

Scandinavian Splendor Tour

July 26th – August 9th 2006

Tour Description

Travel through these three northern European countries, so often grouped together, yet each with a distinctly individual character.

Included Features

Meals - In addition to any meals you may be served during your flights to and from Europe, the tour price includes 13 breakfasts and 8 dinners during the land portion of the tour.



DAY 1 - EUROPE. The day of departure has arrived. Through check-in, keep your ticket and passport handy. Once aboard the aircraft, settle in and enjoy your flight to Europe.

DAY 2 – NORWAY, Bergen. Upon arrival at Bergen Airport, meet your tour manager, who will welcome you to Scandinavia and soon you'll be on your way to your first tour hotel. After freshening up and maybe a nap, become acquainted with what is undeniably one of the world's most picturesque towns. During your first tour dinner get to know the other tour participants and listen as your tour manager prepares you for the splendid days to come. (Dinner)

DAY 3 – NORWAY, Bergen. A morning tour of Bergen with your tour manager directs you to the town's main sights. Along the waterfront, walk around Bryggen, the row of timbered Hanseatic Houses built by German tradesmen who settled in Bergen. These buildings are now on UNESCO's World Heritage List and provide Bergen's harborfront with its unique city scape. You'll also pass by St. Mary's Church, the town's oldest building, and the fish market. The afternoon is yours to see and do as you please. You'll want to have some lunch and Bergen offers lovely colonnades with shops and cafés. Then perhaps, visit the Bergenhus, Bergen Castle with its Rosenkrantz Tower and the 13th-century King Haakon's Royal Ceremonial Hall. In the evening consider a seafood dinner

at one of Bergen's inviting restaurants, or join the optional Bergen Funicular Ride and Dinner. (Breakfast)

DAY 4 – NORWAY, Voss, Flåm Railway, Fjord Cruise, Flåm. Your travels today feature the vistas and fjords with which you associate Norway. From Bergen it's a comfortable drive to Voss, Norway's ski capital and year-round resort. Take a nice break here and do take a look at the Vangskyrkje, the striking church from 1277 in the center of town. During your leisure time, you might want to pick up a snack to enjoy on the train ride through the scenic Norwegian countryside. Destination is the village of Myrdal. Upon disembarking, you're in for a most thrilling experience as you board the Flåm Railway. On this hour-long ride, you'll see mountains, waterfalls, and fertile landscape. The railway is an engineering marvel, for, as you ride down into the Flåm Valley on normal tracks, you'll descend 2844 feet! Along the way the train makes several stops, so keep your camera ready at all times. Your hotel for this evening is at the end stop, the village of Flåm. But

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the day is not over by any means. After check-in at your hotel, board yet another mode of transportation, a fjord steamer, for the cruise through the Aurlandsfjord and into the mirror-smooth Naerøyfjord. With cliffs rising in excess of 3,000 feet, these are some of the most pristine waters of the Sognefjord District. At the southernmost point of the Naerøyfjord lies Gudvangen where your motor coach awaits to whisk you back to the hotel. Linger over dinner and relive all the impressions of the day with your fellow tour members. (Breakfast, Dinner)

DAY 5 – NORWAY, Lærdalsøyri, Borgund, Gol, Hallingdal, Oslo. Just a few miles from Flåm lies the village of Aurland where you take the largest road tunnel in the world. Just recently opened, this route through the tunnel will bring you to the Lærdal and the old village of Lærdalsøyri. Stop here to admire the 160 wooden houses from the 1700s and 1800s that, together, are a protected national monument. Nearby lies Borgund, site of Norway's best preserved stave church, dating to 1147. Stave churches are distinctive for their vertical wooden planks anchored either in the ground or to a horizontal base. Via Borgaul, begin your journey in southeasterly direction towards Oslo. Pass the resort village of Hemsedal and drive through the valley of the same name. Pause for independent lunch in Gol, at the

northern side of the Hallingdal. This valley is made up of lush wooded areas, hills, and lakes, making Gol an important vacation center. Continue your drive along the valley and the banks of Lake Krøderen before an afternoon stop near Hønnfoss. Along beautiful Tyrifjord, you'll now quickly reach Oslo, stunningly situated against pine-covered hills.

(Breakfast, Dinner)

DAY 6 – NORWAY, Oslo. A local guide will take you sightseeing around Norway's capital this morning. Included on the tour are sure to be the Town Hall, the Parliament, and the National Theater with a statue of the great playwright Henrik Ibsen. On the large market place stands the Cathedral. Consecrated in 1697, its tower was redone in the 19th century, and its interior was completely remodeled after World War II. Prominently, at the end of Karl Johansgate, lies the Slottet, the Royal Residence. At the completion of the tour, there is time for lunch and then a free afternoon. A suggestion is to visit Akershus Castle where you can see the casemates (wall chambers) and the tomb of King Hakon VII in the chapel. Art buffs will not want to miss the Munch Museum or a stroll through Frogner Park, dedicated solely to the remarkable sculptures of Gustav Vigeland. Besides the artist's preserved studio, you will also find the Municipal Museum here. If you wish, you may opt to spend your afternoon and evening on the Bygdoy Peninsula excursion. (Breakfast)

DAY 7 – NORWAY, Fredrikstad & SWEDEN, Bohuslän, Göteborg.

Leave Oslo behind and just before the Norwegian/Swedish border, make a stop at Fredrikstad. In this formerly fortified town, the old military buildings house traditional artisan workshops where you may watch jewelry being shaped, glass blown, and pottery molded. Soon after leaving Fredrikstad, you're in Sweden and traveling through its westernmost region, Bohuslän, which stretches out beside the Skagerrak. In the past, this

area was made up of all fishing villages, but nowadays it is known more for its seashore tourism. One of those villages is Hunnebostrand, a summery resort where you'll stop for independent lunch. Around 4:00 p.m. you'll reach Göteborg, often referred to as Sweden's 'greenest city'. Your driver will motor you past some of the major attractions. Göteborg is considered relatively 'young', as it received its charter 'only' in 1621.



Many of its streets were once canals attesting to the large Dutch population that settled the city. Landmarks you're likely to see on the panoramic tour include the Kronhus, which has been a warehouse, an arsenal, and a church and now houses the Municipal Museum. You'll drive by the Governor's Residence and the Cathedral, built in 1815 on the ruins of two other churches. After the city tour, you'll have free time to discover more of Göteborg while your driver brings the suitcases to the hotel.

(Breakfast, Dinner)

DAY 8 – SWEDEN, Varberg, Helsingborg & DENMARK, Helsingør, Copenhagen. Journeying further along the Swedish coastal road, travel to Varberg for the morning stop. Varberg is a much-visited seaside resort dating back to the middle ages. Near the 13th-century fortress, you have a beautiful view over the beaches and rocky cliffs on the Kattegat. Continue south to the town of Helsingborg. Take your independent lunch in this Swedish harbor town on the narrowest part of the Öresund. After lunch, board a ferry for the 20-minute ride to Denmark where you will disembark in Helsingborg's sister city called Helsingør, the 'Hamlet Village'. Here there is time to stroll through town and see landmarks such as the arcaded Carmelite cloister and St. Mary's Church. Undoubtedly, the town's most famous sight is Kronborg Castle, majestically sitting on its own peninsula. It's known the world over as the setting for Shakespeare's 'Hamlet'. You will be able to tour the castle or explore it on your own. Board the coach, pass Fredensborg Castle, where the Danish Royal Family holds many public events, and drive to Copenhagen, the country's friendly capital city. (Breakfast, Dinner)

DAY 9 – DENMARK, Copenhagen. This morning learn about Copenhagen with a local guide. Included are a look at Amalienborg Palace, residence of the queen and royal family. You'll also see the Frederikskirke, or Marble Church, which took 150 years to complete, and of course, Copenhagen's trademark, the statue of the Little Mermaid. On Town Hall Square stands the town hall with its World Clock that is so exact, it's said to lose just 0.4 seconds in 300 years. May we suggest the elite Nyhavn district around the harbor for people watching during your independent lunch. In the afternoon, stroll the Strøget, the pedestrian-only section of the city. There are great shops and stalls, and you'll most likely catch a

street entertainer's act. You might opt to take the excursion to Hillerød and Fredericksborg Castle. Spend the evening over a leisurely dinner al fresco — perhaps 'smørrebrød', a variety of open-faced sandwiches, accompanied by a glass of world famous Danish beer. Conversely, you may want to join your group on the optional Copenhagen Dinner.

(Breakfast)

DAY 10 – DENMARK,

Copenhagen. A full day to experience wonderful Copenhagen. Rosenborg Palace houses the Danish Crown Jewels on display along with furniture and other possessions of the royal family. The palace lies amid 25 acres of botanical gardens — a lovely place to walk. Art lovers should stop in at the National Art Gallery boasting works by Danish artists from the 17th century to the modern day. Then wander over to Christiansborg Palace, home to the parliament and supreme court. It's possible to take a tour and also visit the ruins of Absalon's fortress on this site. Perhaps you'd like to discover another part of Denmark and sign up for the optional excursion to Odense, fairy tale author Hans Christian Andersen's home town. For independent dinner this evening, you might head for Tivoli Gardens. This playground for everyone was founded in 1843 and offers rides, games, concerts, stage shows, parades, restaurants, and the only remaining *comedia dell'arte* pantomime show in the world. You're guaranteed to have a great night out in Tivoli. (Breakfast)

DAY 11 – SWEDEN, Malmö,

Växjö, Gränna/Lake Vättern. After a fond farewell to Copenhagen and Denmark, you quickly reach Sweden again by way of the new Øresund Bridge rising impressively over the sound. In less than 45 minutes you'll be in Malmö, which used to belong to Denmark, but now is Sweden's third largest city. During the stop here, you can easily walk and see the important landmarks, including the town hall from 1546. Traveling in northeasterly direction, you traverse the Skåne

region and ride into Småland, known for its many lakes. For the lunchstop, you're in Växjö. After a bite to eat, you might want to visit the Småland Museum and head right for the exhibit of exquisite Swedish glass works through the ages, for in Växjö you're at the edge of Sweden's 'Kingdom of Crystal'. Many glass artists known the world over have their studios in the area. At the modern city of Jönköping, begin the drive along Lake Vättern. Your overnight hotel is in Gränna, a lively resort on this large lake. If you'd like to take in the atmosphere and stretch your legs after dinner, be sure to wander by the lovely wooden houses and baroque town hall.

(Breakfast, Dinner)



DAY 12 – SWEDEN, Gränna/Visingsö, Norrköping,

Stockholm. Spend a relaxing morning. First linger over breakfast and then board the ferry for the 20-minute ride over to the island of Visingsö. Climb on one of the rustic 'remmalagen', horse-drawn carriages, for a tour of the island. Enjoy the breeze through your hair while the driver tells you about the history of the Viking graves, castle ruins and the Parish and Kumlaby Churches. Back in Gränna, board your motor coach for the drive to Norrköping. Enjoy independent lunch in this port city. You may have time to see the city's trademark Clock Tower as well as the collection of cacti in Carl Johanspark, which has a species added to it annually. Your final destination is Stockholm, Sweden's capital city.

(Breakfast, Dinner)

DAY 13 – SWEDEN, Stockholm.

Start the day with a guided tour of Gamla Sta'n, the old town, to drive by some of Stockholm's best known

landmarks, such as the House of Nobles, and the world's oldest existing bank, the Bank of Sweden. From the old to the newer — the Stockholm town hall was completed in 1911 and contains eight million red bricks and nineteen million gilded mosaic tiles. The Nobel Prize festivities are held here each December. In the afternoon, Stockholm's shops offer a wide variety of merchandise. On Kungsgatan, Drottninggatan, and Birger Jarlsgatan, you're sure to find your last souvenirs. For independent dinner try a meal of Swedish specialties. Dinner is included on the optional excursion to Skansen in the eastern part of the city. (Breakfast)

DAY 14 – SWEDEN, Stockholm.

Spend your full free day exploring Stockholm. You might take a good part of the day to visit all the sections of the Royal Palace including the Treasury, State Apartments, and Council Chamber. The Changing of the Guard takes place daily. At the tiny island of Riddarholmen, you may visit the Riddarholm Church, where almost all Sweden's heads of state are buried. After independent lunch at one of Gamla Sta'n cafés, you may be interested in learning about Stockholm's history at the Stockholm City Museum, or about the Viking era at the Museum of National Antiquities. Maybe you'll want to enjoy a final boat ride and take the ferry out to Drottningholm Palace just west of Stockholm. It's the 'Versailles of Stockholm'. Another choice is to join your tour manager on the day-long Uppsala and Dalarna Region optional excursion. This evening, sadly, it is already time for the Farewell Dinner. Exchange addresses and phone numbers so you can stay in touch and maybe even plan an after-tour get-together. (Breakfast, Dinner)

DAY 15 - Daytime Flight back to the U.S.A.

Morning transfer to Stockholm Airport to check in for the flight home. (Breakfast)