***Newsletter Service***

**May/June 2025**

**MAY ISSUE**

**Host a Syttende Mai party**

*Syttende Mai*, Norway’s national holiday, is usually celebrated in public with massive parades of school kids, *russ* (high school seniors) wearing blue and red coveralls, adults donning *bunader (*folk costumes) and marching bands. It’s a day for expressing cultural pride, excitement for spring and for appreciating the founding of an independent Norway. If there isn’t a parade in your town, there are plenty of ways to have your own 17th of May celebration. Here are some elements that make for a festive get-together:

**Décor**
One thing that you see everywhere on *Grunnlovsdagen* or Constitution Day are Norwegian flags and red, white and blue decorations. Incorporate these colors into your party food, or if that’s not possible, decorate with flag toothpicks and buy red, white and blue napkins.

**Attire**
Typical dress for all ages is a *bunad*, or national folk costume, but don’t stress if you don’t have one; people without costumes can dress nicely and pin red, white and blue ribbons onto their lapel, or wear the Norwegian colors in another way.

**Music**
Put on some Norwegian tunes or sing a few yourselves. The national anthem, *Ja, Vi Elsker Dette Landet* is a favorite, along with *Norge I Rødt, Hvitt og Blått**.*Look on YouTube for playlists of Norwegian music, traditional or modern.

**Gratulererer med dagen!**
A typical activity on Syttende Mai is congratulating one another on Norway’s independence, expressed by saying “Gratulerer med dagen!” (Congratulations today!) or “Hurra for Syttende Mai!” (Hooray for the 17th of May!). Repeat this to everyone you see throughout the day.

**Food**
Syttende Mai is a banner day for kids in Norway, as they are usually allowed to consume as much soda, hot dogs and ice cream as they want. Some people will buy food along the parade route, or eat at home.

Brunch before the parade is popular, with a cold buffet that may include smoked salmon, trout, cured meats, scrambled eggs, porridge, salads and champagne. Later in the day there will be coffee and *bløtkake*, a layered cream cake with fresh fruit- often using blueberries and strawberries to make a flag on top. Heart-shaped waffles and *kransekake* (a tiered almond ring cake made of ground almonds, sugar and egg whites) may be decorated with Norwegian flag toothpicks. The beauty of the *koldtbord* (smorgasbord) is that everything can be made in advance, regardless of the time of day. Combine any of your favorite Norwegian foods and encourage your guests to try new things!

**Activities**
If there’s no parade for you to walk in, at some point, get outside or at least get moving. Once you’ve stuffed yourself on party food, go for a hike, play lawn games, or dance! Hurra for Syttende Mai!

**Article photo for download:**

[**https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution\_Day\_(Norway)#/media/File:Syttende\_Mai,\_Ballard,\_Seattle,\_2010-3.jpg**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_Day_%28Norway%29#/media/File:Syttende_Mai,_Ballard,_Seattle,_2010-3.jpg)

**Library Investment**

In 2021, an International Reading Literacy Study was conducted with 65 countries participating around the world. When the results were published last year, it found that Norwegian youth’s reading levels declined from the previous measurements in 2016 and ranked 18th overall. Of the more than 7,000 students tested, it was 10-year-olds that had the largest decline of all the Nordic countries. The survey found that of those children tested, one in five fell at or below reading mastery levels for their age.

The results of the survey have led the Norwegian government to get involved. To turn this concerning trend around, they are investing 25 million kroner ($2.36 million US Dollars) into school libraries. In particular, they are focusing on libraries in areas with poorer living conditions. The funds will help increase library hours, give children access to more books, and encourage reading for pleasure. The initiative will also promote libraries as safe and inclusive social gathering spots for youth.

Researchers are unsure what has led to the drop in scores. They theorize that the drastic increase in streaming and electronics plays a role and that possibly, the Covid pandemic and the push to digital learning played a part as well. This library investment is part of the Norwegian government’s larger reading strategy initiative to set a better reading culture across the country.

**Source:**

[**https://www.courthousenews.com/norway-allocates-millions-to-counter-decline-in-kids-reading-ability/**](https://www.courthousenews.com/norway-allocates-millions-to-counter-decline-in-kids-reading-ability/)

**Article photo for download:**

[**https://www.pexels.com/photo/girl-in-blue-t-shirt-reading-book-3755619/**](https://www.pexels.com/photo/girl-in-blue-t-shirt-reading-book-3755619/)

**Go Paperless**

Try our new paperless option!

Convenient and flexible, this option lets you find the information you need on a mobile device, iPad or computer. Snowbird? Going paperless allows you to easily access your member account anytime, anywhere. Receive faster updates by visiting [apps.sofn.com/service1/portal](https://apps.sofn.com/service1/portal) and updating your preferences to paperless!



**TRANSLATION**

**Anne-Cath. Vestly: Hun var barnas talsperson og fornyet norsk barnelitteratur**

Det store gjennombruddet til Anne-Cath. Vestly kom med boken om Ole Aleksander Filibom-bom-bom i 1953. Gjennom de rundt 50 bøker hun skrev frem til 2004 introduserte hun nye perspektiver på barn og barndom og familie- og samfunnsliv.

Forsker Agnes-Margrethe Bjorvand ved Universitetet i Agder (UiA) mener Anne-Cath. Vestly fortsatt er relevant.

**Barn skal både høres og synes**

Hun forteller at bøkene til Vestly først og fremst passer aller best for aldersgruppa fire til sju år. Barn liker best å lese om noen som er like gamle som eller litt eldre enn seg selv, sier Bjorvand.

Hva er det nye i Anne-Cath. Vestlys syn på barn og barndommen?

Bjorvand forteller videre at i Vestlys bøker tas barn på alvor. Barna er en viktig del av samfunnet og demokratiet. De får ansvar, de lyttes til, og de anerkjennes. Barna blir sett på som likeverdige med voksne.

– Alle bøkene handler om det å være menneske, et menneske som lærer å samhandle med de rundt seg. Bøkene er fundert på verdier som fellesskap, respekt for andre mennesker, likestilling og det at alle fortjener en ny sjanse.

**Vestly var mer enn en forfatter**

­– Dere skriver at Vestly er «dronningen av norsk barnelitteratur». Hva innebærer egentlig det?

–Hun skrev og fortalte for barn i over 50 år. Hun var med på å få fart på barnelitteraturen etter andre verdenskrig.

Anne-Cath. Vestly var også mye mer enn forfatter. Hun var en kulturpersonlighet og en autoritet man lyttet til.

**Hvis foreldre og besteforeldre i dag vil lese Vestly-bøker for barna, hvor bør de begynne?**

– Begynn med de bøkene du selv har likt. Voksne blir bedre formidlere hvis vi selv liker boken vi leser høyt. Dessuten kan det være lurt velge en serie som har en hovedperson på omtrent samme alder som den man skal lese for.

Forskeren anbefaler å velge bøkene om Ole Aleksander eller Lillebror for 4-5-åringen og Guro eller Aurora for 6-7-åringen. Alle norske barn bør få bli kjent med for eksempel Lillebror og Knerten og mormor og de åtte ungene.

**TRANSLATION**

**Anne-Cath. Vestly: The children's spokesperson who reinvigorated Norwegian children's literature**

Anne-Cath. Vestly's big breakthrough came with her book about Ole Aleksander Filibom-bom-bom in 1953. Through the 50 books she wrote up to 2004, she introduced new perspectives on children, childhood, family and social life.

Researcher Agnes-Margrethe Bjorvand at the University of Agder (UiA) believes Anne-Cath. Vestly is still relevant.

**Children should be both heard and seen**

Bjorvand says that Vestly's books are best suited for the age group of four to seven.  Children like to read about someone who is the same age as or a little older than themselves, says Bjorvand.

What is new in Anne-Cath. Vestly's view of children and childhood?

Bjorvand goes on to say that in Vestly's books, children are taken seriously. Children are an important part of society and democracy. They are given responsibility, they are listened to, and they are recognized. Children are seen as equal to adults.

"All the books are about being human, a person who learns to interact with those around them. The books are based on values such as community, respect for other people, equality and the fact that everyone deserves a second chance.”

**Vestly was more than an author**

You write that Vestly is the “queen of Norwegian children’s literature. What does that really mean?

“She wrote and told stories for children for over 50 years. She helped to boost children’s literature after the Second World War. Anne-Cath. Vestly was also much more than an author. She was a cultural figure and an authority to be listened to.”

**If parents and grandparents today want to read Vestly books to their children, where should they start?**

“Start with the books you yourself have liked. Adults become better communicators if we ourselves like the book we read aloud. It may also be a good idea to choose a series that has a main character who is about the same age as the person you are reading to.”

The researcher recommends choosing the books about Ole Aleksander or Little Brother for 4-5-year-olds and Guro or Aurora for 6-7-year-olds. All Norwegian children should be introduced to, for example, Little Brother and Knerten and Grandma and the Eight Children.

**Source:**

[**https://www.forskning.no/barn-boker-litteratur/anne-cath-vestly-hun-var-barnas-talsperson-og-fornyet-norsk-barnelitteratur/2366712**](https://www.forskning.no/barn-boker-litteratur/anne-cath-vestly-hun-var-barnas-talsperson-og-fornyet-norsk-barnelitteratur/2366712)

**Sosekjøtt & Spring Mashed Potatoes**

As winter fades into spring, temperatures start to rise, and outdoor activity increases, try this delicious, hearty dish that is sure to fill you up.

**Recipe source:** [**https://northwildkitchen.com/sosekjott-spring-mashed-potatoes/**](https://northwildkitchen.com/sosekjott-spring-mashed-potatoes/)

*(Serves 4-6)*

**Ingredients**

*For the sosekjøtt:*

* 2.2 pounds (1 kg) chuck steak or shoulder steak (høyrygg/bog)
* 3 Tbsp. butter, for frying
* 1 large onion, cut into thin wedges
* 6 Tbsp. butter
* 5 Tbsp. flour
* 4 cups (1 liter) beef stock
* 1 bay leaf
* Salt and pepper

*For the spring mashed potatoes:*

* 1 1/2 pounds (about 700 g) starchy potatoes, peeled and cut in half
* 3 Tbsp. lightly salted butter
* 1 cup (240 ml) milk
* Salt and pepper, to taste
* 1 cup (150 g) green peas
* 1 bunch dill, chopped
* 2 spring onions, chopped

**Directions:**

To make the stew, start by cutting the meat into large chunks, about 1 1/2 inches (4 cm). Season well with salt and pepper.

In a large, heavy-bottomed pot or dutch oven, heat 1 tablespoon of butter over medium-high heat, until hot and bubbling. Brown the meat in 3 batches (to avoid overcrowding), turning with tongs, for about 3-5 minutes per batch; add one tablespoon more butter with each batch (adding more if necessary). Transfer the meat to a large plate and set aside.

In the same pot, add the 6 tablespoons of butter and melt over medium-high heat. Add in the flour, whisking to combine. Cook for about 5 minutes or until the mixture has turned dark brown, whisking often to ensure it doesn’t begin to burn. The darker the color, the darker the stew will be. Slowly pour in the beef stock, whisking until blended.

Add in the browned meat, onion wedges, and bay leaf. Bring to a simmer. Lower the heat and cover with a lid, cooking for 2 hours until the meat is tender. Remove the lid, return the stew to a gentle simmer, and cook for 30 minutes more until thickened slightly. Remove from the heat.

While the stew is cooking for the remaining 30 minutes, prepare the spring mashed potatoes. In a large pot, cover the potatoes with cold salted water and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 15 minutes or until the potatoes are barely tender when pierced with a knife. Drain the potatoes and return them to the pot. Add the 3 tablespoons butter, along with the milk, and mash until creamy. Season with salt and pepper. Gently stir in the green peas, dill, and spring onions.

Serve the spring mashed potatoes immediately with the warm sosekjøtt.

**Article photo for download:**

[**https://northwildkitchen.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/P3170045.jpg**](https://northwildkitchen.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/P3170045.jpg)

(Please give photo credit to **North Wild Kitchen** if you use this photo)

**JUNE ISSUE**

**Trending topic: Noctourism**

According to Booking.com, “noctourism” – short for nocturnal tourism – is on the rise. Nocturnal tourism is the concept of planning a holiday around experiences that occur after the sun goes down. Booking.com is so confident in “noctourism” that they predict it will be among 2025’s most sought-after travel experiences. It provides a whole new world of opportunity that the regular tourist likely has not partaken in.

The trend is already evident with the Northern Lights in Norway. Searches for places in Tromsø, Norway, doubled in the months leading up to the end of October 2024, compared with the same timeframe the year prior. People are excited about the chance to see the Northern Lights and are flocking to Norway to make their dreams a reality. Norway is just one example of the gems for noctourism; there are a plethora of places around the world that hold intriguing stories after dark, just waiting to be heard.

**Article photo for download:**

[**https://www.pexels.com/photo/northern-lights-near-snow-coated-mountains-2113557/**](https://www.pexels.com/photo/northern-lights-near-snow-coated-mountains-2113557/)

**Best in Soup**

Polar Star Lodge 5-472 in Aurora, IL recently held a soup cook-off. There were eleven entries for the friendly competition with a traveling gold-colored soup pot and bragging rights for the prize. The competition took place at St. Olaf Lutheran Church, where the lodge also regularly meets.

Soups included broccoli cheese, beef mushroom barley, and onion. Chowders also represented with a corn chowder and potato chowder in the mix. More traditional Norwegian entries included a seafood soup, Norwegian winter soup, lapskaus, and blomkål (cauliflower) supper soup.  One entry went a multicultural route with a Mexican Norwegian soup.

Participants sampled all eleven soups and voted for their favorite. Ultimately though, the prize could only go to one. In the end, it was the lapskaus made by lodge member Barb Johnson that took first place. The soup featured a favorite Norwegian vegetable, the rutabaga, alongside other root vegetables and beef.

Aside from now being known for award-winning soup, Barb is also the lodge’s cultural director and is involved in the many other activities the lodge does to promote Norwegian heritage. With the success of this event, it will remain to be seen who gets the golden soup pot next year.

**Sources:**

[**https://www.shawlocal.com/kendall-county-now/2025/02/09/yorkville-residents-scandinavian-delicacy-declared-norwegian-soup-contest-champion/**](https://www.shawlocal.com/kendall-county-now/2025/02/09/yorkville-residents-scandinavian-delicacy-declared-norwegian-soup-contest-champion/)

[**https://thevoice.us/best-in-soup-yorkville-resident-wins-norwegian-soup-cookoff/**](https://thevoice.us/best-in-soup-yorkville-resident-wins-norwegian-soup-cookoff/)

**Article photo for download:**

[**https://www.shawlocal.com/resizer/RyLlQDgW5MtVtAxYBi4MbDXy4GI=/800x0/filters:format(jpg):quality(70):focal(2615x1787:2625x1797)/cloudfront-us-east-1.images.arcpublishing.com/shawmedia/Z6RAMYGFM5CQTORUY7SJANXGSQ.JPG**](https://www.shawlocal.com/resizer/RyLlQDgW5MtVtAxYBi4MbDXy4GI%3D/800x0/filters%3Aformat%28jpg%29%3Aquality%2870%29%3Afocal%282615x1787%3A2625x1797%29/cloudfront-us-east-1.images.arcpublishing.com/shawmedia/Z6RAMYGFM5CQTORUY7SJANXGSQ.JPG)

**TRANSLATION**

**Hva koster det å ta lappen?**
Skal du ta lappen på personbil, er det viktig å vite at prisene varierer hos kjøreskolene og hvor i landet du bor. Det kan lønne seg å undersøke litt før du bestemmer deg.

Kjøreopplæringen har forandret seg mye de siste årene, noe som har ført til høyere priser for førerkortet. Men det er store prisvariasjoner blant landets kjøreskoler, så det er penger å spare hvis du undersøker litt først.

**Øvelseskjør privat så mye du kan**

Hvor mye du må betale for et førerkortet til slutt, avhenger av

* hvor mange kjøretimer du trenger
* om du velger å følge et teorikurs eller leser selv
* hvilken kjøreskole du velger.

Jo flere timer du får øvelseskjørt privat, jo færre skoletimer trenger du.

Hør også med venner og bekjente som har tatt lappen der du bor. Hvilken kjøreskole brukte de? Hvor mye kom det på totalt? Og ikke minst, var de fornøyd med kjøreskolen?

På [**vegvesen.no kan du søke og finne en godkjent trafikkskole**](http://www.vegvesen.no/Forerkort/ta-forerkort/Finn%20godkjent%20trafikkskole#/) i nærheten av der du bor.

På tjenesten [**prislappen.no**](http://prislappen.no/) kan du sammenlikne kjøreskoler der du bor og lese omtaler av de ulike tilbudene.

**Lappen koster 30 000 i snitt**

Å anslå hva det koster å ta lappen er vanskelig, men [**nettstedet "Alt om førerkortet"**](https://www.altomforerkortet.no/forerkort-priser) har regnet seg fram til at vi i snitt bruker 30 000 kroner på å ta førerkort for personbil (klasse B).

**Faste priser hos trafikkstasjonene**
Priser på teoriprøve, praktisk førerprøve, utstedelse av førerkort og foto er faste beløp uansett hvor i landet du tar lappen. De aktuelle prisene kan du se på [**sidene til Statens Vegvesen.**](https://www.vegvesen.no/forerkort/ta-forerkort/priser/)

Disse prisene gjelder fra 1. januar 2025:

* Teoriprøve: 390,-
* Oppkjøring: 1290,- (1250,- på nett)
* Bilde: 70,-
* Utstedelse av førerkort: 230,- (90,- på nett)

Husk at leie av bil, oppvarmingstime og eventuelle bompenger kommer i tillegg, hvis du leier bil av en trafikkskole.

**TRANSLATION**

**How much does it cost to get a driving license?**

If you are going to get a driving license for a passenger car, it is important to know that prices vary between driving schools and where you live [in Norway]. It may be worth doing some research before you decide.

Driver's education has changed a lot in recent years, which has led to higher prices for getting your license. But there are large price variations among the country's driving schools, so there is money to be saved if you do some research first.

**Practice driving privately as much as you can**

How much you pay for a driver's license in the end depends on...

* How many driving hours you need
* Whether you choose to follow a theory course or study on your own
* Which driving school you choose

The more hours you practice driving privately, the fewer school hours you need.

Ask friends and acquaintances who have gotten their license where you live. Which driving school did they use? How much did it cost in total? And last but not least, were they satisfied with the driving school?

At [vegvesen.no](https://www.vegvesen.no/) you can search and find an approved traffic school near where you live.

On the [prislappen.no](https://www.prislappen.no/) service you can compare driving schools where you live and read reviews of the different offers.

**Getting a license costs 30,000** [kroner, or US$ 2865] **on average**

Estimating how much it costs to get your license is difficult, but the website ["All about the driving license"](https://www.altomforerkortet.no/forerkort-priser) has calculated that we spend an average of 30,000 kroner to get a driver's license for a passenger car (class B).

**Fixed prices at testing locations**

Prices for the written test, practical driving test, issuance of a driver's license and photo are fixed amounts regardless of where in the country you get your license. You can find the current prices on the pages of the [Norwegian Public Roads Administration](https://www.vegvesen.no/forerkort/ta-forerkort/priser/).

These prices are valid as of January 1, 2025:

* Written test: 390,- [$37]
* Driver's test: 1290,- (1250,- online) [$123/$119]
* Photo: 70,- [$7]
* Issuance of driving license: 230,- (90,- online) [$22 / $9]

Remember that car rental, practice lessons and any tolls are additional if you rent a car from a driving school.
**Source:** [**ung.no**](https://www.ung.no/lappen/509_Hva_koster_det_%C3%A5_ta_lappen.html)

**Go Paperless**

Try our new paperless option!

Convenient and flexible, this option lets you find the information you need on a mobile device, iPad or computer. Snowbird? Going paperless allows you to easily access your member account anytime, anywhere. Receive faster updates by visiting [apps.sofn.com/service1/portal](https://apps.sofn.com/service1/portal) and updating your preferences to paperless!

 **Lapskaus Soup**
Barb Johnson, Polar Star Lodge 5-472

**Ingredients:**

1.5 pounds of chuck roast

3/4 pound carrots

one celery root

3/4 cut rutabagas

1 small leek

1 small onion

2 large parsnips

3 cups broth

salt and pepper

**How to make:**
Use boiled or baked meat, fresh, salted or a mixture. Cut meat into even pieces and set aside. Wash and peel carrots, celery root and rutabagas, and dice. In soup pot, bring broth to a boil and add vegetables. Cook 15 minutes. Peel and dice potatoes. Cut leeks lengthwise and wash thoroughly and slice, add peeled sliced onion and potatoes to pot. Cook until almost tender. Add meat and leftover gravy. Salt and pepper to taste. Meat, vegetables and potatoes should be tender but not mushy. Stir while cooking.

**Article photo for download:**

[**https://www.sofn.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Lapskaus1.jpg**](https://www.sofn.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Lapskaus1.jpg)