



## Finnair adding more flights to Lapland

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Finnair and travel operators have concluded a cooperation agreement that will add more flights between Helsinki and destinations in Finland's Arctic Lapland province next winter.

Finnair is to begin adding the new flights to its next winter timetable that begins in November. Flights will be scheduled to provide smooth transit through Helsinki for connections to European and Asian destinations.

"With a growth in travel, there has been an upswing in demand for flights to the North, and we want to offer both Finnish and international travelers the opportunity to experience the magic of Lapland," said Finnair Area Vice President Rolf Backman.

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Lapland's travel industry has been discontented with Finnair cutbacks in connections to the Far North, including reductions in flights to the Arctic village of Ivalo.

A recent Lapland Regional Council study found the northern Finland loses millions of tourism dollars each year because of poor flight connections. A Regional Council of Lapland poll surveying tour operators found that as many as four out of five said they had lost sales in the past two years due to poor air connections.

The poll results were released earlier this month.

Lapland Regional Council Engineer Hanne Junnilainen said 84 per cent of tourism operators surveyed said that sales had slumped over the last two winters.

"Of these, half estimated how much trade they had lost, saying that they lost 53 percent of sales to Lapland. However, in addition, they also see solid potential if flight connections were good and competitively priced compared to other destinations," said Junnilainen. "They saw potential to increase sales between 15 to 200 percent."

*This story is posted on Alaska Dispatch as part of Eye on the Arctic, a collaborative partnership between public and private circumpolar media organizations.*

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