

Holidaying in Scandinavia with Younger Children

Here are some suggestions and tips from our staff who have kids themselves, for traveling in Scandinavia with younger children. We hope that you will find this advice helpful and be sure to ask us for more information before travelling as our staff have all grown up in Scandinavia.

In general, Scandinavia and Finland are very child-friendly destinations and if you have any special requests or questions while here, please contact the staff at your hotel immediately. Almost all restaurants can be considered child-friendly with baby chairs and sometimes also drawing utensils, books or toys, and when using public transport, Scandinavia offers some great support for families with younger children. Baby changing tables in public toilets, play equipment and play rooms at airport terminals and family wagons in trains with playing area for the little ones are common place.

Arriving and Jetlag

When possible, we suggest arriving to Scandinavia or Finland a day or two earlier before your holiday program begins so that your younger children can adjust to the time zone. Young children arriving from the Southern Hemisphere generally wake up at around 4 - 5am for the first few mornings before they get accustomed to the new time zone. Be sure to have breakfast provisions ready for this, as it is unusual for anything to be provided from the hotel at this early hour. We suggest bringing packages of the child's favourite breakfast cereal from home plus tea bags etc. to help in those first few days. Likewise, quiet entertainment for those early hours might be a good idea as well.



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Bedding and Room Arrangements

Hotel rooms in Scandinavia more likely than not, only have twin beds pushed together to make a double if required. The spare children's beds are often foldout beds. Generally, it is easy to arrange at reception for the cots but be sure to ask for help if something doesn't seem right. We were provided a cot without a mattress once - very uncomfortable indeed if we hadn't chased that up!

Also, in Scandinavia it is not common practise to have tea or coffee provided in the room, and even if there is a kettle, there might be nothing else. We suggest travelling with a small supply of your own tea bags/ coffee, and asking directly at reception for a kettle on arrival.

Meal times

Feeding your children adequately is probably the hardest thing to do on an arranged holiday - kids are out of wack with jetlag, fussy and hungry for their own comfort food. When hotels and packages provide set times for meals and buffets, it is important to come prepared.

It is handy to take a small cooler bag already from home filled with snacks, utensils and fresh food. From the breakfast buffets it is usually acceptable to take a small amount of fresh food such as boiled eggs, rolls and fruit for morning and afternoon tea for the little ones.

We would also suggest that you give your kids a taste of what's to come before their holiday on some foods that they are likely to get in Scandinavia. Meatballs, European flavoured sausages, soups & then treats like cinnamon buns and waffles are typical children's menu items. Cinnamon is a very common flavour used in Scandinavia and Finland.

If you are part of an arranged program, be sure to ask at reception if you need anything in particular. The hotel staff will be more than happy to warm up baby food and organise more snacks or fruit.





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Choosing your optional activities

We recommend seeking all available information from the reception or activity provider when considering what optional activities will suit your younger children. These activities can be cold and involve a transfer a certain distance from the hotel. If you are uncertain why the activity is being run at a particular time, please ask for clarification as there is often a reason that you might be unfamiliar with. We all know as parents that children generally perform better earlier in the day than later, however, the activity providers might have a safety or climate reason for picking a certain time. In Scandinavia, it is often left up to the parents to make decisions about age limits and suitability (unlike other regions where everything is stipulated) so be sure to ask reception or other guests who have done the activity for further advice.

Protection against the cold

This is going to make or break your holiday in Scandinavia in the winter. Be sure to refer to our comprehensive packing list provided in your pre-departure information and be on the look out for the best protection for your children in the cold. Winter is great time for kids to play outside and snow-based activities will keep the young ones entertained for hours as long as they have appropriate clothing.

Extra (non-cotton) layers that can be added or taken away when needed, heat warmers and slip on crampons for the older children are recommended. Mittens where all fingers except the thumb are together are often warmer than gloves, and extra pair of mittens will come in handy after building a snowman or two. A balaclava type of hat that covers both the neck and ears and which can also protect part of child's face if needed, is also great under a warm and windproof beanie.

The base-layer next to skin should be either wool or synthetic blend, never cotton. With perspiration cotton turns quickly damp and then cold, no matter what other warmer clothing items are layered on top of it. Many of the hotels and activity providers also do offer warm outer clothing for hire, but if traveling with small kids, please do check beforehand that correct sizes are available.

Packing extras

- Heat warmer pads for inside gloves and boots. Please note that these should not be used directly against the skin, hence for hands, you will need to use the pads in between the two pairs of gloves/mittens recommended in our packing list
- Good boots and warm woolly socks for your little ones
- Bags & suitcases that can easily be carried by one parent if the other is carrying children. Many of us use Trunkies for our travels so that our kids can sit on them, or sometimes the kids can pull the cases themselves. If your child is small enough to be carried, we highly recommend a baby or toddler carrier that leaves your hands free for handling the luggage.
- Provisions for the first day or two whether it is snacks, nappies or fruit drinks.
- Books, drawing pencils or other tranquil inside activity and your child's favourite teddy!



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