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A Little Bit of Language Can Go a Long Way!



Lesson 3: Getting What You Want Using Norwegian

Vær så snill.

LESSON NOTES

This lesson's phrase will help you take matters into your own hands! In this lesson we'll take a look at the word "Please," which will be very important when you need to ask for something.

In Norwegian, "Please" is *vær så snill*.

Let's take a closer look at *vær så snill*. The easiest way to use this expression is by pointing at something and saying *denne, vær så snill* ("This one, please"), or *den, vær så snill* ("That one, please.").

Please remember that in Norway it is a bit rude to point at people. But pointing at things, especially when you are trying to buy something at the market, or when it helps to illustrate your point, is perfectly okay. Just make sure you use *takk* ("thank you") when the object is handed to you.

Another translation of "please" could be the phrase *kan du* ("could you. For example, "Could you hand me that please?"). We use this phrase to ask someone to do something for us and it is usually followed by a verb. Break it down to syllables: *kan du*. Here's an example: *Kan du gi den til meg* ("Please hand it to me.") Here's another example that you may hear at the airport: *Kan du åpne den*. ("Please open it.") The politest way to phrase a request would then be to add *vær så snill* at the end of a *Kan du* request. *Kan du (verb) vær så snill*. Putting both together makes a formal sentence.

PHRASES

Norwegian	English
Vær så snill.	Please.
Kan du...(followed by a verb)	Please... (followed by a verb)
Denne vær så snill.	This please.
Den vær så snill.	That please.

VOCABULARY

Norwegian	English
denne	this
den	that

QUICK TIP

We have learned the sentence *denne vær så snill* and *den vær så snill*. Now since Norwegian operates with three grammatical sexes, *Denne* and *den* would ultimately have to change depending on what you are pointing at (what you want.) The most common sexes, male/female, use *denne*, *den*. However a non-sex noun like the Norwegian *hus* ("house") would require a *dette* or *det*, changing the -n's for -t's. It is not always easy remembering what is male/female and non-sex, whenever in doubt use the one that sounds best. Norwegians are not very picky when it comes to grammar and your request will, no matter the grammatical sex, be understood.

QUICK TIP 2

In Norwegian saying *Kan du ("request") vær så snill*, is a very polite way of asking another person to do or give you something. However if you really want to convey a desire to get something, try to extend the *ær* in *vær så snill*. *vææææææær så snill*. The longer you drag it the more obvious it becomes that you really desire it. If you should ever come to forget the Norwegian phrase for "please" then there is actually no shame in using the English word. You might try to look it up in a dictionary. In Norwegian the English word has been Norwegianized into *Pliiiiis* and is often used by young people.