

TRAVELING TO NORTHERN EUROPE: ONLY ICELAND WILL ATTRACT SOME TOURISTS



Currently, business with Northern Europe is anything but easy. Norway and Finland are closed to conventional tourists, Denmark has only recently relaxed its restrictions, and although Sweden can actually be visited without any problems (with the presentation of PCR tests), its image has suffered somewhat among certain tourists due to the very relaxed approach taken by the Swedish authorities at the beginning of the pandemic. The news from Iceland is different: there are no more covid restrictions as of July 1st.

The boom for Iceland can also be seen in figures. According to a study by Amadeus, Iceland is by far the most popular destination as regards traveling to northern Europe this summer. Or even more clearly: **Iceland's tourism market share among the five Nordic countries, measured by advance bookings recorded by Amadeus, is a whopping 76% for the month of July 2021.** Norway comes in at 11%, Sweden at 7%, Denmark at 4% and Finland at just 3% - before the pandemic, Finland's summer market share was around 15% in each case. And while Norway's figures aren't even that bad by comparison, they may not reflect reality either: Norway, like Finland, is still so closed that the tourism industry there is seriously worried. Domestic tourists alone won't get them very far, and the July figures probably include advance bookings that may not be realized.

Norway and Finland have the lowest infection rates in Northern Europe thanks to the restrictions, but at a high price. Airlines are also complaining: Finnair has postponed the resumption of numerous routes from Europe to Finland until July, and the situation is also tense at Norwegian airlines such as Norwegian and Widerøe. **The positive infection situation is therefore not an advantage in the fight for tourists willing to travel.**

After all, the figures for Finland and, to a lesser extent, also for Norway show a strong upward trend again from December. This means that many want to skip the northern summer and visit the north in winter instead. It is expected that by then Finland and Norway will also have relaxed somewhat. In the summer, however, the tourism companies of the Nordic countries will all be looking eagerly to the smallest country there, Iceland.

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