

Day Trippin'



Although Norway's major cities are always worth the visit, the nearby smaller towns can add another dimension to your trip. They are cultural gems brimming with history and the opportunity to get up-close with nature.

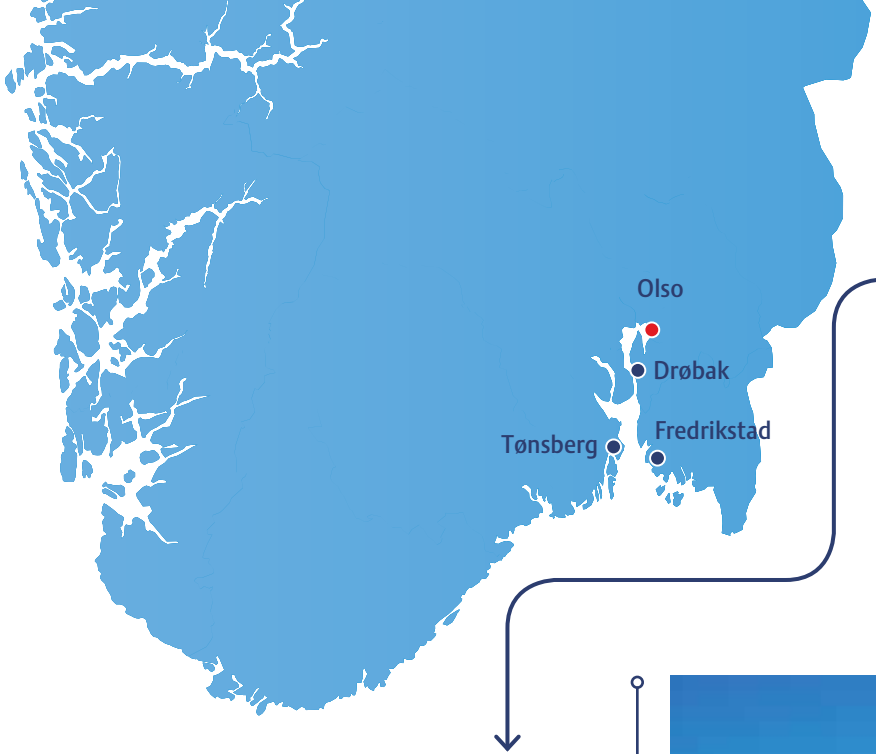
Ready to start exploring? Check out these day trips from Oslo and Bergen.

BY RACHEL GUYAH

Fredrikstad

For the fortress enthusiast

Located 56 miles south of Oslo, Fredrikstad is an artsy town steeped in history and culture. The crown jewel here is Fredrikstad's Old Town—one of Scandinavia's best-preserved fortresses. Founded in 1567 by King Frederick II, the star-shaped fortress town was built on the estuary of the Glomma River and was a military enclave for more than 300 years. Today, it's a thriving arts district, as many of the preserved army buildings now house cozy cafes, boutiques and galleries. After hopping off the free ferry from the mainland, stroll the



Day Trips from Oslo



Tønsberg

For a taste of Viking and medieval history




Founded a millennium ago during the Viking Age, Tønsberg is Norway's oldest city. In 1903, a farmer found the Oseberg Viking ship near here in a burial mound. Today, a full-scale replica of the ship is docked in the town's harbor. (The real deal is on display at Oslo's Viking Ship Museum.) The seaside town was also an important city center during the Middle Ages. To learn more about its medieval past, visit Tønsberg's Slottsfjell Museum—the largest ruin park in the Nordic region—where remnants of an important 13th century castle can be found. The museum also houses the Klåstad ship—the only preserved Viking ship outside Oslo. While here, head uphill to the



(Fredrikstad continued) perimeter to soak in views of the fortifications before weaving inward through the cobblestoned streets.

At the southern tip is Bastion 5, the town's art center, where you can browse open workshops and see painters, glass blowers and ceramic artists working their magic. To soak in more history, head southeast of Old Town to *Kongsten Fort* (The King's Fort)—a small, but fascinating fort set on a small cliff that includes Provisioning Storage, the Commandant's Residence and several underground rooms.

Get There




-  Board the western line of the Østfold Railway at the Oslo Central Station. There are frequent daily departures.
-  Take the Oslo Ø Fredrikstad Nettbuss Express, which runs between the capital and Hvaler and stops at the Fredrikstad bus terminal along the way. There are frequent daily departures. (nettbus.no)
-  Head south from Oslo via E6, then take the main road 110.

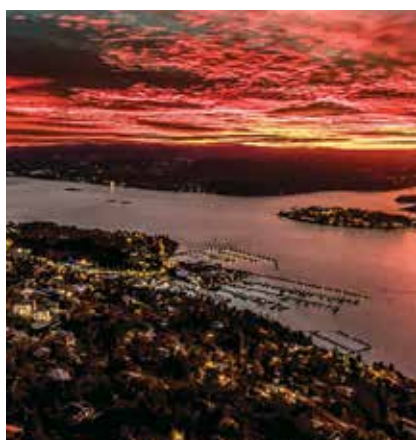


Ruins of St. Olav's Church

Castle Rock Tower for panoramic views of the city and fjord. Tønsberg's long coastline and surrounding woodlands also make it a popular place for day hikes and bike rides. Download free trail maps on the town's website (tonsberg.kommune.no).

Get There

-  Board the Vestfold Railway in Oslo, which stops in Tønsberg on its way to Skien.
-  There are several express bus services to Tønsberg from Oslo. (nettbus.no)
-  Follow the main road E18 to Tønsberg.






Drøbak

If you love Christmas and castles

Located on the narrowest part of the Oslofjord less than an hour from Oslo, this quaint maritime village is home to Oscarsborg Fortress—a former military stronghold set on two islands in the middle of the Drøbak Sound. It played a critical role in sinking a Nazi battleship during World War II. The fortress is now home to a modern museum, art exhibits and an outdoor opera. Guided tours are available. A short, 10-minute ferry shuttles visitors to Oscarsborg throughout the day.

Back on the mainland, the spirit of Christmas is alive—even in summer. For the past three decades, *Tregarden's Julehus* (Christmas House) has been a year-round wonderland of various yuletide trinkets, toys and décor. Many letters to Santa Claus find their way here; in fact, displayed in the town's tourist office are roughly 250,000 letters to Santa from around the world. For a unique experience, head to the Lutefisk Museum. It's the only one in the world that celebrates this Norwegian delicacy. After a day of exploring, refuel at one of the harborside restaurants that serves freshly caught lobster, prawns and fish from the Oslofjord, such as Sjøstjernen.

Get There

-  This is the most scenic way to get to Drøbak. The ferry leaves from Aker Brygge, near city hall, then sails down the Oslofjord to Drøbak, stopping at several harbors. The journey takes one-and-a-half hours. The ferry departs twice daily on weekends from Easter to October, and once daily on weekdays in the summer.
-  Take the 500 or 500E regional bus, which runs from Oslo to Drøbak. There are frequent daily departures. (ruter.no)
-  Head south from Oslo via E6, then follow signs leading to Drøbak.



Day Trips from Bergen



Flåm

For a spectacular journey



Flåm may be a bit farther than the other day trips from Bergen, but the journey itself is a large part of the fun. There are two beautiful ways to venture to Flåm: by cruise and by rail. Go Fjords (goffjords.com) offers a round-trip cruise from Bergen to Flåm. As you sail along the Sognefjord—Norway’s longest and deepest fjord—you’ll soak in spectacular views of plunging waterfalls, picturesque villages and tall, jagged peaks. After docking in Flåm, spend a couple hours wandering the village or fueling up at one of its cafes before boarding again for the beautiful return trip.

Perhaps the most popular route to Flåm is by rail: The world-famous Flåm Railway weaves through jaw-dropping terrain as it snakes through 20 tunnels during its one-hour descent to sea level. It’s one of the steepest standard rail lines in the world and is a spectacular way to savor Norway’s dramatic beauty.

When it’s time to eat, there are plenty of tasty options. Try traditional Norwegian food with locally grown ingredients at Bakkastova Café in the middle of Fretheim Cultural Park. For a lighter bite, Toget Café serves sandwiches, pizza, coffee and cakes. Unwind with a coffee and freshly baked pastry at Flåm Bakery.

Get There

A daily Norled express ferry runs from Bergen to Flåm in the summer. Total travel time is five-and-a-half hours (norled.no).

The Bergen Railway stops in Myrdal on its way to Oslo. From Myrdal, board the Flåm Railway for the incredible one-hour journey down to sea level. Combined tickets can be purchased at nsb.no.

PHOTOS BY (LEFT TO RIGHT): SVERREHJORNEVIK.COM / FLÅM A.S., PAUL EDMUNDSON / FLÅM A.S.

Jondal

For the outdoor enthusiast

Whether you’re wanting to pick up a paddle or strap on some snowshoes, Jondal has an outdoor adventure waiting for you. Located 60 miles from Bergen along the eastern shores of the Hardangerfjord, Jondal is a gateway to Folgefonna, Norway’s southernmost glacier. Adventurous spirits can spend a few hours walking through frozen valleys and towers of blue ice. Guided glacier hikes are available in summer, and snowshoe treks in spring and fall, many of which can be tailored to your desired length and level of fitness. There’s also a wide range of well-marked hiking trails in Jondal and the surrounding area. Several can be done in one to four hours and have benches for stops along the route. Detailed maps can be purchased at Jondal’s tourist office, Juklafjord. Guided sea kayaking along the Hardangerfjord can also be booked, where you can soak in stunning views as you paddle along the water—often tinted turquoise from the surrounding glaciers and landscape.

Get There

From Bergen, take Bus 930 toward Jondal. Hop off at Tørvikbygd, then take the ferry across the fjord to Jondal.



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Lysøen

If you love music and nature

Just 15 miles south of Bergen lies Lysøen, a beautiful island rich with character and charm. Emerging from the island’s native pine forest like a fairytale castle is Ole Bull’s Villa—the former summer residence of Ole Bull, Norway’s world-famous violinist and composer. After the villa was built in 1873, the virtuoso spent many summers on the island, often inviting fellow artists and musicians. In 1973 his granddaughter donated the villa to the Society for the Preservation of Norwegian Ancient Monuments. It’s now home to a museum, which offers guided tours inside the castle—including its stunning, ornately carved music hall. Learn about Ole Bull’s life and influence on music, on Sundays in July and August, when you can combine a tour with a live concert in the villa.

Pack your hiking shoes for the trip, as you’ll want to spend time wandering the trails Ole Bull carved out on the island. Exotic plants and bushes complement the pine forest and paths paved in crushed seashells. It’s a gorgeous way to spend a day outside Bergen.

Get There

Head south from Bergen on E16 and E39, then follow Road 580 to Lagunen. Turn left onto Road 546, then drive over Fana mountain and follow signs for Buena Quay.
 Take the Bergen Light Rail (skyss.no) to the Lagunen bus stop, then take Bus 62 to Buena Quay at Lysekloster.