

CURRENCIES & PRICES

Whilst many European countries have converted to the Euro currency, a greater part of the Nordic region are still using their own kroner currencies, which are in fact not interchangeable between countries.

❖ Legal Tender and Payment Systems

- ❖ The Danish Kroner is the currency for both Denmark and Greenland, and the official acronym is DKK.
- ❖ After Iceland gained its independence, it adapted to the krone currency, and appended a value to what is now universally known as the Icelandic Krona. The official abbreviation is ISK.
- ❖ The Swedish Krone is the currency in Sweden and uses the currency code SEK.
- ❖ Norway replaced its Speciedaler currency with the Norwegian Krone, and uses the currency code NOK.
- ❖ Finland is the only country in the region that adopted the Euro currency.
- ❖ In the Faroe Islands, both the Faroese króna and the Danish Kroner are of equal value. The Faroese prints its own bank notes, but use Danish coins, but Danish notes are equally acceptable.

Across the Nordic countries, foreign credit cards are usually accepted. The most widely accepted are Visa, Eurocard, MasterCard, Diners Club and American Express. Check with your bank before using others. Also be sure to notify your bank that you are leaving the country and that charges will be appearing on your account from the Nordic countries to avoid any hassle.

Checks and travelers checks are not common methods of payment. Direct withdrawals will get you the best exchange rate and are your best option, though currency can often be exchanged at tourist offices or hotels if needed.

ATMs (called “minibank”) accept major cards in addition to Cirrus, Visa Electron and/or Plus. There may be fees and limits to the amount of cash you can withdraw. Check with your bank to see if you have a daily limit on cash withdrawals or if they charge a fee for using an ATM not associated with their bank. Sometimes the ATM itself will charge a fee for use. It is never a bad idea to carry a little bit of cash on you if possible in case of an emergency or a system that does not accept your credit card.

In Norway, ATMS are typically located adjacent to banks or in shopping centers. They are less common in villages. Credit cards are widely accepted. Most banks do not offer currency conversion services.

In Denmark, Danish supermarkets will only take domestic cards. Be aware that not all ATMs in Denmark are open 24 hours, particularly outside of Copenhagen. Some may close between 1 and 6am.

Sweden is a very card-based society and due to this, ATMs are a bit harder to find, but cards are accepted everywhere. Most commonly ATMs can be found in downtown areas and at banks.

Iceland has ATMs located at banks, town centers, larger petrol stations and shopping centers. Credit cards are widely accepted.

In Finland, ATMs are known as “Otto.” which means “withdrawal” in Finnish, and is the logo you will see on the machine. ATMs are not affiliated with specific banks. The machines also have two slots, a blue slot for chip cards and a yellow slot for non-chip cards. ATMs are abundant and credit cards are widely accepted.

❖ Important Information on Chip and PIN system

Most European countries have implemented a chip-and-PIN system, using credit cards that are embedded with a microchip and require a Personal Identification Number (PIN code) for transactions. Some automatic payments points, such as ticket machines at train and subway stations, luggage lockers, toll roads, parking garages, and self-serve gas pumps will not accept your magnetic-strip credit card.

When Chip-and-PIN cardholders use their credit card they enter a pin code. If you know your pin code, some of the automatic machines will accept it. Every card has a PIN code and we will advise you to ask for this number before you leave on your trip.

❖ Tipping

Tipping is not mandatory in Norway, Sweden and Denmark, but highly appreciated by guides, drivers and waiters at restaurants. In Iceland tipping is not normal, but if you would like to leave a tip it will be met by a smile and will be appreciated. In Finland tipping is also not expected and can in some rare cases actually offend service staff. But of course most Finns will appreciate it. The best way of tipping in Finland is to round up the amount of the bill's total. As a general rule, tipping is a token of your appreciation. People make a good living over here and are not reliant on gratuities. We never tip taxi drivers.

Here are some guidelines for Norway, Sweden and Denmark, which can also be used for Iceland and Finland:

- ❖ Private guide full day; kr. 300
- ❖ Private guide half day; kr. 150
- ❖ Private driver full day; kr. 200
- ❖ Private driver half day; kr. 100
- ❖ Waiters at restaurants; kr. 50 – 200 (tipping based on a percentage is not common)