

Pat Arrowsmith 2009 Norwegian Fjords with Fred Olsen on Balmoral

Norwegian Glaciers and waterfalls cruise on board Fred Olsen's Balmoral.

The National Geographic World Traveller magazine once described the Norwegian Fjords as "the best unspoiled destination in the World". Having been fortunate to cruise to this spectacular destination last July, I can see why.

Embarking on a ship in Dover, or Southampton, is probably the most stress free, civilised start to any holiday. Having passed over your luggage on arrival at the port there is plenty of space in the cruise terminal to have some refreshments before being called on board where a member of the crew is waiting to show you to your cabin. These vary enormously in size but even the smallest cabins are adequate and perfectly formed!



Certain destinations, I believe, are well worth spoiling yourself for by paying extra for an outside, or if possible a balcony cabin and this is certainly one of them. There is nothing more relaxing than sitting on your own little private piece of deck, with a drink in your hand, sailing through some of the most beautiful scenery imaginable. If you choose to travel in June or July it stays light until 1 am making it truly the land of the midnight sun.

Bergen with its cobbled streets, sidewalk cafes and busy waterfront lined by shops and bars, is best seen from the top of the funicular on the slopes Mount Floyen.

This

proved to be the perfect introduction to Norway. The cost of shore excursions can easily mount up but Bergen is very accessible independently.

Our next port of call was Olden, a typically Norwegian town of chocolate box houses with grass roofs located at the end of Nordfjord and forms the backdrop for the Briksdaal glacier, the largest in Europe. Sailing out of Olden was amazing as each twist and turn of the ship took you through the most serene and beautiful scenery imaginable, which must be seen from the observation lounge.



Flam is situated in the innermost arm of the Sognefjord and at over 200kms, is the longest in the World.

The incredible 20 kilometre run of the railway here rattling through tunnels, crossing deep ravines, passing roaring waterfalls and mist shrouded mountains is legendary and a must on anyone's itinerary.



Our last port was Eidfjord. A new destination which sits along the mighty Hardangerfjord, the second largest in Norway and only disturbed by coastal steamers, private yachts and the occasional Cruise ship! No excursions were available here but we took the local Dotto train to see the pretty village and a boat trip to view the stunning scenery from a different angle and proved to be the perfect place to end our cruise to this beautiful part of the World.