

An aerial photograph of a Norwegian landscape. In the foreground, there are lush green trees. Below them, a large, vibrant red barn stands in a green field. To the left, a white house with a red roof is visible. The middle ground is dominated by vast, golden-yellow fields, likely harvested wheat or corn. In the background, a town with colorful houses is situated on a peninsula or near a large body of water, possibly a fjord. The sky is overcast and hazy, creating a soft, atmospheric light.

TRONDHEIM TREKS

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While visiting Trondheim, Norway last summer, Roxie, my wife, and I took a couple side trips – one by train to the historic mining town and the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Røros south of the city, and one to the north by car to the Inderøy peninsula in Nord-Trøndelag, along the route known as Den Gyldne Omvei, the Golden Route.



Rail travel in Norway is for the most part spectacularly scenic, and the two-hour ride to Røros was no exception. Towering mountains, river-laden valleys, and stretches of treeless plateaus zipped by before we pulled into the Røros station.

A guide met us, and after a short walk we found ourselves in the midst of wonderfully preserved old wooden houses, many of which looked as if they were built at the time the town was founded in 1646. They lined a street named for the founder and first manager of the Røros Copper Works, Lorentz Lossius, and climbed up small hills with narrow alleys. We were told they numbered about one hundred, and were added to the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1980. I especially noticed a multitude of grass-covered roofs, one lusher than the other.

The tour ended at the Røros Church, one of Norway's largest, with a seating capacity of 1,640, and known as "the mountain cathedral," or Bergstadens ziir (the mining town's beauty). Coincidentally, at the time of our arrival a small crowd had gathered outside the main entrance.



Moments later, two newlyweds stepped out. Cheers and picture taking followed.

Next we had lunch at nearby Kaffestuggu, an intimate little restaurant with white lace curtains, flowerpots in the windows and kerosene lamps dangling from the ceiling. The food, accordingly, was traditional Norwegian: char, boiled potatoes, a creamy sauce with a touch of vinegar, and, as an accompaniment, a bottle of local micro beer. Talking to one of its chefs, we learned that you cannot own a summer home in Røros; you must be a full-time resident. It has a population of 3,000 and there's a town gate known as the Pippi Longstocking Gate, after it starred in a couple of Astrid Lindgren's movie classics.

After lunch we went by taxi to the Røros Museum, 13 kilometers outside town. There, two mines, no longer operational, have been connected and serve as major parts of the museum. While I walked through an exhibition called "Mining the Round," highlighting various aspects of Røros Copper Works and its 300-year history, Roxie more adventurously joined a one-hour walking

tour of the mines, which took her on a journey 500 meters into the mountain and 50 meters below the surface. Requirements: hardhat, warm jacket and sturdy shoes. "It was quite chilly," she said, "but very beautiful, with amazing light and sound effects. It would have made a great movie set."

Our one-day visit also included dinner at Vertshuset Røros. There, in an historic building in the heart of Røros World Heritage site, we started with an appetizer plate of reindeer sausage, cured ham, some excellent local cheese, homemade bread and small cup of lingonber-

(Previous pages) Inderøy Landscape. (Left) Røros and map illustration by Roxie Munro. (Above) Appetizer at Vertshuset Røros. (Next page left) Blue cheese with portersyltede rosiner. (Next page right) Jørn, in charge of the brewery at Klostergården.



ries – all very tasty and easily digested with a glass of Gentil Hugel from Riquiewihr, Alsace. Next came a filet of veal with mashed potatoes and mushrooms, served with an apple butter sauce. Dessert was milk pudding with marinated strawberries. Pleasurably satiated with food and sites, we were ready to jump on the train back to Trondheim.

Delicious.

We had just bitten into a graham cracker laden with pungent blue cheese and portersyltete rosiner, a house specialty – jam consisting of porter-infused raisins. I noted the mixture of salt and sugar, and thought the combination was somewhat of a Scandinavian predilection.

On our second excursion, to den Gyldene Omvei, the Golden Route (literally the Golden Detour), we stopped at Klostergården, a farm located on the small island of Tautra in the middle of the Trondheimsfjord. The island, which can be reached by a one-and-a-half mile causeway, was once the site of a Cistercian monastery from the year

1207, the ruins of which are now a popular attraction for visitors from around the world. Tautra is also known for its birdwatching opportunities, and, not least, Klostergården.

Like some farms we visited during the next couple days, this is a place where you can dine and stay overnight, and which produces and sells locally-made products. In 1994, the owner started growing herbs, fruits and other plants in the style of the long-gone monks.

Portersyltete rosiner apart, Klostergården offered shelves filled – or should I say jam-packed with jams, to which had been added little signs with arrows pointing out the staff’s favorites. Presumably, the monks brewed beer, and so does Klostergården, offering eight different beers on tap as well as three stronger ones in kegs. We met with the owner’s son, Jørn, whose voluptuous blonde beard, in Roxie’s opinion, made him look like a “Viking guy.” In charge of the brewery, he showed us tanks, formerly used to store milk. A tasting followed. I especially recall a rather spicy, Belgian-inspired Saison.

In Inderøy we stayed two nights at Saga, an old sawmill,



SAGA

HOTELL GALLERI WORKSHOPS



which was converted into a photography center a few years ago. It's called NORDphotography and combines a small hotel, a gallery and periodic workshops. From the founder, Elisabeth Nordeng Aanes, who proved a charming hostess, we learned a little about the year's workshop calendar. A tribute to the American photographer Deborah Turbeville called "Studio St. Petersburg" had recently closed; still to come was Bobbie Lane's "ABCs of Lighting" and "Personal Portraits" by Joyce Tenneson, followed by a class in "Making Pro Photo Books." The more Elisabeth told us about the place, the more it struck us as vibrant, modern and involved with cutting-edge art.

On top of Trondheim Fjord

A short drive from Saga took us to Øyna Restaurant and its magnificent view of the Trondheimsfjord and Inderøy peninsula: gentle slopes, fertile fields and clusters of trees and small villages. A most propitious setting.

The restaurant, built to resemble a Viking longhouse, not unexpectedly prides itself on serving local dishes

with products from the Øyna farm and other nearby farms. Our meal commenced with "Øyna plank," a piece of wood heaped with morsels such as cured dried pork with cumin, smoked salmon with leek and red onion, two small salads, cheeses and a little bowl of homemade mayonnaise with mustard and garlic. Almost a meal in itself, it was followed by a luscious pumpkin soup with mussels. Then came poached salmon, and finally a chocolate brownie.

It was late evening but daylight still prevailed. A small group of dinner guests, seated at one of the outdoor tables, was having after-dinner coffee. Below stretched the fjord and next to it in the distance rose the white tower of the medieval Sakshaug Church.

More culinary adventures awaited us the next morning. First there was Gulburet, an old farm with a little café and shop filled with locally produced food, especially bread – lots of it, delicious and homemade.

On top of a hill, we later found Berg Gård, a farm considered one of the highlights of Den Gyldne Omvei. I met the owner, Svein Berfjord, who took me around the prop-



erty. I admired its old-style general store and heard about the butchery, Norway's first authorized farm slaughterhouse for small animals. Among other things, this means great care is taken so no unnecessary stress is inflicted on the animals in their final hour. It also means sheep and pigs can roam freely and enjoy happy lives. As if to confirm this, a content-looking sheep peered at me from behind an old-fashioned wood fence. Back inside, Svein proudly showed me his new, gleaming aquavit machine, soon to be put into action.

(Previous pages) Saga, an old sawmill converted into a photography center. (Left page) Øyna Restaurant and its magnificent view of the Trondheimsfjord and Inderøy peninsula. (Above) "Øyna plank" at Øyna Restaurant. (Left) Sheep at Berg Gård, a farm considered one of the highlights of Den Gyldne Omvei.

Later in the day we visited Gangstad Gårdsysteri, yet another old farm selling food products. If Gulburet had been mostly about bread, Gangstad Gårdsysteri was all about cheese and ice cream – some award-winning and all made from the farm’s fresh cow milk. Much emphasis is given to spending as much time as it takes to make a superior product. “There are no shortcuts,” to quote Astrid Aasen, who, with her husband, Perry Føyasdal, runs the place. Nibbling on some of the cheese, I concurred.

For lunch we went to Mosvik Brygga, an 18th century harbor and trading post with a restaurant and pub. Sitting on the deck outside, enjoying some local seafood, we felt as if we were right in the middle of the fjord. It was bright and sunny, forming a striking contrast to the inside, which was rather dark and murky with aged wood beams and a reindeer head mounted on one of the walls.

We also visited the old harbor of Kjeknesågen, a village on the northwestern shore of Inderøy, where, amongst more contemporary vessels, a 19th century ship named Pauline lay anchored. Apparently, every July there’s a boat festival here with concerts and lots of guests arriving by boat.

Rödbrygga Restaurant, where we had dinner on our last evening in Norway, was just a short walk from Saga. Like Mosvik Brygga, it was housed in a rustic old building from the 1800s and featured a large outdoor terrace. So there we sat, imbibing biffsnadder, shredded beef tenderloin with béarnaise sauce, overlooking once again the clear waters of the Trondheimsfjord.

What a satisfying experience den Gyldne Omvei had been. I was reminded of something I read on Gangstad’s website: “Det beste i livet finner den som tar en omvei.” The best in life is found by the one who takes a detour. ■■

(Right) Homemade bread at Gulburet, an old farm with a little café and shop filled with locally produced food.

