

Adventures Ashore Port Guide

OSLO

An Overview of Oslo

About Your Port Guide >>

This is your guide to Oslo, specially prepared by Princess Cruises. This guide is intended to assist you if you are on a shore excursion, touring independently or doing both.

Please note that the information provided is general in nature and is subject to change.



Norway At A Glance >>

SIZE 125,181 square miles, slightly larger than New Mexico

POPULATION 4,552,200, less than one-seventh the population of California

LANGUAGE Norwegian

CAPITAL Oslo

TYPE OF GOVERNMENT Hereditary Constitutional Monarchy

CURRENCY Norwegian Krone

TIME ZONE GMT +2

Norway's close relationship with the ocean is perfectly reflected in the waters of its capital. It is no accident that Oslo actually wraps itself around part of a beautiful fjord—it's as though the sea has been invited in for a visit! Seafarers have lived in Oslo Fjord since the 8th-century, taking advantage of the beautiful harbor 60 miles from the sea.

The founder of Oslo was the half-brother of St. Olav, Harald Hardrade (whose nickname means "uncompromising commander"). The city probably dates from 1048, when Harald built a fort and a settlement on the left bank of the Aker River.

From the time of its founding, Scandinavia's oldest capital enjoyed steady growth and affluence. Even while Trondheim and Bergen were larger, Oslo grew fat by supplying provisions to ships and trading in timber. Shortly before 1300, King Hakon V selected Oslo as his principal residence, and the trappings of a capital city followed. The powerful Akershus Castle was built to provide additional protection for the thriving town.

Norway's union with Denmark pushed Oslo back to the status of a provincial capital. The German merchants of the Hanseatic League had steadily lost their economic grip, and their cultural leadership was no longer present.

Most of the old city was destroyed by a disastrous fire in 1624, reportedly set by three witches. King Christian IV of Denmark spared no expense to rebuild Oslo on the right bank of the river. He strengthened Akershus Fortress to guard against the Swedes, the first of many military improvements. The king loved his beautiful renaissance town, and

renamed it Christiania, after himself. Exactly 300 years later, in 1925, the name was changed back to Oslo.

Norway was drawn into World War II in the early spring of 1940. Norwegian politician Vidkun Quisling had convinced Hitler that many of his countrymen favored the Nazi cause, and that he could rule the land as a loyal ally.

The German Navy landed troops at strategic points in a lightning campaign, despite heroic defiance by Norwegian troops. The flotilla of troops for Oslo was led by the heavy cruiser Blucher, which was sunk by torpedoes from the Oscarborg fortress. Since many of the German staff officers went down with the ship, this loss delayed the capture of Oslo, but did not stop it.

Resistance to the Nazi occupation was especially heroic here, but the people of Oslo had to endure five years of occupation before their final liberation. Akershus Fortress contains a touching memorial and museum to the country's heroes.

Today, the beautiful city of Oslo is geographically large, since it includes many wooded and recreational areas. The population is relatively small, but lively and very welcoming. About 20 percent of all Norwegians live in the capital. Most buildings seem fairly recent, in spite of the city's great age.

The Cathedral dates from the 17th-century, and the Old Aker Church from as early as 1100. There are some other remnants of the Middle Ages, like the Akershus fortification. But structures done in the 19th- and 20th-century styles predominate, some of them lavishly decorated with carvings and frescoes.

The Radhus, or Town Hall, is a striking red brick marvel with twin towers. It is decorated in a Norwegian style that recalls the 1930s. The Royal Palace, the National Gallery, and the Nobel Institute are all worth visiting. You may enjoy the interesting Museum of the Resistance in Akershus Fortress. It exhibits the entire five-year history of the War, from occupation through liberation.

The Vigeland Sculpture Park is one attraction you must not miss. Sculptor Gustav Vigeland has created and displayed some 650 statues, some of them huge. These works in granite, wrought iron, and bronze depict the many stages and episodes of human life. Once controversial, Vigeland's work today is much beloved by local people, whether they wish to philosophize about the human condition, or merely enjoy a leisurely stroll.

No one is surprised that Oslo's most unique museums deal with ships and the sea. The Viking Ships Museum displays three oaken longships from the 9th-century in a remarkable state of preservation. The largest required 30 rowers. These fine ships were used as tombs for noblemen, who were buried along with jewels, food, and furniture for

the afterlife. The blue clay along Oslofjord kept them well preserved until their discovery in the 19th-century.

The Fram Museum houses the exploration ship Fram, specially-built in 1892 to withstand the crushing force of the polar icecap. It carried Fridtjof Nansen on his expedition to the North Pole, then was used again by Roald Amundsen, when he discovered the South Pole in 1911.

Nearby is the Kon-Tiki Museum, where you can see the raft of balsa logs that Thor Heyerdahl sailed in 1947. His purpose was to demonstrate that the Polynesian people could have migrated from Peru on similar rafts. After sailing 2,000 miles with five crew members, his theory was taken seriously. A similar expedition in 1970 demonstrated that ancient Egyptians might have reached the Americas. Heyerdahl sailed a boat made of papyrus reeds, the Ra II, from North Africa to Barbados. The Ra is also displayed here.

For all their brave exploits sailing the seas of the world, the Norwegians are disarmingly cordial. The global coverage of the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer once again reminded the world of the overriding decency and friendliness of these sturdy people.



Places of Interest in Oslo

Akershus Castle

The oldest parts of this castle date from around 1300; the climb is well worth the magnificent views of the city

Cathedral (Domkirke)

Completed in 1697, the cathedral—situated on Stortorvet, Oslo's main square—features an intricately carved, Baroque pulpit

History Museum

This cream-colored, Art Nouveau brick building houses a wonderful collection of Viking and medieval artifacts

National Gallery

The newly refurbished gallery features a collection of Scandinavian impressionists called the "Northern Light" artists; also offers a fine array of 19th- and 20th-century Norwegian artwork and an extensive Munch collection

Radhus (Town Hall)

Completed in 1950, this twin-towered, red-brick landmark was dedicated to Oslo's 900-year anniversary

Resistance Museum

Located in a building next to the castle, this museum documents events of Norway's occupation by Germany from 1940 to 1945

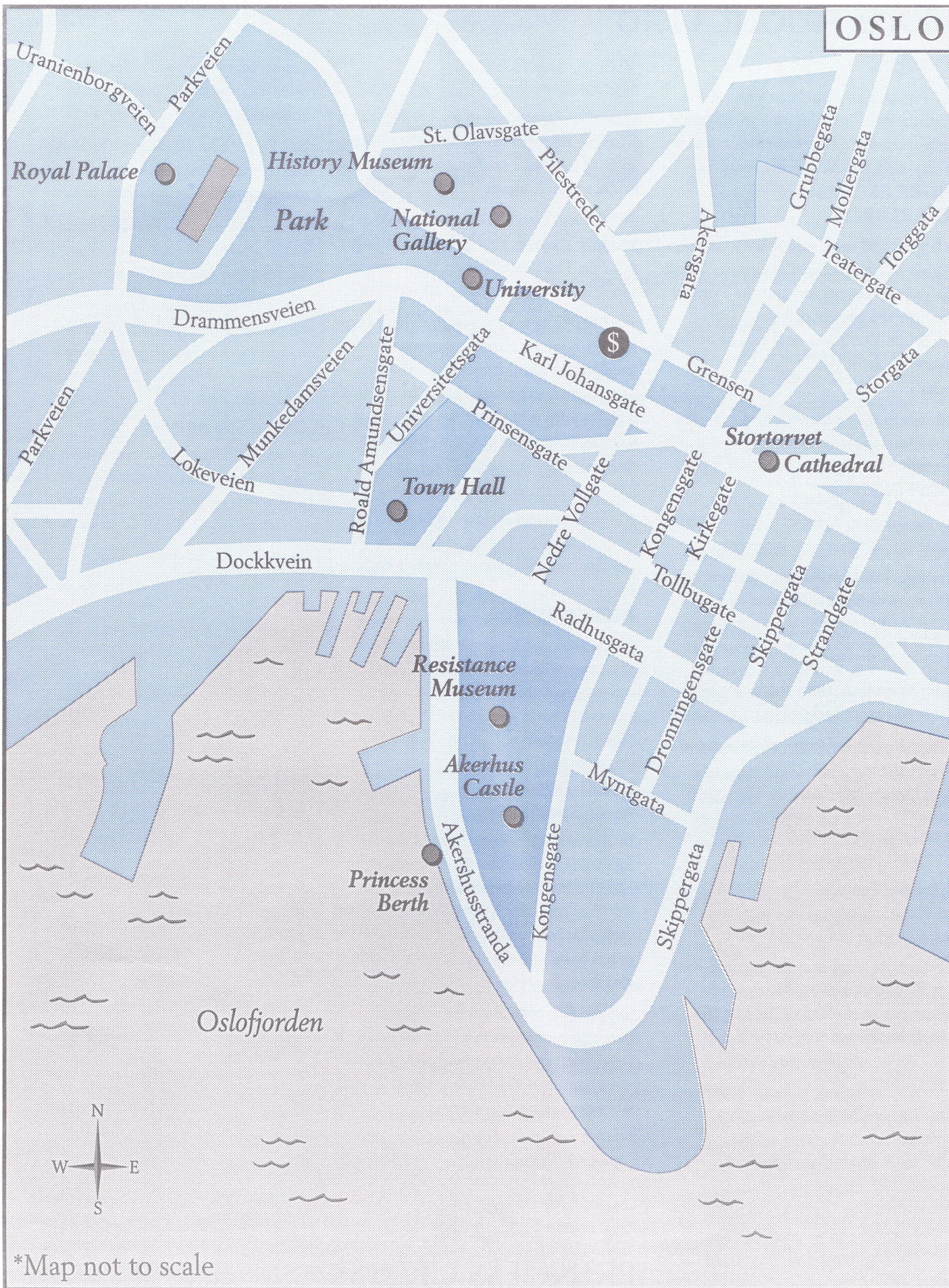
Royal Palace (Slottet)

The neo-Classical building is closed to the public, but you may stroll through the beautiful garden

University

The great hall of the city's old university is decorated with murals by the notable artist Edvard Munch; it is also the site of the Nobel peace prize ceremony

OSLO



*Map not to scale

More About Oslo

DOCKING

Your Princess ship docks in Oslo at the Akershus Pier South, approximately half a mile from the city center. Please refer to the city map for the specific location.

SHORE EXCURSION DEPARTURES

Passengers will meet at a specific location for each shore excursion departure. Please refer to your tour ticket and the Princess Patter for the correct place and time. Your Shore Excursion staff will be at that location to assist you.

TAXIS

Taxis are available pierside and throughout the city. Please inquire at the tour office for more information.

SHOPPING

For the shopper, Norway offers a number of interesting souvenirs, including:

Carvings: Painted wooden figurines of fishermen, reindeer and more

Knitwear: "Reindeer" sweaters, mittens, caps and cardigans

Trolls: Whimsical little characters in a variety of shapes and sizes

Viking ships: Miniatures of the famous vessels

Pewter: Figurines

Crystal and glassware: Flasks, vases, glasses, plates and figurines

Silverware: Enamelled bracelets, dishes and spoons in typical Norwegian style; blue and white are most popular

The best places to shop are around Karl Johans Gate and along Akerbrygge. Please refer to the Oslo City Map for specific locations.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Post Office The main post office is located at Dronningens gt. 15. Hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and on Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Banks Open from 8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and until 5:00 p.m. on Thursday. During the summer months, most banks close earlier.

Museums These vary greatly. Many keep shorter hours during the summer, some keep longer ones. In general, most are open Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Some are open until 8:00 p.m. on Thursday and weekends.

Shops Hours vary greatly, but are normally open from 9:30 to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and until 1:00 or 2:00 p.m. on Saturday; closed on Sunday. Souvenir shops usually have longer hours.

PROPER ATTIRE

Please wear proper attire ashore when planning to visit churches, cathedrals and other sacred places. Shorts for both men and women are considered improper. Women should also cover their bare shoulders.

LOCAL CUISINE

Food Specialties

In this fishing nation, some of the best foods come from the sea. Salmon, trout, cod and halibut are all delightful. Another specialty is what Norwegians call spekemat, or cured food, which included cured ham, sausage and mutton. You'll also want to try:

Soups: Thick, hearty broths like betasuppe, made with meat and vegetables; gul ertesuppe, yellow pea soup with ham; and fiskesuppe, fish soup rich with egg yolks and cream

Smorbrod: The popular Scandinavian open-face sandwich makes an ideal appetizer

Koldbord: The Norwegian "cold table" is the equivalent of Sweden's smorgasbord, overflowing with tasty, fresh dishes

Berries: Blueberries, cranberries, and arctic cloudberries (multer) abound, both fresh and in jams and desserts

Popular desserts include tilsorte bondepiker, layers of stewed apples, biscuit crumbs, sugar and whipped cream; and blotkake, a soft sponge cake filled with fruit and whipped cream.

Drink Specialties

Locally produced beer is usually high quality. Akevitt is a national drink. Wine and spirits are only served from mid-afternoon onward and never on Sunday.

TIPPING

Suggested tipping is 10 percent for good service.

SOME USEFUL WORDS

Yes	Ja
No	Nei
Please	Vaer sa snill
Thank you	Takk
Good morning	God Morgen

PRINCESS CRUISES AGENTS

In case of emergency while you are ashore, please contact:

European Cruise Services

Strandgaten 197

Bergen, NORWAY

5817

Telephone: 47-55-900780

Telefax: 47-55-900696

Note: The information in this port guide is subject to change without notice. We apologize for any inconvenience, but Princess Cruises cannot accept responsibility for any such alterations. Thank you.



PRINCESS CRUISES
escape completely®