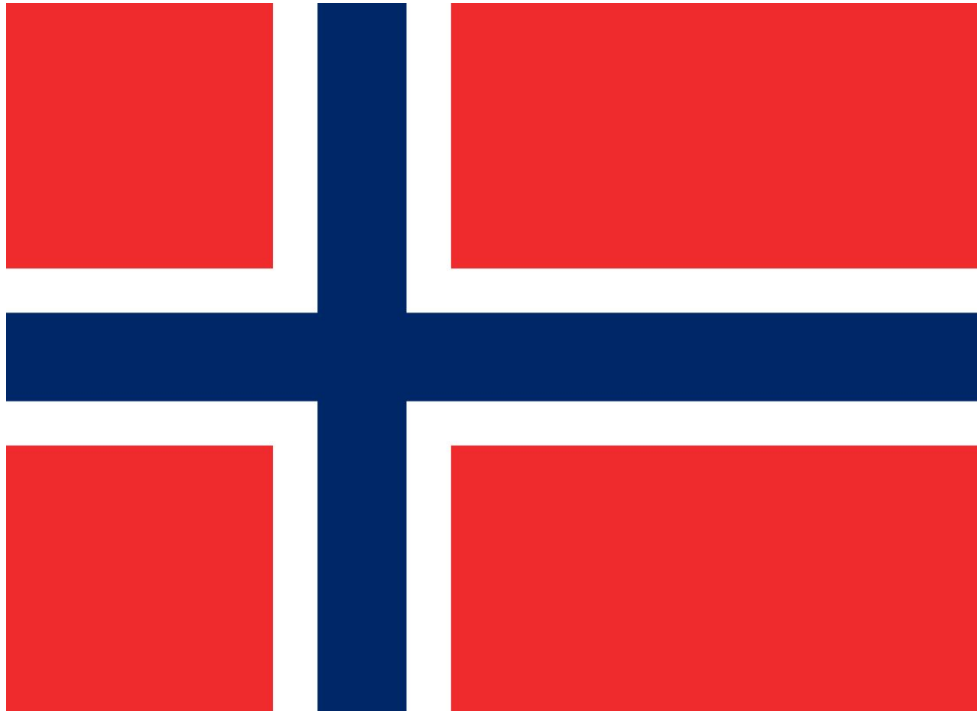


# Kingdom of Norway



A land known for its majestic fjords and soaring peaks, Norway stretches along the western edge of the Scandinavian Peninsula from the North Sea in the south to the Arctic Ocean in the north. More than five million Norwegians call this land home. Despite its peripheral location and sparse population, Norway and its people have had a disproportional impact on the history of Europe and the greater outside world. Norway's fjords provided excellent bases for the famous Vikings. These ambitious medieval raiders and explorers sailed to and past the edges of the known world at the time, with expeditions reaching as far as North America and the Middle East.

Norway was a dependent state of its sister Scandinavian powers for a good portion of the past millennium, falling first under Danish rule in 1397 and later under Swedish control in 1814. Norway only gained independence after a referendum in 1905. The country declared neutrality during both the First and the Second World Wars, but like much of the rest of Europe, it was invaded and occupied by the Third Reich. Following the war, Norway abandoned its neutral position by joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949.

The 1969 discovery of petroleum off the coast in the North Sea forever changed the Norwegian economy; the oil and gas industry today accounts for around 25% of Norway's GDP. Through its export of oil and gas, Norway has amassed the largest sovereign wealth fund in the world. The country's healthy economy, combined with the social benefits of universal health care and a superior education system (ranked #12 in the world by U.S. News), allow Norwegians to enjoy a high quality of life. Indeed, Norway was recently ranked as the happiest country in the world in the World Happiness Report of 2017. Though a member of the Schengen and European Economic Zones, Norway is not a member of the European Union, having opted out of the EU in a 1994 referendum.

## Geography

**Official name:** Kingdom of Norway

**Conventional Short Form:** Norway

**Region:** Europe

**Area:** 323,802 sq km

**Bordering Countries:** Sweden, Finland, Russia

**Physical features:** Norway has a diverse terrain. Extensive fjords and numerous islands are found along its 25,148 meters of coastline. Most of Norway is mountainous, as the massive Scandinavian Mountain range makes up its spine. The highest point in Norway is at the 2,469 m summit of Galdhopiggen.

**Climate:** While a temperate, rainy climate exists on the west coast, the country's northern and interior regions are much colder, exhibiting subarctic, tundra, and polar climates. Snow can be found year-round in the mountain regions. Norway is the home to many glaciers.

**Natural Hazards:** Rockslides, avalanches

## People and Society

**Population:** 5,265,158 (121st in the world)

**Ethnic Groups:** Norwegian and Sami (94.4%), other European (3.6%), Other (2%)

**Official Language:** Bokmal Norwegian, Nynorsk Norwegian

**Other Languages Spoken:** Finnish and Sami

**Religions:** Church of Norway/Evangelical Lutheran (82.1%), other Christian (3.9%), Roman Catholic (1.8%), Muslim (2.3%), unspecified (7.5%)

**Capital city:** Oslo

**Other major cities:** Bergen, Stavanger, Trondheim

**Median Age** (*half the people are younger than this age and half are older*)

Male: 38.4

Female: 40

Total population: 39.1 (2016 est.)

**Literacy Rate** (*percentage of the population 15 and older who can read and write*)

Male: 100%

Female: 100%

Total population: 100%

**Life Expectancy at Birth** (*average number of years to be lived by those born in the same year*)

Male: 79.8

Female: 83.9

Total population: 81.8 (2016 est.)

### **Political Geography**

**Country Founded:** May 17, 1814 (independence from Denmark)

**Type of Government:** Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy

#### **Country Leaders**

Chief of State: King Harald V

Prime Minister: Erna Solberg

**Allies:** NATO countries

**Enemies:** Taliban, Al Qaeda (contributor to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan)

### **Economic Geography**

**Currency:** Norwegian kroner

**GDP:** \$376.3 billion (2016 est.)

**Natural Resources:** Natural gas, petroleum, seafood, wood products, minerals, hydropower

**Unemployment Rate:** 4.4% (2016 est.)

**Population Below Poverty Line:** N/A

#### **Major export and imports**

Exports: petroleum and petroleum products, machinery and equipment, metals, chemicals, ships, fish

Imports: Machinery and equipment, chemicals, metals, foodstuffs

#### **Biggest trading partners**

Exports: United Kingdom, Germany, Netherlands, France, Sweden, Belgium, United States

Imports: Sweden, Germany, China, United Kingdom, United States, Denmark

More information can be found at:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/no.html>