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### Featured Website: The Pilgrim Ways to Nidaros

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### The Pilgrim Ways to Nidaros

#### *Saint Olav*

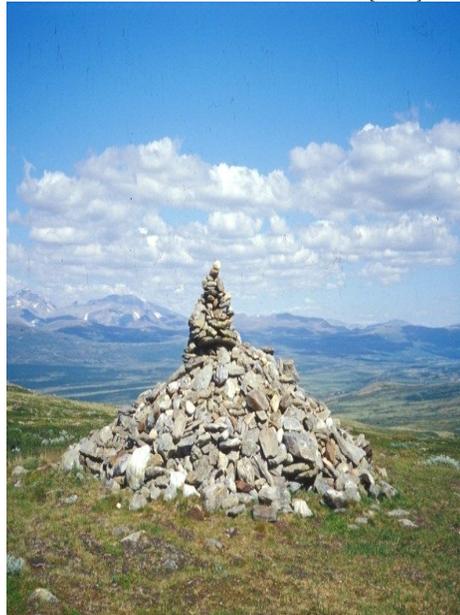
In his attempt to unite and Christianize Norway, Olav Haraldsson fell in the battle of Stiklestad in 1030. When the fighting ceased, his body was rescued from the battlefield and buried on the banks of Nidelva River. Soon afterwards, signs and miracles were reported occurring close to Olav's remains. To protect the remains, a wooden chapel was built above Olav's grave and almost immediately he was proclaimed a saint on August 3, 1031. Around AD 1070 Olav Kyrre founded the first Christ's Church in the same place and this church ultimately became Nidaros Cathedral. Revered as a saint, pilgrims came from all over Europe to celebrate the feast of St. Olav in Nidaros Cathedral, built on the site of the first memorial church. To this day, the St. Olav Festival centered on the feast day of July 29 continues this tradition.



*Image of St. Olav with wreath*

#### *The St. Olav Pilgrimage*

The pilgrim road from Oslo to Trondheim plus two more pilgrim paths were officially opened by Crown Prince Haakon Magnus during Trondheim's millenary celebrations in 1997 after 5 years work. These consist of some 5000 km of prepared pilgrim paths to St. Olav in Scandinavia, of which more than 2000 km are in Norway alone. The St. Olav Ways follow two main historical routes, the eastern path with 'Romboleden' as a main route that runs from around Stockholm and the Baltic Sea, and the southern or western route from mainland Europe that follows various alternatives.



*Norway pilgrimage*

The present Pilgrim Way aims to give today's wanderers an idea of what medieval pilgrims would encounter on their way to Nidaros. The path follows ancient, documented trails when these can be used. The path is bound by names of places and historic monuments with links to Saint Olav's life and work. Along the way you will also see burial mounds and traces of settlements from pre-Christian times. After the medieval pilgrimages ceased, newer historic monuments were built, and some of these will also be of interest to the modern wanderer. The pilgrim guides describes several of these historic monuments, and they are marked on the maps. Thus the wandering will span the events of several thousand years of history. This cultural treasure has become increasingly popular with visitors from Norway and abroad.

The pilgrimage paths to Nidaros were developed and prepared by public authorities in association with local volunteers. The Cooperative Committee of the Pilgrim Ways is responsible for maintaining the quality of these roads in Norway on a national level. For the period 2007-2010 a four-year project is aimed at developing the St Olav pilgrimage paths and ways. The 'Pilot project pilgrimway' is initiated by the Directorate of Cultural Heritage, and managed by Nidaros Diocese.

An initiative is taken to apply for the St. Olav Ways to be approved as a "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" by the European Institute of Cultural Routes. Today the two other large routes in Europe, "The Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes" and "The Via Francigena" have gained this recognition. <http://www.culture-routes.lu>

#### *The Website*

After the modern pilgrimage paths' official debut in 1997, there has been a slow, but steady increase in the interest and following of the pilgrimage roads to Nidaros. Initially, every municipality had a booklet describing their part of the road, but these booklets were published only in Norwegian and just a few remain. The first modern guidebook in English was published in 2001, by Cicerone and attracted the attention of many foreign pilgrims. Today there are guidebooks in the Nordic languages covering most of the routes. <http://www.ciceroneguides.co.uk/product/detail.cfm/book/314/title/the-pilgrim-road-to-nidaros>



*Norway pilgrimage*

But the lack of proper and consistently-updated internet based information aimed at an international public became more and more evident and in 2005 an initiative was taken by the Norwegian Heritage Foundation and the Pilgrim Committee of Nidaros Diocese which resulted in the development of a website dedicated to the Pilgrim Ways and the Heritage of Saint Olav.

The site went public in April 2006; the first that promoted the heritage of Saint Olav in its own name: “Pilgrim Ways to Nidaros”, with the domain names [pilgrim.info](#) (Swedish, Danish, English) and [pilegrim.info](#) (Norwegian), as well as [peregrino.info](#) (Spanish). The site will be the official website for the ‘Pilot project pilgrimway 2007-2010’.

The major objectives of the website are to:

- Give an experience of the pilgrim ways through different media.
- Give comprehensive information on the St. Olav heritage and the pilgrim tradition.
- Give a topographic map based route descriptions for field use.
- Be a hub and a resource for interested parties within the field, in school and church.
- Be a reference for the development of information about the pilgrim ways.

A translation to English and Spanish is in progress, and the information on St. Olav, and pilgrim tales from various pilgrimages are now available, as well as the photo album covering the route from Oslo to Nidaros.

We welcome and encourage visitors to search the site to find out what is available at the present moment. For example, you can read about St. Olav by clicking on the “Saint Olav” in the main dropdown menu of [pilgrim.info](#) after changing language version in the top field. The pilgrim logo top left is the “home” button, and green texts are hyperlinks. Or you can read about the cooperation in building and maintaining the St. Olavs Roads by clicking in the left column beside the logo of the Church.

#### *Jubilee Summer 2007*

In the summer of 2007 we will be celebrating the 10 year jubilee of the opening of the pilgrim ways to Nidaros with a joint Nordic pilgrimage along four pilgrim ways. The pilgrimages have in common that they end by Saint Olav’s day (Olsok) and the Olav vigil Saturday 28. July in Nidaros by the Nidaros Cathedral. Regular offices (services and prayers) will be conducted daily at the Nidaros Cathedral.



*Norwegian altar early 16th century*

It marks the beginning of the Saint Olav Festival in Trondheim. Slated to be Norway's biggest cultural festival, there will be over 350 performances (plays, concerts, etc.) including 800 artists over 10 days (July 27-August 5), plus great food and drink. And at Stiklestad National Cultural Centre the traditional outdoor 'Play about Holy Olav' will be performed in the end of July. Trondheim and Stiklestad offers the finest pilgrims reception in Europe!

Have a look at 'The Pilgrim's Key to Trondheim' on the website to see what is going on.

And information on St. Olav, the pilgrim history, the different routes of the modern pilgrimage, and details about the Jubilee celebration, are also to be found at [pilgrim.info](http://pilgrim.info).

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