



# Window on Northern Tourism Newsletter

-  
January 2017

Veille nordique

Tourisme  
Québec 

 RÉSEAU  
VEILLE  
TOURISME

## Travel by train...in virtual reality

A Norwegian railway line is using virtual reality (VR) to give potential tourists a glimpse of Western Norway by train.

The 360° virtual reality tour, which lasts 44 minutes and covers 20 km, has been created by Expedia Norway and Visit Flåm to mark the 75th anniversary of the Flåm Railway line.

The steepest railway in Europe passes snow-covered mountains, waterfalls, steep valleys and fjords. Landmarks along the route include the Myrdal ski station, Hardangervidda (Norway's largest national park), the 225-m Kjosfossen waterfall, and the Flåm train station and railway museum.

This is the first time the tourist board has used virtual reality in its marketing campaign.



Source: [Travolution](#)

## Stackhouse: an innovative warming hut for skaters

An ultra-modern warming hut for recreational skaters will soon open on Winnipeg's river trail.

Designed by world-renowned sculptor Anish Kapoor, the structure, called Stackhouse, will be made entirely of stacked blocks of ice.

The project was the invited submission at the annual [Warming Huts Art + Architecture Competition](#).



©Warming Huts v.2017/Kapoor, Anish

Source: [Ici-Radio Canada](#)



## Iceland and Scotland join forces

The Scottish tourist board, through its official Web site, Visit Scotland, and the Icelandic tourist board have signed an agreement to encourage the exchange of information between the two countries and formulate recommendations for the development of sustainable tourism. Another purpose of this collaboration was to strengthen tourism related to the film industry at these two destinations.

The agreement was announced during the [Arctic Circle Assembly](#), which is held in Reykjavik each year and brings together an international network for cooperation and dialogue that particularly bears on the future of the Arctic.



© 2011-2016 VisitScotland and © Icelandic Tourist Board



Source: [Hospitality-On](#)



# Environmental issues and tourism

Tourism plays an important role in the Nordic countries' economies. Although tourism can reach rural areas while other industries cannot, it can have a negative impact on the environment.

In order to meet this challenge, the different stakeholders, i.e., regional and national authorities, municipalities, non-governmental organizations and businesses, have developed tools or adopted international standards for eco-labeling and certification.

Despite these efforts, only a fraction of the thousands of tourism businesses in all of the Nordic countries are eco-labeled or certified. In addition, many of the brands only target specific sectors such as eco-food in restaurants or clean beaches.

The purpose of the working paper entitled “Tourism ecolabels in the Nordics” is to report on the environmental labeling systems used for tourism destinations on a national scale and suggest ways of continuing these efforts while promoting Nordic tourist destinations.

Source: [Norden - Nordic Council of Ministers](#)

## “Welcome to Finland, Canadians!”

Since Canada topped Lonely Planet’s list of best travel destination in 2017, the Finnish tourist board is inviting Canadians to visit Finland, which placed third on the list.

A video shared on Facebook uses humour to showcase the aspects the two countries have in common and presents some of Finland’s special attractions.



YouTube video: [This is Finland](#)

Source: [This is Finland Tube](#)

## Recap of the Call a Random Swede campaign

In spring 2016, the [Swedish Tourist Association](#) (Svenska Turistföreningen, STF) set up a phone line to allow potential visitors to talk directly with Swedish residents, making Sweden the first country with its own phone number.

The [Call a Random Swede](#) campaign enabled a large number of people from around the world to get information about Sweden by actually calling Swedish locals.

“In troubled times, many countries try and limit communication between people, but we wanted to do just the opposite, giving our members and other fellow Swedes the opportunity to describe Sweden, express themselves and share their views, whatever they might be” said the CEO of STF. “We wanted to show the real Sweden – a unique country worth visiting with the right of public access, sustainable tourism, and a rich cultural heritage. Who could describe Sweden better than Swedes themselves?”

The campaign generated enormous interest from international media and was a huge hit on social media. In total, almost 30,000 ambassadors took 182,000 calls from 186 countries, with a total “talking time” of 367 days.

Source: [Destination Think](#)