

Fire and Ice, Glaciers and Farming

Scandinavia & Iceland Farm Study Tour 2021

Date	Activity	Overnight
DAY 1 Wed, Jul 7	Tour leader: Lloyd O'Connell 0428 724 615 The tour departs various Australian capitals for Copenhagen. There is the option to leave a day or two earlier to break this long journey with a stopover on the way or to arrive in Copenhagen ahead of the main group.	On plane
DAY 2 Thu, Jul 8 (B,L)	On arrival in Copenhagen, we are met by our local guide and transferred to our city centre hotel. After a well-earned freshen-up we have a welcome lunch and then a chance to stretch our legs with a walk around some nearby sights.	DENMARK Copenhagen
DAY 3 Fri, Jul 9 (B,L)	The Danish capital regularly tops world 'liveability' lists. This is a vibrant, modern city whose fascinating past co-exists with the very latest trends in architecture, design and fashion. And it's one of the globe's greenest, cleanest and most sustainable urban centres with a beautiful and squeaky clean harbour. Urban planners over the centuries have maintained a compact and accessible design making it an easy place to explore. We enjoy a guided city tour including the Queen's Palace of Christiansborg, the Rosenborg Palace, the Amalienborg Palace and of course, the famous Little Mermaid sculpture. After lunch, there's free time this afternoon for your own sightseeing, shopping or relaxation. Free evening in Copenhagen.	Copenhagen
DAY 4 Sat, Jul 10 (B,L,D)	We leave Copenhagen this morning and travel southwest through the beautiful farmlands of the Island of Zealand – the biggest of Denmark's 400 plus islands and one of the three main islands that link together forming the Danish landmass. Our destination this afternoon is Skaelskor, a small town on Zealand's west coast. Historically Skaelskor was an important harbour for maritime traffic between Zealand and Fyn. Today the town is home to one of Denmark's largest breweries – Harboe. Barley and other crops grow very well in this corner of Zealand. We visit a farm – with an Australian connection – near Skaelskor before dinner and overnight in this quaint port town.	Skaelskor

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DAY 5 Sun, Jul 11 (B,L,D)	<p>This morning we cross The Great Belt Bridge linking the islands of Zealand and Fyn. The bridge consists of several structures – a road suspension bridge; a railway tunnel; and, a box girder bridge for both road and rail traffic.</p> <p>We continue onto the 450 years old Egeskov Castle and farming estate in its beautiful location in southern Fyn.</p> <p>Egeskov is famous for being the best preserved moat castle in Europe. For the past 130 years the Estate has been a model of agricultural innovation including the building of its own power station and railway track to nearby Kværndrup to deliver its produce. Innovations such as these over many years has formed the economic basis for the large, modern farm that Egeskov is to this day.</p> <p>In 1967, the Veteran Car Museum was opened in the Castle grounds. Over the years, the museum has been extended to include several of the surrounding farm buildings and now showcases an amazing collection of vintage cars, motor bikes, aircraft and farm machinery – doesn't every farm have these little extras?</p> <p>Then we're off to the historic city of Odense – the birthplace and home of Hans Christian Andersen. This evening we enjoy a brief 'fairy tale' walking tour of the city centre.</p>	Odense
DAY 6 Mon, Jul 12 (B,L,D)	<p>We travel westwards this morning and cross onto the Island of Fyn and the Yutland Peninsula. Yutland has some of Denmark's best farming country. We travel north up the Peninsula and visit the farm of Borglum Kloster. Privately owned by the Rottboell family, this 436 hectare farming operation happens to have an 800+ year-old, 85 room abbey as its 'homestead'.</p> <p>Crops grown include wheat, barley, oats, canola and grass seed. Old Danish species of Emmer wheat and spelt are also grown.</p> <p>After lunch and our visit to Borglum Kloster, we continue further north to the tip of Yutland and the port town of Hirtshals for overnight.</p>	Hirtshals
DAY 7 Tues, Jul 13 (B,D)	<p>At 9.00 am we board our vehicle ferry for a 4-hour crossing of the Skagerrak, the strait connecting the North and Baltic Seas. This waterway contains some of the busiest shipping routes in the world.</p> <p>At a little after 1 pm we disembark in Norway at the town of Langesund. We re-board our bus and travel north along the Oslo fjord and onto the nation's capital, Oslo. This is a beautiful city with extensive waterways and around 1.6 million inhabitants.</p> <p>While in Oslo we will visit sights such as the magnificent Frogner Park where the world-famous Vigelandsparken is situated. The park contains amazing fountains and sculptures created by Gustav Vigeland who worked on the sculpture park from 1924 until his death in 1943. This is a 'must-see' for all visitors to Oslo.</p> <p>We will also visit the world-famous Viking Ships, the Polar exploration ship Fram (the 'strongest ship in the world') and the Holmenkollen Ski Jump with a panoramic view over the city and fjord.</p>	NORWAY Oslo
DAY 8 Wed, Jul 14 (B)	<p>More guided sightseeing this morning in Oslo before a free afternoon and evening to do your own exploration of this wonderful city.</p>	Oslo
DAY 9 Thurs, Jul 15 (B,L,D)	<p>We head north this morning to the Hamar region on the eastern shores of Lake Mjøsa, Norway's largest lake. The landscape is dominated by rolling agricultural areas – this is considered some of the most fertile land in Norway.</p> <p>On the outskirts of town we call in on an arable/livestock farm and meet with the local farmers.</p> <p>We then continue north travelling through Lillehammer – site of the 1994 Winter Olympics – and through idyllic river valley villages with their elaborately carved wooden stave churches. We overnight in the village of Otta, one of the gateways to the magnificent fjordlands.</p>	Otta

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DAY 10 Fri, Jul 16 (B,L,D)	<p>We travel along parts of the “Old King’s Road” today through valleys encircled by up to 1800 metre high mountains and dotted with small farms producing fodder for their sheep and other livestock. We travel through the Valley of Gudbrandsdalen and onto Grotli. We then have an unforgettable descent (not forgetting the stunning views) down ‘the wild mountain’ to the village of Geiranger spectacularly located at the head of Geirangerfjord.</p>	Geiranger
DAY 11 Sat, Jul 17 (B,D)	<p>This morning we have an unforgettable ferry cruise along Geirangerfjord – a jewel among the world’s fjords – to the village of Hellesylt. Wild and dramatic, Geirangerfjord cuts inland between snow-clad peaks, precipitous rock walls and cascading waterfalls.</p> <p>After disembarking at Hellesylt we continue onto the spectacular farming village of Fjærland which is also home to the Norwegian Glacier Museum. We will visit the museum and learn how flowing ice has sculpted the local landscape, the fjords and the mountains. There is also a fantastic multi-screen presentation on the Jostedalbreen glacier.</p> <p>We continue onto the town of Laerdal. If we arrive before closing time, we can visit the excellent wild salmon centre before dinner and overnight at the family owned and run Lindstroem hotel.</p>	Laerdal
Day 12 Sun, Jul 18 (B,D)	<p>Our bus takes us through the world’s longest road tunnel (25 km) this morning to nearby Flam where we jump on board for one of the world’s great train journeys – the Flam Railway.</p> <p>The line twists through tunnels spiralling in and out of the mountain. This 40 km return journey takes in deep ravines, cascading waterfalls, snow-capped mountains and mountain farms clinging dizzily to sheer slopes.</p> <p>When we return to Flam we then board another ferry for yet another spectacular cruise. This time it is Nærøyfjord which is a branch of the large Sognefjord, Norway’s longest and deepest fjord which extends more than 200 km inland.</p> <p>Towering snow-capped mountains and U-shaped valleys surround large delta farming areas which result from the accumulation of sediment supplied by the glacier rivers. We cruise by thundering waterfalls and picturesque villages dotted along the fjord’s shores.</p> <p>Named one of the most beautiful fjord landscapes in the world, Nærøyfjord is on the UNESCO world heritage list. We disembark at Gudvangen and jump on our bus again for our beautiful drive into Bergen.</p>	Bergen
Day 13 Mon, Jul 19 (B,L)	<p>The historic and beautiful port city of Bergen is located on Norway’s southwest coast. The city occupies a sheltered position between a string of islands along the coast and steep sided mountains inland. With its distinctive brightly painted wooden houses and old fishing harbour, it is one of Norway’s most attractive cities.</p> <p>We enjoy a guided tour of Bergen this morning including the World Heritage listed Bryggen (the wharf area). Bergen grew up around its colourful harbour – it was the hub of commerce, seafaring and craftsmanship. The city was a member of the powerful Hanseatic League which dominated trade across northern Europe for centuries.</p> <p>Then it’s a free afternoon to do your own exploration of this fascinating and beautiful town.</p>	Bergen

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Day 14 Tues, Jul 20 (B,L)	<p>This morning we travel along a spectacular peninsula to the Oygarden Coastal Museum. Here we learn about the challenging environmental and economic conditions confronting the lives of the local coastal inhabitants dating back to the last Ice Age through to the present day.</p> <p>We also visit a nearby floating fish farm. Trout and salmon farming are major industries in Norway. Aquaculture in Norway demands millions of tonnes of feedgrain every year – and most of it is imported. We enjoy a guided tour of this commercial operation before heading to Bergen airport for our afternoon direct 2 hour flight to Reykjavik, Iceland.</p> <p>We are met at the airport and transferred to our waterside hotel in downtown Reykjavik. We have a brief introductory tour on the way to help get your bearings. We will arrive in time to do some of our own ‘daylight’ exploration of this amazing city. And we’ll have plenty of time – the sun doesn’t set until after 11 pm!</p> <p>The population of Iceland is about 350,000 people – and more than half of the inhabitants live in the capital region.</p>	ICELAND Reykjavik
Day 15 Wed, Jul 21 (B,L,D)	<p>This morning we set out on our anti-clockwise journey around the famed Icelandic Ring Road. Over the next five days we will discover some of the scenic and cultural gems of this remote island. Waterfalls, ancient Viking parliament sites, amazing geothermal activity and glaciers are just some of the highlights. We will also call in on a number of farms and meet with some of the more tenacious farmers on the planet.</p> <p>One such farm is ‘Thorvaldseyri’ operated since 1960 by Olafur Eggertsson and family. They farm grain and hay crops to support their dairy and cattle operation – and all in the shadow of the Eyjafjallajökull Volcano. Eyjafjallajökull’s eruption in 2010 shut down European air traffic for two weeks and covered the Eggertsson farm in tonnes of ash.</p> <p>We continue onto Vik in the shadow of Europe’s largest glacier, Mýrdalsjökull. We then cross Eldhraun – the largest lava flow recorded on the planet – before arriving at the village of Kirkjubaejarklaustur for overnight.</p>	Kirkjubaejarklaustur
Day 16 Thurs, Jul 22 (B,D)	<p>This morning we cross over the Skeidararsandur sands to Skaftafell. This is a beautiful glacial area where we will visit the the stunning Jokulsarlon Glacial Lagoon – the birthplace of icebergs. We will also enjoy magnificent views of mighty Vatnajökull, Europe’s largest glacier.</p> <p>We then gain altitude as the glacial landscapes give way to magnificent fjord views. We cross the Almannaskard pass offering views of the majestic coastline where towering mountains plunge vertically into the sea. We also encounter remote coastal fjord and farming villages on our way to the Breiddalsvik region, tucked between breathtaking coastal mountains and black sand beaches, for overnight.</p>	Breiddalsvik
Day 17 Fri, Jul 23 (B,D)	<p>We head north today and cross the vast emptiness of the highland desert plateau. We will stop at Dettifoss, Europe’s most powerful waterfall before continuing on through Namaskard pass with its boiling mud pools and vibrant colours. We also visit the beautiful Lake Myvatn – home to more species of ducks than any other place on Earth – and also call in on the magnificent Godafoss falls.</p> <p>Today we also visit Laufás farm and its beautifully maintained turf houses. Laufas has been a farm dating back to the 16th century. During the 19th century more than 20 people lived on the farm – this was the workforce required to harvest the many resources this remote and harsh region offered. One important resource was the down of the eider duck.</p> <p>Overnight in the peaceful rural surroundings of the Reykjadalur Valley.</p>	Reykjadalur

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Day 18 Sat, Jul 24 (B,D)	<p>We continue onto Akureyri, Iceland's 'northern capital'. This is a colourful coastal town with charming buildings and a beautiful view of the Eyjafjordur Fjord. The Norse Viking Helgi magri (The Slim) Eyvindarson originally settled the area in the 9th century mainly because of its outstanding natural harbour and the fertility of the area. It became a booming trading centre during the non-winter months. Permanent settlement at Akureyri started in 1778.</p> <p>During the mid 1800s Akureyri started to grow because of the excellent port conditions and perhaps more because of the productive agricultural region around it. We visit some town sights before continuing west to the Laugarbakki region an area renowned for Iceland's unique horses.</p>	Laugarbakki
Day 19 Sun, Jul 25 (B,L)	<p>We travel south today and cross the Holtavorduheidi plateau through the village of Borgarfjordur and onto the beautiful town of Borgarnes. As we track southwards we enter the magnificent Hvalfjordur (whale) fjord region. We visit a sheep farm, where hand-knitted woollen jumpers are a specialty, and enjoy some scenic stops on our way to Reykjavik.</p> <p>Then it's a free evening so you can explore this vibrant city and its many restaurants and nightlife options at your leisure.</p>	Reykjavik
Day 20 Mon, Jul 26 (B)	<p>We will enjoy some free time in Reykjavik before transfer to the airport for our direct flight to Amsterdam. On arrival in Amsterdam, we are met and transferred to our city centre hotel. After time to freshen-up, we have a chance to stretch our legs with a guided evening walk around some nearby sights.</p>	Amsterdam
Day 21 Tues, Jul 27 (B,D)	<p>For those interested, this morning is an opportunity to visit the Royal Flora Holland flower auction at nearby Aalsmeer. This is the largest trading centre for plants and flowers in the world.</p> <p>The Netherlands is a world-leader in intensive and precision agriculture technology and farming techniques. An astounding statistic is that the Dutch are the world's second-largest exporter of food and agricultural products in dollar terms (after the United States).</p> <p>We return to Amsterdam for a free afternoon and then a farewell dinner this evening.</p>	Amsterdam
Day 22 Wed, Jul 28 (B)	<p>Transfer to the airport today for our flight/s to Australia.</p> <p>Plenty of options available for extra time in Amsterdam or additional travel in Europe – or Asia – before heading home.</p>	