

Skandinavia

Kimberley og Peter i Europa 2011



July 22

As we were leaving Norway, we were sad to hear of the events in Oslo and on Utøya Island on Friday, July 22. We saw a nation in shock and in mourning.

Despite the jovial nature of this slideshow (much of it was written prior to the attacks) we offer our deepest sympathies to those who lost loved ones.



Scandinavia

Hurdy-gurdy, hurdy-gurdy, hurdy-gurdy.

(Picture the Muppets' Swedish chef saying it)

A place of many ups and downs..... literally.

The place that drove us out two weeks early because we couldn't bear it a moment longer.

Scandinavia.

DENMARK

Denmark, hmmm.....

Ummmmm.....

Where do you go when you only
have one day in Denmark?



OK, so the weather wasn't exactly friendly and Peter couldn't justify the ticket price, so it was only one of us. But at least this "big kid" had fun.





Soon we were on the ferry and off to Norway.

After a nice ride, things took a sour turn....

NORWAY

So much promise, so much potential.

But a few things combined to make it, on balance, simply not worth the trouble of being there. We cut our original Norway plan of 22 days down to just 9, and once we had made the decision we just couldn't get across the border fast enough.

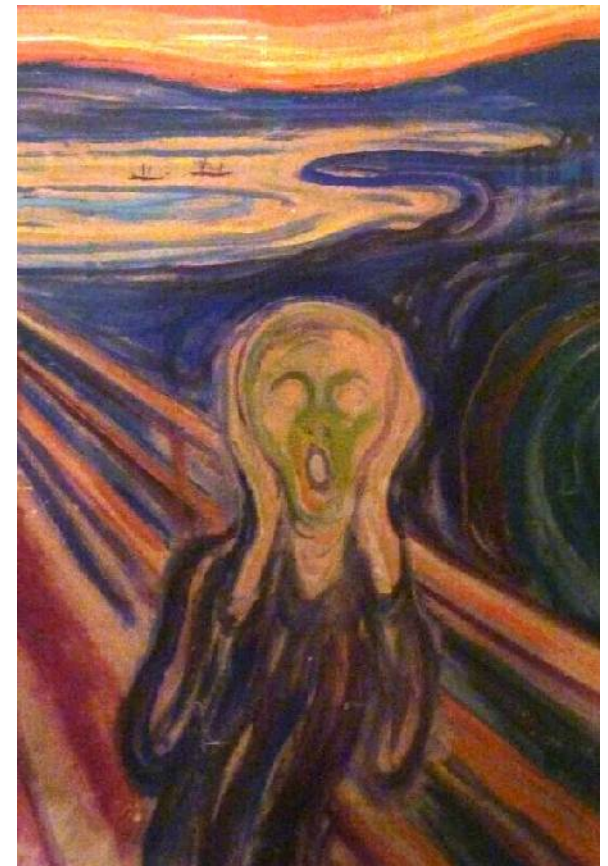
So why did we leave so suddenly?

Because Norway is.....

Norway is.....expensive

Are we just tight? Maybe. But Norway is tough on a budget. (some are things we paid and some we just went without!)

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| HOTEL SUPER-SPECIAL (rare) | \$150 |
| MOST MID-RANGE HOTEL ROOMS | \$200+ |
| TENT SITE (camping) | \$30-40+ |
| CABIN OR GROTTY "MOTEL" (hostel) | \$50-100+ |
| PAY EXTRA FOR SHOWER (per minute) | \$0.30 |
| PUBLIC TOILET | \$1.60 |
| SUBWAY 6-INCH SUB | \$10 |
| MAKE IT A 12-INCH | \$15 |
| HAMBURGER AND CHIPS | \$20 |
| SANDWICH IN CAFE | \$20 |
| PAY EXTRA TO SIT DOWN | \$2-3 |
| GLASS OF COKE | \$5 |
| CANNED SPAG/SOUP IN S/MARKET | \$4 |
| PARKERING IN CITY (per hour) | \$5 |
| ROAD TOLL | \$5 |
| UNLEADED FUEL (per litre) | \$2.50 |



Honestly, I'd scream too!

Norway is.....cold

I mean *really* cold. Yeah, it's Summer there and the gulf stream helps etc etc, but the latitude is the equivalent of being 2,500 km SOUTH of Melbourne!



Glaciers can be seen from our tent.



When Peter fell sick we bunkered down here in this tiny cabin.

Norway is.....frustrating

When you can't afford the hotels and you aren't eating proper food, the cold keeps you from sleeping too.

That's when the effects really start to add up.



Norway is.....full of Norwegians

Nationalities in Europe are identifiable by the language people speak, or by the small flag on their car number plate. And whether we were on the hiking trails or on the road, it was the locals who were the bullies.

Here multiple cars are overtaking on a narrow **TWO-WAY** mountain road, around a blind corner just before the entrance to a tunnel!!



NORWAY

So when you're freezing, hungry, and sick of being rained on, the roads are life-threatening, you haven't slept in days and the locals don't want you there,

WHY FIGHT IT?

We packed up and pissed off to Sweden 2 weeks early.

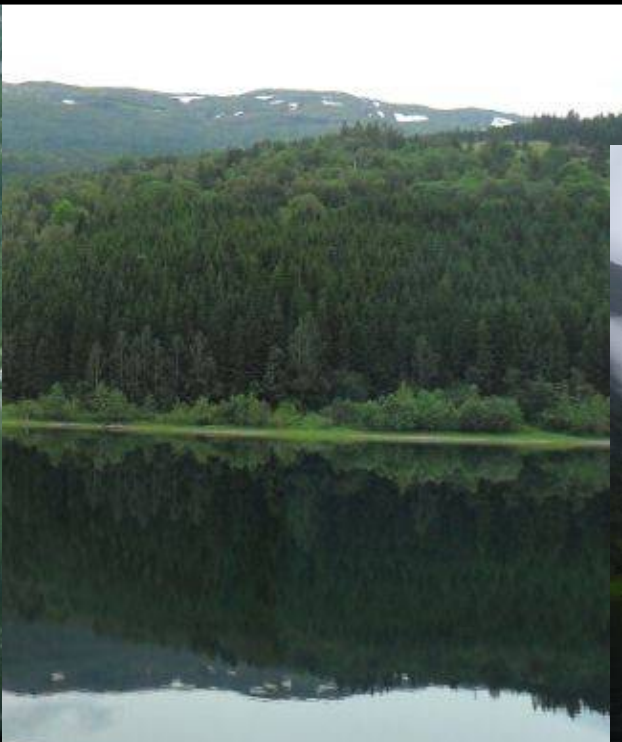
But, you're thinking, there must be SOME reason to go to Norway, surely. Well, that's true.

People go to Norway to do this:





.....and to see all this stuff.





And, despite all the negatives, we occasionally managed to have fun.



SWEDEN



10 hours on the road later
and we were in sunny
Sweden.

We had to rummage in the
bottom of our bags to find
our sunglasses!



In addition to the
sunshine, we:

rediscovered food,

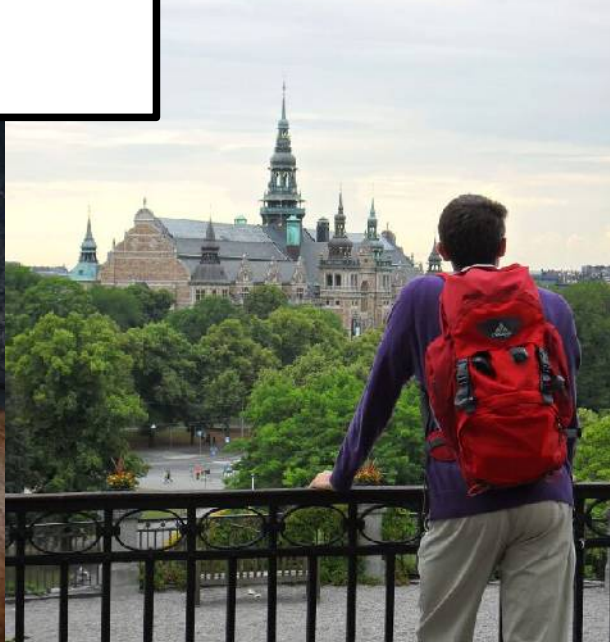
found roads wide
enough to drive on,

saw classic
Swedish icons....





and thought we were finally getting the Nordic experience we'd been looking for.



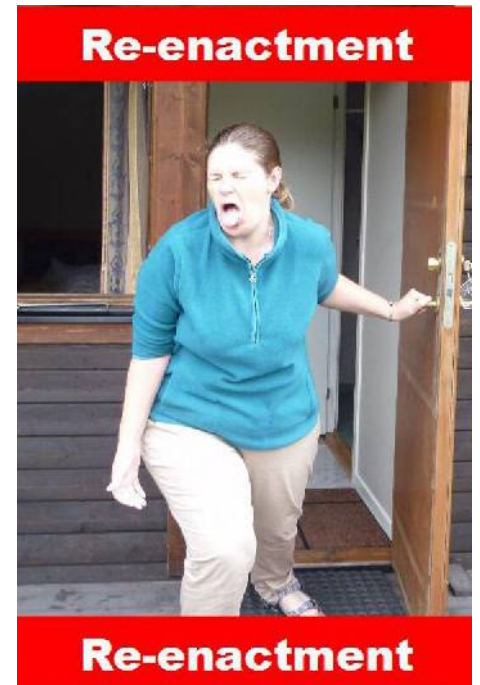


Little did we know
our Scandinavian
adventure had one
more surprise in store.

Three days before we left Scandinavia for good, we had a very rude awakening in this little bungalow.



Around 3am we awoke to a horrible chemical smell in the room, so bad that it stung our eyes, choked our throats and made us run out into the night gasping for fresh air.





The culprit

It turned out the little fridge in our room had packed it in, and was leaking caustic ammonia gas into the air.

The solution

With all bungalows occupied and no reception staff available, what else could we do but pitch our tent, grateful we woke up at all!



(Our landlord was very surprised to find an unexpected tent in his front yard in the morning.)

Scandinavia

So how to sum up our experience of Scandinavia?

Denmark bored us so much,
we resorted to theme parks.

Norway left us hungry and cold.

And **Sweden** tried to kill us in our sleep.

Forget it. We're going back to the mainland.



Ha det, Skandinavia!