

# SOLO FEMALE TRAVEL GUIDE TO NORWAY

**NOTE:** *to make this guide printer-friendly, I have removed all of the accompanying photos. To see the pictures corresponding to each of the places mentioned, go to [WWI](#).*

**The solo female travel guide to Norway is a result of my solo trip to this picturesque, fairytale-like country. Here you will find information on the itinerary, budget food shopping, addresses of hotels and other things that I have experienced personally and recommend.**

The guide starts with the 2-weeks itinerary, day by day, to give you an impression of what can be done for such a period of time. The trip was focused on the coastal part of Norway and sightseeing of the fjords. This is the most touristic part of the country and for a reason. The amazing vistas and the picture-perfect countryside are the two reasons people to come from all over the world.

The last part of this guide is about all the details you need to know about each place in order to plan your own trip. Sightseeing, hotel addresses, transportation and general observations I have had about every city on the itinerary are included in this part.

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## **Why visit NORWAY?**

Magnificent vistas of primeval and pure nature. The simplicity of life in close proximity to nature. Unique fjord views and many possibilities for active adventures. These are only some of the exclusive ingredients of tourism in Norway.

Everything in Norway is well organized. It is easy to travel within the country. From transport to hotel facilities, you should not expect any inconveniences. Ask the locals if you have any unexpected problems, they will be happy to help you.

## **Norway Solo Travel Itinerary for 2 Weeks**

Norway is too big to get to know it well just for 2 weeks. That's why you have to choose the focus of your trip. Do you want to see the fjords? Most probably you are dying to do so! This was my dream too. And because of that, I focused on a coastline tour.

My trip started in the south and continued to the northern part of Norway and included the following places:

### **- KRISTIANSAND – 1 night**

I stayed one night in Kristiansand and still I had enough time to explore this small town during the first evening (remember, the nights are long in summer) and the next morning before my train to Stavanger.

### **- STAVANGER – 2 nights**

Foresee at least one full day for Stavanger as from here you can hike to the famous Pulpit Rock and you will need minimum a half day for that.

### **– BERGEN – 3 nights**

In Bergen and its surroundings, there are numerous tourist attractions. The city is beautiful and has a lot of nice corners to see and the one-day tours from Bergen are some of the best in the country. If you have to minimize your trip around Norway, from Oslo go directly to Bergen. It is what most of the tourists do.

### **– FJAERLAND – 2 nights**

This hidden fjord gem is a place where you can stay even several days. I advise you foresee at least one full day here.

### **– ALESUND – 2 nights**

Honestly, you can skip Alesund if you want to shorten your trip. One night here would have been enough.

### **–TRONDHEIM – 1 night**

Trondheim, however, is a charming northern city that requires more time but even one night and a half day is enough to see its main sights.

### **– OSLO – 2 nights**

Oslo is the capital of Norway and as such doesn't have the charm of the countryside Norway. I have spent one full day here but it felt like lost time. Better, stay longer in provincial Norway, near the fjords.

**At the end of the guide, you will find detailed information about each of these places, including the tourist attractions, hotel addresses and how to reach it.**

## **Best Time to Travel to Norway**

It is said the best time to travel to Norway is in summer, especially the months of June and July. During this period the nights are long and the sun is always on the horizon. It is the time of the 'white nights', a one-time in life experience.

In this connection, I have one tip to share. During the first day or two, you will be so excited to be in Norway and so happy to explore around that you will forget to pay attention to the clock. And if you don't do that, you may end up going to bed after midnight for the simple reason that the night just doesn't come. Your usual habit to go to bed at dark hours will prevent you to go to sleep on time. And you need to rest. That's why, pay attention to the clock, pull the window blackout curtains and go to sleep on time in order to be in a good shape for the next day's adventures.

## **Best Way to Travel Norway**

The best way (and most affordable too) to travel around Norway is railway transport. The rail network in Norway is very well developed and although the asphalt roads are also good, they are a much slower way of travel. That's why bus travel is better for shorter distances.

There are several reasons why the railway is the best way to travel in Norway:

- you will have some of the best views of valleys, lakes, and beautiful farms;
- it is easy - all announcements are in English too, the staff is kind and helpful;

- buy Pass for a few days to save money and to simplify your trip (more info at the end of the solo female travel guide)

Read the Budget tips to see how to save money (and time on booking) on transportation. The Norwegian trains are very comfortable; passengers very polite and the Internet free! Well, don't go boogie boogie. While the connection is free, half of the travel time you will not be able to use it as the railway passes through so many tunnels that it is difficult to stay connected.

The philosophy of the Norwegian State Railway is lovely. Often in the trains, you will see:

***“Thank you for travelling environmentally friendly.”***

It almost makes you feel proud of using NSB and part of the Norwegian concept for environmental preservation.

For more information on railway travel and prices, check their site: [nsb.no](https://www.nsb.no)

Other ways to travel in Norway are busses and ferries. Read the **DETAILED information section** to see the best transport to each of the places on this itinerary.

## **Weather in Norway**

The itinerary in this guide follows the coastal side of Norway. Therefore, the temperatures in this part of the country are much temperate than it is expected because of the Gulf Stream. As you can suppose, the weather in Norway, even in summer, comes with less warmth but with a higher UV-index. So, don't forget your warm clothes and [sunscren product!](#)

The average temperatures vary between 14 and 20°C in the summer months of June and July. During these months you can expect rains, especially in the mountains.

## **Food in Norway**

The food in Norway is delicious. In a high contrast with Amsterdam, all food products in Norway are of good taste and quality. Even if you shop your food from discount stores, you will find a good choice of delicious cheese, ham, bread, yoghurt, vegetables, and fruits. I will recommend you to try the circle Scandinavian bread sold in packets. It is tasty and very easy to prepare your own sandwiches.

Restaurants are very expensive but the food there is also amazing. Except for buying food for making your own snacks from the more affordable grocery stores (see Budget Tips), you can also rely on the very popular Norwegian hot-dogs (pølster). You will find them almost everywhere, often served just with mustard and ketchup.

Fish is the foundation of the Norwegian food. One of the best places to taste traditional fish meals is the Fish market in Bergen.

As my prime travel focus is not on the food, I am not an expert on local food. If you would like to know more about the food in Norway, read these articles:

[Norwegian Street Food](#)

[10 Norwegian Delicacies and Where To Try Them](#)

Here is the place to say that coffee in Norway in most places is bad. (Talking as a coffee snob that loves espresso and Italian-style coffees). Especially in trains. Do not spend your money on brown coloured tasteless water. Often you will have better coffee in your hotel, and many hotels offer to their guests coffee and tea free of charge throughout the day.

## **Is Norway Safe to Travel?**

Norway is one of the safest countries in the world. As a solo female traveller who spent two weeks travelling around the country and didn't have any problem with safety issues, I will tell you that Norway is a perfect destination to make your first [solo trip](#).

## **Accommodation in Norway**

During my solo trip to Norway, I have stayed only in hotels. The hotels that I have used during my trip I have listed in the section DETAILED information about each place on the itinerary. One interesting element of the Norwegian hotels is **the tradition to light a candle on each table at breakfast**. I don't know why this tradition exists, but I suggest that it is connected with the long days during the long winters here. In any case, it is lovely to have your breakfast accompanied by the warmth of a candle; it gives a special touch to this peaceful moment of your day.

Another curious thing is that sometimes the electrical sockets are connected with the light switch. Before letting your phone to charge for the night, check if the socket is not connected with the room lighting. Obviously, when you go to bed you will switch it off and the next morning will be surprised by the **drained battery**. As you know, the phone is very important when you travel alone!

Alternatively, you can camp everywhere in Norway. If you are an experienced camper or want to experience Norway in its fullness – in nature – this is the better way to save money during the trip. In case you do not want to sleep in the wilderness, you can stay in the numerous [campgrounds](#). They often offer also cabins and are much cheaper accommodation option.

## Travel Norway on a Budget

There are several ways to travel to Norway on a budget. Here are the ones I used.

### PAY ONLINE

Wherever it is possible, buy your transport tickets and tourist fees online. The system in Norway facilitates the automated operations and as such promotes the online transactions. However, if you do not succeed to make this operation, you can always buy your bus or another ticket at the place with a credit card.

### CREDIT CARD FEES

Have a credit card from a bank that does not apply transaction fees. In Norway, everything can be paid by card and you will hardly need any cash although it is better to have some for emergencies.

### ON FOOD & DRINKS

Buy your food from **Rema 1000** and **Kiwi**. Many of the supermarkets offer their own store brand products that come at a lower price than others.

**Do not buy bottled water in Norway.** Never! The water in Norway is one of the purest you will ever taste. It will be criminal to spend money for something freely available.

Alcohol is one of the most expensive goods in Norway. If you can go without it, you will save a lot of money.

### ON TRANSPORTATION

Walk and wander as much as possible. Norway is an amazing destination with its beautiful and clean nature. A large percentage of its citizens live in the countryside and because of that, the cities are significantly less populated than many other European cities. You will not need transport within the city, only to reach it out. This, of course, doesn't apply to the capital – Oslo. However, if you stay in the central part of the city (as I did; check the last part of this guide), you will not need transportation in Oslo as well.

Otherwise, use trains wherever possible. I invested in 4-days one-country [Interrail Pass](#). If your country is not a member of the European Union, you can use the [EuRail Pass](#).

Holding such pass gives you several advantages. It is cheaper because you buy a package. In Norway, it is always cheaper to buy tickets online than offline. This applies for bus and ferries too. And it saves you big time because you will not need to make a reservation for each leg of your trip. A win-win.

## Norway Culture

Norwegian culture is somewhat mystery for most of us. People in Norway are polite and helpful but keep to themselves and distant. Don't expect to be making friends for life. It is just their lifestyle. I guess it is because of the countryside life (farms are often far from each other) and generally the surviving in the long winters requires a strong personality. As they themselves say, Norwegians were known in the past as the peasants and the Swedes as the aristocracy. There are no sophisticated conversations with the Norwegians, but that's why they are honest and trustworthy people. Probably that's why this country is so safe and feels so peaceful.

One curious fact I have learnt during my trip is that the Norwegian people don't usually use perfumes and deodorants. This is part of their environmentally-oriented way of living. For them, this is not something new or a temporary trend. They had always lived in peace with nature. When, on the third day of my trip, I dropped my only bottle with perfume on the floor and it broke, I was wiser than usual. I just thought that from now on until the end of my trip, I will be more "Norwegian" than before. It is how travel makes you wiser and more accepting.

As a woman, you should know that the feminist concept is not a concept in Norway. It is a reality. Women and man are totally equal and thus you will not see a man helping a woman to carry her heavy luggage or in another similar situation. Apparently, women are not perceived as the weaker sex.

## What to Pack for Norway

Summer is the best time to visit Norway and see it in its full beauty. June is the beginning of summer but can be rainy and weather varies in the different regions.

In the south, the temperatures are rather acceptable and it is fine for a beach time although it may seem a little bit cold. In the north, Trondheim is expectedly colder with humid and grey days. Because of these variations, you should have different clothing. The best you can do to minimize the luggage weight is layering. The basic list of clothing is:

- [Waterproof and windproof jacket](#)
- [Hiking shoes](#)
- Leather sneakers
- [Polar jacket](#)
- Impermeable hiking trouser with pockets
- T-shirts
- Pair of jeans
- 1 casual dress

- Pyjamas
- 3 pairs of socks of various thickness and length
- Underwear
- 1 scarf
- A brimmed hat
- One light leather jacket

I did travel with 9 kg backpack during this solo trip to Norway. For details, read the [Norway Packing List for Solo Female Travellers](#).

For more information about the weather and how to dress in the different seasons, visit the official site of the [Norwegian Tourist Board](#).

## DETAILS about each place on the itinerary

Each of these cities is typical for Norway but also has its own characteristics that make it unique. Some are more popular than others and you can choose to exclude some of them, depending on your budget and time availability.

### KRISTIANSAND

Kristiansand is a small, quiet seaside town where despite the tourists from the cruise ships there are no tourist crowds. Here you can see the real Norway and the life of the locals. Kristiansand is a family vacation destination and its charm is in the peacefulness and small size. It is also very easy to reach from any of the Oslo's airports. The train takes 4 hours and 35 minutes train ride from the Oslo Central Station (which is a quite short distance for Norway).

#### What to see in Kristiansand:

The old quarter **Posebyen** with its wooden houses is lovely and best for taking amazing typical photos. On **Markens Street**, the main pedestrian street that will bring you to the coastal promenade is full of coffee shops, restaurants, and shops. Go for an early morning walk to see how the town awakens.

Evenings here are quiet unless you visit during one of the numerous festivals organized in the city. For an evening stroll, the best is to walk along the sea and do as the locals – sit on the numerous benches and look the sunset. The walk starts from the Bystranda beach and finishes at the crossing with Markens Street. On the way, you will be passing by the **Fish Quay** (Fishkebygga).

During the day you may want to take some sun so go to the town's **Bystranda beach**. It is curious because although Norway is a maritime country, this beach looks like located in

Dubai. I mean, artificial and surrounded by futuristic architecture but still lovely, because of the teenagers and younger kids playing around.

**Other interesting sights of Kristiansand are:**

The [Kristiansand Historical Museum](#) is an open-air museum displaying miniature houses and toy exhibition.

*Address: Vigeveien 22B*

One of the places that make Kristiansand a favourite destination for families is the [Kristiansand Zoo and Amusement Park \(Dyreparken\)](#). It is said to be the most visited family attraction in Norway! However, it is situated at 11 km from Kristiansand and it will require one whole day to visit it. You can go there by bus. Tickets (as always in Norway) are cheaper online.

**Where to sleep in Kristiansand:**

One of the best value-for-money hotels in Kristiansand is the [Sjoglott Hotel](#). It is a small hotel that has a top location and friendly staff. At 5 p.m. Belgian waffles are offered to the guests and they can enjoy them in the cute colourful garden of the hotel. Wi-Fi is pretty good too.

For even better prices, check the [Comfort Hotel Kristiansand](#).

## **STAVANGER**

Travelling by train from Kristiansand to Stavanger is an awesome experience! The rails are snaking from a tunnel into another tunnel, and each exit from a tunnel brings another WOW. During this trip, you will see many pastoral views of valleys with colourful wooden houses or crystal clear waters of lakes hidden between huge conifers, whose shores are covered with soft moss... The trip lasts around 3 hours.

Stavanger is one of the most interesting cities in Norway for a few reasons. One is the old quarter nearby the port and its white painted wooden houses, arranged in alleys, with flower pots on the windows.

The second reason is that you can use Stavanger as a 'base camp' and make one of the emblematic for Norway hikes.

**What to see in Stavanger:**

The no.1 attraction is the [hike to Preikestolen \(Pulpit Rock\)](#). It is not an easy hike but it is possible to even for old people and young children. It will be one of the highlights of your

Norwegian trip and totally worth the 4-5 hours hike. The best is to go as early as possible in the morning to avoid the strong sun.

To reach the Pulpit Rock, first, take an express boat from Stavanger port to Tau. You buy the tickets on the ferry, costs 52 NOK one direction. Go under the deck, in the salon, where staff members are walking around and selling the tickets to passengers. Here, as everywhere in Norway, you can pay by card.

Then, you should take the bus. If you buy it from the driver, the return ticket costs you 180 NOK. Online is 10 NOK cheaper.

So, the transport expenses for the day are roughly equal to 30 €.

The old part of the town, which is just next to the port, is an agreeable place to wander around the streets of Stavanger. Every corner is a small gem, with cosy cafes, intimate small shops, colours and Scandinavian ambience. And pretty great for photos too.

#### **Where to sleep in Stavanger:**

[Comfort Hotel Square](#) is part of the Nordic Choice Hotels. It is an easy walk from the train station (as all hotels included in this guide). And it was announced as Norway's trendiest hotel by the Marco Polo travel guides. It is super cosy and feels relaxing and cool with its modern interiors.

Just next to the hotel, you will find a store (Coop Prix) to buy food to make your snacks for the hiking day.

## **BERGEN**

Bergen is Norway's London – it rains a lot and never snows. Even more, the city is officially the rainiest place in Europe. However, this was not proved during my stay here. The days were sunny and warm.

To reach Bergen from Stavanger will take you one day by train. It is 14 hours trip because you need to go back almost to Oslo where (at Drammen station) should change for Bergen. Once again, check [nsb.no](http://nsb.no) for timetables and latest changes if there are any.

Although too long, this trip will give you another magical experience. The line starts at low heights, at some point reaches its highest railway station at 1 222m altitude (that looks just like a scientists' camp in Antarctica) and goes down to join the beautiful Sognefjord. The section before Bergen runs along the fjord and the vistas are simply m-a-g-n-i-f-i-c-e-n-t!

#### **What to see in Bergen:**

Bergen is also the most touristic city of all on this itinerary. The reason is that from Bergen you can visit the largest fjord in Norway – Sognefjord, and its many branches. Here you have many ways to enjoy the fjords – by cruising, hiking, scenic train trips or simply walking by the coast.

Bergen is also a home of one beautiful UNESCO World Heritage Site – **Bryggen**. It is a line of commercial buildings that remained from the time of the Hansa and now are favourites (and an absolute must!) for all visitors of Bergen.

At the other side of the port, opposite to Bryggen, you will find the **fish market**. For those who love seafood, it is a must too. At the corner of the market, you will see the **Tourist Visitors Center** that you should visit if you want to have information and buy tickets for some of the numerous tours in and around Bergen. Go early in the morning, because there are many tourists and waiting for the queues takes time.

#### **One-day Trip to Flam**

The one-day tour that I recommend you is the one to Flam. It is said that to take the Flam Railway is the best way to experience some of the most beautiful views in the country. As I saw myself, this is not true. But it is the faster way to get from Bergen to Flam (around two hours). On the way back from Flam to Bergen, you will take the Express Boat. It is a comfortable small ferry that gives you an opportunity to see, feel, and breathe the air of the amazing Sognefjord. Standing on the deck with wind-blown hair during almost five hours is one of the greatest fjord experiences you can have.

This tour can be taken vice versa – express boat to go and train on the way back. The tour costs 1540 NOK and the price includes the express boat ticket and the Flam Railway ticket. If you would like to eat or drink during your stay in Flam (around 3 hours), this is an additional cost. You can make your own snacks and bring your own drinks in order to reduce the expenditures. However, if you want to have lunch at the place, I can recommend Flam Marina Restaurant. You will find it at the quieter side of the bay where is the best view of the fjord.

I bought my tour at the Bergen Visitor's Centre but if you want to get organised this in advance (or if your starting point is different), check these available [tour options](#).

#### **Where to stay in Bergen:**

Bergen is also expensive. Probably the most expensive of all.

I stayed at [Hotel Park Bergen](#). A cosy little hotel with a charming lobby and breakfast room. However, it is quite expensive for what it offers. But as I have said, Bergen is an expensive destination. My room was beautifully decorated but too warm and noisy. The blinds were

letting too much light to enter the room, which means that during the White nights you just can't sleep!

## **FJAERLAND**

In contrast with Bergen, the hotel I will recommend you in the little village of Fjaerland is a gem. Fjaerland is the most magical place in Norway. It is difficult to reach it but also difficult to forget. You can come here only by bus or car. I travelled from Bergen but you can come from Oslo too. Check for busses at [kringdom.no](http://kringdom.no). Alternatively, you can always send an e-mail to ask the hotel what is the best way to travel to Fjaerland from the place you will be arriving.

### **What to see:**

I have written an [article](#) with everything you need to know about this magical place.

### **Where to stay:**

Read about it and see more photos from the small but so charming Fjaerland Fjordstue Hotel [here](#).

## **ALESUND**

Alesund is a relatively small municipality (around 43 000 inhabitants) and this can be seen immediately. There are few streets with charming small cafes and restaurants, 1 or 2 souvenir shops and the small port.

You will arrive from Fjaerland by bus. It is not a long ride (for the Norwegian distances) and best is to ask at the hotel to check the bus timetable for you the day before. The ticket you can buy from the bus driver if not in advance online.

### **What to see:**

Fjellstua viewpoint – stair walk from the city park. The view is one of the best panoramas you will ever see and the walk up on the stairs, especially in the morning, extremely pleasant.

### **Where to stay:**

My choice was [First Hotel Atlantica](#), a hotel situated in the heart of the city and offers all you may need – quiet room, large bed, good Wi-Fi, clean room and helpful and kind staff. The view from the room was magnificent too!

## **TRONDHEIM**

Trondheim is a beautiful city with a very special atmosphere. As it is the northern point of this itinerary, expectedly, this is also the coldest city of all.

To arrive from Alesund to Trondheim, you can take the Hurtigruten ferry. The route of Hurtigruten (from Bergen to Kirkenes) is said to be the most scenic maritime route in Europe! Unfortunately, this is not a cheap experience. Check timetables, routes and prices [here](#).

**What to see:**

The best of Trondheim is hidden behind the old port - the old town. Although it is the most touristic part of the city, it is absolutely peaceful and you can see and feel the atmosphere of the place in its original stage. Colourful houses, tiny cosy restaurants occupy the sidewalks at Bakkandet. The most spectacular view of this part of the city is from the Gamle Bybro bridge, gently named "The Portal of Happiness".

Another magnificent site not to miss in Trondheim is the [Nidaros Cathedral](#). Its imposing building exudes a sense of magic and is surrounded by a clean, well-arranged graveyard in an even more magical park. The cathedral is one of the places everyone should see in Trondheim. Check out the Archbishop Palace's Museum situated in the same park if you fancy learning about the history of the place and the Norwegian monarchy.

**Where to stay:**

[Comfort Hotel Trondheim](#) was a good choice. With a good location, this hotel is part of the Nordic Choice Hotels and is one of the best value for money hotels in the city.

## **OSLO**

If you visit Norway for the first time and you are there to see the fjords, you can skip Oslo. It is the city least charming and most crowded and chaotic of all on this itinerary. If you don't have much time and want real Norwegian adventure, don't lose a day or two for this city. You will have a much better time in Norway's countryside. You are here for nature and outstanding vistas not for another urban European city, right?

**What to see:**

The real gem is the park behind the Royal Residence in the heart of the city. With its green lawns, quiet lakes, and many ducks it is perfect for spending some time people watching.

**Where to stay:**

[Comfort Hotel Xpress Central Station](#) is a budget hotel with an interesting concept. There is no reception; it is called bar-ception. The reduced price reflects the fact that they do not

offer breakfast like in the other hotels. The hotel has a perfect location – two minutes from the Railway Central Station, five to the city centre and ten to the Bus Station from where you can take a bus to the airport/s. There is a Tourist Visitors Center in the Railway Station.

#### **DEPARTURE from Oslo:**

Depending on what airport you are flying from, you must take either [TORP Express](#) or [Fly Buss](#).

A BONUS:

#### **VOSS**

If you have time and interest, you can add Voss to this itinerary. I have spent just several hours there but it is definitely one of the most beautiful fjord towns. It is well known for active adventures and outdoor sports activities.

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#### **DISCLAIMER**

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