



## FLÅM NORWAY

**H**igh waterfalls, majestic mountains, narrow green valleys, deep clear lakes, calm fjords, rocky plateaus and forests, all join together to form a delightful landscape and the great natural splendor that is Norway. The country, the longest in Europe, is bounded by the sea to the south, east and north, with an astounding 32,000 miles of coastline. In the east it shares borders with Sweden, Finland and Russia.

Norway has a constitutional monarch with a parliament, and Lutheranism is the national religion. Before World War II, the Norwegian economy was based on fisheries, forest products, marine transport and agriculture. Today fish, more specifically salmon, is still exported all over the world, but the finding of rich oil and natural gas reserves off the coast of Norway has made industry the largest factor and employer in the country's economy. Vast water resources provide more than 90% of Norway's electricity, generated by hydro-electric plants. Currently only 30% of the water power potential is harnessed, and with pollution-free power to all parts of Norway's life and industry, the country leads the world in per-capita use of electricity. 25% of the country is covered by forests and the timber industry is still important, while iron, nickel, copper and aluminum are mined and processed in electrically run factories.

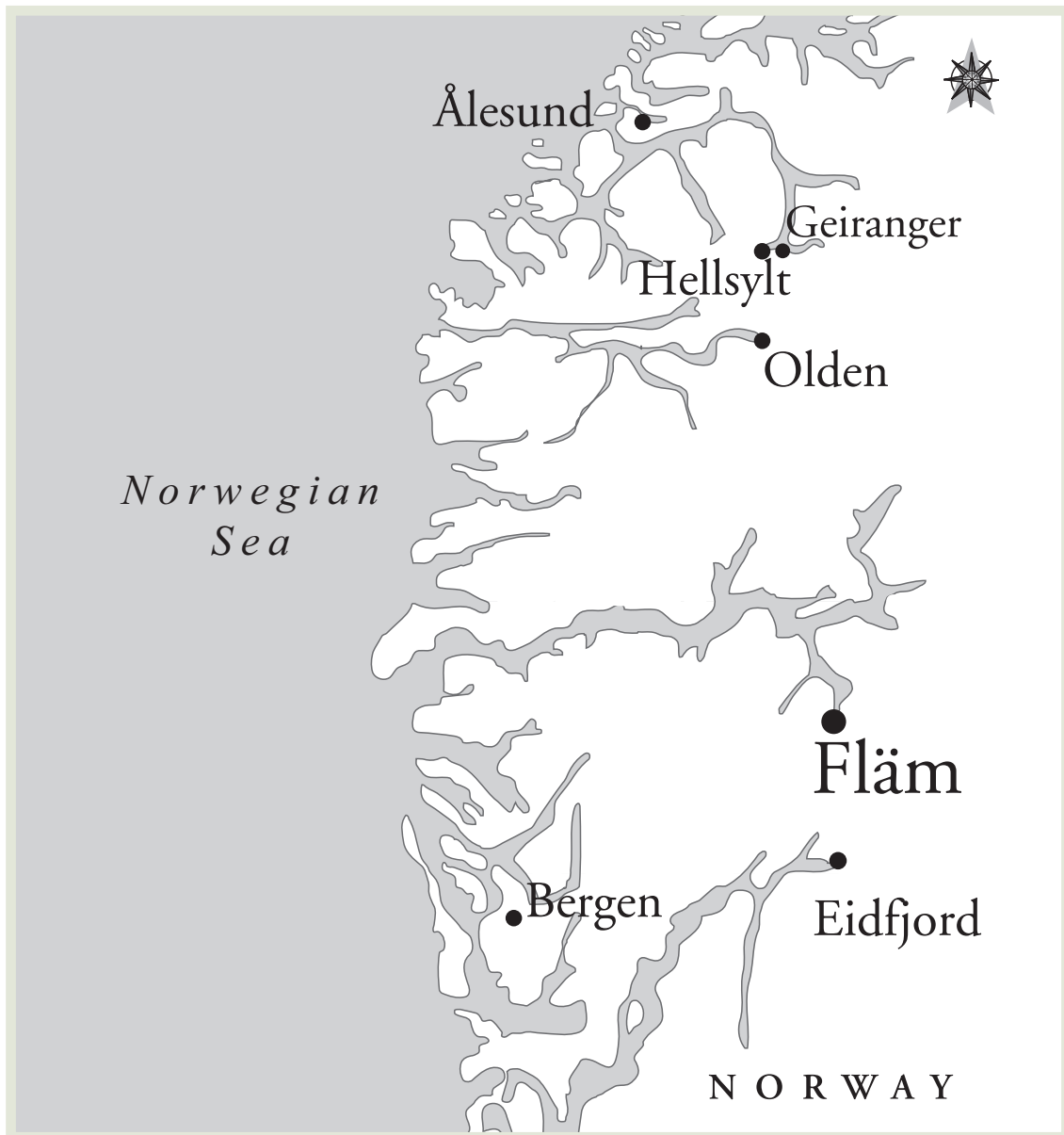
Tourism is a vital adjunct to Norway's strong economy, one of the strongest in the world. Visitors come mainly in the short summer season, largely drawn to the romantic grandeur of the fjord-lands.



### FJORD TOPOGRAPHY

The longest of all of Norway's fjords, Sognefjord thrusts deep into the inner heart of the country, some 110 miles in length. With depths of up to 4,000 feet it is truly the "Father of Fjords," that special landscape feature of Norway, left as a relic of ancient Ice Ages when massive movements of thick ice packs inexorably carved out an exit to the sea. Examples of this are to be found elsewhere in the world, in Alaska, Greenland, Chile and the south island of New Zealand. However, it is to Norway that most minds turn when the term fjord is mentioned. The spirit of the early Vikings may be felt cruising along Sognefjord, before turning into Aurlandsfjord on the way to Flåm and Gudvangen. Here the sheer mountain walls climb twice as high as the 1,500 feet width of this, the narrowest of all fjords, creating an almost permanent shade.

Flåm, as most fjord settlements, is quite small, a ferry terminal with a train station that allows travellers to view the spectacular scenery on the heights above, by way of a railroad rising almost 3,000 feet to lovely little towns such as Voss, with its 800 year old church and memorial to America's great football coach, Knute Rockne who was born here. Then there are vast panoramas such as that at Stalheim, which, in its present tranquility, belies the fiercest of battles fought here during World War II. Plunging waterfalls and snow capped peaks provide the back-drop to the steepest descent in Europe, into the small ferry port of Gudvangen.



#### AREA PLACES OF INTEREST

**Flâm/Myrdal Railway** offers one of the most exciting journeys in Scandinavia, 12 miles long with some 20 tunnels, rising to a height of 2,845 feet, it represents an amazing feat in engineering technology. The trip to Myrdal takes approximately 40 minutes, slightly longer on the descent, and provides some terrific views. Myrdal is the junction on the main Oslo to Bergen railway, and comprises only a few houses inhabited by employees of the railway.

**Voss**, approximately 39 miles from Flâm, is a small town which attracts many visitors as a major ski resort. Voss Church dates back to the 12th century, it has an octagonal wooden tower and walls 7 feet thick. St. Olav's Cross commemorates Christianity, brought to Voss in the 11th century, the cross is the oldest relic in the town. The Knute Rockne Monument pays tribute to the great American Football Coach who was born across the street from the memorial.



there are breath-taking views, both of the valley and Stalheimfoss, the waterfall which cascades 413 feet down the mountainside to flow into Nærøyfjord.

**Aurland** is the closest village to Flâm for shopping. A distance of approximately 5 miles from Flâm, Aurland is well-known for its shoes, which are of excellent quality. It is also the sight of an impressive gothic, stone built church, dating from the 13th century.



**Stalheims-Kleivene** is a daring hairpin transverse of Mt. Stalheim, Europe's steepest road, with the small village of Gudvangen at its base. Once again,

## SHORE EXCURSIONS

To make the most of your visit to Flåm and surrounding areas we suggest you take one of the organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing, consult your Shore Excursion Order Form or contact the Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, be advised to take only necessary items and secure any valuables onboard.

## LOCAL CUSTOMS

**Bargaining:** There is little or no opportunity to bargain in Norway.

**Tipping:** Service charges are included in restaurant pricing. It is appropriate to tip 10% for good service. Taxi fares are usually rounded up to the nearest 5 or 10 NOK.

## LOCAL CUISINE AND DRINK SPECIALTIES

Norway is noted for its fresh and flavorful seafood, especially salmon, trout, codfish, herring, and shellfish. Game meats, such as moose, reindeer, mutton, and duck, also star in some of the region's most delicious dishes. Brunost, Norway's signature whey-based "cheese" has a distinctive sweet caramel taste and is used in open-faced sandwiches and lutefisk dishes. Fårikål, this classic Norwegian stew includes mutton, cabbage, and black peppercorns. Lutefisk, dried codfish or haddock is soaked in potash lye and fermented for up to two years. This local favorite is then served with mustard, bacon, or Brunost.

Aquavit, is a popular throughout Scandinavia. It is distilled from potatoes, aged in wood barrels, and flavored with dill and caraway. Like fine wines, aquavit can be paired to complement dishes.

## SHOPPING

Shopping hours are from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday and 9:00 am to 2:00 pm on Saturday. On Sundays, most shops will be closed.

Local handicrafts include the traditional knitted sweaters in nordic design, good quality silverware and pewter. Trolls make popular souvenirs, as do candles and the Norwegian invented Cheese Plane or slicer. Most major credit cards are accepted.

Value Added Tax (VAT), is added to most purchases. Visitors who spend over a certain amount may be entitled to re-claim some or all of the tax paid. In Scandinavia many stores participate in "Tax Free Shopping." ask for a "Tax Free" receipt, this is usually reimbursed before departing the country although RCCL cannot guarantee the cooperation of local authorities.

## LOCAL CURRENCY

The unit of currency in Norway is the Krone (NOK). There are 100 øre to the Krone. Krone bills are available in the following denominations; 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1,000.

## POST OFFICE

The main Post Office is located in the center of Flåm at the Railway Station.

## TRANSPORTATION

There are very few taxis available at the Quay. The Flåm Railway Station is situated right on the Quay, from which the Vatnahalsen/Myrdal train departs.

## TOURIST INFORMATION

There is a Tourist Information Office on the quay in Flåm.

## USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

Yes • Ja

No • Nei

Good Day • God Dag

Good-bye • Ha Det

Thank-you • Tak

You're Welcome • Versegod

