

**SHOPPING FACILITIES** Shopping hours are from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday thru Friday, closing at 2:00 pm on Saturdays. There may be one or two souvenir shops open on Sundays, but in general, most shops will be closed.

Value added Tax (VAT), is added to most purchases. Visitors who spend over a certain amount (min. Nok 310 – in one shop) may be entitled to re-claim some or all of the tax paid. In Scandinavia many stores participate in “Tax Free Shopping”. Ask for a “Tax Free” receipt, this is usually reimbursed before departing the country although Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.® cannot guarantee the cooperation of local authorities. Items must remain sealed or unused whilst in Norway, in order to qualify for tax refund.

**LOCAL CURRENCY** The unit of currency in Norway is the Krone (NOK). There are 100 ore to the Krone. Krone bills are available in the following denominations: 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1,000.

U.S. Dollars are not accepted in Norway.

Most major credit cards are widely accepted.

**POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE FACILITIES** The main Post Office is located close to the quay in Ålesund.

Local coins are required to use public telephones. it is possible to dial-direct for international calls ('00'). You can also place calls with your personal calling card using the following access codes (coins may be required):

AT&T: 800-19-011 / MCI: 800-19-912 /  
SPRINT: 800-19-877

**TOURIST INFORMATION** There is a Tourist Information center close to the quay at Keiser Wilhelms Gate 11, N 6003 Ålesund.

**TRANSPORTATION** Taxis are in limited supply on the pier. Taxis generally operate by meter or can be hired by the hour.

## USEFUL WORDS

Yes • Ja  
No • Nei  
Good Day • God Dag  
Good Bye • Ha Det  
Thank-you • Tak  
You're Welcome • Versagod

## NOTES

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**GENERAL INFORMATION** Ålesund is located on the northwest coast of Norway midway between Bergen and Trondheim. Situated at the mouth of the Stor fjord, Ålesund is one of the most important fishing harbors in Norway. With a population of approximately 40,000 people, the city is built upon 3 islands connected by a network of bridges. Overlooking the city is Mount Aksla offering magnificent views of the picturesque harbor and fjords.

A devastating fire in 1904 almost completely destroyed the downtown area. After an intensive rebuilding program, the town was totally rebuilt. Ålesund is now considered one of the most attractive and unique of all the fishing towns in Norway.

Some distance inland, near the ferry port and resort town of Stranda, the channel divides with a natural flow to the right, ending at the ferry port of Hellsylt, and the flow to the left being Geiranger Fjord. The natural beauty of the fjords inspired Henrik Ibsen to write his drama, "Brand".



# PORT EXPLORER & SHOPPING GUIDE

# Ålesund

**HISTORY** Ålesund dates from the 9th century when a powerful leader of a band of Vikings, Rollo the Ganger, built a castle near the mouth of the fjord. A fishing village grew up near the castle and eventually received township status in 1848. In 1904 a devastating fire broke out in the center of town. Approximately 850 homes and buildings were completely destroyed and as many as 10,000 residents were left homeless in mid-winter. Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, who often vacationed in Ålesund, led a rebuilding effort that married the Art Nouveau style with Nordic traditional styles. Much of the design was done by foreign educated architects who added their own special touches. The blending of styles helped to create the distinctive look of modern Ålesund.

The 1950s saw a boom in the shipping and fishing industries and the city flourished. Modern Ålesund has developed into the region's commercial and industrial center. Fishing is still an important part of the local economy with tourism contributing more and more as visitors flock to the city for its charm and natural beauty.



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## PLACES OF INTEREST

**Ålesund** has an international reputation for its maritime tradition and distinctive Art Nouveau architecture. The colorful and charming town center has a myriad of turrets, spires and medieval ornaments.

**Mount Aksla** offers bird's eye views of Ålesund and surrounding countryside. From the heart of town, 418 steps lead up to the lookout point on Mount Aksla which offers splendid views of town center, the fjords and the jagged Sunnmore mountains. At the mountain lodge "Fjellstua" you can refresh yourself with coffee, cakes and light snacks before the hike down.

**The Art Nouveau Centre** located in town center documents the tragic fire of 1904 and the consequent rebuilding of Ålesund in the Art Nouveau style.

### Beyond Ålesund

**Sunnmore Museum** is an open-air museum concentrating on Norwegian coastal culture. There are over 50 well-preserved old buildings representing various architectural styles and lifestyles of Norway. The boat collection is extensive and includes the old Sunnmore boats, considered to be the most seaworthy vessels on the Norwegian coast.

**Atlantic Sea Park** is one of the largest aquariums in Northern Europe and the largest in Scandinavia. The Sea Park is unique in that it is built into the coastal landscape and adapted to modern exhibition principles. Large landscape aquariums teem with ocean life from the Atlantic offering guests insights into the multitude of life beneath the waves.

**Alnes Lighthouse** located on Godøy Island has been lit since 1876 and is now preserved by the national authorities and fully restored. Set in beautiful surroundings, the lighthouse and attendant's house now houses exhibitions and a small café and craft shop.

**Giske Marble Church** located on Giske Island dates back to 1135. Built as a family chapel for one of Norway's most powerful families, the interior of the church was restored in 1756 and has a beautiful carved and painted alter and pulpit.

**Stordal Church** or "The Rose Church" is a unique medieval structure with interior rose paintings and fresco decorations.

**Geiranger Fjord** stretches some 10 miles inland, fed by numerous gushing waterfalls including; the Seven Sisters, the Suitor and the Bridal Veil. The sheer magnificence of the surroundings dwarf even the largest of cruise vessels.

**Geiranger Church** is situated approximately a mile up the main road, above the landing area. This quaint little wooden church is built in an octagonal shape and offers lovely views of the cruise ships and the surrounding countryside.

**Trollstigen** is one of Norway's most popular attractions. this natural phenomenon rises from the valley floor to dramatic heights. The Trollstigroad – Path of the Trolls – winds its way to the top with 11 hairpin turns that zigzag across the face of the mountain. The lookout at the top offers stunning panoramic views of the valley below.

**Troll Wall** is a vertical overhanging wall of rock rising to a height of 3,000 feet. Troll Wall is the highest vertical mountain wall in Europe and is known for having some of the most difficult climbing routes along with cliff diving with parachutes.

**Dalsnibba** provides the view that made Geiranger and the fjords of Norway famous. About 6 miles from Geiranger, up the valley by way of a zig-zagging road with as many as 36 bends, visitors may feast their eyes upon the most magnificent of vistas. It is quite likely that the roads closer to the summit of Dalsnibba, whose peak reaches almost 5,000 feet above sea level, can be lined by walls of snow up to 20 feet high, even in mid-July. The roads here are closed between October and May.

- Admission charges are generally in local currency.
- When going ashore, guests are advised to take with them only the items they need and to secure any valuables.

**SHORE EXCURSIONS** To make the most of your visit to Ålesund and its surrounding areas we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing, consult your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Excursion Desk.

**LOCAL CUSTOMS Bargaining:** There is little or no opportunity to bargain in Norway.

**Tipping:** Service charges are included in restaurant pricing. It is appropriate to tip 10% for good service. Taxi fares are usually rounded up to the nearest 5 or 10 NOK.

**Local Cuisine:** Like other Scandinavian countries, the "Koldtbord" (Cold Table) or Buffet style meal is popular, emphasis being placed on fish, particularly Salmon which is a national favorite. "Fair I kal" is one of the more traditional dishes, a stew of lamb and cabbage; kjottkaker (meatcakes) are also quite common, served with sauerkraut, flavored with caraway. Reindeer appears on many menus, particularly further north, similar to beef, but richer, slightly sweet flavored meat. The Norwegians are partial to wild berries, either as an accompaniment to meat or as a dessert. Two varieties native to Norway are Lingonberries, similar to cranberries, and Cloudberries, like orange colored raspberries, they are a little crunchy and have a sharper taste.

**Drink Specialties:** The Norwegians drink a lot of coffee. Although alcohol is very expensive in Norway, the favorite tippie is the local brand of Aquavit, a potato based liqueur, common throughout Scandinavia, usually served ice cold and drunk as a shot.