

The best MARCO POLO Insider Tips

Our top 15 Insider Tips



INSIDER TIP ► Built in Norway

The Norwegians are proud of their wooden buildings – and you can see why in the Arkitekturmuseet. Housed in Oslo's former Central Bank, you can marvel at three distinct eras in Nordic architectural history → p. 37

INSIDER TIP ► Sunset reloaded

If you go to the Monolith in Vigelandsparken early in the evening and look east, you can watch the reflection of the sunset in the façades of houses opposite → p. 41

INSIDER TIP ► Rack and ruins

Minneparken: Where the bishop's palace now is, was the religious centre of power in medieval Oslo too → p. 44

INSIDER TIP ► Tiny Ida

The fossil of the 60cm-tall primate called Ida in the Naturhistorisk Museum is considered to be the 'missing link' in human evolution → p. 46

INSIDER TIP ► Picnic on an iceberg

Fancy going up in the world without risking your neck? The roof of the new opera house is a thrilling spot for a bite to eat with a view of the fjord and Oslo's up-and-coming centre → p. 47

INSIDER TIP ► The little brother and eroticism

The Emanuel Vigeland Museum: The fresco in the mausoleum designed by Gustav Vigeland's younger brother is a homage to the Renaissance and to eroticism. But if you blush, nobody will notice – the light is very dim → p. 47

INSIDER TIP ► As delicious as at the big brother's

Dr. Kneipp's Vinbar is the little brother to Markveien Mat & Vinhus and the perfect place for a glass of good wine and a delicious meal. And even better – it is less expensive than its sibling (photo above) → p. 53

INSIDER TIP ► Stable bakery

Where the horses that pulled the trolley cars at the end of the 19th century were once stabled is where the best bread can be found today. *Godt brød* – nomen est omen → p. 52

INSIDER TIP ► Hidden jewel

Asylet, Oslo's only pub with a real beer garden, is located in an intimate courtyard in the run-down part of Grønland → p. 55

INSIDER TIP ► Fish galore!

Georg Nilsen Fisk & Vilt is perhaps the last genuine fishmonger's in the capital – and quite an experience too. Let's hope it stays at it is → p. 61

INSIDER TIP ► Drinks and vitamins

The best cocktails in the city are stirred and shaken in the little Bar Boca in Grünerløkka, and served with healthy tidbits too → p. 66

INSIDER TIP ► A bargain hunter's den

This exceptionally cheap hotel with small but pleasant rooms is right

in the heart of the expensive city centre. Early birds who book in time live cheaply and can surf free of charge too → p. 77

INSIDER TIP ► Getting off to a good start

A refreshing pint of beer is even served in Vertshus Oscar Braaten on the Akerseleva to wash down a hearty Norwegian breakfast of potatoes, eggs and bacon → p. 80

INSIDER TIP ► Mini cruise

The journey is the reward: take a cruise on the Bygdøy ferry across Oslo Fjord to the Museum Peninsula and you will have seen quite a lot en route before setting foot on dry land (photo below) → p. 81

INSIDER TIP ► Music from around the globe

At the Oslo World Music Festival, world-famous names put a bit of colour into the nightlife in the Norwegian capital on a grey November evening → p. 87



BEST OF ...

GREAT PLACES FOR FREE

Discover new places and save money

● *A stroll past works of art*

Gustav Vigeland's mass of sculptures on display in the open attract millions of visitors – not because it is free of charge but because the monumental figures in Vigeland Park are incredibly impressive → p. 41

● *The Changing of the Guard*

The Changing of the Guard takes place every day at 1.30pm. When office workers are casually returning from their lunch break, the afternoon shift takes over outside the Royal Palace in accordance with strict military protocol (photo) → p. 32

● *Looking down on the city from above*

Those with a head for heights should take the glass lift up to the 34th floor of the Plaza Hotel where you will be rewarded with one of the best views of Oslo from the 34 Skybar. And it won't cost you a penny either → p. 40

● *Open-air concerts*

If you don't have to pay for a concert, the music can sometimes sound that much better. And when it is in the open on a balmy summer's night? Perfect! Throughout the summer, free rock, pop and folk concerts are regularly held on the square outside the city hall, for example → p. 68

● *Walking above the fjord*

An architectonic masterpiece with a social component. Everybody should be able to get their enjoyment from the magnificent white marble opera house. You can wander around on the roof, find a quiet corner, unpack your picnic lunch and take in the view over the city and the fjord → p. 47

● *Cool off*

... and have a swim in the middle of the city. Where can you do that? Below Nydal dam the Akerselva forms a pond surrounded by open grassy areas for sunbathing – the perfect place to relax those weary limbs after all that sightseeing. And it's free → p. 81



●●● Dots in guidebook refer to 'Best of ...' tips

ONLY IN OSLO

Unique experiences

● *Beam me up*

The Holmenkollen ski jump curves elegantly away from the slope and forms the focal point of a magnificent ski arena which is both a major landmark and the heart of Norway's national sport. A high-speed lift takes you up the tower, from which you have an unbeatable view, almost as quickly as the skiers speed down the jump → p. 48

● *Read and be read*

Along with the Icelanders, the Norwegians have the greatest appetite for literature of any nation in the world and Oslo is proud of having a proper literature building where readings and cultural debates are held. There is also a literature café where many guests nowadays sit with iPads in front of them → p. 67

● *Traditional Norwegian gourmet fare*

Apart from a large number of regular guests, inquisitive and hungry tourists also find their way to this pinnacle of perfection – Mat & Vinhus – and are rewarded with excellent Norwegian delicacies such as reindeer and herring specialities (photo) → p. 57

● *Midsummer's night in the park*

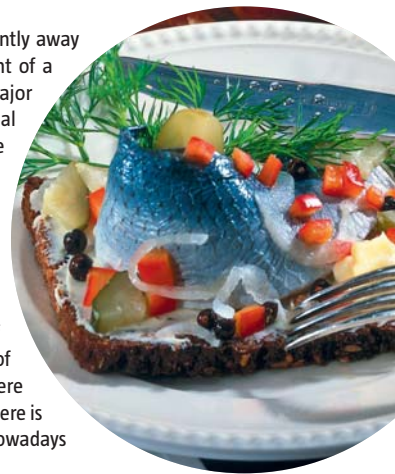
Join the locals in Frogner Park and party the 'white night' through 'til dawn in the middle of the city to the sound of the chink of glasses and strumming of guitars. People crowd around the Monolith in Vigeland Sculpture Park to catch a glimpse of the remaining ruddy light of one day and the sun rising early the next → p. 86

● *Seeing with the eyes of a child*

Child-friendly Oslo even has a *Museum for International Children's Art* with a wide variety of shapes and colours depicting how children see the world. And children can join in everything too – while adults are only allowed to watch → p. 84

● *Herr Nilsen sets the tone*

Oslo is a bastion of jazz and the jazz club *Herr Nilsen* is at its very heart. Here you can listen to traditional jazz of a high standard played live almost every evening. During the breaks, pints are downed along with memories, future plans and masses of shoptalk → p. 68



ONLY IN

THE PERFECT DAY

Oslo in 24 hours

08:30am CAFFÈ LATTE WITH A VIEW OF THE PALACE

You can start your day with breakfast at [Wayne's Coffee](#) → p. 53 near where the ferry from Kiel to Oslo comes in – generously filled sandwiches, delicious cakes and arguably the best *caffè latte* in Oslo. When the weather is good, choose a table outside. Diagonally opposite is the Nobel Institute; beyond it is the royal park.

10:00am VILLAS AND PALACES

Whoever wants to know what the [Royal Palace](#) → p. 31 (photo left) is like inside should buy a ticket for the one-hour guided tour in good time. Afterwards, head for the embassy district backing onto the royal park with its imposing, elegant townhouses lined up harmoniously next to one another. There is less traffic in [Frogner](#) → p. 38 and many more things to look at, such as beautifully decorated villas, ornamental bay windows and the one or other cosy café. You can reach Frogner Park along Frognerveien, Niels Juels gate and Gyldenløves gate.

11:00am GIANTS IN THE PARK

The central feature is the collection of monumental sculptures by Gustav Vigeland in the section of the park known as [Vigelandsparken](#) → p. 41. You don't have to like this type of art and the exaggerated human forms, but the avenue up to the [Monolith](#) at the centre of the collection invites visitors to have a look at the figures on both sides on the way. [Frogner Park](#) → p. 38 itself is the city's largest recreational area. Frisbees spin through the air, the strum of guitars can be heard and the wafting smell of barbecues is in the air – the perfect place to lie down and gaze at the sky over Oslo. If the weather is not up to it, pay a visit instead to the recently modernised [Vigeland Museum](#) → p. 41.

01:00pm UP, UP AND AWAY

From Majorstuen station take line no. 1 to Frognerstøen. The tram crawls up to [Holmenkollen](#) → p. 48 the ski arena which boasts a new ski jump since 2010. After a visit to the ski museum (photo right) and to the tower which offers spectacular views, you can head for the forests of Nordmarka – or save this outing for another day. Down in the city below



Get to know some of the most dazzling, exciting and relaxing facets of Oslo – all in a single day

there is still a lot to explore. Take tram no. 1 again to Ellingsrudåsen and relax on the 40-minute journey to Tøyen.

03:00pm THE GREAT MASTER MUNCH AND THE PRIMATE IDA

The [Munch Museum](#) → p. 45 is the best way to get to know the work of the great Expressionist. The world's largest collection of paintings and graphic works by Norway's most famous artist needs some time; the café in the building can provide the necessary sustenance of a physical kind after all the works of art. For those still up to visiting another museum, head over the road to the [Natural History Museum](#) → p. 46, where the 47 million-year-old primate, Ida – assumed to be the 'missing link' between the animal kingdom and mankind – is on display alongside dinosaurs and other creatures which lived all that time ago.



10:30am DINE LIKE A NORWEGIAN

Now it's time for a proper meal and, so that you can enjoy something typically Norwegian, it's off to [Olympen mat og vinhus](#) → p. 57 in the less pristine district of Grønland – either on foot or with the line no. 1 to Grønland. Dark oak panelling, long wooden tables, waiters in black waistcoats and the biggest choice of different types of beer in the city provide the setting for a hearty 3-course meal, preferably with some fish.

09:00pm DRINKS WITH A VIEW OF THE FJORD

Finish your day in Oslo where both tourists and locals most like to go on a summer's evening – to the promenade at [Aker Brygge](#) → p. 29 (photo above) with schooners bobbing about in front of you. This is where the city opens up to the fjord and where pubs stay open until the early hours. The sun will already be quite high in the sky by the time the last Viking has found his way back to his bunk.



Trams to starting point: 12, 13
Stop: Solli plass. A day pass (valid 24 hrs; 75 NOK) is worth it if you are going to go by tram at least 3 times!