LAPLAND'S ATTRACTIVENESS INCREASES: BUSY WINTER EXPECTED AT SANTA'S OFFICIAL HOME AIRPORT

News / Airports / Routes

Finavia, the Finnish airport operator, has raised the passenger experience at Rovaniemi Airport to a whole new level. Airports in Lapland are eagerly awaiting the busiest winter season which is looking better than in years when measured by the number of bookings. Finavia has invested nearly EUR20 million in Lapland's airports in 2014-2015.

The service level, enjoyment and smoothness of Rovaniemi Airport have been improved. The changes have focused on security control and service desks at the terminal and the appearance of the airport.

"Finavia has made significant investments in making Rovaniemi Airport a more enjoyable place for passengers and in ensuring satisfying and smooth travel. The functionality of the airport has improved notably from before. We can be proud of our modern airport which is now ready to receive Christmas travellers," says Martti Oinas, Finavia's regional manager for Lapland and manager of Rovaniemi Airport.

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Traffic volumes in early winter are expected to be higher than in previous years. When measured by the number of bookings, Finavia expects charter traffic to increase slightly at Lapland's airports, with Rovaniemi showing the most significant growth.

"The volume of charter flights in Rovaniemi has never been this high since 2009. Looking at our order book, we are heading towards better days," Oinas says.

At other airports in Lapland, the number of charter bookings is closer to the year before but, all in all, the situation is showing a positive trend. In the whole of Lapland, 2007 was the peak year when it comes to charter flights, right before the global economic slump.

"Now that the attractiveness of northern regions has increased, the region's tourism agencies need to be able to strengthen the positive trend and develop the magical Lapland into an even more inviting product. Through its cost-efficient and world-class airports, Finavia is doing its part to improve the capacity of travel and tourism in Lapland," Oinas says.

Santa's Post Office Branch Opened at the Airport

Lapland's airports have never been this good and competitive. In the past few years, Finavia has made significant investments in Lapland: In Kittilä, the terminal and air traffic areas were recently modernised, while in Ivalo, the runway was paved last year and the terminal expansion will be ready for the Christmas season.

The modernisation project in Rovaniemi was wrapped up during the autumn. General smoothness improved, particularly through changes in the security checkpoint and passport control and Customs facilities. The interior design reflects nature of the north, and the local touch can also be seen in the restaurant section and shops. A new restaurant section was built in the gate area.

"Now, the café also offers warm meals. We serve reindeer meatballs and smoked reindeer soup which has quickly become a favourite among our customers," says Anne Immonen, operations director at SSP Finland.

A branch of the main post office of Santa Claus was opened at the café located before the security checkpoint.

"Now we are ready to wish travellers welcome to the official airport of Santa Claus. Thanks to charter flights and the extensive range of routes offered by Helsinki Airport, Rovaniemi is within easy reach from all parts of the world. The Arctic Circle can be visited, directly or via one connecting flight, from more than 100 destinations," Oinas says.

Runway paving is being planned in Rovaniemi for the summer of 2016, with simultaneous improvement of the runway lighting system. The runway project is still in its planning phases, which means that the schedule and the project's impact on traffic remain unclear.

In May, Rovaniemi Airport was chosen as the Airport of the Year for 2015 in Finland.

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