

# *~The West Coast of Norway and the Arctic Circle~ Summer Solstice Travels 2013 ~ Part 1*



*Norway was a spectacular destination for us filled with memorable hiking and cycling opportunities, a unique history and culture, lovely people and LOTS of adventure!*

*Our summer solstice timing was perfect for experiencing the unique lighting and days where the sun never set while we were in the Arctic Circle, but it was also still early enough in the summer season for the continued spring melting of snow to make for great waterfall viewing along the fjords and also inland.*

*The weather was mild and sunny all or part of every day, including far up into the Arctic Circle ~ in fact, we awoke to nearly 60° F temps in the northernmost “cities” on the European continent (Honningsvåg and Hammerfest ~ which are very nearly the northernmost cities in the world).*

*More superlatives: Wealthy Norway is widely considered to be the most expensive country in Europe and, also by many, the most expensive country in the world. A good thing to know when planning your travels there!*

*The map above is very compacted and way out of scale, but it can give some idea as to our voyage.*



*Above: Near the end of a favorite cycle adventure starting from snowcapped Mount Dalsnibba (at nearly 5000 ft) on down to the town of Geiranger on Geirangerfjord below.*

*Below: No, these colors are not photoshopped!  
We spent our first day in Stavanger ~ enjoying the fresh clean air and unspoiled environment  
that Norway is famous for.*



## *~Stavanger~*

*From fishing and the canning industry to wealth and fame from the North Sea petroleum industry, Stavanger has clearly adapted well to change! It is situated at the end of the 26 mile Lysefjord with its spectacular scenery and is now Norway's 4th largest city. The town offers a full range of top cultural and culinary options with a very international feel, while still having preserved its rich history.*



*Above: The charm of Gamle (Old) Stavanger ~ the largest surviving wooden house settlement in northern Europe*



*Below: Heaven for the boys and all of those technologically inclined ~the Norwegian Petroleum Museum with interactive displays demonstrating all things to do with Norway's state-of-the-art offshore drilling and oil industry*



*Below: The Canning Museum and Maritime Museum*





## *~Flam~*

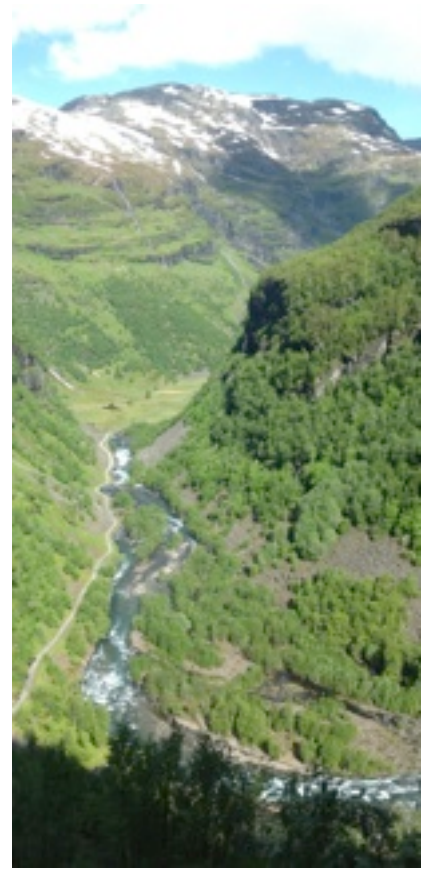
*Flam is located on a finger of the Sognefjord (the longest fjord in Norway at 128 miles long and at a maximum depth of 4,291 feet)*

*We spent the first part of our day there enjoying the scenery and countless waterfalls from the famous Flamsbana train. The Flam Railway (which opened in the 1940's) connects Flam and the Sognefjord to the Bergen-Oslo railway to the south.*

*The Flamsbana train will take you 2,835 feet in elevation in only 12 miles on what remains the steepest railway of its kind in the world (adhesion-type railway on normal tracks). Most of the 20 tunnels were excavated by hand, mile by mile. There is a fascinating museum in Flam about this railway and its incredible engineering.*

*After our training adventure in the early morning, we spent our entire afternoon hiking to Brekkefossen waterfall, ending what was a beautiful first full day within the fjords of Norway.*

*Right and all below: Views from the Flamsbana*



*Kjosfossen (Kjos Waterfall)  
Altitude: 2,207 feet*

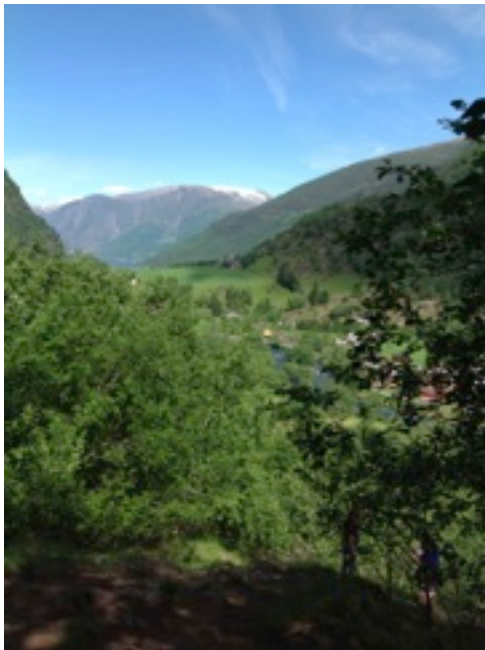
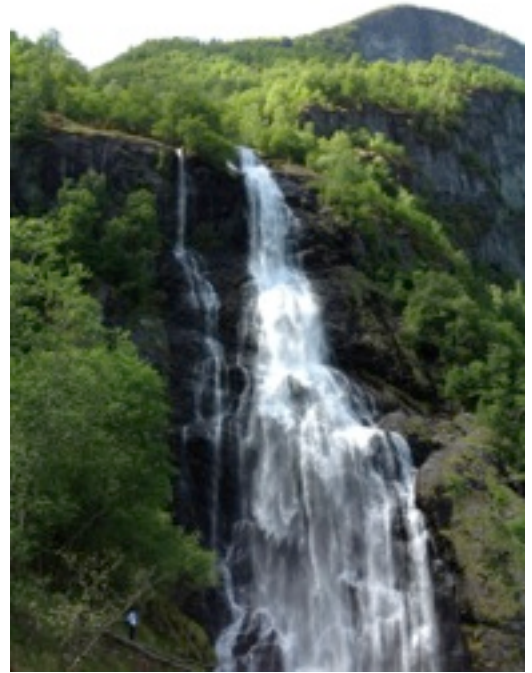








*Below: Our hike up to Brekkefossen Waterfall, Flam*





*Below:*

*After our full day in Flam, we enjoyed happy hour on into the late evening as we cruised along the Sognefford and back out into the North Sea and then on to Geiranger*

