

A heart for Norway

Juven combines Norwegian heritage and love of travel to connect people on both sides of the Atlantic

By **Christy Olsen Field**, Norwegian American Weekly

As the owner and operator of Juven Tours and Travel in Fargo, N.D., Carrol Juven has led tours throughout Norway for decades. His expertise and experience makes him a trusted source on traveling in Norway.

Juven was born and raised in "Little Hallingdal" near Wyndmere, N.D., in a proud Norwegian-American family. From the beginning, he was immersed in Norwegian language, culture and heritage at home and in the community. Juven joined Sons of Norway in 1966, and he jumped in. His boundless enthusiasm for Norwegian heritage and people made him an ambassador for Sons of Norway membership and life insurance.

"I took Sons of Norway fourth district from 1,700 members to 8,000 members in less than two years, and helped save it from dissolution. Today, it has more than 20,000 members," he said.

In 1967, Juven made his first trip to Norway to visit family members in Gol, Hallingdal, Norway.

"All four of my grandparents immigrated from Norway, so we visited second cousins and other family members. We still stay in touch all the time," said Juven.

This trip laid the foundation for Juven to embark on a lifetime of travel. Since his first time in Norway, Juven has returned with 47,000 people for 136 total trips to Norway. In addition, he has led tours in 98 countries on five continents. Juven's knowledge, experience and attention to detail have earned him a loyal tour following.

Juven's tour philosophy is to go off the beaten path, away from the typical tourist places, to experience the true beauty of Norway in its nature, culture and people. To do this, Juven connects with local tour guides who are well-versed in the culture and history of the region, and he draws on his extensive network of Norwegians to help create unforgettable experiences for his tour groups.

Many people want to travel to Norway to connect to their Norwegian relatives, and Juven plays an important role in connecting them to their family. As an avid genealogist himself who prides himself in finding the impossible families in Norway, Juven has assisted thousands of people with their family roots without charge.

"The first time you go to Norway, you need to plan and go with someone who knows about Norway. If you go on your own, and you know you have family over there but you don't know how to find them, you aren't going to get the most out of your experience," Juven said.

When asked about his ideal trip to Norway, he points to his 16-day Luxury Tour package. After 37 years of leading the tour, the itinerary ensures that participants see the best of Norway.

"The tour starts in Hamar (north of Oslo). From there, we continue to Lillehammer to see some Olympic sites and Maihaugen. We continue on to Trondheim, with several stops along the way of course, and visit the cultural sites like the Nidaros Cathedral. One highlight for people is to visit Hell outside of Trondheim, and people like to say that they went to Hell and back," said



Photo courtesy of Juven Tours and Travel. Carrol T. Juven, the owner and operator of Juven Tours and Travel, has been to Norway 136 times since 1967.

Juven.

From there, the tour group travels down to the fjord area with several stops along the way, such as Trollstigen and Geirangerfjord. With some time in Bergen, the group heads east for a few nights in Voss and stops in Geilo and Ål, where visitors get to participate in a traditional Hallingdal wedding – a favorite highlight of the trip. The trip concludes in Oslo with a farewell dinner at the Radisson Oslo Plaza and a walk on Karl Johans gate.

"I just love to see the group have fun," said Juven with a smile. "They go wild with their cameras!"

Carrol Juven's strength is connecting people on both sides of the Atlantic: In addition to leading tours to Norway, Juven has brought over 677 cultural exchange groups – from folk dancer troupes to farm and business tours – from Norway to the U.S. for his "Hands Across the Sea" program, which he founded in 1973.

He arranges each 10- to 14-day tour with performances, recreational activities, transportation, lodging, food and genealogy. The most popular is the "Treff Program," where Norwegian-Americans get to meet the Norwegians. Some of the well-known Norwegians who Juven has hosted in the U.S. include Arve Tellefsen, Bjørø Håland, Hanne Krogh, Sølvguttene, the Nidaros Boys Choir and Norges Ungdomslag, just to name a few. The groups perform at Scandinavian festivals and events throughout the Midwest.

Juven's love for Norway is obvious, from his thoughtfully planned itineraries to his involvement in the Norwegian-American community.

"There is no place in the world with the beauty and culture of Norway," concluded Juven. "I don't know of any other place that compare. You can find spectacular mountains in other places around the world, but it isn't as meaningful if they don't have a fjord."

"There are no strangers in Norway, just a few people you may not have met yet," added Juven.

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