

NORDICS REPORT

February 2026

Travel
South
USA

Prepared By:

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ABOUT TSUSA

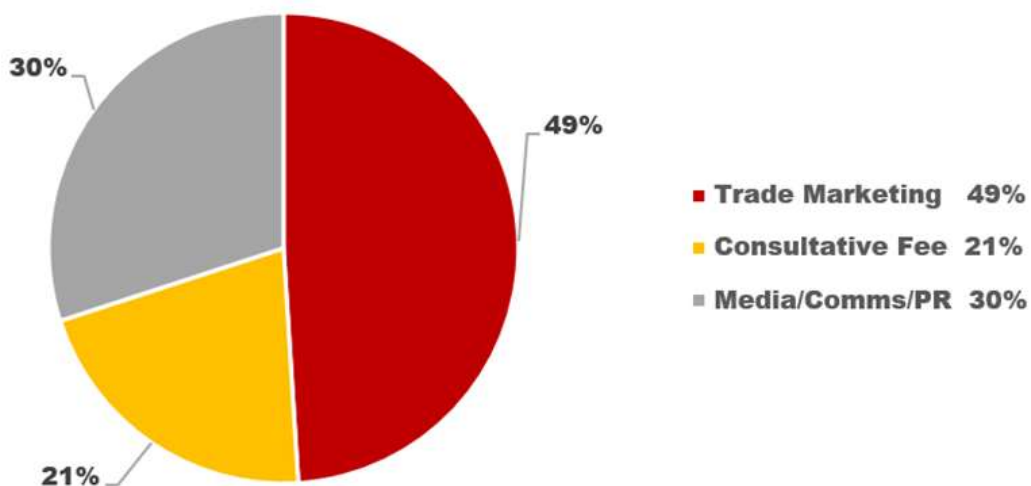
Global Partner Programming

The TSUSA GPP provides a foundational base from which state tourism offices have shared in country representation with international export marketing and sales activities. Managed by Travel South USA, the official regional destination marketing organization for the 12 state tourism offices, these collaborative efforts create leveraged actions, increase reach of travel trade and journalists, and coordinated consumer campaigns which deliver visitors to the South. In 2019, the Travel South USA region welcomed 10.2 million visitors, who spent \$10.3 billion, with 90% of these visitors arriving from 15 markets from around the globe.

The Nordic Region – Denmark, Sweden and Norway have a combined population of approximately 27 million citizens, with have historical high levels of disposable income and extensive vacation days. They rank 10th in visitor volume and often seek off-the-beaten path destinations. They are polite, approachable, and speak English well. They traditionally are willing to adapt to local culture, willing to try local cuisine, tip generously and have prior to the pandemic planned holiday with longer itineraries with more stops than other European visitors. Scandinavians enjoy five to six weeks vacation. There were an impressive range of types of southern tours being sold in the Nordic market prior to the pandemic and booking travel with professional operators for long-haul travel is very common. Therefore, we plan to prioritize travel trade marketing efforts and partnering with operators in consumer efforts for FY22 .

FY 26 Nordic GPP

Resource Allocations



I. Executive Summary

- Attended Americas Day in Copenhagen (26 February), holding meetings with key Danish tour operators including Albatros Travel, FDM Travel, Nyhavn Rejser, USA Rejser and USA Tours. Discussions indicated softer demand for U.S. travel in the Danish market at present, although operators expressed cautious optimism that sentiment will improve later in the year.
- Participated in and supported Swanson’s inaugural Long Haul Travel Event in Stockholm (28 February), which attracted close to 800 long-haul focused consumers and will now become an annual event. Travel South also sponsored and presented at the Swanson team briefing dinner the evening prior to the event, reinforcing the region’s strong relationship with the operator.
- Confirmed three Nordic delegates for the Travel South Mission in London (March 2026) and coordinated preparations for their participation.
- Conducted three media meetings with Nordic journalists to discuss press trip opportunities and story development focused on Southern road trips and culinary travel.
- Distributed the February Travel South newsletter to 459 recipients, achieving a 35.08% open rate and 0.62% click rate.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	Q1 TTL	Q2 TTL	Q4 TTL	FY 25/26 Total
AL/KY /LA/M O/NC/ SC/TN /ROTS	Nordics						
	Travel Trade						
	Meetings/Trainings	16	9		20	25	70
	# Agents Trained	11	135		8	256	410
	Media						
	Media Meetings	3	3		7	9	22
	Total # articles published	2	4		16	24	46
	Impressions	26,700	28,590		4m	6.9m	10,971,360

II. Travel Trade

Contact	Activity/Activation	Follow-up/Next Steps
FDM Travel – Frederik Øhrgaard	After our meeting in February followed up with Frederik to agree the contents of an addendum to agree the pause to our co-op campaign, capture the deliverables to date and based on this agree the financial settlement and review schedule for a re-start to the program. This was done and the addendum has been delivered and we are awaiting the FDM response. Frederik also advised that their CEO will attend the Travel South Nordic session in London in March.	
Travel South Mission – London/March 2026	We have three Nordic delegate that have confirmed their attendance. June Arlen Lindeby – Amerikaspesialisten (NO) Magnus Hermansson – Swanson’s (SE) Anders Iversen – FDM CEO (DK) We have completed their profiles and asked them to prepare their 5 minute introduction.	
Swanson’s Travel – Johan Rudolf	Met with Johan along with Russell Meara at Hablo (who are looking to launch in the Scandinavian market). Johan has created a profile and is keen to use the platform to connect and sell to the Swedish travel industry. Around 25% of Swanson’s business comes from the trade and Johan thinks this will increase over the next year.	
Discover America Sweden – Johnny Gardsater	Met with Johnny along with Russell Meara at Hablo. We are setting up Discover America to be the launch entity in the Swedish market, followed by Swanson’s and then Travel South. Hablo has won the Visit California training program business and plans to integrate this across all entity with representation, including the Nordics. He will be attending the Visit California Outlook Forum in March and will feedback from this.	
Discover America Denmark	Met with Karin Ger Nielsen in Copenhagen ahead of the Americas Day event. She confirmed DA Denmark will attend the fall events alongside Norway, Sweden and Finland	
American Trails – Jonas Larson	Met with Jonas at the Americas day in Copenhagen. He has produced a good amount of Southern content recently but want us to look at another partnership. I have requested information on what he has in the pipeline and	

	am awaiting feedback. Once we have this we I said we will have a further discussion.	
Discover America – Americas Day – Copenhagen	Having skipped a year in 2025 the Discover America event return this year in a slightly altered format. Due to reduced supplier participation from the USA, the show now included suppliers from Canada and the Caribbean. To reflect this, the name changed from 'USA day' to 'Americas Day'. With 120 visitors there were speeches from both the US and Canadian Ambassadors to Denmark. We had a good set of meetings from across the Danish travel industry. Discover America gave a market update, details of which can be found below.	
USA Rejser – Christian Walker Willumsen	Met with Christian at Copenhagen Americas day. He is shortly attending a fam trip to Nashville. He is also attending IPW in Fort Lauderdale in May. We agree to meet at the Nordic reception.	
Albatros Travel – Karina Nuemann Saintz	Met with Karina at the America days in Copenhagen. She was following up on her attendance at Travel South Showcase in Kansas City. She has some new Southern itineraries mapped out and is hopeful that their route 66 tours will still go ahead. They minimum number they need for their escorted tour to proceed. Karina advise she is cancelling her attendance at IPW but is hopeful she will be able to attend TS Showcase in Nashville	
Nyhavn Rejser – Kim Carlsson	Met with Kim at the Copenhagen Americas day. He advised that the US is severely down and they are selling a lot of Japan right now. He will not be attending IPW but hopes positive sentiment will return in time for showcase in Nashville.	
FDM Travel - Birgitte Vraadal / David Rosborg-Larsen	Met with Birgitte and David at the America days in Copenhagen. The both advise that the US is well down from projections but are confident that positive sentiment will return if things settle back to normal. Birgitte advise that, although she is registered, she will be cancelling her attendance at IPW 2026. She is hopeful of attending showcase in Nashville	
USA Tours – Dorthe Laerk Hansen	Met with Dorthe at the America days in Copenhagen. USA Tours is almost on hiatus right now and Dorthe is focusing solely on Top Tours (their sister brand) to the Far East and Indian Ocean. She will not attend IPW. Dorthe will keep in touch and we will meet as soon as the situation changes	

<p>Swanson's Long Haul Travel Event – Stockholm Congress Center – 28th February 2026</p>	<p>Swanson's held its travel show in Stockholm for the first time, expanding an event that has previously been organised 21 times in southern Sweden and traditionally focused solely on North America travel. This was also the first time the event brought together all three of the company's brands: Swanson's, Jambo Tours and TEMA.</p> <p>The event attracted close to 800 attendees, with a strong audience profile of engaged travellers interested in long-haul travel products. An attendee survey indicated a very positive response, with the event receiving an overall rating of 5.2 out of 6.</p> <p>Swanson's will conduct a follow-up survey with participating suppliers to gather feedback and identify opportunities to further enhance the event. Swanson's has confirmed that the Stockholm show will become an annual event.</p>	
<p>Swanson Team Event</p>	<p>Travel South sponsored the Swanson briefing dinner the evening before the Long Haul event. The 15 strong team included 5 that had attended showcase in past years. We gave a presentation on the destination/region. Tommy then spoke to the group advising that Travel South were Swanson's strongest supported and had been for several years.</p>	

Americas Day - Copenhagen



Swanson's Long Haul Day



III. Communications & PR

Contact	Activity/Activation	Follow-up/Next Steps
Monthly Travel South Newsletter	<p>Find attached the coverage chart and the links for the February newsletter.</p> <p>Newsletter links</p> <p>DK: https://presscloud.com/csp/vocast/message.csp?KEY=116685568451578&format=web</p> <p>NO: https://presscloud.com/csp/vocast/message.csp?KEY=365237950603321&format=web</p> <p>SE: https://presscloud.com/csp/vocast/message.csp?KEY=258469410714744&format=web</p> <p>FI: https://presscloud.com/csp/vocast/message.csp?KEY=449645123157228&format=web</p> <p>Newsletter stats: Delivered: 459 Open rate: 161 (35.08%) Click rate: 1 (0.62%)</p>	
Media Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brian Schæfer Dreyer, Freelance journalist for tier 1 media (DK) – Discussing press trip opportunities and story ideas. Brian is among others writing for the magazine Motor where he does road trip articles from different countries. • Rasmus Krarup Jensen, Editor for Connery and Mandekogebogen (DK) – Discussing press trip opportunities and story ideas. Rasmus is very interested in gastronomy, and I pitched our recent newsletter about soul food to him. • Annika Majak, Freelance journalist for Bonnier News Local (SE) – Discussing press trip opportunities. Annika delivers travel stories to Bonnier News Local, which distribute stories in several local newspapers. She is always travelling with her husband. 	

Newsletters

TravelSouth
All Y'all Are Welcome **USA**

Press release

A guide to soul food in the South

The American South is known for many things; their music, "Southern hospitality", civil rights history and, not least, their food culture. The food culture in the states goes by the name "soul food" - a term that encapsulates the warmth, traditions and roots from which it comes, and which is considered to not only nourish the stomach, but also the soul.



Barbecue at "the King of Ribs" in Missouri

In Missouri, Arthur Bryant, who started Arthur Bryant's Barbeque in Kansas City, is known as the "King of Ribs" and has gone down in barbecue history as one of the greatest in the business. He learned his skills from his brother and Henry Perry, who is considered the father of barbecue. Arthur is especially known for his "burnt ends," which are the outermost, caramelized and slightly charred ends of smoked brisket. It started out as a free giveaway to waiting customers, but they eventually became so popular that they became a regular part of the menu - not only at Arthur's Barbeque, but throughout the city.

[Read more](#)



Barbecue traditions in North Carolina

North Carolina proudly carries three distinct barbecue traditions: "Eastern-style", which is a whole roast suckling pig seasoned simply with salt, pepper and vinegar, "Western-style", which is pork shoulder served with a tangy tomato-based sauce, and "Lexington BBQ", which is a special form of slow-smoked pork served with a ketchup-vinegar dip and red coleslaw. The different types of barbecue can be tasted, among other things, at the Lexington BBQ Festival, which is celebrated every October. Here, the city center is transformed into a celebration of pitmasters, music and community, and the streets are filled with smoky dishes from local stalls.

[Read more](#)



African American food traditions in South Carolina

South Carolina is particularly known for the simple Southern dish "meat-and-three" which - as the name suggests - consists of a piece of meat and three different side dishes, often vegetables, beans, salads or cornbread. But in the state, soul food is also more than just comfort food. At the South Carolina State Museum you can explore the Harvesting Heritage exhibition, which explores African-American food traditions, culture and history. Here you can, for example, learn about the Gullah Geechee cuisine, whose traditional dishes include "shrimps and grits" and gumbo.

[Read more](#)



Taste the Alabama legend's secret recipe

In Alabama, at the famous barbecue restaurant Big Bob Gibson Bar-B-Q in the city of Decatur, you can meet Alabama barbecue legend Chris Lilly, who is the pitmaster and fourth-generation partner at the 100-year-old restaurant. His famous Original White Sauce, developed as a dip for chicken instead of the traditional vinegar and mustard mixture, has been copied across the state, but Lilly sticks to his secret recipe. If you visit the famous restaurant, you should try the classic chicken with white sauce and a stuffed potato with butter, sour cream, cheese, bacon and chives.

[Read more](#)



Soul food with a modern twist in Mississippi

In Jackson, Mississippi, you can find soul food in all its glory. Pig & Pint is a must-try restaurant for a modern twist on flavors, especially when it comes to homemade sauces that range from tangy to sweet and spicy to punchy. For pit-to-plate barbecue, visit the recently-appointed Michelin Bib Gourmand restaurant Sacred Ground BBQ, known for its tender, smoky meats.

[Read more](#)



Rhythms of the South: A road trip for foodies

The cities of Atlanta, Nashville, and New Orleans, a popular combination on many road trips, also offer numerous places for foodies.

In Atlanta, you can get a local "meat-and-three" experience at Mary Mac's Tea Room, whose main courses are fried chicken and slow-braised beef with sides like cheese grits, cornbread, and mashed potatoes.

Further along the Nashville journey, you can visit Peg Leg Parker, which serves hickory-smoked spare ribs and pulled pork with strong dry rub spices, or Arnold's Country Kitchen, where the dish of the day is served at communal tables.

In New Orleans, you can visit the local smokehouse Blue Oak BBQ, which serves tender brisket smoked over pecan and oak wood, pulled pork and spare ribs with Creole-inspired sauces and side dishes.

About Travel South USA

Travel South USA is the tourism board for 12 states in the southern United States. Here you will find a wonderful mix of beaches, mountains, music, culture and culinary experiences. With short distances between cities and experiences, the area is perfect for a USA road trip.

Here you can drive along green fields or along winding roads in the Great Smoky Mountains - or enjoy the lush landscape along the 1,200-mile Coast Highway, which runs from the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains to the ocean and beaches. Along the way, you can enjoy the hospitality of small towns, delve into the region's unique musical history, visit local bourbon distilleries or explore the diverse food culture.

www.travelsouth.visittheusa.com

See press rooms for all states here: www.industry.travelsouthusa.com/media

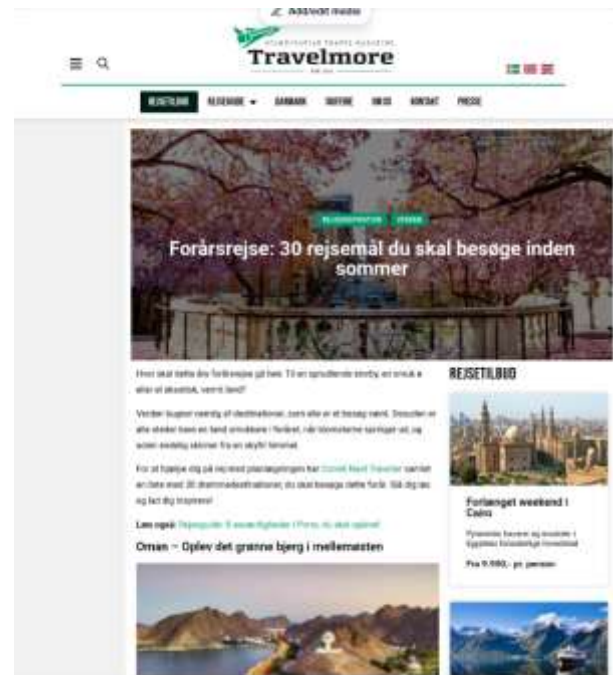
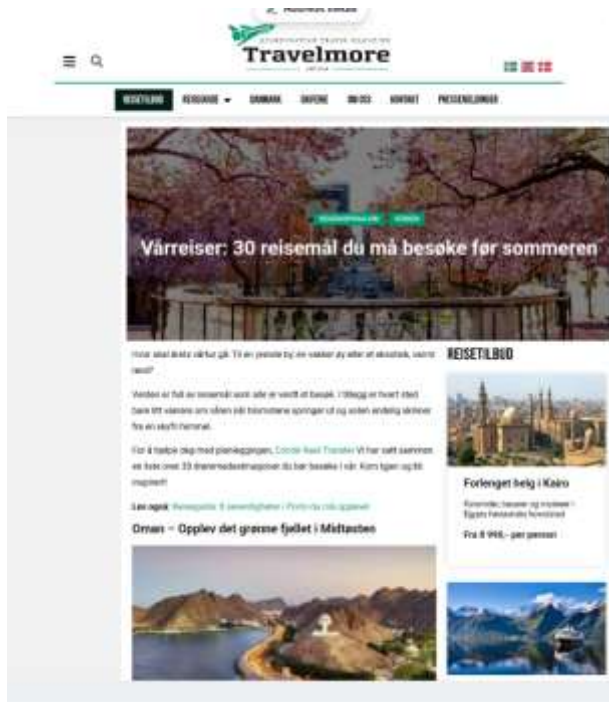
Attachments

[Alabama_Big Bob Gibson BBQ Decatur.jpg](#)
[Atlanta_Mary Macs Tea Room.jpg](#)
[Mississippi_Soul food.jpg](#)
[Missouri_Arthur Bryant's Barbecue 2.jpg](#)
[Missouri_Arthur Bryant's Barbecue.jpg](#)
[Nashville_PegLegPorker-TheGulch.jpg](#)
[North Carolina_Bar-BQ Center Lexington Man Pouring Sauce on Sandwich.jpg](#)
[North Carolina_Raleigh_Sam Jonett BBQ_For Real_Spring.tif](#)
[South Carolina_Angie Mosier-Rodney Scott's BBQ.jpg](#)

Contact Information

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Sample Media Coverage



Louisville, Kentucky – Hesteveddøp i toppklasse



Du trenger ikke å elske hesteveddøp for å reise til Louisville.

Kentucky Derby strøkker seg over en hel uke før den faktiske to minutter lange nervepirrende konkurransen den første lørdagen i mai. Opplev mat- og vinmaking, dans- og musikkopptredener på racerbanen, og til og med sjansen til å se deltakerne trene ved dagry i dagene før det store løpet.

Florida

U.S. Civil Rights Trail utvides med seks nye historiske steder

February 22, 2026 | 7:03 am

U.S. Civil Rights Trail, den amerikanske borgerrettighetsstien, utvides i 2026, med tillegg av historiske steder i Virginia, Louisiana, Tennessee og Florida, som tilbyr reisende nye reisemål for å utforske sentrale historier, steder og stemmer som former landets borgerrettighetsbevegelse.

De seks nye stedene inkluderer:

Historiske Caroline County Courthouse Campus (Bowling Green, Virginia) – Stedet for arrestasjonen av Richard og Mildred Loving i 1958, hvis sak førte til den landemerke høyesterettsavgjørelsen som opphevet forbud mot interrasial ekteskap over hele landet.

Gloucester Museum of History (Gloucester, Virginia) – Gjennom utstillinger og en 12-stoppe kjøretur frembevar museet pionerer innen borgerrettigheter som Irene Morgan, hvis handlinger bidro til å utvikle segregering i seks mellom states.

Texas & Pacific Railway Depot (Natchitoches, Louisiana) – Et av Louisianas best bevarte segregererte offentlige rom, depotet tilbyr et oppsiktsvekkende blikk på reiser fra Jim Crow-tiden og den store migrasjonen, da afroamerikanere reiste nordover og vestover på jakt etter muligheter.

Jefferson Street Sound Museum (Nashville, Tennessee) – Museet ligger i hjertet av historiske Jefferson Street, og viser hvordan musikk, kultur og aktivisme møttes for å gi energi til Nashvilles borgerrettighetsbevegelse.

Museum of Christian & Gospel Music (Nashville, Tennessee) – Undersøker den sterke roten gospelmusikk og musikere spilte som en kilde til håp, enhet og inspirasjon under kampen for borgerrettigheter.

Jacksonville Civil Rights Trail (Jacksonville, Florida) – Denne byomfattende stien bruker stedsbaserte markører og historiefortelling for å koble besøkende til nabolag, institusjoner og ledere som trev grassrotaktivisme og varig endring.

– Hvert år fortsetter U.S. Civil Rights Trail å vokse, og gir besøkende nye muligheter til å oppleve menneskene og stedene som former historien, sa Mark Ezeil, styreleder for U.S. Civil Rights Trail Marketing Alliance.

– Disse nye stedene legger til unike og sterke historier som virkelig vil utdype vår forståelse av borgerrettighetsbevegelsen.

Les mer om det særstige USA [HER](#)

For flere relaterte artikler og reisetips – klikk på linkene: [AMERIKAFERIE](#) – [AMERIKATIPS](#) – [HISTORIE](#) – [KULTUR](#) – [MAT & DRINK](#) – [MUSEER](#) – [REISEOPPLEVELSER](#) – [REISETIPS](#) – [SØRBSTLIGE USA](#) – [TRAVELSOUTH USA](#)

Om U.S. Civil Rights Trail

U.S. Civil Rights Trail, som ble lansert i 2018, er en samling av mer enn 130 kirker, tingshus, skoler, museer og andre landemerker, hovedsakelig i sørstatene der aktivister utførte segregering på 1950- og 1960-tallet for å fremme sosial rettferdighet. Personene, stedene og reisemålene som er inkludert i Civil Rights Trail gir familier, reisende og lærere en måte å oppleve historien på nært hold. For detaljer om stedene og historier fra pionerer innen borgerrettigheter, besøk CivilRightsTrail.com.



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Rekordår
for
Mauritius
i 2025
– blant
Emirates'topp
10 i
Norge



Radisson
to
anchor
The
Butler
project
in
Luxembourg



Solid
årsresultat
for
Havila
Kyststruten



2025
har
styrket
Avinor
for
fremtiden



Smartare
hantering
av
støringer:
Ny
teknik
forändrar
flygbolagens
serviceästerällning



IV. Market Updates

Americas Day – Market Update

The following market update slides were presented at the Americas Day in Copenhagen on the 26th February 2026

Nordics, State of the industry



- **Forward-booking data** and current search behaviour, the US is not among the fastest-growing long-haul destinations for Nordic travelers heading into summer 2026.
- We have been surpassed by **Thailand for two years** in a row
- **More seat capacity** in 2026 summer programs compared to 2025.
- **765.402** visitors to the USA in 2025.
- **5th largest European market** in terms of arrivals. #1 UK #2 Germany, #3 France, #4 Italy
- **Strong spenders:** #1 in spending per visitor in Europe, \$3,500. per visitor, ahead of UK, DE & FR.
- Average length of stay **12 days** in 2025
- **100% online market;** most used channels for inspiration

Arrivals to the U.S. (January 2026)

Arrivals to the US January 2026 (preliminary)								
Country	Jan 2026	Jan 2025	Difference	2024	2023	2022	Population	% travel to US
DENMARK	10,334	13,350	-22.4%	235,894	236,176	214,340	5,946,984	4.0%
SWEDEN	20,447	21,421	-4.5%	504,820	287,747	247,593	10,538,338	2.0%
NORWAY	9,742	11,905	-18.2%	173,412	173,080	149,118	5,597,924	3.1%
FINLAND	7,921	8,357	-5.0%	108,759	101,861	79,288	5,814,571	1.9%
ICELAND	2,788	2,867	-2.8%	45,405	43,099	43,080	390,872	12.0%
TOTAL AREA	51,252	57,300	-10.6%	966,343	839,943	728,319	28,056,689	3.1%
ITALY	70,468	69,462	1.4%	1,123,944	978,952	717,591	61,021,815	1.8%
FRANCE	82,796	87,127	-5.0%	1,706,081	1,562,934	1,317,882	62,814,235	2.7%
GERMANY	86,797	94,886	-8.5%	1,994,786	1,838,481	1,461,008	84,220,184	2.4%
UNITED KINGDOM	232,424	235,115	-1.1%	4,037,119	3,897,534	3,466,107	68,138,454	5.9%

AIRLIFT – NORDICS TO USA & CANADA

Denmark CPH	Sweden STO	Norway OSL	Finland HEL	Iceland REK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atlanta • Boston • Chicago • Los Angeles • Miami • Minneapolis • New York (EWR) • New York (JFK) • Philadelphia • San Francisco • Seattle • Washington D.C. <p>Canada:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montreal • Toronto • Halifax 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New York (EWR) • New York (JFK) <p>Canada:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toronto 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New York (EWR) • New York (JFK) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chicago • Miami • Seattle • Los Angeles • New York (JFK) • Dallas <p>Canada:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toronto 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boston • Chicago • Denver • Detroit • Miami • Minneapolis • New York JFK • Nashville • Orlando • Pittsburgh • Portland /OR • Raleigh-Durham • Seattle • Washington D.C. <p>Canada:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toronto • Montreal • Winnipeg • Calgary • Halifax • Vancouver