

# Norway our way

(late August to mid October, 2024)







# Norway Our Way

## 1. Kristiansand to Evje

(75k, 502^m)

Somehow after a busy 6 weeks off the bike (helping Matt & Cat out) we find ourselves riding in Norway! Bizarre would best describe it. No prep so doing it now! We are here for a while so hopefully some muscle memory will kick in and we will enjoy what is mooted as a stunning riding destination. No reason to dispute that after the first day.



## 2. Evje to Rysstad

(79k, 482^m)

Second cruisey day but that's fine by us! I suspect that this place is just going to keep on giving. It's clean and green, ordered and most importantly the gravel and tarmac roads are incredible - first impressions from yesterday have been confirmed.

The hills are beginning to turn to mountains and we can only avoid these for a short time. Tomorrow it changes and we go up the back of the famous Lysebotn climb and into the same named fjord.



### 3. Rysstad to Lysebotn

(80k, 1852^m)

Today was a "beautiful grind". We set off knowing there was some elevation today but the pain that it brought was surpassed by the beauty of this place. We lucked it with the weather and it was most welcome as we just had some more jaw dropping moments. We got morning tea from a super friendly Norwegian couple who thought our bike set up was "very professional"(!). And we met up with Erik from our first day who was doing the round Norway endurance "race". We found the 3 of us around coffee and buns once more!

We found out earlier in the day that the Lysebotn climb was closed for an international roller-skiing event up it! It reminded us both of the Tour de France with helicopters, camera and support crews, and the finishing chute (which we went through but the other way). Lysebotn is quite something with its huge number of switchbacks and the 1km tunnel at the bottom.



## 4. Lysebotn to Stavanger

(85k,396^m)

Today began with the hurtibagt (fast boat) from our spectacular overnight camping spot at Lysebotn. Like much of the camp we were up early to catch the 7.15 ride out. Most of the passengers were about to or had done many of the hikes to the many locations atop the fjord. None more famous than Pulpit Rock. Dwarfed by these mountains on both sides so early in the day was quite something.

Ended up at Lauvik and had a quick bite before heading through the rich smells of farmland to Stavanger. Quite a challenge getting into the city centre ("sentrum") with directions temporary and sporadic after the weeks Lyse festival. On top of that there was plenty of infrastructure at various levels of completion to navigate.

Another ferry tomorrow morning to get us to Sauda. Could have done it this afternoon but would have got in at 10pm which we thought was not overly helpful even though sunset is at the same time.



## 5. Sauda to Odda

(85k, 1870^m)

It was a casual beginning with the 10.45 ferry to Sauda. This was the recommendation from Matthew at #cyclenorway so as to avoid some busy and uneventful roads. We arrived in Sauda early afternoon all fueled up, tyres pumped and ready to go. Just like 2 days prior this was another "beautiful grind" with some 15 and 20% climbs. But again that's all forgotten when the views are taken in. This place keeps on giving in huge amounts. We arrived in Odda after an outstanding 20km descent which was the perfect tonic coupled with the Indian dinner to finish the day. Lesson for the day; don't rely on Google maps in Norway!!

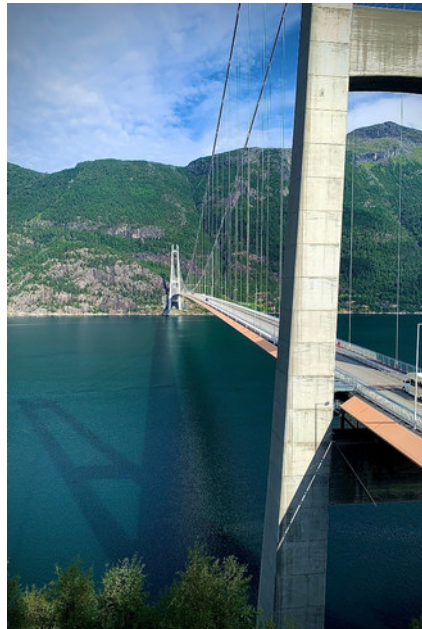




## 6.Odda to Voss

(115k, 1172^m)

It was an early start to avoid the holiday traffic down to Kinsarvik. The road at best for the majority is 1.5 lanes and on a few occasions we had to stop for opposing traffic to sort themselves out. Once over the spectacular Hardangarbrua it was very quiet on the scenic route (which I suspect means the old road with no tunnels) to Ulvik and onto Voss. The climbs were not so steep and descents sweet with next to no traffic to contend with. It's all so beautiful but the wow moment was the 1.3km Hardangar suspension bridge. A magnificent piece of engineering that goes straight into a 7km tunnel. The harbour side lunch at Ulvik was up there too.



## 7. Voss to Vikøyri

(70k, 1190^m)

One is never far from water in Norway. On previous days it's been falling from mountains and mountain streams, out of high altitude lakes and trickling from mossy rock faces as we've been riding by in the sunshine. Of course it all comes from one place and that's where it came from today. Started with raincoats on then quickly off as it looked like it was clearing through the Myrkdalen valley. It was back on as it closed in once more at altitude over the Vikafjellet with low temps and at times really poor visibility. A reality check for us both!

The descent was a ripper and had glimpses of the vista which for the most part had to use our imagination. The port side village of Vikøyri looked amazing in more ways than one as we were getting cold and hungry.

Camping was the aim tonight but Judy made the call to see if a room and hot shower was available which surprisingly it was.



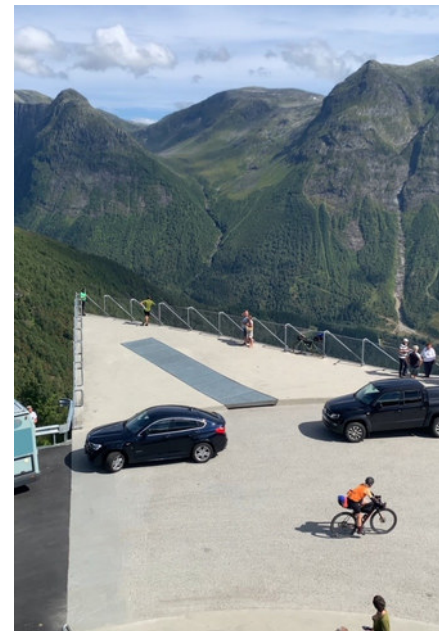
## 8. Vikøyri to Viksdalen

(79k, 1216^m)

A similar profile and metres to yesterday but today edges it. Firstly because the sun was out and we got to experience Gaularfjellet and its surrounds. The climb with its hairpins/switchbacks was outstanding complete with the view at the funky lookout.

We got to experience an electric ferry which was SO quiet - I feel this country is way ahead of most other countries in many respects. Norway has the highest market penetration of EV's in the world. Quite noticeable when cars pass us as we haven't had to deal, for the most part, with any fumes. And bizarrely we got to meet our random Norwegian friend Erik again - that was the 3rd random rendezvous!

And while at the local Spar we dealt with Judy's sidewall flat along with her rear cluster which just fell off in pieces. This was new territory for me but as chance would have it had some friendly assistance from a customer who used to be a bike mechanic.





## 9. Viksdalen to Skei

(57k, 685^m)

The challenge today was to keep Judy's rear tyre up after a side wall leak from the day before. We had spent a while the previous evening getting the goop to build up on the side of the tyre and it seemed to have worked today! After leaving our quirky accommodation it was up, up, up before belting down the other side with the sun desperately trying to break through. The day was finished pretty early with a near flat and quiet cruise around Jolstravatnet (Jolster lake). Our cabin accommodation was right on the lake overlooking the still snow capped mountains. Pretty as a picture even with the sun struggling to make an appearance.

We were constantly watching the weather and playing it as best we could but it looked like our sunny days for the moment were coming to an end. The YR weather app was our go-to and was spot-on to date. A few more "spots" were on the radar but fortunately the temps would remain up.



## 10. Skei to Stryn

(80k, 780^m)

It was out early to miss the predicted early rain and we timed it well! Got to "Bakar Jon" which was about an hour into the ride and arrived before opening time. It was eventually opened by a fellow who looked like baker Jon but it was not the real baker Jon! We sat inside and consumed our goodies while watching the rain come down which was perfect until such time to get going again. The raincoats were donned but prematurely as the sun began to make an appearance as we climbed over Utvikfjellet. Bombed down the other side and into Innvikfjorden.

We finished off the last 45k around the fjord on near flat and touristy roads. Came across another cruise ship with 6000 on board. We both hoped that's the closest we get to one of them. More tunnels encountered but mostly these are navigated around on the old road now used solely for cyclists and pedestrians - safer and more scenic than a tunnel!



## 11. Stryn to Grotli

(65k,1240^m)

It was another early start to best navigate the predicted wet weather which was once again successful. This was to be one of the toughest climbs we would be encountering on this trip and again we were rewarded with spectacular views.

It was flat to start with but from there it was 15k of up part of which was the old Stryn road called the "Gamle Strynefjellsvegen". Trying to get our tongues around the pronunciation of this was entertaining but unsuccessful.

I felt this was a good day to ride over it as it is so raw and rugged. The weather could get nasty up there more often than not. Once at the top we got some crunch under our tyres with some perfect gravel - that was nice!

As the rain began to fall we ended up at our superb accommodation in Grotli. Here for 2 nights with nothing on the agenda for the following day just relaxing after 11 straight days of riding. Contrary to what the name of this place may conjure up it was pretty swish.



## 11. Grotli to Dalsnibba

(return)

(51k,680^m)

The prospect of sun for the next few days was slim so took the opportunity to go up Dalsnibba after the mornings ride. Judy decided to stay put. Fueled by a buffet lunch after the ride from Stryn I dropped the seat and handlebar bags and set off with a lighter load.

Dalsnibba is on the way to Geiranger and branches off for a 4.5k 10% climb up to an elevation of 1500m. A grind but the views it afforded at the top across the mountains and down into Geiranger Fjord were so well worth it!

And trolls are a thing here too particularly in this area! Very much part of ancient culture and mythology. They present in various forms from difficult-to-deal-with-characters to the benevolent type. The one I met today I feel was of the latter sort.





### 13. Grotli to Valldal

(69k, 865^m)

This was one of those days that you knew you could have but did not want it to eventuate. There was no avoiding the wet weather today. After the comfort of the old Grotli Hotel we steeled ourselves for the ride. It was raincoats on for the day and in a short time got to 1000m and 3 deg. We took shelter and idolised a hot chocolate. As we sat opposite each other it looked like I was proposing to Judy as we held each others hands trying to get some blood flowing. We navigated the rain, wind, tourists and copious amounts of buses on the descent. At one point we stopped and went back up the hill for a short distance. We eventually got down to Geiranger and went straight through and began ascending as we needed to get some energy output happening to get warm. The views could have been so much better if the sun was out but thankful that we had been out and up Dalsnibba 2 days prior to see what it was really like. So memorable nonetheless!



## 15. Valldal to Trollstigen

(70k, 1086^m)

This was to be the previous days ride but the rain was hanging around. It was predicted to clear by the morning. So the best option was to get up and away by 4.30am (which is so un-European) and up the famous Trollstigen climb from Valldal. Being up so early enabled us to avoid the traffic and tourists! Perhaps we got up too early as we had it all to ourselves. But the additional bonus of getting up so early was to be back for the delicious buffet breakfast at the hotel we were staying at. It was to replenish and also fortify us for the 2nd ride of the day.

Trollstigen is closed for the whole of 2024 as major rockfalls have occurred and deemed highly dangerous. Amazing to see it regardless and imagined ourselves doing those switchbacks and over the bridge with the amazing waterfall that goes under it.



## 15. Valldal to Tresfjord

(52k, 1157^m)

This was not the preferred route today but had to take it due to the closure of the Trollstigen. All we really needed to endure were several long tunnels and a hike-a-bike section due to a rockfall - a common feature for both our rides today. But the sun was out which was the perfect tonic after the wet weather of recent days.

Storfjorden was pretty as a picture as we saw plenty of glimpses of it. Loaded up with food at the local Spar and got down to our perfect little seaside cabin.



## 16. Tresfjord to Molde

(48k, 737^m)

The main game today was to get to Molde where we would get the Coastal Express to Bodo late in the evening. Once in Molde it was decided to ride up the local high spot called Varden. Amazing views at the top of all the mountains to the east where apparently one can count over 220 named peaks.





## 19. Moskenes to Stamsund

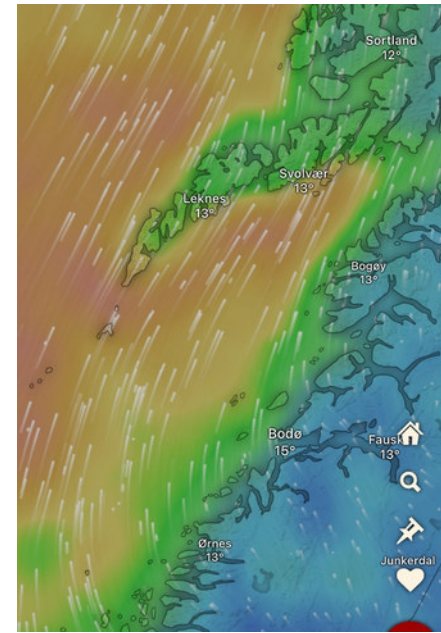
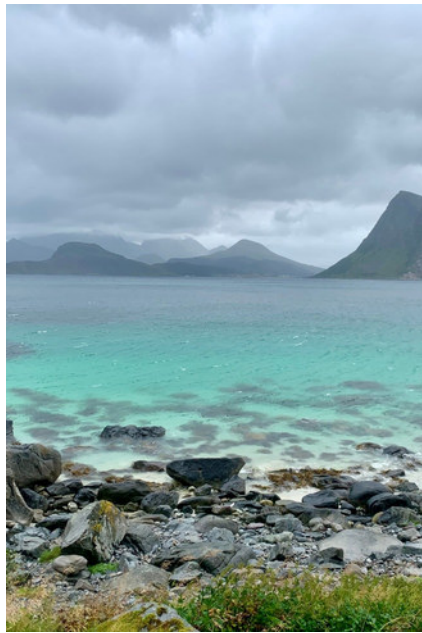
(104k, 1027^m)

After 2 days of boats it was so good to get back out riding again albeit into wet weather. This was the Lofoten Islands where the weather changes at the flick of a switch. The prospect was heavy rain then easing but it kind of went the other way. It was raincoats off to begin with so we thought we were in for a cracker of a day given the forecast. But alas it ended with them on. Admittedly by the end of the ride a small amount of sun did appear. For all that though, observations of this place after day 1 are amazing. Riding beside massive mountains popping out of the sea made one feel quite insignificant. We were kept sustained by superb and perhaps the best coffee and danish so far. And the salmon stack at Nusfjord! - no thin portions around this place where evidence of fishing is pretty much at every turn.



## 20. Stamsund to Svolvær (88k, 600^m)

With the wind howling around us overnight we felt a little tentative getting out and riding today. We waited for as long as we could and from the get go it slowly improved to the point of experiencing some sunshine. it did not last long though. The wind hung around too but not as wild as overnight. We were mostly on quiet roads which was a relief as we were finding the main route (the E10) busy with little to no shoulder. There is no avoiding it sometimes but we are exploring our way north and choosing the best quiet roads.



## 21. Svolsvaer to Eidsfjord

(134k, 980^m)

When you come to the other side of the world you meet some interesting and fascinating people and to date that has been taken by a non-riding couple from the Falkland Islands. Then there are some closer to home like a fellow bike packer from Kingscliff we met briefly before heading off today. Amongst the conversation I asked tongue in cheek if he has had any sunshine yet? His reply was a big "yeah" to the point of wanting to go for a swim!. Now that was good news and reassuring also as we started off once more in inclement conditions. We had to make our destination by 4pm to buy food at the local Spar. Our route was not the shortest as we took in the quieter western side of Vesterdalen - rugged & pretty. As predicted the conditions got better and we enjoyed dry roads which was a treat. Got to our accommodation which would be our base for a few days. Also on the to-do list was to somehow in this remote part of the world source some brake pads.



## 23. Eidsfjord to Nyksund

(104k, 970^m)

We were both determined to get out today after the 4-seasons day yesterday. On the radar was Nyksund an old fishing village out on the north western point of the island Langoya. There's not a lot north of this place and going west is above Iceland and heading for Greenland. Today was calm but I reckon this place could get really wild. We had lunch in a cafe/restaurant that reminded us of real olden day times where patrons would not be over 5 foot tall. One had to watch out for head high timber beams. The birthday lunch was superb and I got the cake but no candles. The location memorable to mark 60.



## 24. Eidsfjord to Harstad

(84k, 904^m)

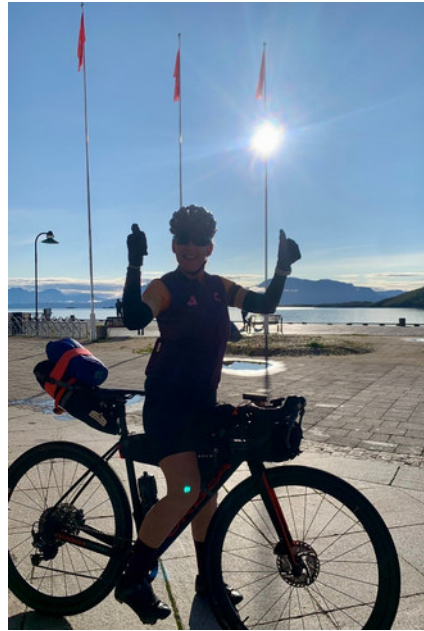
We took the local boaties leaving the marina in the morning as a good sign it was going to at least be a fair day. Hmm, I guess it was for Lofoten standards as we are beginning to understand. Yes we got some rain, some sun and some wind. The latter was out in force today and it was a battle particularly over the high bridges. They are very exposed and when the wind is up they can be a challenge to get over particularly when traffic is right next to you. And even getting around into fjords the wind would be coming in all different directions. It was all navigated successfully and both happy to get to Harstad where a coffee and lemon muffin were our little trophies for the day. And apparently there were sunny icons on the YR app for the next day - so looking forward to that!



## 25. Harstad to Finsnes

(128k, 1300^m)

Part of the water cycle was put on hold today and the sun was out from the get go!! Such a difference when you can see the vistas clearly. And once more at every turn it was stunning along with the ever present cascading waterfalls. Another thing that was out today was a reindeer. It was just meandering down the centre of the road and as we caught up to it it pulled into pasture about 10m away. This gave us enough time to get a quick video. The antlers were rather substantial and somewhat different to what we expected. Going by the number of signs around sightings would be common place and thinking that would be just like a Norwegian seeing a kangaroo in the wild for the first time. It didn't take away from our little wow moment though. Also loved the lbestad Tunnel we went down into and under - some 114m below the fjord water surface. It reminded us of a hydro slide at a water park but the reality check came at the other end!



## 26.Finnsnes to Sommarøy

(71k, 503^m)

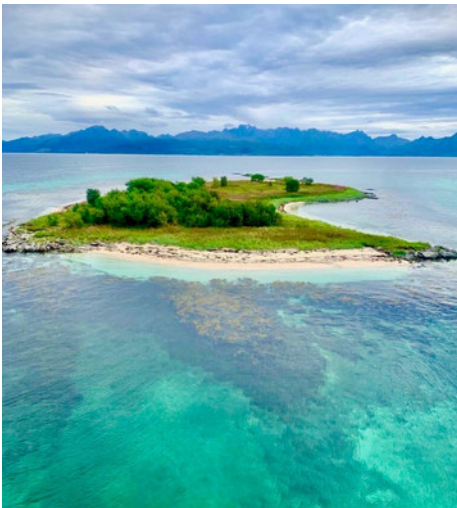
Nice casual day today before a potentially hard one weather wise into Tromso tomorrow.

Immediately leaving Finnsnes, today's ride took us over the bridge and onto the island of Senja. It's an area known for its hikes to mighty peaks particularly out to Segway and Heston. We got views of them but being on bikes we obviously stayed closer to water level. We were heading for Sommarøy which is by translation "summer island". I can see how it could be this with its little islands and crystal clear waters lapping the beaches but by the time we got there it had turned real cold, lowering clouds and the wind was getting up. Not living up to its name today but awfully pretty just the same.

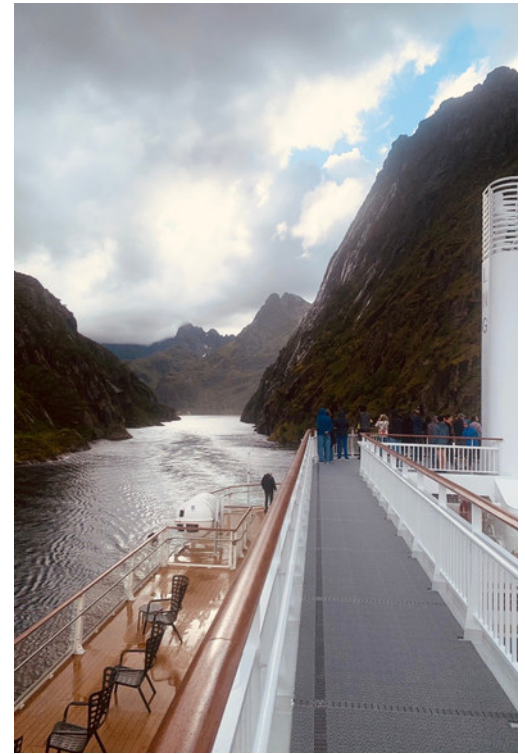


## 27. Sommarøy to Tromsø (58k, 600^m)

We enjoyed a leisurely start at the Sommaroy Arctic Hotel assisted by the buffet breakfast until 11am and the late checkout of 12. And it was looking a little arctic outside but we had to face it. So copped some early wind and persistent rain all the way into Tromso. Once arrived we found a cafe to hunker down into where we got a little drier as we enjoyed their offerings. This helped us bide some time waiting until 11pm. where we boarded the south bound Coastal Express back to Molde - a 3 day journey.







## 31. Molde to Eikesdalen

(88k, 723^m)

We were both feeling woozy after 3 days at sea and some of those choppy but the first thing to do was to get new brake pads on our bikes. We had organized 10 days prior to get Vidar's in Molde to arrange some new brake pads thinking that would be plenty of time for them to arrive for our return trip to Molde. They were in fact to take another week which meant we had to doctor some substitutes. Today's ride was pretty flat but as it progressed and headed further up the side of Eiksdalvatnet we got some magic vistas on super quiet roads. We even went through a 4.3km tunnel and got no traffic either way. The hills gave way to mountains and we both concurred that this was a more beautiful ride than expected. We had mountain views from our accommodation and a location where the owner does not lock the doors - wow! We go up and over these mountains tomorrow which will mean some elevation and also the bonus of some gravel.

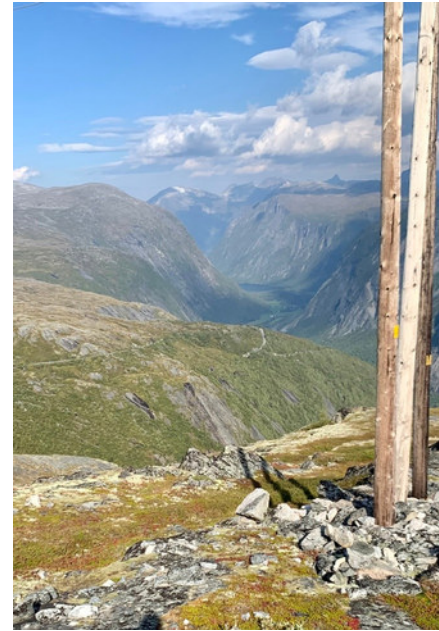


## 32. Eiksdalen to Sunndalsøra

(81km, 1424^m)

It was up early and at it where we rode further up into the valley of the Aursjøvegen. It was nice and gentle for the first 20k before it turned to gravel and straight up. Over half of the climbing for the day was done by the 27k mark as the views opened up - tough but incredible! Once at the top the wind was howling head/side in exposed conditions so got blown around a lot. But once we hit the 45k mark we turned to head down the valley towards Sunndalsøra where we picked up a juicy tail wind. The vertical mountains were immediately to our right hand side and we felt totally insignificant in their shadows. The waterfalls seemed to be in slow motion such was the height they were coming down from.

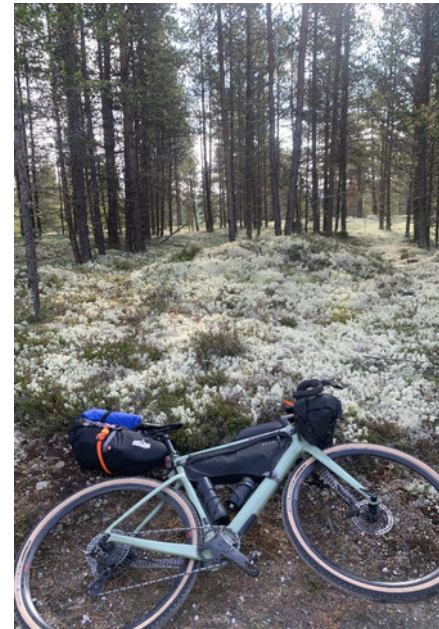
A brutal day but super spectacular.



## 34. Oppdal to Folldal

(100km, 1001^m)

I became quite unwell and fallen into a heap after the Aursjøvegen ride so we took the bus to Oppdal to keep us "on track". the previous day. Despite the fact that I was crook the road would not have been a pleasant one to ride with next to no shoulder. So today was to be a gentle 70k. That was until 15k into the ride when I realised I did not have my phone. Back I went to our previous night's accommodation and there it was nicely camouflaged on the black side table. Water continues to spill off the sides of the mountains and for the majority of the ride we had roadside rivers to accompany us. By the time I got back to a shaking Jude (at 1000m) she just wanted to get going to warm back up. She did have entertainment while waiting which was seeing the social dynamics of 5 sheep endeavoring to cross the E6. An eventful day. I could say I won't leave my phone behind ever again but truth is I probably will!

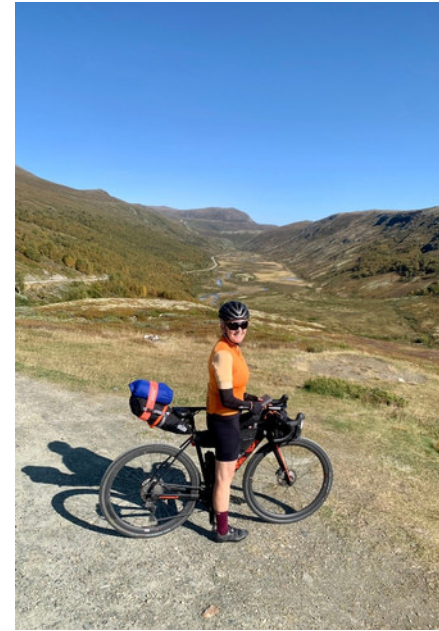


## 35. Folldal to Otta

(91km, 705^m)

Safe to say we didn't have to worry about the weather today as the prediction was sunshine! So we just casually took our time enjoying the views that the Rondane NP afforded. Not as dramatic as what we have seen but it had a quiet magic about it which we gleefully lapped up. Saw a herd of musk ox that populate this area which Judy was quite happy to have a safe distance between. These are big hairy animals with rather large curly horns. At the top we got talking to a young couple with their bikes from Oslo. She was a first timer so what she didn't carry he did and oh golly gosh he had some gear! He was the designated pack horse for sure but it sounded like the trip was of his instigation. We rode off the plateau with a rapid descent after which we found a cafe open in Dovre. It's unusual to have cafe's open on Sundays in Norway.

It was then a gentle ride down into Otta. We felt as though there was a lot of down today.



## 36. Otta to Bygdin

(122km, 2190^m)

We were back at elevation today so yesterday's lovely ride was well and truly squared away.

It was a chilly start and a pretty one but by the time we got to Vinstra it was time for even more clothes. Judy was trying to get some food into her mouth such were the uncontrollable all-over-shakes.

That all changed as we began the Mjølkevegen - touted as one of Norway's best gravel routes. The name Mjølkevegen translates to "the Milk Road," a name born from the roads used to transport milk down into the valleys from the high mountain summer-farms. It was a big day and we were extremely happy to get to our amazing, back-in-time accommodation in the middle of seemingly nowhere. This was the Bygdin Mountain Hotel.

Amazing in that it was warm and dry with fabulous food - the basics of life can not be underestimated.



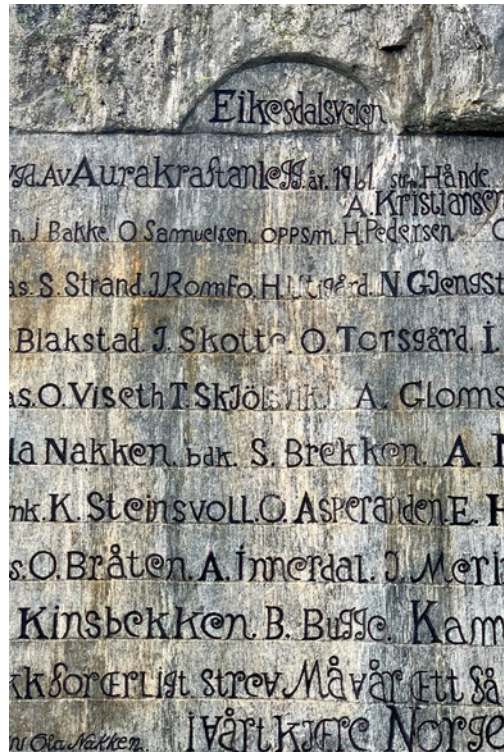
## 38. Bygdin to Ryfoss

(50km, 1009^m)

We had hunkered down at Bygdin for an extra day just to give the weather an opportunity to move on but additionally it ended up being a day for Judy to re-coup as she had become quite unwell now. There could have been worse places to hang out as the old hotel had the yesteryear charm coupled with, as mentioned earlier, really good food. So today was a short and hairy day today. This could be in reference to the chins of the goats we encountered but no - the ride was short and the visibility made it hairy at times. As we continued along the Mjølkevegen we suspected that we missed out on some spectacular alpine views of the Jotunheimen NP as we were up at high altitude. It can't be all peaches and cream.







## 39. Ryfoss to Gol

(88km, 1366^m)

We continued our trip on the Mjølkvegen today with an immediate up of 10% for 5km which was a tough ask. But the day cleared to a cracker - vistas to gaze at and el primo gravel to drool over. There were some small questionable muddy tracks and some single track that were so out of character to the rest of the ride but it all ended smiles with some lovely sweet descents to add to the mix. The day ended so well that the tent came out after about 4 weeks of carting it around half of Norway.



## 40..Gol to Geilo

(54km, 950^m)

Hmm - not sure what to think about today. Bit of Beauty and the Beast going on with again some magic gravel but then horrid stuff more suited for a mountain bike. Judy had a small off doing some minor hand damage but she toughed it out. But the sun was out again and Norway is even more stunning when that happens.



## 41 Geilo to Rjukan

(147km, 2730^m)

Absolutely everything today including plenty of ups and downs (one particularly long one), good and some blah gravel, some hike-a-bike and at times needing a mountain bike. The sun was out and some stunning scenery to take in. After lunch I peeled off and went solo over the top of Hardangarvidda - the largest plateau of its kind in Europe, with a cold year-round alpine climate. Some grunt was needed but rewarded with copious water falls and 360deg wide open vistas. Jude wasn't so keen for it which was a wise choice as it got pretty ordinary at times. After all these days here riding the wow moments keep on coming.



## 42. Ryjukan to Haukeli

(97km, 1570^m)

We were right on time at 9.58 to get our breakfast supplies after which we found a sheltered bench and consumed. Ryjukan has 3 big computer controlled mirrors perched high above on the adjacent northern mountains. These are used in the 6 months when the town would naturally get no sun to reflect the sun into the town square.

The rain was back but it didn't last long and finished the ride reasonably dry. We continued our track southwards where we were back up at elevation and going through lots of winter activity areas and lots of hobbit like housing both old and new. There's nothing outlandish with colours of housing here - brown stained exterior and grass covered roofs. It all blends into the terrain and unsure whether it's what people just do or a case of have to do.



### 43. Haukeli to Rysstad

(100km, 770^m)

Oh did we get wet today! It also marked the completion of a loop around Norway as here at Rysstad 6 weeks ago we headed west and today returned from the north. Got the bikes cleaned and didn't they need it as there were some dirty detours due to extensive roadworks which seemed to go on for some time. But we popped through that and saw what they had already done which was amazing. Norwegians don't do things in halves. This is probably because Norway is such a wealthy country and can well afford to undertake such things.



### 44. Rysstad to Evje

(76km, 356^m)

Woke up to a chilly but spectacular day for our final ride. The plan was to get back to Kristiansand (another 70k further on) but the weather was on the turn. We decided to finish in the sunshine so called in the services of the local bus company.







# SOLSPEILET

## Rjukan

EN 100 ÅR GAMMEL IDE ER REALISERT




Det aller største skiløper- og skiforretningssentrum i Norge er nå på Rjukan. Det er det tidligere Oslo Eitikon som utgjorde 1913 byens kjerne. Etter en stor del av Rjukan som ble nedlagt i forbindelse med 2. verdenskrig. Byens grunnlegger Sam Eide synes det var viktig at det ble gitt noe som kunne gjenopprette byens identitet. Han ble inspirert av skiløperne som hadde kommet til Rjukan etter krigen, og bestemte seg for å bygge et skiløper- og skiforretningssentrum i Rjukan.

Et Rjukan er en by med et stort utvalg av butikker og restauranter. Det er også mange aktiviteter og arrangementer som kan gjøres i Rjukan. Det er også mange aktiviteter og arrangementer som kan gjøres i Rjukan.

For mer informasjon bruk [www.visitrjukan.com](http://www.visitrjukan.com)







