishaller*) with skates for hire.

Be aware of symptoms of hypothermia and frostbite and how to treat them and also avalanche risk when off-piste/trail.

Norwegian Ski Association <<http://www.skiforeningen.no/english>>

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

Stryn Sommerskisenter, N-6783 Stryn (T: 57 87 54 74, Info: 92 25 83 33)

<info@strynefjellet.com> <<http://www.strynefjellet.com>>

Galdhøpiggen Sommerskisenter, N-2687 Bøverdalen (June–October) (T: 61 21 17 50, fax: 61 21 21 72) <gpss@online.no> <<http://www.gpss.no/english/>>

Folgefonna Sommerskisenter, N-5627 Jondal (June–Sept) (T: 46 80 59 66, fax: 53 66 88 95) <post@folgefonn.no> <<http://www.folgefonn.no>>

Swimming (*svømming*): Cities, large towns and large hotels have swimming pools (*bad* or *svømmehaller*), often with saunas and jacuzzis; other places may have one attached to a local school, available to the public at weekends and in school holidays (early July to mid-August). South coast beaches (*badestrand*) are among the best in the world. There are some open air lidos and bathing sites can also be found at some lakes and rivers. Unless signed at the roadside, always enquire locally about safe places – coastal currents and rivers can be dangerous.

Indoor swimming centres <<http://www.badelandene.no>>

Bathing beaches <<http://www.bade.info>> [site under development]

Walking: There are over 20 000 km of marked trails, some in forests surrounding cities and towns with information boards on flora and fauna, but most in upland areas like the Hardangervidda, Jotunheimen, Dovrefjell and Rondane mountains with trails marked with red Ts connecting huts a day's walk apart. The 470 huts are owned by local hiking associations affiliated to the Norwegian Mountain Touring Association (*Den Norske Turistforening*). To use the huts, DNT membership is required. There are 43 large staffed lodges with meals and beds, 169 unstaffed huts with cooking facilities and bunks and 258 where you take your own cooking equipment. A members' universal key opens 400 huts; for others, the key is collected from staffed huts or DNT offices in nearby towns. Linen can be hired at staffed huts or take your own sleeping bag. At staffed lodges, you can just turn up but it may mean sleeping on the floor if you haven't booked; you can also camp outside and use the facilities for a fee. Most huts are open at Easter and from mid-June to end-September; some are open all year. DNT publishes maps for popular upland areas showing paths and walking times, eg 4t = 4 *timer* (hours), between its huts. There are organised walking tours in summer and skiing tours in winter. Some areas have privately owned huts with discounts for DNT members.

Right of access is permitted everywhere except on cultivated land, the immediate vicinity of houses and some conservation areas.

Mountain weather can change rapidly with Arctic conditions even in summer – seek local advice, wear appropriate clothing and footwear and take the relevant Ugland (formerly Statens Kartverk) 1:50 000 map, compass and emergency food and equipment. Large areas have no mobile phone coverage. There may be no-one else in wilderness areas; in case of accident, leave details of your route and expected return time at the place you are staying. During the hunting season, ask locally about safe areas.

DNT, Youngest 1, N-0181 Oslo (T: 40 00 18 68) <info@turistforeningen.no> <<http://www.turistforeningen.no/english/>>

Oslo counter, Storgata 3 (T: 22 82 28 00, fax: 22 82 28 01) <post@dntoslo.no>

Bergen office (T: 55 33 58 10) <post@bergen-turlag.no>

Books: Mountain Hiking in Norway, by Erling Welle-Strand (Nortrabooks 1993 ISBN 978 829 010 364 9) £12.95, details of trails, huts and sketch maps.

Norwegian Mountains on Foot (DNT)

Walking in Norway, by Constance Roos (Cicerone Press 2003 ISBN 978 185 284 230 7) £12, 20 2-8 day treks.

Water Sports, Boating & Canoeing (*båter og kanoer*): Ask at local tourist offices about available facilities. Many coastal towns offer cruises round offshore islands. There are century old steamers on the 105-km 18-lock Telemark canal between Skien and Dalen and large lakes also have cruises. There is white water rafting (minimum age applies) and canoeing on the Sjoelva, Strandaelva, Trysilelva, Dagali, Jølstra and Driva rivers. Canoeing is also good in the Femund area, Østfold, Aust- and Vest Agder, Telemark and suburban Oslo. Rowing boats, canoes and kayaks can be hired on many lakes; some have

organised canoe tours. Wind-surfing and water skiing are available in some places. Sailing is very popular (both King Olav and King Harald won Olympic gold medals); yachts are not available for hire without a skipper but members of UK yacht clubs should contact the local club and may be invited to help crew. The tidal variation ranges from 0.17m on the south coast to 2.17m in the north. Up-to-date sea charts are available from local book shops. Coastal weather can change rapidly – seek local advice.

Norges Padleforbund, Service Box 1, Ullevål Stadion, N-0840 Oslo {T: 21 02 98 35, fax: 21 02 98 36) <webmaster@padling.no> <<http://www.padling.no>>