

~The West Coast of Norway and the Arctic Circle~ Summer Solstice Travels 2013 ~ Part 3



~Trondheim~

My ancestral home city!

We tried our best to see if we could make a day trip on the train south to the nearby village of Oppdal (where all of my Norwegian relatives are from) but spring rains and flooding had reduced the number of daily trains to/from Oppdal, so we spent our entire day enjoying an independent walking tour of Trondheim.

It was our favorite big city on this trip ~ and a Norwegian city that struck us as particularly “European” somehow. A place one could see oneself actually living year round.



The city of Trondheim on the Trondheimsfjord remains an historic and cultural center of Norway ~ indeed, it served as the capital of Norway during the Viking Age onwards until 1217. Today it is a thriving university town and it is also famous for its music scene, including the Ringve Museum of Musical Instruments. Sadly, we just missed being able to take in a performance at Nidaros Cathedral given by St. Olaf Choir of Northfield, MN (a choir that my older sister was a member of while studying at St. Olaf)!

The most famous city landmark is Nidarosdomen (Nidaros Cathedral), which was built in 1070 AD ~ it is considered the most important Gothic structure in Norway and is the largest Cathedral in Northern Europe. It also serves as the national sanctuary of Norway. Nidaros Cathedral was built over the grave of Saint Olaf, the Patron Saint of Norway who brought unification and Christianity to the country. It served as an important destination for Christian pilgrims throughout the Middle Ages and the crypt of Nidaros was especially fascinating. Several beautifully carved floor grave markers depicting templar knights are on display (which reminded us very much of the tombs associated with various other churches of the crusades we have visited ~ culminating with the amazing floor of St. John's Co-Cathedral on the island of Malta, which still serves as the main church for The Knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem and their medieval legacy.



Above: Speaking of the Vikings and central Norway, I found the extent of known medieval Viking settlements and exploration around the world as depicted in this map quite fascinating.

*Of course, in MN we all were taught that it was Leif Ericson who really discovered America!
The British Museum in London has a wonderful display of corresponding artifacts to all of the above.*



Above: Crossing Gamle Bybro (Old Town Bridge) over to Bakklandet (Old Town) along our morning hike up to Kristiansten Fortress. Clouds had rolled in, but they would continue to clear out as our day progressed.

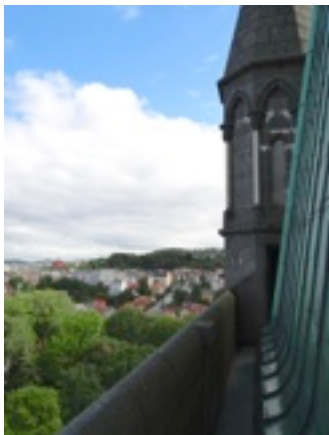


Above: Kristiansten Fortress and its views over the town and fjord



Above and right: Views of Nidaros Cathedral and Marinen Park over the Nidelva River

Below: A view of the facade and views from the tower of Nidaros Cathedral. Medieval stonemasonry from the Archbishop's Palace Museum and The Royal Crown of Norway from the Norwegian Crown Regalia Exhibition.





Above and left:

Gargoyles and “Mini Me” from Oppdal!

Our guide up to the top of the tower was a young girl who was the next best thing to my visiting Oppdal. She was from there and was able to tell me all about life there. In addition, the first thing that John said upon seeing her was that she was a ringer for me when I was her age. She even styled her hair and dressed like me. Somehow, the world is a very small place!



*Below and right:
Center city street life in Trondheim.*

Whereas you will see children all over Tuscany in a stroller with a piece of focaccia in their hands, you will see the children all over Norway in their strollers with a pancake in their hands!





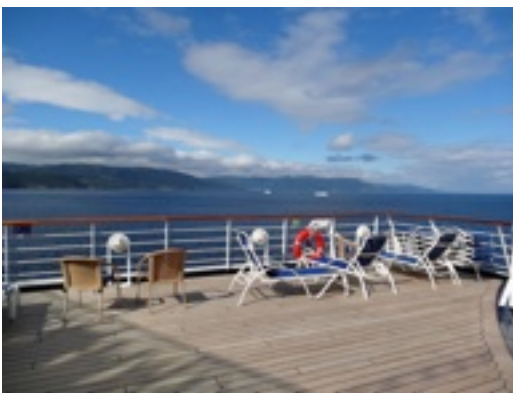
We enjoyed an especially pretty afternoon sail out from Trondheim back into the gentle scenery of the outer Trondheimsfjord.

Our next port of call: Alesund



Above: Munkholmen Islet just off the coast of Trondheim. In ancient times, this was a place for executions.

It has also housed a monastery, a fortress and a prison ~ but it is currently popular for sunbathing, swimming or dining at its restaurant!



Left: Along the Trondheimsfjord. Typical afternoon scenery from the ship

~Alesund~



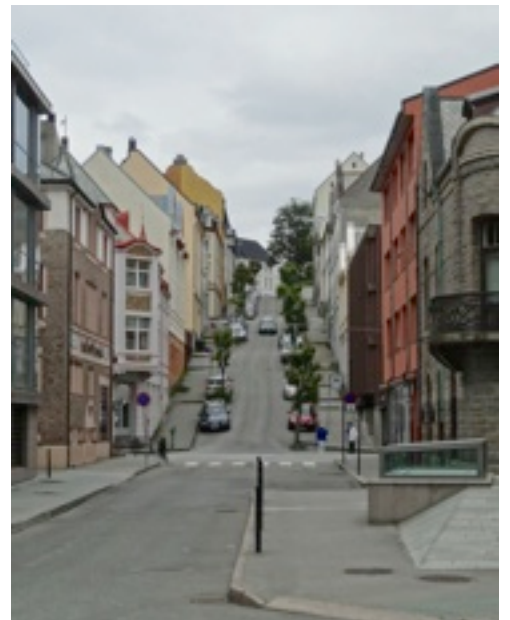
Alesund is perfectly situated on the North Sea at the head of a dozen or so smaller fjords in the heart of Norwegian fjord country (between Trondheim and Bergen and very near to the spectacular Geirangerfjord).

It currently ranks as the most important fishing harbor in Norway and is also famous for the Island of Runde which is nesting place for some 700,000 birds of 40 different species.

But perhaps its greatest distinction is its abundance of Art Nouveau architecture, due to the rebuilding of much of the city after a catastrophic fire in 1904.

We enjoyed a drive and long walk throughout the area, but we would make time on our next visit for the Sunnmore Museum (representing over 50 buildings of different architectural styles and ways of life in Norway) and the Atlantic Sea Park (the largest aquarium in Scandinavia).

Below: Typical street scenes and architecture of Alesund





*Above:
My fascination with some of the local birdlife and nesting
along the wharves*

*Right: John's fascination with the traditional Viking ship
design ~ examples of which we would see out and about
sailing quite often along the fjords on this trip!*

*Below:
Our stumbling upon a local glass blowing studio*



~ Bergen ~



What a beautiful city and a perfect way to end our travels in Norway. The greater city is located over what seems a series of countless islands that are largely connected by bridges and tunnels ~ but the historic center of town is very compact and walkable with the Mt. Floyen funicular in the center of things to get you on up to the top in no time to enjoy Mt. Floyen's views and miles of hiking and nature!

From the beauty of Rosenkrantz Tower presiding over the old medieval Hanseatic buildings in the Bryggen area, which then leads to Bergen's famously tantalizing Fisketorget (fish market), to Mt. Floyen with its views and fantastic hiking ~ Norway's second largest city does not disappoint!

Music lovers have Troidhaugen (the former home of composer, pianist, conductor Edvard Grieg) to visit and art lovers like us are provided with a series of excellent museums overlooking Lille Lungegardsvann.

On top of that, there is a whole section of town named Dokken (my family name) to make me feel at home!



Below: Views in the medieval Bryggen area of Bergen



Below: The Fish Market

I wasn't going to give in, I really wasn't.....

End result: we sailed off with several hundred dollars worth of delicacies from the Fisketorget (which is not difficult to do at all with the Euro and Dollar exchange rate against the Kroner)!



Above: Some of my smoked whale meat being weighed

Below: fresh whale meat ready for the grill



Above: An amazing selection of caviar from everywhere!

Our selection: several jars of delicate Kalix Lojrom

Below: Norwegian king crab and typical dried stockfish





~ Anchors Aweigh ~

After 2 weeks in Norway, we were heading back to England ~ but not before enjoying the coastal islands and communities of Bergen while our ship barely cleared two of the cities longest bridges.

And so ended our voyage....

*Skal!
k & j ~*

