



Stryn



Geiranger Skagefla

Highlights of The Fjords

With some of the most spectacular scenery in the world coupled with the largest glacier in continental Europe and the historic towns of Bergen, Ålesund, Molde and Trondheim, the Fjord region is a delight to explore. Walkers, artists, photographers and nature lovers will be in their element here.

What unfolds as you explore the region is the story of nature and its ability to transform the landscape. Whether you have a couple of days or a couple of weeks, this destination cannot fail to impress.

Bergen:

The bustling port town of Bergen, bordered by a string of islands to the west and seven mountains to the east, has much to offer visitors. Start your tour by taking the funicular railway to the top of **Mount Fløyen** towering 320m above the city and affording panoramic views. For those looking for a more energising experience, it is possible to hike to the summit of Mount Fløyen.

Continue your tour of the city with an exploration of the infamous **Hanseatic quarter of Bryggen**, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the **Hanseatic museum**. For a picture of Bryggen follow the promenade to the opposite side of the Vågen waterway, past the delightful **fish market** – itself worthy of a visit thanks to its lively atmosphere and colourful stands.

Popular excursions from Bergen include the **Norway in a Nutshell tour** (see page 76); the **Sognefjord in a Nutshell tour**; the **Hardangerfjord in a Nutshell tour**; a cable car ride to the top of **Mount Ulriken**, 643m above the fish market; **Fjord cruises** and visits to **Troldhaugen**, the former home of Edvard Grieg located on the shores of Lake Nordåsvatn (8km south of Bergen).

Hardangerfjord:

The 179km Hardangerfjord, and the arms of Samlafjord, Sørfjord and Eidfjord, wind inland from the village of Rosendal. With a backdrop of majestic mountains, powerful waterfalls – including the 182m **Vøringsfossen waterfall**, and idyllic fruit farms, this is a breathtaking region that words cannot describe.

A great way to see the fjord is onboard the **cruise boats** which link the villages of Norheimsund, Utne, Lofthus, Kinsarvik, Eidfjord and Ulvik. **Lofthus**, the location of the Hotel Ullensvang, is a traditional fruit producing village and during May is awash with blossom. Alternatively, hire a bike and cycle along the banks of the fjord.

A visit to the **Hardangervidda nature centre** in Eidfjord is highly recommended for any visitor to the region, the highlight of which is the panoramic film which depicts the landscape of the fjord and the less-explored peaks of the Hardangervidda national park. Other highlights of the region include the **Folgefonna glacier**, the third largest in Norway at 213km²; **Rosendal castle**, the only baronial home in Norway and a renowned museum; the Hardanger Folkemuseum and the Agatunet farm village.

Sognefjord:

Sognefjord is the longest and deepest fjord in the world and the surrounding landscape incorporates the winding **Stalheimskleiva** road, the steepest road in the country with a gradient of 20%; the **Flåmsbanen**, one of the most beautiful rail journeys in the world; and the narrow **Naerøyfjord**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Of particular interest in the region are the **Jostedalbreen National Park** and its 487km² glacier, the largest in Europe. The **National Park Centre** is a great attraction for those wishing to learn about the park, the formation of the fjord and to view a dramatic film of the region. For those wishing to get close to the glacier, the arms of **Nigardsbreen** and **Briksdal** which swoops down 1200m to the valley offer this opportunity.

Also recommended is a cruise from the pretty village of Balestrand along the Fjaerlandfjord to **Fjaerland** and its fascinating Glacier Museum; a visit to the **Urnes Stave Church**, the oldest in Norway and a UNESCO World Heritage Site; and exploration of the **Jotunheimen National Park**, the highest mountain range in Norway and a popular area for mountain walking.



Ona lighthouse



Alesund

Geirangerfjord:

Declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, Geirangerfjord is one of the most scenically stunning of the Norwegian fjords. Measuring just 15km long and with its clear waters, breathtaking waterfalls, fertile mountain ledges and pristine beauty, it is also one of the most visited.

Escape the crowds and follow one of the clearly marked **walking trails** in the region and be rewarded with breathtaking panoramas and the silence of nature. A selection of circular walking trails depart from the village of Geiranger (ranging from 30 minutes – 2 hours) including an easy walk to the viewpoint of Vesteråsfjellet and a moderate climb to Løsta from where there are beautiful views of the Geirangerfjord.

For a more relaxing tour, why not take a **sightseeing cruise** along the fjord, or take a leisurely drive along the **Eagles Road** which winds its way up the fjord side affording fabulous views at every turn.

Ålesund:

Ålesund is the jewel of the fjords and an architectural gem. Best observed on foot or from the summit of the **Aksla Mountain**, the town is a worthy city break destination in its own right and an ideal base from which to explore the stunning **Sunnmøre coastline**.

Within 1 hour's drive are legendary fjords, towering mountains and a varied coastline. Popular excursions from Ålesund include a fantastic cruise along the Geirangerfjord, passing the incredible mountain farms and the majestic **Seven Sisters waterfall**; an evening cruise to the island of **Ona**, Norway's most southern fishing community; and a visit to **Runde**, the 'island of birds' with more than 1½ million birds nesting on its cliffs.

Molde:

The waterfront town of Molde enjoys a spectacular panorama over the **Romsdalsfjord** and a backdrop of 222 mountain peaks. It is a compact town with a selection of restaurants, activity opportunities – kayaking, cycling and hiking – and a fabulous rose garden. For the best view of the town and the surrounding landscape, we would recommend visiting the Varden viewpoint.

Molde is an excellent base for exploring the Geirangerfjord, Sunnmøre coastline and the Romsdalsfjord. Of particular interest is the **Trollstigen** mountain pass – an awe-inspiring construction which climbs 858m through 11 hairpin bends; and the **Atlantic Road** – zigzagging 8274m over 8 low bridges and islets between the fishing village of Bud and the town of Kristiansund, and named by the Guardian newspaper as one of the best road trips in the world.

An un-missable experience for any visitor to Molde is a journey on the Rauma Railway which links the town of Åndalsnes and Dombås. The scenery witnessed on this trip is wild and beautiful: precipitous crags, alpine peaks and lush hillsides. The route also passes Trollvegen, the tallest vertical rock wall in Europe.

Trondheim:

The compact historic centre of Norway's third largest city is best explored on foot. Wander along the broad avenues and visit the imposing **Nidaros Cathedral**, **Royal Palace** and **Trøndelag Folk Museum**. For a panoramic view of the city climb to the **Kristiansten Fort** (10-minutes' walk from the historic centre) or take one of the many fjord cruises available (summer months).

To the southwest of Trondheim, the open-air **Sverreborg Trøndelag Folkemuseum** with its fascinating exhibition of historical buildings - including a post office, grocery store, stave church and farmhouses – is worthy of a visit.

The highlight of the year is the **St Olav's festival** (29 July). During the 10-day event, Trondheim is seething with life – historical markets, jugglers, plays, jousting displays and concerts take place. A wonderful spectacle.



Trondheim

Special offer

Sunvil Discovery is pleased to offer a complimentary Visit Bergen Card to each client booking a stay in Bergen. The pass provides free or discounted admission to museums, attractions, sightseeing tours, cultural events and bus travel.

Notes: The months of July and August are the height of the tourist season in Norway. Please note that outside of these months, many attractions are closed or are open for reduced hours. If you have a specific site or museum that you would like to visit, please contact us to check that it will be open during your visit.