Oslo Fact Sheet

History

The founding of Oslo took place in the turbulent period between the Viking Age and Norway’s Catholic Middle Ages. Many remnants and ruins from ancient Oslo can be found in Memorial Park. The city has a fascinating, interesting, and dramatic history.

Oslo’s population was substantially reduced during the time of the Black Death in 1348, which claimed over fifty percent of the inhabitants. This epidemic also had political consequences for Norway, which was reduced to a province of Denmark. During this period, Copenhagen was the actual capital of Norway. Oslo was also greatly affected by the Lutheran Protestant Reformation of 1537, with religious conflicts, political separation from the Catholic Church, and the foundation of a Protestant National Church. Many ruins of churches and monasteries bear witness to this process.

Oslo was completely destroyed by fire in 1624. Following intense renewal and advanced city planning in the spirit of the Renaissance, a completely new city was created and named Christiania. In 1814 Norway was united with Sweden, and Christiania experienced strong economic and political growth. In 1905 the union with Sweden was dissolved and Norway gained its independence. The original name of Oslo was reinstated in 1924.

Population

Oslo is the capital of Norway and has more than 500,000 inhabitants. Approximately 900,000 people live in the Greater Oslo area, representing twenty percent of the total population of Norway.

Commerce and Industry

The working population of Oslo distributed according to occupation includes: industry, 16%; building and construction, 6%; transport, 9%; trade, services, and tourism, 69%.

Climate

Oslo’s climate is temperate in the autumn and warm in spring and summer. Snow falls three to five months in the winter. Skiing conditions are good in the hills around Oslo between December and April. From May to July, the weather can be quite warm with long periods of sunshine. Drought can also occur from time to time. Statistically speaking, Oslo is Scandinavia’s sunniest capital.

Holiday, Sport, and Leisure

Oslo is surrounded by forest and fjord. Preserving the fjord and the area surrounding the city for leisure and outdoor pursuits is an important part of Oslo’s political tradition. Some of the major sports events in Oslo include the Grete Waitz Race, Holmenkollen Relay, Oslo Marathon, and the Holmenkollen Ski Festival. Oslo includes over 2,000 kilometers of prepared ski trails for cross-country skiing and a number of ski lifts for alpine skiing.

Sightseeing Tours

Tour 1: Mini Cruise

Fifty-minute cruise that departs on the hour

Tour 2: Fjord Cruise

Two-hour cruise that departs on the half hour

Tour 3: Fjord Cruise with Dinner

Two-hour cruise followed by dinner at Restaurant Lanternen

Tour 4: Selected Oslo Sightseeing

Three-hour tour of Vigeland Sculpture Park, the Holmenkollen Ski Jump, the Viking Ships, and the Kon-Tiki Raft

All tours by boat and coach depart from Pier 3 in front of the Oslo City Hall.