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# Hardanger Nyheter



SONS OF NORWAY  
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## The Light That Returns.

### The Light That Returns

In Norway, Christmas is not only a season — it's a state of mind.

The long darkness of winter doesn't feel empty here; it feels sacred. Candles glow in every window, snow falls with intent, and silence stretches like a white velvet cloth across the land.

There is a particular poetry in how Norwegians celebrate *Jul*. It's less about spectacle, more about essence — the light that returns, the gathering that matters, the landscape that shapes emotion.

To experience [Christmas in Norway](#) is to step into a living painting: crisp fjords, wooden cabins framed by snow, and the soft shimmer of the northern lights overhead.

## Featuring Christmases Remembered

# CHRISTMAS IN NORWAY

Christmas in Norway, known as Jul, is celebrated primarily on Christmas Eve (Julaften), which includes a traditional dinner and gift exchange. The season is marked by festive activities like decorating, attending Christmas markets, and hosting pre-Christmas parties called julebord. Key traditions include dancing around the Christmas tree, leaving out a bowl of rice porridge (julegrøt), and the mythical figure Julenissen (Santa Claus).

## Before Christmas

### Adventstid:

The period from December 1st to 24th is called Adventstid, marked by advent calendars and pre-Christmas parties (julebord).

### **Decorations:**

Houses are often decorated with white lights, and cities become festive with Christmas markets and concerts starting in mid-November.

Lille Julaften (Little Christmas Eve): On December 23rd, families often decorate the Christmas tree together and bake gingerbread houses

Lucia Day: December 13th is the feast day of Saint Lucia, celebrated with processions and a young woman wearing a crown of candles.

### **Christmas Eve (Julaften)**

• **Main celebration:** The primary day for celebration is Christmas Eve, December 24th.

• **Activities:** Many Norwegians watch Christmas movies, attend church services, and enjoy traditional meals.

**Dinner:** A common Christmas Eve dinner features pork ribs (ribbe) or cured lamb (pinnekjøtt) with side dishes like potatoes, sauerkraut, &meaballs.

**Dessert:** Popular desserts include riskrem (rice cream with raspberry sauce).

**Gifts:** Gifts are opened after the main meal.

**Traditional treats:** Families often leave a bowl of rice porridge (julegrøt) with butter, sugar, and cinnamon for the mythical figure, Julenissen

## Christmas Day and beyond

\* **December 25th:** Christmas Day is typically a more relaxed day, often spent with family and friends.

**Activities:** Enjoying cozy time by the fire, going for winter walks, or engaging in activities like skiing and dog sledding are popular ways to spend the holiday.

**Post-Christmas parties:** Many families hold parties in the days following Christmas.



Lloyd Colltman laid a wreath at the Rutland cenotaph on behalf of our lodge. Thank you Lloyd for laying the wreath.

# Open Village Experience



The cruise company Hurtigruten is taking a new approach to tourism and has an intriguing new offering. They have introduced “Open Village” experiences, which will occur along Norway’s remote coastline. Tourists will have the chance to visit three villages on the coast and get to experience everyday life in these places. The stopovers include: Træna, Bessaker and Sæbø. The voyages will be offered from May to September and guests can experience activities such as church concerts, guided town tours, live music, and homemade treats.

One of the reasons this new offering is so innovative is that the cruise company will be contributing 250 Norwegian kroner per guest to each community visited, which is a major benefit for the people and businesses that reside there. Additionally, the idea also helps the problem of overtourism in the most visited destinations. It seems like a win-win for guests who may never have had this opportunity, and it also means that locals can benefit economically.

## Norway's Top Scorer Changes Jersey Name

Norway's soccer phenom Erling Braut Haaland, 25, has decided to switch things up on his Team Norway jersey.

The star striker, who plays in the Premier League for England's Manchester City team, is now using both of his surnames, “Braut Haaland” on his national team uniform.

Previously, his jerseys sported the Norwegian spelling Håland with an å. But when he was being recruited to play abroad, he began using the spelling “Haaland” for ease.

The update may be a way of thanking his mother, Gry Marita Braut, who along with his father Alf-Inge Håland has been a steadfast supporter of her son's career. Both parents are former distinguished athletes- his father was a professional soccer player in England and his mother was Norway's the national champion in the heptathlon.

It has become increasingly common in Norway to use both parents' surnames without a hyphen. While the star has always gone by both parents' surnames, he didn't initially use both professionally. Time will tell whether he starts using “Braut” on his jersey in England.



# The Oseberg Ship Arrives at Its Final Harbor –

## – Move Went According to Plan

The 1,200-year-old Oseberg Ship was lowered to its final port on Wednesday evening. The complicated moving process went exactly according to plan.

"I am a little tired, relieved and actually very satisfied. We have managed to follow the plan," project manager at Statsbygg, Lars Christian Gomnæs, said to NTB [Norwegian News Agency].

He has led the extremely demanding moving process, which was carefully planned for ten years. There was cheering, applause and handshakes among museum employees, Statsbygg employees and architects when the ship was finally lowered into its place.

"It is a very historic day. We saw the ship disappear from the exhibition hall where it has stood for 99 years; it will never return. This is its last journey, its final voyage. It is good to have it here," says Gomnæs.

## Majestic

All of Wednesday was set aside to move the ship the 100-meter route from the old Viking Ship Museum to the new Viking Age Museum, which is built next door.

At one point on Wednesday evening, the ship was hanging several meters above the ground. The move took place at a slow pace, up to 20 centimeters per minute.

Museum director Aud V. Tønnessen arrived at the museum early Wednesday morning and felt butterflies:

"This is very special. The Oseberg ship has been hidden under cloths for so long. So, it was very powerful to see it here today. Earlier today, when it came in here, the first thing we saw was the bow—the snake head—peeking out. Then you saw how beautiful, majestic and proud it is," says Tønnessen.

"The way it is being moved, it is almost as if it is sailing towards you, very slowly. It made me a little speechless."

The move has a price tag of around 500 million kroner [50 million US dollars] and has been planned for ten years since the ship is so fragile.

## Transported in a crate

The ship was lifted in a large vibration-protected crate. A crane track in the ceiling supported by enormous steel rigs transported the ship.



The Gokstad ship is still inside the old building and will go through the same moving process later this fall. By spring, the extremely fragile Viking sleds will also be in place.

The new Viking Age Museum is scheduled to open in 2027. Before that, the Gokstad ship and the Tune ship will also be moved into the climate-controlled building. The old museum had 15 times more visitors than it was designed for, which affected the condition of the old ships.

## Christmases Remembered



By Beverley Akerlund

A Christmas away from home brings to mind the year our family was living in Celista in the Shuswap. Dad, Mum, my sister, Heather and I had moved that summer from Zeballos, a village on the west coast of Vancouver Island. I was 6 and my sister was 3. It was 1944 and Dad was working on his homestead in Anglemont.

Our accommodation was a small log forestry cabin that was vacant for the winter. There was no electricity or running water. Coal oil lamps were used and Mum carried water in pails from the lake. Heat was from a wood burning heater.

Mum and Dad had not brought any Christmas decorations from Zeballos so we set about making paper chains and paper snowflakes to hang on the tree that had been brought down from the homestead. We strung popcorn on thread to add even more decorations.

As I had started school in Celista that fall I imagine that there would have been a Christmas concert at the school with Santa arriving. I think we did the play "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" as I have a photo of me dressed as the wicked stepmother. "Mirror, Mirror on the wall, who is fairest of them all" is what Mum remembers me saying.

To cook the Christmas dinner must have been a challenge. In Mum's memoir she tells of cooking the turkey on top of the heater on muffin tins. I can't imagine how she cooked the rest of the meal with the turkey taking up most of the surface of the heater. We do have one photo of Heather and I outside the cabin warmly dressed as we stood by a snowman we had built with Aunt Bobby who was visiting from Vancouver. That was the year we received toy trucks - mine was a milk truck and Heather's was an ice truck. Obviously, no dolls for us!

By Wenche Gransjoen

Christmas was a happy time at our house. Although we did not have a lot of money, we children never thought we were poor. My dad was a shoemaker and worked for the military, and one year he had made my sister and me a pair of sandals. My mother sewed our clothes and I remember specially one year she had sewed my sister and I black taffeta skirts with gold threads.

Christmas did not start before Christmas Eve. My dad and I went out in the morning to buy a Christmas tree. While we were out, my mother made the dinner. Pork rib roasts, Norwegian sour cabbage with caraway, carrots and brussel sprouts and for dessert, cloudberry with cream.

When we came home with a Christmas tree, it really started to smell like Christmas. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon the church bells started to ring in Christmas, and we all went to church for a short devotion. When we came home my mother and father went in the living room. We children were not allowed to come in before the tree was decorated. When they were finished and opened the door we stood there and looked at the beautiful tree. Our house was always full of laughter and singing. My mother and father belonged to a singing group that would sing at old folks homes and hospitals. They could never afford a babysitter so we children always came along. I had a sister and brother that was 2 and 4 years younger than myself. When I was 11, my youngest sister was born.

Julenissen, who brought us our presents, was either a friend or a neighbour. After dinner we opened presents and then we put the tree in the middle of the floor and sang Christmas songs.

## Christmases Remembered

By Darlene Osterlin



Christmas was a gathering of 3 families with our family and the families of two of my dad's sisters. So for Christmas dinner there were 19 of us - one visiting family of 7 and one of 4 members. Our Christmas table was made large enough with the use of a sheet of plywood for a table top. Dinner was served promptly at 12:00 noon as our visitors had to leave for home early in the afternoon to feed the cattle and horses before it was too dark. Dinner was the usual Christmas meal with turkey and all the trimmings including jello salads. Dessert, after all that, consisted of mincemeat pie, apple pie with ice cream, homemade steamed pudding with a light sauce as well as the Christmas tarts, cookies, and cakes. We were well fed. Then when Marlene and I were old enough we stood on Okanagan Apple boxes to reach to wash dishes!!

A few days after Christmas on a day that was clear and calm, 4 from our family and 2 cousins went off X Country to ski on a "big" hill. It was 3 miles for us cutting across the snowy fields. We spent all afternoon going up and down and then home before dark as our cousins had another mile to go to their home.

*From Darlene with credit going to her 3 brothers for this story...continued in the next issue of the Hardanger Nyheter*

By Sonja Heaton

Our **Christmas** traditions from the past have consisted of a Sons of Norway gathering with children's sing song and holding hands encircling the **Christmas** tree singing until Santa arrived to give out presents and goody bags.

Unfortunately, that does not happen anymore as the lodge up north has dissolved. Those in town gather at my daughter's house now since our grandparents and parents have all passed.

It used to be **Christmas eve** at our grandparents house and church either that evening or the next morning.

We still recognize the importance of gathering **Christmas eve** but we also gather usually **Christmas** day and boxing day as well.

Some share those days with other family but there is always a dinner those nights, and a games night now on the 27th! New traditions interspersed with old.

## Christmases Remembered

Gloria Benazic

Lives and times change, but some things remain... growing up, Christmas meant family time and that remains true today. Christmas concerts at our church and at school were an exciting lead up to the holidays. My mother's family of five siblings married and had children but always made an effort to join in celebrations at my grandparent's farmhouse in northern Alberta. Because our farm was about ten miles away, we would pack our pj's and stay over for a couple nights. Christmas Eve was very Norwegian with our meal beginning with a bowl of rømmegrøt sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar and a good dollop of freshly made butter. The next course was lutefisk, flatbread, potatoes, melted butter and possibly stued peas. The homemade 'sheets' of rye flatbread were thin and crisp and maybe helped disguise the gelatinous texture of the fish, as my grandmother boiled it. In more recent years, that changed to baking the fish and a much better texture! The next course was pork ribbe with potatoes and normally a mash of turnip and carrots, surkål, and lingonberries which had been picked in the forest that fall. Dessert was a selection of at least seven types of cookies, fruitcake, and cloudberry cream – the cloudbERRIES picked by my grandfather from a secret marshy area north of the farm.

A large bowl of riskrem with red berry sauce was a must. Everyone (woman and children) helped clean up the dishes in anticipation of gift opening so it never took too long! As we gathered in the living room, Norwegian Christmas carols were sung and then, FINALLY, my grandfather, adorned with his red cap, would begin to pass out the presents. There was one or two small presents each – one from the family name draw and something from your siblings – not piles of boxes under the tree. Usually, some child received a new board game and we would play that while the adults might have a game or two of Norwegian whist. It was off to bed in anticipation of Santa's visit during the night. As the family grew with more children and schools teaching about Canadian traditions of Santa arriving during the night, the family had changed from the nisse arriving with his sack of gifts to awaking to a Santa Claus gift and a stocking, typically holding those wonderful, once a year 'Christmas oranges', some whole nuts and some candy. Santa left one gift per child. Christmas day began with a feast of lefse, flatbrød, cheeses (yummy brunost), rullepølse, head cheese, spekekjøtt, anchovies, scrambled eggs and a selection of wild berry jams. The day was spent playing games, reading a new book, usually some time spent outdoors in the snow, and a home filled with the smells of a roasting turkey and ham.

It was a quieter day (well, not for the cooks!) to spend time getting to know the new babies – my older sister and I were the oldest cousins so we often took on the babysitting roles – and learning to get along with about twenty cousins in the same house! To this day, our family continues the traditional foods of Christmas Eve and gift opening – much to the glee of our children and grandchildren whose friends have to wait until Christmas morning to open their gifts!

## Da Yokes on Yu

Ole and Lena were sitting down to their usual cup of morning coffee listening to the weather report coming over the radio. "There will be 3 to 5 inches of snow today and a snow emergency has been declared. You must park your cars on the odd numbered side of the streets." Ole got up from his coffee and replies "Jeez, OK."

Two days later, again they both are sitting down with their cups of morning coffee and the weather forecast is, "There will be 2 to 4 inches of snow today and a snow emergency has been declared. You must park your cars on the even numbered side of the streets." Ole got up from his coffee and replies, "Jeez, OK."

Three days later, again they both are sitting down with their cups of coffee and the weather forecast is, "There will be 6 to 8 inches of snow today and a snow emergency has been declared. You must park your cars on the..." and then the power went out and Ole didn't get the rest of the instructions. He says to Lena, "Jeez, what am I going to do now, Lena?" Lena replies, "Aw, Ole, just leave the car in the garage."



### NEWS FROM NORWAY

**UPDATED:** Norwegian politicians have been worrying for years that there aren't enough babies being born to support the country's welfare state for generations to come. As the post-war baby-boomers age, they've warned, the numbers of retirees are outpacing youngsters, but now they have some good news.

Births have risen again, reports Norway's public health institute FHI (*Folkehelseinstitutt*), and that's part of new trend. There were 54,472 babies born in Norway last year, according to "fresh numbers" from the state's medical birth register. That's up 4.7 percent from 2022, when a baby boom of sorts began and carried into 2023. It was believed to be a consequence of the pandemic that forced most people to stay home.

In mid-November came more new numbers that that births will increase this year also, after rising by 870 during the third quarter alone. A total of 43,200 babies were born in Norway as of September 30, and the total net population rose by 11,400.

"We have had several years with sinking birthrates, but the trend seems to have turned in 2023," said Dr. Liv Cecilie Vestrheim Thomsen of FHI. She said most births last year occurred in the months from May until August, while the winter months saw the fewest.

Most of last year's births occurred in the Oslo area, while the northernmost county of Finnmark had the least. Efforts are underway to boost the population in Finnmark, with some areas enticing young couples with free day care and inexpensive lots on which they can build homes. Norway's total population now stands at just over 5.62 million, according to state statistics bureau SSB (Statistics Norway).

NewsinEnglish.no staff

# Our Christmas Party

Will be at 1450 Bertram St.

**Christmas potluck December 17th.**

Start time will be 6 pm.

**A roast turkey will be provided**

so we need sides and desserts.

We ask everyone to bring a

**"Secret Santa" exchange gift of**

**\$5 to \$10 value.**

Update information will be sent  
to you closer to party time



As president of the Sons of Norway Foundation in Canada Gloria presented a \$1000 bursary to her granddaughter, Eva Benazic. Eva plans to take paramedic training at the Columbia Paramedic Academy in Kelowna in July of 2026.

Merry Christmas and a  
Happy New year to all.  
**Next Hardanger Nyheter will be  
January 2026**