

In touch with nature

People from all over the world find their way to Flåm, in western Norway, to discover Nærøfjord up close. One of them is Eric Bosgiraud of France, who became so captivated that he returned the next year. The result: two films and a grand passion for Norwegian fjords.

TEXT: NINA BLÅGESTAD
PHOTO: ERIC BOSGIRAUD

Since 1999, Flåm-based Njord Kayaking has been leading kayak adventures of varying duration on Norway's largest fjord, the Sognefjord. Customers come from near and far. One who quickly discovered the special virtues of kayaking was Eric Bosgiraud, of Lyon, France.

In 2011 he travelled to Flåm with seven companions. Previously, the energetic 46-year-old had had to give up his two great passions, paragliding and mountain biking, due to a serious motorcycle accident. But even with one leg partially out of commission, he found he could stay active as a paddler.

"Previously I had travelled around the world paragliding and cycling, but after the accident I started kayaking," he recalls. "Norway was a natural

choice because of the beautiful fjords and the short distance from France."

Filmed under way

He and the other French kayakers took a five-day guided tour of the Sognefjord and its tributary fjords. From Solvorn in the Lustrafjord to Gudvangen at the inner reach of the Nærøfjord (a World Heritage Site), the beautiful natural landscape swept the visitors away.

"The first impression was amazing – I love bivouacking in such wild places!" says Bosgiraud, adding that he and his friends developed a unique bond of solidarity during their adventure.

"We still talk about that trip. Every meal, every camp was full of laughter. My best memory is the morning after a rainy day, when we woke up to wonderful weather. The fjord was

totally still, and we set off with a very respectful silence. That evening we had to hike for two hours to a cabin on the mountain. Since I have problems with my leg, my friends helped me all the way. The trail went along waterfalls and through woods full of trolls. It was fantastic – all that in one day!" says the Frenchman.

Bosgiraud is a photographer and graphic designer, and eagerly shot pictures and video during the trip. Dramatic scenery was easy to find. Back in Lyon, he felt such a longing for Norway that a year later he found himself heading north again.

"I came back to introduce two friends to kayaking in the fjords," the adventurer says. "This trip was shorter and more relaxing, but beautiful since the sun shone the entire way trip."

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In 2011, Frenchman Eric Bosgiraud and seven friends went on a five-day kayak trip in the Sognefjord. He was so mesmerized that he came back the following year. Now he's planning yet another trip to Norway, this time with his wife and two sons.

Bosgiraud's Norwegian journeys resulted in two videos: "Njord Teaser" and "Ripples", bearing a subtitle that is also Njord's tour philosophy: "We leave no trace, only ripples in the water."

Gentle wakes

The company name is from Norse mythology: Njord is the god of ocean, wind and fire. Njord's leaders hold the company to a high standard of outdoor ethics.

"Our guides are the only ones in Norway certified to give 'Leave No Trace Master Educator' courses," says Njord's chief, Roger Kløvtveit. "Leave No Trace is an American organization that has developed principles for treading lightly in nature – principles we follow in all our tours."

His company arranges trips lasting anywhere from a few hours to many days, and lives up to a rule that says

kayaking groups should take more out of the World Heritage Site than into it.

"If we see trash, we pick it up," says Kløvtveit. "There's actually a pretty big problem with litter in the fjords."

Njord has about 2,500 customers a year. In the past decade, Kløvtveit says, interest in kayaking has taken off explosively.

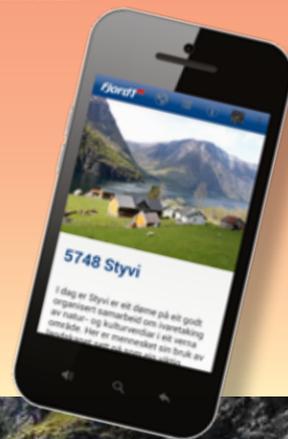
"At first, a lot of Norwegians were a little spooked by kayaks. Now you see them everywhere," says Kløvtveit. Many of his customers have had "Aha!" experiences on the water.

"You get a completely different perspective when you're out there bobbing on the water's surface, completely in touch with nature – you realize you're not that big after all. For many people, it is a momentous experience."

ATTRACTIONS IN YOUR POCKET

Want basic information about attractions in the Nærøysfjord? Just download Fjord1's travel app, Fjord1 Tourist. It lets you follow Fjord1's tour routes in a whole new way. The content of the app is controlled by your telephone's GPS, and describes the attractions on your route as you approach them. You'll learn interesting facts about geology, wildlife, vegetation, waterfalls and hydropower as well as old hunting methods and ways of life on nearby farms.

The app, available in 12 languages, works with both Android and Apple and can be downloaded via Google Play and the App Store. The stretches covered include Flåm-Gudvangen and Gudvangen-Kaupanger. In the Geirangerfjord, you'll find attractions on the Geiranger-Hellesylt and Geiranger-Valldal stretches.



Paddling on the Nærøysfjord puts kayakers in close touch with local residents.

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I sommer kan du blant annet padle kano på Skomakerdiket, prøve den spennende rebusløypen eller leke på den splitter nye lekeplassen. Fløibanen tar deg opp og ned. Velkommen til Fløyen!

GØY Å LÆRE PÅ VILVITE

På VilVite finner du morsomme og lærerike aktiviteter for barn og voksne i den store utstillingen. Få også med vitensshow, verksteder og 3D-filmer! Fotball-leker på uteområdet fra 30. mai. Åpningstider og program på vilvite.no.



BERGENS BESTE BADELAND

Bergens flotteste badeland har bassenger for liten og stor. Prøv spennende super bowl, rutsjebaner og klatrevegg. Maskoten Duffe underholder. Badeland har 110 butikker vegg i vegg.

LEKNE SJØLØVER

På Akvariet skjer det spennende ting for barn og voksne. Møt lekne sjøløver, skumle krokodiller, spennende fisk fra inn- og utland og fascinerende slanger. Filmvisning i kinosal og føring av dyr hele dagen.



ALLTID NOE SOM SKJER

Få byer i Norge byr på så mange gøye og spennende opplevelser for barna. På BarnasBergen.no finner du en oversikt over gøyale og lærerike aktiviteter fra familiefavorittene Akvariet, Fløibanen, Vannkanten og VilVite.

Lik Barnas Bergen



Bergen Reiselivslag – visitBergen.com