



With such ethereal surroundings, it's only natural that Norway's best cabins bring the outside in

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With some of the most impressive natural landscapes in the world and an innate outdoorsy culture, Norway is home to the most spectacular out-of-the-way cabins you can imagine. Here are six of the best...

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It's safe to assume that there isn't a person alive who doesn't find solace in a space that unquestionably evokes the Nordic concept of "hygge". Roughly translating to mean comfort and joy, hygge is something that can be found in one of the many cosy fjord-side cabins peppered across Norway's formidable landscape.

With majestic mountains and deep, narrow fjords offset by the occasional heliotrope and turquoise sky dance that is the northern lights, Norway hits the spot for those in search of a dramatic, picture-perfect experience a far cry from the fast-paced clutter of city life.

A county steeped in history and culture, Norway continues to be committed to its traditions – many rooted in navigating its harsh and craggy environment and reflected in its award-winning literature, art, music and cuisine. Its appeal – especially for the discerning modern traveller – lies in this authenticity.

As far as architecture goes, vernacular wooden structures are a feature. They paint a picture of a country reacting to its environment both ecologically and socially, from the elegantly functional log-built houses reminiscent of the sophisticated craft of Viking long-

boats and the Neoclassicism and Art Nouveau of the early 20th century, to the Functionalism and Brutalism that followed.

The charm of the modern Norwegian cabin is its combination of traditional techniques and materials reimagined in abstract glass and timber creations that loom over the surrounding terrain. Characterised by Norwegian design codes that prioritise natural light, privacy, remoteness and being at one with the outdoors, these cabins are like an oasis in the desert for the comfort-seeking vacationer while miraculously blending seamlessly into its habitat; it's as if they grew there.

The authenticity factor also means that there's pretty much something to satisfy every requirement here, from the romantic rustic charm of a traditional (yet recently restored) boutique hotel on a traditional farm to a floating tree-top retreat jutting out of an Odda hillside like a turtle emerging from its shell. There's really nothing left to do but pour a glass of honey-sweetened mead and nestle down into the inside-outside wonder that is one – or perhaps all – of these glorious Norwegian cabins.



Manshausen

Steigen

The island of Manshausen might only measure 14 acres, but it's an absolute jewel, overlooking the Grøtoyleia strait and the local village of Nordskot. The island was once an important trading post for fishermen, but now it has been turned into a mesmerisingly beautiful collection of contemporary cabins for what is a perfectly formed community of intrepid travellers. There are nine sea cabins in total, each one affording stunning views thanks to floor-to-ceiling glass walls, as well as the main house which is home to the restaurant and library. You get a front-row seat for the northern lights and can be witness to the greatest blanket of stars you're likely to see anywhere in the world (on clear nights you can see the Milky Way). The cabins are compact but perfectly formed, so much so that they have won 41 international architecture and design awards. Dining is a local affair, using produce grown on the island or caught just off it. The Steigen area is awash with hundreds of islands and islets to explore by kayak, with white sandy beaches overlooked by spectacular mountains. Not far north lies the majestic island chain of Lofoten, whose mountains bear much of the brunt of the weather, in turn protecting Manshausen from nature's force. manshausen.no



Juvet Landscape Hotel

Valldalen

Hidden among a dense forest of pines, the Juvet Landscape Hotel is a modernist marvel, situated on a farmstead in Valldalen, a stone's throw from one of the world's great drives, the Trollstigen (Troll's Path), with 11 switchbacks and a relentless 10 per cent incline. It's the brainchild of Knut Sløssing, who redeveloped a century-old barn by converting an old cow shed into a dining room and a pigsty into a kitchen. That forms the heart of the property, but what really draws you to this stunning place are the nine award-winning lodges dotted among the birch trees. With 24 beds in total, the Juvet Landscape Hotel is one of the most innovative hotel properties in the world. It consists of seven minimalist landscape rooms, two smaller Bird Houses and the four-bed Skrivarstua (Writer's Lodge). A few metres from the river, behind a large glass wall, there's a bathhouse with a steam room and hot tub. Over in the old barn building, the chef prepares a seasonal menu with produce sourced from the local area. A stay here can be as active as you want, or a life-changingly meditative experience. juvet.com



Woodnest

Odda

For anyone whose childhood dream was to live in a treehouse, the founders of Woodnest, Kjartan and Sally Aano have built the most magical floating retreat on the hillside of Norway's magnificent Hardangerfjord. The property features four luxury treehouses, each with electricity, a small kitchenette, high-speed wifi, a flushing toilet and shower, as well as under-floor heating. Designed by Norwegian architect Helen & Hard, each treehouse has been cleverly engineered so that the tree supports the majority of the weight. Inside, you'll find a cosy space that reflects the surrounding environment with the use of black alder wood. Even the exterior has been designed to look like a giant pine cone. Everything inside – from the handmade furniture to the locally sourced fur rugs – is well considered, and the views of the fjords are incredible. You only need to raise your head from the bed to be able to view water and mountains as far as the eye can see. woodnest.no

By Ryan Thompson. Photography by Nadia Norskott; xxxxxx; Patrik Johall

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29|2 Aurland

Flåm

After an epic drive south from Juvet, which takes you over Europe's highest mountain pass, you'll find 29|2 Aurland, a charming farm and guest house near Flåm in western Norway. The region has been settled since Viking times, and the landscape in which this family-run boutique hotel sits remains the same. The historic buildings on the site were restored in 2014, losing none of their romantic pastoral charm while new buildings, in keeping with traditional design, have also been added. Split across three different buildings, the hotel has eight rooms in total. The Fiskerhuset is one of the oldest buildings in Aurland, dating from the early 18th century; the beautiful Geitefjøsen (Goat Barn) is an artful combination of an 18th-century cobbled dwelling and modern architecture; while the Bestemorhuset (Grandmother's House) is from the mid-18th century. For dinner, you simply stroll over to the hotel's new restaurant, ETE, where you'll be presented with plates of immaculately crafted local produce from the kitchen gardens. There's also a lounge in the old Eldhuset (the Smokehouse) and a spa, complete with wood-burning sauna and hot tub, on the grounds. 292aurland.com



Owner's Cabin

Giske

62°Nord is a Norwegian travel company that specialises in curating once-in-a-lifetime experiences in and around the Norwegian fjords. Founded by entrepreneur Knut Flakk and his wife, Line, the business has also developed some of the country's most outstanding places to rest your head after a day's exploring. Once such property is the Owner's Cabin, where you can embark on beautiful hikes, world-class skiing, helicopter adventures, deep-sea fishing, wildlife safaris and destination dining. The Owner's Cabin is found in Staurneset, on the tiny island of Giske. The stone and white-washed wood cottage is the picture of serenity inside and out, with simple, typically Scandinavian touches. With snow-capped mountains in the distance, the island is best accessed in 62°Nord's chopper, but once you're there, you'll want to jump in a kayak and explore the islands peppering this part of the Norwegian Sea. 62.no



The Bolder

Lysefjord

Perched high above the Lysefjord among 170 hectares of pristine pine trees, unforgettable views and enormous stones deposited by the glacier when the Ice Age ran its course, you'll find The Bolder. Owner Tom Norland realised a dream when he teamed up with the architects Snøhetta and John Birger Grytdal to build the Bolder Lodges. Raised from the earth with minimal impact to nature, some of the lodges have a mirrored design, giving the roof and underside the illusion of weightlessness, while others, such as the Sky Lodges, are wrapped in Canadian cedar wood and built on a single column to minimise their footprint. Placed discreetly between the soaring pines or perched on the mountainside, the property consists of three Star Lodges, each sleeping two; Grand Lodge, which features two double bedrooms; and two Sky Lodges sleeping four each. The interiors are bespoke designs by upmarket Norwegian brands Vipp and Eikund, each discerning and tasteful. There's so much nature to explore outside, but given that you can see everything from every corner of your lodge, why ever leave? thebolder.no