

Lee Otterholt's Scandinavia Travel Tips

WEATHER: Yes, there will probably be lots of it! That is to say, expect anything and everything and pack accordingly. The temperatures "should" be in the 60's and maybe 70's, but on several trips we have had 80 (and 90!) degree weather one day and 50 degrees the next. Bring a sweater and layered clothing so you will be ready for peeling off or putting on an extra layer would be a good idea. AND it can rain anytime so remember a foldable umbrella and/or a waterproof windbreaker. (One year we had sun all the time, another we had rain every day. Usually there is a little of each.)

CLOTHING: Pack lightly. Our tour dress is informal. Casual clothing is appropriate for everything we do. Bring clothes you can layer to suit a range of temperatures. Suggestions: Wash and wear clothing, sweater, jacket, shorts, raincoat or umbrella, swim suit, comfortable walking shoes (for dancing, too), sun hat, sunglasses.

MONEY: Each of the three Scandinavian countries have their own currency: the Norwegian krone ("crown"), the Danish krone and the Swedish krona. No, you cannot use dollars or Euros. You can exchange dollars at banks or change bureaus anywhere in Scandinavia, also right at the airport. (And you will probably get a better exchange rate in Scandinavia than you will in the US.) But there are ATMs everywhere, and that is where you get the very best exchange rate. Maybe let your bank or credit card company know you will be travelling to Scandinavia so they do not find it suspicious when you suddenly start making withdrawals from there.

You might want to bring some dollars (and a second credit card or a debit card), just in case your main credit card does not work in the first ATM you try, but believe me, credit cards are universal, ATMs are everywhere (they are called "mini-banks") and they give the best rates. But you might not need much local currency at all. **You can use your credit card for almost all purchases**, and this gives you an even better exchange rate, especially for larger items. Other forms of electronic payments, like Apple Pay, PayPal, etc, are also very common. Traveler's checks are useless.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS: No visa is required. It might be a good idea to bring a photocopy of your passport and credit cards in case you lose them.

LUGGAGE: Please pack as lightly as possible. Luggage capacity on the van we will be using is quite limited and at a couple of hotels we might have to carry the suitcases up a flight of stairs. (Don't worry, I'll help you!) Attach name tags to all luggage.

IMMUNIZATION: No inoculations needed for Norway. Proof of vaccination for Covid -19 is not required, but I would recommend it.

MEDICINES: Keep them close at hand, not in checked luggage.

AIRPORT CHECK-IN: Be at the airline counter at least 2 hours before departure.

AIR FLIGHT TRAVEL TIPS: Once on board: Set watch to time at destination. Remove shoes. Drink water on the plane. Go to sleep: (Use earplugs; sleep mask, blanket, neck pillow —

whatever it takes.) Eat lightly. Exercise and stretch in your seat, in the aisles, during stopovers. (Practice your favorite folk dances!) Once on the ground: Upon your arrival, start eating and sleeping on the new time schedule. You might want to use melatonin which is the chemical your brain uses every evening to tell your body it is night time. It is not a sleeping pill; it is often used to reset your body rhythms after a long flight. Sleep is the most wonderful and curative balm for jet lag! Slumber, doze, and nap as much as possible— on the plane, day of arrival, and even for a couple of the following days. You'll be fresh and happy, shining and energized, ready to enjoy your true travel objectives. Exercise and get out in the sun during the day to help resynchronize your body clock.

SPECIAL MIDSUMMER TIPS: If you have a sleeping mask (or if the airline gives you one on the plane) bring it along. Around midsummer, the sky in Scandinavia is never completely dark, so if the curtains in your hotel room are not opaque enough, you might find the sleeping mask handy!

OTHER: You can increase your tour fun by memorizing the words below, and trying them out on Scandinavians on the street, in the shops, at restaurants, anywhere.

SOME MAGIC NORWEGIAN WORDS (very similar in Danish and Swedish):

Goddag! (goo-DAG) Good morning, Good day , or just say “Hei” Hi!

Ha det! (HAH-deh) Goodbye! (Short for “Have it good!”)

Hvordan står det til? (VOOR-dahn STORE deh till?) How are you?

Takk! (TAHK) Thank you or Tusen Takk! (TOO-senn tahk) “A thousand thanks”

Ja (Yah) Yes

Nei (Nae)...(No)

Spise (SPEE-seh) Eat

Drikke (DRIKK-eh)Drink

Trekk (Trek) Pull ... and **Skyv** (SHIUV) Push (think“SHOVE”)

Hvor er .. (Voor are)... Where is ...?

Hva koster ... (Vah KOST-er) What is the cost of?

And most important:

Værsgod! (Vahr-show-GOO!) Please, or “There you go!”

Start using your magic Norwegian words today! Practice them aloud, with nerve, energy, verve, gusto, and enthusiasm! You'll be amazed at the reaction and your progress. Whatever magic Norwegian word you say, in whatever order you say them, Norwegians will reward you with a nod, smile, and sometimes a good laugh ... and then they will answer you in a perfect, British accented English which almost all Norwegians speak! But in the meantime you will both have fun.