

Bergen, Norway: A Disney Cruise Line Port Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

In the second of this series looking at some of the ports of call the Magic will visit in the Norwegian fjords, we head to the beautiful city of Bergen.

Norway's second biggest city, be prepared for the possibility of rain when you visit, as Bergen is one of Europe's wettest cities. When we visited, and had brilliant sunshine, we were absolutely delighted, as of course the weather does make a huge difference whenever you're on vacation. There were plenty of shore excursions, but I took the decision to go it alone, and it's certainly a possibility, as the Magic is likely to dock just a short walk away from some of Bergen's major tourist attractions.

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□ Perhaps the sight that everyone wants to see, particularly if you're a Disney fan, is the Bryggen along Bergen's waterfront. This row of wooden buildings is represented to perfection in the Norway pavilion in Epcot. German Hanseatic merchants lived in their own quarters in the medieval buildings here, but sadly what you see today is a reconstruction, after a series of fires destroyed the original buildings. It's a real shame, but to be honest, when you see them, you really don't notice, and obviously they're still impressive, as they've been catalogued as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. If you want to learn more about the history of this area, there is a Bryggen Museum that will cover this for you.

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□ Today the buildings that make up the Bryggen are generally shops or restaurants, and browsing through them is an absolute joy, particularly when you get the opportunity to look up and see how the gabled buildings were constructed. Definitely allow some time in this famous corner of Bergen.

However, whatever you do, if it is a fine day, don't miss the chance to see Bergen from above. As it was a brilliantly clear day when we were in port, we took the funicular up the Floien mountain for some stunning views. It's easy enough to get there, even if you're not on an organized tour, as the station is a short walk away from the Bryggen. From on top of the mountain, you can see Bergen spread out far beneath you, around its harbor. It's then that you realize this really is a huge city, something you don't get a perspective of when you dock so close to the heart of it.

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□ Something else that's well worth a visit in Bergen is the Hakonshallen, a Gothic ceremonial hall, just between the Bryggen and the dock we expect the Magic to head for. The beauty is, considering Norway is such an expensive country (and trust me, Bergen is not cheap!) you can walk around, and unless you actually want to go inside the hall, there's no charge. We were enchanted enough by just exploring the grounds.

□ We also enjoyed our visit to Bergen Cathedral, or to give it its proper Norwegian name, the Domkirken. We were lucky enough to be the only ones in there, and it's worth stepping inside. From outside it doesn't look like much, but inside it is beautiful.

□ A little further away from the harbor is the beautiful Festplassen, a lovely park, surrounded by cultural activity. If you're an art lover, this is the part of Bergen you'll want to see. The Bergen Kunsthall (the contemporary art museum), and KODE -- the Art Museum of Bergen that houses an extensive collection of art and design, are both located alongside the park.

□ Of course, there's more to explore outside Bergen, and just because we couldn't tear ourselves away from the city, that doesn't mean you have to feel constrained. We took the Norway in a Nutshell full day tour at another stop on our cruise, Flaam, and I can thoroughly recommend it if Disney offer it. It's expensive, and it will consume your whole day in port, but my goodness, what scenery you'll experience on it! You take a train from Bergen to Myrdal, then change to the Flam line, which takes you up to the mountain village of Flam. You pass by snow, waterfalls, and beautiful valleys populated by small villages. I was in my element as a photographer on this tour, and really does give you what it promises -- Norway in a Nutshell.

□ There may also be the opportunity to visit Troidhaugen, the home of composer Edvard Grieg, and a replica stave church.

□ Bergen, for me, was one of the reasons we booked our Norwegian Fjords cruise, and I'm not ashamed to admit that part of that was I wanted to visit the real version of the Norway pavilion we're all so familiar with. While the Bryggen is stunning, and I'm glad I finally got to see it, there is so much more to the city. What I loved most was that we could just wander around, and see and do what we wanted, very unusual for a cruise port, where often you're docked some way away from the major attractions, and have no real options but to take shore excursions.

□ The Disney Magic visits Bergen on its seven-night Norwegian Fjords cruise, departing from Copenhagen on June, 6 2015, and again on the

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nine-night Norwegian Fjords cruise, also out of Copenhagen, leaving on June, 20 2015. The seven-night itinerary also takes you to Stavanger, Alesund, and Geiranger, while the nine-nighter adds in Molde, and Olden, which we've already visited in this series of articles. Next up, we finish with a visit to Stavanger.

About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)

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