

LOOK UP



STUDY IN
NORWAY.

A BRIEF GUIDE TO LIVING IN NORWAY.

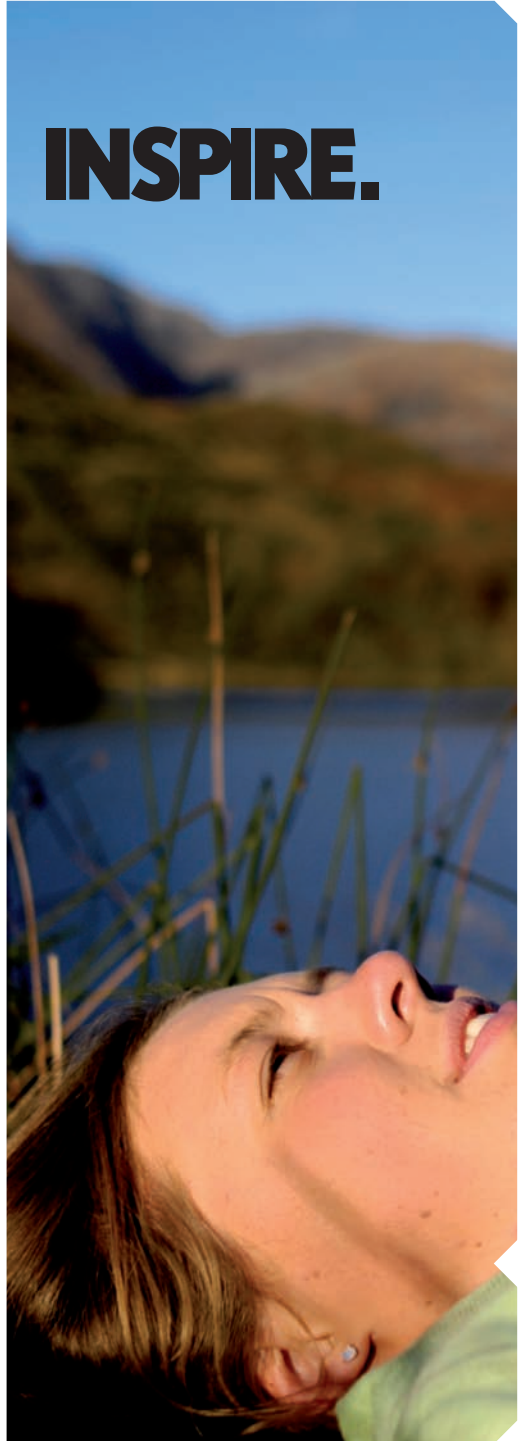


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ASPIRE.



INSPIRE.



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INTRODUCTION.

Why Norway?

This booklet is for anyone who is thinking about living in Norway. A crash course in Norway, if you like. It's designed to give you a brief guide to Norwegian society and culture; lifestyle, behaviour and opinions. We hope that this brochure will make it easier to make the decision, easier to arrive in Norway and easier to fit in, since you'll know a few things about what to expect.

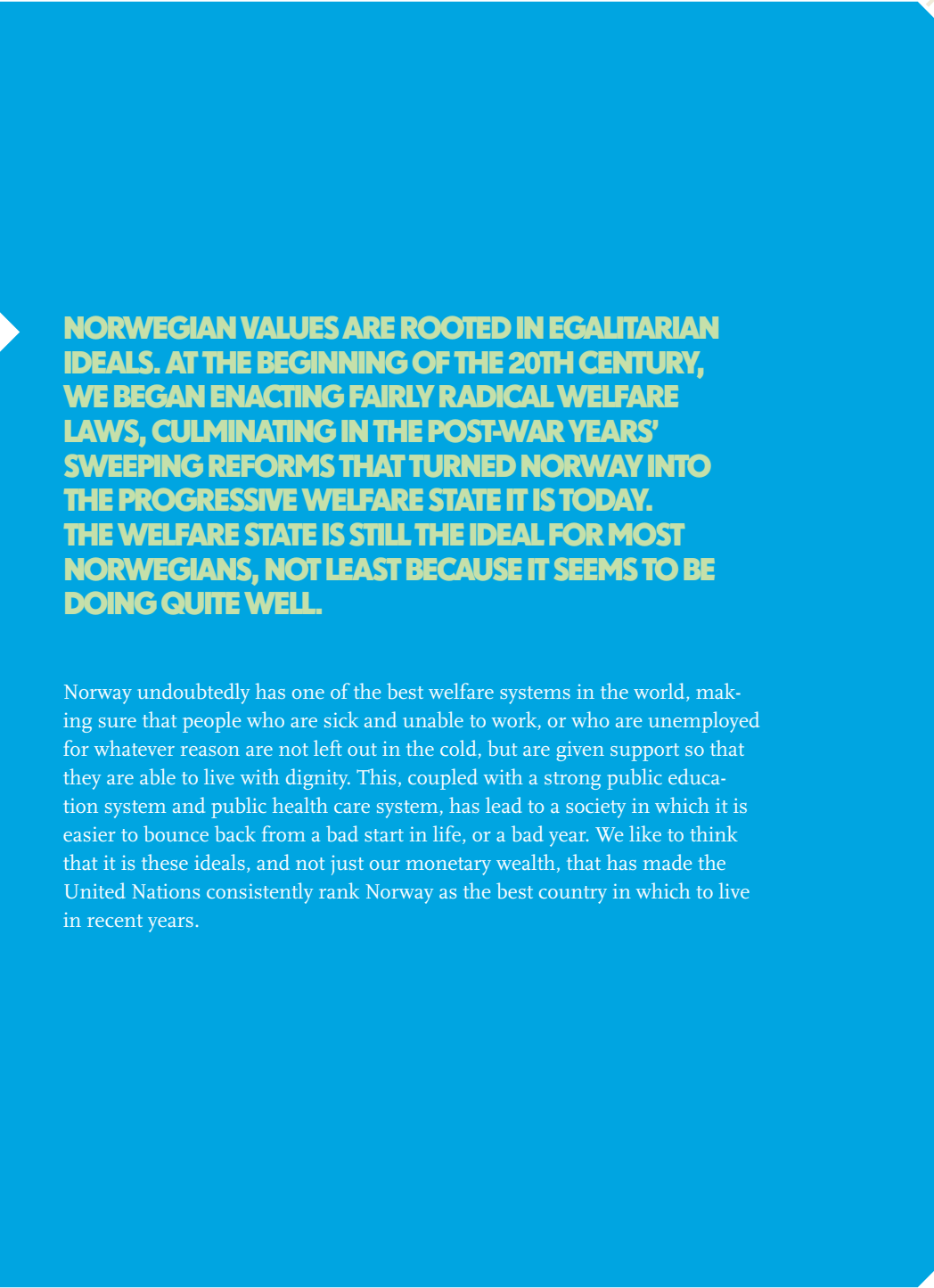
Which is a good thing, because Norway can be confusing at first - and Norwegians are a very odd people - they are walking paradoxes! Norwegians consume more coffee per capita than any other country on the planet, and read more papers than any other people in the world. So on the one hand we're a nation of wide-awake, extremely well informed people. On the other hand, some Norwegians enjoy living in places where the sun doesn't shine for months at a time, and consider fish marinated in caustic soda or dried and blowtorched sheep's head a prime delicacy. This all points to something essential about Norway: a strange mixture of down-to-earthness, curiosity, tradition and innovation in the people here, all combined with a healthy dose of surrealism and madness. This, if nothing else, means that being a Norwegian means you have to develop a keen sense of irony.

You'll be here as part of your studies, so we're sure you'll be happy to hear that Norway has one of the highest standards of general education in the world. We're wide-awake, well informed and well educated. Our egalitarian and freely available education system has led to a remarkable level of education, especially when it comes to women: over 60 percent of all higher education students in Norway are women.

It has been often said that the average Norwegian is shy and reserved. If this is your first impression, don't worry. You'll eventually discover the warm and friendly side of us. Once you crack our hard, rugged exteriors, we're very friendly and welcoming.

So we hope that this brochure will inspire you to come to Norway. Stay a while. Go to school. Have a cup of coffee. Norway just isn't the same without you.

SOCIETY



NORWEGIAN VALUES ARE ROOTED IN EGALITARIAN IDEALS. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY, WE BEGAN ENACTING FAIRLY RADICAL WELFARE LAWS, CULMINATING IN THE POST-WAR YEARS' SWEEPING REFORMS THAT TURNED NORWAY INTO THE PROGRESSIVE WELFARE STATE IT IS TODAY. THE WELFARE STATE IS STILL THE IDEAL FOR MOST NORWEGIANS, NOT LEAST BECAUSE IT SEEMS TO BE DOING QUITE WELL.

Norway undoubtedly has one of the best welfare systems in the world, making sure that people who are sick and unable to work, or who are unemployed for whatever reason are not left out in the cold, but are given support so that they are able to live with dignity. This, coupled with a strong public education system and public health care system, has led to a society in which it is easier to bounce back from a bad start in life, or a bad year. We like to think that it is these ideals, and not just our monetary wealth, that has made the United Nations consistently rank Norway as the best country in which to live in recent years.

The egalitarian values which are at the root of the welfare state also manifest themselves throughout Norwegian society in many ways - for instance in the field of gender equality. The novel idea that women are equal to men and should therefore have an equal say in running society did take some time to catch hold in most of the world, but Norway was in the lead: it was one of the first nations to give women the right to vote. Norway was also among the first countries in the world to elect a female prime minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland, who was elected prime minister of Norway in 1981 (and had eight women in her cabinet, an incredible number at the time), and who later served in that position for most of the late eighties and the first half of the nineties. Because of this, and active government support of gender equality, women have been steadily climbing in standing over the past fifty years. Still, the goal of total equality remains a long way off: while forty percent of the representatives in Parliament are female, only one in every ten company directors are women.

Gender equality has certainly changed the Norwegian male's role as a father. Norway has a paternity leave quota, so that fathers can also take extended time off to be with their children. This has helped make the mixing of careers and family a lot easier.

Norway is still new at multiculturalism. From being a mostly ethnically homogenous society, Norway has gone to being a globalised, culturally diverse nation with massive immigrant communities, and has done so in just 35 years. Forty years ago, most Norwegians had never seen anyone with dark skin, and today nearly a quarter of the citizens of the capital city, Oslo, are immigrants, as is a little over 8% of the total population of Norway. The transition process has not been easy or painless, but while there is still some cultural tension between immigrants and ethnic Norwegians, Norway seems to be learning fast. Most people, particularly in cities, view multi-ethnicity as a natural part of their everyday life.

**GENDER EQUALITY HAS
CERTAINLY CHANGED THE
NORWEGIAN MALE'S ROLE
AS A FATHER.**



**HVOR KAN JEG
KJØPE EN ØL?**

Typical way of asking where to buy beer in Oslo.

**KOR FÅR Æ
KJØPT EN ØL?**

Typical way of asking where to buy beer in Northern Norway.

**KEST E DA RAO Å
FAO KJØPT EI ØL?**

Typical way of asking where to buy beer in Sogn.

LANGUAGES AND DIALECTS. Norway was, until fairly recently, isolated pockets of humanity making a living in the valleys between the mountainous areas which cover most of Norway. Travel was difficult and communication was slow. As a result, local and regional dialects have developed on their own, producing an incredible range of sounds and words, with radical differences from one another. The same word can be pronounced in hundreds of different ways across Norway. No dialect is considered to have more worth than another, except by the people who speak them. Most Norwegian dialects – with some notable exceptions - are understandable once you get to understand a little Norwegian.

To add to the confusion, we have three official written languages in Norway: Bokmål, Nynorsk and Sami. The two biggest are Bokmål and Nynorsk. Bokmål is based on written Danish, which was the official language of Norway for hundreds of years. Nynorsk was created by linguist Ivar Aasen in the 1850s, and is a compilation and combination of some (mostly West-Norwegian) regional dialects. The two languages are not very far apart, but do reflect the large regional differences. Generally, if you understand one of the two languages, you can understand the other fairly easily. Officially Bokmål and Nynorsk have been accorded equal status, although Bokmål is more widely used in Oslo and the larger towns. Nynorsk is used by about 10-15 per cent of the population, mostly on the west coast. You will also find a substantial part of government documents, church services and public broadcasting written in Nynorsk.

Sami, on the other hand, is a minority language used by the indigenous Sami people. It is mother tongue to about 20,000 individuals in Norway. Sami is a member of the Finno-Ugric branch of languages, and North Sami has been established as an official language equal with Norwegian. It is mostly used in Finnmark – a region in Northern Norway.

But if you're not planning on learning Norwegian, don't worry: Norwegian children start learning English at school at the age of six and as a result, practically everyone in Norway has some skill in English (and theoretically

**NORWAY'S RELATIVELY SMALL
POPULATION OF 4.8 MILLION
IS SPREAD THROUGHOUT
THE COUNTRY. TINY VILLAGE
ENCLAVES ARE FOUND IN SOME
OF THE MOST REMOTE PLACES.**





speaking also either German or French). Young people in particular are mostly completely fluent in English. On the other hand, English-speaking films and television series are subtitled instead of dubbed. So if you can read this, you should have no problem speaking to other people, or even just watching television in Norway. But you shouldn't stay in all the time. Go outdoors! It's spectacular! More on this later.

RURAL/URBAN. Mainland Norway covers 324,000 square kilometres, but because of all the mountains, it supports only a comparatively small population of 4.8 million. The government actively encourages growth in outlying districts by supporting smaller towns and hamlets with grants and other funding schemes. As a result, industries, schools and hospitals, as well as cultural institutions, can be found throughout rural Norway. This also means that infrastructure in rural Norway is surprisingly developed, and you can now get broadband Internet and a double latte on almost every last piece of rock in Norway. In keeping with this policy, university colleges have been established in the countryside as well as in the cities.

Still, the rural/urban distinction remains important. The difference between urban centres and rural periphery is one of the driving forces in Norwegian culture and politics, and this is also reflected at the most basic level of government, since our election system has proportional representation. This means that the more sparsely populated constituencies around Norway have a greater representation in the Storting (our parliament) than their population would suggest, the idea being that this keeps the cities from legislating unfairly and draining the rural districts of resources. Despite all this, the rural part of Norway has grown increasingly depopulated over the past 25 years. Due to globalisation and the tendency towards outsourcing, many Norwegian companies have felt compelled to close down many local cornerstone industries, and this has led to previously prosperous small towns losing the ability to sustain themselves.

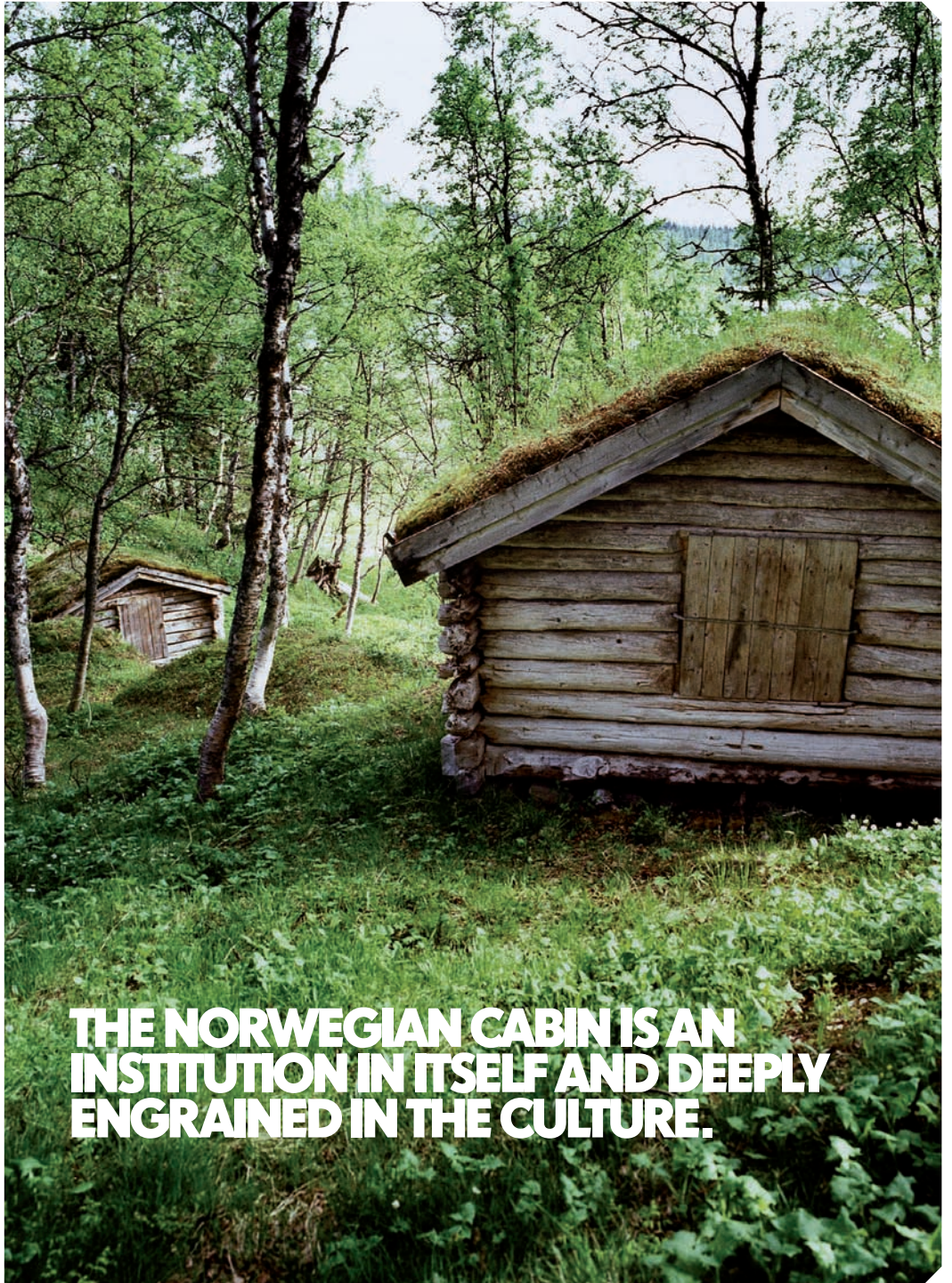
OIL NATION. About thirty years ago, we found oil in the waters off Norway, and since then the technological and economic development have been exceptional. Norway is now the third-largest exporter of crude oil in the world, and is sitting on roughly 50% of the remaining oil reserves in Western Europe.

PEACE WORKER. Our privileged situation, coupled with the egalitarian values on which Norwegian politics are based, have often given Norwegian politicians a moral imperative to engage in peace processes and advocate human rights and humanitarian aid. This leads to an interesting foreign policy, shaped by things like Norway giving a substantial proportion of its annual budget as humanitarian aid, and Norway and Norwegian peace brokers having been actively involved in facilitating peace settlements. An example of the last is the Oslo Accord between Israel and Palestine, which Norway helped facilitate, but Norway has also been heavily involved in peace processes in the Balkans, Colombia, Guatemala, Sudan and Sri Lanka.

Norway has mostly had the role of being a facilitator who sets the table and helps the two parties in the conflict talk. The idea is that since Norway is a small country with no particular aspirations of superpower status, no military clout, and no vested interests in the conflict, that both sides in it will trust us enough to allow us to mediate the agreement.

THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE. Another connection with peace work is that the Nobel Peace Prize is awarded in Norway by a Norwegian jury. Some may think of it as the Academy Awards for politicians, but it's an important institution helping give resources, publicity and credibility to the unselfish few who struggle against the grain to create a lasting peace. Despite being instituted by the man who invented dynamite (he was Swedish, by the way), it's still the most prestigious peace prize, considered the most important recognition of the ultimate political achievement. It is arguably the single most important award in the world.

LIFESTYLE



**THE NORWEGIAN CABIN IS AN
INSTITUTION IN ITSELF AND DEEPLY
ENGRAINED IN THE CULTURE.**

SPACE. Outside of the cities, Norway is mostly very rugged terrain: mountainous regions cover most of Norway, interspersed with valleys, fjords and the occasional glacier. The scenery is, to put it plainly, spectacular, with breathtaking vistas almost everywhere. Norway is quite simply one of the most beautiful and special places in Europe, and well worth taking the time to walk around in. The fact that most of Norway is made of rock also turns Norway into one of the least populated countries in Europe. Only Iceland has less people per square mile than Norway. This means that you don't have to go very far outside the cities before you're out of the populated areas (in most cases, less than an hour of walking out of the city centre will get you into semi-wilderness).

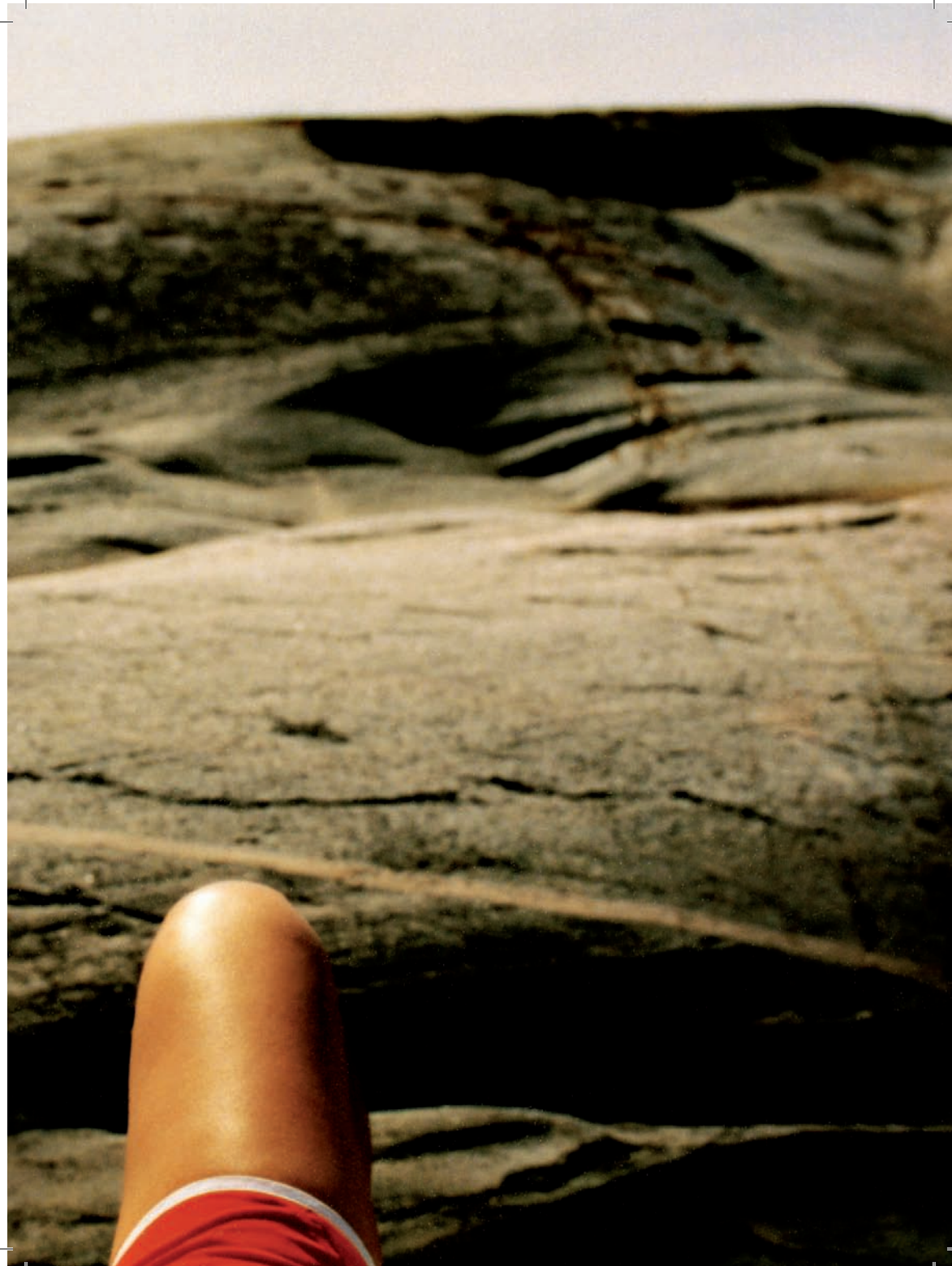
THE GREAT OUTDOORS. This also means that Norwegians live in the strangest of places, often quite far away from city centres (you'll be surprised at the kind of places it is possible to build a house. It is not uncommon to find a house on some grassy patch on an outcropping far above a fjord; or to find 9 tiny houses on a craggy piece of rock out in the ocean, with the inhabitants making a living farming sheep). However, many Norwegians have getaway cabins in more remote areas, and head there during vacations and national holidays. These are often very simple accommodations, with bunk beds, no running water and outdoor toilets. But this is not really to get away from people. It should also be remembered that these cabins also constitute a social scene. One goes there with friends and family to spend time together. If nothing else, they point to the strange need Norwegians have for taking long, gruelling hikes or ski trips through the wilderness.

THE SOCIAL NORWEGIAN. The reputation that Norwegians have for being unsociable is thoroughly disproven several times a year. Norway's National Day celebrations on May 17th, for instance. The National Day celebrates Norway's first Constitution of 1814, and is a celebration of spring and warm weather. The traditional way of celebrating this is to dress up in one's finest clothes - often the national costumes 'bunad' - and take to the streets (which are cleared of cars for the occasion) in great throngs to enjoy parades, music and performances. It can be quite spectacular.

A NEW LIFESTYLE. It should also be noted that the typical Norwegian way of life, if such a notion still makes sense, is changing rapidly, and that the last two generations' lifestyle have had an incredible impact on the shape and structure of Norwegian society and the Norwegian mentality. The young tend to travel much more than their parents and grandparents, they spend far more time and money at restaurants and bars, and they are less prone to the simple outdoor life that Norwegians traditionally lived. With the unprecedented levels of economic wealth now enjoyed by most Norwegians, many prefer to travel the world for their holidays – or they build big luxury cabins that wouldn't have been considered a "hytte" twenty years ago. What people do, how they define themselves, is changing drastically with each generation. Today, people are trying to find a place in the information economy. Education patterns; gender roles and family structures; social patterns and habits; values and cultural status: it's all changing with each passing month. What Norway is, is hard to define. But that this is an important time in Norwegian history is for certain.

A first-person perspective photograph of a person sitting on a large, flat, and cracked rock surface. The person's knee, wearing a red and white striped sock, is visible in the bottom right corner. The background shows a vast, open landscape with rolling hills under a clear, bright sky. The overall tone is warm and sunny.

**AFTER A COLD AND DARK WINTER, NORWEGIANS
KNOW HOW TO APPRECIATE A WARM, SUNNY DAY.**



CULTURE

**GRIEG.MUNCH.
ROYKSOPP.IBSEN.
GARBAREK.FOSSE.
A-HA.BOINE.HAMSUN.
HOVE FESTIVAL.
SNØHETTA.ANDSNES.
DOLVEN.GAARDER.**

For such a small population, Norway has an incredibly rich, accomplished and varied cultural scene, thanks in part to government funding of artists and institutions through our Arts Council, which finances artists of all kinds across Norway.

A very brief, very incomplete introduction to the most important artists of Norway:

CLASSICAL MUSIC. Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) is thought of by most people as Norway's greatest composer. Grieg's music is romantic with a nationalist streak, using scales and modes from Norwegian folk music to create beautiful, modern (for its time, that is) impressionistic pieces. His most famous works are his Lyrical Pieces for piano, his Piano Concerto in A Minor and his incidental music to Henrik Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*.

Norway also has some internationally renowned classical performers, like piano player Leif Ove Andsnes, widely regarded as one of the greatest classical music performers in the world, and winner of several Gramophone Awards. He is particularly well known for his interpretations of Grieg's music, and is often seen in Grieg's home town of Bergen. The cellist Truls Mørk is also a well-known international performer of Grieg's music, and is an outstanding performer both of chamber music and as a soloist for an orchestra.

JAZZ. Norway's jazz scene is phenomenal. Everyone agrees that Norway has one of the most interesting jazz scenes in Europe, with each successive generation of musicians reinventing and creating their own musical language, from the world-influenced, almost-ambient "mountain jazz" of the 80s and early 90s through to the electronica-based period of the late 90s into the hard-bop and free improv-influenced styles of the younger generation. Names like Jan Garbarek, Mari Boine, Arild Andersen, Nils-Petter Molvær, and Bugge Wesseltoft have made their names internationally. While the younger generation of artists, with names like Paal Nilssen-Love, Håvard Wiik, Kjetil Møster, Håkon Kornstad, Supersilent, Jaga Jazzist and Wibutee

are gaining wider and wider recognition as world-class artists in the younger market. Why Norway has such a strong jazz scene is hard to say, although certainly the jazz programme at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, which has been turning out performers since 1979, and generous public funding has also helped.

POP/ROCK/ELECTRONICA. The past decade has been good to Norwegian popular music acts. The so-called “Bergen Wave”, in particular, brought a number of bands from the city of Bergen in Western Norway to great popularity in Norway and abroad. Names like Röyksopp, Kings of Convenience, Sondre Lerche, Magnet, Erlend Øye, Ralph Myerz and the Jack Herren Band and Annie are still widely known and tour throughout the world. Other parts of the country have also produced a lot of popular bands and artists in the past years in the pop and rock fields, with some prominent names being Lene Marlin, Thomas Dybdahl, Xploding Plastix, Kaizers



Orchestra, Ane Brun, Bertine Zetlitz and Susanne Sundfør, with some older popular artists like a-ha, Turbonegro and Sissel Kyrkjebø still regularly touring and producing records. The Norwegian heavy metal and death metal scene, meanwhile, is universally acknowledged as superior to all other such scenes in the world, with names like Dimmu Borgir, Satyricon, Immortal, Darkthrone and Enslaved having achieved worldwide celebrity and/or notoriety.

LITERATURE. Norway has produced more than its share of the great poets, playwrights and novelists of our time.

Henrik Ibsen (1828 - 1906) is probably one of the three most respected dramatists in the world, and is performed almost as much as Shakespeare around the world. He is considered the father of the realistic drama, an important pre-modernist influence and a great social critic. His list of canonical plays includes *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts*, *Peer Gynt*, *Hedda Gabler* and *An Enemy of the People*.

Three Norwegian authors have received the Nobel Prize for Literature: Sigrid Undset (1882-1949) was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1928 “for her powerful descriptions of Northern life during the Middle Ages”; Knut Hamsun (1859-1952) won the Nobel Prize in 1920 “for his monumental work” *Growth of the Soil* and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson (1832-1910) received the prize in 1903 “as a tribute to his noble, magnificent and versatile poetry”. Of these three, the great, central modernist novelist Knut Hamsun is probably the one who you’ve heard of. If not, *Growth of the Soil*, *Hunger* and *Pan* are translated into many languages.

CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE. Jon Fosse is currently Norway’s most popular living dramatist both nationally and internationally. His plays are completely minimalist with an absolutely infuriating, repetitive style, delving deep into the existential darkness of man and grasping for things language cannot express. While Fosse may not be the kind of thing you read aloud

at parties, his greatness is indisputable and anyone wanting to know about contemporary Norwegian literature should start with him. He also writes novels, poetry, essays and children's books. His work has been translated into 30 languages.

Some of the best-known current authors include Jostein Gaarder, who wrote *Sophie's World - A Novel about the History of Philosophy*. The novel, a sort of mystery/history of philosophy for kids, has been translated into more languages than you can shake a stick at and has sold more than 30 million copies.

Lars Saabye Christensen got his international breakthrough with *Halvbroren* (The Half Brother) and many of Saabye Christensen's novels have been translated into several European languages.

FINE ART. The Norwegian painter Edvard Munch (1863-1944) was one of the pioneers of the Expressionist movement in modern painting. You've almost certainly seen his endlessly-reproduced *Scream*, an unnerving expressionist exploration of existential angst. By now it has been turned into mouse pads, book covers, desktop backgrounds, horror movie props and posters all over the world. It is probably one of the three most famous paintings around the world that are less than 150 years old. When Munch died in January 1944, it became known that he had unconditionally bequeathed all his remaining works to the City of Oslo. The city built The Munch Museum in 1963 to house his unique collection of approximately 1100 paintings, 4500 drawings and 18,000 prints. It is well worth a visit to see more of Munch.

Anne Katrine Dolven is a contemporary video artist and painter. She has gained international recognition with her carefully considered videos, described as formal in style and spare in narrative expression – humour and eroticism – at times even simultaneously.

ARCHITECTURE. Norway is famous for its unique Stave Churches, which are wooden churches built as early as the 12th century. Also, many fine examples of the Jugend/Art Nouveau style of architecture can be found in Norway, for instance in Ålesund, where most of the city centre was rebuilt in that style after a catastrophic fire in 1904.

When it comes to contemporary architecture, the Snøhetta architectural firm based in Norway has achieved great international fame for their low-key, cool, “Scandinavian” style. They are behind many high-profile projects such as The Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Alexandria, Egypt, the new Opera House in Oslo, and the Visitor’s Center at the World Trade Center memorial site in New York.



FESTIVALS. Festivals take place throughout the year, covering all areas of culture including music, film, literature and various forms of art. 'Norway Festivals' is the organisation that helps to coordinate and develop all the Norwegian festivals. Molde International Jazz Festival, the Hove Festival and Norwegian Wood are all international music festivals attracting renowned performers from all over the world.

There are three travelling cultural institutions in Norway: The Norwegian National Touring Theatre Riksteatret, the National Touring Concerts Rikskonsertene and the National Touring Exhibitors Riksgalleriet. These institutions are all funded by the government and perform across the country.

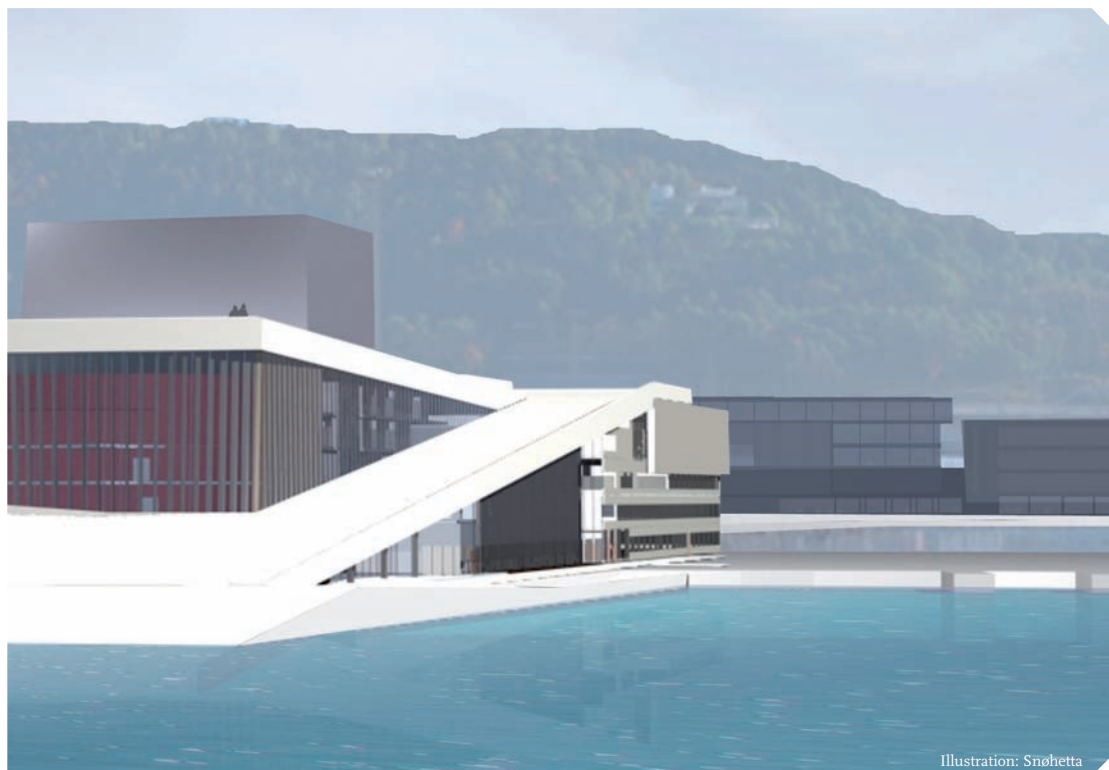


Illustration: Snøhetta

DINING

**NORWEGIAN DINING
HABITS HAVE, PERHAPS NOT
SURPRISINGLY, CHANGED
RADICALLY IN THE PAST
150 YEARS.**

**FROM BEING A NATION THAT SUBSISTED MAINLY ON
HERRING AND PORRIDGE, TO BEING A MODERN,
GLOBALISED CULINARY ECONOMY, WHERE EVERYTHING
FROM SUSHI TO PASTA TO SOMETHING RIDICULOUSLY
SPICY OUT OF THE THAI COOKBOOK ARE ALL POSSIBLE
STAPLE FOODS.**

Still, Norwegian food culture is not perfect. We're newcomers to haute cuisine, and people on average spend very little time preparing meals. This is probably why Norwegians are the world's leading consumer of frozen pizza, with the rather cardboardish Pizza Grandiosa being the most popular (it has been suggested, mostly in a joking tone of voice, as the Norwegian national food). How an ancient Italian peasant food made its way into freezers across Norway is a mystery, but it seems to be there to stay. Fortunately, this is not universal, and most Norwegians – men and women, young and old - can whip up a good meal when they take the time, and many, many Norwegians take great pride and pleasure in being good cooks.

A trend in Norwegian cooking in the past twenty years has been a focus on local or traditional ingredients (sometimes organically grown) in non-traditional combinations. Therefore, Norwegian cooks (both professionals and amateurs) can often be found at their best when making fish and game dishes and it is often dishes like these that help Norwegian chefs win international tournaments.

Norwegians traditionally eat three to four meals every day: a simple breakfast before work, a lunch break around noon which often consists of open-faced sandwiches in a packed lunch (so-called "matpakke") brought from home, a hot meal for dinner around five pm – the only hot meal of the day - and a small late meal which not everyone eats, but which many families with children choose to have because dinner is early. However, as dining habits are changing radically, many variations on this pattern are appearing, with for instance lunch becoming a warm or at least larger meal, breakfast becoming late and more elaborate, the late meal disappearing altogether, etc.

TRADITIONAL NORWEGIAN FOOD. Norwegians often have a charming addiction to the traditional dishes in their culture, but (fortunately, some would say) most of them are only eaten on one specific day of the year, like Christmas or New Year's Eve. Some of them can be rather difficult for the untrained palate, but they are eaten nonetheless. Some of the milder

KLUMPOR
KLUBB
KUMLA
KUMLE
KOMPE
KUMPE
POTETBALL

*Various names for the traditional dish
also known as Raspeballer. Very difficult to
describe - you'll just have to try it!*

examples are raspeballer: Grated, raw potatoes that are mashed together with flour and salt into little balls and boiled; or pinnekjøtt, which is salted meat from dried mutton ribs. Some examples of the more idiosyncratic dishes are for instance smalahovud, which is a sheep's head that has been burned with a blowtorch, smoked and then boiled. You eat the cheeks, tongue and eyes. Another such favourite is lutefisk. This is fish that has been soaked in a combination of cold water and caustic soda - a substance mostly used in soap or floorboard treatment - reducing it to a rough, jelly-like consistency. Nobody really knows who developed that stunning display of culinary lateral thinking, but it is still going strong centuries later. It's very unlikely anyone will make you eat these, but it is all part of the complete Norway experience.

DINING IN - DINING OUT. The number of restaurants in Norway is rising, and almost every kind of national food cultures can be found in the cities - from Japanese to Vietnamese to Lebanese to Chinese. The quality of food has generally gone up, while prices have been adjusting towards the wage level as ingredients have become cheaper. Therefore, it is now becoming increasingly possible to dine out often on a student budget, especially if you steer clear of the wine list.

ALCOHOL. This is because wine is prohibitively expensive in Norwegian restaurants, and beer can also put quite a dent in your budget. A pint can easily cost between 8 and 10 euros in both clubs and restaurants. This is probably why the Norwegian tradition of the 'vorspiel' has been instituted. Vorspiel, a German word literally translated as 'foreplay', is a small party held in a private residence with friends. Here, the people who are going out will warm up with store-bought beer or spirits (which are much more affordable than in clubs) before going out around 11-12pm, and staying out until the clubs close at around 2-3am. Then they will go home or for the particularly resilient, there will often be a 'nachspiel' ('afterplay'). The nachspiel is an afterparty in which usually just a small group of people wind down from a big night.

COFFEE. Like we've already established, Norwegians drink more coffee than anyone else in the world. In rural Norway, getting invited in for coffee can sometimes seem to be the central form of social interaction. In the last twenty years, a café culture has flourished throughout Norway, and as a result, Norwegians are getting really good at coffee. This is good, because at the end of the day, an average Norwegian will drink about five cups of plain black coffee. During your day at the university you will find that a lot of interesting discussions take place during coffee breaks. You will also get acquainted with the expression to "go for a coffee". This means "let's go and talk over coffee". Maybe the rural and urban cultures are not as different as they like to think?



CLIMATE





**NORWEGIANS LOVE BEING
OUTSIDE AND WON'T LET SNOW,
RAIN OR COLD STOP THEM.**

Norwegians love to talk about the weather. A joke about people from the north of Norway goes that they'll never do anything else when the weather report is on, and the following types of phone conversations ensue: "you're pregnant? That's great! Excuse me, the weather is on." "You're dying? Oh, that's... can you call back after the weather?" etc. But it's not really that strange. Weather in Norway is dramatic and changes very fast, and it can often completely change the options for what is possible to do on any given day.

If you get a map, you'll see that Norway is at the northernmost end of Europe with the second largest city, Bergen, on the west coast roughly being the same latitude as southernmost Greenland. Norway is therefore often regarded as a cold and wet country. Though this is true in some regions, Norway's climate is wildly different from region to region and season to season, and the entire coastline is greatly warmed by the Gulf Stream, turning Norway into a more attractive vacation spot than Greenland.

Most of Norway south of Trondheim is a temperate climate. This means that southerly inland climates are dry and very cold in the winter and quite hot in the summertime. The North can be pretty cold and wet except for the brief summer months. Coastal climates in the south are mild and wet in all seasons.

The Norwegian summer in all regions is quite pleasant, being neither too hot nor too cold, although it will sometimes be interrupted by rainy or colder periods. Summer also brings about a marked change in the psychology of the average Norwegian, turning them into a boisterous, joyous people, eager to catch up the wintertime by enjoying the outdoors with friends. In Northern Norway, the summers have midnight sun. The summer is literally one long day and evening that never turns into night.

This is all peachy, but in the winter the Northerners pay for this extravagant summer with a month of no sun, in which the sun never leaves the horizon. Winters in general are quite different in different parts of the country, with the north having hard, arctic winters, and the southwest mostly having mild, wet average European winters.

FOREIGN STUDENTS ABOUT NORWAY

WHAT DO

YOU THINK?

RENÉ WAGNER, GERMANY. *Norway is a popular destination for German students. I think it has to do with the astonishing nature and the down to earth society. I also think Norway is innovative with a highly educated population. The universities are well equipped and I find that my options to develop academically are very good here.*

Compared to my student experiences in Germany, it is very easy to find student activities here. The activities are located within a small area and are highly accessible. It seems like students are more motivated to join student organisations in Norway – compared to my experiences in Germany. I think this may be because Norwegians are more familiar with being in groups than Germans.

It may seem a bit difficult to get to know Norwegians on a deeper level at first, but once you get to know them – the support and communication is very open and generous.

ELISA, THE PHILIPPINES. *It's nice that pregnant women, single mothers and women with children can easily be students in Norway, whereas women in several countries in Asia will have to quit their studies once they become pregnant. Norwegians accept single mothers as well as divorced persons.*



It is also great that students here can talk to their lecturers and come to their office to have tutorials. Norwegian students should feel more privileged as they receive free education during all their years of schooling. What is strange to an Asian person, is the fact that Norwegians keep on educating themselves after the age of 50 and that employees within all kinds of occupations attend courses and seminars all through their working lives. This is what Norwegians call lifelong learning.

TOMAS, SLOVAKIA. *It's amazing to find so many educational institutions spread all over Norway, and it's interesting that you don't have to live in the capital or in other cities in order to have access to higher education. Studies are often flexible so you can choose different disciplines inside your field of study and combine them with studies abroad.*

The arrangement with the State Educational Loan Fund contributes to almost no class distinction. You might also have a job while you study. Most exams are written, but I'm used to oral exams from my home country. Like other Norwegians, students are proud of their dialects and use them wherever they live and on any occasion or discussing any matter. This can sometimes be quite a challenge.



SOME FACTS ABOUT NORWAY

OFFICIAL NAME: The Kingdom of Norway

LOCATION: Northern Europe with borders to Finland, Sweden, Russia, the North Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean

AREA: The Kingdom of Norway: 385 199 km²

MAINLAND: 323 802 km²

SVALBARD AND JAN MAYEN: 61 397 km²

LENGTH OF COASTLINE: 25 148 km, including fjords

LARGEST LAKE: Mjøsa, 362 km²

HIGHEST MOUNTAIN: Galdhøpiggen, 2 469 m

POPULATION: 4 858 200 (01.01.2010)

CAPITAL CITY: Oslo

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Constitutional monarchy

LANGUAGE: Norwegian Bokmål and Nynorsk and in some districts also Sami

MONETARY UNIT: Norwegian kroner, NOK

STATE CHURCH: Church of Norway (Evangelical Church)

TERRAIN: 29 National Parks and 1593 glaciers on the mainland

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL: Almost 27 per cent of the population have completed higher education

NATURAL RESOURCES: Petroleum, copper, natural gas, fish, timber, hydropower

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READ MORE ABOUT NORWAY AT:

www.studyinnorway.no, www.norway.no
www.norway.info, www.visitnorway.com

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