

# Gaustatoppen



Photo: Nancy Bundt

**AT 1,883 METRES ABOVE SEA LEVEL,** Gaustatoppen towers 300–400 metres above the highest of the nearby mountains and almost 1,000 metres above the surrounding countryside. It is easily recognizable thanks to its distinctive shape. The geological formation process took at least 1,200 million years! Gaustatoppen started life as sand deposits on riverbeds. About 100 million years ago, this sand ended up buried many kilometres beneath a mountain range, where it was compressed at high temperatures and “baked” to form quartzite, a hard rock. Subsequent erosion removed thousands of metres of rock above, creating the landscape we see today. Because the quartzite of Gaustatoppen was harder for natural forces to erode than the surrounding rock types, the mountain stands in majestic isolation in the landscape. Seen from the east it resembles a volcano, but from the northwest the peak looks like a pyramid. (Regional Geologist for Buskerud, Telemark and Vestfold.)

Layout: Nina Akersveen / trykk Erik Tørriche Nilsen as

# Tourism in Vestfjorddalen

**IN 1820** Gaustatoppen and Rjukanfossen were “discovered” by Jens Esmark, a mountain surveyor. He reported to the King in Copenhagen that he had found two giants of nature, including the world’s tallest waterfall. Thus began a steady stream of artists and tourists, who came from all parts of Europe to visit Vestfjorddalen. The first tourists were ferried across Tinnsjøen lake in a rowing boat before continuing their journey up the valley by wagon. In those days there was no highway from Rjukan to Tuddal, and the journey took 6–8 hours, climbing to a height of almost 1,600 metres. The tourists could not have made the journey without local mountain guides. The most famous of these was Halvor Brynhildsen Kåse, nicknamed “Emperor”. In 1893 the stone lodge at the summit opened, and now 30,000 people a year reach the top in just a couple of hours. You can even take a shortcut by using Gaustabanen, the railway hidden inside the mountain.



Wilhelm M. Cörpeltan

**Vandrerregionen**  
[www.vandretelemark.no](http://www.vandretelemark.no)    [www.visitrjukan.com](http://www.visitrjukan.com)  
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# Rjukan – Telemark

WALK Gaustatoppen

THEME Views of 1/6 of Norway

Photo: Stegarud Foto



## WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE ON YOUR WALK

**GAUSTATOPPEN MOUNTAIN LODGE** – built by hand in 1893. Photo: Nancy Bundt

**MAP LICHEN:** resembles a map and grows only 5 mm in 10 years. Photo: Nancy Bundt

**SHEEP LIVING THE HIGH LIFE,** grazing at the foot of the cairn in summer. Photo: Nancy Bundt

**STONES FROM ALL THE MUNICIPALITIES** with a view of Gaustatoppen. Photo: Nancy Bundt

**GAUSTABANEN:** entrance to the secret railway. Photo: Karin Rø



# Description of the walk

**A FAMILY-FRIENDLY HIKE TO THE SUMMIT**, suitable for fit adults and children with hiking experience. At the summit you'll be rewarded with a panoramic view of 1/6 of Norway and a mountain lodge selling "the world's best" waffles. The lodge is at an altitude of 1,830 metres, but the highest point is 1,883 metres above sea level.

Your starting point is the car park at Stavsro, altitude 1,100 metres. You will ascend about 700 metres, but the trail is wide and clearly marked by red T's painted on the rocks. Underfoot is a mix of rock and small stones. Feel free to pick up a stone and add it to one of the many cairns you pass en route to the summit.

As you approach the summit, the view becomes increasingly spectacular. In the distance you can see the mountains of Telemark, Buskerud and Osломarka. On the final section, heading north up the ridge, you have fabulous views in all directions, especially over the expanse of Hardangervidda to the west. Hiking boots are recommended for ankle support. In the summer months the café at Stavsro is open, serving traditional Norwegian fare such as *rømmegrøt* (cream porridge).

## Driving directions

**Rjukan Gaustatoppen**

From E 134 – Turn off in Sau-land village for Gaustatoppen, about 35 km.

**25 Tuddal**

From Hwy 37 – Turn off at Dale (4 km east of Rjukan village) and follow signs for Gaustatoppen, about 10 km.

**P** Park at Stavsro kafeteria.  
(GPS: N59°83.457' E8° 71.435')

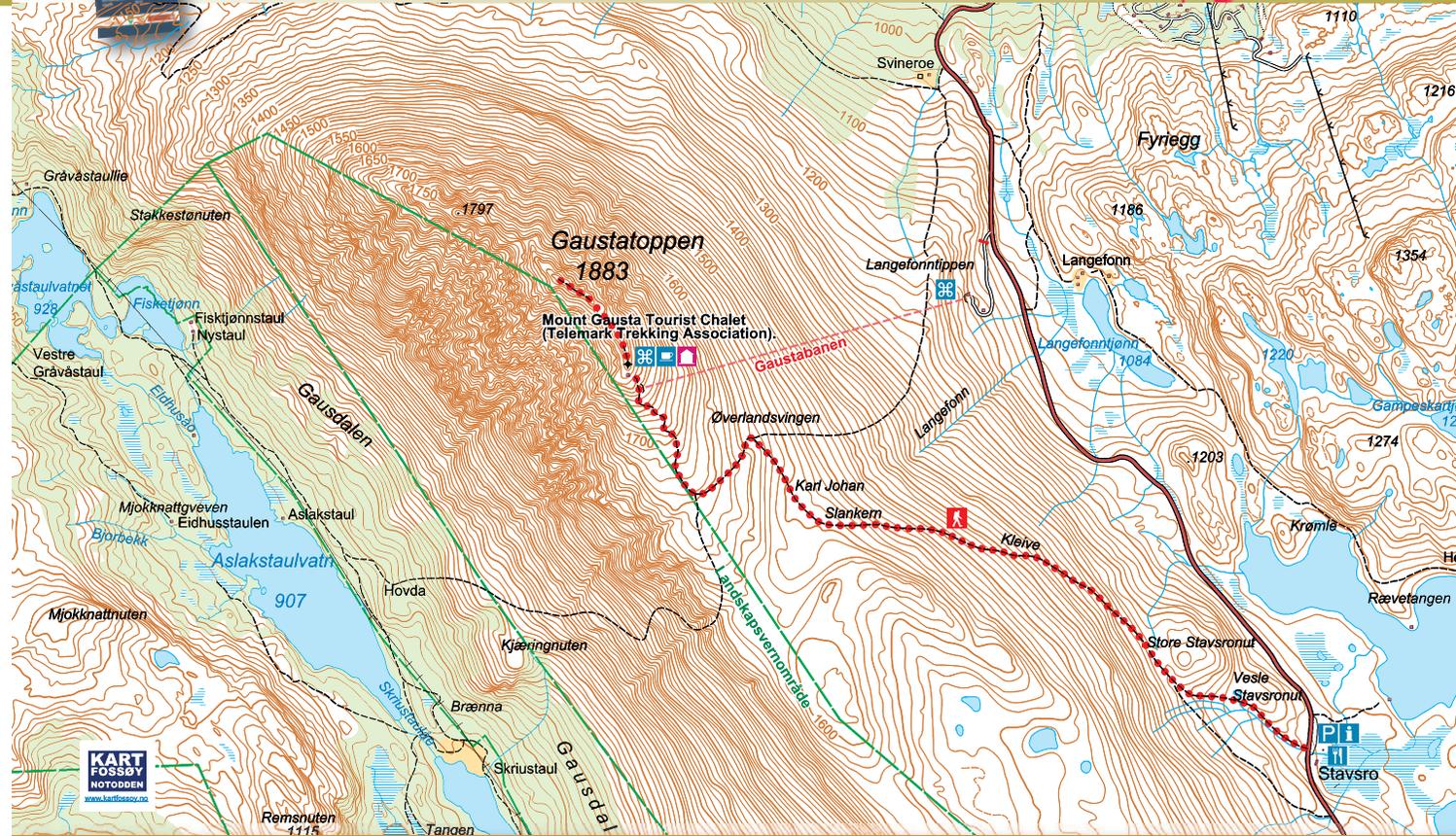
**FURTHER READING:**  
"Gaustatoppen"  
by Helge Songe.



**Maps:**  
Gaustatoppen 1: 30,000,  
Rjukan: Norway Series No. 10025 1:50,000

**DON'T FORGET** your warm clothing.  
You'll be climbing to a height of 1,800 m, and the weather can change fast.

**ACCESS:**  
June-September,  
altitude 1,173-1,883



Scale 1:25 000 Equidistance 10m ..... = marked summer trail



You are responsible for your own safety during the walk. Treat the countryside and grazing animals with respect. Take only photos, leave only footprints. Please take your rubbish home with you. Enjoy the trip!