

TRIP INFORMATION SHEET 2025 NORWAY

The Best of Norway during St. Olaf's 150th Anniversary Year

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Welcome

Hello Study Travelers! We are grateful you have chosen to participate in Travel with St. Olaf College and are working to prepare a program worthy of your high expectations.

The mission of this Study Travel program is to:

- celebrate St. Olaf College's 150th anniversary
- enjoy performances by the St. Olaf Orchestra
- experience the splendor of Norway through its arts, culture, natural beauty, cuisine, and more
- encounter other perspectives while deepening your understanding of your own viewpoints
- engage in stimulating conversations with like-minded travelers

To achieve these goals, we will visit many sites and enjoy conversations throughout the program. Most days are quite full, with a little free time so that you may explore your own interests, reflect on what you are seeing and learning, sit amidst the hustle and bustle of daily life, and decompress. Time to process new ideas is integral to grasping the accuracy and implications of those ideas. Simply savoring the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of another culture can deepen your learning experience.

Equally important to reaching the tour's goals is getting to know the others in your group. A rapport with those sharing your encounters can strongly enhance your learning experience. Connecting to and discussing issues raised by this trip with your fellow travelers can augment your encounters and strengthen your new feelings, perspectives and knowledge. Your faculty leaders will strive to create a relaxed, safe environment in which discussion flows easily and all perspectives are welcome.

In fact, we hope to take you "from curious to courageous." Many of us are eager to see the world and encounter different perspectives, but we find it challenging to take the next step and have difficult conversations. I encourage you to keep these things in mind as you travel:

1. Curiosity is a human condition *and* a skill set. It requires a level of mindfulness and awareness of surroundings. In being curious, we seek to understand both commonalities and differences.
2. Place matters. Travel is as much about creating immersion into an environment as it is about escape from a mindset that is enabled by one's regular environment. When we move into new places we are grasping an opportunity to break a mindset.

3. Voice matters. The speaker's perspective has the power to change the narrative. Pay attention to who is talking, whether it be a local or a fellow group member.
4. Transformation requires reflection, as I mentioned above. Knowledge alone isn't going to generate transformation, we need to engage in further discussion and reflection.
5. The burden of courage is on us. Lifelong learning is a verb – it's an active endeavor. You're going to be processing new information and that's OK, we'll do it together.

I wish you an enriching and enlightening tour.



Heidi Quiram
Director of Alumni & Family Travel

General Resources

As a reminder, please familiarize yourself with the many resources we have online at stolaf.edu/travel > Menu > Prepare for your Adventure, including the overseas travel insurance coverage, how to be an independent group traveler, safety overview, and much more.

Connecting to the Group

The address of the group hotel and the timing of the first gathering will be provided in an email with the subject line "Get Ready for Departure" about 3 weeks prior to departure.

Recommended Readings

As a reminder, your faculty leader(s) put together a Resource List, if you're interested in doing some pre-departure learning, or continuing the learning after the tour. It is linked within Action Items on the trip web page.

No Entry Visa BUT A SPECIAL NOTE about transiting through the UK

There is no visa required for Norway for stays under 90 days. Two blank passport pages and passport validity for at least six months after your entry into the country are recommended.

Please note that if your flight schedule has you transiting through the UK, U.S. passport holders will now need an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) to enter or transit through the United Kingdom. The ETA is the UK's travel authorization and pre-departure security process for screening travelers from visa-exempt countries. Visit [this web page](#) for instructions on applying for the ETA.

A Typical Day

A typical day will normally start with a good breakfast and a departure time on our bus or on foot at approximately 8-9 a.m. On most days, we will set out to see one or more sites or museums; we will coordinate our departure time in order to maximize our time at the site. Factors will include opening and closing times as well as anticipated tourist traffic. We will typically return to the hotel in time to relax and freshen up for dinner.

On every Study Travel we try to strike a balance between scheduled activities and time on your own. Some days may have less free time than others. We work to include activities we feel are essential to the educational theme, or which get you into an area where you can do many things. Your faculty leaders, national guide, or hotel front desk staff can provide many suggestions for free time on-site. Don't forget to use free time to process what you are learning, seeing and feeling, to shop, or simply to rest.

Activity Level

Movement between cities will be by private, air-conditioned motor coach. We will often move around within cities on foot, or a combination of bussing to a site and then walking. One philosophy of St. Olaf Travel is that any destination is more fully experienced on foot. You should be able to walk fair distances in one shot — at times it will be a mile or quite a bit more. Past participants have reported that between group activities and their own explorations, their pedometers have logged 7 to 10 miles in one day. Make sure to have an already-broken in pair of walking shoes along; on certain days, these will be your best friends. This itinerary is full of site visits, and we will spend time on our private bus moving from site to site.

As a reminder, the physical requirements listed in the Terms & Conditions that you agreed to when you registered are:

Alumni & Family Travel tours vary in pace, but in general, they require you, the participant, to be capable, without assistance, of walking a minimum of five miles per day, standing for 2 to 3 hours at a time, of climbing stairs that may not have handrails, of climbing in and out of a variety of transportation vehicles, of keeping pace with an active group of travelers on long days of traveling, of dealing with the emotional highs and lows that can occur when experiencing a different culture, and of being capable of traveling with a group for several hours each day. St. Olaf has published specific requirements for each Alumni & Family Travel trip. You are responsible for reviewing the specific requirements for your tour and judging the appropriateness of these travel activities to your physical, mental and behavioral capabilities. Any participant who is unable to fulfill the tour requirements may have their registration cancelled. Any participant who has demonstrated an inability, in the opinion of the tour leader, of keeping up with the group or of safely participating in tour activities may be prohibited from participating in certain activities.

When it is possible to do so, St. Olaf strives to make reasonable efforts to accommodate disabilities and other special needs of tour participants if we are notified at the time of registration. If you have a special need regarding your participation in the tour or will need an accommodation, you should contact the Alumni & Family Travel Director as soon as possible. Unfortunately, St. Olaf may not be able to accommodate all special needs. Facilities, resources, accommodations and protections for disabled and special needs individuals can be sharply limited outside the U.S. St. Olaf reserves the right to refuse to make an accommodation when not required to do so by law.

You are expected to behave in a reasonable manner toward other travelers, tour leaders, staff and other persons with whom you come into contact during the tour. If you behave, in the opinion of the tour leader, in a way likely to disrupt the enjoyment or endanger the safety of other travelers, you will be expelled from the group and will have to make your own arrangements to return home. No refunds for the unused portion of the tour will be given.

If you have any concerns about these requirements, please give me a call. (My contact information is at the bottom of this document.)

Weather

Be sure to check your favorite app or web site for forecasts in each city shortly before departure, keeping in mind that the forecast could change. Temperatures could fluctuate by 5 or 10 degrees warmer or cooler. We recommend bringing multiple light layers that you can add or remove as necessary to stay comfortable.

Clothing Suggestions

Plan to dress comfortably; we will be out and about for several hours each day. Shorts and short-sleeves are perfectly acceptable attire. Women especially should be prepared to cover knees and shoulders at any religious sites, and men may possibly also need to cover their knees. As mentioned above, we recommend bringing multiple light layers so that you can add or remove as necessary to stay comfortable. If you want to be slightly dressier for the two St. Olaf concerts, that is up to you. Very fancy dress is not required.

Meals

Breakfast will be at the hotel and generally one other group meal is included each day. Menus will be pre-chosen and will include a variety of local dishes.

It's imperative that you have informed us of your dietary restrictions so that we can take these into account when ordering group meals.

Hotel Notes

Our group hotels are likely to have laundry services available. Such service is sometimes expensive. We recommend bringing some laundry soap and doing small batches of laundry in your hotel sink/bathtub.

Some hotels will not provide shampoo or soap; this is often in support of green initiatives. Consider packing a travel sized version of hygiene products. Hair dryers are available at most hotels, either in the room or from the reception desk, but cannot be guaranteed, so if this is something that's important to you, you should plan to bring one along. Washcloths are not always supplied at hotels around the world, but may be available at the reception desk. Many showers in overseas hotels share a floor with the rest of the bathroom or will not have a shower curtain.

Money

How much money you budget for this program depends on what you plan on doing during your free time, and what kind of meals you like to eat. (A quick dish from a sidewalk vendor will cost less than a three-course meal with wine at a fancy restaurant).

We strongly recommend carrying a variety of forms of money, so you will not be without funds if one form should fail or be stolen. ATMs are readily available in each city we'll stay in, so that you can take out smaller increments of money if you wish.

Pickpocketing is prevalent around the world; we recommend you carry your money and credit cards in a buttoned pocket or money belt — i.e., someplace secure. Pick-pocketing is most common at bus and train stations, at ATMs, and around tourist hotels. Be especially careful in those situations! Cash, if stolen, cannot be replaced. Credit cards can be replaced if stolen, but you will be charged a fee by your bank to use them overseas.

Tipping is really and truly not customary nor expected in Norway.

To learn more about the monetary units and exchange rates in your destination, visit [xe.com](https://www.xe.com).

Health Matters: Pre-Departure and On-Site

In large cities, medical facilities will be good. In smaller towns and villages, there will most likely not be a hospital in the vicinity. If you are taking regular medicines or even home remedies, be sure to bring along a sufficient supply, including for an unexpected extended stay.

You should visit the Centers for Disease Control website to learn about recommended vaccinations for your destination. Get started at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/> and use the Destinations box on the right side of the page to learn more.

We also recommend that you consider visiting a travel clinic or your own doctor on how to handle common travel-related illnesses and possibly to obtain prescriptions in case of illness overseas. Your doctor or a travel doctor can also talk through the CDC recommendations and provide further guidance.

Be aware that U.S. Medicare does not apply overseas, and that some travel medical insurance is included in your tour price, including emergency medical expenses, emergency medical evacuation, medical repatriation, accidental death and dismemberment, security evacuation, natural disaster evacuation, and some trip cancellation and trip interruption coverage.

Please visit the US State Department's web site for the latest health information for our destination. Get started at travel.state.gov, click on International Travel, then Country Information, and then type the country name into the box under "Learn about your destination."

An Extra Health Note: Dealing with Covid Now That It's Endemic

We now commonly speak of the pandemic in the past tense, but, in fact, covid has become a permanent component in our lives, like seasonal flu, or like other endemic diseases that we encounter in certain destinations, like malaria. Therefore we're wise to continue to have a plan to deal with covid and other respiratory viruses.

- If you start to feel unwell during the program, we ask you to follow new CDC guidelines, which are to stay in your room and away from others until both are true for at least 24 hours:
 - your symptoms are getting better
 - you are fever-free without the use of medication
- Note that if you miss a substantial portion of the tour or incur additional costs due to illness, in order to be eligible for the travel insurance coverage from EIIA that is included in your trip price, you need medical confirmation of covid. EIIA's FAQ says, "For expenses to be reimbursed, the policy requires that the participant receive (and submit) written confirmation of a positive result from a local medical official." (You can see the [full FAQ here](#).)

Fellow travelers will not be required to quarantine. Regretfully, we will not be able to ask the national guide nor the tour operator to assist individuals with revised hotel, airport transfer, or flight arrangements, as their attention must continue to be focused on the group logistics. Thank you for your understanding.

And finally, this plan may be amended on-site based on the unique circumstances of this group or destination.

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

The U.S. State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) has amended their procedures and we can no longer upload traveler lists for our tours. Instead, we will ask your group leader(s) to register with STEP and they will receive alerts and information for your destination(s).

According to the State Department's web site, the benefits of enrolling in STEP are:

- Receive important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination country, helping you make informed decisions about your travel plans.
- Help the U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency.
- Help family and friends get in touch with you in an emergency.

There are no current unusual travel concerns for your destinations. Enrollment is a standard step we take for each of our study travel trips. If you wish to enroll yourself, visit <https://mytravel.state.gov/s/step> to get started.

Time Difference

To calculate time zone differences, including Daylight Saving Time in either the U.S. or your destination, I recommend using the time zone converter at timeanddate.com.

Electricity

Most gadgets and chargers these days – for laptops, tablets, and phones, whether Apple or Android – are Dual Voltage: Dual voltage appliances are designed to work on either 110V or 220V without a converter. Be sure to check this before you leave. In any case, you will still need the proper adapter to plug into the foreign outlet. The countries in this region are of the two round pin variety (like most of Europe).

If you bring your own hair dryer or electric razors, you will likely need both a converter and an adapter. Converters and adapters can be found at regular stores such as Best Buy, Target, and Walmart.

Airport Security

Visit tsa.gov/travel for up-to-date guidelines on getting through the security lines faster, what you can bring, the liquids rule, proper identification, and more.

Customs (Going Home)

Visit [U.S. Customs and Border Protection](http://U.S.CustomsandBorderProtection) for information on what to Know Before You Visit.

Packing Tips

- Mix and match several items of clothing. Pick a scheme like black, brown or navy.
- Take an all-purpose jacket, one that is warm, can double as rain gear, and has pockets.
- Do not take anything that would upset you if you lost it, such as valuables and jewelry.
- Take only comfortable shoes. Match all or most of your wardrobe with one or two pairs.
- Roll clothing in your suitcase or use packing cubes to maximize space and cut down on wrinkling.
- A dressier outfit is appropriate for any performances or fancy dinners you may have booked on your own (i.e., not jeans).

- Small backpacks are very useful as a day pack. Many days we will be out and about for several hours and you will want to carry water, a small umbrella, and layers.

Don't forget to pack

- Credit card account numbers and toll-free phone numbers for card replacement
- Insurance contact information
- A copy of the hotel addresses and dates of stay – if your name and flight tags go missing, the airline will still know how to contact you or where to send your luggage
- Contact solution or an extra pair of glasses in case you break or lose yours, and your prescription
- Perhaps a small, battery powered alarm clock if you're not bringing your cell phone
- A wash cloth, if you regularly use this item at home. Many overseas hotels do not provide them
- Electrical plug adapters. You may also need voltage converters to go from the usual 110 volts in the U.S., to the 220 volts elsewhere in the world, though most electronics now have these converters built into the cord.

Items to carry with you

- Neck safe or money belt
- Passport and another picture ID
- COVID-19 vaccination card and a couple of high-quality masks, just in case
- Overseas or non-toll free numbers for credit card replacement
- Medical insurance card
- Information and contact numbers for any travel insurance you may have purchased on your own. (A link to ID cards and contact information for the travel insurance that is already included with your trip fee will be provided a few weeks prior to departure)
- Prescription medications in their original containers
- Small amount of over-the-counter medications (these items are readily available for purchase at reasonable prices throughout our journey)

Items to leave with someone at home

Some people leave hard copies, and others create a folder in the cloud that can be accessed by family members, no matter where those family members are.

- Copy of the identification page of your passport
- Credit card account numbers and toll-free phone numbers for card replacement
- Photocopy of your medical insurance card
- Travel insurance provider information and contact numbers
- Photocopy of your itinerary, which will include hotel contact information closer to departure
- Prescription medication information in case yours is lost or stolen; often your pharmacy can send a replacement prescription to a nearby pharmacy

Visit www.onebag.com for more packing tips, including what to pack, what to pack it in, and how to pack it.

Miscellaneous Tips

- Investigate – prior to departure – how to replace lost credit cards.
- Bring with you only those credit cards and documents you will need.
- Do not take or wear expensive jewelry. It can be stolen, even when you are wearing it.

- Print the addresses and dates of stay for our hotels (names of hotels to be provided prior to departure) and place inside your checked luggage in case it's lost.
- Make sure you receive a claim check for each piece of checked luggage.
- Read the fire safety instructions in hotels and know where the exits are located.

If you have any questions at any time, do not hesitate to contact the Travel Director:

Heidi Quiram

Tel 507-786-3629

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