

Frequently Asked Questions – FAQ

Norwegian Guide Service (NGS)

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General

Do I need to be Norwegian or from Bergen to become a guide?

Some of our guides are Norwegian while others are from different parts of the world. You do not need to be Norwegian or from Bergen to become a guide with Norwegian Guide Service (NGS) but you do need to be genuinely in love with Bergen and Norway. Working as a guide means working in an international environment, and we see the cultural diversity of our guides as an asset.

Do I need to know Norwegian to become a guide?

You don't need to know Norwegian to become a guide, as the core literature and information is in English. Nevertheless, knowing Norwegian is very useful to connect with your colleagues as well as to go more in depth about the content that you present. That is why we warmly encourage you to learn Norwegian and use it if you don't already.

What is the guiding season in Bergen?

The guiding season is defined by the tourist activity in Bergen. Even though there are travellers and there is a demand for guided tours year-round in Bergen, the high season starts from the end of April to mid-October, with June usually being the busiest month of the season. Cruises are a significant part of tourist activity in Bergen. Our guided tours are also on sale to the public all year round via our online platforms and the Tourist Information Centre in Bergen.

How can I apply?

Firstly, take your time to carefully read the job description on our website to familiarize yourself with our offer and the job requirements. After you have decided that becoming a guide with NGS is something for you, you need to apply via our online form. Then we take it from there together.

What are the most required languages for guiding?

English and German are the two main languages that most cruise passengers/tourists coming to Bergen speak. Spanish, Italian, French and Dutch are also in high demand as well as many other languages. Norwegian is often in demand for our tours for locals. A guide's language skills are a large factor in the number of possible assignments they will be offered during the season.

What do I get in return for working with NGS?

We are passionate about guiding and we view it as a profoundly human experience. Working with guides gives us a chance to help them become better and do the best work they can. The skills you acquire as a guide will help you for the rest of your life: how to speak to large groups of people so that they will listen;

how to lead a group of people, how to manage emergencies and difficult situations; how to react professionally to complaints and emotional outbreaks, and many other skills in addition to that. We deliver over 80% of the cruise calls, which means our guides have a significant percentage of the guiding assignments in Bergen. On top of cruise, we have online and physical sales of our guided tours all year round. You will also benefit from an international environment of professionals to work with and a chance to develop and certify skills to build a career.

Can I develop a career with NGS?

Once you become an NGS guide you can work as a guide for many years going forward. Some of our best guides have been guiding for more than 20 years. NGS is also a part of a larger network of companies all over Norway and Northern Europe. Working as a guide with NGS might just be the steppingstone towards a future career in the tourism and service industry. Our network is continuously growing, and should you apply for other positions, starting as a guide is a great way to get noticed.

What are the steps towards becoming a guide?

You will find details of the application process on our website.

Guide Certification

Do I need to hold a certification to become a guide?

Yes, everyone who wants to become a guide with NGS must complete a certification to meet the high standards required by our guests. There are several Guide Certifications available on the market and all guides must prove to have undergone a recognised Guide Certification in Norway, have extensive local knowledge, have comprehensive knowledge of the specific routines and procedures for cruise assignments and first aid training certificate.

We do recommend the Certification Programme organised by Norwegian Guide Service in partnership with our sister agency in Voss og Fjordane Guide Service. The training program consists of an engaging online course that you can complete from anywhere in the world, complemented by an intensive onsite training session scheduled for the second half of April. No prior guiding experience is required to apply—just bring your passion and enthusiasm!

Will I get paid while I am doing the certification?

No, most guide certification courses are unpaid. We aim to get you working as soon as possible after your onboarding. The education and certification program to become a guide is an investment in your future.

Do I have to pay for the certification?

Most guide certification courses charge a fee. You can usually find the costs of these guide courses online. We may offer stipends for those committing to working a full season exclusively with us and scholarships for those who present a great deal of potential and need the financial support.

Am I guaranteed paid assignments after the guide certification?

If you successfully complete and pass a certification course, you will receive a work agreement that enable you to work as a guide with NGS. We will then endeavour to give you as many assignments/hours as possible, as per your availability, requirements, skills and the needs of our clients.

Is there further guide training during the season?

You can join your fellow Guides on tour as observers. For certain tours, you must have been an observer before you could receive an assignment to lead them on your own, e.g. full-day Hardanger and Flåm tours. We also provide Guides with a continuous training path for more diverse assignments.

Tours

What kind of tours will I be doing?

Throughout a season, guides will experience and lead a variety of tours, such as: two-hour city panoramic tours by coach, tours around Bergen's coast via coach and ferry, hiking tours up Mount Fløyen, scenic bus tours with 50 guests along the fjords with lunch included, and many other tour varieties.

How can I practice and improve my guiding skills?

As well as online and printed sources, the best sources of information are your NGS colleagues and driver colleagues and your guests. The NGS guide Course is designed to give you the skills and training to be a fantastic guide. NGS will also offer additional training sessions, based on guide and client feedback, to continually develop your guiding skills throughout the season.

Employment Conditions

Do I have to pay tax?

Yes, you will have to pay tax. Unless you are registered as self-employed in Norway, NGS is legally required to automatically pay tax for you in accordance with your registered Norwegian tax card. You must make sure you apply for and have the correct tax card registered with the Norwegian tax office (Skatteetaten). Tax is paid by our accounting department from your gross amount before you are paid your net salary for each working month.

Do I get employee insurance?

You will be covered by an obligatory Norwegian occupational injury insurance for medical emergencies when at work. If you are a resident of Norway, then you have the standard health insurance provided by the social security system. EU/EEA citizens are covered for most health expenses by their European Health Insurance. Very often our guides from other countries obtain travel insurance for convenience.

Do I have to stay and work the entire season?

Some of our guides only work for part of the season, some work throughout the year. To plan the season, it is important for us to agree on the period during which you are available to take on assignments. NGS will prioritise guides who can and show the desire to work for the entire season. A guide's availability is a large factor in the number of possible assignments they will be offered during the season.

Is this a full-time job? How much can I expect to work?

Guiding is not a job with fixed working hours. As a Guide, you accept assignments that NGS will offer based on the bookings from different clients.

There are several factors that affect the number of assignments on offer, and thus the number of hours Guides can work per month:

- Tour sales and their distribution throughout the day
- Guide availability during the season - this must match with the tour times
- Guide language skills - this must match with the tour language/s
- Guide ability, knowledge and certification - this must match with the itinerary & venues of the tour

May, June, July and August are the peak months, with June being the busiest month. We do not guarantee a minimum or maximum number of hours. Many of our guides based in Bergen work around 20 to 25 days per month in the high season while others work less. Duration of tours varies between 2 and 9 hours. Some guides only work as a guide while others have other jobs on the side.

How are assignments distributed to guides?

Tour assignments are determined by the demand from NGS' clients. Available assignments are then distributed amongst Guides according to language, skills, attitude and dedication. We aim to book guides as fairly as possible throughout the season, and guides that prioritise their work with NGS will be prioritised for assignments.

How much can I expect to earn?

Guides will receive an agreed minimum monthly salary that is based on their committed availability over the season, languages and skills, certification level and experience. Many guides earn well beyond the minimum guaranteed salary and have guiding in Norway as a lucrative part of their yearly income.

A first-year guide, guiding regularly in English and German, can potentially earn up to 130000 NOK (May-September).

An experienced guide, guiding regularly in English and German, can potentially earn up to 230000 NOK (May-September). Experienced guides can usually expect to earn more - since their increased experience and skills work well with longer and more specialised assignments.

We put a lot of effort into giving you a realistic expectation of your earning potential before signing the contract. Working with Norwegian Guide Service should be an enriching experience, also from a financial perspective.

When do guides get paid?

Guides get paid for on the 15th of every month for the work done the month before. For example, all guide assignments/hours worked in May will be paid on the 15th of June. Please bear this in mind when applying to make sure you have enough funds to support yourself until your first income.

Administration

Do I need a mobile phone and Norwegian phone number? Do I get refunded for the costs of using my phone?

You must have a contactable mobile phone to work as a guide; mobiles are required for receiving and confirming assignments, as well as for during the tours (e.g. emergencies, contacting the office). All costs connected to the delivery of the assignment shall already be included in the payment rate for the assignment - this includes the costs of the SMS/calls.

Norwegian SIM cards can be obtained using a national ID card, passport or a Norwegian D number. There are both pay-as-you-go (*kontant*) and subscription plans available in Norway.

Is there a uniform? Do I have to pay for it?

Our guides are required to arrive smartly for assignments wearing:

- A white shirt/polo shirt
- Black trousers/skirt
- Black shoes
- An NGS-branded green jacket (weatherproof)

You will receive a yellow visibility vest, which is obligatory on certain piers in Bergen. Some clients also require that we wear accessories with their own logos or symbols.

Are there any other clothing requirements?

Since Bergen can be such a rainy city, we recommend that you are prepared for the weather with rain boots, rain trousers, wool underwear, etc.

International applicants considering moving to Bergen

Is there anything I need to do to be able to work in Norway?

It is your responsibility to check whether you can work in Norway. Please consult the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) website at www.udi.no/en and the Service Centre for Foreign Workers (SUA) at www.sua.no/en for more information.

Also find more information at <http://www.robinhoodhuset.no/about-us/activities/advice-and-guidance/>.

Do I need a work permit?

Citizens of an EU/EEA country are allowed to visit and work for 3 months. After 3 months you must register with the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI). It is your responsibility to check whether you need a work permit. Consult the UDI website at www.udi.no/en and the Service Centre for Foreign Workers (SUA) at www.sua.no/en

Do I need a tax card?

Yes. You can apply for a tax deduction card in person at the Service Centre for Foreign Workers (SUA) in Bergen. You will need to fill in the relevant forms and provide documentation to prove your requirement to pay tax. Refer to:

<https://www.skatteetaten.no/en/person/foreign/are-you-intending-to-work-in-norway/tax-deduction-cards>

Will I have to pay tax? If so, how much?

Yes, you will need to pay Norwegian Income Tax. This usually amounts to 20% to 36% of the income. However, if you overpay tax during the summer, this will be refunded the year after, depending on the type of tax deduction you are registered for; likewise, if you have underpaid your tax, you will have to repay what is owed.

Do I need a visa to come to Norway?

Citizens of Nordic and EU/EEA countries do not need a visa to come to Norway. It is, however, your responsibility to check if you do need a visa to come to Norway. You can do that here: <https://www.udi.no/en/want-to-apply/>

Does Norwegian Guide Service organise accommodation?

Guides are responsible for finding accommodation in Bergen. We strongly advise you to try to find accommodation in or as close as possible to the city centre as this makes life and work much easier.

How do I find a place to stay in Bergen?

Most people looking for a place to rent use websites such as www.hybel.no or www.finn.no
Look at local transport connections on www.skyss.no/en/

How much does it cost to rent in Bergen?

Prices vary depending on location, size and standard, but in Bergen city centre you can find a room in a shared flat for as little as 3500 NOK and as much as 9000 NOK per month. The average is around 5000 NOK

per person. On top of that you should usually calculate electricity costs. Be advised that many places will require a 2- or 3-months deposit which will usually be returned at the end of your stay.

What should my budget be to live in Bergen?

You should consider a minimum of 7500 NOK per month to cover living costs (accommodation, electricity, internet, phone etc.) and food (home cooked). Food costs could be around 2500 NOK per person, per month.

Approximate costs per person, in Norwegian Krone NOK (calculated in 2022):

Accommodation per month - 5000-7000 (city centre area, room in a shared flat, including internet)

Food per month - 2000

Social per month - 800

Electricity per month (summertime usage) - 350 (unless the electricity is included in your rent)

Internet at home per month: 450 (but is usually included in rent)

Phone per month - 150

Transport options:

Bus/tram travel pass (monthly) - 755 per month (455 student), 40 for a 1.5-hour ticket (24 student)

[https://www.skyss.no/billett-og-pris/prisar/buss-bybanen-og-nokre-](https://www.skyss.no/billett-og-pris/prisar/buss-bybanen-og-nokre-batruter/#vaksen__fr%C3%A5_18_%C3%A5r)

[batruter/#vaksen__fr%C3%A5_18_%C3%A5r](https://www.skyss.no/billett-og-pris/prisar/buss-bybanen-og-nokre-batruter/#vaksen__fr%C3%A5_18_%C3%A5r)

City bikes - 149 per month <https://bergenbysykkel.no>

City e-scooters: Ryde, Voi

What other financial practicalities are there to consider?

Please be aware that many landlords require two or three months of rent as a refundable deposit.

Your salary will be paid out monthly on the 15th of the following month.

Also remember that your salary amount depends on the hours/assignments that you have worked - so your first and last salary payments will usually be less since you may not have been guiding for the entire month.

Students with valid student ID can often get discounts on travel passes and other services.

My application

I have worked with a different guide agency in the past. Can I still apply?

We welcome guides that have worked with other companies within our network.

The deadline has passed. Can I still apply?

If the deadline for applications has passed you can no longer apply.

I am not available throughout the whole season. Can I still apply?

You can still apply but guides who are available for the whole season have an advantage in the recruitment process.

I want to move to Bergen, but I do not have enough funds to support myself until my first salary. Can I still apply?

It is your responsibility to provide for yourself until your first salary payment. If you cannot manage this season, we hope you can try again next season.

I do not have any previous work experience. Can I still apply?

Not having work experience still means you can become a fantastic guide. But you must prove in the application process that you have experience of being committed to work, such as an employee or volunteer in a charitable or non-governmental organization, and that you have people that can endorse you as a worker.

I do not live in Bergen yet. Can I still apply?

Yes. But you do eventually have to be in Bergen to complete the steps to be certified and then start working as a guide.

I do not live in the city centre. Can I still apply?

Yes, although we have experienced that guides living outside the city centre have a higher chance of being late because of trouble with their means of transportation (bus, tram etc.).

I do not have a passport/ID card and I live outside of Norway. Can I still apply?

You must make sure to obtain a passport/ID card by the time you travel to Norway. Our guides who have come to Norway and did not have a passport/ID, have had difficulties with the paperwork (opening a bank account, getting a tax card etc.)

I am not an EU/EEA citizen. Can I still apply?

Unfortunately not, unless you already reside in Europe and have the appropriate documentation to live and work in Norway. It is your responsibility to check that you are entitled to live and work in Norway. Check via <https://www.udi.no/en/>

I don't currently live in Bergen. If I get invited for an interview how will that work?

All interviews will include an online video call. We will then communicate about the next step

I don't have a visa for Norway. Can I still apply?

You must be entitled to work and live in Norway by the time you apply. This includes the visa if required. It is your responsibility to check that you are entitled to live and work in Norway. Check via <https://www.udi.no/en/>



I don't have a work permit for Norway. Can I still apply?

You must be entitled to work and live in Norway by the time you apply. This includes the application for a work permit if required. It is your responsibility to check that you are entitled to live and work in Norway. Check via <https://www.udi.no/en/>