

Hamar

Innlandet · Norway

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Hamar is a small, calm town on the eastern shore of Mjøsa, Norway's largest lake. It sits in a wide farming district about 1 hour 20 minutes north of Oslo by train. In the Middle Ages it was a bishop's seat, and the ruins of its cathedral now stand under a huge glass roof by the water.

The town suits one or two relaxed nights. You can mix museums with walks along the lake, see the giant Olympic speed-skating hall shaped like an upturned Viking ship, and take the world's oldest paddle steamer still in timetabled service. Opera singer *Kirsten Flagstad*, one of the great Wagner sopranos, was born here.

When to visit

Summer, from June to August, is the best time to visit. Days are long, the lake is warm enough for a swim and the outdoor museums run at full scale. Spring and autumn are quiet, but many outdoor exhibits close outside the warm season. Winters are long, cold and snowy, with very short days.

Plan around the summer timetable of the paddle steamer **Skibladner**, which runs regular routes on Mjøsa from about late June to mid-August. A trip on the lake is the classic Hamar day out.

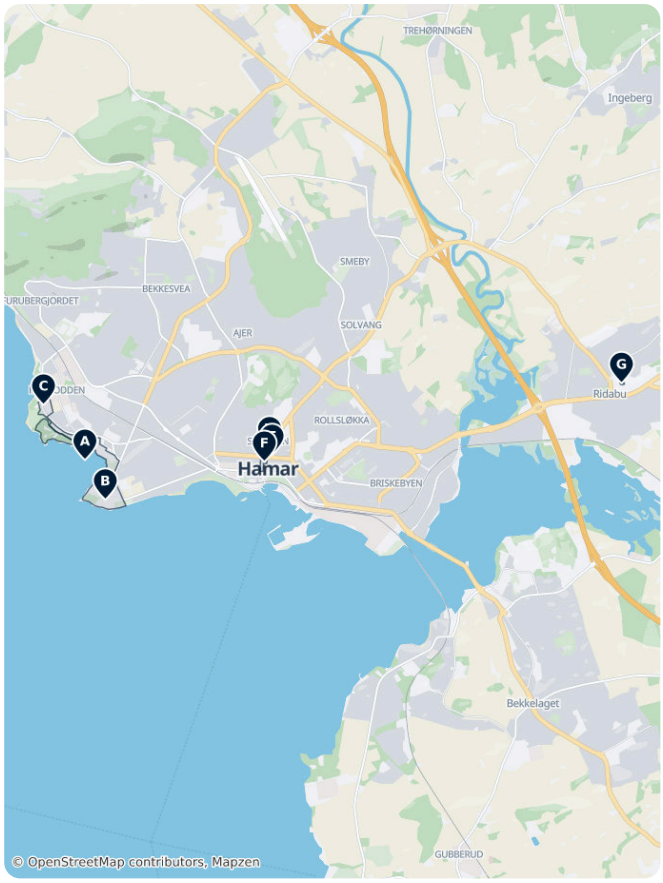
MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	-4° / 2° Feels like -8°	-10° / -19°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
February	Poor Poor for sightseeing	-3° / 2° Feels like -7°	-9° / -19°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
March	Poor Poor for sightseeing	1° / 6° Feels like -3°	-6° / -15°	Dry air · Calm winds
April	Poor Poor for sightseeing	7° / 15° Feels like 4°	-1° / -6°	Dry air · Calm winds
May	Fair Fair for sightseeing	14° / 22°	5° / -1°	15 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Good Good for sightseeing	19° / 25°	10° / 5°	16 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
July	Good Good for sightseeing	21° / 27°	13° / 8°	19 rainy days · Calm winds
August	Good Good for sightseeing	19° / 25°	11° / 7°	18 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
September	Fair Fair for sightseeing	15° / 20°	8° / 2°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
October	Poor Poor for sightseeing	8° / 13°	2° / -3°	15 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
November	Poor Poor for sightseeing	1° / 8° Feels like -2°	-3° / -13°	15 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
December	Poor Poor for sightseeing	-3° / 3° Feels like -7°	-8° / -19°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights

A Hedmarksmuseet covers the whole Domkirkeodden headland, now run as Anno Museum. It combines an open-air museum of old farm buildings, a medieval herb garden and one of Norway's

largest photo collections. Plan at least half a day here.



B Hamardomen is the glass-and-steel shelter over the ruins of the medieval cathedral, finished in 1998. You can see the stone arches through the glass from outside. The shelter has had temporary closures, so check with Anno Museum before you go if you want to go inside.

C Norsk jernbanemuseum is the national railway museum, in a park by the lake. You can see old steam locomotives, a royal carriage and relocated station buildings. In summer, a small narrow-gauge train gives rides around the grounds.

D Hamar domkirke is the town's current cathedral, a whitewashed brick church from 1866 in the centre.

E Kirsten Flagstadmuseet is the house where *Kirsten Flagstad* was born. Its exhibits cover her life and career, with photographs and personal objects. It opens in the summer season.

F Hamar Kulturhus is the modern cultural centre, with a concert hall, cinema, library and café. Check its programme for evening concerts and shows.

G Vang kirke is a large white octagonal stone church from 1810 at Ridabu, a short drive east of the centre.

- **Vikingskipet** is the Olympic speed-skating hall from the 1994 Winter Olympics, a short walk east of the centre by the lake. Its roof looks like the upturned hull of a Viking ship, and it still hosts major skating races and large events.

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What to experience

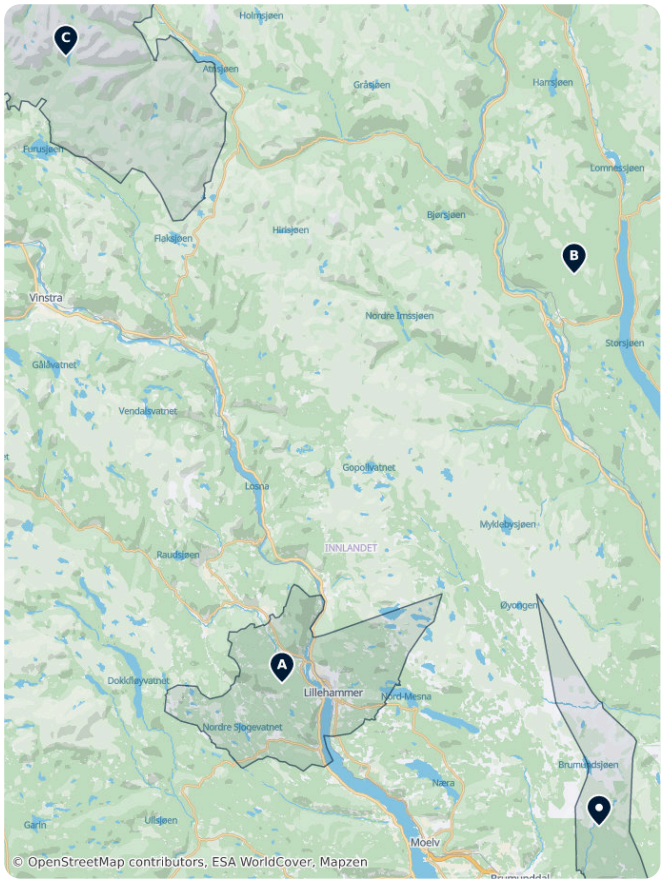
Most of the local traditions here happen on or by the lake in summer.

- **Sail on Skibladner:** Take a summer trip on the paddle steamer from 1856. Eat the traditional meal of salmon with fresh strawberries for dessert in the saloon.
- **Walk the lakeside promenade:** Strandpromenaden follows the shore for about 7 km. It passes the beach at Koigen, the diving tower, Domkirkeodden and the railway museum.
- **Swim in Mjøsa:** Join locals at the small beaches along the shore on warm summer days. The water stays cool.
- **Ride the museum train:** In summer, the narrow-gauge train Tertitten runs in the grounds of the railway museum.

Day trips

The lake and the towns around it are the main reasons to go out for the day.

- **Helgøya** — about 30 to 40 min by car. The largest island in Mjøsa has quiet farm roads, old manor farms and wide lake views.
- **Gjøvik** — about 1 hour by car, or a long summer day on Skibladner. A lakeside town across Mjøsa and the home port of the paddle steamer.
- **A Lillehammer** — under 1 hour by train. The 1994 Olympic host town has the Maihaugen open-air museum and the Olympic ski jumps.
- **B Østerdalen** — about 25 min by train to Elverum, at the start of the long forested valley. Elverum has the national museum of forestry, hunting and fishing.
- **C Rondane** — about 2.5 hours by car. Norway's first national park, with high, open mountains and marked hiking trails.



Where to explore

Hamar sits in the middle of Innlandet, between the big lake and the mountains.

- **Up the lake:** Lillehammer lies at the northern end of Mjøsa, a short train ride away.
- **Valleys and mountains:** Østerdalen runs north-east through deep forest, and Rondane offers high mountain hiking.
- **Skiing:** Trysil is Norway's largest ski resort, near the Swedish border.
- **The capital:** Oslo is the main gateway for most visitors.

Getting there

- **By air:** Oslo Airport Gardermoen (OSL) is the nearest major airport. Direct trains run from the airport station to Hamar in about 45 minutes.
- **By train:** Trains on the Dovre Line run about once an hour from Oslo and take about 1 hour 20 minutes. Most stop at the airport. The line continues north to Lillehammer and Trondheim. Buy tickets in the Vy app or at Vy.
- **By car:** The E6 motorway passes just east of town and links Hamar with Oslo and Lillehammer.

Getting around

- **On foot:** The centre, the cathedral and the lakeside are close together. Domkirkeodden and the railway museum are about 30 minutes' walk west along the lake.
- **Local buses:** Innlandstrafikk runs the town buses. The easiest way to pay is the Entur app. On board you can pay with a Visa or Mastercard bank card, but only if the card supports offline payment, or with cash in NOK. See Innlandstrafikk.
- **Cycling:** The town is fairly flat, and the lakeside promenade is a pleasant, car-free route for cycling.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The centre, the cathedral and the lakeside are close together; Domkirkeodden is a 30-minute walk along the lake.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

High

Fairly flat, with a car-free lakeside promenade that links the main sights.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?** Not for the town itself. A car is useful for Helgøya, the farm villages around the lake and the mountains, where buses are infrequent.
- **Parking:** Parking in the centre is paid. Check the signs for the payment app or machine before you leave the car.
- **Tolls:** Main roads in the region use automatic plate-reading tolls with no barriers. Rental cars are billed through the rental company.

Food & drink

Hamar lies in Hedmarken, one of Norway's richest farming districts, so local meat, potatoes, berries and dairy are common on menus. In summer, look for strawberries from the farms around the lake.

Most restaurants and cafés are in the centre, along the pedestrian street Torggata and the streets near the main square. For a special meal, eat on board Skibladner, where the salmon-and-strawberries lunch has been served for generations.

What to eat & drink

DINNER

Fårikål
Lamb and cabbage stew simmered with whole peppercorns; widely regarded as Norway's national dish, especially in autumn.

Cured salmon · Gravlaks
Salmon cured in salt, sugar, and dill, served thinly sliced with a mustard-dill sauce.

Fermented fish · Rakfisk
Trout fermented for months, eaten cold with flatbread, sour cream, and onion. A strong-smelling acquired taste.

Dried salted cod · Klippfisk
Cod salted and air-dried, then rehydrated and cooked into stews such as bacalao.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Brown cheese · Brunost
A caramel-colored whey cheese with a sweet, slightly tangy flavor, typically sliced thin onto bread or waffles.

Potato flatbread · Lefse
A soft flatbread made from potato, rolled up with butter and sugar or cinnamon.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Waffles · Vafler
Heart-shaped, thin waffles served with sour cream and jam, a common café treat.

DRINKS

Caraway spirit · Akevitt
A potato-based spirit flavored with caraway and other spices, traditionally aged in oak sherry casks and served at holidays.

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Safety & health

Hamar is a very safe town, with little crime aimed at visitors. Normal care with bags is enough.

The main risks are outdoors. Mjøsa is cold even in summer, so swim near the shore. In winter, roads and pavements are often icy, and good shoes with grip help. Ticks are common in tall grass in summer.

History

In 1152 the papal envoy *Nicholas Breakspear* made Hamar the seat of a new diocese. A stone cathedral and a bishop's manor rose on the headland now called Domkirkeodden. In 1567, during the Northern Seven Years' War, Swedish troops attacked the cathedral, and it fell into ruin. The medieval town faded away, and the cathedral remains now stand under the glass roof of Hamardomen.

Modern Hamar was founded as a market town in 1849. It grew as a railway junction, and the national railway collection began at Hamar station in 1896. Today it is shown at Norsk jernbanemuseum.

In 1994 Hamar co-hosted the Winter Olympics with Lillehammer. Speed skating took place in Vikingskipet, which is still the town's best-known modern building.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Norway at a glance:

CURRENCY
NOK kr

ELECTRICITY

Type C / Type F
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Norwegian Bokmål,
Norwegian Nynorsk

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Top sights





A Hedmark Museum

Anno Museum in Hamar, Norway is a regional museum for the municipalities of Stange, Hamar, Løten, and Ringsaker in central eastern Norway.

Strandvegen 100, N-2315 Hamar, Norway (60.79559, 11.03468)

hedmarksmuseet.no, +47 62 54 27 00



B Norsk jernbanemuseum

National railway museum of Norway, founded in 1896 and among the oldest of its kind in the world. An open-air park by Lake Mjøsa with historic locomotives, carriages and relocated station buildings.

Strandvegen, 2316 Hamar, Norway (60.80050, 11.02712)

jernbanemuseet.no, +47 40 44 88 80



C Hamar Cathedral

Hamar Cathedral is the episcopal seat of the Diocese of Hamar within the Church of Norway.

14 Kirkegata, Hamar 2317, Norway (60.79671, 11.06834)

kirken-hamar.no



D Vang Church

Vang Church is a parish church of the Church of Norway in Hamar Municipality in Innlandet county, Norway.

Hamar 2322, Norway (60.80243, 11.13249)

kirken-hamar.no



E Kirsten Flagstadmuseet

Museum in Strandstua, the house where opera singer Kirsten Flagstad (1895–1962) was born and lived for a time. A historic garden with her bust lies beside it.

Grønnegata, 2317 Hamar, Norway (60.79603, 11.06880)

kirsten-flagstad.no, +47 62 54 27 00



F Cathedral Ruins in Hamar

For the current cathedral in Hamar, see Hamar cathedral.

Strandvegen, 2316 Hamar, Norway (60.79205, 11.03838)



G Hamar house of culture

Regional cultural centre opened in 2014, combining a library, cinema, concert hall, cultural school, café and gallery under one roof.

100 Torggata, Hamar 2317, Norway (60.79543, 11.06737)

Mo–Th	08:00–21:00
Fr	08:00–16:00

hamar-kulturhus.no, 62 56 18 50

DATA SOURCES

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