

Welcome to Norway

If you travel north from most places in Europe, you'll eventually reach a land of deep-blue fjords, icy mountains, and glittering skies — a country known for both its beauty and its bravery: Norway.

Norway stretches along the northern edge of Europe, bordered by Sweden, Finland, and Russia. Its long, curving coastline reaches out to the North Sea and the Arctic Ocean. Because of this unique shape, Norway has thousands of fjords — long, narrow inlets of sea surrounded by steep cliffs. These fjords were carved out by glaciers thousands of years ago, and today they attract visitors from all over the world.

One of the most famous is the Geirangerfjord, a UNESCO World Heritage Site where waterfalls tumble down cliffs and cruise ships glide silently through misty water. In winter, the same mountains turn white with snow, and the air feels crisp and sharp — the perfect playground for skiing and snowboarding.

But Norway isn't just about scenery. Its people are known for their love of the outdoors and their strong sense of community. Norwegians even have a special

word, “friluftsliv”, which means “open-air living.” It describes their deep appreciation for nature — walking in forests, climbing mountains, and spending time outside, even when it’s freezing cold. Many families own small wooden cabins called “hytter”, where they escape city life for quiet weekends in the countryside.

Norway is also a land of legends. Long before modern times, Norse people told stories about gods like Thor and Odin, and terrifying sea creatures called krakens.

These ancient myths inspired many books and films today. The Viking Age, which began more than a thousand years ago, saw Norwegian explorers sailing across the sea to trade and discover new lands. The word “Viking” still brings to mind courage, adventure, and determination — qualities Norwegians are proud of.

Modern Norway is a country that blends old and new. Its capital, Oslo, is filled with sleek architecture, museums, and colourful harbours. Yet just a few hours away, you can find remote villages where fishing boats bob gently in quiet bays. In the far north, beyond the Arctic Circle, you can see one of nature’s most magical displays: the Northern Lights, or *aurora borealis*. Green, purple, and pink ribbons of light dance across the night sky — a sight so beautiful that travellers often fall silent when they see it.

Norway is also one of the world's happiest and safest countries, thanks to its focus on education, equality, and care for the environment. From its ancient legends to its modern cities, it remains a land of contrasts — wild yet peaceful, cold yet welcoming, ancient yet forward-looking.

So, whether you come for the mountains, the myths, or the midnight sun, one thing is certain: in Norway, the air feels fresher, the light seems clearer, and the world feels wonderfully alive.

Comprehension Questions

1. What are fjords, according to the passage?

- A) Long, narrow valleys filled with sea water.
- B) Small wooden houses in the countryside.
- C) Mountains covered in snow.
- D) Rivers that freeze in winter.

2. What does the Norwegian word “friluftsliv” mean?

- A) A festival celebrated in summer.
- B) A type of Viking ship.
- C) The love of outdoor life.
- D) A mountain range in Norway.

3. What can we infer about Norwegians from the passage?

- A) They prefer to stay indoors during cold weather.
- B) They enjoy and value spending time in nature.
- C) They dislike living near the sea.
- D) They travel abroad for most holidays.

4. Which of the following is mentioned as something visitors might see in Norway's far north?

- A) The midnight sun
- B) The Northern Lights
- C) The Geirangerfjord
- D) The Oslo Opera House

5. The word “blend” in the phrase “*Norway blends old and new*” most nearly means:

- A) Hides
- B) Separates
- C) Mixes
- D) Replaces

6. What is the main purpose of the passage?

- A) To persuade people to move to Norway permanently.
- B) To explain the daily life of a Norwegian student.
- C) To describe Norway’s natural beauty, history, and culture.
- D) To compare Norway with other countries in Europe.

Answers

1. A) — Fjords are long, narrow sea inlets formed by glaciers. The text explains they are surrounded by steep cliffs and filled with seawater.

2. C) — “Friluftsliv” means “open-air living” or love of nature and outdoor life.

3. B) — The passage emphasises Norwegians’ appreciation for nature, hiking, and outdoor activities.

4. B) — The Northern Lights are specifically described as a magical sight seen in Norway’s far north.

5. C) — “Blend” means to mix or combine different elements — in this case, old traditions and modern life.

6. C) — The passage aims to inform readers about Norway’s landscapes, legends, and way of life — not to persuade or compare.