
**Norwegian Coastal Voyage &
Lapland**

CRUISE TOUR

Plus optional extensions in

**St. Petersburg, Russia; Oslo, Norway
Stockholm, Sweden; Copenhagen, Denmark**

BCT/BCE 2014

Norwegian Coastal Voyage & Lapland

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	3
1. PASSPORT, VISAS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS.....	4
Passport Required	4
Visas not Required for Oslo, Finland, Sweden and Denmark (main trip and optional extensions)	5
Visa Required for Russia (optional extension)	5
No U.S. Passport?	5
Backup Photocopies	5
Optional Tours— <i>Early Purchase Required</i>	6
2. YOUR HEALTH.....	7
Keep Your Abilities In Mind	7
Health Check and Inoculations	7
Jet Lag Relief	8
3. LUGGAGE REGULATIONS.....	9
Size, Number and Weight Restrictions	9
Airport Security/TSA	10
4. WHEN YOU ARRIVE	11
GCT Air Travelers	11
5. MONEY MATTERS	12
How to Carry Your Money	12
Onboard Ship	14
Shopping	15
U.S. Customs Regulations and Shipping Charges	17
Problem with a Purchase?	17
To Tip or Not to Tip.....	18
6. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP	19
In General.....	19
Luggage Suggestions	19
Packing Your Carry-On	20
Clothing Options.....	20
Travel Gear Suggestions	20
Consider	21
Medicines.....	21
Other Gear.....	21
7. REGIONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION.....	22
8. TRAVEL AND TECHNOLOGY	24

In General.....	24
Regional Electricity.....	24
Russia and Scandinavia.....	25
Electric Current Onboard ship	25
Smartphones.....	25
Cell Phones	25
Phone Calling Cards	26
Photo Gear	26
9. HURTIGRUTEN SHIPS & NORWEGIAN COSTAL VOYAGE INC.....	27
Cabin Assignment.....	27
Embarkation.....	27
Dining	27
Other Details	28
Travel on a Working Ship Schedule	29
10. ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS	30
During Your Land Excursions & Optional Extensions	30
Helsinki in Brief.....	30
City Layout.....	30
Oslo in Brief—Main Trip & Optional Extension	31
St. Petersburg in Brief—Optional Extension.....	32
Stockholm in Brief—Optional Extension.....	33
Copenhagen in Brief—Optional Extension	35
11. DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY	38
12. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.....	44
Books, Maps, and Movies.....	44
Tourist Board Addresses	50

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

We've gathered some helpful introductory information for this Grand Circle itinerary. For detailed and timely information, it's wise to visit appropriate websites and confirm luggage regulations, weather conditions and other variable elements of your trip. If you expect to embark on personal exploration, or wish to discover more about the countries you visit, we suggest that you consult your choice of the many in-depth travel guidebooks devoted to your destinations. Refer to our additional resources section (at the end of the handbook) for other sources of insight.

ABOUT GRAND CIRCLE TRAVEL

Grand Circle Travel, founded in 1958 to serve the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP), is the leader in international travel, adventure and discovery for Americans aged 50 and over. Grand Circle vacations have been recommended by *The New York Times*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Travel+Leisure*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel*, among other publications. But our most impressive reviews come from the more than one million people who have traveled with us and from readers of *Condé Nast Traveler* who placed Grand Circle Cruise Lines, the cruise branch of Grand Circle, in the Top 10 of the World's Best Cruise Lines for seven years. Grand Circle has earned a spot on the prestigious *Condé Nast Traveler* Gold List for seven consecutive years as well. For 2011 *Condé Nast Traveler* named seven Grand Circle river ships among the 20 best river ships in the world; for 2012 the Grand Circle Cruise Lines was named to their Platinum Circle of top cruise lines.

YOUR GCT PROGRAM DIRECTORS

During your exclusive Grand Circle Cruise Tour, you'll have reliable assistance available at all times from an on-site Grand Circle Travel Program Director. Your Program Director is fluent in English and can give you an inside perspective on your destinations. He or she is supported along the way by local tour guides, who guide you expertly through particular sites and cities.

Many Grand Circle Program Directors are graduates of professional education programs for travel guides. In addition, they receive specialized training directly from Grand Circle, training that is based on what we've learned from thousands of past travelers about how to make the trip most enjoyable. Your Program Director offers both a deep knowledge of the region and a commitment to make this a very pleasant, informative, and rewarding travel experience for you.

Your Program Director will provide sightseeing trips, handle all travel details, reserve any Grand Circle optional tours you choose to take, oversee your Discovery Series events, and provide any other assistance you may need. You will be in the company of a Program Director throughout your Cruise Tour. If you choose to take the optional St. Petersburg extension you will be joined by a local Russian guide; if you choose to take the optional Oslo extension your Grand Circle Program Director will be with you throughout your extension.

1. PASSPORT, VISAS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS



Passport Required

You need a passport for this itinerary.

Note

Your passport should meet these requirements for this itinerary:

- It should be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- It should have the recommended number of blank pages (see below for details).
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable.

Recommended number of blank pages:

This recommendation is based on a “worst case” scenario. When you are on this adventure, you might use fewer pages, depending on the whims of the Immigration official on duty that day. Since the consequence of having too few pages can be severe—you could be denied entry into a country—we feel that it’s better to be safe than sorry, and we strongly recommend that you follow these guidelines.

- **Main trip only:** 2 blank “Visa” pages.
- **Optional pre-trip extension to St. Petersburg:** Add 1 more page, for a total of 3.
- **Optional post-trip extension to Oslo, Norway:** Same as the main trip only.
- **Optional extension to Stockholm, Sweden:** 2 additional pages
- **Optional extension to Copenhagen, Denmark:** 2 additional pages
- **Both a pre- and a post-trip extension:** You will need a total of 3 to 5 pages.

Please take moment to check if your passport meets all of these requirements. If not, you could be refused entry into a country. And if that happens, you might be required by that country to return to the U.S. immediately, **which would be at your own expense.**

If you need to renew your passport or get extra pages:

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit their website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport, renewing your existing passport, or for additional pages. You can renew your passport by mail if it is not damaged, you obtained it within the last fifteen years, and it’s in the name you want on your new passport. Many local post offices carry forms for renewing by mail or obtaining extra pages. Allow several weeks for processing your passport. You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

NOTE: When updating your passport, it is worthwhile to check the prices on all the different services that might apply to you. For example, it might be less expensive to renew your passport than to have pages added, depending on the number of pages you need.



Visas not Required for Oslo, Finland, Sweden and Denmark (main trip and optional extensions) Visa Required for Russia (optional extension)

Finland—Main trip—visa not required: U.S. citizens do not need a visa for entry into Finland for stays under 90 days.

Norway—Main trip and Oslo optional extension—visa not required: U.S. citizens do not need a visa for entry into Norway.

Sweden and Denmark—Stockholm and Copenhagen optional extensions—visa not required: U.S. citizens do not need a visa for entry into Sweden or Denmark.

Russia—St. Petersburg optional extension—visa required: Travelers taking the optional extension to St. Petersburg will need a visa for Russia. We will send you the necessary visa application form, instructions explaining how to fill it out, and the amount of the visa processing fee approximately 100 days before your departure.

Applying for your visa within 30 days of your departure will result in additional expenses and fees. The additional fees are charged directly by the Russian Embassy and can range between \$100-\$300 per person, depending on how close to departure you apply.

It is very important that you apply for your visa through PVS International. Obtaining a Russian visa through an embassy is a complicated process. Travelers who choose to apply for this visa on their own often encounter problems with processing their visa and may be prohibited from entry into Russia. Details on obtaining your visa through PVS International will be included with your application.

No U.S. Passport?

Non-U.S. citizens or non-U.S. passport holders: If you are **not** a U.S. citizen or if you possess a passport from a country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate or embassy about possible visa requirements. Or you may use the services of PVS International, who also assist non-U.S. citizens.

PVS International Passport & Visa Services
1700 N Moore Street
Rosslyn Center, suite 310
Arlington, VA 22209
Telephone: 1-800-556-9990
Website: www.pvsinternational.org

Backup Photocopies

The smartest security precaution you can take is to make photocopies of your passport's personal information pages, your air tickets, your traveler's check serial numbers (if you're using them), and your credit cards. Also, bring extra passport-sized photos. Make a list of the phone and fax numbers for reporting lost credit cards, your travel protection plan company (if you have an optional travel protection plan) and medical emergency network. Keep these documents separate from the originals, and they can save you immeasurable time, money, and trouble if your originals are lost or stolen as you travel. In addition, scan these photocopies and email them to your email address; you can then print out replacement copies if necessary.

Optional Tours—*Early Purchase Required*

Catherine Palace

To pre-book the Catherine Palace optional tour you must do so by 5 days prior to departure. This tour cannot be booked onsite.

Travel through the countryside to one of the great tsarist palaces. Built for Peter the Great's wife, Catherine I, and expanded by his daughter, the Empress Elizabeth, Catherine Palace is a striking example of Russian Baroque architecture. Catherine Palace was burned to the ground in the great World War II siege of Leningrad, and the restored building that stands today is said to be the finest replica in the world. Its 600-foot façade glitters in all its former glory, with elegant white columns and ornate gold moldings set against an azure background. Perhaps you'll view one of the Palace's most famous rooms—the Amber Room—featuring amber panels, mosaics, and mirrors. \$95 per person.

Note: This optional tour is available on the *St. Petersburg* pre-trip extension only.

2. YOUR HEALTH



Keep Your Abilities In Mind

You can encounter unaccustomed challenges on even the shortest journey — this Cruise Tour, for instance, features a fair amount of walking up and down inclines in towns with uneven or cobblestone streets. At some of the quaint river ports, you may encounter old-style wooden piers that lack modern ramps. You must be able to negotiate stairs without assistance, including the steps of the motor coach. Some of the places you visit have not been improved with elevators, escalators, ramps, railings or other aids that you may be used to. If you have difficulty walking in terms of balance or stamina, or are generally inactive in your daily life consider an exercise program to tone up for your trip. For your comfort and safety, we recommend this program only to individuals in good physical condition. If in doubt, consult your physician describing the length and type of rigors you'll encounter. *Please note that this trip is **not** wheelchair accessible; nor can Grand Circle Travel accommodate motorized scooters of any kind.*



Health Check and Inoculations

Feeling healthy and confident of your mobility is essential if you want to fully enjoy your trip abroad. If you have a condition that requires special equipment or treatment, you must bring and be responsible for all necessary items related to your condition. A loose filling or developing cavity would be difficult to remedy while you are traveling. You may want to have a dental exam before your trip.

***Note:** None of the Hurtigruten coastal steamers have a doctor onboard.*

If you take medications regularly, be sure to pack an ample supply that will last your entire trip, as obtaining refills of your medication can be difficult during your cruise. Pack these medications in your carry-on bag, and keep them in their original, labeled containers. To be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications, you should also bring copies of the prescriptions, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name.

Basic Illness Prevention

It's common for people traveling in contained spaces to be more susceptible to easily transmitted viral and bacterial illnesses such as flu, stomach and respiratory bugs, and colds. The single most effective way to prevent this is frequent hand-washing. We ask all travelers to be extra diligent in their normal hand-washing hygiene, and to drink plenty of fluids for proper hydration. Simple steps like these will help ensure that everyone enjoys the comfortable, carefree vacation they looked forward to.

Vaccinations

Check with the CDC: To ensure you receive any needed vaccinations we suggest that you check the current recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for your destination. You can contact them at:

On-line — if you have access to the Internet, we suggest you visit the CDC's Web site at www.cdc.gov/travel, where you will find comprehensive information about preventing illness while traveling.

By phone— at the CDC's Hotline toll-free at **1-800-232-4636** 24 hours a day. Please note that automated information may be arranged topically by disease, rather than by country or region.

Consult your doctor: After checking the CDC's recommendations we strongly suggest that you consult your family physician (at least 6 weeks prior to departure) concerning any vaccinations or medications that you may need on this trip. At the time of print there were no specific vaccinations required for entry into any of the countries on your itinerary.



Jet Lag Relief

You will feel better on the first days of your trip if, shortly before you leave home, you start to adjust to the different time zone of your destination. Since you will cross several time zones to reach your destination, you may lose many hours of regular sleep. On arrival, your body then will have to suddenly adjust to new sleeping and eating patterns. The result is jet lag. Its symptoms are fatigue—often compounded by insomnia and general restlessness—irritability, and vague disorientation. You cannot totally avoid jet lag; but you can minimize it. Here's how:

- Start your trip well rested. Try to begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave.
- Switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane. Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Try to sleep on overnight flights.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying.
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane, and make an effort to get up and walk about the cabin a few times to keep your blood circulation normal.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don't push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.



3. LUGGAGE REGULATIONS

Size, Number and Weight Restrictions

It may seem early to discuss luggage and packing, but if you know current industry standards for international flights you can start to plan what type of luggage you'll use, how much clothing to bring, etc. The following information can help you in your trip preparations. We'll remind you to confirm your U.S./international luggage limits (and update regional limits, if applicable) in your final documents (arriving about two weeks before your departure).

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current standard for this trip is 44lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-on bags. * (see below)
Size restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (<i>length+width+depth</i>). Generally, 62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches.
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS	
The extensions have the same luggage restrictions as the main trip.	
REMARKS / SUGGESTIONS	
<p>One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person: Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person for flights to Europe and other international flights.</p> <p>Note: Enforcement of published restrictions by countries and airlines is a matter of governmental and corporate policy. Enforcement may include spot checks and may be inconsistently applied. Expect penalties and fines to be imposed immediately, however, when and if enforced. Before you choose to ignore the published restrictions you should ask: <i>Do I feel lucky?</i> And, even if you answer yes, you should make sure that you have the ability to pay the fine.</p>	

Should I confirm luggage restrictions with my U.S./international airline(s) before departure?

Absolutely, confirm current restrictions about a week or so before your departure. You should take this step no matter if your vacation has a lower limit than the average international flight or not, because there may be recent changes, such as new security regulations, or an update to the standard weight/size allowances. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our webpage in the *FAQ* section.

You should also check with the airlines on luggage fees—many airlines charge to check luggage, even on international flights. Others may charge a fee if you bring a second carry-on item, like a purse or a laptop. **These fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines. If you are making a connecting flight, you should also confirm if your luggage can be checked through to your final destination. For more information about air travel, see the "Air Travel" section of your *Important Information* booklet.

*During your trip you will take a domestic flight within Finland from Helsinki to Ivalo. **The weight of your checked luggage is restricted to 44 pounds on this domestic flight within Finland and your carry-on is restricted to 15 pounds.** If you are taking the optional extension to St. Petersburg, these same restrictions apply on the flight from St. Petersburg to Helsinki. Restrictions for carry-on items may vary on your return from Oslo. You may check <http://www.oslo.no/> for updates.

Airport Security/TSA

Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage may change. To avoid inadvertently packing restricted items in your carry-on, we suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website at www.tsa.gov/public.

Liquids and your carry on: Follow the **TSA's 3-1-1 rule:** Liquids must be in a 3.4 ounce or less (100ml) bottle (by volume); all bottles must be in a 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin. One-quart bag per person limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring. The 3.4 ounce (100ml) container size is a security measure. Note that this rule is used increasingly throughout the world.

For flights that originate in the U.S:

To reduce the risk of damage to your luggage, do not lock your bags when checking in for flights originating in the U.S. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is responsible for screening all checked luggage at commercial airports throughout the U.S. TSA baggage-handling agents may need access to your luggage and will break locks if required. TSA "accepted and recognized" locks are widely available: screeners can open and re-lock bags using these locks if a physical inspection is required.

For flights originating outside the U.S.:

On all flights outside of the U.S., we strongly recommend you lock your luggage. This is not a legal requirement but merely a precaution against theft. Have the keys handy, as you may need to open your luggage for a security screening or for customs in the U.S. or Europe.



4. WHEN YOU ARRIVE GCT Air Travelers

U.S. Departure: If you are among a group of ten or more GCT travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, it is our goal to have a GCT Representative assist you at the U.S. airport with the check-in of your flight (beginning your main trip or your optional pre-trip extension). Unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond our control, the Representative will be at the check-in counter three hours before your departure time and at the gate one hour before your departure time (security permitting).

Please note: If you are arriving at your international gateway city via a connecting domestic flight, the Grand Circle Representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.

Helsinki Arrival (main trip): At the beginning of your main trip, a Grand Circle representative will meet you at the airport after you exit customs and escort you to a private motor coach for your transfer to the hotel.

St. Petersburg Arrival (optional extension): On arrival at the St. Petersburg airport, a local Grand Circle representative will meet you outside Customs and assist you with the transfer to your hotel.

***Important note:** Airport porters are **NOT** allowed in the customs hall area. On arrival, you must take your luggage off the baggage carousel and load it onto a complimentary cart, which you then will move through customs. When you exit customs, you'll handle your cart until reaching your motor coach. Your motor coach driver will load your luggage onto your motor coach.*

U.S. Return: At the end of your main trip, you'll be transferred by motor coach to the airport for your return flight to the U.S. If you are among a group of ten or more GCT travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, a GCT Representative will meet you as you exit Customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights. Again, it is our goal to have our GCT Representative waiting to assist your group. In rare instances, unforeseen circumstances may prevent this service.

***Important Note on Name Tags:** Please remember to wear your Grand Circle Travel name tag when you exit Customs, upon arrival and when you return to the U.S., so that you are readily identifiable as a GCT traveler. GCT Airport Representatives are easy to recognize: they carry white clipboards with the red GCT logo on the back.*

Flying with a Travel Companion

If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.

5. MONEY MATTERS



How to Carry Your Money

Traveler's checks—not recommended: We urge you not to rely on traveler's checks for your personal expenses. They can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is very high. It's most practical to view any traveler's checks you might bring as a last "cash" resort in the event of a special situation.

U.S. dollars have an advantage. Cash is more readily exchanged and accepted than traveler's checks, and commands a better exchange rate. You might also consider using a debit card, another reliable payment method. **U.S. dollars will not be accepted as payment in Russia or in any of the Scandinavian countries. Please note that torn, dirty, or taped bills may not be accepted for exchange.**

Currency Exchange

Currency exchange rates fluctuate daily. Your Program Director can advise you of the exchange rate upon your arrival. For current exchange rates, please refer to our website, your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper. On our website select the region and then click on the country you'll be visiting. A link to the currency converter is included in the menu on the page of each individual country.

In Scandinavia, currency exchange is available at money exchange offices, such as FOREX; many exchange offices will charge a set fee regardless of the amount you are exchanging. "Leftover" currency (except small coins) can be converted to that of the next country on your program (or to U.S. currency). Note that you can exchange money *only* at exchange offices, **not** at local banks in Scandinavia.

Tip: Because exchange fees can be high in Scandinavia, and are charged each time you make a transaction regardless of the amount, our Program Directors suggest exchanging some money before your arrival. By arriving with enough local currency for the first couple of days, you'll be able to track your spending and better gauge how much you'll need overall for the trip. Our Program Directors suggest bringing about 30-50 Euros per person to begin the main trip with.

Currency

Finland: The euro is the official currency of Finland. Euro banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, and 500
- Coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 cents; 1 and 2 euro

Banking hours vary by region, but generally banks in Finland are open 9:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday. In the summer, many banks close early, often around 3:00 pm.

Norway: The monetary unit of Norway is the *kroner*, written as Kr. on price tags but officially written as NOK. It is divided into 100 *ore*. Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 50, 100, 200, 500, and 1,000 *kroner*
- Coins: 50 *ore* and 1, 5, 10, and 20 *kroner*

Banking hours vary from town to town, but most banks in Norway are open 8:30 am to 3:30 pm, Monday through Friday. In summer, most banks close at 3:00 pm.

Sweden (optional extension): The official monetary unit in Sweden is the *krona* (written Kr. on price tags; the plural is *kroner*). Sweden did not adopt the euro. The *krona* is divided into 100 *ore*. (Although the legal tender of Denmark and Norway is also the *krona*, *kronor* can only be used in their country of origin—they are not interchangeable.) Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- banknotes: 20, 50, 100, 500, and 1,000
- coins: 50 *ore*; 1, 5 and 10 *kronor*

Banking Hours: Normal bank hours are Monday through Friday, 9:30 am – 3 pm (until 6 pm in larger Swedish cities).

Denmark (optional extension): The monetary unit of Denmark is the *kroner* which is divided into 100 *oere*. Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- banknotes: 50, 100, 200, 500, and 1,000 *kroner*
- coins: 25 and 50 *oere*, and 1, 2, 5, 10, and 20 *kroner*

Banking Hours: Monday to Friday, 10 am to 4 pm, except on Thursdays when most banks stay open until 5 pm or 5:30 pm. Hours may vary, especially in Copenhagen.

ATMs

When traveling, typically PLUS, Cirrus, and other bank networks are available throughout large cities and small towns. Always notify your bank before you leave home that you are going abroad so that they may remove any blocks on your account and also ask them about the number of withdrawals you may make abroad. **For cash withdrawals, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's 4-digit PIN (Personal Identification Number), as many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their numeric keys, they only display digits.**

Note on ATM use: Many banks have begun imposing a fee ranging from \$1 to \$5 every time you use an ATM in a foreign city. You may want to limit the number of withdrawals that you make. Your Program Director/Hospitality Desk Representative can advise you on locations, but when to exchange money is left to your discretion.

Credit Cards

Though major American credit cards (American Express, Visa, and MasterCard) are accepted abroad, always inquire if your type of credit card is accepted before deciding on your purchase. It is also wise to notify the credit card company that you will be using your cards abroad so that they may remove any security block. When using a major credit card you may receive a different exchange rate than if you pay with cash; inquire about the rate first. Please be aware that credit cards might not be accepted for small purchases or in the markets. Note that the Discover credit card is not widely accepted outside the U.S. Keep your receipts in case you have questions about the conversion or exchange rate. Also, keep your receipts as proof of purchase for items to be shipped home.

Important Note - Credit card use in Scandinavia

When using a credit card in Scandinavia, you will usually have to enter a numeric PIN (personal identification number) instead of a signing a slip. Therefore we strongly recommend that you check with your bank or credit card company in advance to learn your PIN number for each credit card you may use while on the trip. Because the keypads usually display numbers and no alpha characters, please memorize this PIN as a numeric code.

If your credit card company is unable to provide a PIN number, you may still be able to sign for credit card purchases, but it will impossible to know in advance. For this reason we suggest that you bring several different cards if possible, or be prepared to obtain cash from ATMs.

Please note: Optional tour payments made by credit card may take up to 3 months to process. For this reason we ask that you use a credit card that will not expire until three months following your trip. Because our headquarters are in Boston, charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as "**OPT Boston**" (depending on your credit card company).

Visa is the most widely accepted credit card in Scandinavia, followed by MasterCard and then American Express. Although American Express and MasterCard are accepted aboard ship, they are less widely accepted onshore.

Onboard Ship

Traveler's checks can be cashed for local currency onboard for a steep fee. You'll get more for your dollar if your checks are in large denominations (which enables you to make fewer exchange transactions). You can also exchange U.S. bills. American Express, Visa, Diners Club, and MasterCard credit cards are accepted aboard ship, too.

Cruise Card: Upon embarkation, you will receive a Cruise Card with which to purchase food and drink not included in your tour. Upon receipt of the Cruise Card, you will swipe your credit card so that your purchases can be charged to it at cruise's end. The Cruise Card can then be used for payments against your room. The day before disembarkation in Bergen, you will receive a bill for your purchases, which will be charged to your credit card.

St. Petersburg

Traveler's checks—not recommended: We urge you not to rely on traveler's checks for your personal expenses. In Russia it has become extremely difficult to exchange U.S. traveler's checks into either dollars or rubles.

U.S. dollars—recommended. Cash is more readily exchanged and accepted than traveler's checks, and sometimes commands a better exchange rate. There is no need to obtain local currency before your trip. You can change money at banks, most hotels, and money exchange offices. Please note that torn, dirty, or taped bills may not be accepted.

U.S. currency—recommended for personal expenses. We suggest that each person bring a small amount of U.S. cash (new bills) to cover your personal expenses. Your U.S. cash should be in small denominations, such as one-dollar bills, fives, tens, and twenties. Credit cards are often the most convenient method of payment.

As a safety precaution, store your money in a couple of different places. For your convenience, hotels provide safe deposit boxes. When sightseeing, keeping your money in a “money belt” or hidden pouch worn under your clothes is a good idea.

Russian Currency

The monetary unit of Russia is the *ruble*. On price tags, it is abbreviated to *p*.

Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 10, 50, 100, 1,000 and 5,000 *rubles*
- Coins: 1, 5, 10, and 50 *copeks* and 1, 2, 5 and 10 *rubles*

Credit Cards

Optional tours in St. Petersburg can be paid for with credit cards only. Credit cards are accepted on a wide basis in stores, restaurants, and other establishments. Don't count on using credit cards completely during your explorations of St. Petersburg, as cash is sometimes the only acceptable form of payment, and works best for minor purchases.



Shopping

It is Grand Circle Travel's goal to identify and provide you with shopping opportunities that highlight unique, locally produced products with good value from reliable vendors. For this reason there may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is **no** requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. **Grand Circle Travel cannot be responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.**

Scandinavian products are renowned for their quality and stylish design. Ask about special tax refunds for foreigners, which are offered in each Scandinavian country, though not at each and every shop. Some will require a minimum purchase, and all will need your passport. Please note: If you receive a tax refund, you must export the goods purchased in *unused* condition.

Shop hours: These vary from region to region—and even store to store. The following times reflect general opening and closing times in Scandinavia:

- Monday-Friday, 8:30 or 9:00 am to 5:00 or 6:00 pm (4:00 pm in summer)
- Saturday, 9 am to 2 pm (though some departments stores are open later).
- A few stores will also be open on Sundays, although many still honor the “closed on Sunday” tradition.

If you plan a major purchase, we strongly recommend that you research the prices and quality available at home before your trip. Just one visit to an import shop or gold dealer will put you way ahead when you go shopping. This is the only way to know if you are getting a good price.

Sample Prices: These sample prices (from 2013) are offered to give you a sense of what things cost in Scandinavia. They are a guideline only and not a guarantee.

Glass of beer in a bar: \$11 - \$12

Coffee and pastry in a café: \$11

Entrée in a restaurant: \$26 - \$41

Burger King or McDonald's meal: \$16 - \$21

Postage to the US (postcard): \$3

In Oslo

Oslo is one of the most shopper-friendly cities in Scandinavia, with traffic-free streets designed for prospective buyers, but prices can be high. The heart of this district is the Stortorvet, where more than two dozen shops sell everything from handicrafts to enameled silver jewelry. At the marketplace on Strøget, you can stop for a glass of beer at an open-air restaurant in fair weather. Many stores are clustered along Karl Johans Gate and the streets branching off it.

Shopping Hours—Most stores are open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm, Saturday 9am to 3pm. Department stores and shopping malls keep different hours—in general, Monday to Friday 9am to 8pm and Saturday 9am to 6pm. Many shops stay open late on Thursday and on the first Saturday of the month, which is called *super lørdag* ("super Saturday").

Shopping Malls

Mall shopping is a firmly entrenched tradition in Oslo, thanks to the uncertain weather. A favorite for wandering and shopping in Oslo is Aker Brygge, a former shipbuilding yard that was recycled into a postmodern complex of steel-and-glass buildings. In all, there are nearly 65 shops here, most of them upmarket fashion boutiques. There are also 40 restaurants, along with pubs, movie houses, and theaters. When it's raining, duck into the indoor shopping mall. Even if you don't buy anything, Aker Brygge makes for a great people-watching experience. It is located on the harbor front across from the Tourist Information Center at Vestbanen.

In St. Petersburg

Among the best buys in Russia are black caviar (sold in small sealed jars or large tins), hand-painted wooden dolls, hand-embroidered shirts and blouses, balalaikas, samovars, watches (Raketa brand and military watches), chess sets, pure wool scarves, lacquer boxes, hats, the traditional Russian wooden nest of dolls (*matryoshkas*), vodka, amber, and books.

One of the best places to buy souvenirs is in the numerous museum shops and souvenir markets in the former royal summer residences. Other shopping areas include *Gostinny Dvor* (35 Nevsky Prospekt) — the most famous of St. Petersburg's department stores—and *Passage* (48 Nevksy Prospekt)—another big department store specializing in women's clothing.

Sweden

Swedish artisans create wonderful crystal (including Orrefors), along with other traditional arts and crafts of the region.

Denmark

A showcase for world-famous Danish design and craftsmanship, Copenhagen seems to have been designed with shoppers in mind. The best buys are such luxury items as crystal, porcelain, silver, and furs. Look for offers and sales (*tilbud* or *udsalg* in Danish) and check antiques and secondhand shops for classics at cut-rate prices.

Although prices are inflated by a hefty 25% Value-Added Tax (Danes call it MOMS), non-European Union citizens can receive about an 18% refund. For more details and a list of all tax-free shops, ask at the tourist office for a copy of the *Tax-Free Shopping Guide*.

U.S. Customs Regulations and Shipping Charges

Exemption Amounts

Articles totaling \$800, at fair retail value where they were acquired, may be imported free of charge if you bring them with you. A flat rate of duty—usually a percentage—will be applied to the next \$1,000 worth (fair retail value) of merchandise. The U.S. Customs Inspector determines the value of your items when you enter, and is not bound by your bill of sale. In almost every case, however, a genuine bill of sale will be honored.

Fees on Items Shipped Home

Items shipped home are *always* subject to duty when received in the U.S. There will also be charges for shipping. Although some shops abroad may offer to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the customs facility closest to you and payment of the *export* duties (the fee to remove an item from its country of origin) not door-to-door shipping or *import* duties (the fee the U.S. government charges to bring an item into the U.S.). All additional duties or shipping charges would be the responsibility of the purchaser—you.

Therefore unless the item is small enough to mail or to be sent by a global parcel service (like FedEx) you should be prepared to pay customs duties and for shipping or pick-up from the nearest customs facility. This is why the U.S. Customs & Border Protection service states: “The most cost-effective thing to do is to take your purchases with you if at all possible.”

Illegal Items

It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins. For more information on what you may or may not bring back into the United States, you can obtain the publication “Know Before You Go” from the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection by phone, mail or from their website:

U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20229
Tel. 1-877-227-5511
www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/

Problem with a Purchase?

The best way to address a problem with a purchase is to not have one in the first place! So don't forget to examine merchandise before paying for it, check contracts or agreements before signing, and review your receipt before leaving the shop. For major purchases, don't hesitate to ask in advance about the return policy—local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up.

But what if you do discover an issue with an item later on? In that case, your best recourse is to contact the vendor directly. For this reason we recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. due to delays in communication, the complexities of international shipping/customs duties, and even cultural differences in how business is conducted.



To Tip or Not to Tip

We're actually fresh out of Shakespearean soliloquies, which is likely a good thing. To tip or not to tip (and how much to tip if you so choose) is *always* at your discretion. We offer these guidelines to answer requests for appropriate tipping amounts – which can vary for different services and between countries, and which can be confusing when you're visiting multiple destinations. Tips below are quoted in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency (usually preferred) or in U.S. dollars (personal/traveler's checks should *never* be used for tips).

Shipboard: Shipboard gratuities to the cruise personnel are not included in the cost of your voyage. If you wish to acknowledge those who have worked to make your cruise enjoyable, a gratuity of \$3-\$4 per person, per night, is customary. On some steamers, tips to dining and cabin staff are pooled. In this case, you can pay one gratuity (based on the above rate) in kroner, which you'll leave in an envelope with a staff member at the end of your cruise. Shipboard tips cannot be paid by credit card.

GCT Program Director: It is customary at the end of your trip to express a personal "Thank You" to the Grand Circle Program Director assigned to your group, especially if he or she has provided you with individual assistance. We recommend \$4-\$6 per person, per day. Please note that tips for our Program Directors can only be in the form of cash.

Port Stops & Land Stays: During port stops, land stays or extensions, you may dine in a local restaurant, take a taxi, or avail yourself of some other service where tipping is customary. A service charge is usually included in restaurant and bar bills, but it is customary to leave an additional tip of around 10% of the bill for your waiter or bartender. As for taxis, in many cities the tip is included in the fare, and will be announced on a sign inside the cab; otherwise a 10% tip is appropriate.

6. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP



In General

Travel light. A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. Eliminate all but the essentials and start packing a few days before you leave. That way, you'll have time to think—not fret—about what you might be forgetting. To have a varied travel wardrobe, yet keep your luggage light, we recommend you select a color scheme and pack color-coordinated clothing items that can be mixed to create different outfits.

Onboard Coastal Voyager ships: Onboard the ship, casual dress is acceptable at all times. While passengers vary in their dress style, they generally do not change into a new outfit for dinner.

Pack casual clothes. Comfortable, low-key apparel is acceptable at your other destinations. Basic pants, shirts, walking shorts, sportswear, everyday dresses and skirts, supportive shoes, and functional outdoor clothes are recommended. When dining off of the ship you will not need to don "dressy" clothing; men do not need a tie. r. Otherwise, a small selection of your favorite everyday outfits is fine for all activities.

Warm clothes & rain gear—needed year-round: Night temperatures are cool on the water all year, and the daytime weather can be fickle. Regardless of your travel season, bring long sleeves, warm socks and pants, and items to layer up with—a heavy sweatshirt, fleece top or wool sweater, waterproof jacket with a hood, hat, and gloves. Snow boots and a heavy-duty parka are also recommended—except in peak summer, when instead a pair of walking shorts and one or two short-sleeve tops may come in handy. Dress in layers, so you can easily adjust to sudden weather shifts. For possible showers, take a folding travel umbrella and/or rain hat.

Good walking shoes are critical. This program features many included tours that follow steep, unpaved or cobbled routes; and even an average day of light sightseeing or shopping can put great demands on your feet. Supportive, waterproof sports shoes are ideal for daytime shore excursions. If you prefer more ankle support, take light hiking boots. Bring five to seven pairs of socks. In case you get caught in the rain, we suggest you bring an extra pair of walking shoes, and rain boots or galoshes. Aboard ship, shoes with rubber soles provide the best traction.

Luggage Suggestions

Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase for your checked luggage. Due to space limitations on our motor coaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Porterage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.

Consider a daypack or small backpack as your carry-on bag. It will do double duty during excursions and walking trips. A daypack leaves your hands free and distributes its weight onto your back. Packed with daily travel needs (sweater, camera, rain/wind jacket, water bottle, etc.), it will compress to fit the storage space of foreign motorcoaches, and yet still have room for an impulse buy at a local street market.

Inner bags: Packing is easier if you use inner bags to help organize your gear. Use plastic bags, nylon stuff sacks, or packing cubes to organize inside your suitcase. Isolate liquids, store camera gear and important papers in heavy-duty Ziploc style bags.

Tip: Bring a second, empty lockable bag folded into your main suitcase, with a luggage tag and small lock. Use this to carry souvenirs home – but remember that you may incur extra luggage fees. If you're traveling with a companion we recommend "cross-packing," i.e., pack 2 outfits of your clothing in your companion's luggage and vice-versa, in case one bag is delayed.



Packing Your Carry-On

Using a daypack as a carry-on bag for your flights is a smart solution. We **strongly urge** you to pack your carry-on with at least one full change of clothes, your camera gear, medications, changes of socks and underwear, your important travel documents, and other irreplaceable items, in case your checked bags go astray. Store camera gear and important papers in plastic bags to protect them from dirt and moisture. With a daypack you can then remove these items on arrival and load your bag with the gear you'll need on walking tours and excursions.

NOTE: Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage change frequently. To avoid inadvertently packing any restricted items in your carry-on luggage, we strongly suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website, at www.tsa.gov which keeps a current list of restricted items. From the main website click on *Our Travelers*, then *Air Travel*, and then you will see a link for *Prohibited Items*.



Clothing Options

We've included information below on the weather you can expect for the regions you'll be visiting on your travels. Taking into account the climate you'll encounter and the general suggestions we offer above will enable you to create a flexible wardrobe that's light enough for sophisticated travel and will guarantee comfort in all the conditions you can expect to encounter. The luggage weight and size restrictions imposed by travel realities today have made traveling light an absolute necessity. With modern fabrics – Gore-Tex, Polarfleece, polypropylene, etc. – lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy. A visit to any on-line or local sporting goods/outdoor stores (L.L. Bean, REI, EMS, etc.) will yield a treasure trove of lightweight, specialized, and fashionable clothing and gear that is readily adaptable to your itinerary.



Travel Gear Suggestions

Though it's often fun to do things as the locals do, it can be frustrating when daily necessities or conveniences from home aren't available. To travel wisely these days you must juggle your personal needs and preferences against the physical constraints of your transportation—whether it's an international airplane, a transfer motorcoach, a small ship or a day-long trek on a camel. You'll have to distinguish between what you **must** have, what you'd *like* to have, whether you can zip your suitcase closed, and what you can reasonably expect to wrestle through airport hallways and security checkpoints. Consult the following items to create your personal checklist – ignoring what you don't need and making the tough decisions over borderline cases. Remember that many airlines today will charge you extra for added luggage.

What not to pack: do not pack aerosol cans, as they tend to leak during air travel. Also avoid packing glass bottles; use plastic containers instead. Leave at home checkbooks and any credit cards not essential for your trip, valuable jewelry, and anything that you would hate to lose.

Consider ...

- Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, body soap, etc.
- Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- Sunglasses with a neck strap
- Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger
- Insect repellent with DEET
- Travel money bag or money belt
- Moisturizer, lip balm
- Wide-brim sun hat or visor
- Pocket-size tissues
- Moist towelettes (packets) and/or anti-bacterial "waterless" hand cleanser
- Compact umbrella
- Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards
- Extra passport-sized photos
- Written prescriptions for your medications

Medicines

- Your own prescription medicines
- Vitamins
- Cold remedies: Sudafed/ Dristan
- Pain relief: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- Band-Aids
- Moleskin foot pads
- Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin
- Motion sickness medicine Dramamine

Other Gear

- Liquor (in a non-glass container): alcohol is very expensive in Scandinavia.
- Camera gear
- Travel alarm
- Compact binoculars
- Hanging toiletry bag with pockets
- Hair dryer (some hotels may not offer this)
- Washcloth
- Handkerchiefs
- Electrical transformer & plug adapter – see “Regional Electricity” below
- Reading materials
- Travel journal/note pad
- Swimsuit, if your ship/hotel has a pool/whirlpool
- Hand-wash laundry soap (Woolite) clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper
- Home address book
- Phrase book
- Collapsible walking staff
- Pocket calculator for exchange rates
- Basic sewing kit



7. REGIONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION

We can't predict the weather you'll encounter during your travels - our local weathermen can't even predict it very well for tomorrow! So, as your departure nears, it's a great idea to visit the *My Account* feature of www.gct.com for a current 10-day forecast of local temperatures and conditions. Or check Internet weather sites (www.wunderground.com is very comprehensive) for those forecasts and tweak your wardrobe choices accordingly. As a starting point, you'll find historical averages and general information on the climate of your destinations below.

Scandinavia:

Mid May to August: During late spring and summer, temperatures can be surprisingly high, comparable to Maine or Vermont; and the sea is generally much warmer than you might expect, largely as a result of the Gulf Stream and the shallowness of the Baltic. The low humidity, too, makes it feel warmer than temperatures may indicate. If you are traveling at this time of year, you're likely to encounter comfortably warm days and enjoy gloriously long hours of sun during your travels. The Midnight Sun will be shining over the northern parts (above the Arctic Circle) of Finland, Norway, and Sweden from mid May to the end of July. However, you should also be prepared for variable weather and temperature drops. The climate and weather along coastlines, in particular, is very much influenced by fluctuations in the sea's condition and is changeable throughout the year. Winds, rain, and clouds are common occurrences, though extended spells of fine settled weather are also likely.

April to mid May/September to October: During early spring and autumn, the weather can turn from warm, sunny, and mild to rainy, misty, and miserable within an hour or so. Be prepared for intermittent spells of wet, cloudy weather. Autumn comes early in this region of the world; summer typically ends at the close of August, and peak fall foliage is in September. If you travel on the shoulder season, come prepared for snow and very cold weather.

St. Petersburg—optional extension: The weather in St. Petersburg is likely to be similar to that of its close neighbor, Helsinki. In general, the Gulf Stream keeps St. Petersburg's climate on the moderate side. Summer is often comfortably warm and bright, but hot spells also occur. You may see some showers, but most days are likely to be at least partly sunny. September is typically pleasantly warm, with plenty of leftover summer-like days, but by October, the temperatures usually have dropped to the 50s and 40s, and a crispness has entered the air.

Oslo—optional extension: Although well into the northern latitudes, Oslo's climate is fairly temperate thanks to warm air being wafted across the Atlantic from the Gulf Stream. Summer weather in Oslo is mild and pleasant, with frequent hot spells, and plenty of long sunny days. In winter temperatures hover just above or below freezing. Snow is plentiful in winter, and rainfall is spread across the year, the rainiest month being August.

Stockholm, Sweden—(optional extension): Despite its northern location, Stockholm has relatively mild weather compared to other locations at similar latitude. Summers have average daytime highs of 68–72 °F and lows of around 55 °F, but temperatures can reach the mid-eighties. Winters are sometimes snowy with average temperatures ranging from 23 to 34 °F, and sometimes drop below 5 °F. Spring and autumn are generally cool to mild. Yearly precipitation averages 21.2 inches with around 170 wet days and light to moderate rainfall throughout the year. Snowfall occurs mainly from December through March with some snow-rich winters, while others are milder with more rain than snow.

Copenhagen, Denmark—optional extension: The weather in Copenhagen is mild through all the four seasons. with average temperatures usually in the range 48°F to 59°F. Rainfall is moderate too, but spread throughout the year, so showers are possible in any season. Grey skies are the norm rather than the exception in Copenhagen.

Here are the data from the weather observation stations at or closest to our destinations:

WHAT'S THE TEMPERATURE?								
<i>Average highs (taken at 2 pm) and lows (taken just before sunrise) in °F.</i>								
	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Helsinki, Finland								
High	45	59	66	70	66	56	46	36
Low	30	41	49	53	51	43	36	28
Ivalo, Finland								
High	36	48	59	65	59	49	36	24
Low	17	33	43	48	44	37	27	16
Narvik (for Harstad), Norway								
High	39	48	57	61	59	51	42	34
Low	32	42	50	54	51	44	36	30
Bergen, Norway								
High	47	56	60	62	61	56	51	43
Low	35	42	48	51	51	46	41	35
Oslo, Norway (main trip and optional extension)								
High	49	62	68	71	69	60	49	39
Low	34	45	52	55	53	45	38	29
St. Petersburg, Russia (optional extension)								
High	46	60	66	70	66	56	45	37
Low	33	44	52	56	54	45	37	28
Stockholm, Sweden (optional extension)								
High	47	60	67	70	68	58	48	39
Low	31	41	49	54	53	45	38	31
Copenhagen, Denmark (optional extension)								
High	49	60	66	69	69	61	53	44
Low	36	45	52	55	54	50	44	37

Please note: The data cited here reflect *climate* as opposed to *weather* conditions, and serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. A 60 degree *average* high temperature means that days may be as warm as 80 or as cool as 40 – but it’s most likely you’ll encounter temperatures in the 50 to 70 degree range.

8. TRAVEL AND TECHNOLOGY



In General

Smartphone, tablet, digital camera/camcorder, MP3 player: travel today can involve technology that didn't exist even five years ago. The usefulness of digital devices is enormous: smartphones can keep you connected and offer up-to-the-minute information via your cell plan or a local Wi-Fi connection. With a tablet (or smartphone) you can store multiple country guidebooks, access maps and connect to the internet in a small, lightweight device. (*Tip: you can download **this** document from the Grand Circle Travel website and import it into your tablet or e-reader, many of which can display PDF files.*)

Compact and lightweight, digital camcorders and cameras take high definition movies and still images of the people you meet and places you visit. For robust use a laptop may be effective; for occasional use it's wiser to rely on Internet cafes or a tablet and hotel Internet access rather than shoulder the heft and size of a laptop.

To use these devices you should first consider the services available at your destinations. You'll encounter a range of electrical standards, varied plug configurations to access the local current, erratic availability (electricity and internet access), and differing technological standards.

You'll need to assess your power and data storage needs, and the accessories required to recharge/connect/use these devices. Finally, it's smart to read the owner's manual *before* you depart. Pay particular attention to electrical, power and storage requirements to ensure that you understand exactly what you need. Thorough preparation is the best guarantee that your devices will work up to their potential.



Regional Electricity

The standard U.S. electrical system — 110V 60Hz current and flat two- or three-pronged polarized plug system — is rare elsewhere. The overwhelming choice for the rest of the world is 220-240V and 50/60Hz current with a variety of plug shapes, sizes, and configurations. Some plugs will work with multiple receptacles, while others won't. Europe is largely standardized to the Type C "Europlug."

Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V 50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. We suggest that you bring *dual* voltage appliances (widely available) that work on both 110 and 220/240 voltage. Dual voltage appliances are inexpensive and need only plug adapters.

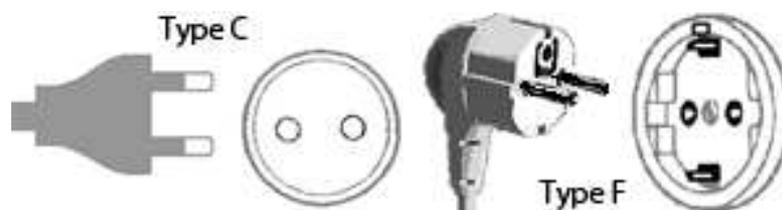
If you bring 110V appliances, such as a hair dryer (note that hotels often supply hairdryers and coffee makers) or shaver, you'll need a transformer (to halve the 220/240V current) in addition to plug adapters. Regional transformer/adaptor kits can often be found at hardware or online stores. Note that transformers can be unreliable: a broken one will leave you lugging a useless 110V appliance. Battery-operated alternatives are an option, but will need a supply of batteries.

Russia and Scandinavia

The electric current in countries along your route, including Russia if you take the optional extension, operates on 220/240 voltage AC, 50 cycles. Electric outlets in Russia and Scandinavia use the standard European two-pin Type C “Europlug” and the Type F plug (Type C plugs work in Type F receptacles).

Electric Current Onboard ship

Aboard ship, the cabins are equipped with European-style Europlug (Type C) outlets. Note however that all sockets in Scandinavia (both onboard ship and in your hotels) are round and *recessed* into the wall. You’ll need adapters to accommodate this feature.



If you use multiple digital devices—cell phone, digital camera, and MP3 player for instance – it’s handy to have a travel power strip, perhaps with a surge suppressors and USB-style port for charging cell phones, MP3 players or e-readers without the use of a device-specific plugs.



Smartphones

It will require some effort to get the most out of your smartphone when you travel. Even with an international roaming plan, costs can add up quickly – those handy apps often pile up download fees. The simplest solution is to shut down all cell phone functions, automatic data feeds and roaming options, and take advantage of the apps via available Wi-Fi. With an Internet VOIP app (like Skype) you can make inexpensive calls. If necessary, turn international roaming back on and your phone will work as usual – albeit at some cost. If your phone doesn’t support international roaming (most smartphones do), some carriers offer loaners.

App quality, availability and costs vary – as do platforms (iPhone, Android, Blackberry ...), so again you’ll need to do some legwork. Apps come in all forms: packing lists, currency converters, language translators, maps, journals, Wi-Fi hotspot finders ... one problem is going to be searching through the vast array of available apps to uncover what works best and what you’re likely to use most. Smartphones have a lot to offer, but their small size can be a drawback for some uses (maps, extended reading, etc.)

Cell Phones

If you want to use a standard cell phone while traveling overseas, be sure to check with your service provider (www.verizon.com, www.t-mobile.com etc.) to see if your phone will work outside the U.S. or whether you’re better off renting an international phone. The websites www.travelcell.com and www.globalcellularrental.com have good information on rentals. Or, consider buying an inexpensive local phone for your stay.

Phone Calling Cards

If you don't carry a phone, you can use a prepaid calling card to call the U.S. with minimal additional charges. Besides the prepaid long distance charges, you might have a local fee of a few cents and possibly a connection fee if you are using your card at a hotel. Check with the reception desk prior to using it to avoid unexpected charges.

Calling cards purchased locally are usually less expensive than those purchased in the U.S. and are more likely to work with the local system. Note that dialing a U.S. 1-800 number outside the continental United States will incur costly long distance fees, since 1-800 does not work outside the U.S.



Photo Gear

For many people, capturing the highlights of their travel experiences in photographs or movies and sharing them is one of the most enjoyable aspects of the journey. Remember, however: some individuals and cultures are less tolerant of photography than others. It's always best to respect local customs. And in some places you may be charged for photography at specific sites, or restricted from any photography at all.

Digital cameras and camcorders are excellent travel companions—and many do dual duty by recording movies *and* still images. Fist sized camcorders can capture HD movies and high quality still photos; cameras the size of a deck of cards are great for snapshots and casual movie clips. With an ample supply of high-capacity memory cards you can record your whole trip with a small, lightweight package.

But you must remember the batteries. Recharging batteries is sometimes impossible, cameras can drain batteries *very* quickly, and replacements may be unavailable. Whether you need standard or proprietary batteries, it's good to have spares. Be sure your charger will work with the local electrical system, and bring more than enough memory cards—they may be hard or impossible to find. Memory cards are small, thin and light: you can never have too much storage.

Compact cameras are impractical for distant subjects. Some models have a zoom lens of up to 120mm, which is good for middle distances. For distant subjects a *megazoom* (with a zoom lens of at least 300mm) or a single lens reflex (DSLR) camera with up to a 300mm telephoto lens are good choices. With a DSLR you can use multiple lenses, though your gear can quickly get complex, weighty and cumbersome. Cameras or lenses that need a tripod are impractical for travel photography. A single mid-range telephoto lens coupled with a small, fast prime lens (for low light/no flash situations) is an effective, flexible and compact kit. Consider mirrorless interchangeable lens cameras (MILC), which combine small bodies and multiple, small lenses with high quality for both still and HD movie images.

If you use a DSLR or MILC camera, protect the lenses with a UV filter and bring lens caps, covers, cleaning paper and a waterproof bag (a heavy duty Ziploc-style bag is good) to protect your gear. Be sure your camera has a flash that you can turn off, and if it's detachable, remember to pack it. (At many sites and museums, flashes are *not* permitted.)

Consider disposable cameras, as well. They are inexpensive and capable of acceptable photos as long as the light is not too dim *or* bright. X-rays do not damage the data of digital cameras (in any media format), and so pose no problems for travelers using digital cameras.

9. HURTIGRUTEN SHIPS & Norwegian Coastal Voyage Inc.



*M/S Kong Harald, M/S Nordkapp, M/S Nordnorge,
M/S Polarlys, M/S Richard With*

You will cruise the Norwegian coast aboard one of these vessels, each of which accommodates an average of about 600 passengers, keeping them small enough to sail into the most narrow of fjords. In addition to people, these ships carry packages, supplies, and mail to some of the most isolated, and delightful, villages along the Norwegian coast. These are true working ships, an essential part of the daily life of the coast. But there's no need for concern—you will find every amenity you need for a comfortable journey onboard. Do be aware, however, that these are mail boats (in existence for more than 100 years) whose main purpose is to deliver goods between ports. Some port calls are very brief and may not allow time to spend ashore.

You will not find any of the standard luxury cruise activities or amenities—casinos, shuffleboard, pool, entertainment program, and the like—but you will enjoy basic comforts, fine service, wholesome cuisine, and a congenial atmosphere.

Each ship has been fully modernized for the comfort of passengers. Well-appointed cabins have lower berths, a private bath, and are equipped with a hair dryer for your convenience. The ships have built-in panoramic viewing areas with spacious lounges. And they have ample open deck space—perfect viewing spots from which to watch your ship pull into a picturesque fishing village, sail through a crystal blue fjord, or cruise past a mountain.

Cabin Assignment

Cabin assignments are NOT given out in advance. Your Program Director will have this information for you when you board your ship in Kirkenes. All cabins have two lower beds. The lower beds cannot be made into a double bed.

Embarkation

Please note that due to customs and safety regulations you will be required to handle your own luggage from the bus to the ship's gangway (approximately 400 feet) during embarkation in Kirkenes, Norway. The ship's crew will then take the luggage from the gangway to your cabin. There is no portage service available at the pier, and the bus is not allowed to drive up to the gangway.



Dining

Three meals a day aboard ship: During the cruise portion of your trip, you'll dine on three meals a day—breakfast and lunch buffets, and a hearty, set-menu dinner served in the dining room. Your meals will include fresh local produce, fish, and Norwegian specialties (including reindeer, which tastes very similar to a good cut of beef).

Some evenings, the set menu for dinner may feature a rather exotic entree or side dish that you prefer to eat around. For such times, and also for your own dietary enjoyment, we suggest you bring a modest supply of your favorite non-perishable snacks: granola bars, dried fruit, nuts, candy bars, etc. You can also purchase a snack in the cafeteria most any time day or night, but prices are high. If you prefer a different dinner choice, inform the dining room staff at lunchtime.

Other Details



Drinking Water

Tap water aboard ship is safe for drinking.

Educational Activities

You'll enjoy your ports even more once you know more about them! The shipboard courier and your Program Director will share information about the unique qualities of the villages you'll visit, facts of cultural interest, and enough history to make each port truly come alive. Optional shore programs provide you with special opportunities to head inland and see more of Norway. Please note that these optional tours are operated directly by the Ship and are not controlled/associated with Grand Circle Travel. Therefore they have to be paid directly on board the ship and cannot be charged to our Optional Tour forms. For more information, visit <http://www.hurtigruten.us/norway/excursions/Southbound-excursions1>

Or ask your Grand Circle Program Director and the Ships' Tour Leader once you are in the destination

Or you can stroll through your ports of call on foot, stopping by tiny cafés or window shopping down cobblestone streets. You just choose the option that suits you best—and your Grand Circle Program Director will help you see the best that Norway has to offer.

***Please note:** The ships featured on this tour are working vessels and therefore adhere to strict sailing schedules. Because of this, not every stop will allow enough time for you to disembark.*



Gift Shop

The ship has a small gift shop that sells sweatshirts, tee-shirts, postcards, and videos. DVDs purchased abroad may not work in U.S. DVD players; look for a label stating "region one" or an American flag marking.



Laundry Service

Your ship has coin-operated laundry facilities. The machines take tokens, which you can purchase at the Information Desk. The laundry service on ship is inexpensive when compared to hotel laundry service and is available 24 hours a day.



Phone Service

You can make phone calls to any destination from the ship's pay phone, which takes local currency coins. There are also pay phones near the piers of almost all ports.

Smoking/Non-Smoking Policy

All cabins are non-smoking. The only area of the ship where smoking is permitted is a designated section of the outside deck.



Travel on a Working Ship Schedule

Coastal freighter, tramp steamer, packet boat – your ship shares the history and romance of these working vessels. Your voyage stops at numerous ports where there may—or may **not**—be time for a stroll ashore, some shopping, or sightseeing on optional shore excursions. Disembarkation isn't possible at every port due to the working nature of your vessel, whose main purpose in many of these ports is to efficiently and punctually offload the goods the local community relies on and move local goods to further ports.

At some ports, for example, your vessel may only pause momentarily alongside the dock, quickly exchange cargoes, and then immediately resume sailing in order to stay on schedule. Port calls may occur late at night or in the wee hours of the morning.

Accommodations on board are small but adequate for a 5 day journey. As a working vessel, you won't find "cruise" entertainments, though your program director will organize lectures and films as time allows. Your program director will also organize brief discovery strolls at ports where the time and the tides agree. The ship itself (not Grand Circle) offers a wide range of optional excursions ashore that you may book onboard.

The variations in the time spent at your ports of call, as well as the sometimes-unusual arrival and departure times, are typical of life aboard a real working vessel. We ask you to understand that this type of cruise schedule is simply part of the authentic coastal experience, hearkening back to an earlier, simpler style of travel. Relax and enjoy the rhythms of the sea and the distinctive charms of daily life on the edge of the ocean. You'll take in the sights and sounds of a region and culture long dependent on the ocean for both food and transport, and you'll become part of that tradition as your ship plies its route.

10. ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS

During Your Land Excursions & Optional Extensions

We're including some handy practical details and a brief introduction to the places you'll visit on your Cruise Tour. If you expect to explore in depth on your own, we recommend that you consult one of the many available book-length guides to your destinations. If you have one or two specific sites, museums or features that you're interested in, an internet search is the ideal way to get-up-to-date information and details. And of course your Grand Circle Travel Program Director or Hospitality Desk Representative will be able to assist you with suggestions and arrangements of activities you wish to participate in during your stay.



Drinking Water

The tap water in Finland and Norway is safe to drink. Never drink from a mountain stream, fjord, or river, regardless of how clean it might appear.



Laundry Service

Laundry service is available through your hotels, although it is expensive. Your Program Director will help you make arrangements for these services if you need them.

Smoking/Non-Smoking Policy

In both Norway and Finland smoking is prohibited in public areas and restaurants.

Helsinki in Brief



City Layout

Established 450 years ago on the order of the Swedish King Vasa, Helsinki is a youngster of a city by European standards, and it's still the smallest in the world to host the Olympic Games. But its ideal location on lovely peninsulas that jut into the Baltic Sea, its compact size and efficient design, and its stunning architectural variety combine to make a city that is easy to explore on leisurely walks and that holds wonders around every corner.

The bustling Market Square, located on South Harbor, is the charming site of wooden stands and colorful awnings that spring to life every morning. Only a few blocks away is the Helsinki Cathedral, done in the Byzantine-Slavonic style with domes and an exquisite interior decorated by Russian artists in the 19th century. Providing a modern contrast is the Art Nouveau-style Juggensali, now a tourist information office but first a bank when it was built in 1906.

Another reason for Helsinki's distinctive small-town ambience is the absence of high-rise buildings. No structure here stands more than twelve stories. Nestled near the harbor is The Esplanade, a broad expanse of trees and gardens in the middle of a boulevard that runs from Market Square west to the Swedish Theater. This is the beginning of *Mannerheimintie*, the city's main thoroughfare. With small shops, large department stores, churches, and outdoor cafés, *Mannerheimintie* is a visitor's delight.

Alive with motion and color from the start of day, Helsinki is no less invigorating at night. The Esplanade was the 1999 winner of the Edison Award for excellence in lighting design, offering a stunning combination of architecture and illumination. Equally vivid is the work of the internationally honored Finnish architect, Alvar Aalto, whose genius sprouts in structures all over Helsinki, from the winged, white marble façade of Finlandia Hall to the cooper-clad curtains of the Academic Bookshop.

Oslo in Brief—Main Trip & Optional Extension



City Layout and Details

Oslo occupies a magnificent site, surrounded by hills on three sides and a fabulous fjord on the fourth. In general, the city's compact and straightforward design makes getting around on foot easy. The Aker River divides the city into east and west.

Karl Johans Gate is Oslo's main street, running the length of the city's downtown, from Central Station to the Royal Palace. Much of it is a car-free pedestrian thoroughfare, and many of the city's most important buildings, stores, and hotels make Karl Johans Gate their address. A pedestrian park is created between Karl Johans Gate and Stortingsgate, an important parallel street running from Parliament to the Royal Palace.

A couple of blocks south, City Hall fronts Oslo's active port, creating a triangle with Central Station and the Royal Palace. City Hall is across the street from the main Norway Information Center. Across the park from City Hall, ferries make regular runs to the Bygdoy Peninsula, site of several top museums. Frogner Park, with its famous Vigeland Sculpture Garden, lies about a mile northwest of the Royal Palace. The park and the palace sandwich an exclusive neighborhood of tree-lined streets and turn-of-the-century homes.



Local Transportation

Public Transit: The Oslo public transit system is comprised of buses, trams, ferries, local and inter-city trains and an extensive metro system called the "T-bane". A single ticket allows the transit user to make use of the full transit system within Oslo for a period of one hour.

Bus and tram: Jernbanetorget is Oslo's major bus and tram terminal stop. Most buses and trams passing through the heart of town stop at Wessels Plass, next to the Parliament, or at Stortorvet, the main marketplace. Many also stop at the National Theater or University Square on Karl Johans Gate, as well as stopping through Oslo's suburbs.

The subway: The T-banen has four branch lines to the east. The Western Suburban route (including Holmenkollen) has four lines to the residential sections and recreation grounds west and north of the city. Subways and trains leave from near the National Theater on Karl Johans Gate.

Taxis: Hiring a taxi is very expensive in Oslo—we recommend taking public transportation instead. Tariffs start at around \$4.60 for hailed taxis in the streets or \$7.70 if you summon one in advance. In addition to regular fares, there are lethal surcharges between 5 and 10pm costing \$17, or between 10pm and 4am costing \$32.

All taxis have meters, and Norwegian cab drivers are generally honest. When a cab is available, its roof light goes on. Taxis can be hailed on the street, provided they're more than 298 ft. from a taxi stand. The most difficult time to hail a taxi is Monday to Friday from 8:30 to 10am and 3 to 5pm, and Saturday from 8:30 to 10am.



Newspapers & Magazines

The *Aftenposten* is an English-language daily newspaper that is published in Oslo and covers local, national and international news and events.

St. Petersburg in Brief—Optional Extension



City Layout and Details

St. Petersburg is Russia's largest seaport and second largest city, with a population of around five million. It lies on the same latitude as southern points of Alaska and Greenland, and yet its climate—which to a large extent depends on the proximity to the sea and the many waterways that crisscross the city—is frequently described as fairly mild.

The city straddles more than 40 islands at the mouth of the great Neva River, which sweeps majestically through its center. The Neva River flows southwest from Lake Ladoga to the Baltic Sea. The Neva branches into three arms and separates the Petrograd side and Vasilievsky Island from the mainland. Today, granite embankments (built in the time of Catherine the Great) contain the 65 rivers, canals, channels, and streams that separate the islands, but flooding still occurs when gales drive in from the Baltic. These waterways, Lake Ladoga, and the sea freeze over in winter, but icebreakers keep the port open all year. There are 365 bridges joining the islands.

From the Admiralty on the south embankment, the main streets radiate like spokes of a wheel; the canals and other streets cross these spokes running parallel to the main channel of the Neva. On Vasilievsky Island the streets are divided up into numbered Liniya (lines). In the months after the renaming of Leningrad to St. Petersburg, streets began to revert to their original, pre-Revolutionary names, a process which continues and can cause confusion. Fortunately, many of the most interesting sites, especially those on the left bank of the Neva, along and around the embankments, are located in a relatively compact area, which can be easily explored on foot.



Cuisine

Be aware that the food at hotels and restaurants in Russia is relatively simple and basic. Portions are on the small side, and there is not much variety in the side dishes and main courses being served from day to day.



Drinking Water

The tap water in St. Petersburg is risky, even in small quantities. Please drink only bottled water, which is available everywhere.



Local Transportation

Included in your St. Petersburg stay are sightseeing tours. If you wish to do some additional exploring on your own, you may find the following information useful.

Buses, trams, and trolleybuses: These run from 6 am to 1 am. Stops marked by an “A” sign serve buses, while stops marked “T” serve trolley buses. The latter are less crowded than buses during rush hour. Tram signs hang from wires above the middle of the road. Your Program Director or hotel reception can help you find your way to specific sites.

Taxis: St. Petersburg taxis are different colors with a “T” sign or checkerboard. If you hire a taxi, negotiate the price FIRST. A tip to a driver is at your discretion; locals generally do not tip taxi drivers.

The Metro: Like St. Petersburg’s buses and trams, the Metro runs from 6 am to 1 am, and like the Moscow Metro, it is famous for its architecture and murals. This is the fastest way to get around St. Petersburg, and it is well worth the effort to learn its routes and destination signs.



Newspapers & Magazines

The city of St. Petersburg publishes a newspaper called *The St. Petersburg Times* (an informative English-language daily) and *WHERE* magazine – both are available at many hotels. The most widely read newspaper in St. Petersburg is the *Sankt-Petersburg Vedomosti*. *USA Today*, the *International Herald Tribune*, and *The Financial Times* are available in some hotels.

Stockholm in Brief—Optional Extension



City Layout

Stockholm is built on 14 islands in Lake Malaren, which marks the beginning of an archipelago of 24,000 islands, skerries, and islets stretching all the way to the Baltic Sea. Stockholm’s major streets—Kungsgatan (the main shopping street), Birger Jarlsgatan, and Strandvagen (which leads to Djurgarden)—are on Norrmalm (north of the Old Town). Stureplan, which lies at the junction of the major avenues Kungsgatan and Birger Jarlsgatan, is the commercial hub of the city.

East of Stureplan rises Hotorget City, a landmark of modern urban planning, which includes five 18-story skyscrapers. Its main, traffic-free artery is Drottninggatan, a three-block shopper’s promenade that eventually leads to Sergels Torg, with a modern sculpture in its center.

South of Sergels Torg, at Gustav Adolfs Torg, sits the Royal Opera House. A block east of the flaming torches of the opera house is the verdant north-to-south stretch of Kungstradgarden—part avenue, part public park—which serves as a popular gathering place for students and a resting stop for shoppers. From here it is a short walk to the Royal Dramatic Theater and the Royal Opera House, as well as two other city landmarks: the Grand Hotel and the National Museum.

Kungsholmen (King's Island) lies across a narrow canal from the rest of the city, and is the site of the elegant Stadshuset (City Hall). South of Gamla Stan (Old Town), and separated from it by a narrow but much-navigated stretch of water, is Södermalm, the southern district of Stockholm. Quieter than its northern counterpart, it's an important residential area with a distinctive flavor of its own. To the east of Gamla Stan, on a large and forested island completely surrounded by the complicated waterways of Stockholm, is Djurgården, part of Sweden's first city national park. This summer pleasure ground of Stockholm is also the site of many of its most popular attractions, including the *Vasa* Ship museum.



Dining, Evening Entertainment

The city's favorite spot for both indoor and outdoor evening events is Djurgården. Don't miss the nightclubs and jazz venues, some of which stay open until 3 or 4 in the morning, and which keep the city hopping.

All the major opera, theater, and concert seasons begin in the fall, except for special summer festival performances. Most of the major opera and theatrical performances are funded by the state, so ticket prices are reasonable.

Stockholm's restaurant scene began revitalizing some 15 years ago and continues to innovate. What was once a dull landscape of overpriced, uninspiring eateries is now a hotbed of culinary creativity: Stockholm's best chefs have stayed way ahead of the game. Increasingly, their talents are rubbing off on mid-price restaurants – and many of those mid-range restaurants now represent the best dining value in town. Recent trends have seen some of the city's better restaurants pick up on this and offer more set-priced tasting menus and increasing numbers of wine by the glass—making otherwise expensive restaurants relatively affordable. In terms of food, *New Swedish* is still tops, and chefs look to fine, seasonal, traditional ingredients, prepared with a modern twist. Many less-expensive restaurants offer traditional Swedish cooking. Among Swedish dishes, the best bets are wild game and fish, particularly salmon, and the smorgasbord buffet, which usually offers a good variety at a decent price. Reservations are generally necessary.



Local Transportation

All *tunnelbana* (*T* or *T-bana*), metro, and local trains, and buses in the city are run by Storstockholms Lokaltrafik (*SL*; www.sl.se). A Stockholm Card (available for varied time periods) covers travel on all SL trains and buses. SL Tourist Cards are primarily for transport, but also give free entry to some attractions. Or, purchase individual coupons: the minimum fare is two coupons, and each additional zone costs another coupon (up to five coupons for four or five zones).

Tunnelbanna (T-Bana) Metro

The *tunnelbana* is the most efficient way around Stockholm. Lines converge on *T-Centralen*, and are connected by an underground walkway to Centralstationen. There are three main lines, numerous branches and more than 100 stations, making the major sites easy to get to. The blue line features a collection of modern art decorating the underground stations. Stations at other lines are also decorated.

Bus

The bus system contains a number of lines that make stops throughout the city, often servicing areas like the Djurgården neighborhood, which is out of the *T-bana's* reach. Some night buses run from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. and are a good alternative to taxis. Bus timetables and route maps are complicated but the system offers useful connections to suburban attractions.

Taxi

Readily available, but *very* expensive: the meter starts at around \$45 and moves up rapidly. Drivers are required to publish prices, and prices are *not* regulated. Make sure you know the fare before you get into the taxi.

Bicycle

In good weather cycling around the city is a great option. Getting through central Stockholm' can take around 30 minutes on a bike—and may be faster than the metro. Cycle paths are plentiful and quite safe.



Drinking Water

Tap water throughout Sweden is safe to drink. Mineral water is fairly expensive, but available if you prefer to drink that.



Websites, Newspapers, & Magazines

English language newspapers are rapidly losing favor to news-related websites. *What's On*, which is widely available, lists upcoming entertainment and cultural events. Most local papers are in Swedish, and imported English-language newspapers and magazines can be hard to find. They show up in spurts at local newsstands, sometimes every few days, sometimes only every few weeks.

Copenhagen in Brief—Optional Extension



City Layout

Old Copenhagen is defined as a rough square by Nørreport Station to the north, Rådhuspladsen (Town Hall Square) to the west, and Kongens Nytorv to the east.

Strøget is Europe's the longest continuous pedestrians-only route. It runs east from Town Hall Square to Kongens Nytorv, and is composed of five interconnected streets: Frederiksberggade, Nygade, Vimmelskaflet, Amagertorv, and Østergade and roughly bisects Old Copenhagen. Strøget is a stroller's and shopper's heaven: lined with shops, bars, restaurants, and, in season, with sidewalk cafes it a favorite of visitors and locals alike. On the Eastern end, Pistolstræde is a maze of galleries, restaurants, and boutiques, housed in restored 18th-century buildings.

Fiolstræde (Violet St.), closer to the western end of Stroget, offers antiques shops and bookshops and cuts through the university (Latin Quarter). At the end of Fiolstræde you can turn onto Rosengaarden where you'll find Kultorget (Coal Square). Here you'll find join the third main pedestrian street, Købmagergade (Butcher St.) which runs gently south until it meets up with Strøget at the Amagertorv section.

At the eastern end of Strøget you approach Kongens Nytorv (King's Square), where you'll find the Royal Theater and Magasin, the largest department store in Copenhagen. Across the square you come to the beginning of Nyhavn, the former seamen's quarter that is now an upscale area of expensive restaurants, apartments, cafes, and boutiques.

Denmark's government is centered on the small island of Slotsholmen, which is connected to the center by eight different bridges. The island also features several museums, most notably Christiansborg Castle.



Entertainment

Free time? Try strolling the Strøget, a three quarter mile stretch of shops between Rådhuspladsen and Kongens Nytorv . If you get peckish or thirsty midway, you can hop over a street to the Vestergade, lined with historic buildings, restaurants, stores and bars for a little more variety. Nynhavn (New Harbor) is the place to be on a good day – outdoor cafes abound, and classic buildings overlook the classic ships that line the harbor front.

In summer, a visit to Tivoli Gardens is a must. Tivoli's twenty-one acres encompasses impressive structures (the Chinese Tower, the Glass Hall Theater, and the Pantomime Theater among them), flower beds, fountains and lovely landscaping. The park features 5 roller coasters, including one of the world's oldest wooden coasters, as well as other rides. Locals and visitors alike find the ambience and experience a repeatable pleasure. If you're not interested in the rides or the performances you can simply stroll, take in the view and people watch. (There is an entrance fee, but many of the events inside are included).

You'll find the nightlife in several neighborhoods, including Strøget and nearby areas; in Vesterbro, with its main street on Vesterbrogade just across from Tivoli Gardens; and on Istedgade — home to some of the today's trendier bars and cafés. The area just off Kongens Nytorv on Gothersgade is another busy nightlife spot.

The famed jazz venues of Copenhagen are largely closed. Nightspots now cater to a wider range of music — from ballroom music to house, rap, and techno. Restaurants, cafés, bars, and clubs stay open after midnight, a few until 5 am.



Local Transportation

Copenhagen is sufficiently compact and inviting that most of your travel in the city should be as a result of a leisurely stroll. Many of the major sightseeing attractions are close to one another.

By Bus: Copenhagen's buses are an inexpensive way to get around a little further out, if necessary. Most buses leave from Rådhuspladsen. A basic ticket buys an hour of travel and unlimited transfers within the zone where you started your trip. For information, call tel. 36-13-14-15.

Metro: Copenhagen's Metro is a little over ten years old, and it connects the east to west of the city with the center. It operates 24 hours a day, and Metro fares are integrated into Copenhagen's zonal system.

A joint zone fare system works with Copenhagen Transport buses, State Railway, and the Metro. A *grundbillet* (base ticket) costs 15DKK (about \$2.60). You can buy 10 tickets for 10DKK (about \$1.65). For 90DKK (about \$15) you can purchase a ticket giving you 24-hour bus and train travel through nearly half of Zealand.

Discount Passes: The Copenhagen Card entitles you to free and unlimited travel by bus and rail throughout the metropolitan area (including North Zealand) and free admission to many sights and museums. The card is available for 199DKK (about \$34) for one day or 429DKK (about \$73), for three days.

Taxis: Watch for the FRI (free) sign or a green light when hailing a taxi. Be sure the taxis are metered. Tips are included in the meter price: 19 to 32DKK (\$3.50 to \$5.50) at the drop of the flag and 12DKK (\$2.10) per kilometer thereafter, Monday to Friday, 7am to 4pm. Off peak and weekend prices are higher. Many drivers speak English.

Bicycle

In good weather cycling around the city is a great option. Getting through central Stockholm can take around 30 minutes on a bike—and may be faster than the metro – and bikes are popular with the residents. Cycle paths are plentiful and quite safe.



Drinking Water

Tap water throughout Copenhagen is safe to drink. Mineral water is fairly expensive, but available if you prefer to drink that.



Websites, Newspapers, & Magazines

Again English language newspapers are rapidly losing favor to news-related websites. *Copenhagen This Week* (www.ctw.dk) and the English newspaper, *The Copenhagen Post* (www.cphpost.dk) are good sources for current events. Local papers are in Danish.

11. DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

Finland

Area: 130,558 square miles

Capital: Helsinki

Geography: Finland is heavily forested and contains thousands of lakes, numerous rivers, and extensive areas of marshland. Except for a small highland region in the extreme northwest, the country is a lowland less than 600 feet above sea level.

Languages: Finnish, Swedish

Location: Finland is bordered to the north and west by Norway and Sweden, and to the east by Russia.

Population (2012 est.): 5,262,930

Religion: Lutheran National Church 84%, Greek Orthodox 1%, other 1%, none 14%

Time zones: Finland is two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, seven hours ahead of EST.

Holidays:

01/01	New Year's Day
01/06	Epiphany
04/18	Good Friday
04/20	Easter Day
04/21	Easter Monday
05/01	Labor Day
05/29	Ascension Day
06/08	Whit Sunday
06/21	Midsummer
11/01	All Saints
12/06	Independence Day
12/25	Christmas Day
12/26	St. Stephen's Day

COVERING AN AREA OF 130,558 SQUARE MILES, *Suomi* (its Finnish name) is one of the largest countries of Europe. It extends about 700 miles in length, and has a maximum breadth of 335 miles. The coastline is approximately 682 miles long. Geographically, Finland can be divided into three distinct areas—the coastal plain, the lake district, and the highland in the north—each characterized by a slightly different climate and topography.

Until 1917, Finland was under the domination of its nearest neighbors, Sweden and Russia, who fought over it for centuries. After over 600 years under Swedish rule and 100 under the czars, the country inevitably bears many traces of these two cultures, including a small (6%) but influential Swedish-speaking population and a scattering of Russian Orthodox churches. But the Finns themselves are neither Scandinavian nor Slavic. All that is known of their origins is that they are descended from wandering groups of people who probably came from west of the Ural Mountains before the Christian era and settled on the shores of the Gulf of Finland.

Helsinki, the capital city, was originally founded in 1550 on orders of the Swedish king Gustavus Vasa, halfway between Stockholm and St. Petersburg, and is still known to the Swedes as *Helsingfors*. Surrounded by water on three sides and fringed by islands, Helsinki grew up around a natural harbor overlooking the Gulf of Finland. A city of wide streets, squares, and parks, it was one of the world's first

planned municipalities and is noted for its 19th-century neoclassical architecture. Because the city is relatively compact, most of it can be explored on foot.

With more than 25% of Finland's people living in Helsinki, the city is not only the center of the country's government, but also the hub of its entertainment and culture. Additionally, Helsinki's opportune location in the Baltic has opened the gates to a strong eastern trade, and many goods pass through it on their way to Russia and the rest of Asia. As a result, Helsinki is fast becoming the major crossroad between Western and Eastern Europe.

Norway

Area: 125,049 square miles

Capital: Oslo

Geography: Nearly 70% of Norway is uninhabitable and covered by mountains, glaciers, moors, and rivers. It has a 1,700-mile coastline on the North Atlantic, raggedly indented with inlets, fjords, peninsulas, and islands. Because the coast is so well sheltered, and most of the country's land area is so rocky and mountainous, Norwegians have taken to the sea since prehistoric times.

Languages: Two official forms of Norwegian: Bokmal and Nynorsk

Location: The Kingdom of Norway stretches along the western edge of the Scandinavian Peninsula, bordering Sweden, Finland, and Russia to the east. It extends about 1,100 miles from the North Sea to more than 300 miles above the Arctic Circle. That makes it the farthest north of any European country.

Population (July 2012 est.): 4,707,270

Religion: Church of Norway (Lutheran) 86%, Pentecostal 1%, Roman Catholic 1%, Muslim 2%, other 10%

Time zone: Norway is 1 hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, 6 hours ahead of Eastern Time. Daylight Saving Time is in effect in Norway from the end of March until the end of September.

Holidays:

01/01	New Year's Day
04/17	Maundy Thursday
04/18	Good Friday
04/20	Easter Day
04/21	Easter Monday
05/01	Labor Day
05/17	Constitution Day
05/29	Ascension Day
06/08	Whit Sunday
06/09	Whit Monday
12/25	Christmas Day
12/26	St. Stephen's Day

A LONG AND NARROW COUNTRY, stretching for some 1,100 miles north and south but rarely more than 60 miles east to west, Norway is a land of raw nature. It occupies the western and extreme northern portion of the Scandinavia peninsula, bordering Finland, Sweden, and Russia to the east. In the west, its 13,000 miles of coastline confront the often turbulent North Atlantic Ocean. Scattered beyond the coast are some 50,000 islands, which help to protect the mainland from fierce ocean storms.

Environmentally, Norway is one of nature's last great frontiers in Europe—70% of its land is covered with mountains, glaciers, and lakes. Less than 4% of its territory is arable (mostly in the south-central area). Within Norway's Jotunheimen range are the highest mountain peaks in Europe north of the Alps. The fjords of Norway, perhaps the country's most distinguishing landscape feature, were created

thousands of years ago when the ocean flowed into glacial valleys. Complementing these ice passages are Norway's 17,000 glaciers. Norway's northerly position on the globe has earned it the title "Land of the Midnight Sun." In summer, towns in northern Norway, such as Tromsø, experience 24 hours of sunlight, followed by 24 hours of darkness in winter. Even in southern Norway the summer days are long and the winter nights may last more than 17 hours.

There's plenty of breathing room for everybody: when you factor in the Arctic desolation of the north, Norway averages about 20 people per square mile. Most of Norway's four million inhabitants are concentrated in the south, where the weather is less severe. Even so, the population of Oslo is less than half a million. Aside from Oslo, there are no really big cities; the population of Bergen and Trondheim is 221,717 and 142,927 respectively.

Norway is a constitutional monarchy. Although without political power, Norway's royal family enjoys the unwavering support of their subjects. The real power is in the Storting, or Parliament. Almost 90% of the population belongs to the Lutheran church, of which the king is the titular head.

The city of Oslo was founded in the mid 11th century by a Viking king and became the capital around 1300 under Haakon V. In the course of its history, the city burned down several times, and was completely destroyed by fire in 1624. However, the master builder, Christian IV, king of Denmark and Norway, ordered the town rebuilt near the Akershus Castle. He named the new town Christiania, after himself, and that was its official name until 1924, when the city reverted back to its former name of Oslo.

Russia—Optional Extension

Area: 6,592,800 square miles

Capital: Moscow

Government: Constitutional republic

Languages: Russian, others

Location: The Russian Federation is the largest republic of the Commonwealth of Independent States. It occupies most of eastern Europe and north Asia, and stretches from the Baltic Sea in the west to the Pacific Ocean in the east. Directly north of it is the Arctic Ocean. Elsewhere, Russia is bordered by Norway and Finland in the northwest; Estonia, Latvia, Belarus, and Ukraine in the west; Georgia and Azerbaijan in the southwest; and Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and China along the southern border.

Population (July 2012 est.): 142,517,670

Religions: Russian Orthodox, Muslim, others

Time zone: St. Petersburg is 8 hours ahead of U.S. Eastern Time

Holidays:

01/01	New Year's Day
01/07	Orthodox Christmas Day
02/23	Defender of the Fatherland Day
02/24	Defender of the Fatherland Day observed
03/08	International Women's Day
03/11	Public Holiday
05/01	Labor Day
05/09	Victory Day
06/12	Russia Day
11/04	Unity Day

THE LARGEST OF THE FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS, the Russian Federation occupies 6,592,800 square miles in both Europe and Asia; it has a population of almost 147 million and is made up of more than 40 nationalities.

The huge territory is divided by the Urals into two main areas: European Russia and Siberia. The former occupies the lesser half of the Republic's territory but the majority of its population lives here. To the east, the European half is bordered by the Ural mountains; to the southwest is the "second Baku," the oil fields between the Volga and the Ural rivers, lying north of the border with Kazakhstan; southwest again are the Caspian plains, the wheat-growing expanse of Krasnodar and Stavropol, and the Black Sea Riviera as far as Sochi. To the west, it is bordered by the iron ore deposits on the edge of the Ukraine, the district of Kursk, the forests of Bryansk, and further north by Belarus, Latvia, Estonia, and the Baltic (in the Gulf of Finland).

St. Petersburg was founded a little more than 300 years ago in 1703 and for most of its history was known as St. Petersburg. Russianized as Petrograd from 1914 till 1924, it was then renamed Leningrad, and ceased to be the capital. In September 1991, the Parliament of the Russian Federated Republic approved a referendum that had been taken earlier in the year and granted the residents of Leningrad the right to officially change the name of the city back to St. Petersburg. The city is a glorious maritime city, built on the shores of the Baltic, on the mainland, and on the islands.

Sweden (Optional Extension)

Area: 173,800 square miles

Capital: Stockholm.

Government: Constitutional monarchy

Geography: The countryside of Sweden slopes eastward and southward from the Kjolen Mountains along the Norwegian border, where the peak elevation is Kebnekaise at 6,965 feet in Lapland. In the north are mountains and many lakes. To the south and east are central lowlands and south of them are fertile areas of forest, valley, and plain. Along Sweden's rocky coast, chopped up by bays and inlets, are many islands, the largest of which are Gotland and Oland.

Languages: Swedish

Location: Sweden is situated on the Scandinavian Peninsula, between Norway and Finland. The north of Sweden falls within the Arctic Circle.

Population (2011 estimate): 9,088,728

Religion: Lutheran 87%, other (includes Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Baptist, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, and none) 13%

Time zones: Sweden is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, six hours ahead of Eastern Time.

Holidays:

01/01	New Year's Day
01/06	Epiphany
04/18	Good Friday
04/20	Easter
04/21	Easter Monday
05/01	Labor Day
05/29	Ascension Day
06/06	National day
06/08	Whit Sunday
06/21	Midsummer Day

11/01	All Saint's Day
12/25	Christmas Day
12/26	St. Stephen's Day

SWEDEN, COMPRISED OF 173,800 SQUARE MILES OF LUSH FORESTS AND MORE THAN 100,000 LAKES, is a land where the urbane and the untamed are said to live harmoniously. It stretches about 990 miles from north to south, with a disproportionate amount of territory lying above the Arctic Circle. From top to bottom, Sweden lies at roughly the same latitude as Alaska. Forests cover more than half the land. The nation can be divided into three main regions: the mountainous northern zone of *Norrland*; *Svealand*, the lake-filled, hilly region of central Sweden; and *Gotaland*, the broad plateau in southern Sweden, home of most of the country's agricultural enterprises.

Sweden's expansive seacoast is more than 1,550 miles long. The west is bounded by the Kattegat and the Skagerrak, and the east by the Gulf of Bothnia and the Baltic Sea. Numerous small islands and reefs dot the eastern and southwestern coasts. If all the inlets and islands were included, the coastline of Sweden would measure 4,650 miles. Oland and Gotland, Sweden's largest, most populated islands, are situated in the Baltic Sea off the eastern coast. There's ample space for all of Sweden's residents—it has a density of only 48 people per square mile. About 85% of Sweden's citizens live in the southern half of the country. The north is populated by Sweden's two chief minority groups: the Sami (Lapp), and the Finnish-speaking people of the northeast. Presiding over the Swedes is a constitutional monarchy supported by a parliamentary government. The royal family functions primarily in a ceremonial capacity. The actual ruling body is a one-chamber parliament, whose members are popularly elected for four-year terms.

Although the capital city of Stockholm was founded more than seven centuries ago, it did not become the official capital of Sweden until the mid-17th century. Today it's the capital of a modern welfare state. The medieval walls of the Old Town (*Gamla Stan*) no longer remain, but the winding streets have been preserved. You will encounter a glorious city of bridges and islands, towers and steeples, cobblestone squares and broad boulevards, Renaissance splendor and steel-and-glass skyscrapers.

Denmark (Optional Extension)

Area: 16,833 square miles

Capital: Copenhagen

Government: Constitutional monarchy

Geography: Denmark is the smallest of the Scandinavian countries (it's about half the size of Maine). The country occupies the Jutland peninsula, a lowland area, where the highest elevation is only 565 feet above sea level. But that doesn't mean that the country is entirely flat. Most of its terrain consists of folds, undulations, small, often steep hills, and long, low rises. There are also forests, rivers, lakes, and beaches, many of which are excellent for swimming, though the water may be too cold for some people.

Languages: Danish, Faeroese, Greenlandic (an Inuit dialect), and a small German-speaking minority

Location: Denmark consists of the peninsula of Jutland and a group of islands at the entrance to the Baltic Sea, between Sweden and Germany. The two largest islands are Sjaelland, site of Copenhagen, and Fyn. Denmark also has two self-governing dependencies—Greenland and the Faeroe Islands.

Population (2012 estimate): 5,543,453

Religion: Evangelical Lutheran 95%, Protestant and Roman Catholic 3%, Muslim 2%

Time zone: Denmark is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, six hours ahead of Eastern Time. Daylight Saving Time is in effect in Denmark from the end of March until the end of September.

Holidays:

01/01	New Year's Day
04/17	Maundy Thursday
04/18	Good Friday
04/20	Easter Day
04/21	Easter Monday
05/16	Prayer Day
05/29	Ascension Day
06/08	Whit Sunday
06/09	Whit Monday
12/25	Christmas Day
12/26	2nd Christmas Day

DENMARK HAS BEEN CALLED A BRIDGE SINCE IT LINKS NORTHERN EUROPE WITH THE SCANDINAVIAN PENINSULA. The smallest of the Scandinavian countries, it has a total land mass of some 16,833 miles, most of which is located on the peninsula of Jylland (bordering Germany). Made mostly of islands, Denmark has more than 4,500 miles of irregular coastline; Zealand, Funen, and Bornholm are its major islands.

Denmark has adequate space for its millions of people, but its population density is much greater than that of the other Scandinavian countries. Only about 3.5% of Denmark's population are immigrants, primarily from other Nordic or European nations. A very large percentage (well over 90%) of all Danes belong to the Danish Lutheran Church. There is also a small percentage of Catholics and Muslims, and about 6,500 Jews make Denmark their home. Denmark is a heavily industrialized nation, known for its manufactured products as well as its arts and crafts. However, it also boasts a quarter of a million farmers.

Technically Denmark is a parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy. Its territories include the Faroe Islands (an autonomous area under the Danish Crown) and Greenland (which was granted autonomy in 1985). The sovereign is Queen Margrethe II, who ascended the throne in 1972; her husband is a Frenchman, Prince Henrik. Margrethe is the first woman sovereign in Denmark in six centuries. Real power is vested in the unicameral parliament (the Folketing), which is elected every four years by all citizens over the age of 23. The royal family functions primarily in a ceremonial capacity.

Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, derived its name from the word *kobenhavn*, meaning "merchants' harbor." It grew in size and importance because of its position on the Oresund (The Sound), the body of water between Denmark and Sweden, which guards the entrance to the Baltic. From its humble beginnings, Copenhagen has become the largest city in Scandinavia, home to nearly 1½ million people. It is the oldest kingdom in the world.

12. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Books, Maps, and Movies

If your local store or library doesn't stock the books or movies below, the Internet offers a wide variety of options for finding older or rare stock – try AbeBooks (abebooks.com), Alibris (alibris.com), Amazon (amazon.com) or Barnes & Noble (bn.com) — or any of the smaller websites. Of course, this selection is not meant to be comprehensive, and is offered as a starting point for your research.

The Cherry Blossom Corpse by Robert Barnard (Mystery)

During a conference in Norway of romance writers, the reigning queen of "bodice busters" is murdered.

Growth of the Soil by Knut Hamsun (Fiction)

Winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1920, this book captures the indomitable human spirit of Norway's early settlers.

A History of Scandinavia by T. K. Derry (History)

Chronicles the history of each of the Scandinavian countries.

A History of the Vikings by Gwyn Jones (History)

Before their defeat at Hastings in 1066, the Vikings' sphere of influence extended from Constantinople to America. Gwyn Jones brings their civilization alive in this portrait of the Viking adventures, based on surviving documents and archaeological finds. With black and white illustrations.

A Doll's House, Ghosts, An Enemy of the People, and The Wild Duck by Henrik Ibsen (Plays)

Realistic social plays in which Ibsen rebelled against sterile and restrictive social conventions. He displayed a strong emphasis on symbolism and blended an introspective realism with folk poetry.

Slayride by Dick Francis (Mystery)

A best-selling mystery set in Oslo.

A Year in Lapland: Guest of the Reindeer Herders by Hugh Beach (Culture)

An American anthropologist's account of a year spent living with the Sami (Lapps) and learning in depth about their way of life. Though set among the Tuorpon Saami in the Jokkmokk District of northern Sweden, this detailed picture of Sami culture says much about the ways of these people across all their homeland in northern Norway, Sweden, and Finland.

Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russia by James H. Billington (History)

"A rich and readable introduction to the whole sweep of Russian cultural and intellectual history from Kevan times to the post-Khrushchev era." –Library Journal

A Traveler's History of Russia by Peter Neville (History)

Neville manages to condense Russia's highly eventful history into one volume that's both readable and lively.

A History of Scandinavia by T. K. Derry (History)

Chronicles the history of each of the Scandinavian countries.

Travels by Hans Christian Andersen (Travel Writing)

A collection of travel expositions on various Scandinavian cities and places, written by Denmark's famous poet, novelist, and writer of fairy tales.

On Tycho's Island: Tycho Brahe and his Assistants, 1570-1601 by John Robert Christianson

Chiefly famed as an astronomer, this book offers a fuller vision of Tycho Brahe as Renaissance man and scientist. From his private island in Denmark, Brahe assembled and manipulated the artists, nobility and the intelligentsia of the age to create breakthroughs in astronomy, science and research. The book includes illuminating thumbnail biographies of Brahe's coworkers and clients.

Iceland's Bell by Halldor Laxness (Fiction)

Nobel Laureate Halldor Laxness reinvents the traditional Icelandic saga and injects it with a modern sensibility and a satirical undercurrent that speaks to our age. The plot pits an impoverished Danish colony – Iceland in the 17th century – against the grand historical workings of Danish and Icelandic history. Three interconnected stories reveal the political and personal conflicts of the day in historical context.

Smilla's Sense of Snow by Peter Hoeg (Mystery)

A mystery that has achieved literary acclaim. It has become mandatory reading for many Scandinavian Studies programs at universities, and was the basis for the 1996 Oscar-nominated movie.

Winter's Tales and **Seven Gothic Tales** by Isak Dinesen (stories)

Perhaps best known for *Out of Africa*, her memoir of 20 years running and living on a coffee plantation in Africa, Karen Blixen also wrote short tales based in her homeland, Denmark. *Winter's Tales* and *Seven Gothic Tales* are generally considered the high water marks of her shorter works – though *Babette's Feast* (as a film, see that section below) in *Anecdotes of Destiny*.

Guidebooks:

Your Program Director will be happy to provide recommendations and suggestions during the trip, so a guidebook is not a necessity. But a good one can be invaluable as a one-stop reference, so for those travelers who have asked for suggestions, we offer these guidelines. Since different guidebook series each have their own target audience and structure, it is well worth your time to browse your local library or bookstore to find the one(s) you like best. To get you started, here is some general information on the most popular series:

Culture Smart! – Focuses on local customs and etiquette instead of sights, dining, etc.

DK Eyewitness – Innovative visuals make these books easy to use and a nice souvenir once the trip is over. The focus is primarily on the sights and activities.

Fodor's – A classic guidebook with strong information on activities, shopping, and dining. Good mix of upscale recommendations and budget suggestions.

Frommer's – A comprehensive guide series that is known for its restaurant recommendations.

Insight – Offers more information on history and culture than usual, nice visuals, good maps.

Lonely Planet – Practical guides geared towards a more adventurous traveler on a budget.

National Geographic – From the same company that publishes the magazine. Excellent photographs, good information on history, nature, and culture.

Rough Guides – For the independent traveler on a budget. Particularly known for their maps.

Maps:

Most hotels will provide maps free of charge at the reception desk or in your room. These maps are usually sufficient for our travelers, but if you plan on any independent exploration, you may wish to consider purchasing a map before your departure. This can be especially useful in a country that doesn't use the Roman alphabet as the hotel maps may only be printed in the local language.

Some recommended map series include: Rand McNally international maps (especially the StreetWise series), Insight's FlexiMaps, and Rough Guide's destination maps. We suggest that you visit your local bookstore or library to get a better sense of which type of map is best for your needs before making a purchase.

Suggested Movies

Here are few of our favorite movies that are about, or set in, or from the region you'll be traveling. Most are available at movie rental stores and websites—or even your public library. Sometimes films produced outside of the US may be hard to find, but they are usually available online. Lists are highly subjective – if your favorites are missing, start a chat with fellow travelers and you'll likely find even more treasured movies to share.

Norway

Edvard Munch (Peter Watkins, 1974) Starring Berit Rytter Hasle, Nils-Egar Pettersen

Peter Watkins' experimental biography of Norwegian artist Edvard Munch traces Munch's life between 1884 and 1894, from Christiania (modern Oslo) to Berlin and his relationships with August Strindberg. Watkins' uses sound, montage, close ups and a dark color palette to emulate Munch's stylistic approach to his art.

Kissed by Winter (Sara Johnsen, 2005) Starring Gran Ragnerstam, Kristoffer Joner

Set in Norway's snowy wilds, a woman runs from her difficult past and discovers love again. After a horrible accident, the guilt-stricken Victoria leaves her husband and flees to the country. She becomes entangled in an unusual murder investigation, and is pulled into the life of the main suspect.

Song of Norway (Andrew L. Stone, 1970) Starring Florence Henderson , Toralv Maurstad

This 1970 film adaptation of the operetta of the same name depicts the early struggles of composer Edvard Grieg and his attempts to develop an authentic Norwegian national music. Not of the highest artistic merit, but interesting for the Norwegian scenery, soundtrack, and if you're in the mood for some kitsch.

Kristin Lavransdatter (Liv Ullmann, 1995) Starring Linus Aaberg, Gisken Armand

An epic love story set in 14th century Norway. The beautiful Kristin is beset by envy, attempted rape, and murder and takes herself to a convent to await her arranged marriage in peace. She meets a young knight and falls in love creating family flames, a political crisis, and finally a bittersweet ending. Liv Ullman directs this adaptation of Sigrid Undset's Nobel Prize winning novel.

Kitchen Stories (Bent Hamer, 2005) Starring Tomas Norström, Joachim Calmeyer

The Home Research Institute sends observers out to rural Norway to study the kitchen routines of single men. Under strict orders to be detached and scientific, things go awry when the cranky farmer decides to amuse himself by impeding the researcher's task. The kitchen quickly becomes the scene of a sly battle of wits.

Finland

The Winter War (Pekka Parikka, 1989) Starring Taneli Mäkelä, Vesa Vierikko

A chronicle of the resistance of a platoon of Ostrobothnian Finns, when Russia attacked Finland in November of '39. Parikka based it on a novel by Antti Tuuri, and co-wrote the script. The Finns fought hard against overwhelming odds, with meager supplies, and the movie faithfully presents their action in the forbidding snowy landscape.

The Unknown Soldier (Edvin Laine, 1955) Starring Kosti Klemelä, Heikki Savolainen,

An adaptation of Väinö Linna's novel this is a story about the Continuation War between Finland and the Soviet Union, told from the view of ordinary Finnish soldiers. Gritty and realistic, the film has no single star—it begins and ends with an ironic play on the narrator's omniscience, and its focus is on the soldier's varied responses to their experiences. One of Finland's most popular films, there is a 1985 version that is updated technically, but holds fast to the revered text.

Steam of Life (Joonas Berghäll/Mika Hotakainen, 2010; Documentary) Starring Timo Aalto, Pekka Ahonen

This film travels around Finland finding men in different saunas willing to share their stories about love, death, birth, and friendship — about life. The steam reveals the men's souls in an intimate and poetic journey to the film's emotional end.

The Man Without a Past (Aki Kaurismäki, 2002) Starring Markku Peltola, Kati Outinen

The second part of Aki Kaurismäki's "Finland" trilogy, the film follows a man who awakens after a brutal mugging with no memory. A poor family nurses him to health and a Salvation Army worker gets him a job. He builds a new self, despite a society that is unable to deal with his lack of established identity and history. The film quietly evolves into funny portrait of the possibilities of life.

Elina: As If I Wasn't There (Klaus Härö, 2002) Starring: Natalie Minnevik, Bibi Andersson

In rural Sweden of the early 1950s, Elina returns to school again after an illness. From a Finnish-speaking minority, Elina has conflicts with her teacher—who is biased against her. Elina finds consolation wandering on the dangerous marshlands while speaking with her dead father.

Pelikaanimies (Liisa Helminen, 2004) Starring: Kari Ketonen, Roni Haarakangas

A pelican becomes a gawky young man who learns to speak, thanks to his talent for imitation. He befriends two children who--unlike adults--see that their new neighbor 'Mr Berd' is not a man but a bird in a suit. The Pelican Man lands a job at the opera and falls in love. When adults discover the truth, trouble starts in this unusual and charming film.

Sweden

My Life as a Dog (Lasse Hallström, 1987) Starring Anton Glanzelius, Stig Engström

The story of Ingemar, a 12-year-old Swedish boy sent to live with his childless aunt and uncle in a country village when his mother falls ill, resulting in a Swedish look at the adult world through a child's eyes. A lovely, sometimes intense coming of age story with rural Sweden as backdrop.

Smiles of a Summer Night (Ingmar Bergman, 1957) Starring Ulla Jacobsson, Eva Dahlbeck

Ingmar Bergman's idea of a bedroom farce brought him international stardom. A melancholy comedy the film depicts the romantic entanglements of three 19th-century couples during a weekend at a country estate. It's also pure Bergman: sharp, serious, thoughtful, and sobering, though there's an undercurrent of humor that Bergman is not particularly known for. Other top Bergman films include *Wild Strawberries* and *The Seventh Seal* – and many more.

Denmark

Babette's Feast (Gabriel Axel, 1988) Starring Stéphane Audran, Birgitte Federspiel

Set on the rugged coast of 19th century Denmark, this film is from a short story by Isak Dinesen. Two beautiful daughters grow up with a devout clergyman/father, who preaches salvation through self-denial. Even after his death the sisters, deep in the habit of denial, continue his teachings and practices. Their inflexible belief is cast into chaos with the arrival of a French refugee, Babette. She cooks and cleans for them, and tempts them into pleasure with the suspect delights of a gourmet French meal. The film won the 1987 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

The Danish Solution (Cantor, Kjaerulff; 2003)

Filmmakers Karen Cantor and Camilla Kjaerulff, with Garrison Keillor narrating, reveal how the citizens of Denmark protected their Jewish population against Hitler's attempt to impose export his final solution into Denmark.



Grand Circle Community & Useful Websites

If you have access to the Internet, the following sites offer a wealth of information:

Visit the Grand Circle Community website for a world of travel news and information:

www.gct.com/community

Government websites:

International health information: CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

www.cdc.gov/travel

U.S. Customs & Border Protection: traveler information

www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel

Transportation Security Administration (TSA): agency responsible for screening luggage in U.S.

www.tsa.gov/public

National Passport Information Center (NPIC): for passport information

www.travel.state.gov

General travel information websites:

Travel books

www.amazon.com

www.barnesandnoble.com

World weather

www.intellicast.com

www.weather.com

Foreign languages for travelers: basic terms in more than 80 languages

www.travlang.com/languages

Travel tips: packing light, choosing luggage, etc.

www.travelite.org

Net café guide: 100s of locations around the globe

www.cybercafes.com

Electric current and plug types

www.kropla.com/electric2.htm

Foreign exchange rates

www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM locators

www.mastercard.com/atm for **Cirrus** ATMs

www.visa.com/pd/atm for **PLUS** ATMs

Country information:

www.visitfinland.com **Finland**

www.norway.org **Norway**

www.goscandinavia.com **Scandinavia**

www.russia-travel.com **Russia**

www-koi.travel.spb.ru **St. Petersburg**

www.visitoslo.com **Oslo**

www.visitsweden.com/sweden-us/ **Sweden**

www.dt.dk **Denmark**

Hurtigruten, Norwegian Coastal Voyages ships:

www.hurtigruten.com (select "The Fleet" and then the ship name)



Tourist Board Addresses

Tourist offices in the U.S. and abroad offer FREE brochures, maps, and pamphlets with information that pertains to many of your destinations. If these materials would enhance your vacation planning, you can write or call the following tourist board offices:

Finnish Tourist Board

P.O. Box 4649, Grand Central Station

New York NY 10163-4649

Toll-free phone: 1-800-FIN-INFO (1-800-346-4636) to request brochures only

Telephone: 1-212-885-9700

Fax: 1-212-885-9739

Norwegian Tourist Board

655 Third Ave.

New York, NY 10022

Telephone: 1-212-885-9700

Fax: 1-212-885-9710

Russian National Tourist Office

224 West 30th Street, Suite 701

New York, NY 10001

Telephone (toll-free): 1-877-221-7120

Fax: 1-212-575-3431

Embassy of Sweden

2900 K Street, N.W.

Washington, DC 20007

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