



The rose of St. Olav «OLAVSROSA»

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The Cultural Heritage of Gjeslingan Islands

The local historical society of Sør-Gjeslingan consists of several local organisations like: Friends of Gjeslingan, Havbåra Welfare Organisation, The Woxeng Coastal Museum and Vikna municipality.

SØR-GJÆSLINGAN FISHING VILLAGE



Welcome to Sør-Gjeslingan in Vikna!

Sør-Gjeslingan is a group of islands located near the ocean. The fishing village was once one of the largest south of Lofoten. During peak periods of the fishing season, up to 4000 men and women gathered there.

As a fishing area Sør-Gjeslingan has been known for several hundred years. The main reason for the first residents were the rich fisheries. Objects like axes from ancient history has been found, and indicates very early use of the islands.

A collection of nearly 80 small islands and skerries are spread around in the shallow waters. The natural harbour is well protected from strong sea current.

Heimværet – the largest island in the group, is only 600 metres long and the highest hill is about 45 metres above sea level. The view is magnificent as you can see lighthouses from long distance and watch the masts of the ships come and go in the horizon. The well-known Norwegian cruise line Hurtigruten passes daily between the mainland and Sør-Gjeslingan, only 1,5 km away.

There are no trees in this windy area, the vegetation consists of heather and marshland, used as pasture for wild sheep. The flowers are brightly coloured, as well as the cloudberry. A lot of seabirds live here in the summer, such as Great Black-backed Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Arctic Tern, White-tailed Eagle, Common Raven, Common Starling and Arctic Skua.

The quay is constructed to host fishing boats, speed boats and modern commute vessels like Namdalingen, which is in regular service 3 days a week. The Gjeslingan islands are a part of the Vikna district. These islands are some of the most lively fishing villages in Norway. With a number of 6.000 islands and skerries this is truly a paradise for ocean fishing, diving, canoeing, hunting and hiking all the year round.



Local history.

The Gjeslingan fisheries early gained importance. The stockfish, produced from dried cod, were of excellent quality, and sold all over Europe. People sometimes travelled for days and weeks in open rowing- and sailing boats to take part in the abundant fisheries of Sør-Gjeslingan, which lasted throughout the entire winter.

A great need for accommodation was created. Both local homes and ships were used to host the hundreds of fishermen.

A special accommodation house – The rorbu cabin

A special type of houses – rorbu cabins - were also built in large numbers. A landlord owned the land, but he did not own the fishermen's apartments. The rorbu cabin was usually a rather tiny house, placed on rented land.

Most of the cabins were owned by the fishermen themselves. The fisherman's life was definitely no romantic ideal.

Up to 20 men and a cook could live in one small cabin.

Sanitary conditions were poor, and contagious diseases were a constant threat. Lice and tuberculosis had free reign, and the dangers of the sea were ever-present. Among the sites that have been preserved in Sør-Gjeslingan are these old rorbu cabins, rows of fish-drying racks, the fish reception area, the proprietor's home, the local shop, the saltery and the cod liver oil factory. Visitors can stay in one of the old rorbu cabins, surrounded by history, and enjoy the natural surroundings and the fresh sea air.

A historical walking tour can be arranged, and boats are available for rent. The small houses are designed for self-catering, and in addition there are two well-equipped meeting rooms with sanitary facilities. Meals can be ordered and fishing trips can be arranged. The property owner's dwelling, today a high standard house, is also for rent.

How to visit Sør-Gjeslingan today:

The coastal town and municipal centre of Rørvik is situated centrally in the sea route, and the north- and south bound Norwegian cruise specialist, Hurtigruten, anchors up in Rørvik harbour for a couple of hours every day.

The World's most beautiful voyage on board the Hurtigruten is a voyage with no comparison. The voyage will exceed all expectations, you are sure to bring home wonderful memories that will last forever. Hurtigruten - the specialist in intimate and informal voyaging.

A visit to Sør-Gjeslingan will be a very special addition to your North Cape tour, as you stop in Rørvik. Rørvik emerged from being a farm in 1875 to a bustling trading centre on the Norwegian coast in 1890.

We recommend a visit to Norway and the Coastal Museum. The highlight of many visitors is the design of the building and the museum which was the winner of Mies van der Rohe Award 2005. The museum NORVEG is located near the Hurtigruten pier.

Transportation to Sør-Gjeslingan

The speed boat Namdalingen leaves from Rørvik to Sør-Gjeslingan four days a week in the season (may-august)

Go to the link Namsos Trafikkselskap

Welcome to Sør-Gjeslingan