

Norway: A spectacular crossing from Oslo to Bergen

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The journey between Oslo on the east coast, and Bergen on the west coast, is a truly spectacular part of Scandinavia. The Bergensbanen runs for 308 miles. Built between 1875 and 1909, the railway line climbs 1200m taking six and a half hours to cross alpine terrain.

We added the Flåmsbana (Flåm Railway) trip, one of the most beautiful train rides in the world. It is combined with a fjord cruise on the spectacular Nærøfjord and a bus journey up the steep hairpin bends of Stalheimskleiva to return to the main rail line and travel through to Bergen.

Things to watch out for:

- Arrive early in Oslo and add a day or two. It is a fascinating place with world class museums and is easily explored on foot or bike. I recommend a visit to the Opera House and Viking museums.
- Although you can do package tours with several companies we booked online. Our tickets arrived safely with maps and guides about various components. This was far more cost effective.
- The train leaves quite early in the morning from Oslo so we stayed near Central Station for a quick getaway. Make sure you take snacks for the various legs. We bought breakfast at the station and had a delightful relaxed meal as we left Oslo which made the early start more bearable.
- First leg is to Finse, elevation 1222m above sea level, located on edge of the Hardangerjokulen Glacier between Hardangervidda and Hallingskarvet National Parks. Lots of alpine scenery and there are several walking tracks. You could add a day to your itinerary and get off to do some hiking if you have the time.

- We left Oslo in bright sunshine but as we climbed higher, alpine conditions kicked in. The internal train displays and station signs show just how high the train goes and the snowy wonderland is not to be missed. Even though it was summer when we travelled, it was covered in snow and just stunning – but cold, so take a scarf just in case.
- Luggage is easily managed throughout the stops and porters are there to help when you transfer between the main line to Bergen and the smaller line down into Flåm, but again it can be quite cold outside while waiting for connections (about 15 minutes) so be prepared.
- The only branch line on the trip is down the mountain into Flåm. You must stay overnight – the little village is amazing, with fabulous accommodation options and the museum a ‘must see’ as it documents the history of the line and the incredible tenacity of human spirit to make sure the line was built and maintained. A train lovers’ delight!
- As if it couldn’t get any better, a fjord cruise on the narrow and spectacular Nærøysfjord is the final leg back on to the plateau. Beautiful boat and scenery that makes you gasp with the sheer beauty of the landscape.



The fjord cruise on the narrow and spectacular Nærøysfjord

I thoroughly recommend the trip.

Contributor details

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Virginia was the Principal of Sylvania High from 2006-2012. She is interested in growth coaching to build teacher and executive leadership capacity and is a passionate geographer.