



PROGRAM COUNTRY: NORWAY



STS – more than 50 years of experience in student exchange programs all over the world



Kingdom of Norway is a constitutional monarchy in Northern Europe that occupies the western portion of the Scandinavian Peninsula. It is a beautiful country with deep blue fjords and high mountains. The Norwegians are very proud of their country, and their Constitution Day on May 17th is a day of great festivity. Norwegians are known as friendly with a good sense of humor.

COUNTRY INFORMATION

Situated: Northern Europe, Scandinavia

Area: 386.958 square kilometres

Inhabitants: 4.7 million

Capital: Oslo

Language: Norwegian

National day: May 17

Celebrities: AHA, Lene Marlin, Marion Ravn, Kurt Nilsen.

NORWAY – “THE LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN”

Norway is the land of the midnight sun, the land of moose and reindeer, the land of “lusekofter” – warm wollen cardigans, knitted in beautiful traditional designs. The “lusekofter” and other equally thick sweaters are much appreciated here, since much of the country of Norway is situated north of the Arctic Circle. The word Norway itself means “the way to the north”. To the east, Norway shares a border with Russia, Finland and Sweden, while to the west, the country faces the Atlantic Ocean. Norway is a country of extremes. Ranging from the rugged mountains to the solemn beauty of the fjords, from the emptiness of North Cape to the beaches of the south. In the north of the country you can experience the midnight sun in June and 24 hours of darkness in December. Mountains and sea dominate this country on the western edge of the Scandinavian peninsula. The coast is punctuated by fjords, which can be as deep as 3,700 feet (1,000 metres), and is dotted with islands.

SCHOOL LIFE

Norwegians start school at the age of six. Everybody has to complete 10 years of elementary school. The school year is divided into two semesters, the fall semester starts in August and ends in December / January. Spring semester starts in January and ends in June.

High school consists of three years, and this is a preparation for higher education. The students have a certain number of com-

pulsory subjects such as maths, English, Norwegian, history and social science, but they can also choose between a range of subjects depending on their interests and depending on the schools. There are certain educational programs to attend, for example the natural science program, social science program, language program (English, French, German or Spanish is offered at most schools), business- and economics, aesthetics, media and communication, sports program and more.

The relation between teachers and pupils is usually friendly and informal. Students in their final year of high school go under the name of “russ”. These graduates tend to make themselves heard and seen in towns and communities throughout the year, and especially in the spring. Dressed in red, black and blue, the “russ” have their special cars, clothes, whistles etc. They participate in a number of activities such as trips, parties, shows, parades etc. It’s a fun year, although hard studying is necessary for the final exams. Grades are from 1-6, where 6 is the best. School normally starts at eight or nine o’clock in the morning, and ends between one and four in the afternoon.

STS High School and all exchange students must be thankful to the school for accepting an STS student. It is sometimes hard to get school placements and there are quite a few exchange organisations who want to place students. So please be open and thankful to the school, and don’t be demanding! If you have a special request, go via the STS office or area representative. Special requests might be fulfilled, but STS cannot guarantee them.

All schools normally have physical education on the schedule. Other sports activities take place after school and have to be arranged by you and the host family while in the host country.

School transportation varies. If you have to go by bus, there is a chance that the school will pay. If not, you will have to pay your own way. Ticket prices vary.

Most schools have a canteen where the students can buy lunch, but it is common for Norwegian students to bring their own lunch to school.



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You should be aware of the fact that school will be difficult in the beginning, when you don't know the Norwegian language. STS strongly recommends that you study Norwegian in your home country before you arrive in Norway. It will help you to follow the lessons in school and you will make new Norwegian friends more easily.

You must be present at school, do all your homework and do what the teachers tell you to do, like all other students. You must also show respect towards teachers and other students.

HOST FAMILY LIFE

Most of the students go straight to their permanent host families when they arrive in Norway. All host families must be accepted by STS before a student can move in to their home. Norwegian families all over the country open up their homes and volunteer as host families. Therefore you should be prepared to be placed either in the south near the beautiful Norwegian archipelago, in the north where you can experience amazing nature and the famous aurora, in the west where the deep fjords and glaciers are, or in the east near the capital Oslo.

The average Norwegian family consists of a mother, father and two children. If you compare to, for instance, the US, Norwegian families are not that religious. You usually do not have to participate in church activities. Most Norwegian families only go to church on holidays like Christmas or Easter. In the past decade, divorce has become more widespread, and society today accepts that a mother or father lives alone with his or her children. It is also acceptable for a woman to have children without being married and for couples to live together without being married.

In their everyday life, people are busy with work, school and activities. Most families have dinner together every day, and parents try to spend as much time as possible with their children. Most Norwegian children are taught to be independent and participate in making decisions from an early age. In the upbringing of the children, little emphasis is placed on obedience and discipline, whereas more emphasis is placed on being active, independent and creative.

You must be able to help out in the host family's home like all other family members. It is important to show the host family that you take initiative to help out. Many Norwegian host families expect exchange student to do that. It is very important that you take care of your hygiene and sometimes STS discover cultural differences that concerns this. Norwegian people shower every day and will expect the student to be hygienic as well. We recommend about 1,500 – 3,000 NOK pocket money per month.

SPARE TIME ACTIVITIES

Norwegians in general like to think of themselves as lovers of sports and outdoor activities. Soccer is a big sport among boys as well as girls. Handball is another very popular sport in many communities. If you like other sports such as tennis, golf, basketball, volleyball, aerobics or ice hockey, just to mention some, you will have no problems keeping fit. Skiing is a very popular weekend-activity in the winter, while boating and swimming take up a lot of people's time in the summer. In addition to sport clubs, there are many organisations and clubs for children or adults involved with music, singing, dancing, drama, and arts and crafts. Norwegians enjoy getting together for celebrations, both in public and at home. In the towns, young people go to youth clubs and discotheques as well as to the cinema and to concerts.

PROGRAM EXTRAS

Every year all exchange students in Norway are invited to Oslo. Here they get a chance to meet other students from different countries.

Oslo trip – This trip is in the fall semester and you get to spend two days in Oslo. On the first day there will be a social gathering with Norwegian students as well as other exchange students. You will go out for bowling and pizza. The second day you will be taken sightseeing around Oslo and eat dinner at Hard Rock Café.

Hiking trips – It is the Norwegian Trekking Association that arranges the hiking tours. They offer a wide range of trips to, for example, Jotunheimen, Rondane and Hardangervidda. The youth group also has different base camps around Norway, where you can go rafting, rock climbing, canoeing, ice fishing and much more. These trips are spread throughout the year. The students can get more information and sign up at www.turistforeningen.no.

EUROPEAN TOUR

In the end of June, STS offers an amazing three-week bustour around Europe. You get to visit 10 countries together with students from all over the world. The price includes accommodation, half board, sightseeing, most entrances and activities, Disneyland in Paris etc. Please see separate sheet for more detailed information regarding the tour.



All information is subject to change.

