

Hardangervidda



Day 1. Haukeliseter was an old summer farm which provided some shelter to travellers for centuries. But 150 years ago was enlarged as tourism increased. Even Nansen and Amundsen frequently visited to prepare for expeditions



Day 1. Haukeliseter lies beside the main road on this important crossing between east and west Norway. It is 6 hours by bus from Oslo and 5 from Haugesund or Bergen, and is an ideal place to start a ski-tour over Hardangervidda

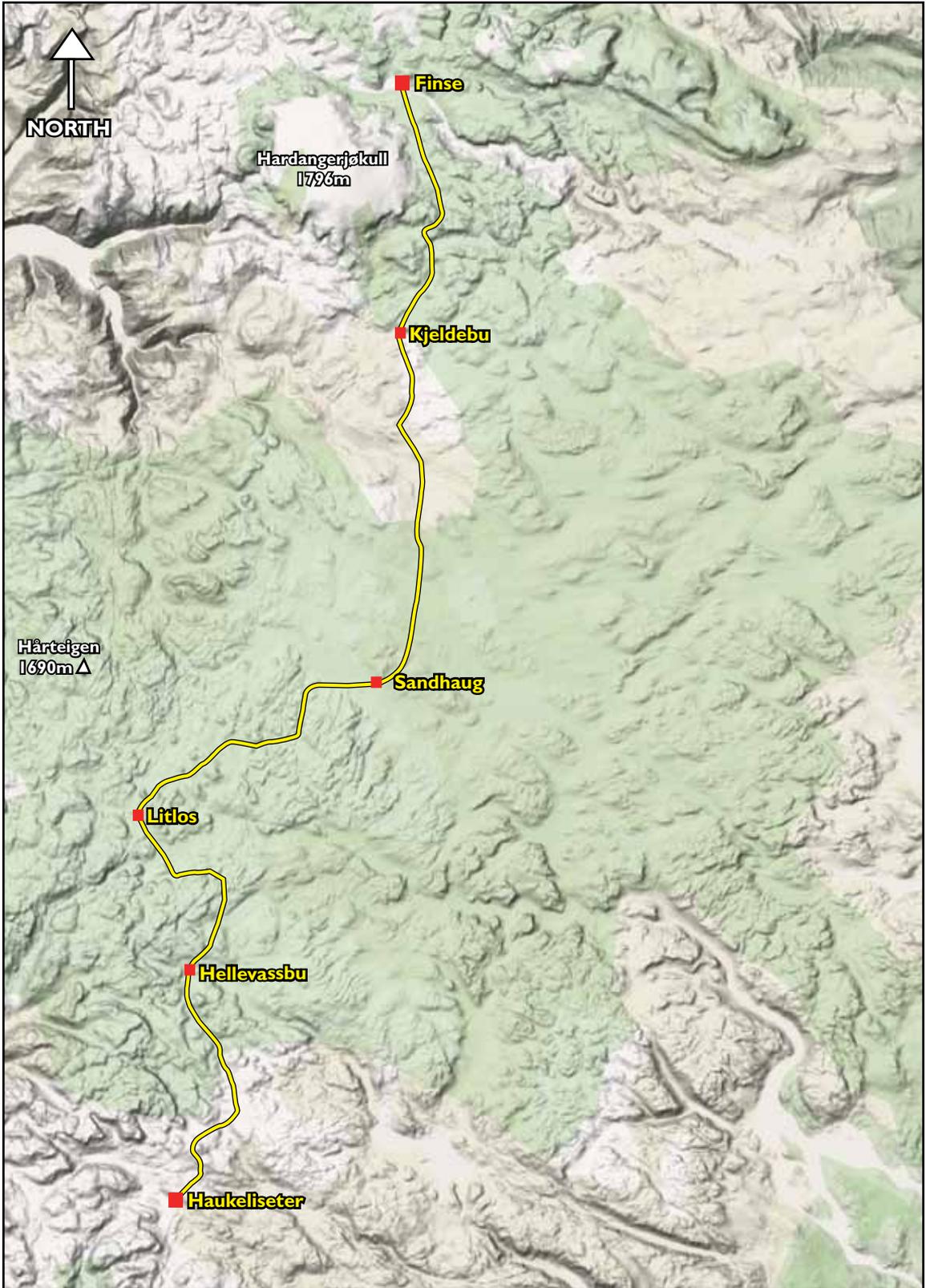
The Hardangervidda is a great undulating circular plateau which is about 100km across. This plateau is really a *penneplain*, or an area which has been eroded down to its base level of ancient bedrock of gniess, which today lies at 1100m. There are a few remnants of the mountains which once stood here, but they are just small scattered stumps, like Hårteigen, 1690m. The majority of Hardangervidda is a vast network of lakes and small streams. Much of this area is a National Park and is home to 7000 wild reindeer which are survivors of once huge herds which roamed Scandinavia. They live off the abundant lichen thriving on this treeless plateau.

The DNT (Den Norske Turistforening) lodges and most private lodges are open for 2-3 weeks around Easter. Outside this time the private lodges will be closed (except Finse 1222 hotel) and the DNT lodges will be closed but will revert to self service cabins (except Haukeliseter which is always open). Hellvassbu and Kjeldebu cabins are always self-service, while Litlos and Sandhaug are lodges which revert to self-service cabins when closed.

The lodges provide food and accomodation, while there is bedding, provisions and firewood in the cabins - enabling you to make yourself comfortable. However, a good sleeping bag, foam mattress, nylon windsack and spade should be taken in the event of having to spend the night in snow shelter in case of being surprised by bad weather. Navigational skills are also essential especially if the route is not *kvistered* with branches.

Access to Haukeliseter from Oslo and Bergen/ Haugesund is on a bus called "Haukeliexpressen." There are a few departures each day and it takes about 5-6 hours from these cities to Haukeliseter. At the northern side of Hardangervidda is the Oslo to Bergen trainline which stops at Finse Station. Finse also takes 5-6 hours to reach from either city and there are many departures each day.

A 2-map set (Hardangervidda Øst and Hardangervidda Vest) at 1:100,000 covers the entire area. It is in the "Turkart" series published by Ugland IT in 2008.



Map of Hardangervidda plateau. The ski tour starts in Haukelisetet and goes north for 5 days across the undulating hillsides and over numerous frozen lakes and streams. There are many more cabins and lodges on Hardangervidda, over and above the ones shown, but only a few are self service and open all year



Day 1. Looking south from the saddle on the west side of Vesle Nup over the very southern part of Hardangervidda around Haukeliseter. It shows the typical undulating terrain of the plateau and how it would suit novices. However with few features navigation can be a problem in bad visibility.



Day 2. Not all of Hardangervidda is flat especially on the west side where remnants ancient mountains have to some extent resisted the erosive forces. The cabin in the photo is the self-service Hellevassbu and the route to Haukeliseter is along a string of lakes beyond the left of the picture



Day 1. After the initial climb up to Vesle Nup saddle from Haukelisetter the rest of Day 1 goes along a string of frozen lakes. After these 24 easy km you reach Hellevassbu cabin



Day 1. All over the Norwegian mountains one can find small huts. Some are private fishermen or hunters cabins, some are scientific cabins and other belong to the state, but all are locked



Day 1. Hellevassbu cabin is locked with the standard DNT key which is available to members of the DNT. It has provisions, a stove and bedding and it does not take long to make it cozy



Day 1. Inside Hellevassbu cabin there is a kitchen with gas cookers and a dining area as well as 6-7 bedrooms each with 4-6 beds. You make a note of what provisions you use and pay by credit card



Day 2. After Hellevassbu cabin the ski route crosses a shallow pass between hills and then drops down into the wide expanses of Bjørndalen where it makes a gradual ascent to Tueslaet pass



Day 2. From Tueslaet pass there is an easy descent to the 2 Tuevatni lakes shown here. After you ski over these lakes there is a long and not steep descent to Kvennsjøen lake and Litlos cabin



Day 2. Litlos lodge is large with over 100 beds. It is only open during the busier Easter period and outwith this time the small self-service cabin with 20 beds beside it is open



Day 3. Litlos lodge during a gale and engulfed in spindrift just 9 hours after the previous calm photo was taken. Both the photos were taken from the window of the open self-service cabin



Day 2. A calm evening from the steps of Litlos cabin looking to the sunset in the west. The photo does not betray the incoming bad weather which arrived overnight with a strong gale and heavy snowfall. The self service cabins are comfortable places and it is easy to wait a day for such bad weather to pass



Day 3. The terrain between Litlos and Sandhaug is largely undulating punctuated by a few hills which rise up a few hundred metres above the plateau which is covered in a lots of frozen lakes and many frozen tarns



Day 3. Sandhaug is a large lodge with over 100 beds but when it is closed the smaller self-service cabin, shown above, is open. It has a stove and wood, gas for cooking, provisions and bedding. There are about 30 beds in 6-7 bedrooms



Day 3. Hardangervidda can have bad weather and there is the occasional storm during the winter months. In such weather visibility is very poor and the *kvister* branches guide you to the cabin



Day 3. The relaxed atmosphere in a cabin during a storm, resting ones bones in front of a warm stove and chatting with fellows. It is a highpoint of a tour if there are enough sunny days to balance it



Day 4. Sandhaug self-service cabin plastered in spindrift. Vast amounts of spindrift can be moved in a storm but this is not always good as it can strip loose snow from some areas leaving it icy



Day 4. Approaching Kjeldebu cabin the dome of Hardangerjøkulen ice cap, some 10 km across, dominates the northern horizon. Finse lies on the other side of this natural feature



Day 4. Kjeldebu self-service cabin is available throughout the year and is opened with a DNT key. It is superbly situated on the south side of Hardangerjøkulen ice cap



Day 4. Hardangerjøkulen icecap is a large circular glacier sitting on top of a cluster of mountains. The icecap completely covers these mountains and flows off the top down glaciers between ramparts



Day 5. Looking south over the flat plateau of Hardangervidda from the pass between Helvetesnutane and Helveteshorga. Kjeldebu cabin is out of sight in a small valley among the darker hills in the middle distance and the great ice dome of Hardangerjøkulen is just to the right out of the photo. The descent from here to the end of the tour at Finse is behind the photographer and is relatively shallow

Hardangervidda

Day	Start	Finish	Km	Up	Down	Time	General
1	Haukeliseter	Hellevassbu	24	660	470	7	Climb the slope to the north of Haukeliseter, 1000m, for half an hour to gain the plateau studded with small lakes to the south of Vesle Nup 1510m. Head north for a couple of km across this plateau to the pass, 1350, on the west of Vesle Nup. Take the skins off and ski down to Mannevatn lake and from its east end continue down into Borrdalen valley. Climb gently for a km to reach the south end of Årmotsvatnet. Now follow the very gentle line of lakes north for 9km past Midnutvatnet to Simletindvatnet, 1230m on the west of the small Simletind mountain. Just beyond this lake is a shallow pass and an easy 2km run down to the lovely Hellevassbu cabin beside a lake in gentle undulating terrain.
2	Hellevassbu	Litlos	20	500	430	5	Wax the skis well for the easy climb up to the saddle on the east side of Buanuten, at about 1320m. From here there is a lovely run down the north side into a shallow valley. Cross this valley and then climb gently up the shallow slope to the north of Øvre Bjønvatnet lakes west end to reach the Tueslaet saddle at 1340m. Descend easily to the East Tuevatnet lake and cross it to reach a small saddle to the west Tuevatnet lake. Cross this lake also, heading for the NW corner. Now follow a shelf westwards between Kvennsjøen lake and the higher mountains for 3 km. Litlos cabin is visible 7 km to the NW. After 3 km leave the shelf and descend more steeply to Kvennsjøen lake, 1170m, by a couple of cabins. Now simply ski NW for a good hour across this lake and the slightly higher Litlosvatnet lake to reach the large lodge at the end of it.
3	Litlos	Sandhaug	24	350	280	6	Head NE from Litlos up the easy slope to the saddle on the east side of Holken. From here there is a lovely run down to Ambjørgvatnet lake. Cross the frozen lake and head into the shallow valley between the hills of Flauteuten and Storahorgi. The gentle undulations of Hardangervidda stretch in all directions. After an almost flat hour you reach Engelstjørn where the summer path goes over the rounded Bismarhei, 1465. Head to the south of it onto Bismarvatnet lake and follow the lake to the east. Here the snow and ice covered outflow heads NE down the small narrow Dimmedalen valley. Follow it down for 3 km to a small lake and then for another 2km to Besso on the frozen shore of Nordmannslågen lake. Skirt to the south of Besso keeping above its red buildings and head due east for 3km across undulating terrain and frozen marshes to reach the same shore. Sandhaug is just a km further east across the end of the lake.
4	Sandhaug	Kjeldebu	34	330	630	8	Head NW up the negligible slope for 3 km until the ski track forks with a path going to Rauhelleren/Stigstuv and another veering north to Dyranut. Take the latter down the gentle slope into Eiriksbudalen and then across flat tundra for another 6 km to the east end of Langavatnet lake. From here there is a gentle climb and descent over a further 5 km down into the Bjøreio river valley. This is followed by a very shallow 5 km descent down this same valley until it reaches the frozen Svinto river just to the east of some cabins at Nybu. Even the 4 km climb from Nybu up over a low ridge and down the other side to Dyranut Turisthytte almost seems flat, but glimpses of the Hardangerjøkulen ice cap to the north show the plateau is coming to an end. At Dyranut there is an often closed road which the ski track crosses. It then climbs round to the east side of Dyranutane, 1363m, before the ski track drops down the longest slop of the day into Langatjørndalen valley. From here the self-service cabin of Kjeldebub is just 2 km towards the now looming ice cap of Hardangerjøkulen which fills the NE horizon.
5	Kjeldebu	Finse	24	700	560	7	Head round the east side of the great glaciated dome of the Hardangerjøkulen for 8 km skiing over the frozen Langavatnet and Lassheldretjørna. Here the ski route forks and there is a short steep alternative over a pass between Helvetesnutane and Helveteshorga, which, if the weather is good should be taken. This scenic route offers wonderful views down to the Hardangervidda plateau and also up to the Hardangerjøkulen icecap. Climb up to about 1420m before descending down the north side of the pass to Midnutvatn lake where you meet the longer fork from earlier today. Now turn north and ski across easy undulating terrain crossing a few more lakes for 5 km before starting the final 5 km gentle descent which takes you down to Finse and the end of the trip. Finse lies between the Hardangerjøkulen ice cap and the craggy ramparts of Hallingsskarvet and there is a lodge and train station here.
			126	2540	2370	33	