Fjord in Norway

When: late June 1999
Who: With Jinghai

I have just finished my excursion of the west part of Norway, which is famous for its unique terrain -- Fjord. The trip is combined with train, express boat, and coastal steamer. The whole journey took 6 days.

I am really exhausted when coming back yesterday morning. Given more time, I would try to go to the north part of Norway, crossing the Arctic Circle and experiencing the mid night sunshine. The natural beauty of Norway is the best of Scandinavia think. But wandering around Scandinavia especially Norway is terribly expensive :-(

The journey is almost the same route as "Norway in a Nutshell" which is a package trip provided by the NSB (Norwegian Station Railway). My original route is "Trondheim -> Oslo -> Mydal ->Flåm -> Bergen ->Trondheim" while a little alternation was made when I arrived in Mydal (A small place between Oslo and Bergen). It was snowing. All around you, ragged, snow-covered mountains stretch for thousands of metres into the sky. A feeling of extremely cold :(although it is just a psychological phenomena, because inside the train it is warm enough:) prevent me from getting off at this station in such an early morning . After a shortly hesitation, we decided to resume the trip to Bergen first. We reversed part of the trip for the fjord excursion. Starting from Bergen we took an express boat to Flåm experiencing Sognefjorden, the world's longest, deepest fjord. It is really a fantastic area. Standing on the deck, we saw waterfalls meandering down from the glaciers while seagulls gliding above the water. The weather was lightly cloudy which made the scenery even more charming because of the occasional variations. We also encountered some small seals along the fjord. They are smaller than I had thought but they are really very cute. With only 450 local residents, Flåm is a small place. But bulks of stupid tourist stream to this area every day in the summer.

After finishing the five-hour express boat, we continued the trip by train from Flåm to Mydal. This is the highlight of the fjord excursion. The altitude of Flåm is 2 meters and the train climbed up to 800 meters high within 50 minutes, past waterfalls and through tunnels. It stopped along the way so that we can have a chance to immortalize the scenery with the camera. When we stood on the Mydal railway station, the snow mountain was so close that we can even touch the snow with our feet and hands. It is amazing.

We returned to Bergen by train that evening. Packing our stuffs quickly, we rushed to the harbour to catch the Coastal Steamer, which would depart around 10 p.m. that night. We bought the tickets on board. It is fairly expensive. Even without cabin, it cost 638 Kr from Bergen to Trondheim under 50% student concessions. Most of the passengers were old gentlemen and ladies, who are rich of money but short of energy comparably. I remember a slogan of a travel agency that gives concessions only to students and people under 32 --- “Go, before it is too late”. The longest day of the year was spent on the ship. I had struggled to get up at mid night to experience the sun setting off and rising with little intervals, but an unconquerable temptation of sleep held me and I finally gave up :( What a pity. The ship stopped on many small coastal towns. They are very similar. One truth that I found during the journey is that it is not the Norwegians who like sun bathing, however, it is that when people stay in Norway, they will fall in love with sunshine. As long as there was sunshine, even though there was strong wind, the deck was full of people, covered with blanket as a shield, enjoying the sun.

We arrived home two days after. I fell in sleep immediately when I say my comfortable bed :-) 

The three major cities of Norway are all included in the trip. Oslo, Berben, and Trondheim. Oslo, from my own point of view, is a hot bed for artist. The culture life in Oslo flourishes within this century. Artists, like the famous expressionist painter Edward Munch and the Vigland brothers, were all provided with enough space and liberty to express their talents. My first and most impression to Bergen is that the weather is too fickle, shower then sun shine then shower again... you never know
what the weather would like in the next hour. Bergen is famous for its fishing market and the 17th century wooden house, which is on the list of UNESCO's historical resources. Well, as to Trondheim, it is the scientific centre in Norway. The country's largest research centre SINTEF (like the national academic centre) is located in Trondheim (Just beside my office building). People here are kind and polite.

Norway is a fantastic country. A local resident recommended the national wild animal and plant conservations and described it as "terribly wonderful".

Any one who is interested in this trip, you can call the NSB reservation service at: 815 00 888 and dial 4 for English speaking operator.