

Light fantastic

This year's solar maximum gives agents more opportunities to sell the northern lights, writes **Alice Barnes-Brown**

Gazing up at the night sky to see the darkness illuminated by dancing lights is a bucket-list experience for many clients – one they'll have a good chance to complete this year, as the solar maximum (the highest level of activity in the sun's 11-year cycle) makes northern lights sightings more likely.

Specialist operator The Aurora Zone has reported a significant increase in demand for this winter, with bookings for September 2025 onwards up by 63% compared with last year. The operator's travel expert Allan Cooper says: "To meet soaring demand, we've increased capacity for next winter, particularly for our cabin holidays. The allure of watching the northern lights from the comfort of a glass-roofed cabin is a powerful selling point. Paired with thrilling adventures, these holidays are perfectly suited for first-time clients seeking a more adventurous short break."

But with so many northern lights breaks available, picking which is right for your clients can be a puzzle – so delve into the diverse offering with our guide.

BEST FOR...TOWN AND COUNTRY

Reykjavik is a short drive from some fabulous northern lights viewing spots, and clients can have the best of both worlds on Audley Travel's Iceland Winter

Break itinerary. The trip begins with two nights at Hotel Ranga, a country retreat that features its own observatory and northern lights wake-up service. During the day, clients can discover Iceland's southern coastline, including the black granite beach of Reynisfjara and the fairytale falls at Skógafoss. They'll also go on a guided hike to the Sólheimajökull glacier, clambering on the ice by way of crampons.

Then, they will head to Reykjavik via the Golden Circle. A 4x4 tour into the wilderness takes travellers to witness the aurora – which, in Icelandic folklore, is believed to be the spirits of departed ancestors.

Book it: Audley Travel sells the five-night itinerary from £5,690 per person, based on two sharing. Includes breakfast, listed excursions, transfers and flights. audleytravel.com

BEST FOR...SNOWMOBILES AND SÁMI CULTURE

Who says Lapland is just for little ones? Transun's adult-only Snowmobile Voyager tour in Finnish Lapland sees clients whizz out on a northern lights-spotting safari. Two people share one vehicle, so this trip is ideal for couples keen to get cosy under the swirling skies.

Clients will also get the chance to interact with the Indigenous Sámi people via a visit to a family-owned ➤

Ilulissat Icefjord,
northern Greenland

PICTURE: Paul Zizka/Visit Greenland

DESTINATIONS

SCANDINAVIA | NORTHERN LIGHTS



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Northern Lights Village in Saariselkä, Finland; aurora-spotting on board Fred Olsen Cruise Lines' *Balmoral* in Alta, Norway; spectacular display in northern Norway **PICTURE:** Sorrisniva AS; Northern Lights Village Saariselka

reindeer farm, where the animals can be fed by hand – and there's also the option to go on a sleigh ride through the snow.

Book it: Transun sells the three-night tour from £1,899 per person, based on two sharing. Includes full-board accommodation, two snowmobile excursions, reindeer experience, thermal clothing, transfers, luggage and flights departing Liverpool on February 11, 2026. transun.co.uk

BEST FOR...OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

For clients who've seen Scandinavia and explored Iceland, Greenland is the hottest – or coolest – place to be, with a host of new itineraries launching by land and sea. The territory opened a new airport last year, making it easier for international visitors to reach. Regent Holidays' Ilulissat Aurora

Break is based on the edge of a vast ice fjord. By day, there are traditional dog-sledding rides, boat trips and visits to rainbow-hued fishing villages on offer.

By night, clients will stay at one of the world's most northerly hotels, the Hotel Arctic. The chance of a sighting is strong at this latitude, so they might be able to see the northern lights from their room – especially if they upgrade to an Aurora Cabin, with one-way glass over the bed and a position right on the water's edge, away from any sources of light pollution. If not, a guided excursion to spot the solar phenomenon is also included.

Book it: Regent Holidays sells the four-night break from £2,450 per person, based on two sharing. Includes breakfast, one dinner, listed excursions, transfers and flights. regent-holidays.co.uk

BEST FOR...AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS

Most travellers will want to capture gorgeous photos of the northern lights. The Aurora Zone's holiday in Saariselkä includes a photography workshop; advise clients to bring a tripod and a camera, either an SLR or an advanced smartphone.

The next night, there's a tour to frozen Lake Inari, where clients will be able to practise their photography skills from the comfort of a campfire. On the final night, a snowshoe hike provides another charming way to see the amazing aurora.

Book it: The Aurora Zone sells the four-night Northern Lights Village Saariselkä trip from £2,495, based on two sharing and departures between December 5 and March 26, 2026. Includes accommodation in a glass-roofed cabin, full-board, excursions as listed, transfers and flights. theaurorazone.com

BEST FOR...FESTIVE FUN

Combine the magic of Christmas with nearly two weeks of aurora-spotting on Fred Olsen Cruise Lines' festive Scandi sailing. Passengers set off from Southampton on *Balmoral* and spend a serene Christmas at sea, making a beeline for Narvik in northern Norway. Nights at sea mean clients couldn't be further from light pollution on land, plus Norway's polar nights are long in December and January, so there's even more time to enjoy the aurora.

Stops include Leknes, Alta and Tromsø, where clients can explore a Christmas market and New Year's Eve fireworks.

Book it: The 15-night In Search of the Northern Lights at Christmas is priced from £2,399 per person, cruise-only, based on two sharing an Interior Cabin and departing from Southampton on December 22. fredolsencruises.com **TW**

INSIDER insight



Sue McAlinden,
general manager,
Best Served Scandinavia

"The northern lights are a natural phenomenon and never guaranteed. That's why it's crucial to book a holiday your customers will love, even if the aurora doesn't make an appearance. For customers keen on snow-based activities, the ideal time to travel is mid-December to the end of March. For those on a budget, chalets and cabins are a good alternative to glass igloos, with many featuring panoramic windows for stunning views."