

Summary:

Foreign Motor Tourism in Northern Norway 1998

This report is a description and analysis of central aspects of foreign motor tourism in Northern Norway, based on a national survey of foreign visitors conducted by the Institute of Transport Economics, Norwegian Centre for Transport Research. The main parts of the report are based on data from the summer season of 1998.

In the summer season of 1998, approximately 401 000 of the foreign motorists who stayed overnight in Norway visited the four northern counties of Nord-Trøndelag, Nordland, Troms, and Finnmark. This implies a three per cent increase from the summer of 1997. Over the same period, there was a 10 per cent increase in the number of motor home visitors to this region. Two out of five foreign motorists who stayed overnight in Norway visited the country's northern region in the summer season of 1998. These visitors spent 3.178 million guest nights in Norway.

The average time spent in Norway by these motorists was 8 nights. The German motor tourists had the longest average stay here, consisting of 14.5 nights. The Swedes stayed 5.5 nights. Finnish motor tourists had the shortest average stay in Norway, with only 3.5 nights. One in seven foreign motorists travelled with a motor home, one in eight had a motor car with caravan, and the rest used an ordinary car on their tour. Three out of five people motoring in Northern Norway were on a round trip (stayed overnight at several places), while the others stayed overnight in one or two places only. More than one third of the motor tourists visited Narvik, one in five went to Tromsø, while one fourth visited North Cape. One in 10 visited relatives or friends during their motor tour in Norway.

In particular, the survey shows that the dramatic and wild fjord and coastal scenery in the region is of great importance to the experiences of most motorists. A considerable number of tourists enjoyed seeing new places, visiting fishing and coastal communities, travelling around and being on the go, and learn something new. There is also some interest in relaxation and being together with spouse/travel party.

Although most motorists decide their itinerary in advance, only one in seven made reservations or arranged accommodation before arrival. Signs along the roads, first-hand experience, travel handbooks, catalogues, brochures and tourist information offices in Norway were the most important sources of information for choosing places to stay.

The report can be ordered from:

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Most of the motor tourists in Northern Norway are to a large extent self-catering. Three out of five prepare their own food during most of their stay, and eat only a small proportion of their meals in roadside inns and cafes, fast-food outlets or restaurants.

The total expenditure of the foreign motorists in the summer of 1998 represents an export value for Northern Norway of approximately 900 million Norwegian kroner. The average total expenditure is about 450 kroner (NOK) per guest night for the foreign motor tourists who visit Northern Norway during their summer holiday (1995). About one sixth of this sum is related to expenses paid in advance; the remaining sum relates to expenses incurred while travelling in Norway. The general pattern is that the consumption per guest night of tourists from Finland and France is below the average, whereas the consumption of those from countries such as Italy, Switzerland and Austria is substantially higher.

The survey of foreign visitors, which involved the registration of and interviews with motor tourists as they exited Norway, was carried out in the summer of 1998. Visitor statistics were gathered in various categories. The first category, Part A, involved a calculation of the number of vehicles and people, the length of stay in Norway (visitor days) and trip purpose. The estimates are based on the Institute of Transport Economics' own counts at seven border crossings on the national highway system, and on data from the Norwegian Public Roads Administration, the Swedish National Road Administration, Finnish Customs Authorities, and ferry companies operating routes between Norway and other countries. Traffic volume figures from road administrations in border counties and estimates of general traffic structure have been used to provide estimates of traffic on national highways across the border. A short questionnaire for roadside interviews with people in selected vehicles was also used. The data were collected at exit points from Norway. The second category, Part B, involved statistics for visitors staying overnight in Norway, for which a longer self-completed questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was distributed and collected at nine national highway border crossings (from Svinesund in the south to Karigasniemi in the northeast) and at 11 ferry connections to Sweden, Germany, Denmark and the United Kingdom. The questionnaire was available in eight languages: Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Italian, and Swedish.