

# of the BEST

## AFFORDABLE NORDIC BREAKS

Exploring the Norwegian fjords or Iceland's lagoons needn't break the bank, writes **Lina Molloholli**

The stunning Nordic region features on many people's bucket lists, but its reputation for high prices has kept some budget-conscious visitors away. But there are now more affordable options on the market for travellers eager to explore this region, while cruises and escorted tours are a good choice for customers who don't want to encounter surprise costs.

With the recent northern lights frenzy in the UK, it's also a great time to sell a Nordic break. Plus, with Christmas markets, lakeside retreats and picturesque scenery, there are plenty of other strong selling points too.



### 1 SCENIC NORWEGIAN FJORDS CRUISE

While travel costs can be high on land, a cruise offers exceptional value for money. Ambassador Cruise Line has recently launched two Scandinavia itineraries for 2025, both from London Tilbury, while last year Norwegian-rooted Havila Voyages began sailing the 130-year-old Coastal Express Route – previously only served by Hurtigruten ships. The route passes majestic fjords between Kirkenes and Bergen, while the dramatic peaks of the Lofoten Islands are a highlight, offering a glimpse of sea eagles and a chance to kayak through still waters at Svolvær. The journey continues to the historic city of Trondheim; here passengers can visit the gothic Nidaros Cathedral, one of the largest in northern Europe.

**Book it:** The six-day Voyage South trip costs from £516 per person sharing an Interior cabin on a full-board basis. Departs on November 5 and excludes flights. [havilavoyages.com](http://havilavoyages.com)

PICTURES: Shutterstock/Mumemories, Trygve Finneisen, JW Cohen, Elena Nerva



### 2 CITY BREAK IN GOTHENBURG

Sweden's second largest city Gothenburg is filled with beautiful gardens, picturesque canals, bustling markets and happens to be a top craft beer hub. It also boasts Scandinavia's largest amusement park, Liseberg, which transforms into a winter wonderland during the holiday season. For a deep dive into history, clients can visit the Maritiman maritime museum, home to a fascinating collection of historic ships, before taking a leisurely stroll through the Haga district, known for its charming wooden houses, unique boutiques and cosy cafes. It's the ideal spot for traditional Swedish fika – coffee and a sweet treat.

**Book it:** Regent Holidays offers a four-day Gothenburg Winter Break from £710, including return flights from Heathrow, some meals and a 48-hour Gothenburg city pass. Based on a November 12 departure. [regent-holidays.co.uk](http://regent-holidays.co.uk)

### 3 ADVENTURES BY RAIL IN SCANDINAVIA

For first-time visitors eager to get the most out of their experience, suggest a multi-city rail trip. Great Rail Journeys' eight-day Oslo, Stockholm and Copenhagen by Rail itinerary blends three of Scandinavia's most vibrant cities. Starting in Oslo, clients can see Edvard Munch's *The Scream* (pictured) among the paintings at the National Museum, and delve into polar exploration at the Fram Museum. In Stockholm, there's the Vasa Museum to see the remarkably restored eponymous 17th-century warship, before wandering through the historic Gamla Stan (Old Town) with its cobblestone streets and colourful buildings. The last stop is Copenhagen, home to the historic amusement park Tivoli Gardens. Clients will cruise along Nyhavn Canal, lined with brightly coloured 17th-century townhouses and savour local delicacies at Torvehallerne food market.

**Book it:** From £1,495 per person departing on October 3. Includes return flights from Heathrow, accommodation, all transport and some meals. No single supplement on selected departures. [greatrail.com](http://greatrail.com)



### 4 MOOMIN MAGIC IN FINLAND

Husky dog-sledding, meeting reindeers or having a go at ice-fishing – there's plenty for families in Finland. Tweens and tots will love the Moomin-themed activities and shops in Helsinki, which they can visit on Best Served Scandinavia's Moomin Holiday in Finland. In Tampere, a short train journey away, families can visit the Moomin Museum, featuring unique exhibitions exploring the Moomin World, before heading off to the riverside town of Turku, home to the Moominworld theme park. Here, kiddies will meet the characters and enjoy interactive performances and seasonal activities, from barefoot trails in Moomin forests to mini skiing with Moomintroll. Families can also kayak in the Archipelago National Park or take a swim in lake Kakskerta from Brinkhall Beach.

**Book it:** Best Served Scandinavia offers a six-night Moomin Holiday in Finland from £3,090 for a family of two adults and one child on August 7. Includes flights, B&B accommodation, train tickets, entry to the Moomin Museum and a day ticket to Moominworld. [best-served.co.uk](http://best-served.co.uk)

## DESTINATIONS

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#### ICELAND'S NATURAL HOT POOLS

Intrepid Travel's Iceland Express tour will do the trick for those looking for a speedy jaunt around the country's hotspots. Guests will travel the 186-mile Golden Circle route from the capital city of Reykjavik into Thingvellir National Park, the dramatic Geysir Geothermal Area and the majestic Gullfoss waterfall. Other highlights include the opportunity for a dip in Secret Lagoon, a natural hot pool and a visit to the Mýrdalsjökull ice cap, which covers the active volcano Katla, but may soon be gone due to rising temperatures. Take a stroll along the black-sand beaches of Jökulsárlón lagoon, where iceberg chunks wash up on the beach, before heading to Reykjavik for a guided walk to the old harbour, city centre and Hallgrímskirkja church.

**Book it:** From £825 for a five-day tour including accommodation, some meals and transfers. Based on a July 11 departure and excludes flights.

[intrepidtravel.com](http://intrepidtravel.com)



PICTURES: Shutterstock/Umomos; fotogedlips

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#### WINTER WONDERLAND IN COPENHAGEN

From traditional handmade ornaments and festive lights to interactive installations and traditional treats, Denmark's capital pushes the boat out when it comes to Christmas markets. Nyhavn, the capital's famous waterfront, turns into a magical village with festive stalls offering *æbleskiver* (pancake balls) and *gløgg* (mulled wine). Tivoli Gardens, one of the world's oldest amusement parks, is adorned with thousands of twinkling lights and offers activities such as ice skating, thrilling rides and carol singing with the locals. The Kongens Nytorv Christmas Market is unmissable, too – warm up with a hot chocolate at the chalet bar at the entrance of the market, beside the Royal Theatre.

**Book it:** Osprey Holidays offers three nights' B&B at Best Western Hotel Hebron from £572 per person, based on two sharing a Standard Room, with flights from Gatwick on December 5. [ospreyholidays.com](http://ospreyholidays.com)



## Best OF THE REST

#### Camp and kayak in Sweden

Experience Sweden's wild side with Responsible Travel's kayaking and camping holiday, perfect for adventure-loving families. Camp under the stars and paddle through the serene waters of the Saint Anna Archipelago, exploring its myriad islands and pristine nature. Prices start from £647 including all equipment, and pre-ordered groceries. [responsibletravel.com](http://responsibletravel.com)

#### Dog-sledding in Tromsø

Clients wishing to delve deeper into the Gateway to the Arctic will be pleased to hear British Airways will launch a flight to Tromsø on December 1. The city offers the chance to see the northern lights, thrilling activities such as dog-sledding, whale watching and reindeer encounters. Rooms at the Comfort Hotel Xpress Tromsø start from £70 per night based on two sharing a Standard Room. [strawberryhotels.com](http://strawberryhotels.com)

#### Explore the north of Iceland

Home to just over 18,000 people, Iceland's 'capital of the north', Akureyri, offers stunning fjords and nearby natural wonders, such as the Goðafoss waterfall and Lake Mývatn. Stroll through the city's botanical gardens, visit the Akureyri Museum and enjoy a vibrant local arts scene. Three nights at Fosshotel Mývatn and return flights to Akureyri cost from £521. [easyjet.com/en/holidays](http://easyjet.com/en/holidays)