

August 14 - 25, 2026

WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL
OF GREATER HOUSTON
Global Perspectives, Local Conversations

SCANDINAVIAN EXPERIENCE

Sweden & Norway

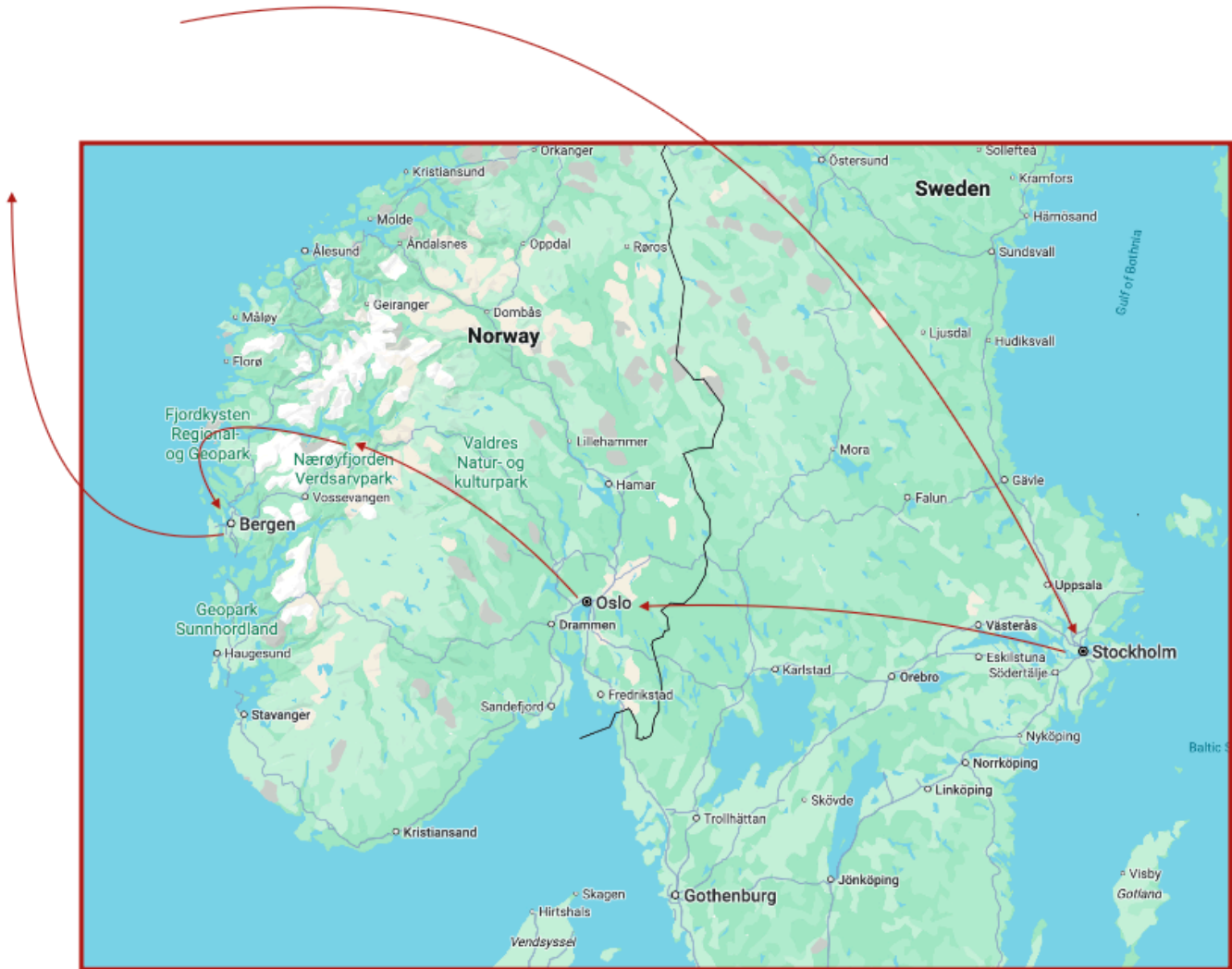




ITINERARY

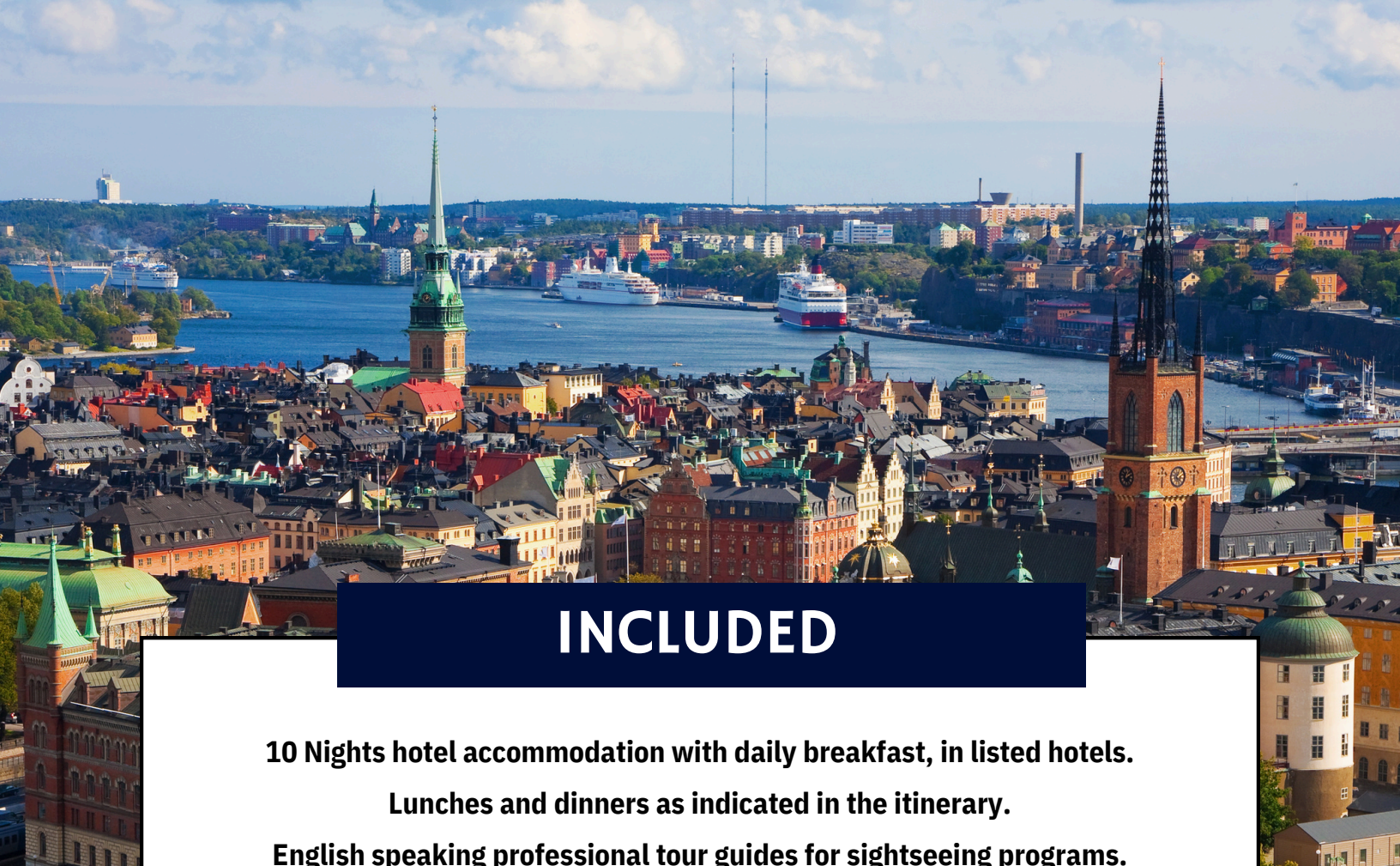
DAY 1	Fri, Aug 14	Leave USA for Stockholm	
DAY 2	Sat, Aug 15	Arrival - transfer to hotel	Stockholm
DAY 3	Sun, Aug 16	Stockholm sightseeing	Stockholm
DAY 4	Mon, Aug 17	Uppsala excursion	Stockholm
DAY 5	Tue, Aug 18	Train to Oslo	Oslo
DAY 6	Wed, Aug 19	Oslo sightseeing	Oslo
DAY 7	Thu, Aug 20	Oslo - Flam - Balestrand	Balestrand
DAY 8	Fri, Aug 21	Fjaerlandsfjord excursion	Balestrand
DAY 9	Sat, Aug 22	Cruise to Bergen	Bergen
DAY 10	Sun, Aug 23	Bergen & Troidhaugen sightseeing	Bergen
DAY 11	Mon, Aug 24	Hardangerfjord cruise	Bergen
DAY 12	Tue, Aug 25	Departure	

MAP TRAJECTORY



HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore Stockholm, the elegant Swedish capital built across fourteen islands, including Gamla Stan (Old Town), the Royal Palace, and Stockholm City Hall where the Nobel Prize banquet is held.
- Visit the Vasa Museum, home to the spectacular 17th-century warship Vasa, one of the best-preserved historic ships in the world.
- Discover Viking heritage in Uppland, including rune stones, ancient Viking assembly sites, and the royal burial mounds of Gamla Uppsala.
- Stroll through Sigtuna, Sweden's oldest town, founded in the 10th century along the shores of Lake Mälaren.
- Enjoy a scenic train journey from Stockholm to Oslo, passing forests, lakes, and the shores of Lake Vänern, Sweden's largest lake.
- Explore Oslo, Norway's vibrant capital, including Vigeland Sculpture Park, the Royal Palace, and panoramic views from Holmenkollen.
- Visit world-famous polar exploration museums, including the Fram Museum and the Kon-Tiki Museum.
- Travel on the legendary Flåm Railway, one of the world's most spectacular mountain train journeys.
- Cruise through the dramatic landscapes of the Sognefjord, the longest and deepest fjord in Norway.
- Visit Fjærland and the Norwegian Glacier Museum and see Bøyabreen, an arm of the vast Jostedalbreen Glacier.
- Relax in the picturesque fjord village of Balestrand, surrounded by mountains and pristine waters.
- Sail through Norway's fjord landscapes to Bergen, the historic "Gateway to the Fjords."
- Explore Bryggen, Bergen's UNESCO-listed Hanseatic waterfront.
- Visit Trolldaugen, the home of composer Edvard Grieg, including a live concert performance.
- Ride the Fløibanen funicular for panoramic views over Bergen and the surrounding fjords.
- Experience the beauty of the Hardangerfjord, including the Hardanger Bridge and the spectacular Vøringfossen Waterfall.



INCLUDED

10 Nights hotel accommodation with daily breakfast, in listed hotels.

Lunches and dinners as indicated in the itinerary.

English speaking professional tour guides for sightseeing programs.

Transportation with AC vehicles & drivers.

Arrival and departure transfers for suggested flights.

All entry fees to places mentioned in the itinerary.

Local taxes.

NOT INCLUDED

International airfare.

Visa fees if applicable.

Drinks with included meals, except tea or coffee for breakfast.

Gratuities for guides & drivers.

Personal expenditures like phone calls, laundry, medical expenses.

Local taxes.

Travel insurance.

SUGGESTED FLIGHTS

Suggested flights are on **UNITED** and partner airlines:

Fri, Aug 14 UA 8867 **Houston to Frankfurt dep: 3:35 pm / arr: 8:15 am on Aug 15**
Sat, Aug 15 UA 9000 **Frankfurt to Stockholm dep: 10:20 am / arr: 12:25 pm**
Tue, Aug 25 UA 9131 **Bergen to Frankfurt dep: 6:45 am / arr: 8:50 am**
Tue, Aug 25 UA 8866 **Frankfurt to Houston dep: 11:00 am / arr: 1:35 pm**

Economy class: \$1,000

Business class: \$4973

Fares are per person, including taxes, surcharges and fees as of March 5, 2026.

Fares are non-refundable and may change based on availability.



Preferred Travel Partner



August 14 -25, 2026
12 Days / 10 Nights

ACCOMMODATIONS

August 14 -25, 2026
12 Days / 10 Nights

Clarion Hotel Sign

Stockholm

www.choicehotels.com/sweden



Thon Hotel Bristol

Oslo

www.thonhotels.com/hotels/norway



Kvikne's Hotel

Balestrand

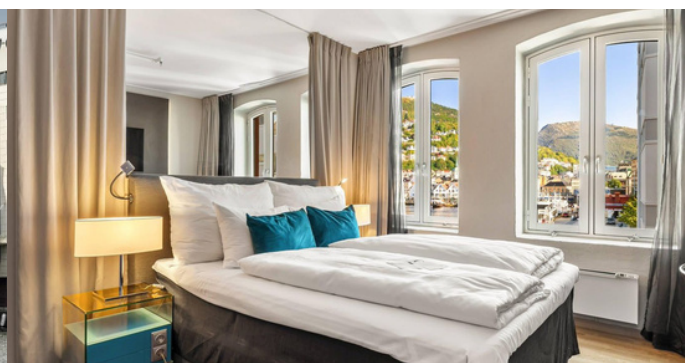
<https://en.kviknes.no/>



Clarion Hotel Admiral

Bergen

www.choicehotels.com/norway





PROGRAM DETAILS

Day 1: Fri, Aug 14

Leave USA

We will leave USA for Stockholm, Sweden.

Overnight en route

Meals: -

Day 2: Sat, Aug 15

Stockholm

Arrival at Stockholm Arlanda Airport, where you will be met and transferred by private transportation to your hotel. After check-in, the remainder of the day is at leisure to relax after your journey or begin exploring the Swedish capital at your own pace.

Overnight in Stockholm

Meals: -

Stockholm, founded in the mid-13th century, grew from a fortified trading settlement controlling the waterways between Lake Mälaren and the Baltic Sea into one of Northern Europe's most important cities. Its strategic location helped it become a key center of commerce within the Hanseatic trading network, and over the centuries it developed as the political, cultural, and economic heart of Sweden. Today, Stockholm is renowned for its striking setting across fourteen islands connected by bridges, its beautifully preserved medieval Old Town (Gamla Stan), and its reputation as one of Europe's most innovative and livable capitals. The city is a leading center for technology, design, sustainability, and culture, while still maintaining a deep respect for its royal heritage, historic architecture, and maritime traditions.



Day 3: Sun, Aug 16

Stockholm

After breakfast at the hotel, depart for a comprehensive six-hour sightseeing tour of Stockholm by private vehicle with a local English-speaking guide. Beautifully situated where Lake Mälaren meets the Baltic Sea, Stockholm is often called the “Venice of the North” for its many waterways, islands, and elegant bridges.

Your tour begins with an exploration of Gamla Stan, Stockholm’s historic Old Town, where narrow cobbled streets wind between colorful medieval buildings. Here you will see the Royal Palace, one of the largest royal residences in Europe, as well as the nearby Parliament buildings, the political center of modern Sweden.

Continue to the island of Djurgården, a green oasis that is home to many of the city’s most important museums. Here you will visit the remarkable Vasa Museum, which houses the spectacularly preserved 17th-century warship Vasa. The ship famously sank on its maiden voyage in 1628 and was salvaged more than three centuries later; today it stands as one of the world’s most impressive maritime archaeological discoveries.

The tour also includes a visit to Stockholm City Hall, one of the city’s most recognizable landmarks with its tall brick tower crowned by the golden Three Crowns of Sweden. Inside, admire the magnificent Golden Hall, decorated with thousands of glittering mosaics, and the Blue Hall, where the prestigious Nobel Prize banquet is held each year.

Before returning to your hotel, stop at Fjällgatan on the island of Södermalm, where a scenic viewpoint offers one of the most beautiful panoramas of Stockholm’s islands, waterways, and historic skyline.

Overnight in Stockholm

Meals: B – D

Day 4: Mon, Aug 17

Uppsala Excursion

After breakfast, depart for a full-day excursion north of Stockholm with a private vehicle and local English-speaking guide. Today's journey explores the landscapes of Uppland, a region rich in Viking history and early Swedish heritage.

Your first stop is Täby, where you will see the ancient Jarlabanke Bridge, a remarkable Viking-era causeway accompanied by rune stones dating from the 11th century. These inscriptions commemorate local chieftains and provide fascinating insight into Viking society. Continue to Arkils Tingstad, the site of an early Viking assembly, or Thing, where community leaders once gathered to debate laws and resolve disputes. The circular arrangement of stones marks the places where council members traditionally sat during these assemblies.

Proceed to Granby, an important settlement from the late Viking Age. Here you will see Granbyhällen, a large rock covered with intricate rune carvings that record the stories of local families and their achievements. A short break follows at the nearby Hökeriet Café, where you may enjoy coffee or a light lunch (at your own expense) and browse a small selection of Swedish handicrafts and homemade specialties.

The journey then continues through the peaceful countryside of the Lunda region to Sigtuna, Sweden's oldest town, founded in the late 10th century. With its charming wooden houses, medieval churches, and numerous rune stones, Sigtuna offers a delightful glimpse into the early days of the Swedish kingdom. Enjoy some free time to stroll along the historic main street and along the shores of Lake Mälaren.

Next visit Gamla Uppsala, one of Sweden's most important ancient sacred sites. The area is famous for its monumental royal burial mounds dating from the 6th century and was once a center of pagan worship and political gatherings in Viking times.

Finally arrive in Uppsala, one of Sweden's most historic university towns. Here you may visit the impressive Uppsala Cathedral, the largest church in Scandinavia and the traditional coronation church of Swedish monarchs, or explore the charming old quarter and lively streets of this academic city.

In the late afternoon, return to Stockholm and your hotel.

Overnight in Stockholm

Meals: B - L



Day 5: Tue, Aug 18

Stockholm - Oslo

After breakfast, transfer by private vehicle to Stockholm's central railway station to board the train to Oslo. The scenic rail journey between Sweden and Norway offers a relaxing way to experience the Nordic landscape as the train travels through vast forests, quiet countryside, and regions dotted with sparkling lakes.

Along the way, the route passes through Karlstad, a pleasant city situated on the shores of Lake Vänern, the largest lake in Sweden and one of the largest in Europe. The journey showcases the natural beauty of Scandinavia, where dense woodlands, open fields, and tranquil waterways form an ever-changing panorama outside your window.

Upon arrival in Oslo, the capital of Norway, you will be met and transferred by private vehicle to your hotel. The remainder of the day is at leisure to begin discovering this vibrant city set between forested hills and the waters of the Oslofjord.

Overnight in Oslo

Meals: B

Oslo, the capital and largest city of Norway, sits at the head of the scenic Oslofjord and is surrounded by forested hills that have shaped the city's character for centuries. Founded around 1050 by King Harald Hardrada, Oslo grew as a medieval trading town before becoming the political and cultural center of the Norwegian kingdom. Over time it developed into a modern capital known for its strong maritime traditions, vibrant cultural institutions, and innovative architecture. Today Oslo combines historic landmarks, such as the medieval Akershus Fortress and the Royal Palace, with striking contemporary buildings along its revitalized waterfront. Consistently ranked among the world's most livable cities, Oslo is also recognized for its commitment to sustainability, outdoor life, and a dynamic cultural scene that includes world-class museums, galleries, and music venues.

After breakfast, depart for a full-day sightseeing program of Oslo with a local English-speaking guide. Today's tour combines the city's most important cultural landmarks with the remarkable museums located on the Bygdøy Peninsula.

Begin with a panoramic introduction to Oslo, passing several of the capital's most recognizable sights. See the striking modern Oslo Opera House along the waterfront, the historic Akershus Fortress, which has guarded the harbor since the Middle Ages, and the elegant Royal Palace at the end of Karl Johans Gate, Oslo's lively main boulevard. The tour also passes through the area of Old Christiania, recalling the city's earlier name and history.

Continue through some of Oslo's pleasant residential neighborhoods to Frogner Park, home to the remarkable Vigeland Sculpture Park, the world's largest sculpture installation created by a single artist. More than 200 expressive granite and bronze sculptures by Norwegian sculptor Gustav Vigeland depict the full range of human emotions and stages of life in a beautifully landscaped setting.

Next travel to the Bygdøy Peninsula, a green waterfront district known for its outstanding museums. Here you will visit the Fram Museum, dedicated to Norway's legendary polar expeditions. The museum's centerpiece is the original polar ship Fram, the strongest wooden ship ever built, which carried explorers to the farthest reaches of the Arctic and Antarctic. Visitors may board the ship and see how the crew lived and worked during these daring expeditions.

Nearby is the Kon-Tiki Museum, where the original balsawood raft used by Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl during his famous 1947 crossing of the Pacific Ocean is displayed, along with exhibits from his other remarkable journeys and research.

In the afternoon, continue to Holmenkollen, one of Oslo's most famous viewpoints and a center of Norwegian skiing traditions since the 19th century. Visit the Holmenkollen Ski Museum, the oldest museum of its kind in the world, tracing more than 4,000 years of skiing history and polar exploration. An elevator takes you to the top of the ski jump tower, where an observation platform offers spectacular panoramic views over Oslo, the surrounding forests, and the Oslofjord.

Return to your hotel in the late afternoon.



In the morning, leave our luggage at the front desk of your hotel, it will be picked up and brought directly to your hotel in Bergen (please remember to pack an overnight bag).

After breakfast, transfer by private vehicle to Oslo Central Station to begin one of Scandinavia's most spectacular travel days. Board the train for the journey from Oslo to Myrdal along part of the famous Bergen Railway, widely regarded as one of the most scenic rail routes in the world. The train climbs steadily through forests, valleys, and high mountain landscapes before reaching Myrdal, a remote mountain station located about 866 meters (2,840 feet) above sea level.

At Myrdal, change to the legendary Flåm Railway, an extraordinary engineering achievement and one of the steepest standard-gauge railways in the world. The train descends dramatically from the mountain plateau to the village of Flåm, passing through twenty tunnels while revealing breathtaking views of cascading waterfalls, deep ravines, and steep mountainsides. The journey offers numerous opportunities to admire the dramatic scenery that has made this railway famous worldwide.

Upon arrival in the small fjord village of Flåm, continue your journey by boat through the majestic Sognefjord, the longest and deepest fjord in Norway. Surrounded by towering mountains and dramatic cliffs, the fjord stretches more than 200 kilometers inland and reaches depths of over 1,300 meters. The cruise through this magnificent landscape brings you to the charming fjord-side village of Balestrand.

Upon arrival, proceed to your hotel for check-in and overnight in this peaceful setting along the shores of the Sognefjord.

Overnight in Balestrand**Meals: B - D**

Day 8: Fri, Aug 21

Fjord Cruise, Fjærland & the Glacier Landscape

After breakfast, depart from Balestrand for a scenic cruise through the majestic Sognefjord, the longest and deepest fjord in Norway. As the boat glides through this dramatic landscape of towering mountains and quiet waters, the route continues into the narrower and tranquil Fjærlandsfjord, surrounded by steep green slopes and cascading waterfalls.

Upon arrival in the village of Fjærland, continue by bus to the Norwegian Glacier Museum, an engaging and interactive center dedicated to the fascinating world of glaciers and climate science. Through innovative exhibits, films, and hands-on displays, you will learn how glaciers shape the landscape and gain insight into the powerful natural forces that formed the Norwegian fjords.

The excursion continues to Bøyabreen, a striking arm of the vast Jostedalsglacier, the largest glacier on the European mainland. Here you can admire the dramatic sight of the glacier descending from the mountainside into the valley below, a powerful reminder of the Ice Age landscapes that shaped this region.

After this memorable experience among Norway's glacier scenery, return by bus to the ferry quay and continue your journey by boat through the fjord.

Overnight in Balestrand

Meals: B - D





Day 9: Sat, Aug 22

Balestrand - Bergen

After a traditional Norwegian buffet breakfast at the hotel, enjoy a relaxed morning in the charming fjord-side village of Balestrand. Surrounded by mountains and overlooking the deep waters of the Sognefjord, the setting offers many opportunities to appreciate the remarkable beauty of western Norway. You may wish to spend time on the hotel terrace enjoying the fresh mountain air and sweeping fjord views, take a leisurely walk through the village to admire its historic wooden buildings, or explore the surrounding nature. Optional activities may include visiting the local aquarium or small art gallery, renting a bicycle or rowing boat, or simply enjoying a scenic walk along the shoreline or into the nearby hills. Balestrand's peaceful atmosphere makes it an ideal place to savor the tranquil rhythm of life along the fjord.

In the afternoon, walk to the harbor to board the boat for a scenic journey along the Sognefjord toward the Norwegian coast. The cruise continues through narrow channels and past the beautiful skerries of Gulen and Nordhordland, where the dramatic fjord landscape gradually opens toward the North Sea.

Arrive in Bergen, often called the "Gateway to the Fjords," in the early evening. Upon arrival, transfer by private vehicle from the pier to your hotel for check-in and overnight.

Overnight in Bergen

Meals: B

Bergen, Norway's second-largest city, is beautifully situated between mountains and the sea along the country's rugged west coast. Founded in 1070 by King Olaf III, Bergen quickly grew into an important trading center and later became a major hub of the medieval Hanseatic League, which connected Northern Europe's commercial cities. The legacy of this prosperous period can still be seen in the colorful wooden warehouses of Bryggen, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. For centuries Bergen served as Norway's principal gateway for trade and maritime travel, and today it remains the cultural and economic center of western Norway. Known as the "Gateway to the Fjords," the city combines rich history, lively harbor life, and a vibrant cultural scene with its dramatic natural setting surrounded by seven mountains and the waters of the North Sea.

Day 10: Sun, Aug 23

Bergen & Troidhaugen

After breakfast, depart for a full-day guided exploration of Bergen, Norway's historic coastal city and the traditional gateway to the fjords.

Begin with a visit to the lively Fish and Flower Market, located along the harbor, where Bergen's long maritime traditions are still very much alive. Continue to Bryggen, the city's famous old wharf with its distinctive rows of colorful wooden warehouses. This historic Hanseatic quarter dates back to the 14th century, when Bergen was an important center of the Hanseatic League's vast trading network. Although fires have repeatedly damaged the wooden buildings—most recently in 1955—the area has been carefully reconstructed following traditional methods, preserving the character of these historic merchant houses.

Today Bryggen, with its narrow alleyways and gabled structures, is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Later, travel just outside the city to Troidhaugen, the former home of Norway's celebrated composer Edvard Grieg. Set in a peaceful landscape overlooking a small lake, the villa is now a museum dedicated to the composer's life and music. During your visit, enjoy a short midday concert featuring Grieg's works, followed by an optional lunch at the museum.

Returning to Bergen in the afternoon, take a ride on the Fløibanen funicular to the summit of Mount Fløyen, one of the seven mountains surrounding the city. From the top, enjoy magnificent panoramic views over Bergen's colorful harbor, the surrounding islands, and the fjords stretching toward the open sea. Return to your hotel afterward for the evening.

Overnight in Bergen

Meals: B - D





Day 11: Mon, Aug 24**Bergen - Hardangerfjord - Bergen**

After breakfast, depart for a full-day excursion to the spectacular Hardangerfjord, one of Norway's most beautiful fjord regions. Traveling by private minibus with a local guide allows for a comfortable and flexible journey through some of western Norway's most dramatic landscapes. The route first takes you eastward from Bergen through the scenic countryside toward Voss, a town surrounded by mountains, lakes, and waterfalls. Continuing deeper into the fjord region, cross the impressive Hardanger Bridge, one of the longest suspension bridges in the world, offering sweeping views of the fjord and surrounding mountains.

Proceed to the village of Eidfjord, located at the inner reaches of the Hardangerfjord. From here, visit the spectacular Vøringfossen Waterfall, one of Norway's most famous natural landmarks. The waterfall plunges nearly 180 meters into the dramatic Måbødalen valley, creating one of the country's most iconic landscapes. There may also be an opportunity to stop at the Hardangervidda Nature Center, where exhibitions explain the unique environment of the vast Hardangervidda mountain plateau.

Later in the day, enjoy a scenic fjord cruise from Eidfjord to Norheimsund, passing through the magnificent waters of the Hardangerfjord, often called the "Queen of the Fjords." Your private vehicle will meet you in Norheimsund for the return journey to Bergen, arriving in the evening after a day filled with unforgettable fjord scenery.

Overnight in Bergen**Meals: B**

Day 12: Tue, Aug 25**Departure**

After breakfast at hotel, group transfer to airport for departure flight.

Meals: B



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