



## OUTCAN Guide | Life in Oslo, Norway

### LOCATION

**Country:** Norway

**Town:** Oslo

**Other info to Consider:**

- Family (non-dependants) can visit and stay 90 days **without visa** (Schengen Area).

### POPULATION

**Size:** Oslo: over 680,000, Norway is 5,434,146

**Ethnicity:** 86% Norwegian, 13.8% non-Norwegian, Polish second highest population. Large international/ex-pat community.

### LANGUAGE(S)

**Official language:** Norwegian.

**Prevalence of French or English speaking:** The vast majority of Norwegians speak English in addition to Norwegian – and generally on a very high level. There is a small French community, especially around the French lycée. It is possible to find French students who works in Cafés or restaurants downtown Oslo.

### COST OF LIVING

**Exchange rate to consider:** Norwegian Krone (NOK). Latest Currency Exchange Rates: 1 Canadian Dollar = 7.7334 Norwegian (March 2024).

- The most expensive cities in Norway are Oslo, Bergen, Stavanger, and Trondheim.
- The service industry tends to be pricey in this country.
- Variety of items is not like North America, but you can find everything you need. You might have to visit more than one shop to find everything on your grocery list, but the food is good quality.

### QUALITY OF LIFE

**Climate and potential for severe weather, natural disasters:**

- Although it occupies almost the same degrees of latitude as Alaska, Norway owes its warmer climate to the Norwegian Current (the northeastern extension of the Gulf Stream), which carries four to five million tons of tropical water per second into the surrounding seas. This current usually keeps the fjords from freezing, even in the Arctic Finnmark region. Even more important are the southerly air currents brought in above these warm waters, especially during the winter.
- Avalanches and rockslides present a risk in mountainous areas where the weather is highly unpredictable. Monitor local media and stay informed of weather patterns and warning levels before setting off on a trek.
- Dark days in winter, long days in summer.
- The temperature in winter is around 0 to minus 10, in summer 14-23 degrees.
- During the fall and spring, there are extended grey and rainy seasons. You may experience a lack of vitamin D.

### **Laws and Culture:**

- Penalties for trafficking, use or possession, even of small amount, of illegal drugs are severe. Convicted offenders can expect heavy fines, detention or deportation. Deportation from Norway will also mean expulsion from the greater Schengen area. The period of expulsion can be from 2 to 5 years, depending on the severity of the offence.

A visitor found in possession of drugs upon arrival in Norway will be charged with importation rather than simple possession.

### **Safety and Security:**

- The crime rate is low; however, petty crime (pickpocketing and purse snatching) occurs, particularly during the summer tourist season, from May to September.

### **Level of isolation:**

- There are 2 Canadian military families posted to this location (as well as some GAC members at the embassy), it is considered remote, level of isolation is high.
- French-Speaking spouses may feel isolated if they don't speak English at all.

## **HOUSING**

- Good selection of single-family dwellings (small) as well as condos and townhomes. Apartment and houses for larger family (4+) can be harder to find in town, you might have to rent further away.
- Yards are not big, but houses can be very large.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

**Are there employment opportunities for spouses?** Due to tax and legal implications, spousal employment on the economy is not an easy option.

- Limited, language barrier.
- There are very limited employment opportunities available through CFMWS, families should plan to be single income for the duration of the posting.
- Employment is extremely limited. Families should plan to be a single-income family for the duration of the posting. [CFMWS | MFS | OUTCAN Europe | CFMWS](#)
- Of note, the French Lycée and international schools are sometimes hiring.

**Op Tempo:** The op tempo will vary greatly depending on position. TD is possible.

## **HEALTH CARE**

**Access:** Norway scores overall very high on different rankings in health care performances worldwide.

- Highly accessible via private clinic (almost no wait times), public access very similar to Canada, incl. wait times.
- English services are widely available, French is limited but you can find French speaking doctors, optometrists or dentists.
- The Canadian Medical Clinic in Geilenkirchen is responsible for the healthcare of all Canadian military members in Europe and can be accessed.
- All bills associated with the care of dependents are the member's personal responsibility and are to be claimed through PSHCP. [PSHCP Member Portal \(pshcp-msh.ca\)](#)

### **Special needs:**

- Depending on language required (English/French), area of specialization and degree of support needed.
- It may be a wait before finding an appropriate match and at times may not be possible based on availability of English/French speaking providers or resources.

- It is highly advised that the family consult with Medical Screening Officer in Canada and / or the Canadian Element to ensure that the required services are readily available in either English or French before accepting a posting.

**Consideration for pregnancy / birth:** Health care for pregnancy and birth is available on the economy, private care.

**Dental:** Dental care can be accessed in town. You are required to pay up front, and you can then claim your expenses.

## **SCHOOLING**

- Schooling is typically the International Oslo International school (IB) for grades K-12, Lycée Français René Cassin for grades JK-12.
- For an approved list of schools, please contact Children's Education Management at: [CEMGEE@forces.gc.ca](mailto:CEMGEE@forces.gc.ca)
- [Children's Education Management - Canada.ca](http://Children's Education Management - Canada.ca)
- [Gestion de l'éducation des enfants - Canada.ca](http://Gestion de l'éducation des enfants - Canada.ca)

**Curriculum vs. Canadian curriculum:**

- The Curriculum varies depending on choice of school.
- None of them offers Canadian history or geography at the elementary level.

**Resources for special need children:**

- Access to Special needs services is depending on the choice of school, language required (English/French), area of specialization and degree of support needed, it may be very limited.
- Consult with CEM and school prior to any commitments.

## **CHILDCARE**

**Things to Consider:**

- Local childcare is available, no guarantee that staff will be English or French-speaking.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

**Things to Consider:**

- You should carry an international driving permit (For a diplomate, there is an agreement in place that you can drive given a valid Canadian driver's licence).
- Penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs are severe.
- The legal blood alcohol limit is 0.02 percent. Roadside checks for alcohol are frequent, and submission to a breathalyzer test is mandatory.
- Speed limits are quite low and there are many tunnels and narrow roadways. Fines are extremely expensive, for example, over 600\$ for speeding 75 Km/h in a 60 zone.

**Public Transport:**

- Very accessible and convenient public transportation throughout the region. It should be known that parking downtown Oslo can be challenging and expensive like in any big cities.

## **RESOURCES AND AMENITIES**

**Is there a Military Family Services centre available in that location?**

- No physical centre. Families in Norway are supported by the Remote Team: [MFSE.Remotes@cfmws.com](mailto:MFSE.Remotes@cfmws.com)

**Psychosocial / Mental Health Resources:**

- Not at post, MFS(E) SW for dependants only, CAF SW/Mental Health Team for member and family are located in Geilenkirchen, Germany. Padre is located in the UK.

**Communications (e.g. Quality of Internet connection):** Very good service & very reasonable prices.

## **ACTIVITIES**

### **Access to sports or other leisure activities:**

- Large selection of sports & activity clubs, both local and international orgs. Very an outdoor community.

**Availability of playgrounds:** Yes, many.

## **RESTRICTIONS TO CONSIDER**

**Are common law relationships recognized?** Yes

**Are same sex couples recognized?** Yes

### **Medications that are illegal in the country:**

- Use without a prescription of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances is illegal. Cannabis is illegal.
- Variety of over-the-counter medications is slim, it is good to have a good stock of Advil, Tylenol, Benadryl, etc.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

- **European Commission Country Reports (2023)**

[https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/publications/2023-european-semester-country-reports\\_en](https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/publications/2023-european-semester-country-reports_en)

- **Canadian Travel Advisories**

- <https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/norway>

- **CIA World Factbooks (One Pagers from US)**

- <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/norway/>

- **Living Abroad (from Gov.UK)**

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/norway>

## **For more comprehensive information, please feel free to reach out to the resources below**

- MFS(E) Social Worker: [MFSSocialWork@cfmws.com](mailto:MFSSocialWork@cfmws.com)
- CAF Social Worker: [GKMedicalClinic@forces.gc.ca](mailto:GKMedicalClinic@forces.gc.ca)
- MFS(E) Team: [MFSE.Remotes@cfmws.com](mailto:MFSE.Remotes@cfmws.com)
- MFS(E) Regional Office: +49 (0) 2451 717 173, [MFS.Europe@cfmws.com](mailto:MFS.Europe@cfmws.com)