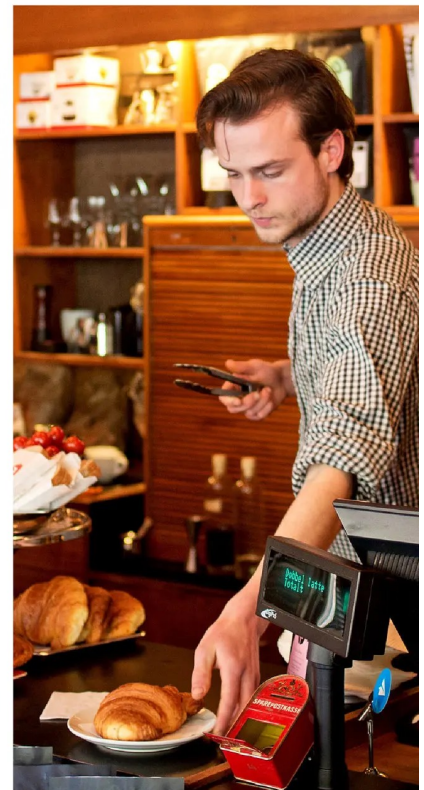
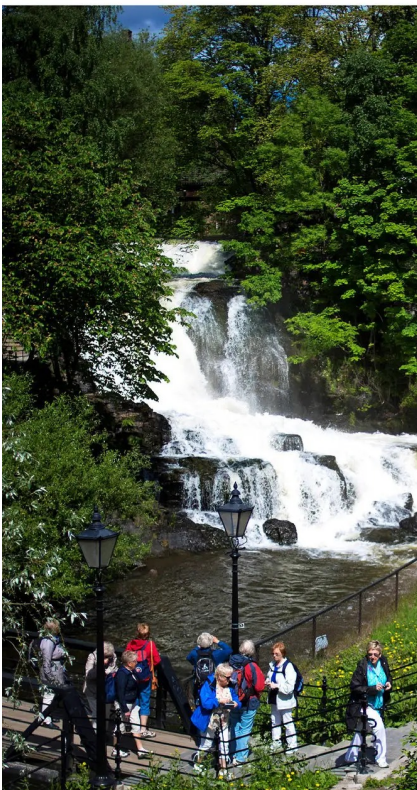


## 36 Hours in Oslo

June 12, 2013



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: HOLMENKOLLEN SKI JUMP, OSLO OPERA HOUSE, FUGLEN, ASTRUP FEARNLEY MUSEET AND WATERFALL AT MOLLA. CENTER: SCHOUSKJELLEREN MIKROBRYGGERI. KYRRE LIEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES**

Has Oslo priced even itself out of the city? These days, the most appealing areas in the famously expensive Norwegian capital lie on the periphery of the city center, in its newly trendy neighborhoods — hip Grunerlokka to the northeast, glamorous Tjuvholmen to the southwest — and beyond, in the glorious landscapes of the Oslo Fjord and the sprawling northern forests. Granted, downtown still harbors a version of “The Scream,” by Norway’s best-known painter, Edvard Munch, whose birth 150 years ago is being celebrated here all year. But more buzz now surrounds the dazzling architectural landmarks — the sinuous art museum that opened last year and the angular opera house — anchoring the city’s

renewed waterfront. Today, to properly explore Oslo's finest attractions, expect to wander widely.

## **FRIDAY**

### **3 p.m. 1. This Bird Has Flown**

Oslo's well-developed coffee culture provides ample opportunity for connoisseurs to parse the nuances of light roasted beans from local roasters like Tim Wendelboe and Solberg & Hansen. One stylish spot to sample sort kaffe, or black coffee, is at Fuglen (Universitetsgata 2; [fuglen.no](http://fuglen.no)), a cozy cafe decked out in midcentury Scandinavian designs. Soak in the heady 1960s atmosphere amid vintage sofas and armchairs, which are also for sale through the shop's affiliated secondhand furnishings store. Those who can't get enough of the denlike setting can return at night; since 2010, the shop has doubled as a classic cocktail bar. This concept — espressos by day, old-fashioned by night — has proved so popular that Fuglen, which means “the Bird” in Norwegian, spread its wings last year, opening its first international outpost in Tokyo.

### **4:30 p.m. 2. Chasing Waterfalls**

Not many capital cities have impressive waterfalls gushing within the city limits. But that's precisely what you'll find on a well-caffinated walk north along the pretty footpaths hugging the Aker River. At the Beier Bridge, the river crashes down a cliff to create the spectacular Waterfall at Molla, as well as ephemeral rainbows in the misty spray.

### **7 p.m. 3. Colonized Kitchen**

Maaemo became a culinary-world darling when the restaurant earned two Michelin stars in 2012, just over a year after opening. But seats are scarce, and prices sky high. Instead, head to the upscale Frogner neighborhood west of the city center where hidden in a cobblestone courtyard is Kolonihagen (Frognerveien 33; [kolonihagenfrogner.no](http://kolonihagenfrogner.no)), a rustic restaurant with exposed brick walls and wooden beams. The restaurant, co-owned by a Maaemo founder, takes its name from Norwegian garden colonies — public urban allotments for gardening communities — and sources organic local ingredients from the same producers that supply Maaemo. The delicious results are simple, seasonal dishes, like wild mushroom soup with black truffles, and fire-grilled reindeer with Jerusalem artichokes, cranberries, sprouts and pickled turnips. At dinner, the ever-changing menu consists of seven courses (745 Norwegian kroner, or about \$130 at 5.66 kroner to the dollar), from which diners may also order à la carte.

### **9 p.m. 4. Riverside Revival**

At a pair of music spaces beside the Aker River, the stage itself is arguably as interesting as the performers on it. Kulturkirken Jakob (Hausmannsgate 14; [jakob.no](http://jakob.no)) is a deconsecrated church whose afterlife as a “cultural church” is devoted to a variety of dance, music and theater events. In addition to jazz groups and country singers, the space also hosts a weekly Sunday-night service (which, with stage lighting, grand piano and band, is more performance than prayer) that will resume in September. A few blocks away is Bla (Brenneriveien 9; [blaoslo.no](http://blaoslo.no)), a bunkerlike, graffiti-covered building that maintains an even more eclectic schedule. On some nights, you'll find bingo parties and literature debates; on others, D.J.'s and the odd electronic-pop band playing to a packed, dancing house.

### **11:30 p.m. 5. Strange Brew**

Norway is home to a small but thriving group of microbrewers. To sample these craft beers, head across the river to the Grunerlokka neighborhood, where a pair of fine brewpubs opened recently. Start at Schouskjelleren Mikrobryggeri (Trondheimsveien 2; [schouskjelleren.no](http://schouskjelleren.no)), a microbrewer that opened a pub in late 2010 in the cellar of the Schous Bryggeri, a defunct brewery dating from the 1800s. Beneath the subterranean bar's vaulted brick ceiling, try the smooth Thunder Bear Stout (67 kroner). A few blocks

away is Grunerlokka Brygghus (Thorvald Meyersgate 30B; [brygghus.no](http://brygghus.no)), a bustling alehouse where you can sample one of the house beers on tap, like the refreshing Kjell Pop Single Hop (64 kroner) or choose among the nearly 100 bottles on the menu, including many from domestic breweries like Haandbryggeriet, Aegir Bryggeri and Kinn Bryggeri.

## **SATURDAY**

### **9 a.m.6. Fjord Escape**

The proximity of the city to the pristine Oslo Fjord makes a brief morning escape to its small islands simple. Board the ferry (schedules at [ruter.no](http://ruter.no)) at Vippetangen, and five minutes later you can find yourself traipsing around Hovedoya, the nearest island. Hiking trails crisscross this islet, also home to two swimming beaches and monastery ruins dating from the 1100s. On the return trip, take note of the glittering facades that dot the waterfront.



### **12:30 p.m. 7. Polse Platter**

Madrid has the Mercado de San Miguel, Copenhagen has Torvehallerne, and now Oslo has a food hall of its own, Mathallen (Maridalsveien 17; [mathallenoslo.no](http://mathallenoslo.no)). The food hall, opened in October, occupies an old brick factory building beside the river and gathers more than 30 stalls, shops and restaurants under one (very large) roof. A focus on seasonal, local products is most evident at the mezzanine-level restaurant von Porat ([vonporat.no](http://vonporat.no)), where dishes often feature foods from fellow vendors. But for a quick bite, pull up a stool to the counter at Anni's Polsemakeri ([polsemakeri.no](http://polsemakeri.no)), a butcher that also serves an excellent platter of grilled sausages, slaw and creamy potato salad (75 kroner).

### **3 p.m. 8. Art Thief**

Tjuvholmen, or Thief Island, is the highlight of the city's continuing urban renewal project to reclaim industrial areas and docklands along the waterfront. The gleaming area has been transformed into a vibrant arts district, and its centerpiece is the city's new architectural jewel: the Astrup Fearnley Museet (Strandpromenaden 2; [afmuseet.no](http://afmuseet.no)). This modern-art museum reopened last September in a sloping glass-and-timber complex designed by Renzo Piano; inside, provocative exhibitions feature works from Damien Hirst, Takashi Murakami and Cindy Sherman (entrance, 100 kroner). Outside the museum, a small sculpture park is dotted with pieces by Louise Bourgeois, Anish Kapoor and others. After a tour, explore Tjuvholmen's pedestrian lanes, where several art galleries have taken up residence. At the Pushwagner Gallery (Tjuvholmen Allé 10; [pushwagner.no](http://pushwagner.no)), the giddy colors and playful pop art from Hariton Pushwagner — the pseudonym of the acclaimed Norwegian artist Terje Brofos — are a far cry from Munch.

### **7:30 p.m. 9. Seafood Supper**

After admiring Tjuvholmen's diverse art offerings, refuel at one of the area's many new dining options. One standout is Hanami (Kanalén 1; [hanami.no](http://hanami.no)), a polished Japanese-fusion restaurant that opened in September 2011 with a focus on fresh seafood pulled mostly from the nearby Norwegian seas. Snag a table outside on the waterfront promenade, a prime people-watching location, and order a few plates to share. The torched salmon with roe and basil-miso sauce (159 kroner) is delightful, and the succulent roasted lobster, halved and slathered with sea urchin and foie gras butter (395 kroner), is positively decadent.

### **11 p.m. 10. Designer Drinks**

If you're up for only one drink, try the small cocktail bar No. 19 (Møllergata 23; [no-19.no](http://no-19.no)), which opened a year ago near the former jail that inspired its name. With attentive service and dim lighting, the bar is a pleasant place to savor a concoction like the Violet Hands, made with Thronhjems Aquavit, Martini Rosato, Grand Marnier, Campari and a flambée of rosemary and Ardbeg Uigeadail whiskey (121 kroner). Unless you need to sober up quickly, wait until morning to calculate the cost of that drink in your home currency.

## **SUNDAY**

### **10:30 a.m. 11. Just Jump**

Ride Line 1 of the metro up into the forested hills northwest of the city center to the majestic Holmenkollen Ski Jump. Skiers have been hurtling through the air here since the 19th century, but in 2010 a reconstructed version of the landmark was unveiled. With steel curves reaching for the sky, the modern structure looks more like a work of art than a sports venue. Entrance to the Ski Museum (110 kroner) offers access to the jump tower and its 360-degree views of the city, fjord and forests. (Holmenkollen Ski Jump and Museum, Kongeveien 5; [holmenkollen.com](http://holmenkollen.com))

### **1 p.m. 12. Norwegian Wood**

Hop back on the metro heading north and alight where the line terminates and the tranquil woods take over. This sprawling forest, known as Nordmarka, lures adventurers year-round. In winter, cross-country skiers stream onto nearby trails; warmer weather brings mountain bikers and hikers. Take a brisk walk, and then retire to Frognerseteren (Holmenkollveien 200; [frognerseteren.no](http://frognerseteren.no)), a handsome chalet with a restaurant and cafe near the metro stop of the same name. On the terrace, sip a crisp Saison from the Norwegian craft brewery Nøgne O (half-liter, 115 kroner) and savor the spectacular view.

## **LODGINGS**

Norway's first Design Hotel, **The Thief**, opened in January with 119 rooms and suites (Landgangen 1; [thethief.com](http://thethief.com); from 2,090 kroner). Dark hues and rich fabrics offset eye-catching artworks, many borrowed from Astrup Fearnley Museet.

The **Scandic Vulkan** (Maridalsveien 13A; [scandichotels.no](http://scandichotels.no); from 590 kroner) has 149 simple, comfortable rooms. Free breakfast and Wi-Fi, and a 15-minute walk from downtown.