

# PRIORITY

EXCLUSIVELY FOR PPS CLUB MEMBERS | OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2019



## EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS MARKETS

*Celebrate the festive season in these  
winter wonderlands*

## NEW ZEALAND'S PRISTINE BEAUTY

*Hiking, star-gazing and unwinding in  
the South Island*

## SINGAPORE'S FINEST TABLES

*Experience culinary excellence at  
these top-notch restaurants*







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*Located at the harbour, Oslo's Opera House features an angled design that allows visitors to walk on its roof and enjoy views of the city and the fjord. The popular venue hosts a variety of outdoor plays, concerts, and events year-round.*

# REDISCOVERING OSLO

Oslo's current ethos of reinvention is palpable, and this creative energy is (re)defining the city's spirit.

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**PHOTOS** UNSPLASH, VISIT OSLO



Extending over the western and northern edge of the Scandinavian Peninsula, with Russia, Finland, Sweden, and Denmark as its neighbours, Norway is mostly defined by its wildly picturesque coastline, fractured by a network of fjords and dotted with thousands of islands.

Against a backdrop of mountains and sea, its capital, Oslo, is a compact and cultured city that is consistently ranked as one of the world's most liveable. This year, it has also been named the European Green Capital, as it has one of the lowest carbon footprints worldwide.

Unlike Copenhagen or Stockholm, which have long enjoyed global attention with their creative offerings, Oslo has very quietly glided under the radar with a more low-key approach. But now, thanks to some smart town planning and a globally-minded, ambitious set who are determined to put their home city on the map, Norway's capital is finally ready to snap up its fair share of the Scandinavian limelight by tapping into its unsung design talent.

## HOW TO GET AROUND

Oslo's compact city centre is best explored on foot. If that's not your cup of tea, the easiest and most inexpensive way to get around is via the Oslo Pass, which gives you unlimited rides on public transport, admission to 33 museums and attractions, and discounts at a variety of cultural sites, shops, and restaurants.

[www.visitoslo.com/en/activities-and-attractions/oslo-pass/](http://www.visitoslo.com/en/activities-and-attractions/oslo-pass/)



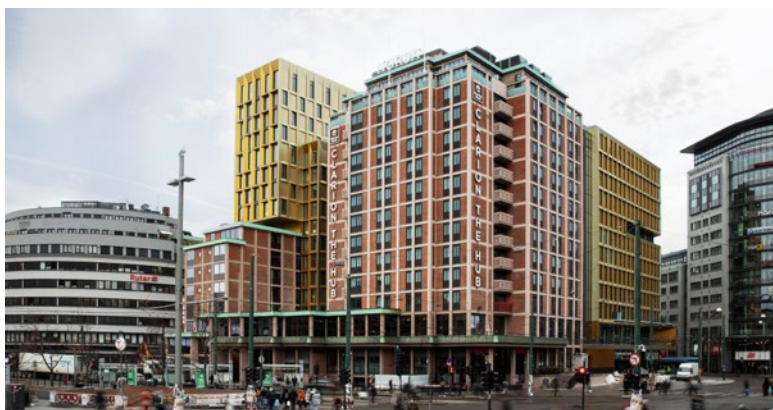
### A Rejuvenated Waterfront

This has been bubbling under the surface for a while now, with urban projects such as Fjord City, the rejuvenation of Oslo's 10km waterfront. Here, the Bjørvika neighbourhood — once muddled with highways, railways, and closed container ports that separated the city from the fjord — has been tapped as the country's new cultural hub: The Snøhetta-designed Opera House, which was launched in 2008, anchors it as its main landmark. This was followed in 2016 by **Barcode**, a collection of 12 multi-use high-rise buildings of different heights and widths that together resemble the parallel lines of a barcode. A new Public Library, art museum, and National Museum are in the pipeline for next year.

A five-minute walk away, adjacent to the bustling Central Station in downtown Oslo, Nordic Choice Hotels recently launched its Clarion Hotel flagship. Called **The Hub**, the 810-room property raises the bar for conference hotels with a flourish. It boasts a restaurant — on the 13th floor, with panoramic city vistas



(Clockwise from top) Atlas at boutique hotel Amerikalinjen is a great brasserie for a hearty breakfast or lunch; Clarion Hotel The Hub is a newly opened hotel with panoramic views of the city; Barcode comprises 12 narrow buildings designed by different architectural firms. This multi-purpose project boasts restaurants, shops, galleries, and apartments.



— that uses ingredients from GrowHub, the property's rooftop garden, art from the group's own collection curated by Sune Nordgren, and a pop-up shop that partners companies such as Fjong, a local brand that is redefining the way we consume fashion by renting out designer gear.

On the other side of the station, on Jernbanetorget Square, the historic frame of a landmark neo-baroque building has been reshaped into **Amerikalinjen**, a 122-room boutique hotel. The property, which flies the Norwegian flag by championing all things local, was the former headquarters of the now non-existent cruise ship company Norwegian America Line, which ferried hopeful Norwegian immigrants across the Atlantic Ocean to the US. It's also one of the first design-led properties to launch in Oslo since its sister hotel, The Thief, opened in 2014.

Fashion brand Holzweiler, best-known for its scarves, is behind the hotel's stylish staff uniforms; cosmetics

brand Sprekenhus supplies its bathroom amenities; the custom-made crockery in the restaurants is by Porsgrund; the pendant lamps in the guest rooms and a limited collection of special occasion champagne glasses come courtesy of Hadeland Glassverk; and long-lost mid-century Norwegian furniture and lighting classics dot the interiors.

These furniture classics, in particular, have been revived by a company called Eikund. Its founder, Morten Hippe, is on a mission to champion Norway's long but little-known design history — he spent a year crawling through attics and rummaging through private and public archives to get hold of the original drawings for designs like the Veng armchair (designed in 1960 by Torbjørn Bekken) and Sigurd Resell's Øya dining table. Meanwhile, following its initial debut with the revival of the Birdy lamp (designed by Birger Dahl in 1952), furniture brand Northern continues to expand with a sleek, elegant new collection.



### Cool Nordic Eats

A first for the city, and certainly upping Amerikalinjen's wow factor, is the hotel's humming assemblage of ground-floor restaurants and bars that takes full advantage of the energetic footfall on the street. Drop by **Atlas**, an all-day brasserie with a kerbside entrance, for a quick bite from its healthy, locally-sourced menu which includes quinoa salads, delicious bagels, or traditional Norwegian waffles topped with a savoury twist like fresh avocado and eggs. While the day away on your laptop at **Haven**, accompanied by a cup of coffee and a tasty snack from the afternoon waffle trolley; on weekends, tuck into its brunch menu — the perfect way to brush away any cobwebs from late-night shenanigans at **Pier 42**, the hotel's cocktail bar. Finally, round up with an evening at **Gustav**, an intimate basement club that has fast become a hotspot for its stellar parties and cosy gigs.

Norway's food game is on the up, too, and Oslo is becoming a culinary hub in its own right. If you're keen on covering all the bases, start at **Maaemo**, the



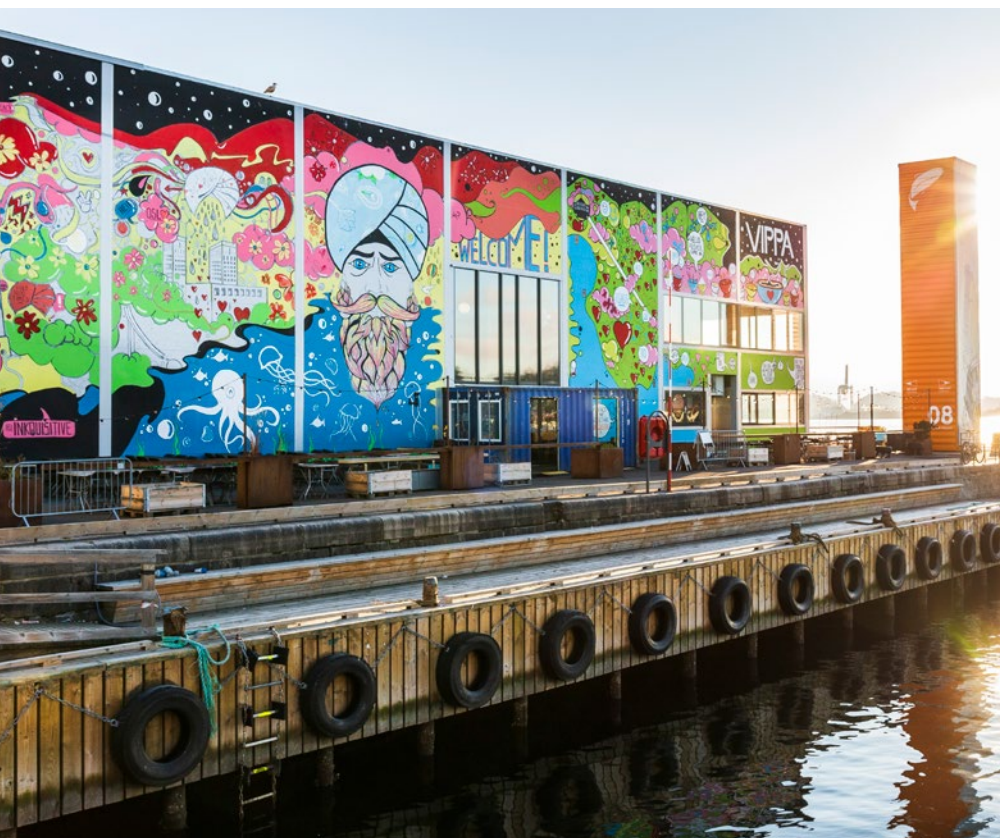
(Above) Three-Michelin-starred Maaemo uses fresh seafood sourced from the pristine surrounding region; Vippra is a food, culture, and education centre located at the edge of Vippetangen, just by the Oslofjord.

world's northernmost three-Michelin-starred restaurant. Work your way down to one of the food halls, like the newly opened **Oslo Street Food** in Torggata Bad, or **Vippra**, which serves everything from poke bowls to Mexican fare from an old depot on the waterfront.

There's no shortage of excellent dining options in Oslo, but for something truly exceptional, head to **Fyr**. Housed in the barrel-ceilinged cellar of an impressive 19th century building, the restaurant slots right into the city's current bistro boom, with chef-owner Sebastian Myhre serving up elegant, straightforward dishes in a relaxed, approachable setting; think sous vide asparagus topped with bonito flakes, or wagyu beef cooked on Himalayan salt rock. In the summer months, arrive early for a preprandial cocktail on the terrace, which overlooks the adjacent park.

For something a little more low-key, **Hrímnnir** is a cosy neighbourhood restaurant in Vulkan that capitalises on the global ramen obsession, with a Nordic twist. Expect variants of the noodle-and-soup dish — sporting toppings like smoked celery root and blackened onion — to be served alongside fermented and grilled snacks such as rosewood kimchi, in a pared-back, understated space. End your evening with a postprandial drink at **Territoriet**, an intimate design-led wine bar by local firm Krakvik & d'Orazio, which serves everything from simple cavas to exclusive Bordeaux and grand cru burgundies.

Oslo is a futuristic playground on the cusp of change, from its innovative architecture, abundance of bucolic parks, and the Oslofjord's waterways, to the spruced-up waterfront and a proliferation of new restaurants, bars, cafés, shops, and hotels. It's a city worth visiting over and over again. ■



✈ SINGAPORE AIRLINES FLIES TO COPENHAGEN SIX TIMES A WEEK. FROM THERE, TAKE A CONNECTING FLIGHT TO OSLO.