

## **PROGRAM/PRESENTATION: “Hurtigruten – A Journey Across Time”.**

**TYPE:** Adult learning presentation on the history of shipping in Norway from the earliest steamships to today’s modern fleet).

(Alternatively available as a travelogue, “*Sailing Along Norway’s Coast*”.

**DURATION:** 60 Minutes (50 - Presentation / 10 - Question and Answer). Can be shortened, but presents better at 50 minutes.

**DESCRIPTION:** Today, a fleet of ships constantly re-supplies the country of Norway sailing up and down the coast, day and night, 365 days each year stopping in 33 ports. In earlier times it wasn’t possible. From the earliest steamships in 1838 sailing only in the summer from Trondheim to Tromsø to the hopes in 1857 that private companies would take over this function, no one wanted to sail in winter. With over 15,000 miles of coastline, 50,000 islands, unmapped/uncharted waters, and few lighthouses, no private companies would take on this task. Another failed attempt in 1891 was finally followed in 1892 when Captain Richard With offered to take on the task although many thought he was crazy. Still under control of Sweden, having a population of 2 million mainly living near the coast in small villages with few good roads, Norway needed to be unified and it needed to be supplied.

We follow that time of those earliest steamships learning about the various types of vessels and services offered as well as the impact of WWII, and changes in technology. It was 1962 before the last of the steamships were taken out of service and 1983 before the Norwegians trusted air service enough to stop transporting mail by ship. The ships continue to be referred to as the “mail boat” or “coastal steamers” even though those functions ended decades ago.

We also tie the past to today, and we sail on Hurtigruten® (1) for one week during the “midnight sun” northbound from Bergen to Kirkenes just a few miles from the Russian border leaving the ship to explore. Side excursions take us to into beautiful fjords, the cathedral in Trondheim, and the heights of surrounding mountains still covered in snow in June.

### **THE PRESENTERS CONNECTION TO NORWAY:**

The presenter is of 100% Norwegian heritage, with some command of the Norwegian language, having taken multiple trips to Norway. A webmaster and Editor of a newsletter for a Norwegian heritage/culture group, the presenter is also a member of multiple genealogy and Norwegian heritage organizations in Norway and the U.S. He is the Treasurer and Membership Chairman of a 500 member Norwegian Heritage organization with members in the U.S., Canada, and Norway. His cousins are key historians/genealogy researchers for part of mid-Norway, each having unique access to information and historic sites in this geographic area.

A speaker on his areas of focus, the presenter has also published dozens of short articles for a variety of Norwegian heritage organizations including his 2009 article, “Å vokse opp som Norsk i America” (Growing up Norwegian in America), published in English and Norwegian in Norway in Årbok Nr. XIX of Skatval Historielag (a publication of a Norwegian genealogy society).

(1) **Hurtigruten®** (Norway’s coastal ships used both as supply ships, short term travel from port to port, and by tourists traveling on them much as you would on a cruise ship).