

VIKING LINE

More than half of travellers come from abroad – Nordic boom in travel clearly evident at Viking Line

International tourism is growing rapidly in the Nordic region, and a cruise on the Baltic Sea is a natural part of many travellers' experience. At Viking Line, this growth is greatest among travellers from Asia. Meanwhile, the cooler climate of the Nordic countries is attracting more and more tourists from the Mediterranean region.

Last year, Viking Line transported 4.6 million passengers on its five vessels, with over half of them coming from countries other than Finland. More than 16 per cent of travellers were from countries other than Finland, Sweden or Estonia. The company believes that both the number and share of international travellers will continue to rise in the years ahead, especially those from Central Europe and Asia.

“The biggest number of our international travellers are German, but the number of Chinese travellers is growing rapidly – in two years, the figure has quadrupled. In February 2026, in conjunction with the Chinese New Year, more than 4,500 Chinese guests travelled on our vessels. That is twice the number than the year before,” says **Daniel Atteroth**, Viking Line's Sales and Marketing Director for the international market.

The number of travellers from other far-flung markets, such as the US, India, Japan and even Australia, continues to rise.

“The trend in international tourism is strongly linked to improved flight connections. New direct routes from Asia and the US to the Nordic region increase traveller flows and also create significant opportunities for maritime transport,” notes Atteroth.

International travellers contribute to new demand while also helping to even out seasonal variations in passenger traffic. In Viking Line's home markets, demand is greatest during the summer holiday period, June-July, whereas trips taken by travellers from international markets travel are spread more evenly throughout the year. Chinese travellers are especially active visitors to Finland and Sweden during the cooler half of the year.

Coolcations, security and nature attract visitors

Viking Line sees security, nature experiences, the internationally acclaimed Nordic cuisine and the opportunity for sustainable travel as the biggest draws attracting international travellers to the Nordic region. In recent years, the cool climate has become a strong factor in attracting tourists.

“The coolcation trend is shifting demand for travel from the Mediterranean to the Nordic region as more and more people seek alternatives to increasingly hot holiday destinations. The number of people travelling with us from Spain and Italy is also steadily on the rise,” says Atteroth.

International visitors often travel with Viking Line as part of extensive tours in the Nordic region, when they visit a number of countries and capital cities over a week or two. Maritime trips are an important part of tour operators' logistics since transport and accommodation are combined on board. For many travellers, their cruise on the Baltic Sea is also one of the highlights of their journey.

“Car and passenger ferries on the Baltic Sea provide a very high level of service. Our international guests are often pleasantly surprised by the wide range of services on board – from restaurants and spas to cabins that clearly surpass their previous experiences sailing on ferries. For Asian travellers, shopping options are especially important, and there is sharply growing interest in sauna experiences,” Atteroth adds.

Growth is expected to continue

The growth in demand from outside Viking Line’s home markets is part of a broader trend in which the Nordic region has strengthened its position as a tourist destination. According to the trade organization Visit Finland, the number of foreign overnight stays in Finland last year was a record 7.2 million. That rate of growth is far higher than the European average. The trend in Sweden follows the same pattern, and the country generates especially great interest in the US market.

“The geopolitical situation naturally creates uncertainty in international tourism and affects air traffic, above all. In the longer term, the trend is still clear: travel to the Nordic region will continue to grow, and maritime traffic will experience its share of growth. Viking Line is investing particularly in sales in Asia, the US, the German-speaking countries in Europe and southern Europe. We work closely with the trade organizations Visit Finland, Visit Estonia and Visit Sweden. Our study trips to the Nordic countries together with the airlines also play an important role,” Atteroth notes.

TOP 10 – Nationalities of international travellers (increase from March 2025 to February 2026):

- Germans, 8%
- Ukrainians +17%
- Chinese +56%
- Poles +5%
- Latvians +7%
- Lithuanians +9%
- Indians +10%
- Americans +17%
- Brits +15%
- Spaniards +16%

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