Nordic Travel
The New Oil, or Just Spilled Potential?

Point of View by PwC
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Nordic Travel – The New Oil or Just Spilled Potential?

Nordic tourism is at the threshold of a unique opportunity.
Demand from both domestic and international travellers is growing, fuelled by rising interest in nature-based experiences, adventure tourism, “coolcation”, sustainable destinations, and safe, reliable travel. Yet too few players are capturing this potential. **Why?**

The challenge is not demand — travellers are ready. The barriers lie within the industry: fragmented supply, limited infrastructure, low margins and insufficient alignment with international standards and affluent customer expectations. The market struggles to scale, coordinate, and capture value. **Unless addressed, the Nordics risk missing a once-in-a-generation opportunity.**

The winners of tomorrow will be those who act today. Drawing on deep expertise in strategy, M&A and transformation, **PwC supports tourism players** — from local operators to global investors and public stakeholders — in unlocking the sector’s full potential. **In this report, we explore:**

Where demand is surging – and why the opportunity is bigger than most realize

What pain points holds the market back – and how this reflect a broader challenge across the value chain

Why profitability remains a challenge – and which areas offer opportunities to improve margins

How to unlock the untapped potential – and where this offer a gateway to growth

This Nordic Travel Report uses **Norway as a case study** to explore the opportunities and challenges in unlocking the region's untapped potential. With especially Norway, Sweden and Finland all focusing on unique nature experiences and sharing similar packaging and distribution strategies, **the trends in Norway largely reflect those across the Nordics.**

Preface and Executive Summary

Dear reader,

Travel and tourism remains a major global industry. The World Travel & Tourism Council estimates the sector itself, and its ripple effects contributed 8.5% of global GDP in 2024 and supported over 350m jobs worldwide. Leisure travel makes up about 80% of global spending. While it hit roughly USD 5.4 trillion in 2019, total global travel spend rebounded past pre-pandemic levels to more than USD 5.7 trillion in 2024. The Nordics also show strong post-pandemic momentum. Total inbound spend in the Nordics reached roughly USD 34bn in 2024, where Denmark (USD ~9.6bn) is the region's largest inbound market, marginally larger than Norway (-USD ~0.1bn). Inbound tourism spend in Norway was roughly USD 9.5 bn in 2024.

Why the Nordics, and why Norway? The "coolcation" trend turns cold and remote into a selling point. Visitors choose Norway for its pristine nature and distinctive adventure experiences. Most regions in Norway report double-digit growth in tourist visits and spending, and we expect continued expansion as global demand trends favour the strengths of the Nordics: Travelers want authentic, personalized experiences – often enhanced by digital tools – and are prepared to pay for them. This segment, "adventure travel", is projected to roughly double by 2030. Luxury travel is in strong growth globally, and we observe increasing interest for the Nordics. The demand is there, and travellers are ready.

However, we believe the supply side of Norwegian travel & tourism faces significant constraints due to gaps in luxury and adventure offerings. We observe that the sector overall faces profitability challenges with margins falling below the Norwegian market average. The sector is fragmented across a challenging geography: fjords, mountains, islands and remote north. That fragmentation increases friction for international travellers. High prices combined with standards in accommodation and logistics that fall short of expectations associated with the price point, compress margins. Norway lacks a consistent and unified offering to meet the demand we described above. There is a lack of premium adventure operators, seamless logistics, and luxury accommodation.

The commercial path forward is clear: focus on adventure travellers and affluent travellers that are willing to pay a premium for a seamless experience, extra service, exclusive access and personalized experiences. This requires better service, investments in hardware, but first and foremost; a tighter coordination across the value chain, and unified distribution to reach these travellers.

The Norwegian travel sector represents a significant consolidation opportunity, allowing for synergy-driven margin improvements as well as better value chain-coordination, leading to higher quality products. We already see strong interest from financial buyers in the Nordic travel sector, with the number of transactions in 2024 in the tourism sector having doubled since 2019. The majority of acquisitions have been made by strategic buyers, but financial investors are also active in the sector. As a recent example, Equip Capital acquired Nordic Tours AS and 50˚ North forming North Travel, a transaction where PwC proudly acted as advisors.

PwC has mapped Norwegian travel and tourism industry, and we see a fragmented market underpinning the consolidation potential. We currently work with both strategic and financial investors to convert upside into value: we help set investment strategies, identify and evaluate targets, execute all types of due diligence, vendor assistance and manage post-deal value creation.

We hope this report helps investors and decision makers act and avoid missing a rare opportunity for the Nordic travel sector. We welcome a discussion on how to go from insight to action.

Best regards,

Asta Lassesen
Partner, PwC Norway

Marianne Å. Nyrønning
Senior Manager, PwC Norway

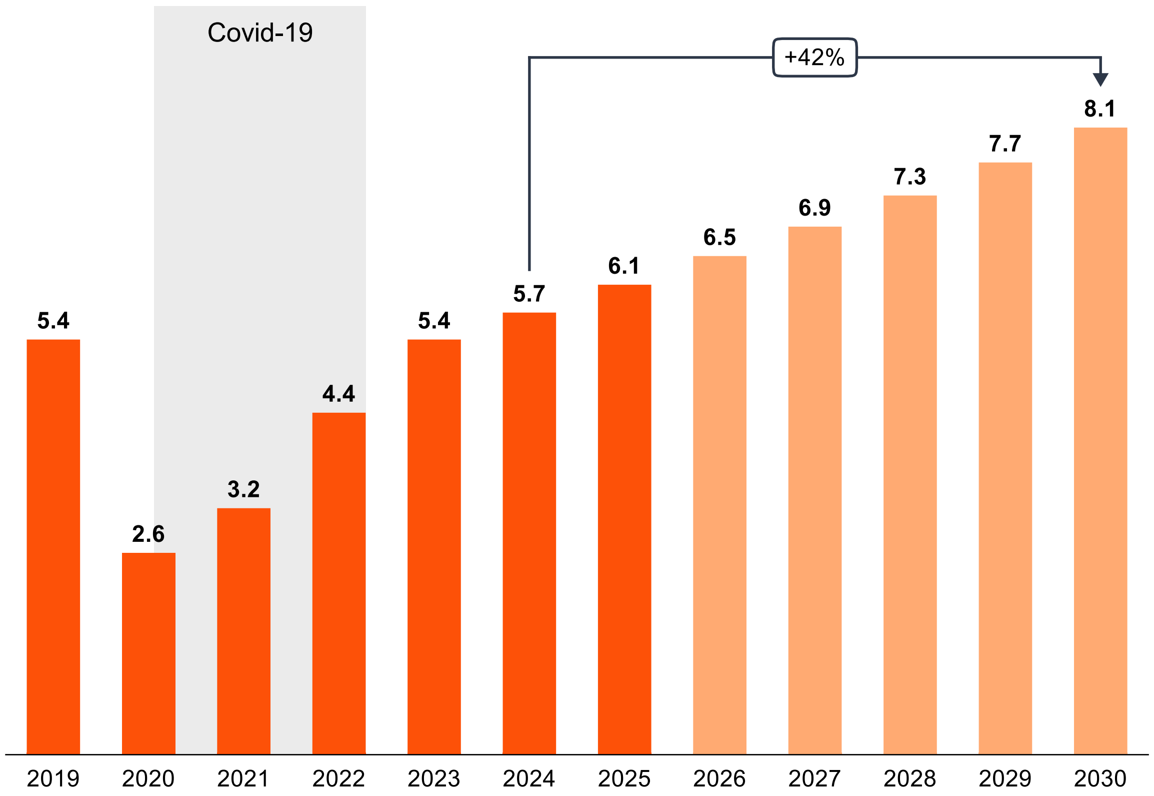
"Demand for Nordic travel is already on the verge of a boom. Travelers are seeking authentic experiences and pristine nature, eager to invest in comfort, luxury, and personalized journeys. The Nordics not only offer ideal destinations but also significant potential to unlock further volume and margin growth.

— now is the ideal time to invest."

The global leisure tourism expenditures rebounded past pre-pandemic levels and are projected a further increase of 40% by 2030

- **Travel and tourism and its ripple effects into global economies, makes it one of the world's largest economic sectors.** Travel and tourism contributed to 8.5% of global GDP in 2024 and supported +350m jobs.
- **Global leisure tourism expenditures** accounts for ~80% of global travel & tourism spending and grew about 4% annually pre-covid and totalled USD 5.4 trillion in 2019. The remaining 20% share of direct expenditures comes from business travel.
- **After a period of recovery**, the total global expenditures 2024 were up to USD 5.7 trillion. This corresponds to a strong recovery, well above pre-covid growth rates.
- **Consumer spending is one of the key drivers** behind this growth. All Covid-19 restrictions were fully removed in 2022 globally, and consumer confidence continued to rise. As accumulated savings were at an elevated level, consumers are increasingly willing to spend on travel and particularly experiences.
- **The growth of 2025 and beyond** is uncertain as trade tariffs and rising geopolitical tensions could limit the sector's expansion, however the sector's contribution to GDP is projected to grow at 3.5%, which is above the global economy's growth rate at 2.5%.
- **+40% Increase by 2030:** In nominal numbers, we expect the global leisure tourism expenditures to surpass USD 8.1 trillions by 2030.

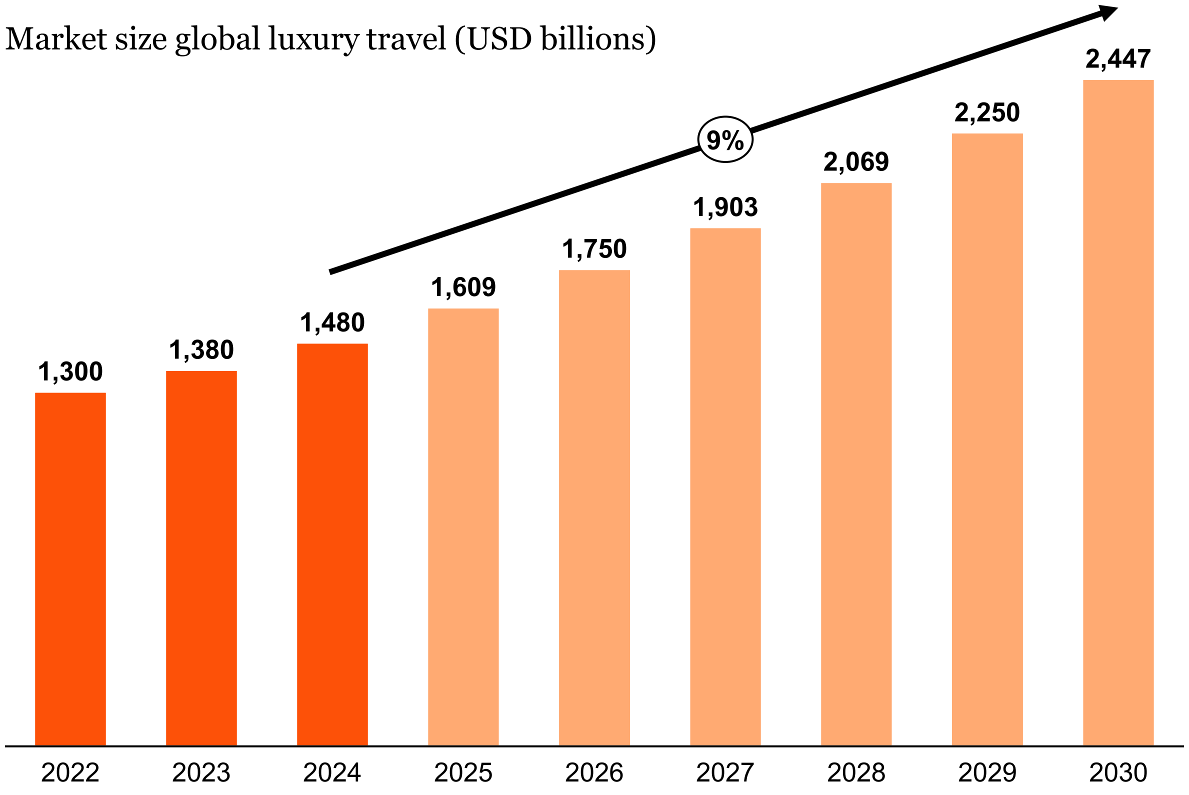
Global leisure travel market (USD trillion in travel spending)



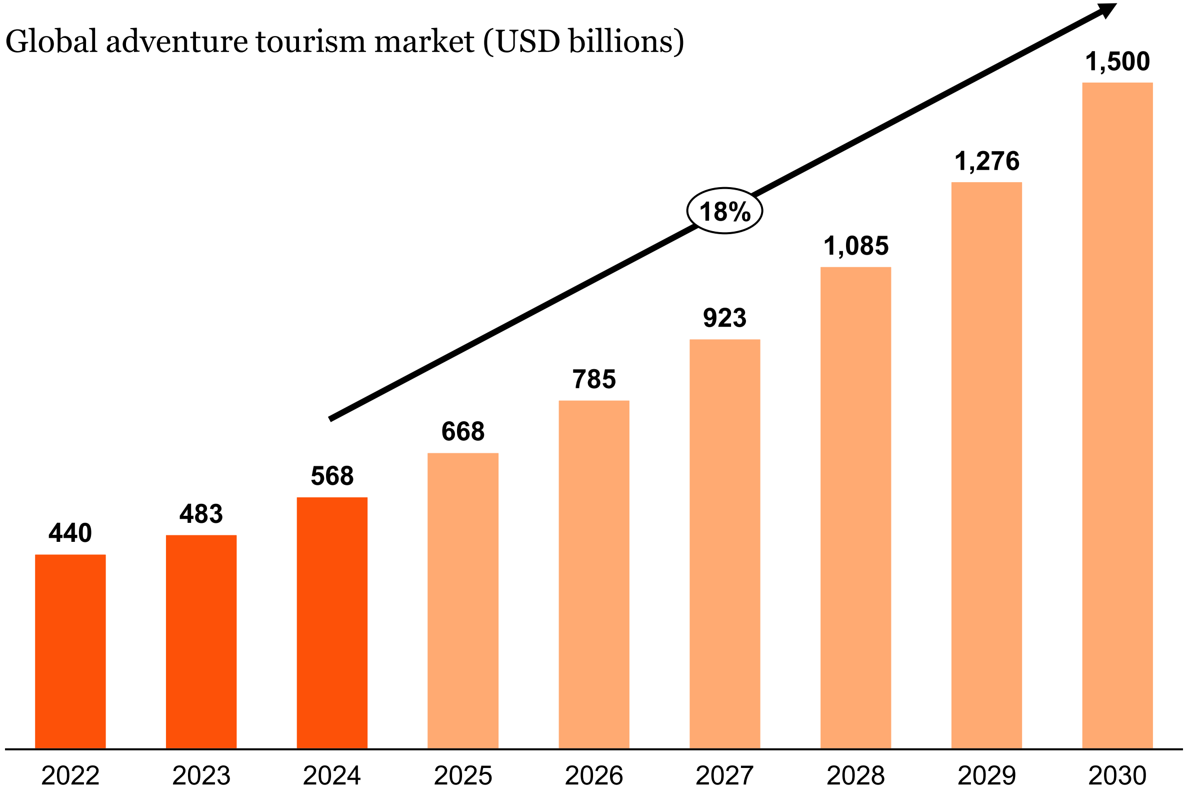
Sources: World Travel & Tourism council, Oxford Economics/ Tourism Economics (2025); PwC Analysis. Numbers have been rounded

Especially the adventure and luxury travel markets are projected to see substantial growth the next five years, with adventure expected to almost triple in market size

The global luxury travel market is estimated at USD 1.6 bn in 2025, and expected to grow at a 9% CAGR towards 2030



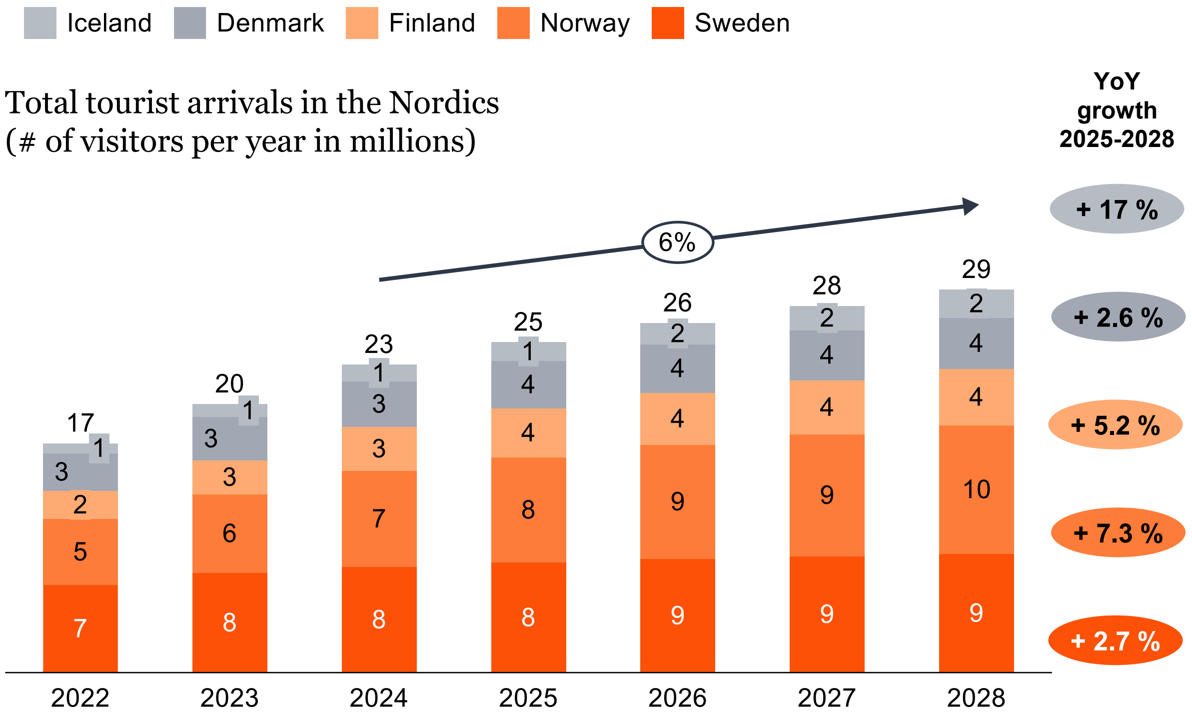
The global adventure tourism market is expected to almost triple by 2030



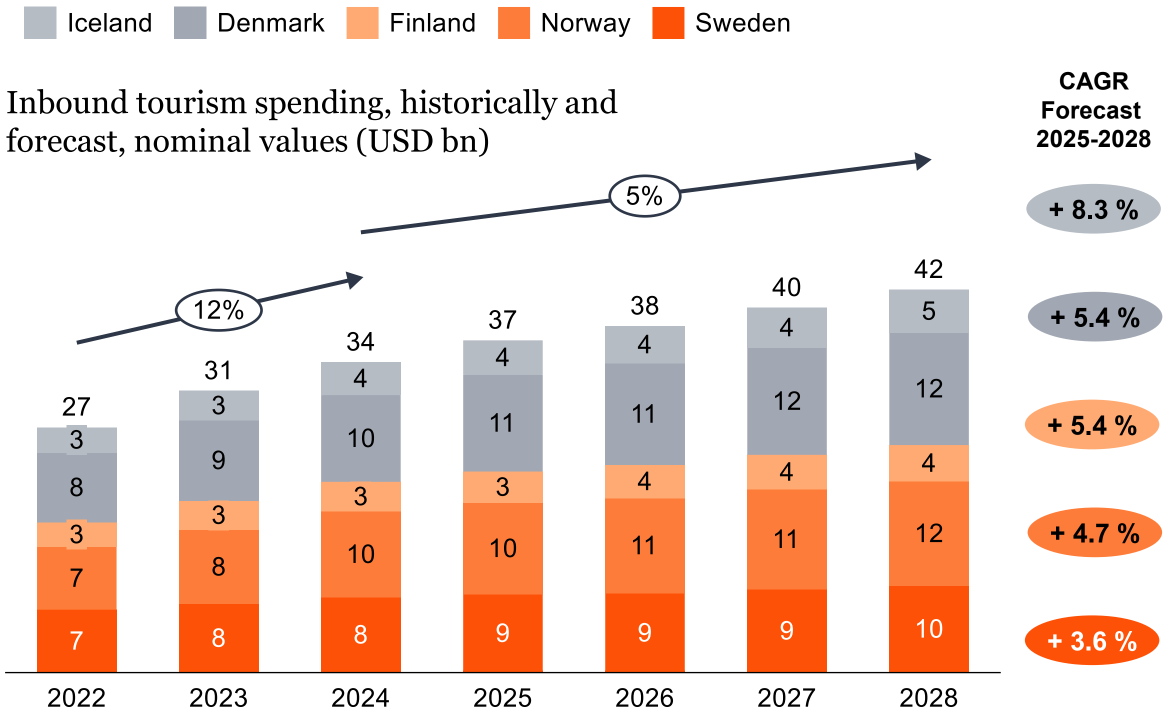
Sources: Grand View Research, Allied Market Research, The Brainy Insight, Global Market Insights, PwC Analysis

Slower spending growth despite strong visitor growth, especially for Norway, highlights potential to boost tourism spend by targeting the right travelers

The Nordic countries are projected a 6% CAGR in number of tourist arrivals, with Norway significantly contributing to this growth



Forecasted spending show similar growth pace, with Norway lagging other Nordic countries - revealing an untapped potential for value enhancement



The strong projected growth in tourist arrivals in Norway, relative to spending, suggests many visitors currently have low spend. However, the rising number of inbound tourists highlights the country's appeal and potential to **boost spending by targeting new customer segments**

Sources: BMI – Fitch Solutions, Euromonitor retrieved on October 17th 2025, PwC Analysis

Nordic tourism is very well aligned with: authentic, personalized experiences rooted in nature

Adventure tourism

+18 %

Expected CAGR until 2032

Luxury Travel

+9 %

Expected CAGR 2025-2030

Experiences

USD 3.1 trn

Experience travel market size

Authenticity

6 / 10

Value authenticity and local activities

Adventure tourism

Expected roughly 18% annual growth from 2023-2032, with a focus on combining nature and outdoor activities

Luxury travel

The growing number of wealthy individuals is fuelling demand for luxury travel, with a focus on unique experiences and personalized, high-quality service.

Immersive experiences

Experience-driven travel is set to surpass USD 3.1 trillion by 2025, with segments: (1) live events and cultural engagement, and (2) nature, adventure, and active travel each contributing USD 1 - 1.3 trillion.

Authentic local culture

Travelers consider the variety and quality of local activities a key factor in destination choice, just behind safety and cost, and value authentic local customs and culture.

Sources: Skift Research, Statista, Technovia, Menon, PwC analysis

The top reasons to go to the Nordics is a combination of accessible pristine nature, and exotic adventures that cannot be experienced anywhere else in the world

Top reasons to travel to the Nordics by source market and season

Source market	Season: Summer	Season: Winter
From the Nordics	Outdoor lifestyle experiences	Cross-country skiing
	Coastal fishing	Northern lights and arctic experiences
	Road trips and scenic drives	Sami culture and reindeer safari
		Winter spa getaway
From Europe	Midnight sun	Northern lights and arctic experiences
	Hiking and outdoor activities	Alpine skiing
	Mid summer climate – coolcation	Winter city breaks
	Festivals	
From the rest of the world	Fjords and coastal cruises	Northern lights and arctic experiences
	Outdoor activities e.g., hiking	Arctic and polar exploration
	Luxury arctic experiences	Outdoor activities e.g., snowshoeing
	Viking history and stave churches	

Top destination regions for inbound travel across the Nordics 2025 YTD

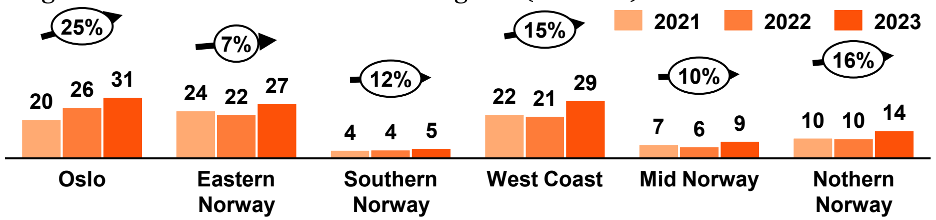
Country	Popular Destinations	Unique Selling Points
Sweden	Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö	Archipelagos, cultural heritage, design and innovation
Norway	Oslo, Bergen, Tromsø	Fjords, Northern Lights and midnight sun, Viking heritage
Finland	Helsinki, Lapland, Turku	Santa Claus Village, saunas, pristine nature
Denmark	Copenhagen, Aarhus, Odense	Historic castles, modern architecture, culinary scene
Iceland	Reykjavik, Golden Circle, Blue Lagoon	Geothermal spas, volcanic landscapes, glacier tours

Sources: Visit Norway, Visit Sweden, Visit Finland, Visit Lappland, European Outdoor Travel Report, National Geographic, Lonely Planet, Conde Nat Traveler, Travel + Leisure Statistics Norway, Tilväxtverket, Statistics Finland, PwC Analysis

Several regions have experienced solid growth compared to pre-Covid levels, with Oslo, Northern and Western Norway showing double-digit growth in overnight stays

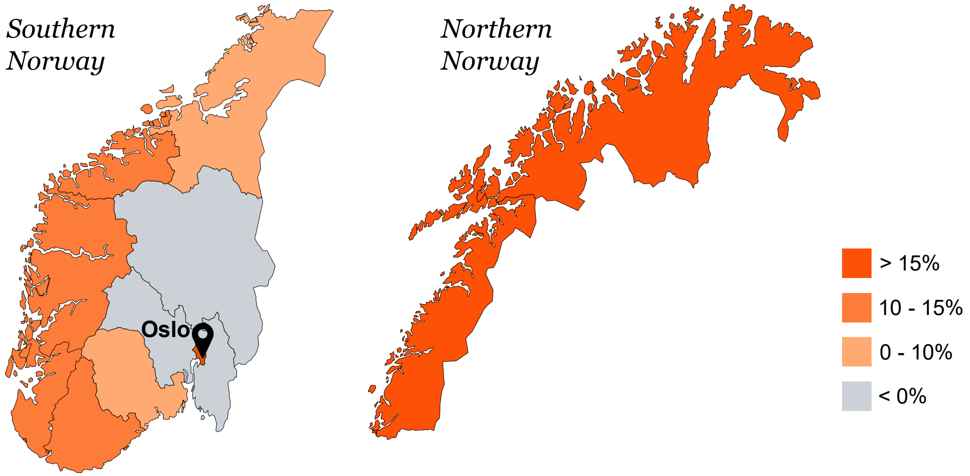
Tourism contributes NOK 115bn to the economy, with the highest growth seen in Oslo, Northern Norway, and the West Coast

Value generated from tourism in select regions (NOK bn)



Overnight stays: Oslo and Northern Norway significantly exceed pre-COVID levels, led by Nordland county at 42% growth in overnight stays since 2019

Growth in tourist visits to Norway since 2019 (growth in # of overnight stays)

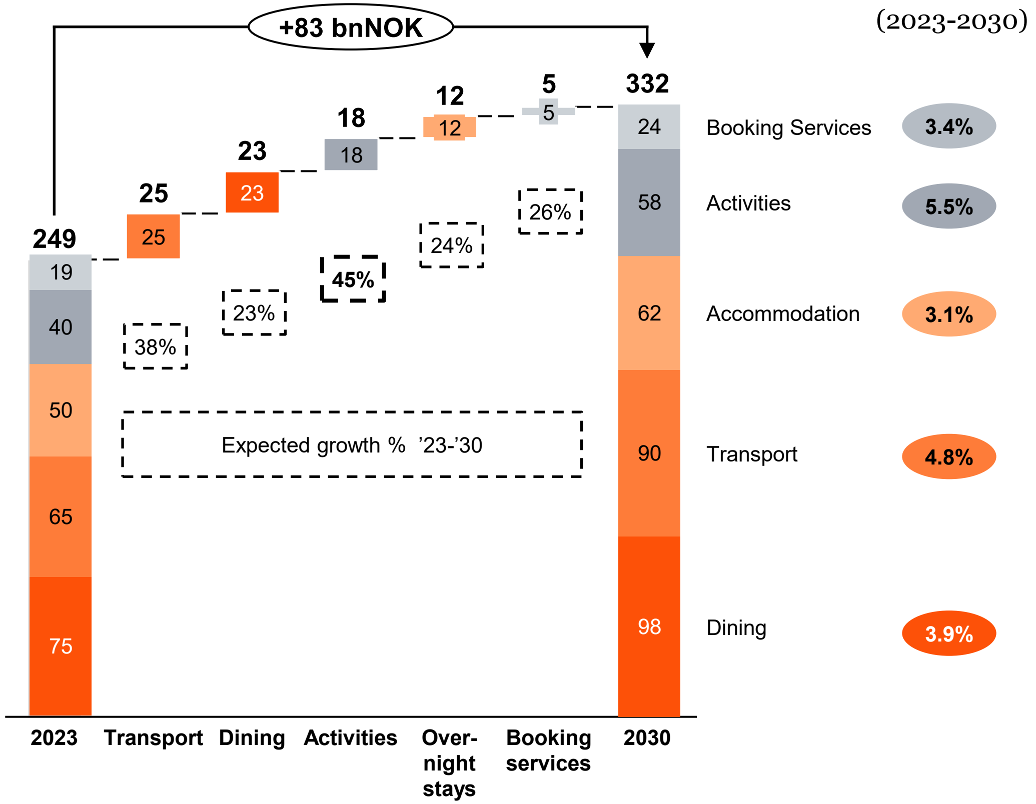


Especially Norway's activities market is projected to boom over the next five years, with a CAGR of ~6%

- The Norwegian tourism industry comprises five key sectors that together deliver a complete travel experience: Accommodation, Dining, Activities, Transport, and Booking Services. Numbers below include domestic tourism spend.

Norway's travel market (NOK bn)

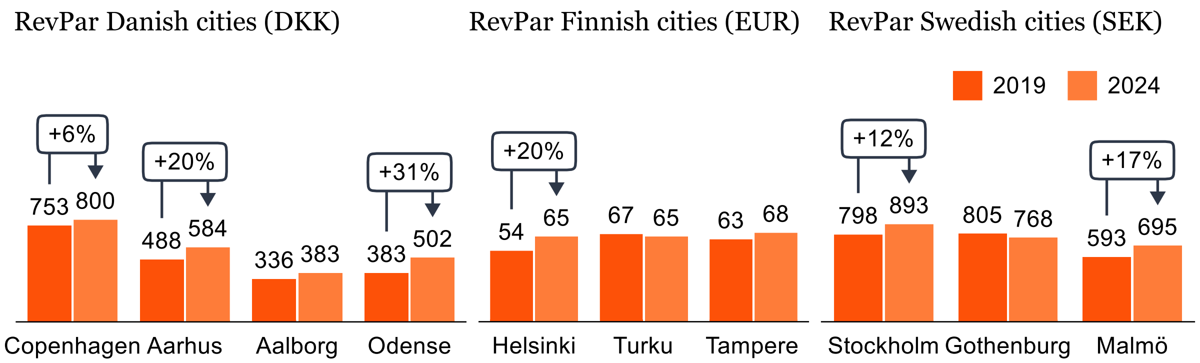
CAGR (2023-2030)

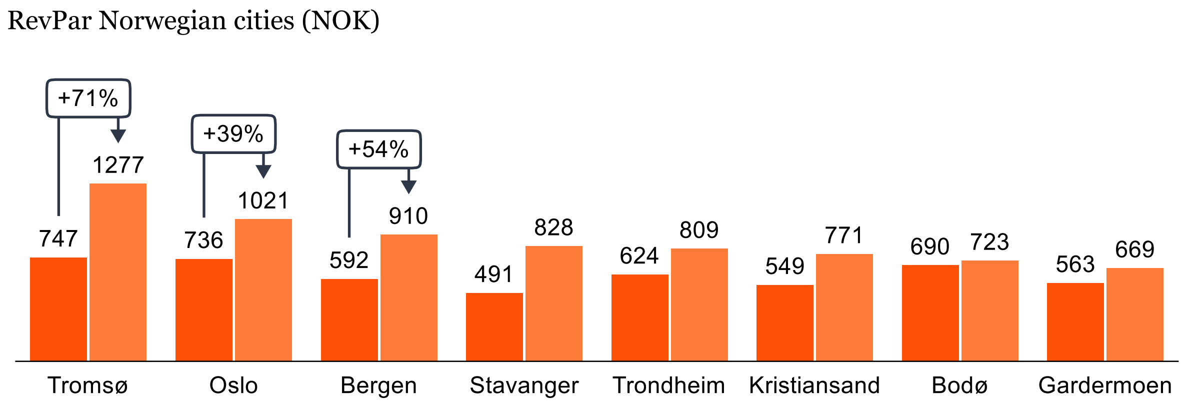


 Sources: SSB, Asplan Viak, Menon, PwC and Strategy& Analysis

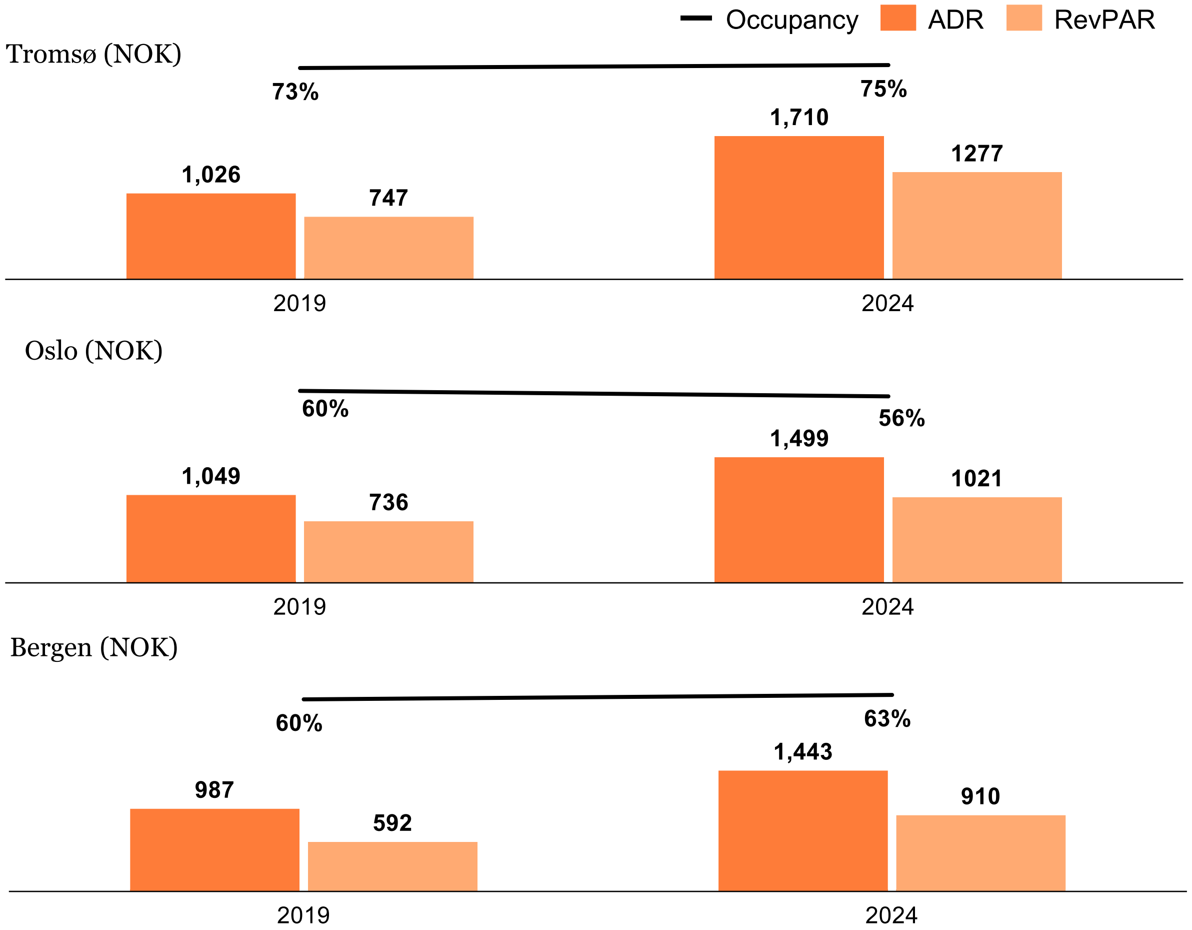
Significant growth in revenue per available room across several cities in the Nordics, with Tromsø experiencing the steepest price increase

Tromsø has the strongest development in RevPAR, when comparing to other cities in the Nordics**





Tromsø experienced a boom in RevPAR, from 2019 to 2024. Although occupancy only went 2% up, ADR* increased by 67% in the same period**

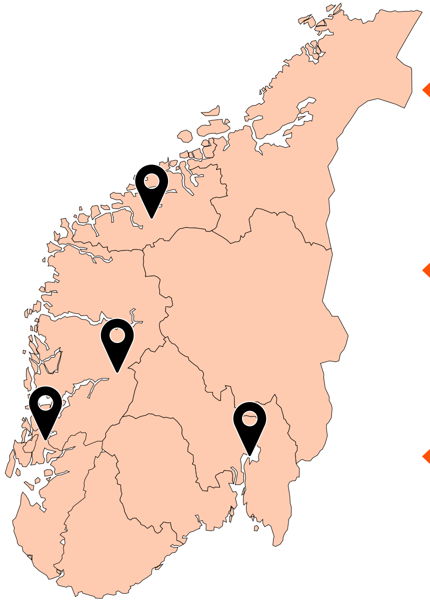


*ADR is short for Average revenue earned per occupied room, while **RevPAR is short for Revenue Per Available Room, taking into account both sold and unsold rooms
Sources: Hotelia, Benchmarking Alliance, PwC Analysis

Adventure luxury travel is growing globally, yet niche in Norway. However, luxury itineraries priced above NOK 10k per person per day exist with growing interest

«Adventure Luxury»: Luxury travel meets exploration of remote areas with unique, local experiences
Authentic and unique experiences rooted in local culture and nature: «adventure», while «luxury» ensures top-tier comfort, fine dining, convenience, safety and personal service

Case study: 10-day itinerary blending authenticity and luxury. Curated by large international luxury travel company



Day 1-3: Oslo
Arrival. Private guiding in Oslo's many museums and history
Accommodation: Amerikalinjen

Day 3-6: Aurlandsfjord
Flåmsbana railway, tour of extraordinary and pristine nature and guided exploration of outdoor activities.
Accommodation: 29/2 Aurland

Day 6-8: Bergen
Tour of UNESCO World Heritage Bryggen, Troldhaugen and the fish market.
Accommodation: Opus XVI

Day 8-11: Norwegian fjords
Private boat tour and fjord exploration, sapphire waters and emerald valleys.
Departure
Accommodation: Storfjord Hotel

Price: From ~NOK 250k
Two persons, all-inclusive, pre-packaged

Sources: Skift, Virtuoso's Luxe Report, Scott Dunn, The Brainy Insights, Global Market Insights, PwC Analysis

1 Surging Demand: Opportunities Ahead

2 Navigating the Market Roadblocks

3 Unlocking Untapped Potential

While Nordic Travel is well positioned to benefit from the global growth, it faces constraints especially due to fragmentation and inconsistent end-to-end quality

Market characteristics and trends are largely similar across most Nordic countries, with common challenges limiting their attractiveness, especially to affluent travelers

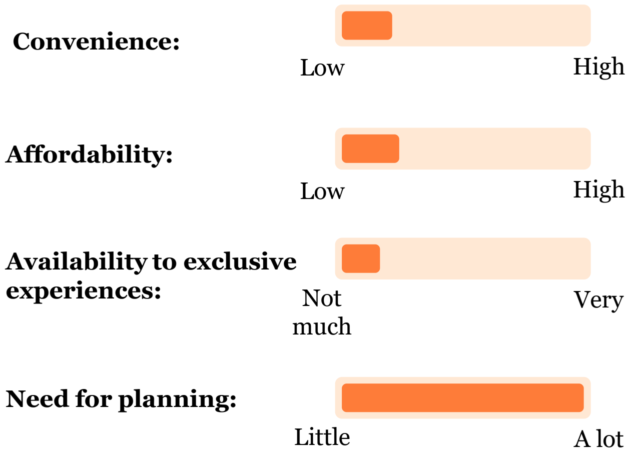
Norway's tourism sector has faced **challenges in maintaining strong profitability** margins, with margins falling **below the overall Norwegian market average –** even after excluding the highly profitable oil and financial sectors.

Norway's rugged terrain – characterized by fjords, mountains, islands, and remote northern areas – **adds complexity to travel planning**, making it more difficult to offer a seamless travel experiences. The challenge is further intensified by the level of fragmentation on the Norwegian travel market.

Current standards for logistics, accommodation, culinary experiences, and exclusivity in Norway **fall short of international high-end benchmarks.** In contrast, countries and markets that successfully combine authentic nature with luxury – such as the safari industry – have effectively packaged experiences that also attract affluent travellers while overcoming challenges similar to those in Norway.

We believe the solution lies in **enhancing the overall travel experience** (product and package quality) while targeting travellers who are both willing and able to spend more. This will enable the tourism sector to create greater value, **encouraging longer stays and increased spending**.

Norway as a destination (current offering)

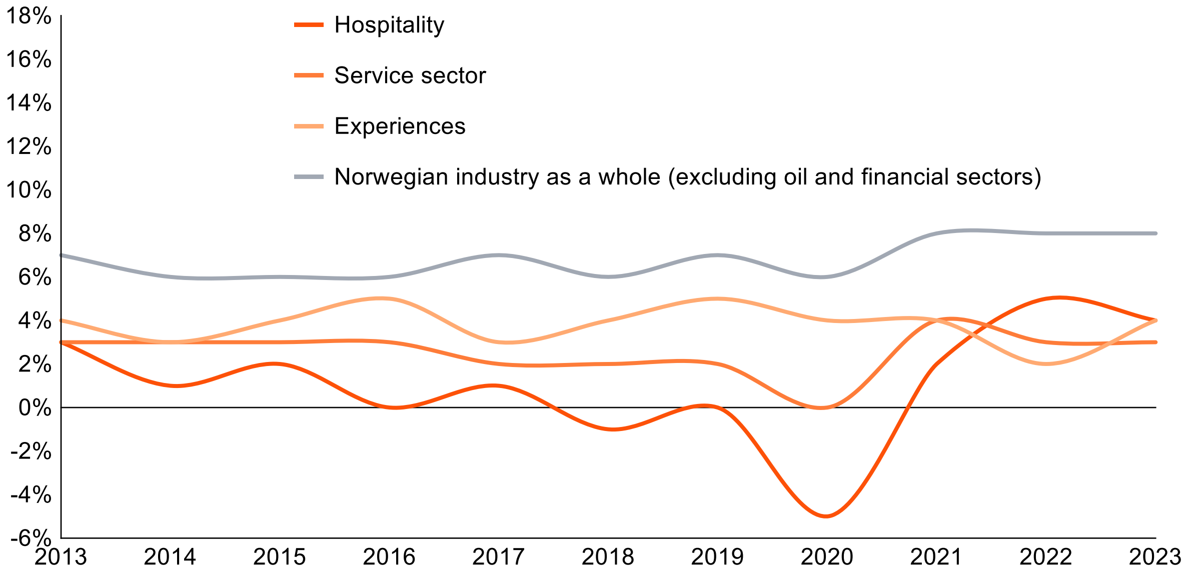


Source: PwC analysis

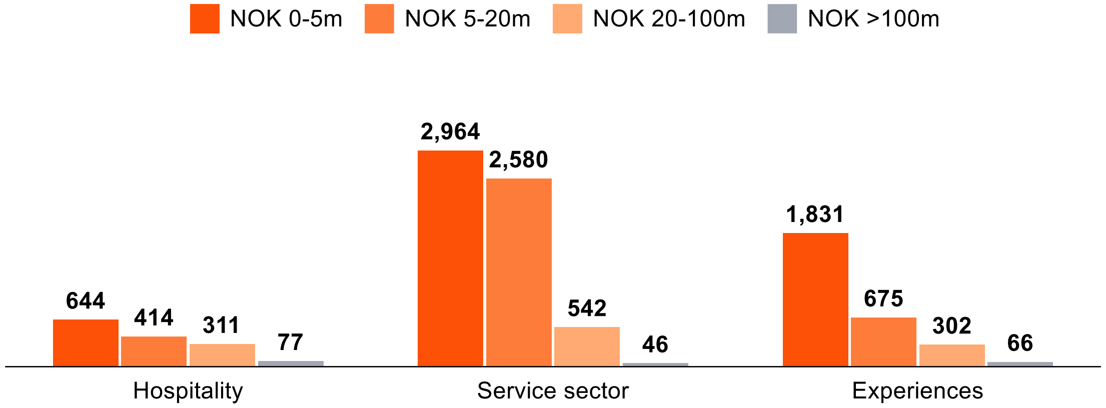
The inability to penetrate the high-end market, coupled with Norway’s high operating costs, also underpins the low profitability margins in the sector

The profit margin in Norway’s tourism industry falls below the average of the broader Norwegian business sector even when excluding the highly profitable oil and financial sectors. The tourism sector in Norway is highly fragmented, dominated by small businesses that also face the greatest challenges in sustaining profitability

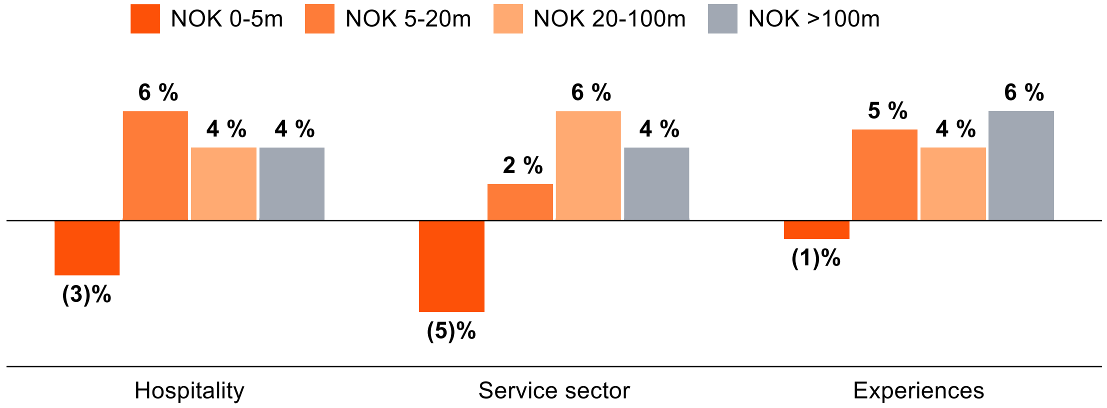
Profitability margin in the tourism sector over time by industry sub-sectors



The number of companies by revenue size and industry sub-sector (2023) highlights the significant fragmentation within the Norwegian market



Profitability by revenue size and industry sub-sector (2023)



Sources: Menom Economics, Lønnsomhetsanalyse for reiselivsnæringen 2023

We believe affluent travellers represent the next frontier for growth in Norwegian tourism, and the winners will be those who successfully capture this segment

Traditional target segment

By offering more compelling packaged trips, Norway can also attract a larger share of the traditional travel segment that typically visits by cruise

Biggest untapped potential

Family Travelers

Families visiting for child-friendly hiking, museums, theme parks, and nature experiences suitable for all ages

Active explorers

Visitors seeking outdoor activities such as hiking the fjords, glacier trekking, kayaking, skiing, and Northern Lights tours

Traditional

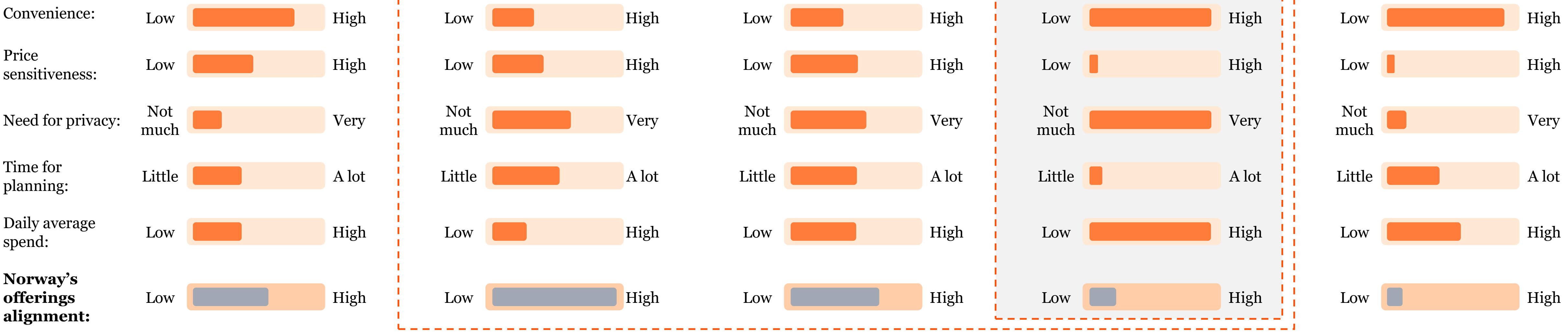
The traditional travellers that have time to participate in planning, including both affluent and medium-income

Affluent traveller

Looking for exclusive experiences, luxury lodges, fjord cruises on upscale vessels, gourmet dining and premium accommodations

Resort vacationers

Seek convenience, predictable budgeting, and a hassle-free experience without need to plan or pay for extras during their stay

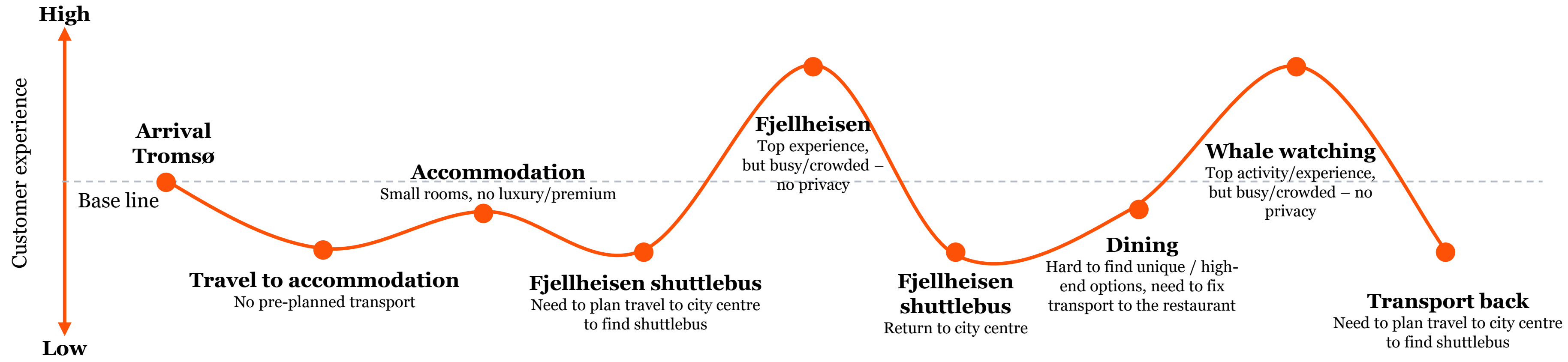


Norway's current offering **falls short of meeting the exclusive, seamless, and private experiences demanded by affluent travellers**, yet their low price sensitivity makes them an attractive customer segment with significant potential

Source: PwC analysis

A lack of a holistic approach diminishes the customer experience and does not maximize value

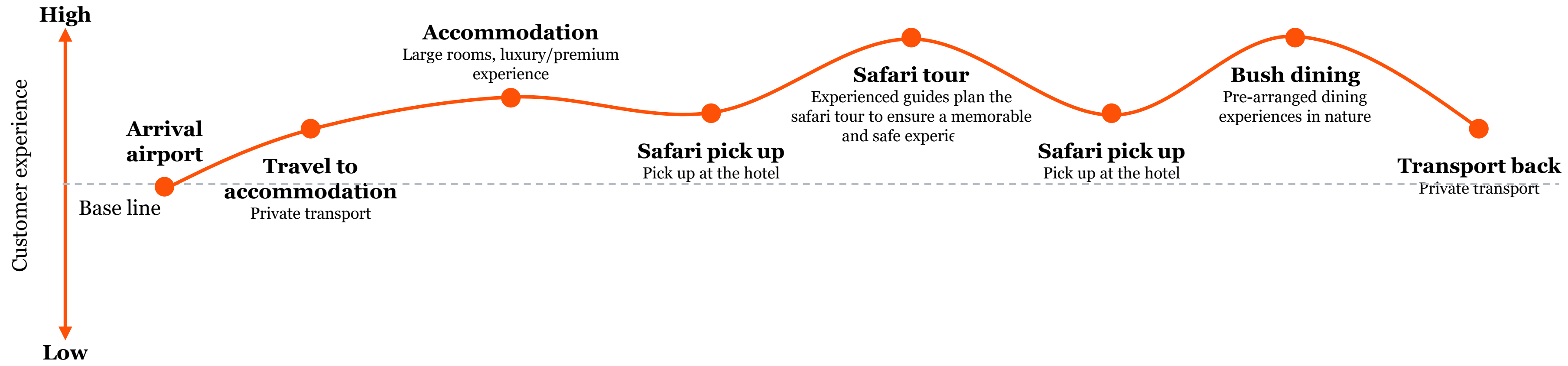
Illustrative Customer Journey (**Northern Norway**):



Overall experience

The overall impression and total value are lacking. In particular, the **current standards in logistics, accommodation and exclusivity do not align with those expected by affluent travellers**

Illustrative Customer Journey (**Safari**):



Overall experience

By meticulously managing logistics, offering premium accommodations and exclusive experiences, **the trip aligns with the high standards expected by affluent travellers**

To attract affluent travellers, it is essential to offer a **seamless and holistic customer journeys** that enhance the travel experience, making it more comfortable and exclusive

Source: PwC analysis

End-to-end delivery is critical in the luxury segment— with both affluent and adventure travellers willing to pay a premium for an authentic, seamless experience

Fully customized

Supplier	DMC*	Tour operator	Travel Agent	Traveller	Cost parameter
Hotels, special lodging, railways, cruise ships, outdoor activity providers, minibuses/coaches etc	On-the-ground expertise and local resources organising activities and experiences in a region	Creates travel packages with lodging, tour guides, activities and transport	**Professionals advising travellers on deals and destinations, selling tour operators' products to end customer**	End customer purchasing a complete and packaged travel product	**High –** great option for travellers with a generous budget seeking a more personalized and tailored travel experience

Semi customized

Supplier	DMC*	Tour operator / OTA**	Traveller	Cost parameter
Hotels, special lodging, railways, cruise ships, outdoor activity providers, minibuses/coaches etc	On-the-ground expertise and local resources organising activities and experiences in a region	Creates travel packages with lodging, tour guides, activities and transport. **Direct-to-consumer sales typically focus on standard packages with fewer customizations, though some personalization is still possible**	Book part of their trip as a package but need to arrange flights and certain parts of the trip independently	**Medium –** Suitable for travellers who have chosen the destination and need support booking parts of their trip and local experiences

B2C (business to consumer)

Supplier	Traveller	Cost parameter
Hotels, special lodging, railways, cruise ships, outdoor activity providers, minibuses/coaches etc. **Customers can book accommodation, transport, or attractions directly on the supplier's website or though OTAs (online travel agencies) for example Booking.com or Hotels.com. This often requires more planning and coordination from the traveller to organize all trip components smoothly**	End customers independently book their trips and conduct all the necessary research themselves	**Low –** Preferred by travellers who want to plan their entire trip independently and are budget-conscious

Source: PwC analysis, *DMC = Destination Management Company, **OTA = Online travel agencies

Norway's current DMC offerings fail to meet the standards required to attract distributors targeting affluent travellers…

Categories	Safari DMC*	Nordic DMC*
Luxury Accommodation	Access to a wide range of renowned luxury lodges and camps, many of which have established reputations and cater specifically to affluent travellers	Few dedicated high-end luxury lodges, especially outside of major cities or well-known ski resorts, which can limit the luxury appeal
Accessibility & Logistics	Safari destinations are typically located in remote areas and face logistical challenges but have invested in small aircraft and luxury vehicles to improve accessibility	Norway's rugged terrain and remote locations make travel logistics more challenging and less seamless, often involve multiple transport modes such as flights, ferries and trains
Range of Activities	Safari destinations offer a diverse range of exclusive activities and are often paired with a relaxing beach getaway following the safari	Norway offers impressive outdoor activities but lack the breadth of exclusive or ultra-luxury experiences that affluent travellers seek
Local Expertise & Resources	Extensive network of expert guides and local partners	Extensive network of expert guides and local partners
Pricing & Value Proposition	Premium-priced, offers exclusive, once-in-a-lifetime experiences that justify the cost	Lack exclusive or differentiated luxury experiences to justify premium pricing to affluent travellers

Conclusion

Current high-end international travel agents and operators offer limited tour options to the Nordic region, which we believe is due to the region's inability to provide the experiences that affluent travellers expect

Safari DMCs have effectively created seamless, luxurious travel experiences that attract and satisfy affluent travellers

Nordic DMCs struggle with limited luxury suppliers and lack seamless experiences, hindering partnerships with top travel operators targeting affluent travellers

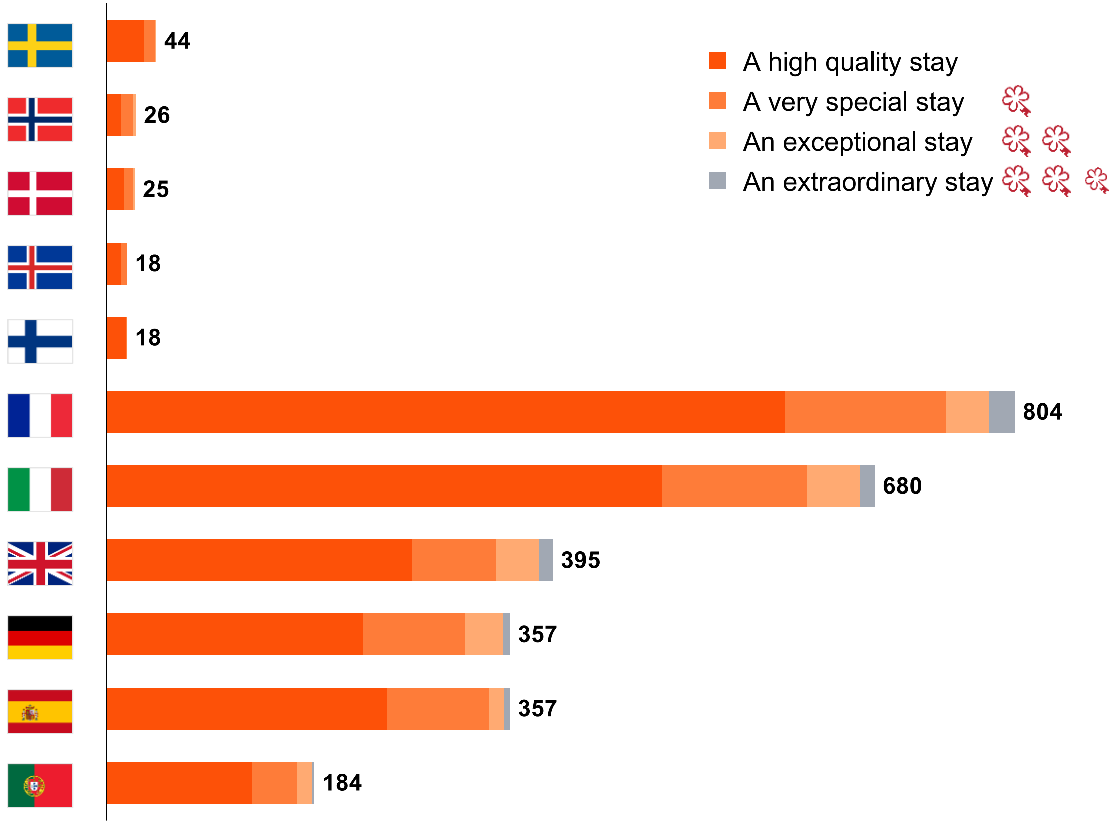
Select travel agents and operators used by affluent travellers

Abercrombie & Kent | Black Tomato | Butterfield & Robinson | Kensington Tours | Red Savannah | Scott Dunn | TCS World Travel

Source: PwC analysis, *DMC = Destination Management Company

… coupled with the country's limited accommodation and dining options in the luxury segment, many of which fall short of international standards

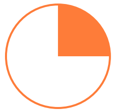
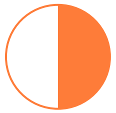
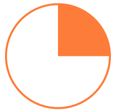
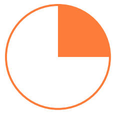
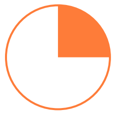
The Nordic region has a limited supply of premium hotels, with none that have been recognized with three Michelin Keys by the Michelin Guide



Limited availability of fine dining options in Norway and the broader Nordic region

Source: Michelin websites (accessed in October 2025)

Currently, Norway lacks key elements affluent travellers seek to pay a premium for, such as seamless service, exclusive access and personalized experiences

Areas with high priority for affluent travellers	Current situation	Norway's Travel fulfilment level
81% No wait time	**Complex geography and logistics –** Norway's rugged terrain – with fjords, mountains, islands, and remote northern regions – creates complex logistics, requiring careful coordination of flights, ferries, trains, and road travel to craft a seamless experience with limited waiting time.	
78% Private touring	Private tours with local guides can provide highly personalized services with **access to off-the-beaten-path nature expeditions** with **intimate encounters with Norwegian landscapes and culture**. However, public nature sites and popular attractions can get crowded during peck seasons.	
74% Exclusive events	Norway's offerings for exclusive events are still developing and is **limited compared to more traditional luxury destinations**. However, affluent travellers can gain access to intimate, curated events such as private dinners in historic locations and exclusive Viking cultural nights.	
68% Private access	Achieving private access in Norway is complicated by the country's **"right to roam" laws**, which **encourage public access to natural areas**. However, affluent travellers can secure private rights or **exclusive use arrangements at luxury lodges**, boutique hotels and some fjord properties.	
66% Personalized custom travel	**Few local boutique agencies** offer tailored itineraries combining nature, culture, wellness, and insider access for truly authentic experiences. The main challenge is scaling these services while maintaining exclusivity and quality.	

Sources: Kensington, 2025 Travel trends report, PwC analysis

As such, challenges in the value chain especially limit appeal to affluent travellers, triggering a cycle that is difficult to break and leaving significant untapped potential

	Supplier	DMC	Tour operator	Travel Agent	Traveller
	Hotels, special lodging, railways, cruise ships, outdoor activity providers, minibuses/coaches etc	On-the-ground expertise and local resources organising activities and experiences in a region	Creates travel packages with lodging, tour guides, activities and transport for a hassle-free vacation	Professionals advising travellers on destinations and deals, selling tour operators' products to end customer	End customer purchasing a complete and packaged travel product
Implication of pain points within the value chain	Suppliers in the luxury segment are few and caught in a negative cycle of limited affluent travellers, making it difficult to achieve significant volume and scale their businesses	Focusing primarily on traditional travellers as it is easier to scale but results in a shortage of specialized luxury activities and experiences	Insufficient luxury suppliers and DMCs available to coordinate travels for affluent travellers	Norway is overlooked as a luxury destination due to concerns that it may not fully meet the expectations of affluent travellers	The traveller chooses a different destination either because Norway was not initially recommended or because they do not find travel arrangements that meet their expectations

Insufficient supply triggers a cycle of adverse effects that is difficult to break, yet presents substantial market opportunity for those who can effectively address these gaps

Source: PwC analysis

1 Surging Demand: Opportunities Ahead

2 Navigating the Market Roadblocks

3 **Unlocking Untapped Potential**

We believe travel companies and investors can unlock untapped potential by better aligning products with the demand and optimizing distribution channels

Adventure travel as a low hanging fruit

Adventure travel is growing rapidly, with the market expected to double. Stakeholders should focus on meeting demand for experiential travel through partnerships that offer pre-packaged, ready-to-buy itineraries combining Nordic nature with local culture.

Packages should include experiences, accommodation, dining, and seamless logistics (excluding inbound flights). With travelers willing to pay for frictionless, curated adventures, adventure travel represents a strong revenue and margin opportunity for the Nordic industry.

Enhance the Luxury travel portfolio

To meet rising demand for luxury travel, players must enhance their product portfolio to match international and US standards in accommodations, transport, activities, and personalized service.

As “experiences are the new luxury,” offerings should broaden in range and location, delivering a seamless, high-service journey.

However, given the significant investments required, we recommend starting with adventure travel as a low-hanging fruit. Experiences and service are more scaleable and require a lot less capex.

Leverage distribution to expand the reach

To boost awareness and market presence, stakeholders should leverage distribution channels strategically and diversify investments in products and infrastructure. A coordinating function can enable bundling and curation of comprehensive travel packages.

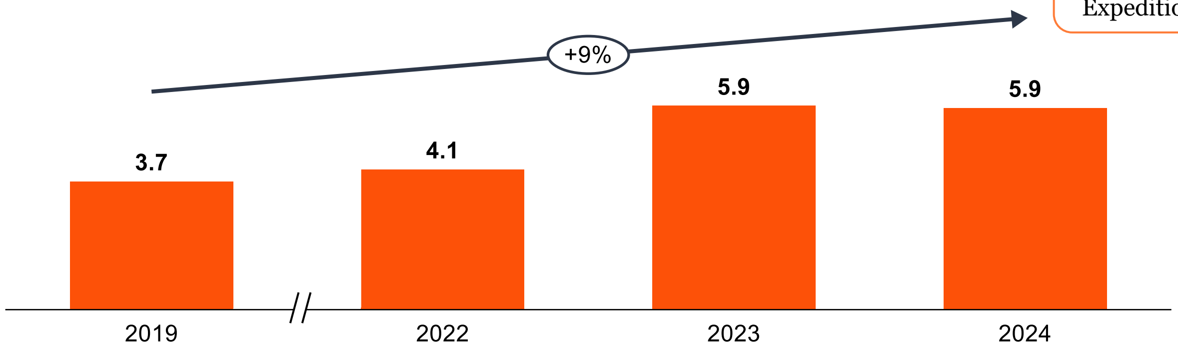
Integrating the value chain – through in-house services, DMCs, and local expertise – will capture more market share. This includes developing tour operators in key markets and building strong ties with international travel agents.

Travel companies should capitalize on the growing demand for adventure travel by **developing tailored, pre-packaged experiences for affluent travelers, enhance luxury offerings, and strategically optimize distribution channels to broaden the market reach**

The existing demand for luxury cruise experiences highlights the presence of a customer segment willing to pay a premium for high-end and luxury offerings

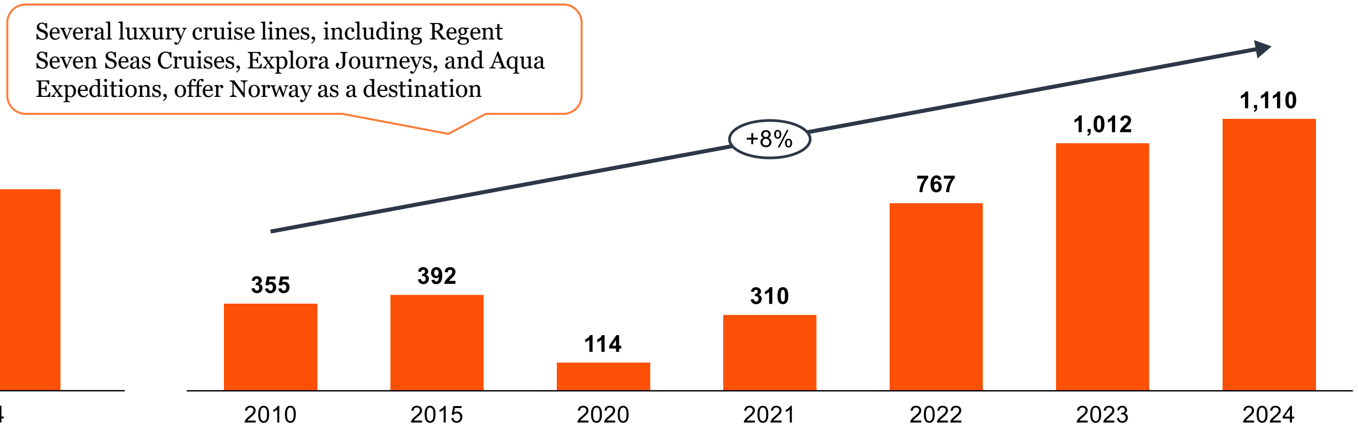
Substantial increase in the number of cruise passengers in Norway, with a 57% growth from 2019 to 2024

Total number of passengers on board all reported arrivals (million)



An emerging global trend in the cruise industry favouring luxury travel experiences

Luxury market passenger volume (thousand)



Affluent travellers visiting Norway on luxury cruises are willing to pay a premium for end-to-end travel experiences

Willingness to pay
Luxury cruise tourists typically have higher disposable incomes and are accustomed to paying for premium travel experiences. As such, they demonstrate the existence of a market that has the willingness to pay for exclusive, high-end end-to-end travel experiences in the Nordics.

Value convenience and well-organized travel
When visiting Norway by cruise, travelers enjoy minimal planning requirements and a high level of convenience, making them an ideal audience for companies offering carefully crafted, well-organized package trips. Currently, comparable trips on land that match this level of quality and customization are limited.

Curiosity about Norway's natural beauty and culture
Travelers' who desire to experience Norway's authentic natural beauty and cultural heritage can be better fulfilled through package trips that offer off-the-beaten-path experiences, away from overcrowded ports and the time constraints at each location.

Sources: Kystverket, Innovasjon Norge, Cruise Lines International Association, State of the Cruise Industry Report 2025

The fragmented industry presents a significant opportunity for consolidation, allowing for synergy-driven margin improvements

- The Nordic travel market remains highly fragmented, characterized by a multitude of small and privately owned operators.
- The lack of consolidation results in inefficiency, especially in the luxury segment, where consumers increasingly seek seamless, high-quality experiences.
- The limited number of large operators capable of packaging comprehensive luxury travel products represents a significant gap in the market—and source of untapped potential—that can be leveraged to achieve stronger market penetration and growth.

Number of companies in Norway by revenue size and sub-sector

	Supplier*	DMC	Tour operators**	Travel Agent
NOK >100m	+150	+5	~5	Travel agents in the Nordic region primarily focus on facilitating outbound travel for Nordic residents rather than inbound tourism. Travel agents that specialize in promoting Nordic tourism are mostly based outside the region and are therefore beyond the scope of this analysis.
NOK 20-100m	+1,000	+15	+10	
NOK 5-20m	+3,500	+150		
NOK 0-5m	+5,000	+1,000		

Please feel free to reach out if you would like to learn more about the above companies. Contact information is provided in the end of the report.

*Including the hospitality, experience and service sector **Refers to companies specializing in inbound tourism.
Sources: Menon Economics, Valu8, PwC analysis

Moreover, consolidation can act as a key catalyst for growth by enabling better value chain coordination, leading to higher-quality products and broader customer reach

Larger, integrated operators can deliver the **seamless, end-to-end experiences that affluent travellers expect.** These consolidated entities harness strong **synergies**, amplifying their **competitive advantage** and empowering them to challenge global players more effectively.

Consolidation expands market reach and **unlocks valuable cross-selling and upselling opportunities.** It enables significant **investments** in luxury hotels, premium experiences, and high-end transportation – critical elements that elevate the **Nordics as a premier global luxury destination.**

Access to capital and resources
- Larger organizations attract more investment and funding opportunities.
- More resources available for marketing, technology upgrades, and expansion.

Stronger market position
- Larger consolidated entities have increased brand recognition and influence.
- Helps to compete more effectively against global players.

Improved innovation and service quality
- Pooling of expertise and technology accelerates digital transformation.
- Enhances the ability to offer integrated, seamless travel experiences.

Cost efficiency
- Larger companies can reduce costs per unit through bulk purchasing, streamlined operations, and shared resources, improving profitability.

Expanded customer reach
- Combines customer bases from different companies, increasing market coverage.
- Enables cross-selling and upselling opportunities across diverse segments.

We are already seeing interest from financial buyers in the Nordic travel sector, driven by global megatrends and the unique appeal of Nordic destinations

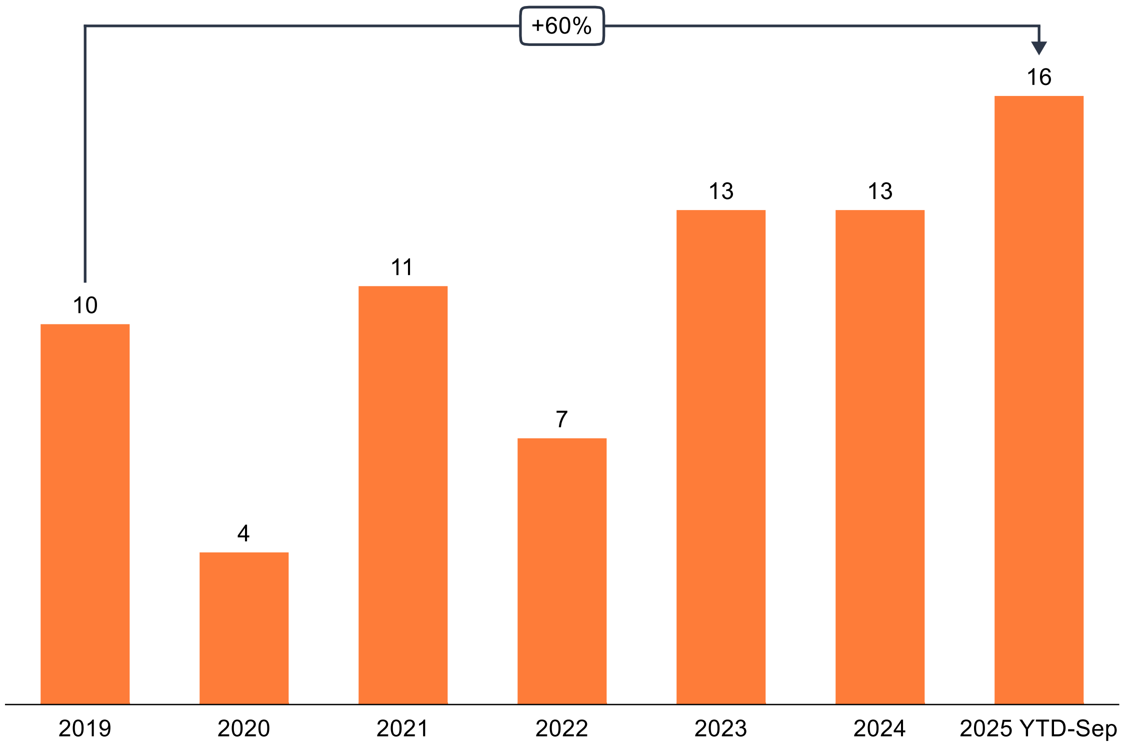
Key takeaways from recent transaction activity

- The majority of the acquisitions have been made by strategic buyers, for example, Abercrombie & Kent's recent strategic acquisition of Danish Borealis DMC, and the golf destination developer Cabot Collection’s acquisition of Lofoten Links – both completed in 2025.
- Financial investors are also active in the sector and have shown increasing interest in travel recently, including both Nordic and non-Nordic private equity firms.
- Non-Nordic private equity firms targeting Nordic opportunities typically have an established presence in the sector and look to the Nordics for bolt-on acquisitions to expand destination offerings rather than establishing platform investments.
- We believe that the interest in the travel sector is poised to maintain an upward trajectory moving forward.

Select financial investors with presence in the market

Longship Norwegian Travel	Norvestor First Camp	Takoa Invest Elämys Group
Braganza Escape travel	DSD DSD Explore	Explore Equity Select Collection
Equip Capital Nordic Tours AS, 50 Degrees North	CBRE Hamn i Senja	Mayfair Equity Partners (Tour Partner Group) Vision of Scandinavia (VOS)

Significant increase in number of transactions in the tourism sector in the Nordics, with 16 transactions in 2025 YTD-Sep



Sources: Mergermarket, Valu8, PwC analysis

To fully realize a successful business plan and unlock the untapped potential, we think current owners and new investors must address several key factors

Key factors for realizing value

Understand **target audience** and what drives their **willingness to pay**

As today's travel industry is characterized by low margins and increasing expectations from travellers, rather than competing solely on price, investors and owners should start by clearly defining their target audience, then prioritize understanding demand dynamics, identifying the key factors that influence willingness to pay. As previously mentioned, adventure travel first, then luxury travel is our recommended approach. Targeting and converting travellers from cruise-itineraries to mainland itineraries and packages, could also be an approach.

Consolidation, but also **expansion** into adjacent markets and ecosystems

The Norwegian and Nordic travel industry is highly fragmented and ready for consolidation; however, the winning consolidation strategy must be grounded in a deep understanding of market dynamics and customer preferences, while also adopting a broader perspective that considers adjacent markets and ecosystem opportunities. For example: Evolving from a traditional hotel offering only F&B and accommodation, to one that delivers compelling experience packages through leased or owned partners or assets, and new partnerships.

Ownership of the customer journey as a strategic advantage

Today's customer journey is highly fragmented involving numerous players and often marked by inconsistent quality. We anticipate that improving profit margins will be directly linked to owning a larger share of the customer journey. Ownership of the guest experience comes with greater responsibility but also provides valuable insights into customer preferences and fosters stronger loyalty – assets that can be leveraged strategically. Ownership also translates to greater control, enabling businesses to deliver more seamless and consistent experiences, and margins.

Elevate the value proposition to justify **premium**, or even **luxury prices**

"Adventure by day, luxury by night": Premium today goes beyond hardware, spacious rooms or additional hotel features. Travelers want convenience and support in maximizing 'value for money' through authentic and meaningful experiences rooted in local culture and heritage, combined with luxury accommodation and fine dining. Do keep in mind that the Nordic definitions of premium and luxury are quite different from international standards. Stakeholders should avoid letting the domestic market determine the offering and standards.

AI has wide-range potential applications for Nordic travel and tourism, though real-world use cases are still few

We expect AI in tourism to experience rapid progress over the next few years, with a strong focus on **efficiency** and **automation**, capable of delivering both **top- and bottom-line impact.** We recommend that travel service providers and agencies invest in targeted AI use cases now to achieve **growth** and elevate **customer experience**

Four example use cases we anticipate gaining traction in the Nordic travel sector within the next years

Tailored travel routes and planning

Dynamic, personalized itineraries using LLMs* **trained on Nordic content**: seasons, local regulations, opening hours, transport timetables, accessibility, and weather

Agent booking assistants that search/ hold/book across providers; handle changes, disruptions, refunds, and loyalty

Context-aware recommendations optimized for budget, levels, mobility needs, kids/pets, and preferred activities; multi-modal journeys

Community interaction: connect travelers to local guides and events; table bookings; dynamic city passes; gamified discovery

Environmental sustainability & visitor flow management

Visitor volume forecasting at trails, fjords, parks, and city hotspots; set capacity thresholds and simulate scenarios

Demand shaping: nudge travelers to alternative sites/times through pricing, availability, and rewards

Real-time congestion monitoring via sensors, ticketing, mobile signals; time-slot reservations for fragile destinations; dynamic routing that spreads visitors

Transport optimization: coordinate bus/ferry schedules to reduce emissions and crowding; align with regional transit

Digital guide and enhanced on-trip experience

Location-aware digital guides with offline mode delivering narratives, AR overlays, local culture (e.g., Sámi heritage), and practical tips

Real-time multilingual support: speech/text translation for visitors on private device (e.g., sign and menu translation)

Safety and compliance: live weather, avalanche/trail conditions, geofenced warnings, capacity limits, and rescue service integration for emergency guidance

Real-time updates: re-route when ferries are canceled or trails close; monitor wait times, occupancy, and events

Operational optimization and asset management

Demand forecasting and dynamic pricing for hotels, attractions, ferries, and ski resorts; staffing and inventory optimization; waste reduction

Predictive maintenance for lifts, buses, ferries, HVAC**, and trail infrastructure; computer vision for inspection; schedule repairs before failure

Energy optimization in hotels and venues: occupancy-based heating/lighting, water use, and waste sorting; track sustainability KPIs

Logistics and capacity: route planning for guest transfers and deliveries; housekeeping scheduling; check-in queue management

Source: PwC analysis, *LLC = Large language models, HVAC = Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning

Guest contributor:

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Both financial and strategic owners have a prime opportunity to acquire or build successful travel companies, unlocking strong potential for growth and profitability

Demand for Norwegian travel is already on the verge of a boom and now is the ideal time to invest. PwC can help you navigate the Norwegian travel market:

Corporate strategy and growth initiatives

Customer and market insight

Finding the right buyer and advising owners on the sale of their company

Concept validation

Understanding the possibilities of AI

Target screening and acquisition due diligence

Travelers seek authentic experiences and pristine nature, with high-end, personalized itineraries. Norway offers the perfect destination.

Significant market development:

- Norway: CAGR ~7% until 2028
- Global luxury travel market: CAGR 9% until 2030
- Global adventure travel market: CAGR 18% until 2030

Growing interest in Nordic tourism companies:

- +60% in number of transactions in YTD September 2025 versus whole 2019

Growing RevPAR in tourist-heavy cities:

- 2019-2024: +71% in Tromsø, +39% in Oslo

Our team brings a broad range of relevant expertise towards the Travel Industry

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