



↑ Gazing out over Lake Gjende from the Besseggen ridge.
↗ Roaming reindeer on the mountain ridges of Jotunheimen.
→ Gjendesheim lodge, the starting and finishing point of the Jotunheimen Loop.

mountain lodge renowned for its traditional Norwegian mountain cuisine, including locally harvested reindeer, elk, lamb, berries, and mushrooms.

The next stage of the journey (16km/9.9mi) to Spiterstulen lodge is the easiest of the Jotunheimen Loop. Setting out from Leirvassbu, pass north of the pyramid-shaped Kyrkja peak (2,032m/6,667ft)—an excellent 4.5-km (2.8-mi) side trip if you have the time—before descending gradually into the U-shaped Visdalen valley. Meandering down Visdalen’s expansive wildflower-dotted floor, the way is lined with prominent peaks over 2,000m (6,562ft) high, including Store Bukkeholstinden (2,213m/7,260ft), Store Hellstugutinden (2,347m/7,700ft), and Styggehøe (2,213m/7,260ft). After four to six hours, you’ll arrive at Spiterstulen. Formerly a family summer hamlet, since 1881, Spiterstulen has become an increasingly popular base for adventurers looking to make the 13-km (8.1-mi) out-and-back ascent of Galdhøpiggen. (Note: Due to the extreme exposure of this route, it should only be attempted in good weather.)

The trek’s third stage extends for 16km (9.9mi) between Spiterstulen and Glitterheim lodges. Soon after leaving the former,

the trail climbs steeply to the northeast for approximately 3km (1.9mi) to reach a signposted junction. The left path goes towards Glittertinden peak, at 2,452m (8,045ft), the second-highest mountain in Norway. Our trail continues right across the rocky plateau of Skautflye. On a clear day, the views in this section are outstanding, with Glittertinden to the northeast and Leirhøe (2,330m/7,644ft), Veobreatinden (2,183m/7,162ft), and Veobrean Glacier to the south. After 10km (6.2mi), you’ll reach a narrow, boulder-strewn pass set among a group of small, frigid lakes. From here, descend precipitously into the lovely Veodalen valley, which often plays host to a sizable herd of reindeer, before curling northwards along the Veo River to reach Glitterheim lodge.

The penultimate stage of the loop crosses the Veo on a footbridge and heads south toward a wide, rocky saddle (1,691m/5,548ft), located approximately a 1.5-hour walk from Glitterheim. Descend gradually from the scenic high point to the sickle-shaped Lake Russvatnet, then parallel its shoreline past the Sundodden Peninsula (which boasts an inviting sandy beach) and an impressive 35-m- (115-ft-) high waterfall. From the lake’s southern end, ascend to a junction on a scenic ridge overlooking Lake Gjende. >

JOTUNHEIMEN LOOP Southern Norway NORWAY

