

## Bergen: A Historic Coastal City With Numerous Attractions

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Europe's northernmost country, the Kingdom of Norway is famed for its mountains and spectacular fjord coastline, as well as its history as a seafaring power. It also enjoys one of the highest standards of living in the world, in large part due to the discovery in the late 1960s of offshore oil and gas deposits.



Bergen Byspills

Bergen, the second largest city after Oslo the capital, with a population of 258,500 is a delightful, friendly place for tourists. Traditionally Bergen is thought to

have been founded by King Olav Kyree, in 1070 AD, four years after the Viking Age ended. Modern research has, however, discovered that a trading settlement was established already during the 1020s or 1030s. Towards the end of the 13th century, Bergen became one of the Hanseatic League's most important bureau cities.

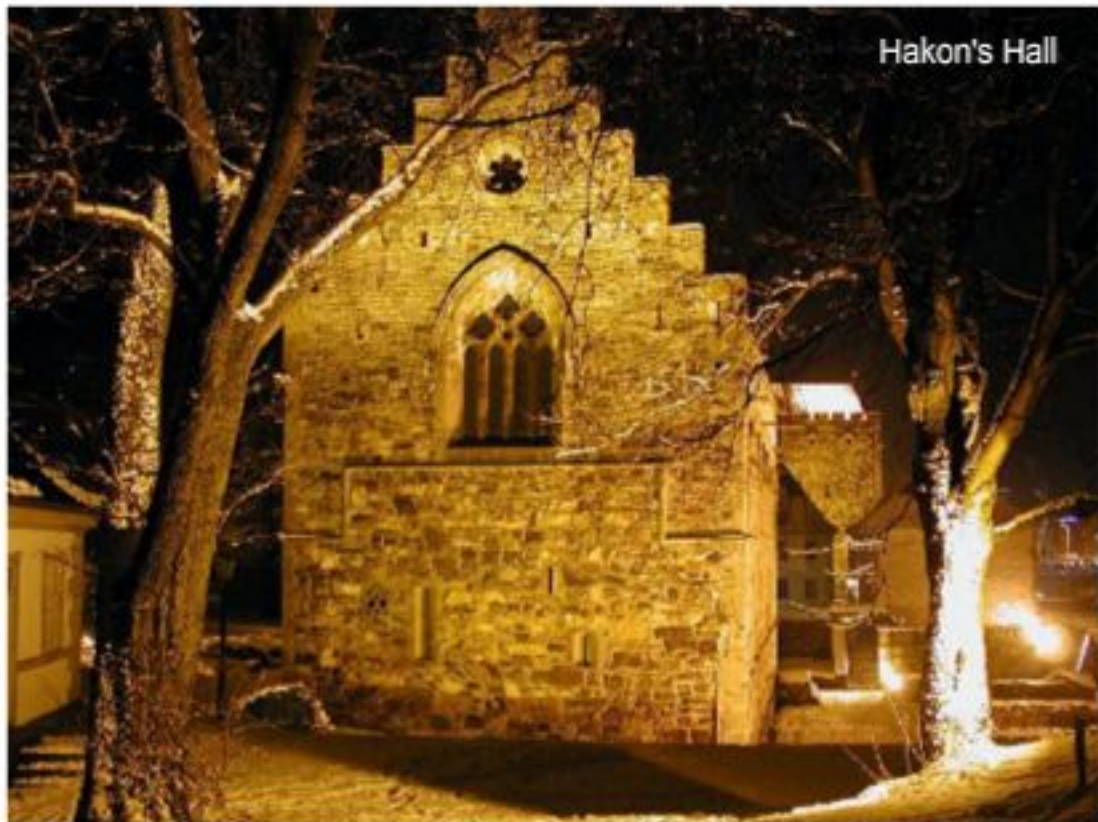
The main reason for Bergen's

importance was the trade with dried cod from the northern Norwegian coast which started around 1100. By the late 1300s, Bergen had established itself as the centre of the trade in Norway. The Hanseatic merchants lived in their own separate quarter of town. Today, Bergen's old quayside, Bryggen on UNESCO's list of World Heritage sites.

The city has throughout its history

Bekketomten Street





Brynnen

been plagued with numerous great city fires. In 1198 the Bagler faction set fire to the city in connection with a battle against the Birkebeiner faction during the civil war.

Bergen was also devastated by fire in 1248, 1413, 1455, 1476, 1582, 1675 and 1686.. The greatest fire was in 1702 when 90 percent of the city was burned to ashes. In 1349, the Black Death was inadvertently brought to Norway by the crew of an English

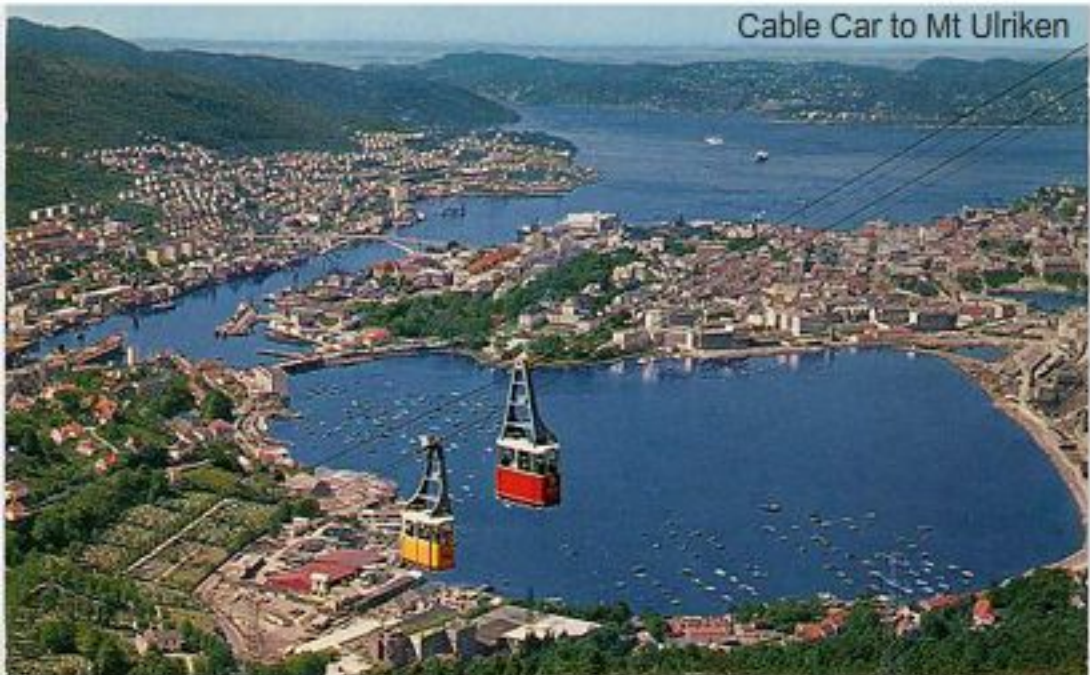
ship arriving in Bergen. In the 15th century the city was attacked several times by the Victual Brothers and in 1429 they succeeded in burning the royal castle and much of the city.

Throughout the 15th and 16th centuries, Bergen remained one of the largest cities in Scandinavia and was Norway's biggest city until the 1830s, when the capital city of Oslo became the largest. Bergen retained its monopoly of

Panorama of Hanseatic buildings



Cable Car to Mt Ulriken



Rosenkrantz Tower



handicrafts and souvenirs is a good place to get their bearings. Situated next to the fish market is Bryggen (the waterfront). Parallel rows of buildings, with their seaward-facing gables represent a building tradition dating back almost 900 years.

Nearby is Rosenkrantz Tower dating from medieval times. The tower was erected by the governor of Bergen Castle (Bergenshus), Erik Rosenkrantz, and served as a

combined residence and fortified tower. The view of the sea front is amazing and it even has a mermaid's cave, the start of the Niels Klim's subterranean journey described in Ludvig Holberg's famous story.

Another historic building is Håkon's Hall which takes its name from its first builder, King Håkon Håkonsson who constructed it between 1247 and 1261. King Magnus Lagabote,

Hakon's son and co-ruler was married in the hall used for both ceremonial occasions and practical daily activities.

The old Bergen Exchange, containing the Fresco Hall, was built in 1862 and extended in 1893. The murals on the walls in the Fresco Hall were painted by Axel Revold (1887-1962-), and have long been recognized as a national treasure. They were painted during the years of 1921-23-. The North Country has three panels

representing fishing near Lofoten in Northern-Norway. The Bergen Wall includes four panels, showing the heavily loaded vessels arriving at the Bergen harbor. The third wall called The World Wall, shows man's importance in the busy machine age, the cultivation and processing of the products of nature, and nature's abundance under exotic skies.

Bergen Byspills an outdoor theatre group stages its performances next to to historical monuments

View from Mt Ulriken





and buildings. The theatrical events are brought closer to the public by actors who pop up in different places, with a vast number of characters and spectacular shows.

A curiosity is the city's shortest street - 18 meters long - named Bekketomten dating back to 1887. Mount Ulriken in Landaas five km from the centre of Bergen provides great views of the city. Walking up the mountain is possible but hard.

The second option is to take the shuttle bus from the tourist information (in the centre of Bergen) to the Mount Ulriken cable car and walk from there. The easiest option is to take the shuttle bus and continue by the cable car to the top. There are free telescopes and Ulriken Mountain Café is open when the cable-car is running. During the summer the outdoor restaurant serves grilled food. It is also the venue for outdoor concerts.