



SONS of NORWAY



December 2020
Walworth County, WI

Norsemen of the Lakes 5-650

Greetings fellow Scandinavians

I pray you are all safe and keeping up your spirits. I am down here in sunny Arizona, but we, too, are dealing with the pandemic. I believe with prayer, faith and strength of spirit, we will make it through so that we may all begin to meet again soon and enjoy each others' company. Corlene

Check out past recorded episodes of Nordic News here

http://www.sonsofnorway5.com/programs/speakers_bureau.php

A Virtual Woodcarving Class will be offered by James Ray Miller. In this three-session class (Feb. 4, 11, 18) you will learn everything needed to complete the Woodcarving cultural skill pin - Level 1. Course fee is \$60 and includes one prepared wood carving blank. Max class size is 12. Sign up at: <http://son-class1.jamesraymiller.com>

Princess Märtha Risks it all to Defend Norway in New Drama

Norway's royal family thought that neutrality would protect their nation from hostile takeover, but they were caught unawares when the Germans invaded in 1940. A new historical dramatization, *Atlantic Crossing*, recently debuted on NRK, Norway's National Broadcasting Corporation. The epic Norwegian-American production finds Crown Princess Märtha and her three children fleeing Norway to find political refuge in the White House. Märtha forges a close friendship with Franklin Delano Roosevelt and helps steer Norway's destiny.

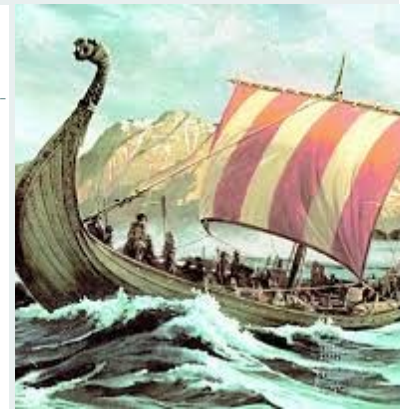


Not content to settle for her own safety while her country is under occupation, the glamorous and politically-savvy princess delivers stateside speeches against the Nazis and charms FDR, enlisting his reluctant support on behalf of Norway and eventually Europe. Both Eleanor Roosevelt and Crown Prince Olav are tested as they witness FDR's affection for Märtha and the influence she wields with him.

Screenwriter Alexander Eik said that when he first learned of the little-known friendship between FDR and the Crown Princess, he thought the series could offer a fresh perspective on World War II. Set in the US, UK and Norway, the show takes viewers on a voyage across the Atlantic and back with the royals, offering a chance to view key historical figures portrayed as real people. Shot in Norwegian, English and Swedish, the film has the highest-ever budget of any Scandinavian TV series.

Sofia Helin said that she prepared for her role by studying Norwegian for over a year. As there was limited archival footage of the Swedish-born princess' expressions and body language, Helin trained on royal manners and comportment at the palace in Stockholm.

PBS Masterpiece has picked up the 8-hour series for US release in the Spring of 2021.



Gratulere Med Dagen

December

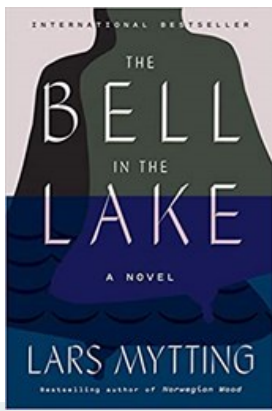
Emily Henderson	5th
Valerie Wick	8th
Haley Hansen	26th
Doris Wild	29th

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KALENDAR

Let's all hope and pray for extermination of the Covid 19 virus by spring so we can resume some semblance of normalcy.



As long as people could remember, the stave church's bells had rung over the isolated village of Butangen, Norway. Cast in memory of conjoined twins, the bells are said to ring on their own in times of danger. In 1879, young pastor Kai Schweigaard moves to the village, where young Astrid Hekne yearns for a modern life. She sees a way out on the arm of the new pastor, who needs a tie to the community to cull favor for his plan for the old stave church, with its pagan deity effigies and supernatural bells. When the pastor makes a deal that brings an outsider, a sophisticated German architect, into their world, the village and Astrid are caught between past and future, as dark forces come into play.

Lars Mytting, bestselling author of *Norwegian Wood*, brings his deep knowledge of history, carpentry, fishing, and stave churches to this compelling historical novel, an international bestseller sold in 12 countries. With its broad-canvas narrative about the intersection of religion, superstition, and duty, *The Bell in the Lake* is an irresistible story of ancient times and modern challenges, by a powerful international voice.

This title is available at the local library.

The Best Modern Viking Board Games

Andrew McKay — November 28, 2020

As the nights start drawing in, what could be better than getting together with a few friends and playing some board games? Let's take a look at some of the better titles available, with a Viking theme of course.

It's always impossible to really say which games are "best". Different players like to get different things from a game. I've tried to provide a wide variety of games here, each using different mechanics and with different goals and gameplay styles so hopefully there's something for everyone.

Fire & Axe: A Viking Saga

Originally titled Viking Fury, in *Fire & Axe* you're vying for glory across three epic sagas. Will you choose to trade, raid or settle? Or maybe go for the authentic Viking experience and do a mixture of all three?



The game initially looks a little bit like Risk – there's a "world map" and you move around conquering territories and hopefully surviving on the open seas. You start in the "Wintering Zone" where you can load your ship up with goods, warriors or both. Then you set sail, trying to achieve the objectives on your Saga card. The gameplay can take a couple of turns to get your head around but it's actually quite straightforward. Suitable for ages over 12, it can accommodate 2-5 players, but honestly, it's a game that's better with more people. Two players will probably be done in half an hour but for a larger group you'll find it stretching to about 90 minutes.

There have been a number of editions since its release in 2004 and the earlier ones look much better than the later ones. Of course, these are really hard to find, and you'll have just as much fun with the newer print. But if you do happen to see one available with the older, more vibrant and colorful map then snap it up quickly!

Yggdrasil Chronicles

Named for the mythical tree that connects the nine realms of Norse mythology, *Chronicles* is a 2019 update of the 2011 game *Yggdrasil*. You take on the role of one of 6 Norse Gods attempting to defend the realms from nefarious creatures, including everyone's favorite trickster, Loki.

It's a co-operative game so players work together against the game rather than each other. Each character has a distinct set of strengths, weaknesses and abilities. You have to have the right characters using the right abilities at the right times to come up with a winning strategy overall.

The gameboard is a beautiful 3-level depiction of the titular Norse tree of life, updated from the previous game's flat board. One of the best things about *Yggdrasil Chronicles* is that it offers numerous different game modes. There's a base game with both Easy and Hard options or if you want to play a few times there's a campaign mode.

Gameplay can be quite complex, but the makers have done a good job of making it as easy as possible. You have a character card which summarizes everything you can do if you find yourself in each of the different zones and levels on the board. Things are nicely tied together with Runic symbols to make it simple to keep track of where you are.

So, whether you want to grab a couple of friends for a quick game or get a group together for a whole series of games over the course of a campaign, you'll fill up 60-90 minutes each time. You'll want to avoid playing with children but early teens and above shouldn't have any problems.

Vikings

Vikings takes a decent dive into the day to day lives of Vikings. Over the

course of six rounds you have to gather tiles to build up your personal gameboard and fill it with different types of Vikings – fishermen, goldsmiths, warriors etc. – who can help expand your empire and fend off any attackers.

In terms of gameplay, this is similar to games such as Catan where you have to contend with other players for resources. There's a little randomness thrown in with a "pricing wheel" that can alter the price of tiles and characters over the course of the game. So you have to decide whether you want to risk wasting money early on, or risk losing out if it becomes cheaper on someone else's turn!

Vikings is pretty fast, taking 2-4 people of age 10+ around an hour to get through. The original print from 2007 is hard to get hold of but the Z-Man reprint from 2014 is widely available from all good gaming retailers.

Blood Rage

A game that always rates highly among gaming enthusiasts is Blood Rage. Ragnarök is approaching, but before you can ride gloriously into Valhalla you have to steer your clan through three ages of gameplay to pick up God's Gift cards that will hopefully help you charge on to victory!

The gameboard is divided into 9 provinces, split into three regions – Manheim, Jotunheim and Alfheim, plus Yggdrasil as its own region in the center. It's a beautiful board and has a "Glory Track" running from 1-100 around the edge.

Blood Rage is effectively a card-drafting/deck-building game. You play through three ages building your deck and positioning your pieces, hoping you'll have the strength to beat your opponents and gain the most glory. There are cards that dictate different strategies – for example if you have Loki on your side, you'll get extra points for losing!

As you'd expect from a Viking game, the only real losing strategy is to shy away from battle and the chance of a glorious death! Two-4 people of 14+ will get through a game in around 90 minutes. There's an expansion to add a 5th player and others that add new characters, cards and monsters and help keep the gameplay fresh.

A Feast for Odin

As the name suggests, A Feast for Odin is basically about food. You have to keep your clan fed as you work to build your society. Basically, it's Viking economics as a game. And what a game it is! Opening the box and laying everything out, you'll see that it's massive. It's sumptuous and complex and yet it doesn't take long to get your head around it.

You start with a personal gameboard representing your own Viking society. Through 6 or 7 rounds you have to feed your people and build up the strength and prestige of your empire. There's space for ships and animals and luxury tiles that you get through trade or plunder to build up to a winning position.

If you've played any of the Uwe Rosenberg 'worker placement' type games before you'll have a head start. Released in 2016, the game has been nominated for many 'Game of the Year' awards and already has a few expansions to mix the gameplay up a bit. 1-5 players of age 12+ can take anywhere between one and two hours to enjoy this fully.



New Rules for Arctic Shipping "a Missed Opportunity"

By Malcolm Senior, BBC News
20 November 2020

The International Maritime Organization has passed a series of restrictions on ships which use and transport heavy grade oils. It hopes these will help protect the lands, communities and wildlife of the Arctic.

But the new rules include a series of waivers and exemptions for ships from Arctic coastal states. The decision has been condemned by environmentalists as a "massive missed opportunity".

Heavy fuel oil (HFO) is widely used to power commercial ships. HFO's have been banned in Antarctic waters since 2011 over fears that oil spills could cause pollution.

Dr Sian Prior, from the Clean Arctic Alliance, said the IMO and its member states "must take collective responsibility for failing to put in place true protection of the Arctic, indigenous communities and wildlife from the threat of heavy fuel oil."

The IMO's plan "would allow 74% of HFO-fueled ships to keep using HFO in the Arctic," said Dr Bryan Comer, from the International Council for Clean Transportation. It "would result in a reduction of HFO carried of just 30% and a cut in black carbon emissions of only 5%," he added.

And John Maggs, senior policy advisor at Seas at Risk said, "A 'ban' that affects just a quarter of ships is not a ban at all."

A coalition of green groups had proposed a much tougher set of restrictions, but they were rejected by delegates. Furthermore, an accident which resulted in an HFO spill from a ship could wreak havoc on the Arctic's fragile ecosystem.

The new restrictions, which will come into force in July 2024, aim to reduce the number of ships that can use and transport HFO in the Arctic. However, analysts say with the amount of sea ice reducing in the Arctic, more and more ships will use the Northern Sea Route.

But included are a whole string of exclusions and waivers for ships that carry the flag of the five central Arctic coastal countries (Russia, Norway, Denmark [Greenland], Canada and the US) until July 2029.

Russia has the largest number of vessels in the Arctic area. It told IMO delegates that the NGO proposal was "irresponsible".

Earlier this month, Norway announced its own proposed HFO ban from all the waters around the Arctic island archipelago of Svalbard.

"This is yet another sad day for the Arctic," said Sigurd Enge, manager of Shipping, Marine and Arctic Issues, Bellona. "The Arctic environment is threatened from all sides, from climate change, toxic contamination, plastic pollution, oil exploration and other extractive industries. What the Arctic needs now is better protection and bold politicians."

10 Ways to Save Money on Groceries in Norway

By Whitney Love — June 1, 2014

A Norwegian food writer shares some top tips on grocery shopping in Norway on a budget.

You know the scene – it's you, your debit card and two bags of groceries that you just paid 600NOK to drag out of the corner market. Then you get home and nearly break into tears because you've just realized that you forgot to pick up the pate and sliced pickles!

We've all been there, and now, sadly again, you're there too– you've blown your food budget in one trip to the grocery store and you need to buy just a few more items.

So here are some of my budget friendly tips for eating well on a limited budget in Norway:

1. Stick to a list. Decide what you are going to buy at the grocery store, make a list – and stick to it. It's easy to blow your food budget by giving in to impulse purchases, so make your list and stick to it.

2. Meal planning is the key to success. Planning out your meals for the week – or even just your dinners – takes all the guess work out of your evening meal and makes it better to plan ahead. If you base your meals on the foods that are in season and in the weekly circular ads, you'll be able to save money by eating what's freshest.

3. Know what you have in stock. Do you really need (yet) another block of cheese? If you know what is in your fridge before you go to the store, you know what you need to buy. Make sure to take inventory of what you have on hand before you head to the market.

4. Go meatless. One or two days a week, go vegan or vegetarian. This is a lot less painless than it sounds and the money you save on meat, dairy and other animal-based products will quickly add up. Choose dishes that are full of both fiber and plant-based protein such as vegetarian chili. Also, try dishes with loads of flavor, to keep you full and satisfied.

5. Get a deep freezer. My deep freezer is one of my best friends when it comes to keeping my monthly food budget in check. Save one or two portions of any dish you make in the freezer and you'll have homemade convenience meals on hand instead of buying expensive convenience meals at the store for when you can't be bothered to cook.



6. Compare prices. Finding good deals on food items you buy often might come in unexpected places, so keep your eyes open. I buy items such as unrefined sea salt, tea, bouillon, nuts, seeds plus a few other items in health food and organic food stores. Why? These are items commonly bought in these stores and as such, don't tend to cost as much per kilo as in other places. Also, as the store's clientele buys them frequently, the store's stock rotates often. No one ever believes me when I say I save money in the organic food stores, but I do.

7. Go where the deals are. International food stores in Norway are a great place to find super deals and save big. Dried beans, spices, produce and olives in international food stores are normally 50-90% off compared to prices in more traditional Norwegian supermarkets. These stores are also a good place to find lamb and poultry.

8. Use what you buy. If you buy something, eat it. Wasted food means wasted money.

9. Find substitutions. Most grocery stores have a "soon to be expired" section where they sell food items that are reaching their expiry date or looking a little less than fresh. Shop in this section of the store for great deals on more expensive cuts of meat which weren't purchased at full price, or cheeses which were left behind for the same reason.

10. Eat your greens. Most major cities in Norway have shops that only sell fruit and vegetables, so head here for discounts on your greens.

Supermarket loyalty programs

Loyalty schemes are becoming more popular in Norwegian supermarkets. The best known is Rema 1000's **Æ**, which gives 10% discount on all fresh fruit and vegetables, along with your most bought items.

If you shop more frequently at Kiwi, Meny, Spar or Joker, check out the **Trumf** program. It allows you to collect and redeem points at multiple outlets, and even convert them to air miles. Of course, such schemes are designed to get you to spend more, not less, but clever use of them can still see you benefit.

Norway Oil Fund Hits Record \$1.2 Trillion Value Following Coronavirus Vaccine Boost

By David Nikel Nov. 17, 2020

Norway's oil fund topped 11 trillion Norwegian Kroner (NOK) (\$1.214 trillion) for the first time today as a stock market rise driven by positive coronavirus vaccine news drove up the value of the world's largest sovereign wealth fund.

The new record comes almost exactly one year after the value hit NOK 10 trillion (\$1.1 trillion) for the first time.

With some of Norway's wealthiest people taking a financial hit due to the pandemic, it may surprise many to see Norway's savings account looking so healthy.

But the fund's holdings are so diverse that it can ride out economic issues better than most. Substantial investments in real estate complement the holdings in more than 9,000 companies worldwide to ensure a constant flow of rental and dividend income into the fund.

Stock market rise benefits Norway

Because of the fund's global footprint, news that causes a general lift in stock markets worldwide usually has a corresponding impact on the fund's value. The recent promising vaccine news from Pfizer and Moderna saw global markets rise, which lifted the value of the fund to new heights.

When the scale of the pandemic became clear earlier this year, the fund's value dipped to NOK 9.3 trillion (\$1.02 trillion) as the world's stock markets fell. But since then, the fund has been boosted by market recovery and a weakened Krone.

Why a weakened Krone matters

As the fund only makes investments outside of Norway, the vast majority of its holdings are denominated in foreign currencies, with the U.S. Dollar and Euro leading the pack. Even a small change in the value of the Krone can make a major impact on the estimated value of the fund in Krone.

In May 2011 the NOK/USD exchange rate stood at 0.190. The value of the Kroner steadily weakened over time to 0.109 today, although it did recover quickly from a coronavirus-related collapse to 0.084 in March.

Turning oil reserves into wealth

In 1969, one of the world's largest oil fields was discovered off the coast of Norway. It was the first of many discoveries on the Norwegian continental shelf that would forever change the fortunes of the Scandinavian nation.

As exploration and exploitation grew, oil money quickly dominated the economy. To keep control and avoid imbalances in the economy, the government decided to exercise caution in the use of oil revenues. In 1990, they passed legislation to create what is now known as the Government Pension Fund Global. The first money was deposited in 1996.

"Oil revenue has been very important for Norway, but one day the oil will run out," according to Norges Bank Investment Management. The fund is designed to promote long-term thinking and safeguard the future of the Norwegian economy.

As such, Norway's government is limited to spending no more than approximately 3% of the fund's value during the course of a year. Nevertheless, that amounts to as much as 20% of the annual government budget.

A warning from the top

Øystein Olsen, governor of Norway's central bank, warned earlier this year that the fund's value won't always increase. The fund has become more dependent on the stock markets over time, with the proportion of its total value increasing from 40% to 70%.

"Because the fund has constantly increased in value, Norway has long escaped demanding austerity measures. It may be different in the years ahead," he said in his most recent annual speech.



IKEA Signs Work Agreement for Immigrants in Norway

by David Nickel — November 24, 2020

Norway's Labor and Welfare Administration (NAV) has signed a deal with IKEA to help get more immigrants into the workplace.

Refugees and immigrants are among those struggling hardest in the labor market in the wake of the ongoing health crisis. A national collaboration between NAV and IKEA should help more of them find a job in Norway.

High unemployment among immigrants

"The unemployment level among immigrants is high. Many in this group, especially those who come from countries outside the EEA, have weak Norwegian skills and little formal competence," says NAV director Hans Christian Holte.

"In a more demanding labor market with many unemployed, we are concerned that immigrants end up even further behind in the job-seeker queue and remain outside the labor market for a long time."

"In Oslo, they have succeeded in getting refugees and immigrants into work through a collaboration with IKEA. We now want to benefit from these experiences in the rest of the country."

On Thursday 19 November, Holte signed on behalf of NAV an agreement with IKEA on a national collaboration to get more refugees and immigrants into work. The collaboration has been named "The bridge to work".

Norwegian language training in the workplace

According to NAV, the unique collaboration model that combines Norwegian language training with work practice is the key to success in Oslo. This means that adult education in the municipality plays an important role, together with NAV and the employer.

So far, this has produced good results. Of the 50 who have completed the program, half have secured a job with IKEA. If you include other employers, as many as 68% have found work.

"This is a good example of what we can achieve when we work together across sectors. NAV has a large toolbox, but in order to succeed we depend on good cooperation with, among others, employers and the education system," says Holte. "The collaboration in Oslo has proved so successful that we want to spread the model to the rest of the country so that more refugees and immigrants have the opportunity to get paid work. In the long run, we also want to use the model in collaboration with other employers," he adds.

Great opportunity for recruitment

Back in 2017, a collaboration was established between NAV Alna, NAV Grorud and Oslo Adult Education and IKEA.

"In recent years, IKEA has had very good experience of collaborating with NAV and adult education," says Clare Rodger's CEO of IKEA Norway.

"The bridge to work' is a scheme that helps people with a refugee background to have a meaningful everyday life and get paid work, but it has also been an opportunity for IKEA to recruit skilled employees. We are proud that half of those who have participated in the program so far are now working at IKEA," she adds.

Started in Oslo

The collaboration in Oslo is part of the employment program in Oslo's area initiatives. City Councilor Raymond Johansen is pleased that the efforts are also yielding results outside the capital. "This important agreement shows that the Area Initiatives in Oslo contribute to the development of new and exciting services that make it easier for refugees and immigrants to get a job. Oslo is a diverse city with complex challenges. If we get it here, we can make it all over Norway," says Johansen.

Succeed with cross-disciplinary collaboration

"I think it is very good that NAV and Ikea are rolling out this job collaboration in the middle of a very difficult time for those who are far away from working life. The job of creating more and including more continues in full force," says Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Henrik Asheim. He believes that good cooperation between the sectors will be able to yield results, and will be followed by his ministerial colleague in the Ministry of Education and Integration:

"In order to achieve individually tailored and work-oriented qualification courses, which can lead refugees and immigrants to work, it is important to have good relations and good cooperation between the municipality, the state and the business community," says Minister of Education and Integration Guri Melby. "This agreement between NAV and IKEA has the ambition that at least 50 percent of the participants will get a job. It is a very good initiative that it is good that municipalities in other parts of the country can now also take part in," adds the minister.

