

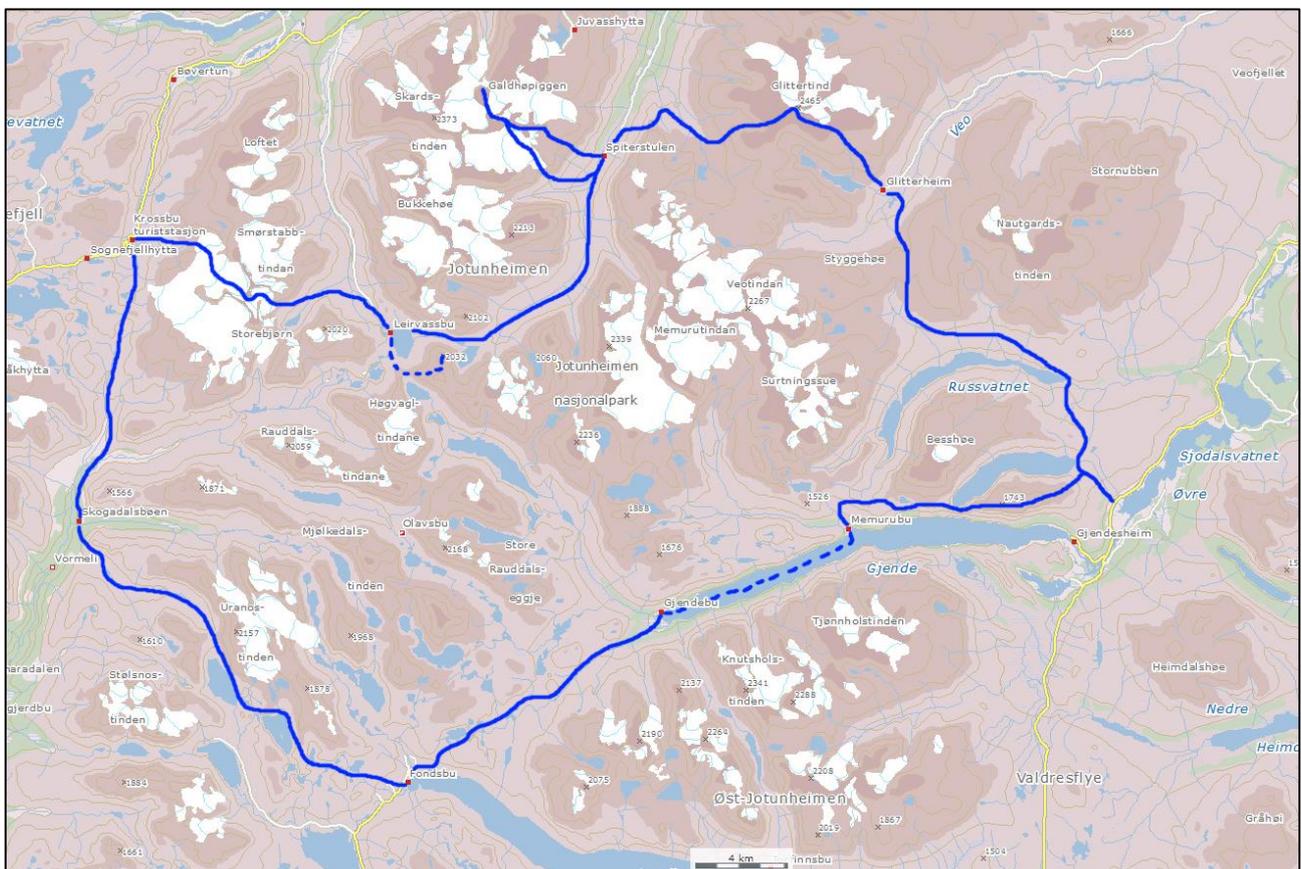
Alpine Mountain Walking in The Home of the Giants

- CircumTrek™ Jotunheimen -

Demanding

This trip is your unique opportunity to explore northern Europe's greatest mountain massif. The area is home to 100 major summits over 2000 metres, and to all of Northern Europe's highest peaks over 2300 metres. Many of these major mountains were ascended as early as the 1870's by bold climbers such as William Slingsby. The area is also spiced with many glaciers which become an integral part of exploring the mountains here. On this 12 day itinerary, we will make a round of the Jotunheimen National Park, taking in the most impressive views and routes. On several days, we will also get away from the more popular trails, allowing us to experience the remote and quiet reaches of these majestic mountains.

The map below shows our route which starts and finishes at Bessheim Fjellstue, lying just north east of Gjendesheim, on the eastern edge of Jotunheimen. The described route follows the circuit anti-clockwise over ten days of walking, with an optional rest day halfway at Leirvassbu in the very heart of Jotunheimen. The eleven nights' accommodation will be at quality mountain refuges with full board, allowing us to have to carry a minimum of equipment and to be able dry eventual wet kit each evening - and of course relax.



Day 1: Late afternoon meet at Bessheim Fjellstue lodge, alternatively transfer can be arranged following a morning arrival at Oslo Gardermoen airport. This is a picturesque drive of 300km or 190 miles and takes four to five hours. The evening meal is included and afterwards we will discuss equipment and the trek.

Day 2: Our first day takes us up the hillside directly behind Bessheim Fjellstue along the torrent of Bessa to the waters of Bessvatnet and later Russvatnet. From the outflow of Russvatnet at 1200m we follow the shoreline a little way before ascending and traversing the hillside westwards. Our trail then turns north into Blåtjønnholet and we ascend to a col at 1685m. From here the remaining few kilometres of descent to the lodge at Glitterheim are in view. This is a day of 20km or 12 miles, with 900m/3000ft of ascent and 500m/1670ft of descent. The trail is generally good although it will be rocky and rough underfoot in places.



Day 3: Looking west across the summit of Glittertind (2465m).

Day 3: From our lodgings in Veodalen at almost 1400m/4600ft above sea level, we begin the ascent of Glittertind, Norway's second highest peak. The ascent is steady but unrelenting until we actually stand on the icy summit. It is likely that we will put on crampons for the few hundred meters over the ice. The remaining part of our day will be spent descending to Spiterstulen in the beautiful lush Visdalen valley.

Tomorrow's objective, Galdhøpiggen (2469m/8098ft), will hopefully be in view during the descent. Today's walk covers a distance of 14km or 9 miles with 1100m/3600ft of ascent and 1400m/4600ft of descent.

Day 4: Following a good night's rest and a hearty breakfast we will be ready for a day involving glacier travel and an ascent of Scandinavia's highest and very popular summit. Because of Galdhøpiggen's popularity, especially among Norwegians, we follow a less trodden but exciting alternative route to the summit. Only a few kilometres walk from Spiterstulen, we begin ascending a steep moraine to the snout of the Svellnosbreen glacier. Here the blue ice cascades steeply over the underlying rock. We put on harnesses and crampons and rope together for a journey over the ice. After a little exploration, we gain the gentler glacier plateau which we cross to the southern flank of Galdhøpiggen. We gain the main ridge of the mountain and tourist trail by easy scrambling up the southern flank for some 250m/820ft. The final brief ascent to the summit is over snow. We return to Spiterstulen via the tourist trail. This day gives a distance of 12km or 8 miles with 1400m/4600ft of ascent and descent. The final part of the descent is quite steep.

Day 5: After two strenuous days we have earned an easier day. The walk from Spiterstulen to Leirvassbu along the lush floor of Visdalen is one of the best valley walks in Jotunheimen. We can set a leisurely pace to cover the 14km or 9 miles with only 300m/1000ft of ascent and 100m/330ft of descent and enjoy the views of the peaks rising to all sides above us.

Day 6: Here at Leirvassbu there is the opportunity to have a day of rest or to enjoy a short walk. It will also be possible to make an ascent of Kyrkja “The Church” (2032m/6665ft) which is a dramatic triangular peak overlooking Leirvassbu. The route takes about 3 hours and involves some scrambling close to the summit.



Day 6: Kyrkja from the north. Leirvassbu is located by the largest lake to the right. Our route on day 5 passes along the bottom of the picture.

Day 7: Fully rested up, we should be ready for the next leg of our tour. We leave Leirvassbu and head north westwards along the narrow road before gaining the footpath along the Tverrbyttbekken river. We ascend the valley floor and gain Bjørnbreen “the bear glacier” which we follow to the snowy col of Bjørnskardet at 2000m/6670ft. On the far side we descend easily for 5 kilometres over the Leirbreen glacier before reaching the final stage and a good footpath which we follow in descent along the river Leira to the lodge at Krossbu. This exciting day gives a total distance of 12km or 8 miles with 800m/2670ft of ascent and descent.



Day 7: Evening light on Store Smørstabbind as seen from the Krossbu lodge.



Day 8: Skogadalsbøen located just below the tree line in Utladalen (DNT photo).

Day 8: Again we can enjoy an easier day of only five hours walking time as we move from Krossbu through the western Utladalen valley to Skogadalsbøen – the lowest point on our itinerary at 831m/2726ft above sea level. Skogadalsbøen dates back to 1888 when, like many of the mountain huts, it was built as a *seter* (shieling) providing shelter for the shepherds when the animals grazed in the mountains during the summer months.

Today's walk covers 12km or 8 miles with 150m/500ft of ascent and 600m/2000ft of descent.

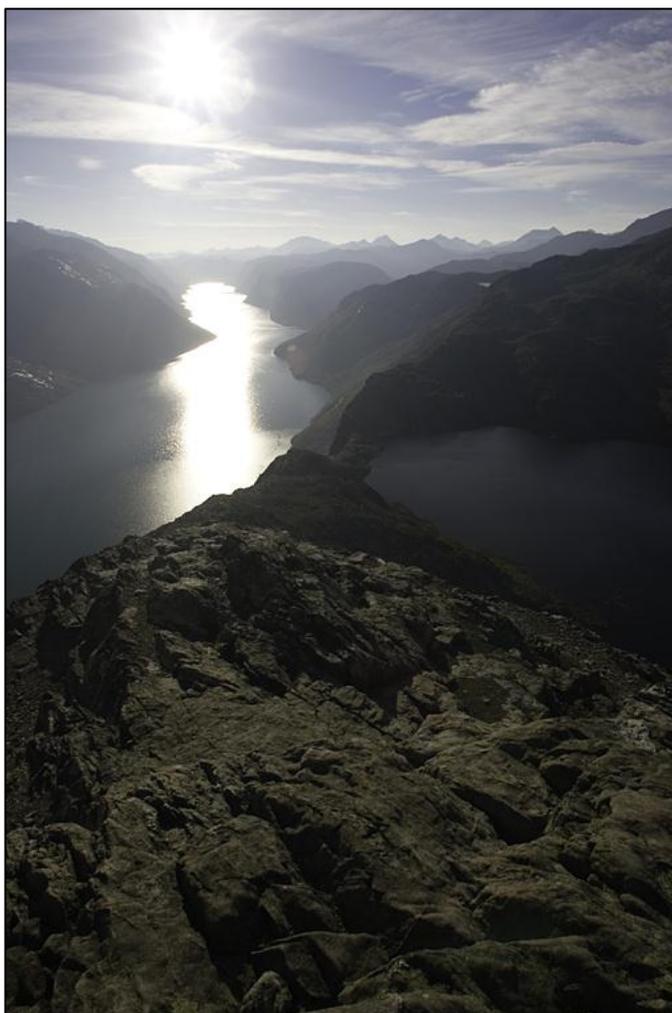
Day 9: Leaving the cosy valley refuge, we ascend into the valley of Uradalen and towards the pass Uradalsbandet – one of the quietest parts of Jotunheimen. Our route undulates through the most remote but also most magnificent scenery and affords us views of dramatic peaks such as Falketind and Uranostinden. Although we cover 22km or 14 miles today in order to reach Fondsbu by Lake Bygdin, the ascent and descent are limited to 800m/2600ft and 600m/2000ft respectively.

Day 10: Upon departing from Fondsbu, we follow the main trail along the shores of Bygdin briefly before heading up the hillside to gain the mountain plateau of Gravafjellet and an unmarked footpath through beautiful terrain with dwarf birch, bilberry and crowberry underfoot, en-route towards Gjendebu. Upon arrival at Gjendebu, there should be time to enjoy a cup of coffee and explore one of the oldest mountain lodges, originally built in 1871, and visited by the earliest pioneers to these parts. At 4pm, we depart by boat for a short sail on Lake Gjende to the lodge at Memurubu, where we will spend the night. Our route today covers 14km or 9 miles with approximately 500m/1600ft of ascent and descent.



Day 10: The view east from where we ascend the mountainside above Lake Bygdin.

Day 11: Unfortunately our last day of walking to complete the circuit, but certainly one of the best as we will traverse one of Norway's greatest mountain routes – The Besseggen Ridge. The views of Lake Gjende expand as we ascend quite steeply behind Memurubu. The ascent takes us to slightly over 1500m/4900ft before we descend gradually to Bandet, where the waters of Bessvatnet are held back by a thin rock wall some 400m/1300ft above Lake Gjende. The path allows us to peer down the vertical mountainside to the waters far below. From Bandet, we ascend the Besseggen ridge proper – in some places we use our hands to aid our ascent over the clean rock. The narrow ridge begins to ease and open out onto the broad summit of Veslfjellet (1743m/5717ft). From here we descend easily to the outflow of Bessvatnet and onwards to Bessheim Fjellstue for our final evening. Our route today has covered 14km or 9 miles with 900m/3000ft of ascent and descent.



Day 11: Evening over Besseggen with light reflecting on Lake Gjende.

Day 12: Departure after breakfast with possible transfer to Olso Gardermoen airport.

The complete circuit is a distance of almost 150km or 94 miles with 7500m or 25000ft of ascent and descent spread over the ten days. This also includes the optional ascent of Kyrkja from Leirvassbu. Participants can expect impressive and challenging days with some rough paths, passages over glaciers and sections on rock with easier scrambling. Therefore, participants must be in good physical condition and have experience of summer mountain walking and ensure that they have the appropriate clothing and equipment as shown on the detailed equipment list. Technical glacier equipment will be provided, although each guest will carry their own kit. It is a good idea therefore, to experiment packing your rucksack and have space for a packed lunch, crampons and an axe. It will be possible to leave other baggage in our vehicle or at Bessheim for the duration of the trek. The trip price is TBA per person. The group size will be limited to 6 clients. This price includes 11 nights' accommodation in shared rooms at mountain lodges with full board from the evening meal on day 1 to packed lunch on day 12, technical glacier equipment and guiding. The price does not include travel to and from Bessheim (although transfers can be arranged) or alcoholic beverages. Upon booking, booking forms should be returned and the specified deposit per person paid. The full balance is due 8 weeks prior to departure. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions via e-mail or telephone.

Clothing & equipment list

Clothing

- Walking socks
- Lightweight walking trousers
- Long and short-sleeved walking T-shirts (ideally wicking)
- Thermal underwear
- Fleece top/sweater or similar
- Fibre or down jacket
- Wind and waterproof outer clothing (jacket and trousers)
- Gaiters
- Woolly hat
- Gloves (ideally 2 pairs)
- Walking boots (ideally category B1 – for articulated walking crampons)
- A pair of lightweight hut sandals or trainers
- Underwear
- A set of clothing for time in the lodges

Equipment

- Rucksack (with plastic bag liner or rain cover, approximately 50 litre)
- Sunglasses
- Water bottle (0.75-1 litre)
- Flask (0.5 or 0.75 litre)
- Lightweight sleeping bag liner (pillows, duvets and blankets are provided in the lodges)
- Personal first aid kit (containing lip balm, sun cream, Compeed, plasters, painkillers, medication etc.)
- Telescopic trekking poles (recommended)
- Piece of sleeping mat for sitting on

Other

- Passport
- Travel tickets
- Travel insurance papers
- Norwegian kroner for personal use - although all lodges do accept credit cards
- Credit card
- Watch
- Camera with extra memory cards, charger and travel adapter
- Basic toiletries
- Lightweight travel towel
- A book and/or diary

At some lodges there are washing facilities for clothes. All lodges have small shops with a selection of kit and snacks.