NORWAY (originally Nordweg, meaning the "northern way") is a part of Scandinavia, the large peninsula in northwest Europe. It borders with Sweden (1619 km), Finland 716 km) and the Soviet Union (196 km).

The land area is 324,000 km$^2$ (excluding Spitsbergen and Jan Mayen). About 50% of the country is made up of exposed bedrock. A mere 2.8% of the area is cultivated soil, 5% lakes, 20% productive forest, while less than 1% is populated. Although Norway is the country with the second lowest population density in Europe, it is the fifth largest in terms of area.

Norway has a population of 4,538,400 (2002), with about 45% living in towns and built-up areas.

The first people came to Norway at least 10,000 years ago when the huge inland glacier receded.

Oslo is the capital and the largest city with a population of 974,500 (2002).
Other large towns are:

- Bergen: 233,300
- Trondheim: 151,400
- Stavanger: 109,700
- Kristiansand: 73,900
- Fredrikstad: 68,500
- Tromsø: 60,500
- Drammen: 55,800

The oldest town Tønsberg was founded about 900 AD. Hammerfest is the most northerly town in the world.

The coastline (excluding fjords) measures 2,650 km, including the 50,000 islands the total shoreline is as much as 55,000 km.

There are great climatic variations in Norway. Thanks to the Gulf Stream and the prevailing westerly winds the country enjoys a more pleasant climate than the location between 58° and 71° north should indicate. The temperature varies little from north to south, but there is a significant contrast between the inland and the coastal regions. The average temperature is 8°C (46°F) along the west coast and -2°C (28°F) in the northern most parts (Finnmark).

The average annual precipitation is 1,960 mm in Bergen and 740 mm in Oslo. The lowest recorded temperature is -51°C ( -60°F) in Finnmark.

In the arts, sciences, and humanities the country has fostered many personalities of international stature, among them Henrik Ibsen, Edvard Grieg, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, Gustav Vigeland, Sam. Eide, Roald Amundsen and Fridtjof Nansen.
The first tourists found their way to Norway at an early date, but it was not until after the First World War that this new industry really gained momentum, leading to the building of a wide network of roads and a host of up-to-date hotels, pensions and mountain lodges. Norway's unique attraction lies in her unpolluted lakes and rivers, clean, fresh air, and a wealth of unspoiled scenery that includes tumbling waterfalls, breathtakingly beautiful fjords, and vast expanses of mountain moorland far removed from the bustle of city life. Fascinating too is the vivid contrast between snowcapped mountain peaks and verdant valleys.

In summer, days are long and nights but a fleeting twilight. And for weeks on end in the north, in the Land of the Midnight Sun, the sun never sinks below the horizon.
A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE GEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF NORWAY

Arild Palmstrom
Ing. A. B. Berdal A/S

Precambrian
The Norwegian continent is part of the Baltic shield, one of the bigger continental shields in the world. It includes Fenoscandia (Norway, Sweden, Finland) and the western part of Russia. The dominating rocks originated in medium and late Precambrian, presently some of the older types of rocks on earth. The Baltic shield is limited by the Caledonian mountain range on the western edge, and by the much younger sedimentary types of rocks on the continental shelf towards the Norwegian Sea and the North Sea.

Paleozoic
The geology of Norway and Scandinavia is basically a result of folding and metamorphism during the Caledonian orogeny 550-400 mill. years ago, when the sea bottom with sediments from Cambrian-Silurian time was compressed to form this Caledonian mountain range. It is assumed that the range was eroded down to a low
hilly scenery over a period of 50 mill. years.

**Mesozoic**
During this era Scandinavia was mostly flatland. There are only very few remnants left from the events during this 160 mill. years long era.

**Cenozoic**
Tertiary sediments are not found onshore in Norway. The flat Scandinavian landmass only a few meters high is believed to have been uplifted and tilted in connection with faults outside western Norway. This event is responsible for the characteristic highlands in Norway. In the following periods, rivers and later glaciers were eroding their way down to create the valleys we find in Norway today.

The glacier erosion in Quarternary during several ice ages ending some 10,000 years ago has effectively removed the weathered rocks. The rock surface of today is therefore fresh and in many parts uncovered by soils. This feature frequently offers excellent possibilities to study the bedrock conditions from simple surface observations.