

NIGHT & DAY

Visit the highlights of one of Europe's most fashionable cities in this short guide to 24 hours in Oslo

Words: Sandra O'Connell

Grand Hotel Oslo

OSLO

09.00

Fly into **Oslo Airport at Gardermoen** (www.osl.no) and marvel at the contemporary architecture by Gudmund Stokke. As you walk through the terminal, you'll find yourself relaxing in the unusually quiet space, free from PA-announcements – the airport proudly calls itself a 'silent' zone. For NOK 170 (US\$30) hop onto the underground **Airport Express Train** (www.flytoget.no) for a 20-minute ride to Oslo Central Station.

10.00

From Oslo Central Station pile your luggage into a waiting taxi for a five-minute trip to the regal **Grand Hotel Oslo** (www.grand.no; +47 23 21 22 00), located on the busy **Karl Johans gate**. With guests ranging from heads of state to Nobel Peace Prize laureates, the hotel has a distinguished 130-year history. Drop your bags off in your elegantly furnished room before having a late morning snack in the hotel's **Grand Café**.

11.00

Bicycles reign over cars in this Norwegian capital, and it makes sense to pedal your way to the sights that are further afield.

Rent a bicycle for two hours from **Viking Biking** (www.vikingbikingoslo.com; +47 41 26 64 96), which is a mere five-minute walk from your hotel. With your set of wheels, trace your steps back to Karl Johans gate and follow this main street to the lush grounds of the **Royal Palace**, where you should stop to take in the sweeping city view.

11.30

Continue your biking adventure for a further 10 minutes northwest to **Frogner Park** and the controversial **Vigeland Sculpture Arrangement**, designed by Gustav Vigeland over a 20-year period beginning in 1924. Explore the expansive park and study more than 200 sculptures in bronze, granite and wrought iron. The works depict nudes in different stages of being, including contorted in agony and relaxed in thought. Visit the **Vigeland Museum** (www.vigeland.museum.no) to learn about the various meanings of the impressive sculptures and to gain more knowledge of the talented artist.

13.00

After returning your bicycle, enjoy a 10-minute

walk southwest via **Rådhusgata** to the waterfront, where you will pass the esteemed **Nobel Peace Center** on your way to **Aker Brygge**, a trendy wharf development teeming with restaurants and boutiques. Find a seat with a view of the harbour at **Lofoten Fiskerestaurant** (www.lofoten-fiskerestaurant.no; +47 22 83 08 08) and please your tastebuds with one of their delightful seafood dishes.

15.00

If you are travelling to Oslo between April and September, take the ferry to **Bygdøyenes** from the **Rådhusbrygga pier** next to Aker Brygge to visit the much-lauded **Viking Ship Museum** (www.khm.uio.no/vikingskipshuset; \$10). Outside of these months, a 10-minute taxi ride will also take you to the attraction. Travel to another time as you gaze at the incredible craftsmanship dating back to 800 AD and imagine Vikings conquering new territory in the three mighty vessels.

17.00

As one of the most fashionable cities in Europe, you'll want to mimic some of Oslo's style while in Scandinavia. Head back to the





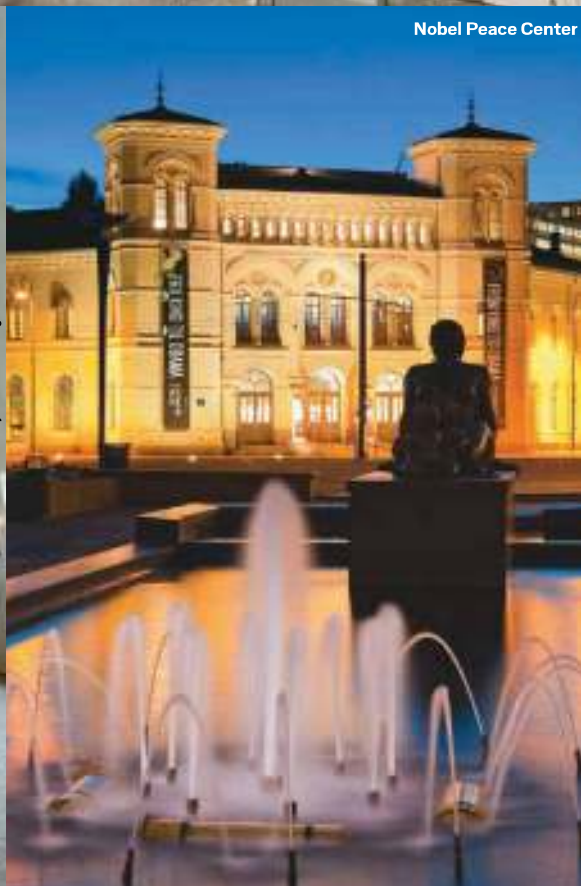
Etoile Bar



Vigeland Museum



Viking Ship Museum



Nobel Peace Center

Photo: The Vigeland Museum / BONO 2012

city centre to **Freudian Kicks** (www.freudiankicks.com), the best independent fashion boutique in town. Browse through the racks containing such designers as Acne, Opening Ceremony and Surface to Air, along with the store's own eponymous label.

18.30

Head east to the striking **Oslo Opera House** to walk across the slanting rooftop and stare out at the glistening water. Built in 2008, the architectural beauty is the first opera house in the world to allow visitors to walk on the roof. Before trekking back to your hotel to dress for dinner, rest your weary feet downstairs in the spacious **Sanguine Brasserie** (www.braseriesanguine.no; +47 21 42 21 43) while sipping on a libation of your choice.

20.30

Once you have donned your best threads for dinner, purify your body at Oslo's first organic restaurant, the two Michelin star **Maaemo** (en.maaemo.no; +47 91 99 48 05). With a focus on local food, a set menu is offered at 1,600 NOK (US\$275) – a unique feast and experience that's well worth the expense.

23.00

With a sated appetite, return to the **Grand Hotel Oslo** for a nightcap, just an elevator ride away from your room. Allow the lights of Oslo to mesmerise you from the chic **Etoile Bar**, situated on the top floor of the hotel.

00.30

Retire to your room for the night and sleep soundly, nestled in the luxurious sheets before your early departure. ■

STAY

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www.grand.no

Hotel Continental Oslo

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Photo: University of Oslo / Eirik Irgens Johnsen