

## 37 Ullensvang – Nosi

8.00 hrs.

### Royal walk in the west of the Hardangervidda

The Nosi is a panoramic mountain 'nose', a protruding rock on the western edge of the Hardangervidda with a superb view of the Sør fjord 900m below and the Folgefonna glaciers. Due to the steepness of the terrain and wind conditions it is also a popular starting point for paragliding. After the steep ascent to Nosi there's a wonderful high altitude walk above the tree line to Opesjøvatnet lake in Hardangervidda National Park with opportunities for a swim. Even when the cherry trees are in blossom in May in Ullensvang and it's high-summer weather in the middle of July, be aware that there might still be snow around and that melting snow can make the continuation of the walk from Nosi to the Opesjøvatnet dangerous or even impossible.

**Starting point:** Ullensvang Torgplass/ Havni (5m), market place, car park and bus stop at the harbour in the centre of the Hardanger municipality of Ullensvang on national road 13 (Hardanger tourist route).  
**Height difference:** 1160m.  
**Grade:** fitness, surefootedness, good

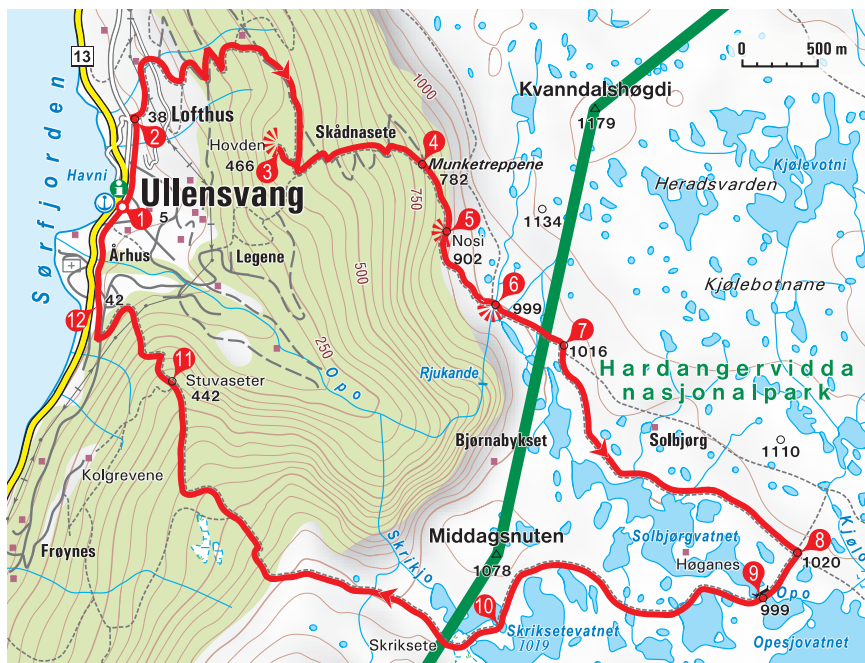
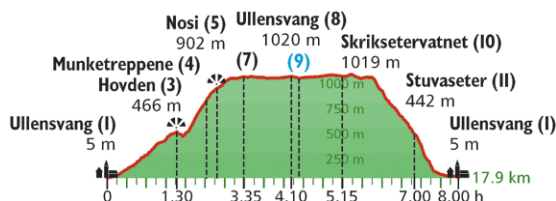
head for heights; while the ascent is only graded moderate, the descent route might be considered by many as difficult due to its steepness.  
**Map:** Turkart 1:50,000 Hardangervidda Vest or Turkart 1:100,000 Folgefonna-Hardangerfjorden.

The market place and harbour form the centre of the fruit community of **Ullensvang (1)** on the Sør fjord. Provisions for the walk can be bought from the supermarket next to the car park. From the bus stop cross the road over the pedestrian crossing to the walkers' information board with an overview map next to the community centre. Next to the info board there's a gap that leads up to an asphalt track (no cars). This track leads left along beside the orchard slopes (signposted: *Hardanger Fruktsti* – fruit path). The asphalt track joins the approach road to Lofthus campsite which continues uphill to the right with a view of Nosi and the cirque with Opo waterfall. The fruit path crosses Ringolvsbekk stream amidst fruit plantations and at the turn-off of the **Nosi no-through road (2)** follows the access road coming up from the

Ullensvang Hotel. The fruit path here leads straight on to Loftus campsite so turn off right and follow the signpost for *Nosi* along a soon unsurfaced and steep no-through road to the forest. After a barrier the uneven roadway becomes an agricultural track with no traffic. The T-marked path soon leaves the roadway to the right, then winds its way up the hillside and at the upper end of the mountain meadows with lovely views the waymarkers guide you through the forest to **Hovden** clearing (3) where there's a viewpoint of the same name. At the end of the clearing go up left back to the agricultural path and along this for a short way to the right until the two



The Munketreppene (monks' steps) are said to have been built by monks in the Middle Ages.







*The Sør fjord between Hardangervidda and the glaciated Folgefonn peninsula.*

paths separate again: the steep path crosses the zigzag agricultural path four times on its way up. Shortly after the fourth crossing you come to the start of the **Munketreppene (4)** from where you are afforded spectacular views; this set of steps was supposedly constructed by the monks in order to make the steep terrain negotiable for mules, thereby acquiring its name of 'monks' steps'. The Munkebu hut on Veivatnet lake further up was also named after the monks. At the top of the monks' steps continue on the right along a path to **Nosi (5)** with a lovely view over the Sør fjord and beyond to the glaciated Folgefonn peninsula. A short while later you glimpse the 'smoking' **Rjukande waterfall (6)**. Now the terrain levels out and the real Vidda begins. Continue at first along the T-marked path which forks after the entrance into the national park (7). It leads on the right along beside the river where a multitude of lake-like river widenings are inviting places to stop for a rest and a swim. At the northern bay of Opesjovatnet you come to an important **cross-roads (8)**: the signposts here indicate right in the direction of **Ullensvang**, the T-waymarkers lead to the **Opo all-year-round bridge (9)** across the connecting water between Opesjovatnet and Solbjørgvatnet and follow the winding path through the high altitude terrain with many lakes to **Skriksetervatnet (10)**, after which the land begins to slope down towards the sheer cliff edge. The T-waymarkers there lead just as steeply downhill as on your ascent to Nosi, but if it's already getting dark, there's no opportunity for escaping onto an agricultural path. Continue downhill over a ridge to **Stuvaseter** alpine pasture (11) and to the carefully tended houses at the edge of **Ullensvang (12)**. The narrow street joins the national road below. Follow this road to the right over the Opo estuary and soon afterwards, before the right hand bend, turn off onto the traffic-free asphalt path into the fruit orchards. This path then brings you back to the community centre at your **starting point (1)**.

*The upper section of Rjukande 'smoking' waterfall.*

