

Oslo



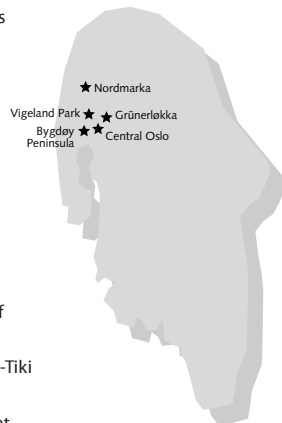
Hemmed by a 'fjord' and kilometres of woodland, Norway's capital is an easy-going city with an eclectic architectural mix of old, new and just plain 1960s that is hard not to like. The perfect size for exploring on foot, the city boasts world-class museums, a lively nightlife and plenty of outdoor activities for the energetic.

Most visitors will find themselves struggling to choose between Oslo's numerous museums, which offer something for almost every taste: a face-to-face with the haunting image of Edvard Munch's *The Scream* at the National Gallery, a chance to stand in the shoes of an Olympic ski-jumper at the Holmenkollen Ski Museum, or a window into history and culture at the unforgettable Viking Ship, Polarship Fram or Folk Museums on Bygdøy. And Oslo is certainly the cosmopolitan heart of Norway, with a rapidly growing café and bar culture, top-notch restaurants, and nightlife options ranging from world-class opera and jazz to indie rock.

But many Oslo residents, being avid hikers, skiers and sailors, will fondly tell you that what they love most about their city is how easy it is to leave the city life behind. Located at the head of the Oslofjord (which actually isn't a fjord, but is pretty anyway), Oslo is one of Europe's largest capitals in terms of area (450 sq km) but smallest population-wise. As a result, it is the only European capital that boasts cycling, hiking, ice-skating, kayaking, sailing and skiing, all within its city limits and a short train ride away.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Walk in the footsteps of Henrik Ibsen down Karl Johans gate for coffee at the **Grand Café** (p110)
- Eat ice cream as you stroll with the locals in the **city centre** (p93) and wave a Norwegian flag on 17 May, Norway's **national day** (p108)
- Pick summer blueberries and go winter skiing in Oslo's **Nordmarka** (p105)
- Come up with ways to cheat security at the **Munch Museum** (p103) then start the afternoon in one of **Grünerløkka's cafés or bars** (p112) and find yourself still there early the next morning
- Reconsider parenthood while looking at the works of Gustav Vigeland at **Vigeland Park** (p99)
- Examine the ships and charts of the Viking Ship, Kon-Tiki and Polership Fram Museums on **Bygdøy** (p101)
- Enjoy an impromptu dinner of shrimp on the docks at **Aker Brygge** (p112)



POPULATION: 548,000

HIGHEST ELEVATION: FJELLSJØKAMPEN 812M

HISTORY

The name Oslo is derived from the words *Ás*, the Old Norse name for the Norse Godhead, and *lo*, meaning 'pasture', yielding roughly 'the fields of the gods'.

The city was originally founded in 1049 by King Harald Hardråde (Harald Hard-Ruler; see p32), whose son Olav Kyrre (Olav the Peaceful) set up a cathedral and a corresponding bishopric here. In the late 13th century, King Håkon V created a military presence by building the Akershus Festning (Akershus Fortress; see p98) in the hope of deterring the Swedish threat from the east. After the mid-14th-century bubonic plague wiped out half of the country's population, Norway united with Denmark and, from 1397 to 1624, Norwegian politics and defence were handled from Copenhagen. Oslo slipped into obscurity and, in 1624, it burned to the ground. It was resurrected by King Christian IV, who rebuilt it on a more easily defended site and renamed it Christiania, after his humble self.

For three centuries, the city held on as a seat of defence. In 1814 the framers of Norway's first constitution designated it the official capital of the new realm, but their efforts were effectively nullified by Sweden, which had other ideas about Norway's future and unified the two countries under Swedish rule. In 1905, when that union was dissolved and Norway became a separate kingdom, the stage was set for Christiania to flourish as the capital of modern Norway. It reverted to its original name, Oslo, in 1925 and the city has never looked back.

ORIENTATION

Oslo's central train station (Oslo Sentralstasjon or Oslo S) sits at the eastern end of the city centre, with the Galleri Oslo Bus Terminal not far away to the northeast. From Oslo S the main street, Karl Johans gate, forms a ceremonial axis westward through the heart of the city to the Royal Palace. Most sights, including the harbour front and Akershus Festning, are within a 15-minute walk of Karl Johans gate, as are the majority of hotels and pensions. Many of the sights outside the centre, including Vigeland Park and the Munch Museum, are just a short bus or tram ride away. The Bygdøy Peninsula is a mere 10-minute ferry ride across the harbour.

Maps

The tourist offices distribute a detailed and free city plan. Unless you're heading out to the suburbs, it should be sufficient. On the reverse side is a map of the T-bane (metro) system and an inset covering Holmenkollen.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

- Ark Bokhandel** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 47 32 00; www.ark.no; Øvre Slottsgate 23-25; ☹ closed Sun) Good English-language and stationery section; branches around town.
- Nomaden** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 13 14 15; www.nomaden.no; Uranienborgveien 4; ☹ closed Sun) Travel books, maps and gear.
- Norli** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 00 43 00; www.norli.no; Universitetsgata 20-24; ☹ closed Sun) Largest bookstore in Norway.
- Ringstrøms Bookshop** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 20 00 13; www.ringstrom-antikvariat.no; Ullevålsveien 1; ☹ closed Sun) Secondhand and antiquarian books and CDs.
- Tronsmo** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 99 03 99; www.tronsmo.no; Kristian Augusts gate 19; ☹ closed Sun) Alternative bookstore with feminist, gay, lesbian and political works.

Emergency

Ambulance (☎ 113)

Fire (☎ 110)

Police (Map pp96-7; ☎ 112; Hammersborggata 10)

Internet Access

- Arctic Internet Café** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 17 19 40; Oslo S; per 30/60min Nkr35/60; ☹ 8am-midnight)
- Deichmanske Bibliotek** (Municipal Library; Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 43 29 00; Arne Garborgs plass; free access limited to an hr, unlimited wi-fi; ☹ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat Jun-Aug; 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat Sep-May)
- IT-Palasset** (Map p93; ☎ 22 46 21 12; www.it-palasset.no; Majorstua T-bane, Sørkedalsveien 1; per hr Nkr60; ☹ 10am-midnight Mon-Fri, 11am-midnight Sat & Sun)
- Use-It** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 41 51 32; Møllergata 3; free access; ☹ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat Jun-Aug; shorter hrs rest-of-year)

WI-FI ACCESS

- Free wi-fi is popular in many of Oslo's cafés; the tourist office keeps a list of options. Most ask that you buy something before logging on.
- Kaffe & Krem** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 83 25 10; Haakon VII gate)
- Nobel Peace Center** (Map pp96-7; ☹ 48 30 10 00; Aker Brygge) At an important sight.
- QBA** (Map p93; ☎ 22 35 24 60; Olaf Ryesplass 4; Grünerløkka)
- Tea Lounge** (Map p93; Thorvold Meyersgate 33; Grünerløkka) A bar we recommend.

OSLO IN....

Two Days

Start your day with a quick stroll through the centre of town, passing by the elegant **Stortinget** (Parliament building; p95), the **National Theatre** (p115) and **Oslo Cathedral** (p94), all along the busy pedestrian thoroughfare of Karl Johans gate. Stop for a coffee at the **Grand Café** (p110), Henrik Ibsen's favourite haunt, before ducking into the nearby **National Gallery** (p93) on Universitetsgata for a representative dose of artwork by Edvard Munch or, for the bookish, wander up Henrik Ibsensgate to the **Ibsen Museum** (p94).

Try an al fresco, pier-side lunch of peal-and-eat shrimp on **Aker Brygge** (p112) from one of the local fishing boats. For dessert combine a pastry stop at **Pascal** (p112) with a visit to the adjacent **Nobel Peace Center** (p94). From Aker Brygge, take a ferry to **Bygdøy** (p101) and spend your afternoon learning about the exploits of Norway's greatest explorers at the **Polership Fram** or **Viking Ship Museums** (p102). Or head to the open-air **Folk Museum** (p102) to see buildings and exhibits from across Norway.

By night, head to the bars, cafés and restaurants of Oslo's Greenwich Village, **Grünerløkka** (p112), and/or treat yourself to a great view and opulent service at the **Holmenkollen Park Hotel** (p110).

Four Days

Follow the two-day itinerary, but with the extra time you can linger in the medieval **Akershus Castle** (p98) and visit the **Norwegian Resistance Museum** (p99). You will have time to wander among the bold, earthy statues of Emil Vigeland at **Vigeland Park** (p99) and stop in at the **Vigeland Museum** (p100).

The energetic might try spending an afternoon walking, skiing or biking in the **Nordmarka** (p105), or simply take the T-bane up to **Frognerseteren** (p113) for a good view and some apple cake. The **Holmenkollen ski-jump** and adjacent **Ski Museum** (p104) are worth a stop on the way back down.

Make space in your schedule for an evening at one of the harbour-side restaurants on **Aker Brygge** (p112) or for the truly gourmand try Oslo's two-Michelin star **Bagatelle** (p111).

One Week

With a week in Oslo, you'll have a chance to take in some of the city's more specialised (or simply bizarre) museums, wander well beyond the well-beaten track of Karl Johans gate or take a day trip.

The **Historical Museum** (p94) and **Munch Museum** (p103) in particular are worth a stop and the **Astrup Fearnly Museum** (p93) proves that Norwegians are not as conformist as they may seem. On a sunny day, families might enjoy a ferry ride and picnic among the 12th-century ruins on **Hovedøya** (p106). The quirky 18th-century homes of the **Damstredet District** (p99), the bazaars in **Grønland** (p112) and the up-and-coming **Gamlebyen** (p99), are all distinctive neighbourhoods within 10 minutes of the city centre.

Both the **Oscarsborg Fortress** (p118) at Drøbak and the cobbled streets of Gamlebyen, the old quarter of **Fredrikstad** (p120), are well worth a day trip.

Laundry

A Snarvask (Map p93; ☎ 22 37 57 70, 41 42 92 53; Thorvald Meyersgate 18; wash/dry Nkr35/30; 🕒 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat)

Selva Laundry (Map pp96-7; ☎ 41 64 08 33; Ullevålsveien 15; wash Nkr40-90, dry Nkr30; 🕒 8am-9pm)

Left Luggage

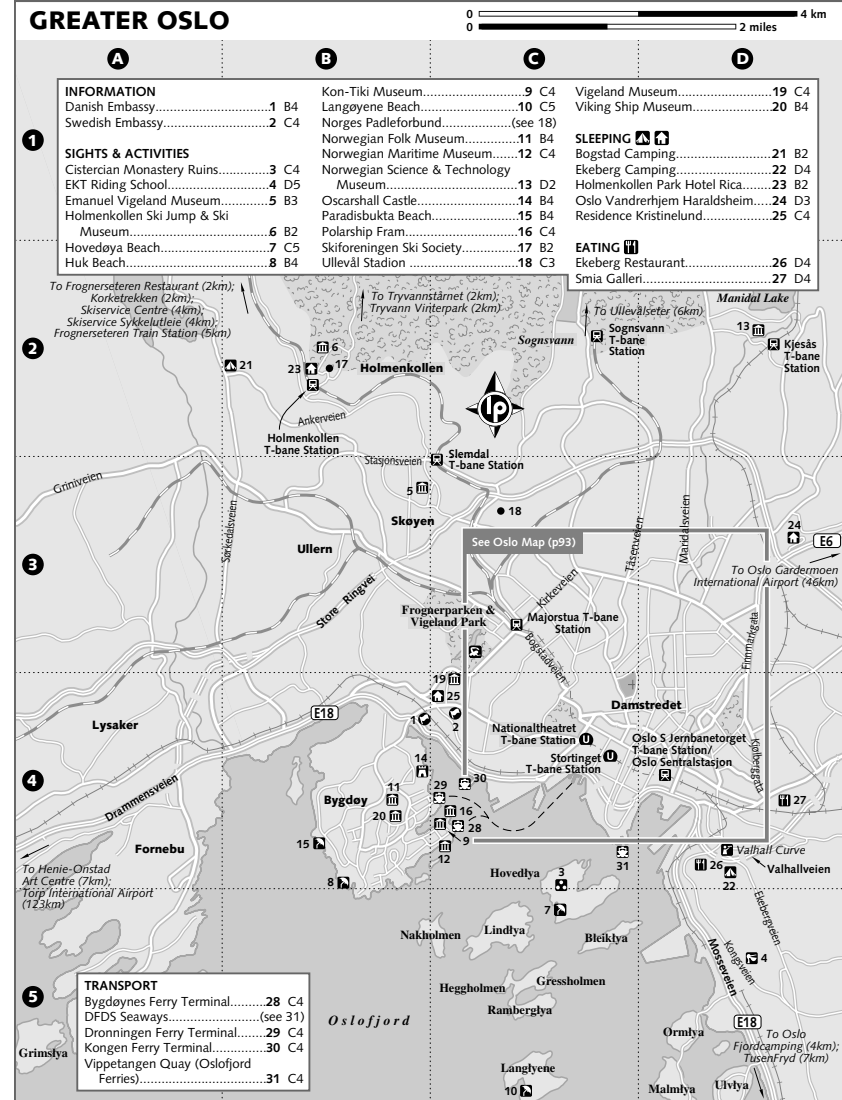
Oslo S has various sizes of lockers priced from Nkr20 to Nkr30 per 24 hours.

Libraries

Deichmanske Bibliotek (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 43 29 00; 4 Arne Garborgs plass; 🕒 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat Jun-Aug; 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat Sep-May) The largest public library in Norway, it has a reading room with foreign newspapers and magazines.

National Library (Nasjonalbiblioteket; Map pp96-7; ☎ 81 00 13 00; www.nb.no; Drammensveien 42; 🕒 8.30am-3pm Mon-Fri May-Sep, 8.30am-3.45pm

GREATER OSLO



Mon-Fri Sep-May) Contains the world's largest collection of material about and by Henrik Ibsen.

Medical Services

If you're pressed for time (and not worried about the expense) the Oslo Kommunale Legevaketen clinic has a list of private doctors they recommend.

Jernbanetorget Apotek (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 41 24 82; Fred Olsens gate) A 24-hour pharmacy opposite Oslo S.

Oslo Kommunale Legevaketen (Oslo Emergency Clinic; Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 93 22 93; Storgata 40; 🕒 24hr) Casualty and emergency medical clinic.

Tøyen Tannlegevakten (Map p93; ☎ 22 19 18 00; Kjøllberggata 29; 🕒 7-10pm Mon-Fri, 11am-2pm & 7am-11pm Sat & Sun) Recommended dental practice.

OSLO ON THE CHEAP

Begin with a visit to **Åpent Bakeri** (p111), behind the castle, for a breakfast of freshly baked rolls, slathered with unlimited amounts of homemade strawberry jam (Nkr14). On the walk into town keep an eye out for the unpretentious Nobel Institute, where the committee meets to choose the winner of the peace prize, and playwright **Henrik Ibsen's last home**, now a museum (p94). Browse through the galleries at the **Astrup Fearnly Museum** (opposite), the **National Gallery** (opposite) or check out the exhibits at the **Historical Museum** (p94) near the university; they're all free. For lunch snag a *poise* (hot dog) wrapped in a *lumpe* (potato flour wrap) for Nkr15.

Spend the afternoon strolling around **Vigeland Park** (p99) and then head back into town for dinner at one of the restaurants along **Bernt Ankersgate** (p110) a little north of Oslo S for some authentic Vietnamese (mains Nkr60 to Nkr105). In the evening, try **Stargate** (p114) in Grønland for reasonably priced beer (Nkr35). Tuck in at **MS Innvik** (p109) for the night and let the waves lull you to sleep.

Other freebies: a visit to the graves of Ibsen and Munch at **Vår Frelsers Gravlund** (p99); the view from **Frognerseteren restaurant** (p113), followed by a walk through the **Nordmarka** (p105); and a dip in the Oslofjord at **Huk** (p106).

Money

There are banks with ATMs along Karl Johans gate. The tourist office and post office in Oslo S exchange money (into Norwegian kroner only) at a less advantageous rate (usually 3% less than banks). **Forex** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 41 30 60; www.forex.no; Fridtjof Nansens plass 6 & Oslo S; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri) is the largest foreign exchange service in Scandinavia.

Post

Main post office (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 14 90 00; cnr Prinsens gate & Kirkegata) To receive mail, have it sent to Poste Restante, Oslo Sentrum Postkontor, Dronningens gate 15, 0101 Oslo, though pick it up using the Kirkegata entrance. You'll find convenient post office branches at Oslo S, Solli plass and on Grensen (all Map pp96-7).

Telephone

Telekort card phones and coin phones are found throughout the city. Coin phones take Nkr1 to Nkr20 coins, but you'll need at least Nkr5 for a local call. Faxes can be sent from post offices.

Telehuset (Map pp96-7; ☎ 81 54 44 00; Haakon VII gate 1; ☎ 7am-9pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat) If you want a SIM-card for your mobile phone.

Tourist Information

Den Norske Turistforening (DNT; Norwegian Mountain Touring Club; Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 82 28 22; www.turistforening.no; Storget 3; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Wed & Fri, 10am-6pm Thu, 10am-2pm Sat, open 1hr earlier in summer) Provides information, maps and brochures on hiking in Norway and sells memberships, which include discounted rates on the use of mountain huts along the

main hiking routes. You can also book some specific huts and pick up keys.

Oslo Promotion Tourist Office (Map pp96-7; ☎ 81 53 05 55; www.visitoslo.com; Fridtjof Nansens plass 5; ☎ 9am-7pm Jun-Aug, 9am-5pm Mon-Sat Apr, May & Sep, 9am-4pm Mon-Fri Oct-Mar) Located just north of the Rådhus (Town Hall). Look out for its useful *Oslo Guide* or the monthly *What's On in Oslo*.

Tourist Office (Map pp96-7; Jernbanetorget 1, Oslo S; ☎ 8am-11pm May-Aug, 8am-11pm Mon-Sat Sep, 8am-5pm Mon-Sat Oct-Apr) Easy to find under the glass Trafikanten tower in front of the Oslo S; handles Oslo-specific questions, sells the Oslo Pass and can help book accommodation. Also sells city bike day pass and 24-hour Audio Tor i-pod tour (p107).

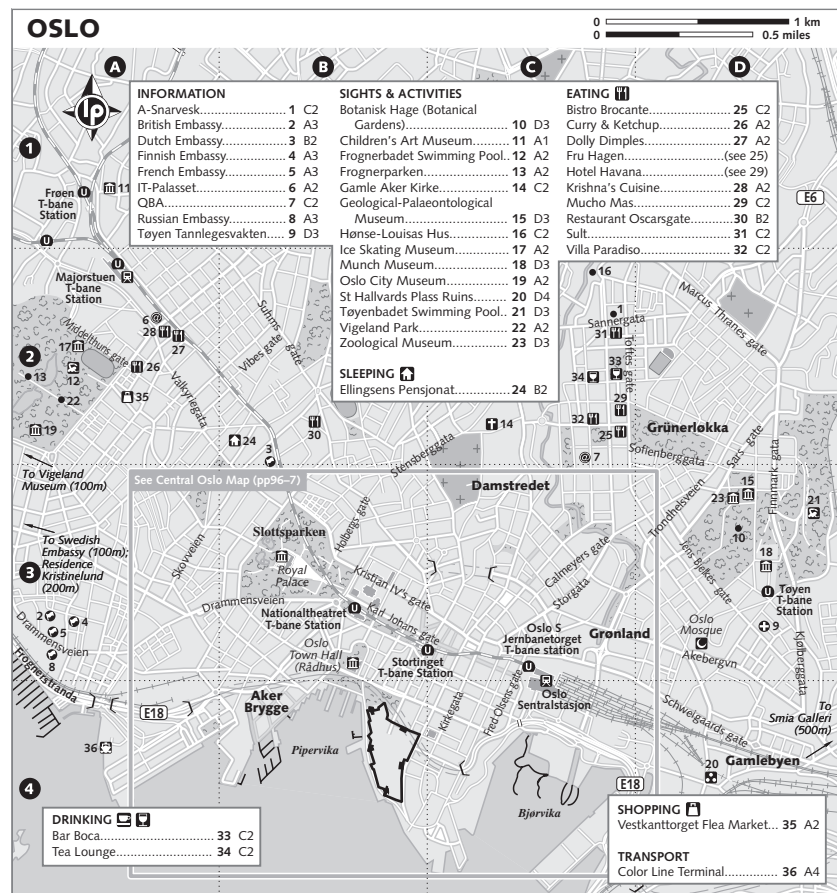
Use-It (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 41 51 32; www.use-it.no; Møllergata 3; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri Jul & Aug, 11am-5pm Mon-Fri Sep-Jun) The exceptionally helpful and savvy Ungdomsinformasjonen (Youth Information Office, better known as Use-It) is aimed at (but not restricted to) backpackers. It makes (free) bookings for inexpensive or private accommodation and provides information on anything from current events to hitching possibilities.

Travel Agencies

Kilroy Travels (Map pp96-7; ☎ 02633; www.kilroytravels.no; Nedre Slottsgate 23; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Thu, 10am-5pm Fri, 11am-3pm Sat) Specialises in student and youth travel and discounted stand-by tickets.

SIGHTS

Whether you're artistic or literary, a peacenik or a history enthusiast, an explorer or an athlete, chances are there is a museum in Oslo tailor-made for you. Most are clustered around the city centre, on Bygdøy or near Vigeland Park.



Central Oslo ART GALLERIES & MUSEUMS National Gallery

One of Oslo's major highlights is the **National Gallery** (Nasjonalgalleriet; Map pp96-7; ☎ 21 98 20 00; www.nasjonalmuseet.no; Universitetsgata 13; admission free; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue, Wed & Fri, 10am-7pm Thu, noon-5pm Sat & Sun). It houses the nation's largest collection of Norwegian art, including works from the Romantic era and more-modern works from 1800 to WWII. Some of Edvard Munch's best-known creations are on display, including his most renowned work, *The Scream*; see the boxed text, p103. There's also an impressive collection of European art with works by Gauguin, Picasso, El Greco and many of the impressionists:

Manet, Degas, Renoir, Matisse, Cézanne and Monet.

For more on Edvard Munch, see p51.

Astrup Fearnley Museum

With its often steamy content, this **museum** (Astrup Fearnley Museet; Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 93 60 60; www.afmuseet.no; Dronningens gate 4; admission free; ☎ 11am-5pm Tue, Wed & Fri, 11am-7pm Thu, noon-5pm Sat & Sun) certainly begs the question, 'what is art?' Don't miss the gilded ceramic sculpture *Michael Jackson and Bubbles*, by Jeff Koons.

National Museum of Contemporary Art Featuring the National Gallery's collections of post-WWII Scandinavian and international art is the **National Museum of Contemporary Art** (Museet

OSLO PASS

The **Oslo Pass** (1/2/3 days Nkr210/300/390), sold at the tourist office, is one popular way of cutting transport and ticket costs around the city. The majority of the city's museums are free with the pass, as well as all public transport within the city limits (barring late-night buses). Other perks include restaurant and tour discounts. Note that students and seniors get large discounts on ticket fares anyway, so walking and buying individual tickets may prove more economical for them.

for Samtidskunst; Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 86 22 10; Bank plassen 4; admission free; ☎ 11am-5pm Tue, Wed & Fri, 11am-8pm Thu, noon-5pm Sat & Sun). Some of the 3000-piece collection is definitely an acquired taste, but it does provide a timely reminder that Norwegian art didn't cease with Edvard Munch.

Stenersen Museum

This **museum** (Stenersenmuseet; Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 49 36 00; Munkedamsveien 15; adult/child Nkr45/25, free with Oslo Pass; ☎ 11am-5pm Wed & Fri-Sun, 11am-7pm Tue & Thu) contains three formerly private collections of works by Norwegian artists from 1850 to 1970. The museum and much of the art, which includes works by Munch, were a gift to the city by Rolf E Stenersen.

Ibsen Museum

Housed in the last residence of Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen (see the boxed text, p50), the **Ibsen Museum** (Ibsen-Museet; Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 12 35 50; www.ibsenmuseet.no; Arbins gate 1; adult/child Nkr25/70, free with Oslo Pass; ☎ guided tours 11am-6pm & hourly, 11am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, 11am-4pm Tue-Sun Sep-May) is a must-see for Ibsen fans along with his birthplace of Skien (p153) and Grimstad (p138), where the eminent playwright spent his formative years. The study remains exactly as he left it and other rooms have been restored in the style and colours popular in Ibsen's day. Visitors can even glance into the bedroom where he uttered his famously enigmatic last words 'Tvert imot!' ('To the contrary!'), before dying on 23 May 1906.

Nobel Peace Center

Norwegians take pride in their role as international peacemakers, which explains the central location of the new **Nobel Peace Center** (Fredsetner;

Map pp96-7; ☎ 48 30 10 00; www.nobelpeacecentre.org; Brynjulf Bulls plass 2; adult/child Nkr80/free; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun Sep-May; 10am-6pm Mon-Fri Jun-Aug) in Aker Brygge. Opened in 2005, the centre is Oslo's most technically advanced museum, with an array of digital displays that are intended to offer as much or as little information as the visitor desires. Don't miss the Nobel Book on the 2nd floor or the movie theatre streaming films on the history of the prize and its winners (see the boxed text, opposite).

Historical Museum

The highly recommended **Historical Museum** (Historisk Museet; Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 85 99 12; www.khm.uio.no; University of Oslo, Frederiks gate 2; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun mid-May-mid-Sep, 11am-4pm Tue-Sun rest-of-year) is actually three museums under one roof. Most interesting is the ground floor **National Antiquities Collection** (Oldsaksamlingen), with displays of Viking-era coins, jewellery and ornaments. Look out for the 9th-century **Hon treasure**, the largest such find in Scandinavia (2.5kg). A section on medieval religious art includes the doors and richly painted ceiling of the Ål stave church (built around 1300). The 2nd level has an Arctic exhibit and the Myntkabinetet, a collection of the earliest Norwegian coins from as early as AD 995. The 2nd level and top floor hold the **Ethnographic Museum**, with changing exhibitions on Asia, Africa and the Americas.

Norsk Filminstitutt

The **Norwegian Film Museum** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 47 45 00; www.nfi.no; Dronningens gate 16; admission free; ☎ 9am-4pm Tue-Fri) has a colourful and lovingly presented selection of displays on the history of filmmaking, clips of old films (from silent, black-and-white shorts, to WWII documentaries) and pictures of Norwegian stars. Classic movies are screened regularly in the theatre on the 2nd floor.

HISTORIC SIGHTS

Oslo Cathedral

Dating from 1697, the **Oslo Cathedral** (Domkirke; Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 31 46 00; Stortorget 1; admission free; ☎ closed for renovations till 2009) is worth seeing for its elaborate stained glass by Emanuel Vigeland (brother of Gustav) and painted ceiling (completed between 1936 and 1950). The exceptional altarpiece, a 1748 model of the Last Supper and the Crucifixion by Michael Rasch, was an

THE WORLD'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS PRIZE

Most Nobel prizes – physics, chemistry, medicine, literature and economics – are awarded every October in Stockholm, but the most prestigious prize of all, the peace prize, is reserved for Oslo. In his will in 1895, Alfred Nobel, the Swedish founder of the prize and inventor of dynamite, instructed that the interest on his vast fortune be awarded each year 'to those who, during the preceding year, shall have conferred the greatest benefit on mankind.'

It is unclear why Nobel chose Norway to administer the peace prize, but whatever the reason, it is a committee of five Norwegians, appointed for six-year terms by the Norwegian Storting (parliament), that chooses the winner each year. Their meetings, held in a room of the Nobel Institute that is decorated with the pictures of winners past, from Mother Teresa (1979) to Mikhail Gorbachev (1990) and Al Gore (2007), are closed-door affairs presided over by the chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, professor Ole Mjøs. Meetings are also attended by the institute's director, Geir Lundestad. Appointed director in 1990, Lundestad filled us in on some prize history and discussed his pet project the new **Nobel Peace Center** (Map pp96-7; www.nobelpeacecenter.org); see opposite for details of the centre.

What's the difference between being nominated and short-listed for the peace prize? Anyone can be nominated, from President George Bush to Madonna, and this often causes a huge outcry, but there is a big difference from being nominated to being selected as the winner! We start from almost 200 candidates in February. The list is cut down to 30, then five and the rest of the time is spent focusing on the qualifications of the candidates on the shortlist.

Is the committee ever criticised for being too secretive? The committee is transparent, but it is true that the list of nominees is closed for 50 years and no minutes are kept, though some of the members keep notes, which they have made public.

How has the nature of the prize changed while you've been director? The definition of peace has slowly broadened to include elements that reflect the changing world. Human rights, for example, was initially a very controversial interpretation when it [the prize] was given in 1960 to South African activist Albert Lutuli. The environment was added as a road to peace in 2004 and there is always pressure to widen the definition further.

Describe the ideal candidate? Many see the prize as a declaration of sainthood, but winners are often just more or less ordinary people that have tried to do something useful for peace. Their efforts have been heroic, but they are all very different. At the same time, they share a vision and they have the courage to carry it out.

What is special about the new Fredsetner? The new peace centre is where we tell the story of all the laureates. It is the most electronically advanced museum in Oslo and the idea is that people can choose to learn as much or as little as they want to find out. It is up to you.

As told to Kari Lundgren

original feature of the church (from 1700), but it was moved all over the country before being returned from Prestnes church in Majorstue in 1950. The organ front and pulpit were both part of the original construction. Occasional concerts are held in the church (Nkr100).

The bazaar halls (Basarhallene; Map pp96-7), around the back of the church, date from 1858 and are currently used by summer handicraft sales outlets.

Stortinget

Built in 1866, Norway's yellow-brick **parliament building** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 31 35 96; www.stortinget.no; Karl Johans gate 22; admission free; ☎ guided tours in Norwegian & English 10am & 1pm, in German 11.30am Jul &

Aug, Sat only rest-of-year), right in the city centre and staring up the hill towards the royal palace, is one of Europe's more charming parliaments.

Oslo Rådhus

This twin-towered **town hall** (Rådhus; Map pp96-7; ☎ 02 180; Fridtjof Nansens plass; adult/child Nkr40/free, free Sep-May or with Oslo Pass; ☎ 8.30am-5pm May-Aug, 9am-4pm rest-of-year), completed in 1950 to commemorate the city's 900th anniversary, houses the city's political administration. Something of an Oslo landmark, its red brick functionalist exterior is unusual, if not particularly imaginative. The entrance is lined with wooden reliefs from Norse mythology and the interior halls and chambers are decorated with splashy

CENTRAL OSLO



INFORMATION	
Akershus Fortress Information Centre.....	1 D4
Arctic Internet Café.....	(see 30)
Ark Bokhandel.....	2 E3
Canadian Embassy.....	3 D1
Deichmanske Bibliotek (Municipal Library).....	4 F2
Den Norske Turistforening (DNT).....	5 F3
Forex.....	(see 30)
Forex.....	6 D3
German Embassy.....	7 B1
Irish Embassy.....	8 D3
Japanese Embassy.....	9 D1
Jernbanetorget Apotek.....	10 F3
Kaffe & Krem.....	11 B3
Kilroy Travels.....	12 E3
Kvinnefronten.....	13 G1
LLH.....	14 E3
Main Post Office.....	15 F4
National Library.....	16 A3
Nomaden.....	17 C1
Norli.....	18 D2
Opera House Information Centre.....	19 G4
Oslo Kommunale Legevakten (Oslo Emergency Clinic).....	20 H2
Oslo Promotion Tourist Office.....	21 D3
Police.....	22 G3
Post Office.....	23 F3
Ringstrøms Bookshop.....	24 E2
Selva Laundry.....	25 E1
Solliflask Post Office.....	26 B3
Spanish Embassy.....	27 B1
Storting Information Centre.....	28 E3
Telhuset.....	29 D3
Tourist Office.....	30 G4
Transmo.....	31 D2
US Embassy.....	32 B3
Use-It.....	33 F3
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES	
Akershus Castle & Fortress.....	34 D5
Anker Bridge.....	35 H2
Astrup Fearnley Museum.....	36 F5
Bazaar Halls.....	37 F3
Båtservice Sightseeing.....	38 C4
Christiania Bymodell.....	39 D4
Fortress Parade Ground.....	40 E5
Gekko Klatring.....	41 H5
Historical Museum.....	42 D2
Ibsen Museum.....	43 C3
Narvisen Outdoor Ice Rink.....	44 E3
National Gallery.....	45 D2
National Museum of Contemporary Art.....	46 E4
Nobel Institute.....	47 B2
Nobel Peace Center.....	48 A4
Norwegian Armed Forces Museum.....	49 E6
Norwegian Film Museum.....	50 F5
Norwegian Resistance Museum.....	51 D5
Oslo Cathedral.....	52 F3
Oslo Promenade.....	(see 53)
Oslo Town Hall (Rådhus).....	53 D3
Paléet Shopping Centre.....	54 E3
Stenersen Museum.....	55 C3
Stortinget (Parliament).....	56 E3
Sykkestenes Landsforening.....	57 F3
Victoria Terrace.....	58 C3
Vår Frelzers Gravlund.....	59 E1
SLEEPING	
Anker Hostel.....	60 H2
Cochs Pensjonat.....	61 C1
Grand Hotel.....	62 E3
Grims Grenka.....	63 E4
Hotell Bondeheimen.....	64 E3
MS Innvik.....	65 F5
P-Hotel.....	66 E3
Permalinen Hotel.....	67 E4
Rica Victoria Hotel.....	68 D3
Thon Hotel Munch.....	69 E2
EATING	
Aker Brygge Food Court.....	(see 120)
Albertine.....	70 C4
Ap'Apent Bakeri.....	71 B2
Bagatelle.....	72 A3
Bagel & Juice.....	(see 103)
Baltazar.....	(see 37)
Beach Club.....	73 B4
Dolly Dimples.....	74 D3
Dolly Dimples.....	75 F3
Dr Kneipp's Vinbar.....	(see 82)
Fisherman's Coop.....	76 C4
Food Court.....	77 G3
Grand Café.....	(see 62)
Grønland Bazar.....	78 H3
ICA Gourmet Supermarket & Café.....	79 C4
Japo Sushi.....	80 A3
Kaffistova.....	(see 64)
Life.....	81 E3
Markveien Mat & Vinhus.....	82 G1
Mithas The Sweethouse.....	83 H3
Pascal.....	(see 48)
Peppes Pizza.....	84 C4
Pizza da Mimmo.....	85 A2
Punjab Tandoori.....	86 H3
Rimi Supermarket.....	87 G3
Rust.....	88 C1
Solsiden.....	89 D4
Teddy's Soft Bar.....	90 G3
Theatrecaféen.....	91 D3
Thien Nga.....	92 G2
Tullins Café.....	93 D1
United Bakeries.....	(see 81)
DRINKING	
Café Kaos.....	94 H1
Champagneria.....	95 A2
Dattera Til Hagen.....	96 H3
Justisen.....	97 F3
London Pub.....	98 E2
Onkel Donald Kafé-Bar.....	99 D3
Palace Grill.....	100 B3
Robinet.....	101 F2
Stargate.....	102 H3
Stockfleth's.....	103 E3
Süd Öst.....	104 H2
Tekehtopa.....	105 E2
ENTERTAINMENT	
Black Box.....	106 C4
Blå.....	107 G1
Den Norske Opera.....	108 F3
Elsker.....	109 E2
Filmens Hus.....	110 F4
Fire Oslo.....	(see 119)
Gloria Flames.....	111 H3
Mono.....	112 F3
National Theatre.....	113 D3
New Opera House.....	114 G4
Oslo Spektrum.....	115 G3
Rockefeller Music Hall.....	116 F2
Saga Kino.....	117 D3
Spasbar.....	118 D2
Stratos.....	119 F2
SHOPPING	
Aker Brygge Shopping Complex.....	120 C4
Galleri Oslo Shopping Centre.....	121 G3
Glasmagasinet Department Store.....	122 F3
Gunerius Shopping Centre.....	123 G3
Hassan og Den Dama.....	124 A2
Heimen Husflid.....	(see 64)
ICA Gourmet Supermarket & Café.....	125 D3
Juhls' Silvergalleri Oslo.....	126 D3
Norway Designs.....	127 D3
Oslo City Shopping Centre.....	128 G3
Unique Design.....	129 D3
Vinmonopolet.....	(see 128)
TRANSPORT	
Aker Brygge Pier.....	130 C4
Color Line Ferries.....	131 E3
Galleri Oslo Long-Distance Bus Terminal.....	132 H3
Rådhusbrygge Quay (Boat Terminal).....	133 D4
Stena Lines.....	134 F4
Trafikanten.....	135 F4
Vippetangen Quay No 2 (Stena Line & DFDS Ferries).....	136 F6

and impressive frescoes and paintings by some of Norway's most prominent artists. It's here that the Nobel Peace Prize is awarded on 10 December each year (see the boxed text, p95). You can view the main hall for free from the front corridor. Guided tours (in English) are available at 10am, noon and 2pm Monday to Friday and on weekends in June and July (no extra charge).

Akershus Castle & Fortress

Strategically located on the eastern side of the harbour, dominating the Oslo harbour front, are the medieval **castle and fortress** (*slott and festning*; Map pp96-7), arguably Oslo's architectural highlight.

When Oslo was named capital of Norway in 1299, King Håkon V ordered the construction of Akershus to protect the city from external threats. Since it suffered repeated fires, sieges and battles, the fortress was reconstructed to withstand the increased fighting power of the day, including the 1559 addition of the Munk gun tower. Between 1580 and the mid-18th century, it was further fortified with mounds and reinforced ramparts.

When Oslo was rebuilt after the 1624 fire, the city, renamed Christiania, was shifted to the less vulnerable and more defensible site behind the protective fortress walls. By 1818 the need for defence had been superseded by the need for space and most of the outer ram-

part was destroyed to accommodate population growth. From 1899 to 1963 it underwent major renovations and, nowadays, the park-like grounds serve as a venue for concerts, dances and theatrical productions – a far cry from its warlike origins and a welcome departure from its grim history. Note, however, that this complex remains a military installation and may be closed to the public whenever there's a state function.

In the 17th century, Christian IV renovated **Akershus Castle** (Akershus Slott; ☎ 23 09 35 53; adult/child Nkr50/10; ☹ 10am-4pm Mon-Sat, 12.30-4pm Sun May-mid-Sep; guided tours 11am, 1pm & 3pm Mon-Sat, 1pm & 3pm Sun) into a Renaissance palace, although the front remains decidedly medieval. In its dungeons you'll find dark cubbyholes where outcast nobles were kept under lock and key (one dungeon still holds a rather miserable-looking model wrapped in sackcloth), while the upper floors contained sharply contrasting lavish banquet halls and staterooms.

The castle chapel is still used for army events, and the crypts of King Håkon VII and Olav V lie beneath it. The guided tours are led by university students in period dress and, while not compulsory, they do offer an entertaining anecdotal history of the place that you won't get by wandering around on your own.

Entry to the expansive **fortress** (admission free; ☹ 6am-9pm) is through a gate at the end of Akersgata or over a drawbridge spanning Kongsens gate at the southern end of Kirkegata. After 6pm in winter, use the Kirkegata entrance.

The **Akershus Fortress Information Centre** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 09 39 17; ☹ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun mid-May-mid-Aug; closes 1hr earlier rest-of-year), inside the main gate, has an exhibit entitled *New Barricades*, which recounts the history of the Akershus complex. Staff also offer guided tours of the **castle grounds** (☹ 10am, noon, 2pm & 4pm Mon-Fri, noon, 2pm & 4pm Sat & Sun Jun-Aug). At 1.30pm you can watch the changing of the guard at the fortress.

Also within the fortress complex, adjacent to a memorial for resistance fighters executed on the spot during WWII, is the **Norwegian Resistance Museum** (Norges Hjemmefront Museet; Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 09 31 38; www.nhm.mil.no; adult/child Nkr30/15; ☹ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat & Sun Sep-May). The small, but worthwhile museum covers the dark years of German occupation, as well as the jubilant day of 9 May 1945

when peace was declared. Artefacts include a set of dentures that belonged to a Norwegian Prisoner of War in Poland, and were wired to receive radio broadcasts, underground newspapers, numerous maps and photographs. The museum is a must see for WWII history enthusiasts (see boxed text, p100).

DAMSTREDET

The quirky 18th-century wooden homes of the **Damstredet district** and the nearby **Telthusbakken** (Map pp96-7) are a nice change of pace from the modern architecture of the city centre. Once an impoverished shantytown, Damstredet has become a popular residential neighbourhood for artists. To get there, walk north on Akersgata and turn right on Damstredet gate. Telthusbakken is a little further up Akersgata, also on the right. On the way, you'll pass **Vår Frelzers Gravlund**, the graveyard where Ibsen, Munch and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson are buried.

GAMLEBYEN

The ruins at Sørenga and St Hallvards plass in Gamlebyen east of central Oslo date back to the 12th and 13th century and the city centre might still be here today had the 17th century King Kristian IV not decided to move to Akershus Festning after a devastating fire. Long one of Oslo's poorest neighbourhoods, Gamlebyen remains a bit rough around the edges, but is changing rapidly, a trend that is likely to continue given its proximity to the **New Opera House** (Map pp96-7) on Bjørnvika.

Frognerparken & Vigeland Park

Frognerparken, which has as its centre-piece **Vigeland Park** (Map pp96-7; ☹ year-round), is an extraordinary open-air showcase of work by Norway's best-loved sculptor, Gustav Vigeland (see the boxed text, p101). Vigeland Park is brimming with 212 granite and bronze Vigeland works. His highly charged work ranges from entwined lovers and tranquil elderly couples to contempt-ridden beggars. His most renowned work, *Sinataggen* (the 'Little Hot-Head'), portrays a London child in a mood of particular ill humour.

It's a great place to visit in the evening as other sights have closed.

Near the southern entrance to the park lies **Oslo City Museum** (Oslo Bymuseum; Map p93; ☎ 23 28 41 70; www.oslobymuseum.no; Frognerveien 67; adult/child

THE NORWEGIAN RESISTANCE: 'NEVER AGAIN!'

The day the German army marched into Oslo – April 9, 1940 – Gunnar Sønsteby watched them parade down Karl Johans gate, mounted his bicycle and disappeared into the woods to join the resistance.

At the time, there wasn't really anything to join. After 125 years of peace, Norwegians watched bewildered as their country was occupied in less than 60 days and their king and cabinet were forced into exile. But by the end of the war, there were 40,000 homespun resistance soldiers, 60 underground newspapers and the Norwegian *hjemmefront* (resistance) could take credit for some of the war's most successful acts of sabotage.

These actions came at a cost. Over 50,000 Norwegians were arrested for political reasons during WWII, not a small number for a country of only three million, and 9000 were sent abroad. Of these, 1400 Norwegians, half of them Jewish, would never return.

With that in mind, we posed a few questions about the resistance to Ivar Kraglund, director at **Oslo's Resistance Museum** (see p99).

If resistance fighters had to escape, where did most of them go? Almost 50,000 people escaped to Sweden, some on their own and others with guides. Once there, many received military training. By the end of the war, there were 13,000 Norwegians that had been trained in Sweden and who were carrying Swedish weapons.

Did any famous acts of sabotage take place? The most important attack was on the heavy water plant at Vemork in 1943 (see p153). It is probably one of the most famous sabotage attacks of WWII and the museum has the only remaining water cell from the factory that I know of.

And what happened to Gunnar Sønsteby? He became the leader of the 'Oslo gang' and one of Norway's most famous resistance fighters. He's probably best known for his attack on the registration offices in 1944, which made it impossible for the Germans to send Norwegian recruits to the front.

What other reminders of the resistance are there in Oslo? In addition to the Resistance Museum keep an eye out for the haunting, grey Victoria Terrasse near Oslo centre, which was commandeered by the Gestapo. At the time, it was known as the *skrekken hus* (house of fear). And a little further on, at Solli plass (Map pp96–7), there's a bronze statue of Sønsteby and his bicycle.

As told to Kari Lundgren

Nkr40/20, free with Oslo Pass; ☎ noon–4pm Wed–Sun, noon–7pm Tue) housed in the 18th-century Frogner Manor (built on the site of a Viking-era manor); it contains exhibits of minor interest on the city's history.

Frognerparken itself attracts Oslo locals with its broad lawns, ponds, stream and rows of shade trees. On a sunny afternoon it's ideal for picnics, strolling or lounging on the grass.

To get there, take tram No 12 or 15, marked Frogner, from the city centre.

VIGELAND MUSEUM

For an in-depth look at Gustav Vigeland's work, visit the **Vigeland Museum** (Map p91; ☎ 23 49 37 00; www.vigeland.museum.no; Nobels gate 32; adult/child Nkr45/25, free with Oslo Pass; ☎ 11am–5pm Tue–Sun Jun–Aug, noon–4pm Tue–Sun Sep–May), opposite the southern entrance to Frognerparken. It was built by the city in the 1920s as a home and workshop for the sculptor, in exchange for the dona-

tion of a significant proportion of his life's work, and it contains his early collection of statuary and monuments to public figures, as well as plaster moulds, woodblock prints and sketches. When he died in 1943, his ashes were deposited in the tower and the museum was opened to the public four years later. Visiting the artist's private apartments on the 3rd floor is possible, but must be arranged in advance (tours per group cost Nkr700 on top of the cost of admission).

EMANUEL VIGELAND MUSEUM

Part gallery, part mausoleum, this spooky **museum** (Map p91; ☎ 22 14 57 88; www.emanuelvigeland.museum.no; Grimelundsveien 8; adult/child Nkr30/15, free with Oslo Pass; ☎ noon–4pm Sun, noon–5pm during summer) is dedicated to the life work of Gustav Vigeland's brother Emanuel (1875–1948). A pioneer in fresco painting, Emanuel is considered by many to have been the superior artist of the two brothers. The showpiece of

the museum is the 800-sq-metre fresco *Vita* depicting human life from conception to death. To get there, take the T-bane (line 1) to Slemdal. For a taste of the artist's work nearer the city centre, check out the stained glass in the Oslo Cathedral.

ICE-SKATING MUSEUM

This **museum** (Skøytemuseet; Map p93; ☎ 22 43 49 20; Middelthuns gate 26; adult/child Nkr20/10, free with Oslo Pass; ☎ 10am–2.30pm Tue & Thu, 11am–2pm Sun) is dedicated to speed and figure skating in Norway. Featured are historical skating apparatus and information on such Norwegian champions as speed skater Johann Olav Koss – 'Koss the Boss' – and figure skater Sonja Henie. It makes a nice complement to the Olympic sites in Lillehammer (p163) and Hamar (p169).

Bygdøy Peninsula

The Bygdøy Peninsula (Map p91) holds some of Oslo's top attractions. You can rush around all the sights in half a day, but allotting a few extra hours will be more rewarding.

Although only minutes from central Oslo, Bygdøy maintains its rural character. The

royal family has a summer home here, as do many of Oslo's well-to-do residents.

Ferry No 91 (☎ 23 35 68 90) operates from early April to early October, making the 15-minute run to Bygdøy (adult/child Nkr20/10, free with the Oslo Pass) every 30 to 40 minutes from 8.45am, with the last crossing returning from Bygdøy at around 6.30pm in April and September, 9.15pm in summer; earlier final departures the rest of the year. Keep an eye out for the king's ship *KS Norge* on the ride over, as well as the King and Queen's royal yacht clubs (*Kongen* and *Dronningen*), which face one another on either side of the Frognerkilen. The ferries leave from Rådhusbrygge 3 (opposite the Rådhus) and stop first at Dronningen ferry terminal, from where it's a 10-minute walk to the Norwegian Folk Museum (p102) and a 15-minute walk to the Viking Ship Museum (see p102). Beyond the ships it's a further 20 minutes' walk to Bygdøyenes where the Kon-Tiki, Polarship Fram and Norwegian Maritime Museums (see p102) are clustered; the route is signposted and makes a pleasant walk. Alternatively, the ferry continues to Bygdøyenes. You can also take bus 30 to

GUSTAV VIGELAND

The Norwegian sculptor Gustav Vigeland (1869–1943) was born to a farming family near Mandal in the far south of the country. As a child and teenager he became deeply interested in Protestantism, spirituality, woodcarving and drawing – a unique combination that would dominate his life's work. In 1888 Vigeland secured an apprenticeship to sculptor Brynjulf Bergslien. The following year he exhibited his first work at the State Exhibition of Art. It was the break he needed, bringing his talents to national and international attention.

In 1891 he travelled to Copenhagen and then to Paris and Italy, where he worked with various masters; he was especially inspired by the work of French sculptor Auguste Rodin. When his public grants ran out he returned to Norway to make a living working on the restoration of the Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim and producing commissioned portraits of prominent Norwegians.

In 1921 the City of Oslo recognised his talents and built him a spacious studio in which to work (see opposite; it's now a museum).

The highlight of Vigeland Park is the 14m-high granite *Monolith*, which crowns the park's highest hill. This incredible production required three stone carvers working daily from 1929 to 1943 and was carved from a single stone pillar quarried from Iddefjorden in southeastern Norway. It depicts a writhing mass of 121 detailed human figures, both entwined with and undermining each other in their individual struggle to reach the top. The circle of steps around it supports rows of stone figures. The figures, together with the pillar, have been interpreted in many ways: as a phallic representation, the struggle for existence, yearnings for the spiritual spheres and transcendence of cyclic repetition.

Leading down from the plinth bearing this column is a series of steps supporting sculptures depicting people experiencing the full range of human emotions and activities. The numerous sculptures dominating the surrounding park carry the artist's themes from the realist to the ludicrous. The result is truly one of Norway's artistic highlights and, best of all, there are no signs admonishing you to keep your distance.

the Folk Museum from Jernbanetorget, next to Oslo S.

MUSEUMS

Norwegian Folk Museum

Norway's largest open-air museum and one of Oslo's premier attractions is this folk museum (Norsk Folkemuseum; Map p91; ☎ 22 12 37 00; www.norsk-folke.museum.no; Museumsveien 10; adult/child Nkr79/25 mid-May–mid-Sep, Nkr70/25 rest-of-year, free with Oslo Pass; 🕒 10am–6pm mid-May–mid-Sep; 11am–3pm Mon–Fri, 11am–4pm Sat & Sun rest-of-year). The museum includes more than 140 buildings, mostly from the 17th and 18th centuries, gathered from around the country, rebuilt and organised according to region of origin. Paths wind past old barns, elevated *stabbur* (raised storehouses) and rough-timbered farmhouses with sod roofs sprouting wildflowers. The Gamlebyen (Old Town) section is a reproduction of an early-20th-century Norwegian town and includes a village shop and old petrol station; in summer (daily except Saturday) you can see weaving and pottery-making demonstrations. Another highlight is the restored stave church, built around 1200 in Gol and shifted to Bygdøy in 1885.

The exhibition hall near the main entrance includes exhaustive displays on Norwegian folk art, historic toys, national costumes (including traditional clothing used for weddings, christenings and burials), the Sami culture of Finnmark, domestic and farming tools and appliances, as well as visiting exhibits. Sunday is a good day to visit, as folk music and dancing is staged at 2pm (in summer). Other daily summer highlights include carriage rides (noon to 4pm) and children won't want to miss a chance to feed the farm animals at 1pm.

It's the definitive guide to traditional Norwegian culture – don't miss it.

Viking Ship Museum

Even in repose, there is something intimidating about the sleek, dark hulls of the Viking ships *Oseberg* and *Gokstad*, which is why visitors to this unforgettable **Vikingskipshuset** (Map p91; ☎ 22 13 52 80; Huk Aveny 35; adult/child Nkr40/20, free with Oslo Pass; 🕒 9am–6pm May–Sep, 11am–4pm Oct–Apr) often find themselves whispering. Only a few boards and fragments remain of a third ship, the *Tune*, built around the same time as the *Gokstad* and excavated in 1867 from the Oslofjord region. All were built of oak in the 9th century; the ships were pulled ashore and used as tombs for nobility, who were buried

with all they expected to need in the hereafter: jewels, furniture, food, servants, intricately carved carriages and sleighs, tapestries and fierce-looking figures.

The impressive *Oseberg*, buried in 834, is festooned on prow and stern with elaborate dragon and serpent carvings. It measures 22m and required 30 oarsmen. The burial chamber beneath it held the largest collection of Viking Age artefacts ever uncovered in Scandinavia, but had been looted of all jewellery. The sturdier 24m-long *Gokstad*, built around 890, is the finest remaining example of a Viking longship, but when it was unearthed its corresponding burial chamber had also been looted and few artefacts were uncovered. In addition to the three ships, the museum contains a good general exhibit on Vikings.

Polarship Fram Museum

Nature is often the best architect. Which is why, when the well-known shipbuilder Colin Archer was asked to design a ship whose hull could withstand the crush of the polar ice, he looked no further than an egg for inspiration. Launched in 1982, the **Polarship Fram** (Map p91; ☎ 23 28 29 50; www.fram.museum.no; adult/child Nkr50/20, free with Oslo Pass; 🕒 9am–6pm mid-Jun–Aug, shorter hrs rest-of-year), captained by both Fridtjof Nansen and Roald Amundsen, spent much of its life trapped in the polar ice. From 1893 to 1896 Nansen's North Pole expedition took the 39m schooner to Russia's New Siberian Islands, passing within a few degrees of the North Pole on their return trip to Norway.

In 1910 Amundsen (see the boxed text, p383) set sail in the *Fram* (meaning 'forward'), intending to be the first explorer to reach the North Pole, only to discover en route that Robert Peary had beaten him to it. Not to be outdone, Amundsen turned the *Fram* around and became the first man to reach the South Pole. Otto Sverdrup also sailed the schooner around southern Greenland to Canada's Ellesmere Island between 1898 and 1902, travelling over 18,000km.

You're allowed to thoroughly explore the ship, peek inside the cramped bunkrooms and imagine life at sea. In addition, there are detailed exhibits complete with maps, pictures and artefacts that bring the various expeditions to life, from Nansen's attempt to ski across the North Pole to Amundsen's discovery of the Northwest Passage and the fateful rescue attempted that ended in his disappearance.

Kon-Tiki Museum

A favourite among children, this worthwhile **museum** (Map p91; ☎ 23 08 67 67; www.kon-tiki.no; Bygdøynes; adult/child Nkr50/25, free with Oslo Pass; 🕒 9.30am–5.30pm Jun–Aug, shorter hrs rest-of-year) is dedicated to the balsa raft *Kon-Tiki*, which Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl sailed from Peru to Polynesia in 1947. The museum also displays the totora reed boat *Ra II*, built by Aymara people on the Bolivian island of Suriqui in Lake Titicaca. Heyerdahl used it to cross the Atlantic in 1970. For a full rundown on the life of this extraordinary explorer who achieved a lot in his lifetime, see the boxed text, p132.

Norwegian Maritime Museum

The author Roald Dahl once said that in Norway, everyone seems to have a boat, and there is no better place to explore that theory than at the **Norske Sjøfartsmuseum** (Map p91; ☎ 24 11 41 50; www.norsk-sjofartsmuseum.no; Bygdøyneveien 37; adult/child Nkr40/free; 🕒 10am–6pm mid-May–Aug; 10.30am–4pm Fri–Wed, 10am–6pm Thu Sep–mid-May). The museum depicts Norway's relationship with the sea, including the fishing and whaling in-

dustry, the seismic fleet (which searches for oil and gas), shipbuilding and wreck salvaging. Outside the museum there's a seamen's memorial commemorating the 4700 Norwegian sailors killed in WWII, and alongside is Roald Amundsen's ship *Gjøa*, the first ship to completely transit the Northwest Passage (from 1903 to 1906). Other features of the museum include Norway's largest collection of maritime art, a dried cod display and a film with scenic footage of the Norwegian coastline.

OSCARSHALL CASTLE

This **castle** (Oscarshall Slott; Map p91; ☎ 22 56 15 39; Oscarshallveien), designed by Johan Henrik Nebelong to reflect a blend of Romantic and English neo-Gothic styles, was constructed as a residence for King Oscar I from 1847 to 1852. It's probably the least interesting of Bygdøy's attractions, but is worth a brief detour to view from the outside if you're passing by.

Grünerlokka Area

MUNCH MUSEUM

Edvard Munch (1863–1944) fans won't want to miss the **Munch Museum** (Munch-museet; Map

PLEASE DON'T STEAL THE ARTWORK...

On 12 February 1994, the day of the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norwegians woke to the news that arguably the nation's most prized cultural possession, *The Scream*, by Edvard Munch, had been stolen from the National Gallery in Oslo. There was nothing hi-tech about this deeply embarrassing incident – a patrolling police officer discovered the theft (carried out by breaking a window and using wire cutters) when he found a ladder propped up against the gallery wall. In place of the painting was a note: 'Thanks for the poor security.'

The nation was appalled, even more so when the authorities received a ransom demand of US\$1 million from people with ties to the anti-abortion movement. A Lutheran minister who had helped plan anti-abortion protests during the Olympics claimed that the painting would be returned if Norwegian national TV broadcasted a graphic film showing a foetus being aborted.

Finally, after almost three months, the Norwegian police discovered four fragments of the painting's frame in the northern Oslo suburb of Nittedal. Within days, Edvard Munch's masterpiece, which was painted on fragile paper, was found undamaged in a hotel in Asgardstrand, about 60km south of Oslo. Three Norwegians were arrested and the country breathed a huge collective sigh of relief.

Fastforward 10 years. On 22 August 2004, two masked, armed men walked into the Munch Museum, threatened a guard, detached another version of *The Scream* (Edvard Munch painted four versions) as well as another Munch masterpiece, *The Madonna*, and made off in a getaway car, all within five minutes and in front of startled gallery visitors. No alarms went off, the police took 15 minutes to arrive and, astonishingly, the paintings were uninsured (gallery officials claimed that the paintings were simply priceless).

Two years and nine days later, the police recovered both paintings, though restoration work has delayed their return to the gallery. Most Norwegians and museum staff seem keen to put the embarrassing episode behind them. Nonetheless, the bristling security provides a somewhat ironic, after-the-fact reminder to keep your hands to yourself.

p93; ☎ 23 94 35 00; www.munch.museum.no; Tøyengata 53; adult/child Nkr65/35, free with Oslo Pass; ☎ 10am-6pm Jun-mid-Sep; 10am-4pm Tue-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun mid-Sep-May, which is dedicated to his life's work and has most of the pieces not contained in the National Gallery. Security is high in the museum since the 2004 theft of *The Scream* and *The Madonna*, though both paintings were recovered in 2006 (see boxed text, p103). The museum provides a comprehensive look at the artist's work, from dark (*The Sick Child*) to light (*Spring Ploughing*). With over 11,000 paintings, 4500 watercolours and 18,000 prints and sketching books bequeathed to the city by Munch himself, this is a landmark collection. To get there, take the T-bane to Tøyen, followed by a five-minute signposted walk.

ZOOLOGICAL MUSEUM & GEOLOGICAL-PALAEONTOLOGICAL MUSEUM

By Oslo's botanical gardens, the university's **Zoological Museum** (Zoologisk Museum; Map p93; ☎ 22 85 17 00; Sars gate 1; adult/child Nkr40/free; ☎ 11am-4pm Tue-Sun) has well-presented displays of stuffed wildlife from Norway and elsewhere, including a special exhibit on Arctic wildlife. The adjacent **Geological-Palaeontological Museum** (Geologisk Museum; Map p93; ☎ 22 85 17 00; Sars gate 1; adult/child Nkr40/free; ☎ 11am-4pm Tue-Sun) contains displays on the history of the solar system and Norwegian geology, as well as examples of myriad minerals, meteorites and moon rocks. The palaeontologic section includes a 10m-long iguanodon skeleton and a nest of dinosaur eggs.

BOTANICAL GARDEN

Oslo's 15-acre **Botanical Garden** (Botanisk Hage; Map p93; ☎ 22 85 17 00; Sars gate 1; admission free; ☎ 7am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-8pm Sat & Sun Apr-Sep; 7am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun Oct-Mar) features over 7500 plants from around the world. There are also plants from the Oslo fjords, including four that are almost extinct in nature. Specimens in the aromatic garden are accompanied by text in both print and braille.

GAMLE AKER KIRKE

This medieval stone **church** (Map p93; ☎ 22 69 35 82; Akersbakken 26; admission free; ☎ noon-2pm Mon-Sat), located north of the centre on Akersbakken, dates from 1080 and is Oslo's oldest building. Lutheran services are held at 9am

and 11am on Sunday. Take bus 37 from Jernbanetorget to Akersbakken then walk up past the churchyard.

Outer Oslo

HENIE-ONSTAD ART CENTRE

In Høvikodden, west of the centre, lies one of Norway's best private art collections, the **Henie-Onstad Art Centre** (Henie-Onstad Kunstenter; Map p119; ☎ 67 80 48 80; www.hok.no; Høvikodden; admission free; ☎ 11am-7pm Tue-Thu, 11am-5pm Fri-Sun), founded in the 1960s by Norwegian figure skater Sonja Henie and her husband Niels Onstad. The couple actively sought out collectible works of Joan Miró and Pablo Picasso, as well as assorted impressionist, abstract, expressionist and modern Norwegian works. When you've seen enough art you can head downstairs for a look at Sonja's various skating medals and trophies. From Jernbanetorget, take any bus heading towards Sandvika and get off at Høvikodden.

HOLMENKOLLEN SKI JUMP & MUSEUM

The **Holmenkollen Ski Jump**, perched on a hill-top overlooking Oslo, offers a panoramic view of the city and doubles as a concert venue. During Oslo's annual ski festival, held in March, it draws the world's best ski jumpers.

At the Holmenkollen ski jump, the **Ski Museum** (Map p91; ☎ 22 92 32 00; www.skiforening.no; Kongeveien 5; adult/child Nkr70/35; ☎ 9am-8pm Jun-Aug, 10am-2pm Oct-Apr, 10am-5pm May & Sep) leads you through the 4000-year history of Nordic and downhill skiing in Norway. There are exhibits featuring the Antarctic expeditions of Amundsen and Scott, as well as Fridtjof Nansen's slog across the Greenland icecap (you'll see the boat he constructed from his sled and canvas tent to row the final 100km to Nuuk). Recently redone exhibits on the 2nd floor cover the more modern aspects of skiing and include a glimpse of the royal family on skis.

Admission to the Ski Museum includes a visit to the **ski-jump tower**. Part of the route to the top of the tower is served by a lift, but you're on your own for the final 114 steep steps. Outside, the **ski-jump simulator** (adult/child Nkr50/35) is good for a laugh, but don't try it if you have a weak stomach. To get to the museum, take T-bane line 1 to Holmenkollen and follow the signs uphill.

NORDMARKA

The woodland north of the Holmenkollen ski jump, known as Nordmarka (see p119), is a prime destination for hiking, mountain biking, sledding and skiing and is also the geographical centre of the city. For skiers, there is **Tryvan Vinterpark**, Oslo's largest skiing area with 14 slopes and six lifts. In the summer, the **Tryvannstårnet observation tower** is a good place to start a hike or a bike trip. The 118m-tall tower is no longer open for visitors, but the view from its base is still fantastic. Make sure to take a container for picking blueberries in summer. From the Holmenkollen T-bane station, take the scenic ride to the end of the line at Frognerseteren and look for the signposted walking route.

ACTIVITIES

Avid skiers, hikers and sailors, Oslo residents will do just about anything to get outside. That's not too hard given that there are over 240 sq km of woodland, 40 islands and 343 lakes within the city limits.

Climbing

The best local climbing is on the pre-bolted faces of Kolsåstoppen, which is accessible on T-bane line 3 to Kolsås. Otherwise, there is a good indoor climbing wall at **Gekko Klatring Oslo** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 99 28 21 21; www.gekkoklatring.no; Bispegate 16; before/after 3pm Nkr50/85; ☎ 10am-10pm Mon & Thu, noon-10pm Tue & Wed, 10am-10pm Fri, 10am-6pm Sat, noon-8pm Sun).

Cycling

Renting a bicycle in Oslo (see p117) is harder than it should be, but once you have one, the city is easy to get around. The tourist office has free cycling maps, with **Sykkelkart Oslo** tracing the bicycle lanes and paths throughout the city, and **Idrett og friluftsliv i Oslo** covers the Oslo hinterland. It also has a pamphlet **Opplevelsesturer i Marka**, which contains six possible cycling and/or hiking itineraries within reach of Oslo.

Two especially nice rides within the city (suitable to do on an Oslo city bike) are along the Akerselva up to Lake Maridal (Map p91; 11km) and in the woods around Bygdøy (Map p91). The trip to Maridal will pass several waterfalls, a number of converted factories at the edge of Grünerløkka and cross several of Oslo's more unique bridges, including the Anker or *eventyr* (fairy-tale) bridge (see the

boxed text, p107). Cyclists should be sure to stop for coffee and a waffle at **Høns-Louisas Hus** (Map p93; Sandakerveien 2; ☎ 11am-6pm). This can also be done on foot by taking the T-bane to Kjesås and following the path back into the city. Cycling, or walking, around Bygdøy is far more pastoral and provides ample opportunity for swimming breaks. There is a bike rack in front of the Folk Museum. For more serious cycling take T-bane line 1 to Frognerseteren and head into the Nordmarka.

For Norway-wide cycling information and for more detailed maps for the Buskerud region (the area surrounding Oslo), contact **Syklistenes Landsforening** (Map p91; ☎ 22 47 30 30; post@slf.no; Storgata 23C; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri). It is a local club and not really set up for tourists, but members are happy to help if they can. Ring the bell 10m to the right of the door if it looks closed.

Hiking

A network of 1200km of trails leads into Nordmarka from Frognerseteren (at the end of T-bane line 1), including a good trail down to Sognsvann lake, 6km northwest of the centre at the end of T-bane line 5 (Map p91). If you're walking in August, be sure to take a container for blueberries and a swimsuit to cool off in the lake (bathing is allowed in all the woodland lakes around Oslo except Maridalsvannet and Skjersjøen lakes, which are drinking reservoirs). The pleasant walk around Sognsvann itself takes around an hour, or for a more extended trip, try hiking to the cabin at **Ullevålseter** (☎ 22 14 35 58; www.ullevalseter.no), a pleasant old farmhouse that serves waffles and coffee. The round trip (about 11km) takes around three hours.

The Ekeberg woods to the southeast of the city centre (take bus 34 or 46 from Jernbanetorget to **Ekeberg Camping** (Map p91) or tramline 18 or 19 towards Ljabru to Sjømannskolen) are other nice places for a stroll. During the summer weekends, it's a popular spot for riding competitions and, more recently, cricket matches. There is an Iron Age heritage path through the woods, and for a piece of architectural history don't miss the **Ekeberg Restaurant** (Map p91), one of the earliest examples of functionalism. On the way down, stop at the **Valhall Curve** (Map p91) to see the view that inspired Edward Munch to paint *The Scream*.

Avid hikers may want to stop by the **DNT office** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 82 28 22; www.turistforeningen.no; Youngstorget 1; 🕒 10am-4pm Mon-Wed & Fri, 10am-6pm Thu, 10am-2pm Sat, open 1hr earlier May-Sep), which maintains several mountain huts in the Nordmarka region and can provide information and maps covering longer-distance hiking routes throughout Norway.

Ice-Skating

At the **Narvisen outdoor ice rink** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 30 30 33; Karl Johans gate), you can skate for free whenever it's cold enough to freeze over (around November to March). Skates can be hired from the ice rink for around Nkr40.

Skiing

Oslo's ski season is roughly from December to March. There are over 2400km of prepared Nordic tracks (1000km in Nordmarka alone), many of them floodlit, as well as a ski resort within the city limits. Easy-access tracks begin right at the end of T-bane lines 1 and 5. The **Skiservice Centre** (☎ 22 13 95 04; www.skiservice.no; Tryvannsveien 2), at Voksenkollen station, one T-bane stop before Frognerseteren, hires out snowboards and Nordic skis. The downhill slopes at **Tryvann Vinterpark** (☎ 40 46 27 00) are open in the ski season. **Skiforeningen** (Ski Society; Map p91; ☎ 22 92 32 00; www.skiforeningen.no; Kongeveien 5) can provide further information on skiing options, or check out www.holmenkollen.com.

Swimming

ISLANDS & BEACHES

If the weather hots up, there are a few reasonable beaches within striking distance of central Oslo. Ferries to half a dozen islands in the Oslofjord region leave from Vippetangen Quay, southeast of Akershus Fortress. Boats to Hovedøya and Langøyene are relatively frequent in summer (running at least hourly), while other islands are served less often. The last ferry leaves Vippetangen at 6.45pm in winter and 9.05pm in summer.

The southwestern shore of otherwise rocky Hovedøya (Map p91), the nearest island to the mainland, is popular with sunbathers. The island is ringed with walking paths to old cannon emplacements and the 12th-century **Cistercian monastery ruins**. Take boat 92 or 93.

South of Hovedøya lies the undeveloped island of Langøyene (Map p91), with superb

swimming from rocky or sandy beaches (one on the southeastern shore is designated for nude bathing). Boat 94 will get you there.

The Bygdøy Peninsula has two popular beaches, **Huk** (Map p91) and **Paradisbukta** (Map p91), which can be reached on bus 30 from Jernbanetorget to its last stop. While there are some sandy patches, most of Huk comprises grassy lawns and large smooth rocks ideal for sunbathing. Separated into two beaches by a small cove, the beach on the northwestern side is open to nude bathing. If Huk seems too crowded, a 10-minute walk through the woods north of the bus stop leads to the more secluded Paradisbukta.

SWIMMING POOLS

Oslo has two outdoor municipal swimming pools: **Frognerbadet Swimming Pool** (Map p93; ☎ 23 27 54 50; Middelthus gate 28; adult/child Nkr69/33, free with Oslo Pass; 🕒 mid-May-mid-Aug) in Frognerparken (entry via Middelthus gate) and **Tøyenbadet Swimming Pool** (Map p93; ☎ 23 30 44 70; Helgesens gate 90), which is near the Munch Museum.

OSLO FOR CHILDREN

A springtime afternoon spent counting baby carriages in Oslo highlights just how child- and parent-friendly the city is (or at least gives a sense of how long the winters are).

Most Oslo parents will tell you that the best activities are often the simplest and free. There are no rules against climbing the statues at Frognerparken, for example, or chasing your little sister around the garden's 3000m mosaic labyrinth. The park also has one of the city's best playgrounds. Nearer the centre, the cannons and fortifications at Akershus Fortress are great for sparking the imagination. And it would be a pity to leave Norway without picking up a copy of Norwegian folktales (see boxed text, opposite).

More organised summer activities include taking a **Thomas Train City Tour** (☎ 91 62 53 03; www.thomas-toget.no; 🕒 11am-5pm Mon-Sat mid-Jun-Aug) or the **Oslo Toget** (☎ 67 97 20 60; www.oslotoget.no), which both do a half-hour loop around the city centre in cheerfully painted open-air trains. Tours begin every half-hour in front of the Paléet shopping centre (Map p93) and Aker Brygge shopping complex (Map pp96-7). There is a Christmas train in December.

For a more rural experience, try the **EKT Riding School and Husdyrpark** (EKT Rideskole and Husdyrpark; Map p91; ☎ 22 19 97 86; www.rideskole.no;

SNIPP, SNAPP, SNUTE

Norwegian trolls come in all shapes and sizes. There is the Nokken, a slimy creature who lives in mountain ponds, and the Huldra, a stunning temptress who seduces young men before dragging them into the woods (unless they can first drag her to a church). There are even lucky trolls who grant wishes to fishermen who treat them nicely.

The antics of these fantasy characters, as well as the princesses and farms boys that managed to outwit them, are as essentially Norwegian as the fjords and Vikings. But it is only due to the work of two Buskerud locals – Peter Asbjørnsen and Jörgen Moe – in the early 1800s that they were ever written down at all. Inspired by the popular work of the Grimm brothers, the two men began with what they knew best: the folktales told in the woods and valleys surrounding Oslo. Comic, cruel, moralistic, ribald and popular from the moment they were published, these stories set the tone for some of Norway's greatest authors including Henrik Ibsen and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson.

The tales, most often illustrated with the distinct sketches of Erik Werenskiöld and ending with the words '*Snipp. Snapp. Snute. Så er eventyret ute*' (Norwegian for 'The End'), remain popular and easy to find. In Oslo keep an eye out for the bronzes that decorate the Anker (*or eventyr*; meaning 'fairy-tale') Bridge (Map pp96-7) on Storgata. No trolls, but you will see four other famous characters from Asbjørnsen and Moe's stories: Peer Gynt, the Polar Bear King, Kari Woodencloak and Little Freddy and his Fiddle.

For more on Norwegian folklore, see p49.

Bekkelagshøgda 12; pony rides Nkr30; 🕒 11am-6pm daily May-Sep, shorter hrs rest-of-year) in the Ekeberg forest southeast of the city centre. There are sheep, goats, pigs and rabbits, as well as Norwegian fjord ponies. Take tram 19 toward Ljabru to Sportsplassen and walk 15 minutes uphill until you reach the farm. The **Folk Museum** (p102) also has regular events that are geared towards children.

In the winter, try sledding down the 'legendary' **Korketrekkeren** (cork screw) toboggan run. The 2000m long track drops 255m and began its life as a bobsledding run for the 1952 Olympics. Sleds can be rented at the **Akerforeningen** (☎ 22 49 01 21; www.akerforeningen.no; adult/child Nkr80/50; 🕒 9am-9pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun during winter) next to the Frognerseteren restaurant. To get there take the T-bane to Frognerseteren and follow the signs downhill.

A popular rainy day distraction is the **Norwegian Science & Technology Museum** (Norsk Teknisk Museum & Telemuseum; Map p91; ☎ 22 79 60 00; www.tekniskmuseum.no; Kjelsåsveien 143; adult/child Nkr80/40, free with Oslo Pass; 🕒 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 11am-6pm Sat & Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug; shorter hrs rest-of-year) near Lake Maridal, which has Norway's first car and tram, water wheels, clocks and enough gadgetry to keep the whole family busy for a few hours at least. Or if you have a particular affinity for your friends' refrigerator art displays, visit the **Children's Art Museum** (Barnekunstmuseet; Map p93; ☎ 22 46 85 73;

www.barnekunst.no; Lille Frøens vei 4; adult/child Nkr50/30; 🕒 11am-4pm Tue-Thu & Sun late Jun-early Aug, shorter hrs rest-of-year, closed early Aug-mid-Sep) near the Frøen T-bane station.

Finally, **TusenFryd** (Map p119; ☎ 64 97 64 97; www.tusenfryd.no; Vinterbro; height over/under 120cm Nkr240/290; 🕒 10.30am-7pm mid-Jun-Sep, shorter hrs rest-of-year), an amusement park 10km south of the city, is enormously popular with kids from the whole Buskerud region. The park offers carousels, a fantasy farm and an excellent wooden roller-coaster, which creates zero gravity 12 times each circuit. You'll find it just off the E6. The TusenFryd bus departs from the Galleri Oslo bus terminal nine times from 10am to 4pm daily (adult/child Nkr30/15).

TOURS

The best Oslo tours offer juicy cultural and historical morsels (or a boat trip), while also giving the visitor the flexibility to explore at their leisure.

ourpick AudioTor (☎ 98 82 93 23; www.audio.tor.no) rents out iPods with information on various sites around Oslo so you can tour the city at your own pace. The iPods, available from the tourist office (one-/two-day rental Nkr149/249), have a selection of itineraries covering major attractions such as Vigeland Park and Holmenkollen. They offer all the basic history, practical details, a pronunciation guide, as well as a variety of

interesting information most Oslo dwellers don't even know.

City Sightseeing (☎ 22 78 94 00; www.citysightseeing.net; ☽ mid-May–mid-Sep) is Oslo's version of the hop-on hop-off phenomenon. Tickets cost Nkr165/85 per adult/child, are valid for 48 hours, and cover the overwhelming proportion of city sights, which you can explore at your own pace. The tourist office has a list of stops that this tour company goes to. Another option is to go on a 1½-hour evening city walk starting from in front of the Rådhus (Town Hall) with **Oslo Promenade** (adult/child Nkr80/free; ☽ 5.30pm Mon, Wed & Fri Jun–Aug). The guides are knowledgeable and entertaining, making this a good option for getting an insider's view of Oslo.

For a more comprehensive package, or if you want to get out on the water, try **Båtservice Sightseeing** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 35 68 90; www.boatsightseeing.com; Pier 3, Rådhusbrygge), which does a tidy 7½-hour city tour to the Bygdøy museums, Vigeland Park and the Holmenkollen ski jump, plus a cruise of the Oslofjord for a reasonable Nkr515 (late May to early September only). Shorter tours are available.

If the weather is clear, there are few more dramatic ways of seeing the city than by sea-plane. **Fonnaflly** (☎ 67 10 50 50; www.fonnafllyoslo.no; Nkr790) does a 20-minute Oslo on Top tour (minimum three people) that flies over the Holmenkollen ski jump and the city centre.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Oslo's most festive annual event is surely the 17 May **National Constitution Day** celebration, when Oslo residents, whose roots spring from all over Norway, descend on the Royal Palace dressed in the finery of their native districts. Other festivals of note include the **Holmenkollen Ski Festival** (www.holmekolen.com; ☽ mid-March) featuring Nordic skiers and ski jumpers from around the world and skiing events and cultural programmes, **Summer Parade** (last weekend in July), the six-day **Oslo International Jazz Festival** (www.oslojazz.no; ☽ Aug) and the **Øya Festival** (www.oyafestivalen.com; ☽ Aug).

For details on these and other festivals, visit www.visitoslo.com.

SLEEPING

Oslo has a good range of accommodation, including a growing number of small bed

and breakfasts, which offer more character than the chain hotels.

Budget

CAMPING

Oslo Fjordcamping (Map p119; ☎ 22 75 20 55; mail@oslocamping.no; Ljansbruksveien 1; tent with/without car Nkr130/150) Oslo Fjordcamping enjoys a peaceful location 6km southeast of the city centre but the facilities have seen better days. To get there take bus 83 from Oslo S.

Bogstad Camping (Map p91; ☎ 22 51 08 00; www.bogstadcamping.no; Ankerveien 117; 4-person tent with/without car Nkr245/170, 4-person cabins from Nkr440; ☽ year-round; (P)) Located at the edge of the Nordmarka, Bogstad Camping is ideal for enjoying the Oslo outdoors. However, as one of northern Europe's largest camp sites, it can get very busy. The facilities include showers, communal kitchen and there is a nearby kiosk and restaurant. It's 9km north of the city centre. To get there take bus 32 from Oslo S (30 minutes approx).

Ekeberg Camping (Map p91; ☎ 22 19 85 68; www.ekebergcamping.no; Ekebergveien 65; 4-person tent with/without car Nkr245/170; ☽ 1 Jun–1 Sep; (P)) Nestled on a scenic knoll southeast of the city, Ekeberg Camping promises one of the best views over Oslo. It can get seriously crowded and facilities (kitchen, laundry, convenience store and showers) aren't as well maintained as they could be. Take bus 34 or 46 from Jernbanetorget to Ekeberg Camping (10 minutes). Prices rise by 10% in peak periods.

Those who prefer wild camping can take T-bane line 1 to Frognerstøen at the edge of Nordmarka or line 5 to Sognsvann. You can't camp at Sognsvann itself, but walk a kilometre or two into the woods and you'll find plenty of natural camp sites where you can pitch a tent for free.

HOSTELS

Anker Hostel (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 99 72 10; www.ankerhostel.no; Storgata 55; 4-/6-bed dm with bathroom Nkr215/195, s/d from Nkr510; (M)) This traveller-savvy hostel boasts an international atmosphere, spick-and-span rooms, a laundry, luggage room, kitchen and small bar. Breakfast costs an extra Nkr75 and linen costs Nkr50. The location is not scenic but it is convenient, with Grünerløkka and the city centre only a five-minute walk away.

Oslo Vandrerhjem Haraldsheim (Map p91; ☎ 22 29 65; oslo.haraldsheim.hostel@vandrerhjem.no; Haraldsheim-

IN SEARCH OF THE CHEAPEST BED

Cheap beds in Oslo come at a premium, but there are four good services to help you track one down:

- **Use-It** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 41 51 32; www.use-it.no; Møllergata 3), the Oslo Youth Information Service will help with bookings at hostels and private homes (dorms from Nkr120); there's no minimum stay and bookings are free.
- **Oslo tourist offices** (Oslo S & Fridtjof Nansens plass 5; see p92) also book rooms in private homes (two nights minimum stay; booking fee Nkr50) for prices a little cheaper than the hostels, as well as hotel rooms at discounted rates.
- **Den Norske Turistforening** (Map pp96-7; DNT; Norwegian Mountain Touring Club; ☎ 22 82 28 22; www.dntoslo.no; Storgata 3) has lists of around 40 locally owned huts in Nordmarka. Among them are better-known staffed huts where beds must be booked in advance and DNT members/nonmembers can expect to pay Nkr185/240; most of these huts are at least 10km from the centre.
- **Bed & Breakfast Norway** (☎ 22 67 30 80; www.bb-norway.com) is the best source for finding a room in one of the capital's B&Bs.

veien 4; dm from Nkr220, s/d with shared bathroom Nkr355/495, all incl breakfast; (M)) A pleasant, if hard to find, hostel 4km from the city centre. It has 24-hour reception and 270 beds, mostly in clean four-bed dorms. There are kitchen and laundry facilities. Linen costs Nkr50. Take tram 12, 15 or 17, or bus 31 or 32 to Sinsenkrysset, then walk five minutes uphill.

Perminalen Hotel (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 09 30 81; www.perminalen.no; Øvre Slottsgate 2; 4-/6-bed dm with bathroom Nkr335, s/d Nkr360/499; (M)) Perminalen has a barracks feel, but tidy rooms and a central location make up for the pension's sterile, dormitory atmosphere. Prices include linen and a simple breakfast, which you can eat outside in the summer.

Ellingsens Pensjonat (Map p93; ☎ 22 60 03 59; www.ellingsenspensionat.no; Holtegate 25; s/d with shared bathroom Nkr330/540, s/d with bathroom Nkr460/650) Located in a quiet, pleasant neighbourhood, this homey pension offers one of the best deals in the capital. The building dates from 1890 and many of the original features (high ceilings, rose designs) remain. Rooms are bright and airy, with refrigerators and kettles. It's a popular place so reservations are a must in the summer.

Midrange

Cochs Pensjonat (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 33 24 00; www.cochspensionat.no; Parkveien 25; s/d with shared bathroom Nkr420/580, with bathroom from Nkr520/680) Opened as a guesthouse for bachelors in the 1920s, Cochs has sparsely furnished, clean rooms at an ideal location behind the Royal Palace. The rooms

at the back overlooking the Slottsparken are especially spacious. There is a luggage room and it offers a discounted breakfast buffet at a coffee shop around the corner for Nkr59.

P-Hotel (Map pp96-7; ☎ 80 04 68 35; www.p-hotels.com; Grensen 19; s/d Nkr645/745; (M)) P-hotel offers some of the best prices in central Oslo, which does something to make up for the hotel's otherwise sterile character. A breakfast in a bag, delivered to your door is included and there is free wi-fi access.

MS Innvik (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 41 95 00; www.msinnvik.no; Langkaia; s/d Nkr425/750) A car ferry turned theatre/B&B, MS Innvik offers a memorable, if slightly cramped, sleeping experience. On a sunny day, breakfast can be enjoyed on deck with a clear view over the fjord and across to Oslo's new opera house at Bjørvika. To get there take the footbridge over the E18 south of the central station.

our pick Residence Kristinelund (Map p91; ☎ 40 00 24 11; www.kristinelund.no; Kristinelundveien 2; s/d with shared bathroom Nkr590/790, with bathroom Nkr690/970; (M)) In a pretty 19th-century building, on one of Oslo's more exclusive streets, the Kristinelund provides some respite from the bustle of the city centre. Breakfast is served in a sunny room facing the garden, rooms are well kept and the staff is both helpful and friendly. The location is especially nice if you plan to spend several days in Oslo, as Bygdøy, Vigeland Park and the city centre are all within a short walk or bus ride. To get there take bus 20, 30, 31 or 32 (towards Bygdøy) from Jernbanetorget

and get off at Olav Kyrres plass. Kristinelund is the white house on the corner.

Thon Hotel Munch (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 36 27 00; www.thonhotels.no; Brugata 7; s/d mid-Jun–mid-Aug, also Sat & Sun Nkr595/795, breakfast buffet Nkr50; 🍷) One of 13 Thon hotels scattered around Oslo, the Munch has the amenities of a good budget hotel-chain and an all-out breakfast buffet.

Hotell Bondeheimen (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 21 41 00; www.bondeheimen.com; Rosenkrantz gate 8; s/d weekdays mid-Jun–mid-Aug from Nkr750/830, Sat & Sun Nkr750/990, rest-of-year Nkr1095/1295; 🍷) This central hotel has attractive rooms and helpful staff. The older rooms (with 1980s Scandinavian pine-wood furniture) are slowly being renovated and all are highly recommended.

Rica Victoria Hotel (Map pp96-7; ☎ 24 14 70 00; www.rica-hotels.com; Rosenkrantz gate 13; s/d mid-Jun–mid-Aug & Sat & Sun Nkr695/945, rest-of-year Nkr950/1290; 🍷) This straightforward business hotel, located between Aker Brygge and Karl Johans gate, is also a winner.

Top End

Holmenkollen Park Hotel Rica (Map p91; ☎ 22 92 20 00; www.holmenkollenparkhotel.no; Kongeveien 26; s/d mid-Aug–mid-Sep Nkr1160-1410; s/d rest-of-year Nkr1680/1930; 🍷 🍷 🍷) Founded in 1891 as a sanatorium by Dr Ingebrigt Christian Lund, this hotel offers luxury, great views and some history. Not to mention a vast breakfast buffet, complete with organic produce.

Grand Hotel (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 21 20 00; www.grand.no; Karl Johans gate 31; s/d summer Nkr1245/1495, rest-of-year Nkr1710/1960; 🍷 🍷 🍷) Brimming with period character, the regal Grand Hotel has long been considered the benchmark of true elegance in Oslo. The rooms are beautifully appointed and classy without being overdone. It's also highly recommended.

Grims Grenka (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 10 72 00; www.grimsgrenka.no; Kongens gate 5; s/d from Nkr2150; 🍷) It's Oslo's answer to the exclusive, cosmopolitan experience offered by boutique hotels in London and New York. Grims Grenka, opening in 2008, will have minimalist, modern-designed rooms, a hipster rooftop bar, an Asian-fusion restaurant and a great location.

EATING

In the past, eating out in Oslo was an expensive luxury that residents reserved for special occasions. Luckily, this began to change in the late '90s (see boxed text, opposite) and

today there are good restaurants, cafés and supermarkets all over the city.

While there are some excellent restaurants on Akers Brygge and along Karl Johans, a five-minute walk towards Majorstua T-bane station or Grünerløkka offers more variety and better prices.

For the ultimate snack try a *pølse* (hot dog) in a *lumpe* (potatoe cake) for Nkr15 or a waffle with sour cream and strawberry jam.

Central Oslo RESTAURANTS

Rust (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 20 22 10; Hegehaugsveien 22; snacks & light meals Nkr36-59, mains Nkr119-129) On a cobblestone side street, Rust has plenty of outdoor seating and loads of blankets for when it gets cold. Good for a quiet cocktail, burgers (Nkr129), hearty salads (Nkr119) or tapas late into the night.

Thien Nga (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 20 44 41; Bernt Ankersgate 6b; starters Nkr40-50, mains Nkr60-105) Thien Nga is one of several good Asian-food choices on this street. Ignore the Greek ambience; the food is authentically Vietnamese.

Krishna's Cuisine (Map p93; ☎ 22 60 62 50; Kirkeveien 59b; lunch Nkr65, dinner Nkr70-90) Upstairs across from the Majorstua T-bane station, Krishna's is one of Oslo's best vegetarian options, serving up enormous platefuls of vegetarian curries for both lunch and dinner.

Tullins Café (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 20 46 16; Tullins gate 2; snacks & light meals Nkr69-108) This dimly lit café offers a little bit of everything, from salads and burgers to pasta and stir-fry dishes. It's a favourite among students.

Curry & Ketchup (Map p93; ☎ 22 69 05 22; Kirkeveien 51; curries Nkr74-110) With decorations reminiscent of a Tiki bar or garage sale, Curry & Ketchup dishes out piping hot naan (Nkr23) and fragrant portions of Indian classics such as chicken tikka masala and palak paneer (Nkr74), not to mention good mango lassis for Nkr35. The service is notoriously bad, but the good atmosphere makes up for it.

Grand Café (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 24 20 18; Karl Johans gate 31; lunch Nkr92-215) At 11am sharp, Henrik Ibsen would leave his apartment on Drammensveien (now Henrik Ibsens gate) and walk to the Grand Café for a lunch of herring, beer and one shot of aquavit (alcoholic drink made from potatoes and caraway liquor). His table is still there and you don't have to eat herring if you go, though it is on the menu (Nkr88).

BAGATELLE

Eyvind Hellstrøm still remembers the thrill of the day he first hosted the discerning taste buds of the Michelin inspectors at **Bagatelle** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 12 14 40; www.bagatelle.no; Bygdøy allé 3) in 1984. Two stars later, Hellstrøm continues to apply lessons learned in the exacting kitchens of Paris and Lyon, to glam up old favourites and create something entirely his own. His restaurant represents the pinnacle of fine dining in Norway, serving modern European cooking with an emphasis on local and, when possible, organic ingredients. He filled us in on his restaurant and the city's blossoming dining scene.

The Oslo dining scene has completely changed. I remember when I came back from France there were few fresh markets. They just didn't exist. Getting the products to make great cooking was so difficult. Now, the customers are more open to gastronomy. Even members of the old class are changing their habits, going to restaurants and trying new cooking.

'If there is a trend, it is towards Asian restaurants and towards sushi bars. Young people like these casual places and I think that's good. It's easy, informal and it gets people used to eating out. It's an introduction for young people to go to more elaborate places like Bagatelle and discover new styles of cooking.'

And what Norwegian dish simply cannot be missed? Fresh cod and I even like *lutefisk* [a glutinous dried cod dish], which is my Norwegian speciality. We had the great pleasure of introducing *lutefisk* at the Ritz in Paris and the French people appreciated it because the texture is very different. It's best with a light red wine, but start with beer and aquavit in the traditional way.

Which are the up-and-coming stars of the Oslo dining scene? Try **Restaurant Oscarsgate** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 46 59 06; www.restaurantoscarsgate.no; Oscarsgate 2) for a good mix of know how and craziness.

As told to Kari Lundgren

Theatercafeen (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 82 40 50; Stortingsgaten 24/26; small dishes Nkr98-154, mains Nkr190-318) A favourite with Norwegian families during Christmas and on 17 May, the Theatercafeen, directly across from the National Theatre, presents Norwegian classics in posh Viennese surroundings. Favourites include the reindeer steak with mushrooms and whortleberries (Nkr305).

Pizza da Mimmo (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 44 40 20; Behrens gate 2; pizza Nkr105-135) The best pizza in Oslo is served in this family-run basement restaurant; book ahead on weekends.

Baltazar (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 35 70 60; Dronningens gate 27; starters Nkr110-130, mains Nkr150-280) Located in the bazaar halls of the cathedral, Baltazar serves up Italian classics, homemade pasta and good wine. During the summer (when the owners are in Lucca, Italy), the main restaurant is closed and lunch is served at Trattoria Cappuccino in the leafy courtyard behind the cathedral.

CAFÉS

Fact: unaided by Starbucks, Norwegians drink more coffee per capita than any other nationality. And while most coffee drinking happens at home, preferably alongside waffles,

in Oslo, there is a good selection of coffee bars. Most cafés offer toothsome open-faced sandwiches to snack on, topped with *gulost* (yellow cheese) or mayonnaise and shrimps. *Boller* (raisin rolls) and *skolebrød* (pastry with vanilla cream filling) are also popular.

Stockfleths (Map pp96-7; Lille Grensen) Founded in 1895, the award-winning Stockfleths is one of Oslo's oldest coffee shops. It also serves thick slices of wholegrain bread with brown cheese, a favourite Norwegian snack.

our pick **Åpent Bakerei** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 04 96 67; Inkgognit Terrasse 1) A neighbourhood café that serves coffee in deep, cream-coloured bowls and has unbeatable breads and pastries. A freshly baked roll (Nkr14) topped with homemade *røre syltetøy* (stirred jam) and enjoyed on the bakery's patio, makes for one of Oslo's best and least expensive breakfasts.

QUICK EATS

Bagel & Juice (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 42 38 70; Lille Grensen; bagels Nkr31-58; ☎ breakfast & lunch) Terrific bagels and a huge range of fresh juices.

Japo Sushi (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 55 55 11; Frognerveien 1; bento boxes Nkr79-155) Given that Norwegians cheerfully down pickled herring for breakfast, it shouldn't be too surprising that Oslo

has some good sushi. Japo is one fast option of many.

United Bakeries (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 41 27 53; 1st fl, Paléet shopping centre; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-7pm Sat, 10am-5pm Sun) Offers quiche, salads and gourmet sandwiches (Nkr89).

Other recommendations:

Dolly Dimples (Map pp96-7; ☎ 04 440; Stortingsgata 12; pizzas from Nkr124) Reliable Norwegian pizza chain, with a number of locations around the city, including Kirkeveien 64 and Storgata 2.

Kaffistova (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 31 80 00; Grensen 19; snacks Nkr68-120, mains Nkr80-160) A centrally located Norwegian-inspired cafeteria.

Life (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 42 96 00; Akersgata 32; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat) Sells organic produce and wholesome snacks.

Aker Brygge

Aker Brygge, the old shipyard turned trendy shopping complex west of the main harbour, has a **food court** (☎ 11am-10pm) with various eateries and a variety of waterside restaurants.

If the weather is nice, the local meal of choice is peel-and-eat shrimp, eaten dockside with a fresh baguette, mayonnaise and just a touch of lemon. In the summer, you can buy shrimp from the **Fisherman's Coop** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 42 02 75; Rådhusbrygge 3/4; ☎ 7am-5pm Tue-Sat; shrimp per kg Nkr120) or, on Thursdays, keep an eye out for one of Norway's richest men, Kjell Inge Røkkles, who can be found selling shrimp from his boat *Trygge*.

Albertine (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 83 00 60; Stranden 3; snacks Nkr34-95, light meals Nkr78-170, mains Nkr189-225) One of the oldest waterfront eateries, Albertine offers bistro-style food and a front-row seat to watch the world go by.

Pascal (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 55 00 20; Brynjulf Bulls plass 2; starters Nkr90-140, mains Nkr180-215) Next door to the Nobel Peace Center, Pascal is best known for its French pastries. Former US president Bill Clinton came here for coffee. It also offers a savoury Francophone lunch and dinner menu.

our pick Solsiden (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 33 36 30; Søndre Akershus Kai 34; starters Nkr125-155, mains Nkr185-295; ☎ May-Sep) Solsiden means 'sunny side' in Norwegian, which explains why this place is so popular among sun-craving Oslo-dwellers. Located on the opposite side of Pipervika from Aker Brygge, Solsiden serves up some of the city's best seafood and has an ideal view over the fjord.

Other recommendations:

Beach Club (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 83 83 82; Bryggergetor 14; burgers Nkr85-135; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) Great for a sunny afternoon, it serves a full American breakfast (Nkr105).

ICA Gourmet Supermarket & Café (Map pp96-7; Holmens gate 7; ☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Fri, 9am-8pm Sat) Well-stocked supermarket.

Pepper's Pizza (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 31 12 80; pizzas from Nkr134)

Around Oslo S & Grønland

Teddy's Soft Bar (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 17 36 00; Brugata 3A; light meals around Nkr75; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Teddy's Soft Bar is a local institution and has scarcely changed since it opened in the 1950s. On offer are light, typically Norwegian meals – try the *pytt i panne* (Nkr88), which is essentially eggs with diced potato and meat.

Mithas The Sweethouse (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 17 03 03; Grønland 2A) Sells delectable Iranian sweets.

Punjab Tandoori (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 17 20 86; Grønlandsleiret 24; lunch specials Nkr75, mains around Nkr60) Good-value Indian and Pakistani food is easy to find anywhere around the Grønland T-bane station. This place has simply presented Indian fare – curry, dahl, samosas and tasty curries.

Anyone aged over 18 can buy beer at Oslo supermarkets until 8pm from Monday to Friday and 6pm on Saturday. For wine or spirits, you'll have to be at least 20 years old and visit the **Vinmonopolet** (Map pp96-7; Oslo City Shopping Centre; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Wed, 10am-6pm Thu, 9am-6pm Fri, 10am-2pm Sat). There are others at Kirkeveien 64, Møllergata 10 and Elisenbergveien 37.

The Grønland district and the back streets east of Storgata are brimming with inexpensive ethnic supermarkets where you'll find otherwise unavailable items such as fresh herbs and African, Asian and Middle Eastern ingredients.

Regular supermarkets also abound around Oslo. Only the small ones classed as kiosks can open on Sundays. Some of the more central choices include the following:

Grønland Bazaar (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 17 05 71; Tøyengata 2) Middle Eastern-themed shopping centre.

Rimi Supermarket (Map pp96-7; Storgata 32; ☎ 8am-10pm Mon-Sat) All-purpose grocery chain; other branches can be found at Oslo S and Gunerius Shopping Centre.

Grünerløkka

Oslo's Greenwich Village, while always lively and frequented by a well-dressed, youthful

crowd, is especially pleasant in the summer when life spills out onto the sidewalks from the numerous cafés, bars and restaurants around Olaf Ryes plass.

Mucho Mas (Map p93; ☎ 22 37 16 09; Thorvald Meyers gate 36; chips & salsa Nkr62, burrito Nkr143) What it lacks in authenticity, Mucho Mas more than makes up for in cheese and portion size. The full Mexican repertoire is on offer, including tacos, nachos and burritos (which are enormous); all dishes are offered in meat or vegetarian versions. Well-priced beer helps put out the fire.

Sult (Map p93; ☎ 22 87 04 67; Thorvald Meyers gate 26; starters Nkr59-69, mains Nkr179-215) The polished green-and-black colour scheme of Sult perfectly captures the Grünerløkka vibe with an imaginative menu replete with superb fish and pasta dishes often using local and organic ingredients. It's always packed so get there early and wait for a table in the attached bar appropriately called *Tørst* (meaning 'thirsty'). There are free tapas on Fridays.

Fru Hagen (Map p93; ☎ 22 38 24 26; Thorvald Meyers gate 40; mains Nkr118-137) The low-key and always full Fru Hagen, 'Mrs. Garden', serves sandwiches and burgers, all with a healthy side portion of vegetables. Its location facing Olaf Ryes plass also makes it good for people-watching.

Bistro Brocante (Map p93; ☎ 22 35 68 71; Thorvald Meyers gate 40; lunch specials Nkr59-129, starters Nkr96-102, mains Nkr192-199) Next door to Fru Hagen, this informal French-inspired café serves fantastic salads (Nkr98 to Nkr115), quiche (Nkr93) and even *coq a vin* (Nkr192). The outdoor tables are at a premium in summer.

Markveien Mat & Vinhus and Dr Kneipp's Vinbar (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 37 22 97; starters 135-155, mains Nkr240-290, 3 courses Nkr495) With a hint of truffle oil or a dash of dill, the cooks at Markveien make Norwegian cooking unforgettable. The restaurant focuses on using local seafood and meat, as well as organic produce, to create their delectable dishes. If you're not in the mood for the formal dining room, slide into one of the dark wooden booths at Dr Kneipp's next door for finger food or a sumptuous dessert, not to mention an amazing wine list.

Other recommendations:

Hotel Havana (Map p93; Thorvald Meyers gate 38; ☎ 10am-6pm, Mon-Fri) International deli with everything from French cheese to Belgian chocolates. The chorizo and manchego sandwiches (Nkr55) are an especially good bet.

Villa Paradiso (Map p93; Olaf Ryes plass 8; ☎ 22 35 40 60; pizzas from Nkr99) No-frills Italian food (mostly pizzas), pleasant service and family friendly.

Vålerenga & Ekeberg

Smia Galleri (Map p91; ☎ 22 19 59 20; Opplandsgata 19; starters Nkr85-95, mains Nkr185-215) Smia Galleri is one of those places Oslo residents are so fond of they almost hate to share it. The leafy patio is perfect on summer afternoons and there's jazz on Thursday evenings. If they have it, try the rhubarb crumble with wild strawberry sorbet. It takes about 15 minutes to get there: from Oslo S, take bus 37 towards Helsfyr T-bane station and get off at Vålerenga.

Ekeberg Restaurant (Map p91; ☎ 23 24 23 00; Kongsveien 15; starters Nkr95-138, mains Nkr145-275) An early example of functionalist architecture, the 1929 Ekeberg Restaurant once attracted long lines of spectators eager to be seen enjoying a beer outside this angular, painfully white nonconformist building. After falling into disrepair in the 1980s, the restaurant was renovated and reopened with a classy menu and slick bar. If nothing else, go for the view.

Holmenkollen Area

Frognereteren restaurant (Map p91; ☎ 22 92 40 40; www.frognereteren.no; ☎ 11am-10pm Mon-Sat, 11am-9pm Sun) There are three good reasons to visit Frognereteren: the apple cake (Nkr50), the view and the building. The apple cake is billed as the best in Oslo and the view, from over 400m above sea level, is as good as it gets. As for the building, with dragon heads and enough wood trim to rival the most ornate Swiss chalet, it is the epitome of the Viking revival-style popular in the 1860s.

DRINKING & ENTERTAINMENT

The tourist office's free monthly brochure *What's On in Oslo* lists current concerts, theatre and special events, but the best publication for night owls is the free *Streetwise*, published annually in English by Use-It (p92).

Bars & Clubs

Going out in the world's most expensive city requires a bit of skill, but high prices certainly don't keep the locals at home. Quite the opposite: Oslo is more vibrant, busy and nonchalantly proud of its up-and-coming status than ever. And the manageable size of the city makes it easy to figure out where to be on any given night.

GAY & LESBIAN OSLO

Oslo is a liberal, gay-friendly city in an already liberal country, which makes for a relaxed gay/lesbian scene. Favourite watering holes include: the mixed scene at **Elsker** (Map pp96-7; Kristian IV gate 9), which has, according to local Øyvind Gjengaar, a 'kind of Eurovision schläger-musical profile'; and the dark basement at **London Pub** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 90 83 98 58; www.londonpub.no; CJ Hambros plass 5; cover charge Nkr50), Oslo's oldest gay bar. The parties at **Fire Oslo** (Map pp96-7; www.fireoslo.com; at Stratos, Youngstorget 2; cover Nkr100 or Nkr150) are also popular.

At the end of June, don't miss **Skeive Dager** (☎ 22 41 11 33; www.skeivedager.no), Oslo's Gay Pride week complete with a parade, art exhibits, concerts and other events. And the first Sunday of every month is Gay Sunday at the **Norske Filminstituttet** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 47 45 00; www.cinemateket.no).

For more information, the *Streetwise* guide published by Use-It (p92) has a 'Gay Guide' covering cafés, pubs, clubs, bookstores and other activities. Or for a truly insider scoop, ask someone to translate the weekly guide from *Blikk* (www.blikk.no), Oslo's gay/lesbian magazine.

Note that many Oslo night spots have an unwritten dress code that expects patrons to be relatively well turned out – at the very least, don't show up in grubby gear and hiking boots. For most bars and clubs that serve beer and wine, you must be over 18 years of age, but many places, especially those that serve spirits, impose a higher age limit. On weekends, most Oslo night spots remain open until at least 3am.

Beer prices for half-litres typically range from Nkr50 to Nkr65, but some places (usually grim and inhabited by wary elbow-on-the-bar locals) charge as little as Nkr30 for those travellers watching their kroner. **Stargate** (Map pp96-7; Grønland 2; half-litre Nkr36) is a decent and central dive.

Some of the most popular places close to the city centre can be found around the Youngstorget, also the political hub of Oslo. **Justisen** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 42 24 72; Møllergata 15), frequented by lawyers and politicians, is good for a peaceful beer in classic surroundings and has outdoor tables. **Robinet** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 20 01 50; Mariboes gate 7), to the north of the square, is a tiny, retro bar packed with musicians and media types.

Grab a stool at the well-polished wooden bar at the ex-pharmacy **Tekehtopa** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 20 33 23; St Olavs plass) – that's pharmacy spelled backwards in Norwegian – for decent beer or a bite to eat. Another popular central location is the long-standing **Onkel Donald Kafé-Bar** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 35 63 10; Universitetsgata 26).

The well-heeled crowd of Oslo west can be found sipping Cava in **Champagneria** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 21 94 88 02; Frognerveien 2; ☎ 11am-1am Mon-Sat, noon-1am Sun) or cocktails at the New Orleans-style courtyard bar at **Palace Grill** (Map

pp96-7; ☎ 23 13 11 40; Solli gate 2), also an excellent restaurant, both near Solli plass.

The city's best neighbourhood bar scene is along Thorvald Meyers gate and the surrounding streets in Grünerløkka. Try working your way through the cocktail list at the hip **Café Kaos** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 04 69 90; Thorvald Meyers gate 56) or minimalist **Tea Lounge** (Map p93; ☎ 22 37 07 05; Thorvald Meyers gate 33b). **Bar Boca** (Map p93; ☎ 22 04 10 80; Thorvald Meyers gate 30) is famous for its bloody marys, among other things.

In Grønland, the back garden at **Datter Til Hagen** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 17 18 61; Grønland 10) is especially busy in the summer, as is the swanky riverside patio of **Süüd Øst** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 35 30 70; Trondheimsveien 5; ☎ 11am-midnight Mon & Tue, 11am-1am Wed & Thu, 11am-2am Fri & Sat).

Live Music

An upbeat place is the rock club **Mono** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 41 41 66; www.cafemono.no; Ploensgate 4), which is known for being ahead of the curve on booking good indie bands. In Grønland, **Gloria Flames** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 17 16 00; www.gloriaflames.no; Grønland 18) is a popular rock bar.

West of the centre, the Russian, cowboy-themed and just plain bizarre **Spasibar** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 11 51 90; www.spasibar.com; St Olavs gate 22) has live music, food, beer, art and a garden overlooking the Slottsparken. To get there go through the Kunstacademe on Wergelandsveien and go towards the back of the yellow building.

Finally, it would be a pity to leave Oslo without checking out **Blå** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 40 00 42 77; www.blaaoslo.no; Brenneriveien 9c), which features on a global list of 100 great jazz clubs compiled by the savvy editors at the US jazz magazine *Down Beat*. As one editor put it, 'to get in this list means that it's quite the club'.

Concerts

Keep your ear to the ground in summer to hear about outdoor concerts at Vigeland Park – a weird-and-wonderful venue.

The city's largest concert halls, **Oslo Spektrum** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 05 29 00; www.oslospektrum.no; Sonja Henies plass 2) and **Rockefeller Music Hall** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 20 32 32; www.rockefeller.no; Torggata 16), once a bathhouse, host a wide range of artists and events.

Den Norske Opera (Map pp96-7; ☎ 81 54 44 88; www.operaen.no; Storgata 23; tickets from Nkr300) is Oslo's opera company and stages opera, ballet and classical concerts every month, except for July. As of 2008 it will be performing in the city's new Opera House at Bjørvika, complete with humidified air for resonance and screens with subtitles in eight different languages on the back of each seat. More casual concerts in the public roof garden are also planned.

You may also want to check out the alternative dance and theatre scene at the café-style **Black Box** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 10 40 20; www.blackbox.no; Stranden 3), in the Aker Brygge complex.

The **National Theatre** (Nationaltheatret; Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 00 14 00; www.nationaltheatret.no; Stortingsgata 15) is Norway's showcase theatre venue and has a lavish rococo hall. It was constructed specifically as a venue for the works of Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, whose works are still performed here.

Cinema

Saga Kino (Map pp96-7; ☎ 82 03 00 00; Stortingsgata 28) The six-screen Saga Kino cinema shows first-run movies, including Hollywood fare, in their original language; the entrance is on Olav V's gate.

Films Hus (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 47 45 00; Dronningens gate 16) Films Hus screens old classics and international festival winners most days.

SHOPPING

Oslo excels in upmarket shopping and there are many fine shops on Grendsen and Karl Johans gate. For art, try the galleries on Frognerveien, exclusive boutiques head to Hegdehaugsveien or Skovveien and for funky shoes or T-shirts go no further than Grünerløkka. **Oslo City Shopping Centre** (Map pp96-7; Stenersgata) and the more glamorous **Glasmagasinet Department Store** (Map pp96-7; Gensens) are good for mainstream shopping.

Husfliden (Map pp96-7; ☎ 24 14 12 80; Rosenkrantz gate 19-21) Husfliden is a larger shop selling

quality Norwegian clothing and crafts, as well as a popular place to buy a *bunad* (national costume).

Vestkanttorget flea market (Map p93; Amaldu Nilsens plass; ☎ 10am-4pm Sat) If you're happy with pot luck and sifting through heaps of junk, take a chance here. It's at the plaza that intersects Professor Dahls gate, a block east of Vigeland Park and it's a more than pleasant way to pass a Saturday morning.

Hassan og Den Dama (Map pp96-7; www.hassanogden dama.no; Skoveien 4) One of many boutiques on Skoveien, this shop has clothing, shoes and jewellery produced by Scandinavian and international designers.

Norway Designs (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 11 45 10; www.norwaydesigns.no; Stortingsgata 28) Features beautifully designed glassware, stationery, clothing and watches within a stone's throw of the National Theatre.

Other recommendations:

Heimen Husflid (Map pp96-7; ☎ 23 21 42 00; www.heimen.net; Rosenkrantz gate 8) Clothing and crafts.

Unique Design (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 42 97 60; Rosenkrantz gate 13) Good for sweaters.

Juhls' Silvergallery Oslo (Map pp96-7; ☎ 22 42 77 99; Roald Amundsens gate 6) Fine silver and crafts.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

Oslo's Gardermoen International Airport (Map p119; ☎ 91 50 64 00; www.osl.no) opened in October 1998 and has a motorway and high-speed rail link to the city centre (see p116). For details of international services, see p403.

Domestic flights also depart from here and include services (with sample one-way fares) to Ålesund (Nkr459), Bergen (Nkr374), Røros (from Nkr498, daily except Saturday), Stavanger (Nkr374), Tromsø (Nkr708) and Trondheim (Nkr374).

KLM, Widerøe, SAS Braathens and Ryanair also operate 'Oslo' services to/from Torp Airport (Map p119), some 123km southwest of Oslo. See p116 for details on how to get there.

Boat

For details of international ferry services, see p408.

Ferries operated by **DFDS Seaways** (Map p91; ☎ 21 62 10 00; Vipptangen 2) connect Oslo with Denmark from the Vipptangen Quay off Skippergata. Bus 60 stops within a couple of minutes walk of the terminal.

Color Line Ferries (Map p93; ☎ 81 00 08 11; www.colorline.no; Color Line Terminalen, Hjortnes) runs to/from Hirtshals (Denmark) and Kiel (Germany); boats dock at Hjortneskaia, west of the central harbour. Take tram 10 or 13 from Oslo S, or the Color Line bus, which leaves Oslo S one hour before boat departures.

Bus

Long-distance buses arrive and depart from the **Galleri Oslo Bus Terminal** (Map pp96-7; Schweigaards gate 8, Galleri Oslo); the train and bus stations are linked via a convenient overhead walkway for easy connections.

Nor-Way Bussekspress (☎ 82 02 13 00 or 81 54 44 44; www.nor-way.no) has the biggest range of services. International services also depart from the bus terminal.

Car & Motorcycle

The main highways into the city are the E6 from the north and south, and the E18 from the southeast and west. Each time you enter Oslo, you must pass through (at least) one of 19 toll stations and pay Nkr15 to Nkr25.

Hitching

When leaving Oslo it's generally best to take a bus or train to the outskirts of the city and start hitching from there.

To hitch to Bergen, take bus 161 to its final stop and wait beside the E16 towards Hønefoss. For Trondheim, take T-Bane line 5 (direction: Vestli) to Grorud and wait beside Rv4, which connects to the E6. For the south coast and Stavanger, take bus 31 or 32 to the Maritim petrol station. For general information see p418).

Train

All trains arrive and depart from Oslo S in the city centre. It has **reservation desks** (Map pp96-7; ☎ 6am-11pm, international 6.30am-11pm) and an **information desk** (☎ 81 50 08 88), which provides details on routes and timetables throughout the country.

There are frequent train services around Oslofjord (eg Drammen, Skien, Moss, Fredrikstad and Halden). Other major destinations include Stavanger via Kristiansand, Bergen via Voss, Røros via Hamar, and Trondheim via Hamar and Lillehammer.

For details of international schedules and prices, see p406.

GETTING AROUND

Oslo has an efficient public transport system with an extensive network of buses, trams, underground trains (T-bane) and ferries. In addition to single-trip tickets, day and transferable eight-trip tickets are also available. Children aged four to 16 and seniors over 67 years of age pay half price on all fares.

The Oslo Pass (see the boxed text, p94) includes access to all public transport options within the city, with the exception of late-night buses and trams. Bicycles can be carried on trams and trains for an additional Nkr11. The automatic fine for travelling without a ticket is a rather punitive Nkr750.

Trafikanten (Map pp96-7; ☎ 177; www.trafikanten.no; Jernbanetorget; ☎ 7am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm Sat & Sun) is located below Oslo S tower and provides free schedules and a public transport map, *Sporveiskart Oslo*.

To/From the Airport

Flybussen (☎ 177; www.flybussen.com) is the airport shuttle to Gardermoen International Airport, 50km north of Oslo. It departs from the bus terminal at Galleri Oslo three or four times hourly from 4.05am to 9.50pm. The trip costs Nkr120/220 one-way/return (valid one month) and takes 40 minutes. **Flybussekspressen** (☎ 177) connects Gardermoen with Majorstua T-bane station (Nkr160), Bekkestua (Nkr180), Ski Skole (Nkr185) and other places, one to four times hourly.

FlyToget (☎ 81 50 07 77; www.flytoget.no) rail services leave Asker station in the far southwest of the city for Gardermoen (Nkr190, 49 minutes) every 20 minutes between 4.18am and midnight, with departures also from the National Theatre and Oslo S. In addition, most north-bound **NSB** (☎ 81 50 08 88) intercity and local trains stop at Gardermoen (Nkr75, from 26 minutes, hourly but fewer on Saturday).

To get to/from Torp Airport in Sandefjord, 123km southwest of Oslo and serviced by Ryanair among others, take the **Torp-Expressen** (☎ 48 30 10 00177, 81 50 01 76; www.torpekspressen.no; adult/child Nkr150/80) bus between Galleri Oslo bus terminal and the airport (1½ hours). Departures from Oslo leave three hours before scheduled Ryanair departures, and leave from Torp after Ryanair flights arrive. Although the service operates primarily for Ryanair passengers (the bus will wait if the flight is delayed), passengers on other airlines may also use it. At other times, you'll need to take

the hourly Telemarksekspressen bus (or a taxi; from Nkr150, 10 minutes) between the airport and Sandefjord train station from where there are connections to Oslo.

Bicycle

The best place to rent bicycles is the **Skiservice Sykkelutleie** (☎ 22 13 95 04; www.ski.service.no; Tryvannsveien 2; per day around Nkr295) in the Nordmarka. To get there by public transport take T-bane 1 towards Frognerseteren and get off the Voksenkollen station (the 2nd-last stop).

One alternative if you don't plan on going too far is **Oslo Citybike** (☎ 22 02 34 88), a network of bikes that cyclists can borrow for up to three hours at a time from bicycle stands around the city. Access cards (Nkr70) can be purchased from the tourist office and last for 24 hours, but bikes must be exchanged or returned to a rack within three hours or you will lose your deposit (Nkr500). They're convenient and well maintained; just don't forget to get a map of the bike stand locations around the city, as the rack you were planning to use may be full.

For ideas on where to cycle, see p105.

Boat

Ferries to the Oslofjord islands sail from Vippetangen Quay (Map p91), see p106. For details of ferries to Bygdøy, see p101.

The express boat **Princessin** (☎ 22 87 64 20; www.nbds.no) connects Oslo with Drøbak (Nkr72, 1½ hours, three weekly) and other Oslofjord stops en route: Ildjernet, Langåra and Håøya (which is a holiday spot offering fine swimming and camping). It departs from Aker Brygge pier.

Bus & Tram

Bus and tram lines lace the city and extend into the suburbs. There's no central local bus station, but most converge at Jernbanetorget in front of Oslo S. Most westbound buses, including those to Bygdøy and Vigeland Park, also stop immediately south of the National Theatre.

The frequency of service drops dramatically at night, but on weekends, night buses N12, N14 and N18 follow the tram routes until 4am or later; there are also weekend night buses (201 to 218). These services are called *Nattlinjer* and cost Nkr45 per ride (no passes are valid).

Tickets for most trips cost Nkr20 if you buy them in advance (at 7-Eleven, Narvesen, Trafikanten) or Nkr30 if you buy them from the driver. A day pass costs Nkr60.

Car & Motorcycle

Oslo has its share of one-way streets, which can complicate city driving a bit, but the streets are rarely as congested as in most European cities.

Metered street parking, identified by a solid blue sign with a white 'P', can be found throughout the city. Payment (up to Nkr44 per hour) is usually required from 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday, and until 3pm Saturday. At other times, parking is free unless otherwise posted. The city centre also has 16 multistorey car parks, including those at Oslo City and Aker Brygge shopping centres; fees range from Nkr70 to Nkr200 per 24-hour period.

Note that the Oslo Pass includes parking at all municipal car parks; instructions for display come with the pass.

Taxi

Flagfall starts from Nkr39 plus Nkr12 to Nkr18 per kilometre. There are taxi stands at Oslo S, shopping centres and city squares, but any taxi with a lit sign is available for hire. Otherwise, phone **Norgestaxi** (☎ 08000) or **Oslo Taxi** (☎ 02323), but note that the meter starts running at the point of dispatch! Oslo taxis accept major credit cards.

T-Bane

The five-line Tunnelbanen underground system, better known as the T-bane, is faster and extends further from the city centre than most city bus lines. All lines pass through the Nationaltheatret, Stortinget and Jernbanetorget (for Oslo S) stations.

AROUND OSLO

DRØBAK

pop 11,500

Once Oslo's winter harbour, Drøbak is a cosy little village by the water's edge, home to enough clapboard timber buildings to warrant a day trip from the capital.

The helpful **tourist office** (☎ 64 93 50 87; Hanegata 4; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug) by the harbour has a wealth of information on Drøbak, including *Walks*

Around Drøbak (free) to assist your rambling through the village.

In town, there are several small eateries around the pretty Torget Sq and along nearby Storgata.

Sights

Drøbak is known as Oslo's 'Christmas town' and is renowned for its public decorations. There's also a Christmas shop, **Tregaardens Julehus** (☎ 64 93 41 78; www.julehus.no; Torget 4; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat Mar-Oct; 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat Nov; 10am-8pm Mon-Fri & 10am-4pm Sat Dec-Feb), which has a Father Christmas post box for kids.

Saltvannsakvarium (☎ 64 93 09 74; www.akvarium.net; Havnegata 4; adult/child Nkr30/10; ☎ 10am-7pm May-Aug, 10am-4pm Sep-Apr) lays claim to the title of the world's only *lutefisk* museum. Not far away, the small **Drøbak Båtforenings Maritime Samlinger** (☎ 64 93 09 74; Krokettøtta 4; adult/child Nkr10/free; ☎ 11am-7pm May-Aug) is a museum of maritime paraphernalia.

Not to be missed is the imposing **Oscarsborg fortress**, which lies on an offshore island and dates back to the 1600s. It was the Oscarsborg batteries that sank the German warship *Blücher* on 9 April 1940, an act that saved the King and the Norwegian government from being captured. The fort museum was renovated in 2005 and open-air concerts and complete operas are held here throughout the summer. There is even a hotel, spa and restaurant on the island if you want to extend your stay. **Ferries** (www.oscarsborgfestning.no) to the island (adult/child Nkr70/40; 45 minutes) depart 14 times daily from the harbour from mid-June to mid-August.

Getting There & Away

The hourly bus 541 travels between Oslo and Drøbak (Nkr62, one hour). Alternatively in July, the express boat **Princessen** (☎ 22 87 64 20; www.nbds.no) does one trip (Nkr72) from Oslo's Aker Brygge pier daily Wednesday to Sunday (three times weekly in August), allowing 1½ hours in Drøbak before returning to Oslo.

The new tunnel under Oslofjord, between Drøbak and Drammen, charges Nkr55 each way for a car (motorcycles free).

DRAMMEN

pop 58,700

Drammen is an industrial centre of more interest to businesspeople than tourists. With

heavy port machinery and factories, it hardly jumps out at you as being worth a stop. It does, however, have a couple of quirky elements – Drammen was the start of the Royal Road to Bergen and it was the original home of the potato alcohol aquavit – which may warrant a detour. The **Drammen Kommune Offices** (☎ 03008; www.drammen.kommune.no; Engene 1; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) can provide further information.

Sights & Activities

Drammen has several buildings of note all of which are clustered close together in the old centre around the main thoroughfare Bragernes Torg: the historic **Stock Exchange** (Bragernes Torg), which now houses a McDonald's; the restored **Rådhus** (Engenes 1), the city hall, a former courthouse and jail; the **fire station** (Bragernes Torg), now a bank; the lovely **Drammen Theatre** (☎ 32 21 31 00; Gamle Kirkeplass; ☎ events only), built in 1870, burned down in 1993 and reopened in 1996; and the Gothic-style **Bragernes church** (Bragernes Torg) built in 1871.

You can also see the house (from the outside only) where aquavit was first produced, in 1804, on Sommerfrydveien by merchant Johan Godtfried Schwencke in response to a royal decree that corn not be used to produce spirits. In late autumn, Drammen holds a national aquavit competition in which celebrities judge which is the best brand.

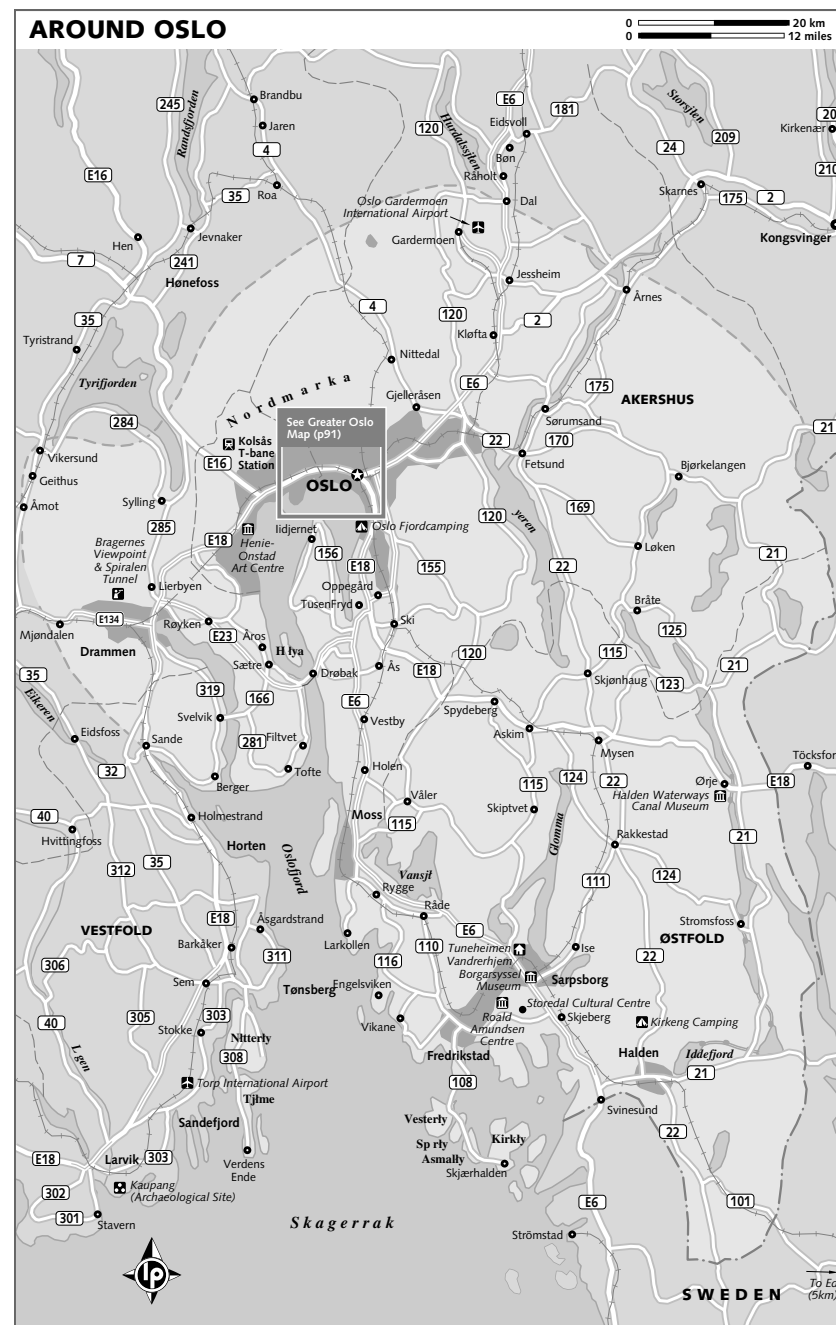
To get beyond the industry, take a trip up the 1650m-long **Spiralen tunnel** (Map p119) to the 200m-high Bragernes for a lovely view, as well as good waffles (Nkr35) at the Spiralentop Café. And if you still can't quite face the drive back down the six-spiral tunnel – reminiscent of a never-ending indoor parking lot – go for a walk in the Drammensmarka. Bus 41 does the trip three times daily from Bragernes Torg (Nkr20, 15 minutes) on weekends during the summer.

Getting There & Away

Trains run to Oslo every 30 minutes (Nkr83, 35 minutes) and buses depart once or twice every hour (Nkr75, 35 minutes).

AROUND DRAMMEN

Another interesting excursion will take you to Åmot, where the **Royal Blåfarveværk** (☎ 32 78 67 00; www.blaa.no; hourly tours Nkr35; ☎ 11am-6pm mid-June–mid-Aug, 11am-5pm Tue-Sat, 11am-6pm Sun rest-of-year) was established by King Christian VII in 1773 to extract cobalt for the production



OSLOFJORD HIGHLIGHTS

- Take the ferry down the Oslofjord past **Oscarsborg Fortress** (p118), imagining the fateful shots that sank the German cruiser *Blücher* on 9 April, 1940
- Step into the 1700s, complete with cannons and duels, during a historical re-enactment in the **Gamlebyen** (right) at Fredrikstad
- Gasp for breath after a spring dip in the Oslofjord during a visit to the **Hvaler Skerries** (p123)

of blue pigments for the glass and porcelain industries. It's also worth looking at the large Haugfoss waterfall, the Mølla shop (which sells cobalt-blue glasswork), and the various art exhibitions in the attached **museum** (☎ 32 78 67 00; adult/child Nkr60/free). Take the regular Nettbus express bus 100 or 101 from Drammen to Åmot (Nkr68, one hour) then change to bus 105 (Nkr26, seven minutes).

ØSTFOLD

The Østfold region, the detached slice of Norway to the east of Oslofjord, is a mix of forest, pastoral farmland and small seaside villages that carry great historical significance and are well worth visiting.

FREDRIKSTAD
pop 96,600

Fredrikstad is home to one of the best-preserved fortress towns in Scandinavia, Gamlebyen with a modern waterfront district just across the water. Once an important trading centre between mainland Europe and western Scandinavia, Fredrikstad also has a cathedral (1880), which contains stained-glass work by Emanuel Vigeland; bizarrely, the steeple contains a lighthouse, which still functions at night.

Information

The **Gamlebyen tourist office** (☎ 69 30 46 00; turistkontoret@opplevfredrikstad.com; Tohusgata 41; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, noon-5pm Sat & Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug; 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri mid-Aug-mid-Jun), in Gamlebyen is complemented in the summer by the smaller **tourist office** (☎ 69 39 65 00; Dampskipsbrygga; ☎ 8am-9pm 15 Jun-15 Aug), at the

marina. The latter also offers internet access (Nkr10 per 15 minutes).

Sights

GAMLEBYEN

The charming timbered houses, moats, gates and drawbridge of the Fredrikstad Gamlebyen (Old Town) are simply enchanting. It was first built in 1663 – as a primary trade outlet connecting southern Norway with mainland Europe, Fredrikstad was vulnerable to waterborne assaults – the Old Town began life as a military enclave, which could be readily defended against Swedish aggression and attacks. The perimeter walls, once defended by 200 cannons, now consist of grassy embankments that make for a very pleasant stroll. The narrow cobbled streets have been similarly preserved and are still lined with picturesque 17th-century buildings, many of which remain occupied today.

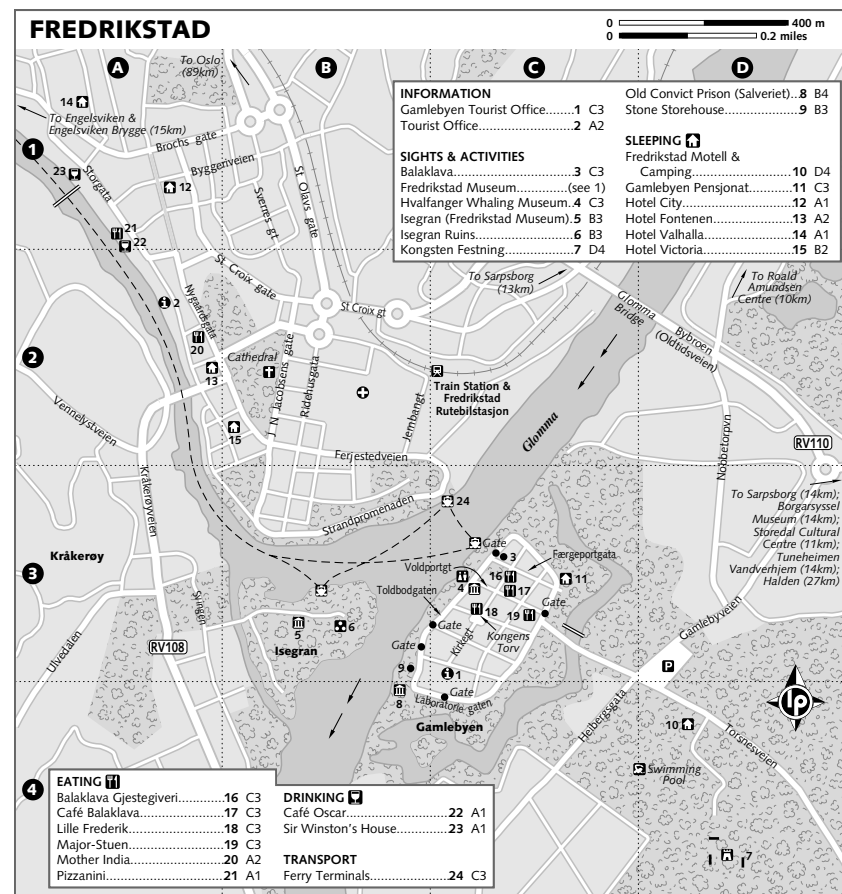
Among the finest old buildings in town, look out particularly for the **old convict prison** (Salveriet; 1731); the **stone storehouse** (1674-91), the oldest building in Gamlebyen and now a ceramics showroom; and **Balaklava** (1783), a historic building.

From mid-June to mid-August, the Gamlebyen tourist office runs one-hour **guided tours** (adult/child Nkr75/35). They leave from the tourist office at 11am, 1pm and 3pm, and also at noon and 4pm on Saturday and Sunday.

The **Fredrikstad Museum** (☎ 69 95 48 00; www.fredrikstad.museum.no; combined ticket with Isegran adult/senior or child Nkr40/20; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, noon-5pm Sat & Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug; 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri mid-Aug-mid-Jun) is housed in the same building as the tourist office in Gamlebyen and is well worth a browse. The downstairs area houses temporary exhibitions, while upstairs you'll find scale models of the Old Town and an interesting collection of relics from three centuries of Fredrikstad's civilian, military and industrial activities. Also on the top floor is a military museum.

ISEGRAN

Fredrikstad Museum has another section on **Isegran** (☎ 69 33 20 03; www.isegrn.no; combined ticket with Fredrikstad Museum adult/senior or child Nkr40/20; ☎ noon-5pm Tue-Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug), an islet across the Glomma. Norse sagas mention the 13th-century fortress of Isegran, which later became a further line of defence against Sweden in the mid-17th century. The **ruins** of



a stone (originally wood) tower remain visible at the eastern end of the island. It's also the site of a small museum on local boatbuilding (from the time when boats were lovingly handcrafted from wood). Boats run between Isegran and Gamlebyen or the modern centre (Nkr6). By road or on foot, access is from Rv108, about 600m south of Fredrikstad city centre.

HVALFANGER (WHALING) MUSEUM

This small whaling **museum** (☎ 69 32 44 21; Tolbodgaten; admission Nkr10; ☎ noon-4pm Wed-Sun, Sat & Sun Aug-Sep) is run by proud old men only too keen to show you around the old photos, the formidable whaling guns once used in the Antarctic, and the even more formidable

penis of a blue whale. No English is spoken and all labels are in Norwegian.

KONGSTEN FESTNING

On what was once called 'Gallows Hill' stands the flower-festooned **Kongsten Festning** (Kongsten Fort). Dating from 1685, it once served as a lookout and warning post for the troops at nearby Gamlebyen. Although it can get overrun on summer weekends, this otherwise lonely and appealingly unkempt spot is a fun place to scramble around the turrets, embankments, walls and stockade, or just sit in the sun and soak up the silence. It's a 10-minute walk southeast of the Gamlebyen drawbridge (turn off Torsnesvæn in Fredrikstad Motell & Camping).

Festivals & Events

The **Glomma Festival** (☎ 69 31 54 77; glommas@glommafestivalen.no) runs during the second week in July, featuring a week of musical performances, ritual duels, a 'bathtub regatta' for creative vessels and a veteran sailing ship exhibition. It's a very popular festival so book ahead for accommodation.

Sleeping

GAMLEBYEN & SARPSBORG

Fredrikstad Motell & Camping (☎ 69 32 03 15; Torsnesveien 16-18; tent with/without car Nkr100/155, caravan Nkr155-190, motel s/d Nkr400/500; (P)) This multifaceted but largely uninspiring place, in the grounds of Kongsten Fort, is nonetheless good for its proximity to the Old Town. From the centre, take any bus (eg 362) headed for Torsnes.

Tuneheimen Vandrerhjem (Map p119; ☎ 69 14 50 01; www.sarpsborgvandrerhjem.no; Tuneveien 44; dm Nkr250, s/d with shared bathroom Nkr425/630, all incl breakfast; (P)) The nearest youth hostel to Fredrikstad is near Tunevannet lake, 1km from Sarpsborg, which is in turn a 14km bus ride from Fredrikstad. Linen costs an extra Nkr55; there is an open kitchen or you can buy dinner for Nkr115.

Gamlebyen Pensjonat (☎ 69 32 20 20; www.gamlebyen-pensjonat.no; Smedjegaten 88; s/d with shared bathroom Nkr378/5094; (P)) Housed in the renovated former artillery barracks, this place can have the feel of a student dorm on summer weekends, but it's the only choice for budget travellers in the Old Town and, as such, represents decent value.

NEW TOWN

Hotel Fontenen (☎ 69 30 05 00; www.hotelfontenen.no; Nygaardsgata 9-11; s/d Nkr795/995) One of the best-value midrange places in town, this place has pleasant rooms, good breakfasts and a family feel. The polished floorboards and views of the cathedral (ask for a room at the front) are among the highlights.

Hotel Valhalla (☎ 69 36 89 50; www.hotelvalhalla.no; Valhallsgate 3; s/d Nkr695/995 mid-Jun–mid-Aug & Sat & Sun; Nkr750/1090 weekdays rest-of-the-year) High on a hill overlooking the town, but within easy walking distance of the centre, the lovely old wooden house has comfortable, tidy rooms and good views.

Hotel Victoria (☎ 69 38 58 00; www.hotelvictoria.no; Turngaten 3; s/d mid-Jun–mid-Aug & Sat & Sun Nkr895/1020, weekdays rest-of-year Nkr1240/1365) Opposite the cath-

edral grounds, this place is also better than it looks from the outside. Ageing but well maintained, it offers attractive rooms just a short walk from the ferry to Gamlebyen.

Hotel City (☎ 69 38 56 00; www.ricahotelcity.no; Nygaardsgata 44-46; s/d mid-Jun–mid-Aug & Sat & Sun Nkr956/1056, weekdays rest-of-year Nkr1195/1320) Recently renovated, Hotel City is good value in summer, with simple, nondescript rooms. It also has a nightclub, plus a pub, pizzeria and two quality restaurants. Don't be put off by the drab exterior.

Eating

GAMLEBYEN

What the Old Town lacks in accommodation, it makes up for with restaurants.

Lille Frederik (Torvgaten; burgers from Nkr54; ☎ 11am-10pm Mon-Fri, 10am-10pm Sat, noon-10pm Sun) For burgers, snacks and coffee, Lille Frederik is just the place. It's hugely popular in summer, when snackers descend on the outdoor tables like seagulls, and queues can be long.

Major-Stuen (☎ 69 32 15 55; Voldportgata 73; starters Nkr75-95, mains Nkr205-285; ☎ noon-10pm) Another fine place in Gamlebyen, the recommended Major-Stuen has an international menu, but specialises in Norwegian dishes, including whale meat with fried onions, stewed cabbage and potatoes (Nkr225).

Café Balaklava (☎ 69 32 30 40; Færgoportgata 78; snacks Nkr79-89, desserts Nkr30-45; ☎ noon-9pm) Café Balaklava is a charming, well-run place, with a pleasant outdoor patio, that becomes a bustling hub of activity during the summer months.

Balaklava Gjestgiveri (☎ 69 32 30 40; Faergoportgata; mains from Nkr150, 3-course dinner Nkr450; ☎ 6-11pm Mon-Sat) Next door in a historic building, it specialises in excellent, more upmarket, Norwegian beef and fish dishes.

NEW TOWN

The Fredrikstad waterfront between Storgata and the water is lined with all manner of restaurants and bars, most with pleasant outdoor terraces ideal for a summer's afternoon or evening.

Pizzanini (☎ 69 30 03 00; Storgata 5; pizzas Nkr99-275, pasta Nkr129-149; ☎ noon-1am Sun-Thu, noon-2am Fri & Sat summer, 3pm-midnight winter) When other restaurants stand empty, this place always buzzes, due in part to its young vibe and extensive, well-priced menu.

Mother India (☎ 69 31 22 00; Nygaardsgata 17; mains Nkr140-195; ☎ 4-11pm Mon-Sat, 2-10pm Sun) This

atmospheric Indian restaurant gets the thumbs up from locals and travellers alike for its attractive décor and good food.

Engelsviken Brygge (☎ 69 35 18 40; Engelsvikveien 6, Engelsviken; 3-course dinner around Nkr350) Excellent quayside seafood restaurant, 15km northwest of Fredrikstad. The high-quality food includes crab, mussels, catfish and halibut.

Drinking

The following have breezy outdoor tables in summer.

Café Oscar (☎ 69 36 99 20; Storgata 5; ☎ noon-1.30am Sun-Thu, noon-2.30am Fri & Sat) With a buzzy vibe, Café Oscar offers cover bands from 10.30pm Wednesday (free) and from 11.30pm Friday and Saturday (cover charge Nkr60). Beer costs Nkr59.

Sir Winston's House (☎ 69 36 99 10; Storgata 17; ☎ 3pm-3am Wed-Fri, noon-3am Sat, 2pm-2am Sun) Beside the river, this English-style pub serves fish and chips for Nkr95, and you can choose between 10 draught beers. On weekends it also offers DJ music (mostly 1960s, but some contemporary) and dancing.

Getting There & Away

Intercity buses arrive and depart from the **Fredrikstad Rutebilstasjon** (☎ 177, 69 35 72 00) at the train station. Bus 200 and 360 run to/from Sarpsborg (Nkr30, 25 minutes, twice hourly). Nor-Way's Oslofjordekspres has one to seven daily services between Oslo and Fredrikstad (Nkr155, 1¼ hours), with most buses continuing to Hvaler; there are also regular **Flybusssekspresen** (☎ 177, 82 02 13 00; www.flybusssekspresen.no) services from Fredrikstad to Oslo Gardermoen International Airport (Nkr240, 2¼ hours, every hour or two).

Fredrikstad lies on the **NSB** (☎ 81 50 08 88; www.nsb.no) rail line between Oslo and Göteborg. Trains to/from Oslo (Nkr166, one hour) run about 10 times daily, and also go to Sarpsborg and Halden but note that south-bound international trains require a mandatory seat reservation.

Getting Around

To cross the Glomma to Gamlebyen, you can either trek over the high and hulking Glomma bridge or take the *Go'vakker Randi* ferry (Nkr6) from Strandpromenaden. It operates from 5.30am to 11pm on weekdays (to 1am on Friday); from 7am to 1am on Saturday and from 9.30am to 11pm on Sunday.

The ferry (adult/child Nkr10/5, two minutes) shuttles across the river Glomma to the main gate of Gamlebyen regularly between 5.30am and 11pm.

For a taxi, phone ☎ 69 36 26 10. Bicycle hire is available from the two tourist offices.

AROUND FREDRIKSTAD Hvaler Skerries

Norwegian holidaymakers and artists love the Hvaler Skerries, an offshore archipelago of 833 forested islands and islets guarding the southern entrance to Oslofjord. The main islands of **Vesterøy**, **Spjærøy**, **Asmaløy** and **Kirkøy** are connected to the mainland by a toll road (Nkr55) and tunnel. Bus No 365 (Nkr58) runs all the way from Fredrikstad to Skjærhalden, at the far end of Kirkøy.

Hvaler **tourist office** (☎ 69 37 50 00; Skjærhalden; ☎ 10am-8pm mid-Jun–mid-Aug) can point you in the direction of the numerous sights dotted around the islands.

Above the coastline of Akerøy island, accessible only by ferry (taxi boat) from Skjærhalden, clings a well-preserved 17th-century coastal **fortress**, renovated in the 1960s. Admission is free and it's always open.

The mid-11th-century **stone church** (Skjærhalden; ☎ noon-4pm Jul, noon-4pm Sat 2nd half of Jun & 1st half of Aug) on the island of Kirkøy is one of the oldest in Norway. The church hosts a week-long music and arts festival in July.

The tourist office has a list of fully equipped private houses and chalets in Hvaler available for between Nkr400 and Nkr700 per day or Nkr2700 and Nkr4500 per week. **Hvaler Kurs & Konferansesenter** (☎ 69 37 91 28; Skjærhalden; apt from Nkr500) offers excellent apartments for rent.

All year, the *M/S Hollungen* and *M/S Hvalerfergen II* sails roughly every hour from Skjærhalden and through the Hvaler Skerries (Nkr45, one hour). Alternatively, you can sail with the scheduled tour ferry *M/S Vesleø II* between Skjærhalden, Koster (Sweden) and Strömstad (Sweden) from mid-June to mid-August for Nkr135/95 per adult/child return.

Roald Amundsen Centre

The renowned and noted polar explorer Roald Amundsen, who in 1911 was the first man to reach the South Pole, was born in 1872 at Hvidsten, midway between Fredrikstad and Sarpsborg. Although the family moved to Oslo when Roald was still a small child,

the family home in Hvidsten, which was the base for a small shipbuilding and shipping business, is now the **Roald Amundsen Centre** (Map p119; ☎ 69 34 83 26; museum & guided tour adult/child Nkr30/10; 🕒 5-7pm Wed, noon-2pm Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug), which is dedicated to the man's life and expeditions. Standing surrounded by these quiet fields of southern Norway, it seems perhaps not so surprising that Amundsen set off to seek adventure so far from home. The centre is signposted about 11km east of Fredrikstad, along the Rv111 towards Sarpsborg.

Storedal Cultural Centre

This **cultural centre** (Map p119; ☎ 69 16 92 67; www.storedal.no; Storedal; adult/child Nkr35/free; 🕒 9.30am-5pm Mon-Fri May, 9.30am-5pm Tue-Fri, noon-6pm Sun Jun-Aug) is 11km northeast of Fredrikstad. King Magnus the Blind was born here in 1117; he took the throne at 13 years of age and earned his nickname at 18 when he was blinded by an enemy in Bergen. A later owner of the farm, Erling Stordahl, who was also blind, developed a monument to King Magnus, as well as a centre dedicated to blind and other disabled people. The most intriguing feature is the *Ode til Lyset* (Ode to the Light), a 'sound sculpture' by Arnold Haukeland and Arne Nordheim which, using photo cells and a computer in the farmhouse, transmutes the slightest fluctuations in natural light into haunting, ever-changing music. To get there, follow Rv110 east for about 9km from Fredrikstad; the centre is 2.1km north of the main road.

Borgarsyssel Museum

This excellent Østfold county **museum** (Map p119; ☎ 69 11 56 50; www.ostfoldmuseet.no; Gamlebygaten 8, Sarpsborg; adult/child Nkr40/free; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, noon-6pm Sat & Sun mid-May-Aug) lies in the town of Sarpsborg (14km northeast of Fredrikstad). The open-air display contains 30 period buildings from various parts of the country and includes a vast collection of cultural art and artefacts. There's also a **herb garden**, a **petting zoo** and the **ruins** of King Øystein's St Nikolas church, constructed in 1115 and destroyed by the Swedes in 1567. From Fredrikstad, trains and buses run frequently to Sarpsborg.

Oldtidsveien

People have lived and worked in the Østfold region for thousands of years, and numerous examples of ancient stone works and rock paintings lie along the Oldtidsveien (Old

Times Way), the old sunken road between Fredrikstad and Sarpsborg. At Solberg, there are three panels with around a hundred figures dating back 3000 years. At Gunnarstorp are several 30m-wide **Bronze Age burial mounds** and several **Iron Age standing stones**. The site at Begby includes well-preserved renditions of ships, men and animals, while Hunn has several **stone circles** and a series of **burial mounds** dating from 500 BC to AD 800. The **rock paintings** at Hornes clearly depict 21 ships complete with oarsmen. The sites are signposted off the E6, just south of Sarpsborg, but they may also be visited on a long day walk or bike ride from Fredrikstad.

HALDEN

pop 28,000

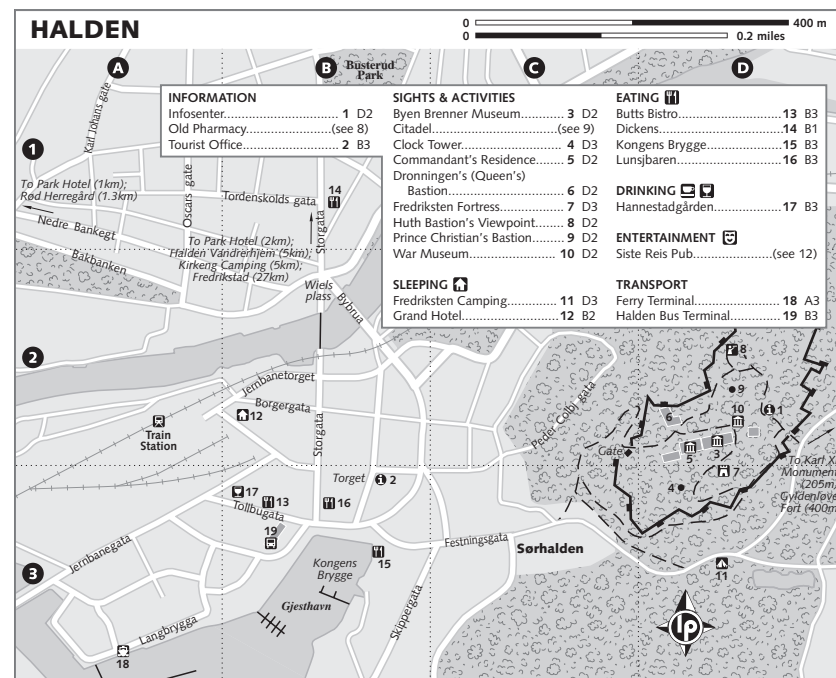
The soporific border town of Halden, at the end of Iddefjord between steep rocky headlands, possesses a hugely significant history as a cornerstone of Norwegian defence through centuries of Swedish aggression. With a pretty little harbour filled with yachts, a looming fortress rising up behind the town and a sprinkling of decent restaurants, this place makes a worthwhile detour.

The Halden **tourist office** (☎ 69 19 09 80; www.visithalden.com; Torget 2; 🕒 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 9am-3.30pm Mon-Fri rest-of-year), just off Torget, has some useful information. In summer, there is a second office at the fortress, **Infosenter** (🕒 10am-5pm May-Aug).

History

Halden served as a garrison during the Hannibal Wars from 1643 to 1645. From 1644 it was fortified with a wooden stockade. In the 1658 Roskilde Treaty between Sweden and Denmark, Norway lost its Bohuslän province (and Bohus fortress), and Halden was left exposed as a border outpost requiring heavy defences. When attacks by Swedish forces in 1658, 1659 and 1660 were scarcely repelled, the need for a better fortification became apparent, resulting in the fortress, which was begun in 1661.

In the midst of it all, in 1659 and 1716, the Halden resistance resorted to fire to drive out the enemy, a sacrifice honoured with a mention in the Norwegian national anthem, which includes the lines: '...we chose to burn our nation, lest we let it fall'. The fires also serve as a centrepiece for a museum on the town's history in the fortress.



Further attacks from the Swedes continued into the 19th century. In the first few years of the 20th century, Fredriksten Fortress was armed with increasingly powerful modern cannons, turret guns and howitzers. However, this firepower was removed during the 1906 negotiations for the dissolution of the Swedish-Norwegian union and the town nestled into life as a quiet seaside village.

Sights

FREDRIKSTEN FORTRESS & MUSEUMS

Crowning the hilltop behind Halden is the 1661 **Fredriksten Fortress** (Fredriksten Festning; ☎ 69 18 54 11; www.halden.museum.no; adult/child Nkr50/10, incl all museums; 🕒 10am-5pm daily 18 May-Aug & Sun in Sep), which has resisted six Swedish sieges and never been captured.

To reach the fortress from the town, a half-overgrown cobbled footpath climbs from the top of Festningsgata in Sørhalden (a neighbourhood of 19th-century sea captains' cottages), up the unkempt lilac-covered slopes. The road for cars leads up from the same street.

On 28 July 1660 King Fredrik III of Denmark issued a declaration ordering a more sturdy fortification above Halden. The pentagonal citadel, as well as the adjoining Gyldenløve Fort to the east, Stortårnet and Overberget, was constructed across two parallel hills from 1661 to 1671, and augmented between 1682 and 1701. Its crowning event came on 11 December 1718, when the warmongering Swede King Karl XII was shot dead on the site (a monument now marks the spot).

The museums in the castle grounds cover various facets of the fortress' history. Downhill from the main entrance, the **War Museum** contains military artefacts and a variety of information on Halden's experiences of war from 1660 onwards, including details on the Norwegian independence movement in 1905. A tunnel leads up into **Prince Christian's Bastion** – the main vantage point for the fortress defenders. A broader sweep of Halden's history is outlined in the **Byen Brenner Museum** ('City in Flames' Museum) exhibition about halfway down the main thoroughfare. Displays in the **old pharmacy** describe the history of pharmacology from early Norwegian folk remedies to

early-20th-century apothecaries. It's housed in the former **Commandant's Residence**, constructed between 1754 and 1758 and damaged by fire in 1826. After renovation it was used as a powder laboratory, armoury and barracks. Note the Fredrik V monogram over the doorway.

Perhaps the most interesting sites are the **brewery**, which once produced up to 3000L of beer a day, and the **bakery ovens**, which baked bread for up to 5000 soldiers. There's also a multimedia presentation and shop at the Infoserter, just inside the main entrance of the fortress.

There are many intriguing old buildings dotted around the fortress, but even better are the **views** over Halden and the surrounding hills from alongside the cannons near the **Dronningen's (Queen's) Bastion, Clock Tower, Huth Bastion's Viewpoint** and the **citadel** (the outside of Prince Christian's Bastion). Note that the high bastions are barely fenced, if at all.

Guided tours (adult/child Nkr50/25; ☎ noon, 1.30pm & 3pm daily mid-Jun–11 Aug, noon & 1.30pm Sun 12–26 Aug) of the fortress and other buildings on the grounds are in Norwegian or English. There are also **ghost tours** (child/accompanying adult Nkr50/25; ☎ May–Aug) in the summer.

RØD HERREGÅRD

Rød Herregård **manor** (☎ 69 18 54 11; Herregårdsveien; tours adult/child Nkr50/10; ☎ tours noon, 1pm & 2pm Tue–Sat mid-Jun–mid-Aug, noon, 1pm & 2pm Sun May–mid-Jun, noon, 1pm & 2pm Sun mid-Aug–Sep), dating from 1733, has fine interiors, notable collections of both weapons and art, and one of the best gardens in Norway. It's 1.5km northwest of the town centre and is well signposted.

Sleeping

Fredriksten Camping (☎ 69 18 40 32; Fredriksten Festning; tent with car Nkr150, 4-/5-bed cabins Nkr400/800; 📍) A great location amid the trees and adjacent to the fortress makes this well-run place a winner. It also offers minigolf and, after the fortress closes and the crowds disappear, a quiet green spot to pitch a tent.

Halden Vandrerhjem (☎ 69 21 69 68; www.vandrerhjem.no; Brødløs; dm/s/d/tr Nkr150/250/395/450; ☎ mid-Jun–mid-Aug) The family-run hostel, at the suburban Tosterød school, offers standard rooms in pleasant surroundings on the edge of Halden. Take bus 102 to 104 from Busterud Park (marked Gimle).

Grand Hotel (☎ 69 18 72 00; www.grandhotell.net; Jernbanetorget 1; s/d Fri & Sat 755/910, Sun–Thu mid-Jun–mid-

Aug Nkr910/1050) The Grand Hotel, opposite the train station, is comfortable and functional rather than luxurious, but the location is good, as are the buffet breakfasts, which are included in the price.

Park Hotel (☎ 69 21 15 00; www.park-hotel.no; Marcus Thranes gate 30; s/d mid-Jun–mid-Aug & Sat & Sun Nkr840/990, rest-of-year Nkr1160/1410) The Park Hotel, 1.5km west of the centre, represents the best summer value in town for its combination of attractively furnished, airy rooms and friendly staff.

Eating

Around Gjesthavn (Guest Harbour), you'll find several pleasant restaurants with outdoor seating.

Kongens Brygge (☎ 69 17 80 60; Gjesthavn; pizzas Nkr99, mains from Nkr169; ☎ lunch & dinner) Right on the waterfront, this place has a cruisy atmosphere and a wonderful pontoon terrace open that's in summer. The pizzas are expensive but come in quite generous proportions and are bound to fill hungry travellers.

Butts Bistro (☎ 69 17 20 12; Tollbugata 3; mains from Nkr100; ☎ 3pm–4am Fri & Sat, 3pm–midnight Sun–Thu) Unfortunately named, but good food and great on weekends for a midnight curry.

Dickens (☎ 69 18 35 33; www.dickens.no; Storgata 9; mains from Nkr110; ☎ lunch & dinner) The very popular Dickens offers a choice between outdoor seating (summer only) or the dining room in a 17th-century cellar.

Drinking & Entertainment

Hannestadgården (☎ 69 19 77 81; Tollbugata 5; nightclub cover Nkr50; ☎ beer garden 3pm–3am Mon–Fri & 1pm–3am Sat, nightclub 10pm–3am Fri & Sat) This multipurpose nightspot has an atmospheric beer garden, a piano bar, boisterous nightclub and regular concerts throughout summer.

Dickens (☎ 69 18 35 33; Storgata 9; www.dickens.no) If you prefer laid-back music on a lazy summer's afternoon, head to Dickens where there's (free) jazz in the courtyard from 1.30pm to 3.30pm on Saturday during July and August.

Getting There & Away

Trains between Oslo and Halden (Nkr211, 1¼ hours) via Fredrikstad run hourly from Monday to Friday and every second hour on weekends. An average of four trains daily continue on to Göteborg and Malmö in Sweden. The long-distance bus terminal sits right at

the harbour, with regular services (less on weekends) to Oslo and Fredrikstad.

AROUND HALDEN Halden Canal (Haldenkanalen)

East and north of Halden, a canal system connects the town with Göteborg, Sweden, for all but one short dry section (1.8km). The highlight is the Brekke Locks, a system of four locks between Femsjøen and Aspern (on the Halden–Strømsfoss run), which raise and lower the boats a total of 26.6m.

Canoe hire is available from **Kirkeng Camping** (Map p119; ☎ 69 19 92 98), 5km northeast of town in Aremark, if you prefer to explore under your own steam. You can pick up a boating

and recreation map from the tourist office in Halden.

Otherwise, you can take a ride on the tourist cruise boat **M/S Turisten** (☎ 93 06 64 44; www.turisten.no), which follows the Haldenkanalen between Tistedal (just east of Halden) and Strømsfoss (adult/senior/child return Nkr250/200/150, 3½ hours). The boat leaves Strømsfoss at 11am and begins its leisurely return from Tistedal at 3pm on Wednesday and Friday to Sunday from mid-June to mid-August. To reach the town of Tistedal, take bus 103 or 106 (Nkr32, 18 minutes, twice hourly except late Saturday afternoon and Sunday). You'll need to drive to Strømsfoss to do the return trip.

© Lonely Planet Publications. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'