

Norway national day

Craggy cliffs, stunning views make Norway's fjords famous

Every May 17, the Kingdom of Norway and its people celebrate the anniversary of the country's constitution, which was signed on this day in 1894, declaring the country's independence.

Norway is a constitutional monarchy. Its territory of

around 385,000 sq. km comprises the western portion of the Scandinavian Peninsula, Jan Mayen Island, the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard and the subantarctic Bouvet Island.

Norway shares a 1,619 km border to the east with Sweden.

Its northernmost region is bordered by Finland and Russia, and to the south, Norway borders the Skagerrak Strait across from Denmark.

Much of the country is dominated by mountainous or high terrain, with a great variety of natural features caused by prehistoric glaciers and varied topography. Its extensive coastline, facing the North Atlantic Ocean and the Barents Sea, is home to its famous fjords, deep grooves cut into the land flooded by the sea following the end of the most recent ice age.

The following are some recommended tourist destinations among the Norwegian fjords, excerpted from the official website of the Scandinavian Tourist Board.

Lysefjord

The Lysefjord is a 42-km-long fjord wedged between enormous, sheer rocks. Located in the southern part of Norway, Lysefjord's most fascinating spot is a sharp, precipitous cliff 604 meters above sea level, known as Prekestolen or Pulpit Rock. From the top of the rock, which is practically afloat in the air, you can experience the vitality of nature.

Geirangerfjord

The Geirangerfjord is in southwestern Norway, northeast of Bergen. Geirangerfjord and Nærøfjord, set 120 km from one another, are considered as archetypical fjord landscapes and among the most scenically outstanding anywhere. Their exceptional natural beauty comes from narrow and steep-sided crystalline rock walls that rise up to 1,400 meters from the Norwegian Sea. The Geirangerfjord stands proudly as one

of the most popular sightseeing spots in the world that portrays the forces of nature. The main

sightseeing spots include the Briksdal Glacier in Sogn og Fjordane and the Dalsnibba Obser-

vatory. Access is possible from Oslo, Bergen and Ålesund with the use of trains and buses.



Unspoiled scenery: Geirangerfjord is one of Norway's most visited tourist destinations and has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site since 2005. PER ERDE/FJORD NORWAY



Breathtaking: Prekestolen, also known as Pulpit Rock, is a massive cliff 604 meters above sea level in Lysefjord. HANNE SUNDBO/REISEMAL RYFYLKE AS

Sognefjord

Stretching 204 km eastwards from the west coast with a depth of 1,308 meters, the Sognefjord is the world's deepest and second longest fjord. The fjord can be reached by trains and other public transportation from Oslo and Bergen, and it can be accessed all-year round. It is recommended to take the Flam Railway through villages located at the inland part of Sognefjord.

Hardangerfjord

With a length of 179 km, the Hardangerfjord in the county of Hordaland is the third larg-

est fjord in the world and the second largest in Norway. The fjord is surrounded by gently sloping mountains that are covered in colorful tree blossoms, which creates an idyllic scenery. The fruit trees were planted by a monk who visited these lands about 800 years ago. Highlights in this region include Hardangervidda National Park and the Folgefonna glacier, which is the third largest glacier in Norway and is highly recommended for hiking.

For more information, visit <http://www.visitscandinavia.org>.

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on

the Norwegian Constitution Day

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