

Sightseeing Norway's capital: a guide to Oslo

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I travelled to Oslo in the summer of 2010 and the following summer in August, when the East Norwegian weather was at its sunniest. During my trip, we visited many parks and museums and enjoyed Norway's capital thoroughly. Nicknamed Tigerstaden, "the tiger city", Oslo is not the capital of Norway for nothing, as any tourist would find out whilst strolling through Oslo's many lovely areas. Here's a taste of what we got up to in one of Scandinavia's nicest city:



The Castle: Det kongelige slott, meaning "the royal castle", is right in the city centre, at the top of a wide main street, where Oslo's university is also situated. To British eyes, the castle seems more like a palace as opposed to a fairytale castle, but one cannot fail to be impressed by its regal architecture, as it overlooks the rest of the city. Surrounded by beautiful gardens, one can stroll in these at any time. A guided castle tour is also available, but only in the summer months, so make sure to go there between May and August if this is on your to do list.

Nobel Peace Centre: This was a very interesting and interactive museum, which gives a detailed history of the Nobel peace prize, how it was ironically created by Alfred Nobel, a man who discovered dynamite, and who has won throughout its long and sometimes controversial history. The first time I went was in 2010, a year after Barack Obama won the prestigious award. In celebration of this, the Peace Centre had put on an 'Obama special' with interactive speeches given by the US President. The very thorough history of everyone who had won it before him was inspirational and very educational. The Nobel Peace Centre is a must-see, go and get inspired!

The Kon-Tiki museum: This was my favourite museum after the Nobel Peace Centre. Thor Heyerdahl was Norway's number one explorer who, with the aim of proving his scientific thesis to be correct and after a lot of professional ridicule from fellow ethnographers, decided to embark on the trip of a lifetime. The Kon-Tiki expedition was inspired by native legends and archaeological evidence suggesting that there might have been contact between South American and Polynesian civilisations. It took Heyerdahl and his five companions 101 days to navigate a handmade boat, designed to be like the Peruvians would have sailed in at the time. After his trip, Heyerdahl raised a previously unknown environmental problem. Heyerdahl saw huge clumps of crude oil, dumped by various oil tankers, before it became illegal to do so. After what Heyerdahl described as a "shocking discovery", he reported his discovery to the United Nations. The UN then decided to ban all dumping of oil at sea. The museum is fascinating, and has the original boat on display with an interactive audio guide included.

Vigelandsparken: If it's a sunny day, and you have a picnic hamper and a couple of friends handy, Vigelandsparken is the place to go. There are many serene places to sit down and enjoy a bit of respite from an otherwise bustling city. The park itself is filled with 192 bronze and granite statues, designed by Gustav Vigeland, a famous Norwegian sculptor. The monolith, which is at the centre of the park, is a very impressive 14 metre high statue, with 121 naked humans all intertwined with each other. It is an extremely impressive sight to encounter.

Top tips:

Save money before your trip. Norway is not the cheapest place to spend a week or two on holidays. Though its beauty really does compensate for the high prices of everything, from food to beer, it is recommended that you save up beforehand, so that you can fully appreciate everything that Oslo has to offer.

If you want to know the must-see places, buy a 3 day ticket from one of the bus touring companies. We bought one from H.M.Kristiansens Automobilbyrå (HMK) and luckily were allowed to travel for more than the number of days that we paid for, as the bus driver wasn't at all strict about it.