



CLASSIC
EDELWEISS TOURS

THE VIKING EXPERIENCE

“ Highlights of this motorcycle tour: Fjords and lakes, islands, mountains, and glaciers - in southern Norway, nature pulls out all the stops! ”

THE VIKING EXPERIENCE

RIDING DAY 1 : OSLO - VRÅDAL

Standard Route (281 km / 175 miles)

Leaving Oslo we ride west towards Kongsberg, and soon you will notice traffic becoming lighter. A very picturesque valley named Numedal takes us to the fylke of Telemark. Fylke means county or province, and this particular province is known for the skiing style of the same name and for the canal that cuts right through the middle of it. Apart from the beautiful scenery we ride through, this marvellous feat of 19th century engineering is our highlight of today.

At Vrangfoss you can see the largest locks along the canal, a succession of five chambers that each feature two wooden gates with a height of 8 m (26 ft) and a weight of 11.5 tons (25,000 lbs). To this day they are operated by hand. It takes about one hour to lift or lower a boat through the locks, covering 23 m (75 ft) in the process.

From Lunde we follow the canal all the way to Vrådalen, today's destination.

Highlights:

#1: Numedal



Many Norwegians come to Numedal Region during summer to spend their holidays here. Forests, meadows and fields on the mountain slopes, side valleys and colourful villages, historical stave churches and wide open spaces – this is picture-book Norway!

#2: Heddal Stavkirke



The Lord's house is without any doubt one of Norway's most important sights. It is the country's largest stave church and its roof construction and towers are very distinctive. The church is still used today. The carvings on the portals such as masks, animal heads, demonic fabulous creatures and snakes are still original.

#3: Telemark Canal



Via a series of lakes the Telemark Canal links the interior of southern Norway to the North Sea. From Dalen all the way to Skien it measures 105 Kilometers (65 miles) in length and uses 18 locks to cover an elevation of 72 meters (236 ft). Actually it consists of two canals, one built from 1854 to 1861, the other from 1887 to 1892, carved out of the Norwegian rock using manual labour only, no machines!

Travel books at the time described it as the "eighth wonder of the world", and still today it is a first class tourist attraction. Very popular are boat trips along the canal, preferably on board the vintage steam ship "Victoria", the Queen of the Canal, which was built in 1882 and has travelled the canal ever since. With a little luck you might spot her or one of the other two ships, maybe even inside one of the original hand-operated locks.

RIDING DAY 2 : VRÅDAL - SOLA

Standard Route (324 km / 201 miles)

Today we leave hilly green Telemark behind and head out to the coast, to the fjords. The first one we get to see is one of the most spectacular one in all of Norway and easily stands up to any comparison with Sogne- or Geirangerfjord. Framed on both sides by nearly vertical rock walls towering up to 1,000 meters (3,280 ft.), this area is every basejumper's dream. In fact, base jumping is legal here!

If the weather is right, if you like curves and don't suffer from vertigo you can tackle the 27 hairpin turns down to the town of Lysebotn. The terrain is so impossibly steep that one of those turns is a hairpin tunnel inside the rock. An unbelievable, crazy ride!

Highlights:

#1: Lysefjord



The majestic "Lightfjord" got his Name from from the lightly coloured granite rocks along its sides. It can easily stand up to comparison with Geiranger- or Sognefjord: It's 1,640 ft. deep, the surrounding rockwalls up to 3,280 ft. high and just by looking down from them we will feel dwarfed by the sheer dimensions of what mother nature has created here. Just lean back and enjoy!

#2: Lysefjord Road



From an elevation of 2,620 ft (800 meters) 27 switchbacks - built from 1974 to 1984 into an almost vertical rock wall - bring us all the way down to sea level, a ride past mountains of every colour, with incredible panoramic views and through vertigo-inducing hairpin turns. The road from the Setesdal Valley was pretty good already, but this one is even better. Doesn't it sound fantastic?

RIDING DAY 3 : SOLA

Standard Route (116 km / 72 miles)

If you are physically fit enough to climb 4 km up a - partially - steep trail (and back down of course) you should not miss out on one of Norway's major highlights: Preikestolen, or Pulpit Rock. The reward for the strenuous hike is a breathtaking view from the top, 604 meters (1,982 ft) above Lysefjorden. The cliff edge is unsecured, base jumpers sometimes take off from here. Do not get too close!

Highlights:

#1: Stavanger



First mentioned in the 8th century as a “conglomeration of cabins at the fjord with the steep mountains”, Stavanger became more important after a bishopric was established and the cathedral was completed in 1125. By around 1800 the city counted around 2,400 inhabitants, growing steadily up to 15,000 60 years later due to the booming fishing industry. In 1969 oil was found and today Stavanger is the

fourth largest city in Norway, with around 130,000 inhabitants. The cathedral and the old city “Gamle Stavanger” with its white painted wooden houses from the last centuries are the most important sightseeing points in this city.

#2: Preikestolen



Preikestolen is one of Rogaland county's most visited attractions, and one of the country's most spectacular photo subjects. Preikestolen has been named one of the world's most spectacular viewing points by both CNN Go and Lonely Planet. It rises 604 meters above the Lysefjord.

The mountain plateau of about 25 x 25 metres was most probably shaped by the expansion of ice some 10 000 years ago. Water that froze in the crevices in the mountain broke loose large edged blocks of stone that the ice glacier brought along on its course. In the old days, the name of the plateau was Hyvlatånnå (planed tooth) and was already then well known as a landmark for fjord travelers in the Lysefjord. It was not until around 1900, that the first tourist traveled to the top and Preikestolen as a touristic destination was discovered. (www.fjordnorway.com)

Optional Route (221 km / 137 miles)

To ride or not to ride, that's the question today, as it is a rest day. There is Stavanger, a pretty and very interesting city with a delightful old town, a grand cathedral, a plethora of museums and an impressive line-up of cafes and restaurants. It is no problem at all to spend a full day here, wander the cobbled alleys of "Gamle Stavanger", stroll along the busy port and enjoy everything this amazing city has to offer. It's yours to explore.

But after all you came here to ride, didn't you? So if you want to take your bike out today you could follow your guide along the south-western coast, to Egersund and on to Flekkefjord. Road 44 is a stunning ride, one of the best in southern Norway, featuring gorgeous scenery and basically no traffic. On the way back to Sola don't miss the 150 year-old Terland Klopp, a small stone bridge. Yes, it is more interesting than it sounds.

Highlights:

#1: Terland Klopp



This low bridge constructed in 21 stone arches and stretching just 60 m (197 ft) across the river Gya, has been proposed for inclusion in Unesco's prestigious list of historical monuments. Why? Because it still looks the way it did when it was built in 1867, making it one of the oldest and best preserved bridges of its kind in Norway. This is what bridges looked like in this country only 150 years ago;

compare it to Hardanger Bridge and you will see that this country has come a long, long way.

#2: Stavanger



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fourth largest city in Norway, with around 130,000 inhabitants. The cathedral and the old city "Gamle Stavanger" with its white painted wooden houses from the last centuries are the most important sightseeing points in this city.

RIDING DAY 4 : SOLA - BERGEN

Standard Route (408 km / 253 miles)

This route puts the focus on the riding, no less than 10 fjords are waiting for you to ride along their shores. It is a gorgeous ride, long but rewarding. Highlight is the spectacular bridge across the Hardangerfjord. If you want to visit Stavanger after breakfast you should go straight to Bergen in the afternoon (optional route).

Highlights:

#1: Låtefossen waterfall



Latefossen also known as twin's waterfall is a dream come true. As soon as we arrive we are welcomed by wild, gushing water masses right next to the street. Walking from the parking lot you will be impressed with the sheer power nature puts on display. The waterfall gifts us with a constant drizzly rain shower.

#2: Hardanger Bridge



The newly built Hardanger Bridge (opened in August 2013), financed with 2.3 billion kroner (400 million US\$) is, at 1,380 m (4,300 ft), the longest (and perhaps most expensive) suspension bridge in Norway. It reduces the driving time considerably along the E16, the main road connecting Oslo with Bergen. The bridge spans across Hardangerfjord which is more than 500 metres (1,600 ft) deep at this point. Therefore the bridge towers had to be built on the shores, creating a main span of 1,310 metres (4,300 ft), the tenth longest of all the world's suspension bridges.

RIDING DAY 5 : BERGEN

Standard Route (71 km / 44 miles)

Bergen is a great place for a rest day: so much to do, so much to see! If you still want to ride your bike a little you can follow your tour guide on a 65-mile loop which leads you out to an island, where a fortress from the days of WWII is waiting to be discovered. You can be back in Bergen in time for lunch and spend all afternoon strolling around this amazing city.

Highlights:

#1: Bergen



Not many people know that the historic old town of Bergen is a UNESCO world cultural heritage. The kontors and storage houses, which were often destroyed by fire, belong to the world cultural heritage like the cities of the Hanse. We take a walk to castle "Bergenshus" and get a feeling for this Norwegian capital of culture where it rains 265 days a year. But if the sun shines the cafe owners put their seats out on the street and the people from Bergen (and of course we as well) take an Espresso or a Cafe Latte while enjoying the sun.

#2: Fjell Festning (Fortress)



Fjell fortress was built by the German occupation forces during the Second World War. It was the biggest German fortress in Norway, a significant link in the coastal defence network called the Atlantic Wall. Its main commission was to intercept the seaward approach to Bergen. The main gun turret, originally mounted on the battleship Gneisenau, had three barrels, 28.3 centimetres each, and a range of 41 kilometres. The 600-ton guns were fired at full charge only once, an event that caused an earthquake. Today the site is a museum exhibiting remains of the gun as well as uniforms, weapons, machinery and much more from WWII.

RIDING DAY 6 : BERGEN - FJÆRLAND

Standard Route (309 km / 192 miles)

Are you ready for tunnels? In this part of Norway, the country seems to be like swiss cheese and we can admire the Norwegian art of tunnel construction all day long. Although, if the weather is fine we will skip the 16 mile-long tunnel between Aurlandsvangen and Lærdal and take the old road instead, aka Snow Road, a stunning 30-mile ride across the mountains, among barren rocks and through tundra vegetation.

Before we get there we have, of course, a few other things to see. The single track road Fv 314 parallels the main road and offers a scenic detour, while Tvindefossen waterfall is right next to the road and makes for a great picture. The famous Stalheim hotel sits high on a hill and offers spectacular views, but the real highlight here is the super-tight switchback road that climbs up to it, or, in our case, down from it. This is an appropriate training session for the Snow Road...

Once back down from the Aurlandsfjellet we catch the ferry across the Årdalsfjorden, take a quick look at the stave church in Kaupanger, ride through Sogndal and reach Fjaerland, today's destination.

Highlights:

#1: Stalheimskleiva



It took 7 years, but when this 1.6 mile long section was finished in 1846, it took its place among the world's masterpieces of road construction! 13 hairpins with a 20% grade are the late afternoon challenge of today! The hotel on top offers a view that is world famous and the ride up and down is definitely one of the highlights of the whole trip.

#2: Lærdalstunnel



At 15,23 miles Lærdal tunnel is the world's longest road tunnel and a masterpiece of Norwegian road construction. It was built from 1995 to 1999 at a cost of almost 1,500 USD per foot! To prevent fatigue and mental strain during the 20-minute drive through the tunnel the road is slightly curvy and there are brightly illuminated caves at 3.7 mile intervals to offer some change of scenery to drivers. If you

suffer from claustrophobia you should avoid this tunnel...

The tunnel is actually only a bad weather option for us, because the road outside, across the mountains, is the spectacular Aurlandsvegen which shouldn't be missed.

#3: Aurlandsvegen



The designated National Tourist Route across the Aurlandsfjell from Aurland to Lærdal is one of the most beautiful mountain roads in all of Norway. From sea level it takes you up to 1,306 metres (4,280 ft), high enough for snow to stick around all year, which is why this road is also called Snøvegen - the snow road. In early summer, snow can be piled up to 10 metres (33 ft) on both sides of the

road! Along the road's 48 km (30 mile) course you will frequently be distracted by amazing views of fjords and mountains, from Stegastein lookout the view is simply unbelievable. Do not miss this Kodak moment!

RIDING DAY 7 : FJÆRLAND - GEIRANGER

Standard Route (244 km / 152 miles)

Glaciers, fjords and views make up this spectacular day. The white tongues of the Jostedalsglacier are within sight as we cruise north. In the National Park centre you can watch a short film and learn everything about the geology of this amazing landscape. Next on our bucket list is a genuine Edelweiss picnic, Norge style, on the banks of crystal-clear Oppstrynsvatnet. Let's hope our tour guide knows how to handle a fishing rod...

Scandinavia's highest road then takes us up to Dalsnibba, a mountain top that offers breathtaking views all the way down to Geiranger Fjord, 5000 ft below, where giant cruise liners look like little toys in a bathtub. It is simply unbelievable! To round off this amazing day we tackle the famous Geiranger road, a rollercoaster, a festival of curves all the way down to Geiranger fjord. If this ride makes you dizzy you'll save the money for beer!

Highlights:

#1: Dalsnibba



Dalsnibba, a mountain located next to world-famous Geiranger Fjord, stands 1,476 metres (4,850 ft) tall and offers spectacular views. No book about Norway would dare not to feature at least one picture taken here, of the wild, barren mountains and - most importantly - of the fjord far below, with one or two cruise liners on it, small as toy boats. We're lucky, we don't have to climb the

mountain, because there is a road, actually Scandinavia's highest. It was built in 1939 but officially didn't open until 1948, because of WWII. In 2013 it was paved and the parking lot enlarged, a tribute to increasing tourism. The cruise passengers are carried up here by bus, dozens of buses, nobody wants to miss out on these views. The road is actually named Nibbevegen and is a toll road, not cheap (we're in Norway, remember), but worth every penny!

THE VIKING EXPERIENCE

#2: Geirangervegen



The road from Geiranger to Djupvasshytta is only 10 miles long, but it is a masterpiece of road construction. In fact it received a prize for being just that, during the 1924 World Expo in Paris. From Djupvasshytta you have the opportunity to ride up to Dalsnibba (toll road), at almost 5,000 ft., Scandinavia's highest road. The view from there, down to Geiranger fjord will simply blow you away.

RIDING DAY 8 : GEIRANGER - ÅLESUND

Standard Route (148 km / 92 miles)

Today is the day you have all been waiting for: Geiranger-Day! The world's most famous fjord offers dramatic beauty that we can marvel at during a one hour ferry cruise from Geiranger to Hellesylt. Be amazed by vertical rock walls, countless waterfalls and the crystal-clear water of the fjord. This is Norway's number one landmark, a must-see, one of the most beautiful places on the planet!

On the way to Alesund there is one last highlight waiting for us: the famous Rose Church. Doesn't look like much from the outside, but wait until you see the interior. simply stunning!

Upon entering Alesund we can, if we have enough time on our hands, ride up to the Aksla lookout and enjoy an aerial view of this beautiful city. What a place to wave goodbye to Norway!

Highlights:

#1: Ørnesvingen (Eagle's Road)



The “Eagles Road” features 11 hairpin turns and each of them offers superb views of the narrow fjord and the surrounding mountains. The viewing platform next to the highest hairpin is the best spot for a great group picture.

#2: Geirangerfjord




Norway's premier tourist attraction is a breathtaking array of crystal clear water, towering rock walls, abandoned farms and countless waterfalls. Even large cruise ships frequently find their way through the narrow fjord and sometimes three or four of them anchor at Geiranger town.

#3: Stordal gamle kyrkje (Rose Church)



The small town of Stordal is home to the famous Rose Church, built in 1789. With its unique Baroque and Renaissance adornments on walls, ceiling and pillars, it is a church like no other. Many of the lovely artifacts date back to the old stave church that was situated here during the Middle Ages, among them a font and a crucifix.



We wish you a wonderful tour.

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