
WELCOME

to Western Telemark and our museums!

Here you can see, hear, taste and explore our history.

Western Telemark is known for being a land of stories and a treasure chest. Let this brochure be your guide into our history, art and cultural heritage. Here we propose a number of topics to help you on your journey. Here you will also find information about distances to the next museum.

The painter Henrik Sørensen once said that Telemark is like Paris: every square meter has its own history! Sørensen was known for using big words, but a lot of this is true. The more you hear, see and learn, the more fascinated you will be. For over 40 years he returned again and again to see more, get inspired and to paint – Sørensen never finished.

You will find a lot of information in this brochure, on our website or via the *Vest-Telemark Museum application* (VTM app), available for free for your smartphone. You will soon see that roads will cross, stories will connect and you will understand more of this region.

West Telemark museum was founded in 2002 as a common administration for a total of twelve locations. They have different stories to tell, but together they convey much of the most important from the region.

Find your path, find the treasures and enjoy your very own voyage!



With kind regards

Dag Rorgemoen

director

West Telemark Museum

THROUGH WESTERN TELEMARKE

The History of Western Telemark

The first people to reach this region were hunters following the reindeer. A long time passed before they settled down, built houses and cultivated the land. After some time, the rich natural resources were discovered, and these made the foundation for industry and trade.

● Iron, Whetstone and Copper

The oldest traces of iron mines and quarries in Western Telemark are from the first centuries of our Current Era. During the migration period, approximately 400-600 A.D, a number of farms were established. The burial mounds in **Fyresdal** are from this period.

After some time the people learned how to make steel that had to be sharpened, and the sale of whetstone from the quarry in **Eidsborg** started around the 700's. This was the first product of our export and became a part of the North Sea trade route.

The varied geology offered several advantages. When the Danish king in 1539 issued German mine workers to start mining in Norway, it was to Western Telemark they went. Copper mines are found in several places, but at **Åmdals Verk** you can visit actual mines and learn about the operation that took place 1691-1945.

The Telemark waterway was the main route out for export.

From the 1600's, timber was considered valuable and thus lumbering became an important industry. From Western Telemark there was a current of whetstone, ore, timber, and also butter, meats and fish. This was grazing land as well as hunting grounds.

The transport and trade connected this part of Telemark to the rest of the world. This provided work and influence from abroad. The building of a canal started in the 1850's, and from 1892, it was possible to sail directly from Dalen to the sea. A new era had begun for tourism, industry, and trade. The **Telemark canal** also became part of the main connecting route between the eastern and western part of Norway.

THROUGH WESTERN TELEMAR

● Peasant Culture

There is no other place where you can find such a number of well preserved wooden houses from the Middle Ages as you can in Western Telemark. Big and coarse logs of pine were selected carefully for houses for both people and animals. The farmer did not only build for himself, but also for the generations to come.

Many of these houses are still standing on various farms; at our outdoor museums at **Eidsborg**, **Kviteseid**, **Fyresdal**, and **Øyfell**, you can study and compare them with later building traditions. Here you can also experience interior design, tools and other utilitarian articles. Craftsmanship has been highly valued, and in addition to their usage(s), aesthetics were greatly appreciated.

Arts and crafts from the region bloomed from the 1700's. Based on knowledge of materials and skills, the development of ski making also increased. The pioneers came from **Morgedal** with competitions, displays and even trips to the poles – this created the foundation for modern skiing.

● Sculpturing and Art

From the middle of the 18th century, the Norwegian romantic nationalism movement collected many motives that show nature and everyday life in Western Telemark. But also in later periods painters like **Henrik Sørensen** and **Harald Kihle** kept coming back yearning for more inspiration.

Many artists originate from Western Telemark, for example four big Norwegian sculptors: **Gunnar Utsond**, **Anne Grimdalen**, **Dyre Vaa**, and **Knut Skinnarland**. No other region is comparable.

From this region, also musicians and writers have become great in their arts, for example: poet and journalist **Aasmund Olavsson Vinje**, and the fiddler Tarjei Augundsson, better known as **Myllarguten** (meaning the Miller's Son).

FOOD AND ACCOMMODATION

There are cafés with warm meals at the museums in Morgedal and Eidsborg. You can buy coffee at Åmdals Verk Mining Museum, Kviteseid Local Folk Museum and Grimdalstunet.

Find information about accommodation on these websites:

Eidsborg/Dalen/Tokke:

visitdalen.com

Morgedal/Kviteseid/Vrådal:

morgedal.com

visitvraadal.no

Fyresdal:

fyresdal.kommune.no

Øyfell/Rauland/Arabygdi/Vinje:

visitrauland.com

Seljord:

seljordportalen.no

For more information about the region:

visittelemark.com



The café at the Ski Museum in Morgedal offers warm meals with traditional food all year round. In Eidsborg you find a summer open café.

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WEST TELEMAR MUSEUM EIDSBORG

- Permanent exhibitions with folk art and crafts
- Temporary exhibitions
- Eidsborg whetstone: exhibition and hiking trail



The main building of the West Telemark Museum was opened in 2012, and is the main office of the consolidated museums you find in this brochure. The museum is located nearby Eidsborg Stave Church, between Høydalsmo and Dalen at the very top of the Telemark Canal. Here you can find an outdoor museum surrounding two old farms, and an activity park with a miniature model of the Telemark Canal (see p. 8/9)

In the museum's main building there are both permanent and temporary exhibitions and displays with folk art, costumes, silver, rosemåling (decorative painting), and knife making. You will also find an exhibit telling the story of the hydroelectric development in the region, and a separate department showing the 1500-year history of whetstone from Eidsborg. Varying temporary exhibits throughout the year.

Open May – September or upon request. Gift shop and café.



7 km (10 min) to Canal History at Dalen bryggje
16 km (20 min) to Grimdalstunet at Skafså

EIDSBORG STAVE CHURCH

- Stave church from the 1200's
- Wall painting, gothic décor, crucifix



This small and fair stave church is located close to West Telemark Museum, location Eidsborg. The building is from the period 1250-80 and was expanded upon in the 1600's and 1800's. The church was restored in 2005-2008 and is still in use.

The stave church is of a kind that has the exterior covered entirely with chipping. The church was dedicated to St. Nicolaus (locally called Nikuls), and a statue of this saint was central in local religious practices that remained well into the 1700's.

There are many interesting details to this church, such as runes, carvings and interior décor from the 1600's.

From June until September there are guided tours of the church every day, or upon request.

In the museum, you can purchase a book about the church.



22 km (25 min) to Øyfjell bygdetun
28 km (30 min) to Norsk skieventyr in Morgedal

OPEN AIR MUSEUM EIDSBORG

- Europe's oldest profane wooden building
- Trail to the whetstone quarry (two hours)



This part of the West Telemark Museum Eidsborg was established as Lårdal Village Museum by silversmith Eivind Tveiten and his wife Hæge. It consists of two old farms, Uppistog and Nistog Vindlaus and many more buildings that were relocated here.

There are more than 30 buildings, among them Europe's oldest profane wooden building, Stålekleivloftet from 1167.

In the yard, you also find the house of a wealthy farmer called Juve King – a typical Telemark house richly decorated by the famous rose painter Olav Torjusson in 1799. Other buildings tell the story of farm life in the 1800's. In addition you will find a tenant farm.

Many of the buildings are open to the public.

Open May – September, or upon request.



40 km (40 min) to Kviteseid bygdetun / Old Church
43 km (45 min) to Vinje biletgalleri at Smørklepp

ACTIVITY PARK IN EIDSBORG

- The history of the Telemark canal conveyed through water activities and traditional artisanship



The Activity Park in Eidsborg is new to the museum.

In the middle of the park, there is a 105 m (344 feet) long model of the Telemark Canal with water, boats, locks and a power station. Here you can indulge yourself in history and guide your whetstone or timber all the way between Dalen and Skien.

Near the canal you find a small tenant's farm where you can experience traditional handicraft several days a week.

The park also offers archeological site activity, log house building, archery and blacksmithing.

Enjoy a cup of coffee while the children play in the park!

Open June – August.



48 km (50 min) to Dyre Vaa / Skinnarland at Rauland
51 km (55 min) to Fyresdal bygdemuseum

CANAL HISTORY AT DALEN BRYGGJE

- History of boating and the floating of lumber
- Lastein wharf: Port of export for whetstone



The history of Telemark waterway as a mean of transportation goes back a thousand years. Whetstone, timber and other goods were transported down the waterway. In 1892, the Bandak Canal was opened, and Dalen became an important junction between Western and Eastern Norway. The picturesque Dalen Hotel, built in 1894, is still to this day living proof of a golden age that lasted until the mid-1920's.

An exhibition at the Dalen quay (bryggje) shows the history of boat traffic on the canal with objects and photographs. Next to the quay, there is a listed loading dock for timber, with posters illustrating the importance of the floating on the canal.

The exhibition at the quay is open as long as the canal boats are running. This is also the starting point for the tour of Tokke power station. For more information, visit the Tourist office in Dalen.



7 km (10 min) to Eidsborg Museum / Stave Church
10 km (15 min) to Grimdalstunet at Skafså

GRIMDALSTUNET (ANNE GRIMDALEN HOME)

- Collection of art from the known female sculptor
- Historic mountain farm with ten houses and a mill



The sculptor Anne Grimdalen (1899-1961) was born and raised here at Grimdalstunet, but left early to become an artist. She had her breakthrough in 1938, when she won a competition and became one of the main contributors to the decorations of Oslo City Hall. She is most famous for her child and animal sculptures, many of which you can see here.

The Grimdalen Farm is one of very few completely preserved authentic mountain farms in the area. The main dwelling has original interior from the time when Anne Grimdalen lived here.

In the gallery, you find many of her sculptures and things that Grimdalen collected. Here you can also find exhibitions of contemporary art, with certain pieces available for purchase.

Open June – August, or upon request. Coffee and snacks.



10 km (10 min) to Canal History at Dalen bryggje
11 km (15 min) to Åmdals Verk gruver

ÅMDALS VERK GRUVER (MINING MUSEUM)

- Guided tour in 250 years old copper mines
- Unique mechanical models and geology exhibit



In the 1500's, German miners on behalf of the Danish king came to Gullnes in Seljord and to Moisesberg in Fyresdal to start mining in Norway. At Åmdals Verk, not far from Moisesberg, the extraction of copper started in 1691, and lasted until 1945.

In a reconstruction of the old sorting house there is a unique museum with advanced mechanical models that show the different parts of the mining process. A rich exhibit of minerals shows some of the geology in the area.

A guided tour of the mines starts at the museum and goes several hundred meters down into the Hoffnung Mine. Outside the museum, there are walking paths to the remains of an entire mining community – that made the foundation for today's establishment at Åmdals Verk.

Open June – August, or upon request. Coffee and snacks.



11 km (15 min) to Grimdalstunet at Skafså
31 km (35 min) to Fyresdal bygdemuseum

FYRESDAL BYGDEMUSEUM (LOCAL MUSEUM)

- Burial mounds from about 400-800 A.D.
- Farmhouses from 15-1700. Village area from 1900



This is one of Norway's oldest village museums, established in 1909. It is located in Øyskogen, a park in the center of Fyresdal, with the oldest houses being from the Middle Ages, moved here from farms in the rural district.

1500 years ago, Øyskogen was sacred grounds, and notable people were buried here. During the Viking period (800-1030 A.D.) the burial mounds were used as a site for contacting the gods.

Folkestadbyen (Folkestad Village), close to Øyskogen is a unique place looking like a small town of Southern Norway. The houses here were moved from the district when people started migrating "to the city", between 1870 and 1920.

The Øyskogen buildings are open June – August, or upon request.

A book about the museum can be purchased at the local tourist information, or at West Telemark Museum Eidsborg.



31 km (35 min) to Åmdals Verk gruver

51 km (55 min) to Kviteseid bygdetun / Old Church

KVITSEID BYGDETUN (LOCAL MUSEUM)

- Buildings from prosperous 1700's farms
- Collection of sculptures by Gunnar Utsond



The Kviteseid Museum of Local History was founded in 1907 and established next to the Kviteseid Old Church in 1949.

Several of the houses have been moved here from big prosperous farms. The famous painter Talleiv "Målar" Espetveit decorated the dwelling "Flektveitstoga" from Lårdal, in 1750. The store houses "Tveitloftet" and "Flektveitloftet" have beautiful carvings from 1790.

A display hall shows sculptures made by Gunnar K. Utsond (1864-1950). Utsond is one of the famous Norwegian symbolists and the creator of the *Helhest* ("Hell's horse") at Ekeberg, Oslo. Utsond's dramatic and tragical history is told through the exhibition. In addition, there are new varying exhibits every year.

Open June – August, or upon request. Coffee and snacks.



19 km (20 min) to Norsk skieventyr in Morgedal
42 km (45 min) to Øyfjell bygdetun

KVITSEID OLD CHURCH

- Stone church made in Roman style from 1260
- Decorations by painter Thomas Blix from 1714



Most churches built in the Middle Ages were stave churches, unlike in more central places where they were built in stone. Kviteseid Old Church is one of these main churches, from 1260.

At this time, there was a trade post (*Kauphamar*) not far from the church by the water for trade with whetstone, iron and leather. There are several of these stone churches along the Telemark Canal.

The church has many interesting details, such as an arch in entrances with two dragons twisting around each other, and decorations around the altar by Thomas Blix from 1714. The altarpiece is from 1732, while the font has a medieval style and is probably made in the 1500's.

There are tours of the church starting at the Kviteseid Local Museum from June to August.



40 km (40 min) to Eidsborg Museum / Stave Church
51 km (54 min) to Fyresdal bygdemuseum

ØYFJELL BYGDETUN (LOCAL MUSEUM)

- Unique museum with a peculiar varied exhibition
- Dwelling with influence from city fashion in 1890



In 1931, the village of Øyfjell got this special museum as a testamentary gift from the brothers Tarjei and Olav O. Trovatn. The main building is made in granite.

The museum has a rich collection of tools, costumes, rose paintings, kitchen utensils and various curiosities. Here you can see Norway's biggest "beer hen" (a type of bowl). The «Nystog collection» shows items which were in use on a wealthy farm of the 1800's.

The yard shows a farm as it was in the 1900's. In the barn, you can find an exhibit about the workhorse. The farmhouse "Mostøylstoga" is from 1860/90 and has an interior influenced by city fashion from that time.

Open weekends June – August, or on request.



21 km (25 min) to Dyre Vaa / Skinnarland at Rauland
25 km (30 min) to Norsk Skieventyr in Morgedal

MYLLARHEIMEN (FIDDLER HOME)

- Smallholding Kosi from 1866 with older houses
- Home of famous fiddler. Statue by Dyre Vaa



Tarjei Augundsson, born 1801 and raised in Sauherad, was a well known folk musician. Called the “Miller’s Son” after his father, Tarjei started early with the Hardanger fiddle and performed from the age of eight. He was discovered by famous violinist Ole Bull, and even played for the Danish king.

In 1852, Myllarguten had earned money and could buy Øygarden, which Kosi was a part of. He had to sell everything in 1866, but got to keep Kosi. He moved four older buildings to the place and lived here until his death in 1872. The main house was destroyed in 1900, but the site was restored and a new house built in 1950.

A monument of Myllarguten, made by Dyre Vaa was set up here in 1969. Myllarheimen is located in the small village of Arabygdi.

Group tours in the Fiddler Home are available for booking at the West Telemark Museum Eidsborg.



25 km (28 min) to Dyre Vaa / Skinnarland at Rauland
37 km (40 min) to Vinje biletgalleri at Smørklepp

SCULPTURE & ART MUSEUM RAULAND

DYRE VAA COLLECTION

● Large and small originals in plaster by the sculptor



Alongside Gustav Vigeland, Dyre Vaa (1903-1980) was the sculptor that has had most influence on Norwegian sculpting. He was born in Kviteseid and lived in Oslo for a long time before moving in to Rauland in the 1930's. During his study period, he was a student of Gunnar Utsond and W. Rasmussen at the Art Academy in Oslo.

Many of Vaa's sculptures are in Oslo. Probably most famous are his fairy tale figures at the Anker Bridge (Ankerbrua) and the wolves at Ila. He also made the Seamen's Monument in Bergen and three figures for the western front of the Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim. He was also a painter.

Dyre Vaa gave most of his plaster originals to the municipality of Vinje. In 1981, the Dyre Vaa Museum opened. Here are also works by Dyre's son Tor, and by Svallaug Svalastoga.

Open June – August, or upon request.



21 km (25 min) to Øyfell bygdetun

25 km (30 min) to Fiddler Home at Arabygdi

SCULPTURE & ART MUSEUM RAULAND

KNUT SKINNARLAND COLLECTION

 Rich collection of sculptures and sculptor's atelier



Western Telemark had four great sculptors in the 1900's: Gunnar Utsond, Anne Grimdalen, Dyre Vaa, and Knut Skinnarland (1909-1993). Knut Skinnarland was, as Dyre Vaa, a student of Wilhelm Rasmussen at the Art Academy in Oslo.

An important part of Skinnarland's work is related to the restoration of the western front of the Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim, where he contributed with four figures. He is also known for the monument of a fisherman in Ålesund and in Akureyri (Iceland), and for portraits of famous writer Aasmund Olavsson Vinje and skiing pioneer Sondre Norheim.

In 1994, the Skinnarland exhibit opened, in walking distance from the Dyre Vaa exhibit. Here there is a copy of his atelier. Every year there also is an exhibit with contemporary art for sale.

Open June – August, or upon request.



34 km (40 min) to Vinje biletgalleri at Smørklepp
48 km (50 min) to Eidsborg Museum / Stave Church

VINJE BILETGALLERI

HENRIK SØRENSEN AND HARALD KIHLE

● Unique gallery with Telemark-inspired paintings



The painter Henrik Sørensen (1882-1962) was a leading figure for Norwegian artists in his time. During his long period of working, he had a special rhythm: he spent the autumn in Italy, the winter in his atelier in Oslo City Hall, the spring in Holmsbu (Hurum) and the summer here in Smørklepp in Vinje, where he painted landscape and people.

His son Sven Oluf Sørensen built two galleries for his father's paintings, one in Holmsbu in 1973 and this one in Vinje in 1991. They were both drawn by the architect Bjart Faye Mohr in a peculiar style with coarse granite and glass, well hidden in the forest.

In this secret pearl of an art museum, there are also paintings by Sørensen's friend Harald Kihle (1905-1997), famous for portrayals of landscape, rural life and horses.

Open June – August, or upon request.



4 km (5 min) to A. O. Vinje Home

34 km (40 min) to Dyre Vaa / Skinnarland at Rauland

A. O. VINJE HOME

- Poet Aasmund Olavsson Vinje's childhood home
- House from the 1800's with furnishings



Aasmund Olavsson Vinje (1818-1870) grew up in this smallholding from 1824. He was an energetic, skillful and creative man, and became famous nationwide as a poet, writer, and journalist. He was the first to use *Nynorsk* (New Norwegian) as written language by publishing a book that described what he saw of country life during his travels around Norway. Vinje was known for his beautiful poems but also for a particularly satirical use of the pen.

In Vinjestoga there are still objects from the time when Aasmund lived and worked here, such as his his writing desk, originals of the newspaper he edited *Dølen* and many other things.

Open June – August, or upon request.

One can also pre-book a tour including a mini concert with Aasmund Nordstoga, a local and nationally known folk musician.



4 km (5 min) to Vinje biletgalleri at Smørklepp
31 km (35 min) to Dyre Vaa / Skinnarland at Rauland

NORSK SKIEVENTYR (SKI MUSEUM) MORGEDAL

- Experience Norwegian ski history: Sápmi ski culture, ski making, snowboarding, waxing, and Norwegian pioneers of skiing and Polar expeditions



Norway, Telemark, and Morgedal have a special place in the international history of skiing.

The word *ski* comes from the Norse word *skíða*, meaning cleaved piece of wood. The term 'slalom' originates from the Morgedal dialect word *slalom*, meaning slight track in the hill. Other examples are the *Telemark turn* and the *Telemark jump*.

Several of the well-known Norwegian pioneers of skiing were from Morgedal: Sondre Norheim, the brothers Torjus and Mikkel Hemmestveit, and polar explorer Olav Bjaaland.

The museum shows early ski and polar exploration history and today's skiing with several exhibits using different media.

Open year round (except January). Gift shop and café with tasty traditional food.



19 km (20 min) to Kviteseid bygdetun / Old Church
25 km (30 min) to Øyfell bygdetun

ØVERBØ (SONDRE NORHEIM HOME)

- Smallholding where skiing legend Sondre Norheim was born. Norheim himself built the house still standing today. Hiking trail from the ski museum.



Sondre Auversson Norheim (1825-1897) is considered the grand pioneer of modern skiing. He was born at this smallholding in Øverbø, Morgedal.

Sondre became a master of many varieties of skiing, such as cross country, ski jumping and slalom. He also made modifications to the Sápmi ski technique and bindings, and made it popular.

But Sondre remained poor, and in 1884, he emigrated to the U.S., where he is buried in Denbigh, Minot, North Dakota. A statue of Norheim, by Knut Skinnarland was raised both at the Ski Museum in Morgedal and in the centre of Minot.

In the house at Øverbø, the first winter Olympic flame was lighted in 1952, and later again in 1960 and in 1994.

Guided tours available upon request at Norwegian Ski Museum.



28 km (30 min) to Eidsborg Museum / Stave Church
50 km (53 min) to Dyre Vaa / Skinnarland at Rauland

Haukelifjell

Songe-
vatnet

E-134

Arabygdi

VINJE

Haukeligrend

Møs-
vatn

Ra

Smørklepp

Totak

Vinje

TOKKE

Dalen

Grimdalstunet

Fyresdals-
heiane



STATENS KARTVERK



vest-telemark
museum