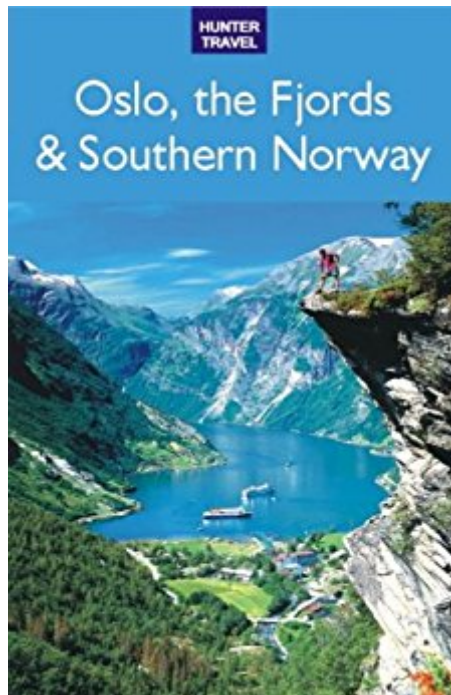




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Oslo, The Fjords & Southern Norway (Travel Adventures)



Synopsis

This guide is based on our larger Adventure Guide to Scandinavia, but with abundant color photographs added and focusing on Oslo, the Fjords & Southern Norway. The author is a native of Scandinavia and knows it intimately. The spectacular, scenic fjords of Norway are long, deep and usually surrounded by mountains. Since most of the country's 4½ million people live in urban areas, it leaves most of the country uninhabited. This makes for abundant wildlife in the beautiful mountains, forests, lakes, and the famous fjords. Half the country's area is above the timberline while 25% is covered by forest. The highest mountain, and the highest peak in Scandinavia, is Mount Galdhøpiggen (2,469 m/8,100 feet), while the longest fjord is Sognefjorden (204 km/126 miles), the longest in the world. Norway is the home of skiing, not only for Scandinavia, but for the whole world. While Norway has some great ski resorts for alpine skiing and produced several great skiers in the four disciplines (slalom, giant-slalom, Super-G and downhill), the most popular form of skiing by far is cross-country, which is considered the national sport. Oslo is a small capital but, with just over 500,000 people, it's Norway's biggest city by far. What makes Oslo unique is its location. The Oslofjord links the city with the sea to the south. In the other three directions you find mountains, lakes and forests within easy reach from the city center. The fjords were created during the latest Ice Age when the layer of ice, which was three km (1.8 mile) thick, cut deep incisions in the earth's crust. Fjords are found all along the coastline in Norway. The four major fjords in this region are Hardangerfjord, Sognefjord, Nordfjord and Geirangerfjord. Sognefjord is the longest and also the deepest of the Norwegian fjords; some parts of it have been measured as deep as 1,300 m (4,000 feet). Geirangerfjord has some of the most spectacular waterfalls you will ever find anywhere in the world. Hardangerfjord is known for its flowers and fruit orchards in the springtime. National Geographic Traveler, in a global survey done by 200 specialists, reported that the Norwegian Fjords ranked as the world's greatest destination. Discover Scandinavia's pristine wilderness with suggestions on the best places to ski, hike, cycle, canoe and dogsled. The author takes you to Renaissance castles and Viking ruins; outlines spectacular driving tours; recommends the best cruises; and guides you through the magnificent countryside. Hundreds of hotel and restaurant choices are offered in all price ranges--from budget-friendly B&Bs to luxury hotels, from casual eateries to the hottest new restaurants, complete with thorough reviews showing what makes each place special. The myths and legends are explored, along with the history--from Harald Bluetooth to Sven Forkbeard, Knut the Great, Gorm the Old and the Vikings--examining how those traditions carry through in the culture today. The guide shows you how to meet the people, get involved, experience Norway directly and unforgettably.

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