

# #379: NORWEGIAN DRINKS



## SKÅL TO NORWEGIAN DRINKS

Aquavit, julebrus and gløgg are just a few of the beverages that are unique to Norway. Along with the distinctive traditional foods of Norway, its drinks are interesting and tasty as well. So raise your glasses and Skål to all that Norway has to offer. Below is a list of just some of the drinks that are readily consumed by Norwegians, Norwegian-Americans and Norwegian enthusiasts alike.

The drinking culture in Norway varies from region to region. Drunk driving is strictly regulated in Norway so many either use public transportation or don't drink at all. However, after a long hard day in the office, fishing, working on the oil rig or plowing the fields, nothing sounds better than a cold, warm, or room temperature drink. Take your pick and drink sensibly.

**Aquavit** is flavored liquor that has been produced in Scandinavia since the 15th century. This is Norway's national drink (Linie Aquavit) and is typically sipped straight with Christmas dinner. Strongly linked with the Scandinavian drinking culture its name is derived from aqua vitae which is Latin for "water of life". Norwegian aquavit is distilled with potatoes and then mixed to let sit with herbs and spices such as caraway, cardamom, cumin, fennel, anise and orange peels.



**Gløgg** is a warm homemade mulled wine prepared during the winter months in homes across Norway. This holiday hot drink is a must for Christmas parties as the aroma fills the air and the taste warms the body. Literally translated into smart and bright, gløgg derives from the word *gløde* or warming. The aroma of cinnamon sticks, oranges and ginger brings that *julestemning* (Christmas feeling) to Norwegians of all ages. Gløgg extract is sold in stores across Norway and can easily be mixed with wine or water, heated up, and then served with raisins and almonds.

**Julebrus** (Christmas soda) is popular with Norwegians both young and old. It is a caffeinated beverage sold exclusively during the Christmas holiday. A seasonal favorite with children, *julebrus* comes in hues of red, brown, yellow-orange and even black. It is a sweet and fizzy drink that is bottled and labeled with festive Christmas patterns and pictures. The seasonal drink is often flavored with lots of sugar, vanilla, ginger and caramel and comes in a variety of berry, citrus or pear flavors.





**Solo** is refreshingly Norwegian. This popular orange soft drink was at one point, in Norway, more popular than Coca Cola. The “father” of Solo, Torleif Gulliksrud, brought the delicious recipe over from Spain in 1934 and since then it has been the country’s most popular drink. The unmistakable orange bottle with bright branded colors is a product of Ringnes, Norway’s largest brewery.

**St. Hallvard’s Liqueur** is an after dinner sweet and syrupy liqueur. The drink is named after Oslo’s patron saint, Hallvard (1020-1043). Sold exclusively in Sweden and Norway, the drink is treasured by Norwegian-Americans who can secure a bottle after a trip to Norway or from considerate visiting Norwegian relatives. Flavored with a large number of herbs and spices and aged in oak barrels, this liqueur warms the body with each sip.

## GENERAL DRINKS

**Beer** has such a long history in Norway that it seems wrong not to include it. Norwegian beer has not commercialized on the international market but a couple of its giant breweries, Carlsberg-Ringnes and Hansa-Borg are well-known in Europe. Microbreweries are growing in Norway, most specifically are Oslo Mikrobryggeri and Nøgne Ø whose beers can be found in select liquor stores across the US. Let’s not forget juleøl (Christmas beer), a malty beer sold exclusively during the holiday season in Norway.

**Coffee** consumption in Norway ranks among the highest in the world. Morning coffee, mid-day coffee, and after dinner coffee with dessert are *typisk norsk* (typical Norwegian) daily rituals. Coffee was introduced in Norway in the late 17th century and just 100 years later it was readily consumed in homes and businesses across Norway. The trend stuck and the caffeine hot drink is still a staple in homes across Norway. And don’t forget to make it strong.