

# The Rise of “Coolcations”: Escaping the Heat with Cooler Climate Travel

As global temperatures reach record highs, many travelers are redefining their vacation plans with “**coolcations**” – holidays taken in cooler climate destinations to escape the heat. This report delves into the coolcation phenomenon, examining its origins, driving factors, popular destinations, effects on traditional hotspots, economic and environmental implications, and future outlook. Practical recommendations are also provided for various types of travelers considering a coolcation.

## 1. Definition and Origin of “Coolcations”

“Coolcation” is a portmanteau of “cool” and “vacation,” referring to a trip taken in a cooler or more temperate climate. In essence, it means choosing a holiday destination known for mild or cold weather (or traveling during a cooler season) instead of a hot, peak-summer spot

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. For example, visiting Norway in the summer or heading to the mountains in autumn would both qualify as coolcations

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. The term was first popularized in late 2023 by *Condé Nast Traveler*, which predicted **coolcations** would be a major travel trend for 2024

[tripit.com](https://tripit.com)

. Shortly after, other media and travel companies picked up on the concept. A network of luxury travel advisors (Virtuoso) found in a survey that 82% of clients were interested in taking a “coolcation” in 2024

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. By early 2024, outlets like *The Independent* and *CN Traveler* had listed “coolcation” among the year’s biggest travel trends

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, and tourism boards in cooler countries began using the term in their marketing

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. For instance, Visit Sweden’s website proclaimed the arrival of this “new vacation trend,” urging travelers to skip “the scorching sun and sweltering heat” in favor of cooler locales

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. In summary, **coolcations** emerged as a named trend in 2023 and quickly gained traction going into 2024, encapsulating a growing desire among travelers to beat the heat by vacationing in cooler climates.

## 2. Factors Driving the Coolcation Trend

Multiple environmental, social, and economic factors have converged to fuel the rise of coolcations. Key drivers include:

- **Climate Change and Extreme Heat:** Perhaps the biggest catalyst is the increase in extreme heat events around the world. The past few years have seen

unprecedented high temperatures. 2022 and 2023 were the hottest years on record in many regions

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, with intense summer heat waves across Europe and Asia. In the summer of 2023, parts of the Mediterranean (Spain, Italy, Greece) hit the high 40s °C [iglu.com](https://www.iglu.com)

, setting records and making traditional beach vacations uncomfortable or even unsafe. Southern Europe's popular destinations have grappled with wildfires,

droughts, and heat-related health risks during peak season [euronews.com](https://www.euronews.com)

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. Facing the prospect of sightseeing in 40°C+ weather or dealing with smoke and heat advisories, many travelers are opting to go north or to higher elevations instead. Simply put, climate change is *literally* making typical holiday spots too hot to handle, driving tourists toward cooler climates as a refuge [euronews.com](https://www.euronews.com)

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- **Health and Comfort:** Closely tied to the heat issue are health and comfort considerations. Travelers who might tolerate a hot beach day are finding it difficult to enjoy vacations amid heatwaves. There are genuine health risks associated with extreme heat – from heat stroke to dehydration – especially for older travelers and families with young children. By contrast, a moderate 20°C summer day in, say, Scandinavia or a mountain town allows for comfortable outdoor activities without the need to constantly seek air-conditioning. As one travel industry executive noted, people who “struggle in intense temperatures” find a cooler destination much more manageable and enjoyable

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. The desire for a pleasant climate – where one can sightsee, hike, or dine outside without overheating – is a major motivator behind coolcations.

- **Avoiding Crowds and Overtourism:** Social factors are also at play. Popular warm-weather destinations (Mediterranean beaches, tropical islands, etc.) tend to be magnets for mass tourism, which can mean crowded attractions, long queues, and inflated prices during peak season. In contrast, cooler-climate destinations have historically been less visited in summer, translating to fewer crowds and a more relaxed experience. Early adopters of the coolcation trend have enjoyed having more space and a sense of discovery. Travel experts point out that choosing an alternative, off-the-beaten-path locale often leads to more authentic interactions with local culture and better value for money

[tripit.com](https://www.tripit.com)

. There's also an altruistic angle: visiting less-crowded destinations can help alleviate overtourism in hotspots. By spreading tourism income to new regions, travelers “help share the wealth—and draw attention away from overcrowded tourist hotspots” [tripit.com](https://www.tripit.com)

. In essence, some tourists feel good about choosing a cooler destination not only for themselves but also because it reduces pressure on oversaturated places.

- **Novel Experiences and Natural Beauty:** Many coolcation-seekers are motivated by a desire for new experiences and landscapes that differ from the standard sun-and-sand getaway. Cooler regions often offer unique attractions: think seeing glaciers and geysers in Iceland, hiking through emerald fjords in Norway, or spotting wildlife like bears and whales in Alaska. These experiences have strong appeal for travelers who have “been there, done that” with beach resorts and are looking for something fresh. The chief commercial officer of a cruise company noted that

people are keen to “tick off their bucket lists” by visiting places like Iceland, Norway or Alaska – destinations that offer dramatic scenery and natural phenomena like the Northern Lights

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. Social media has also played a role, as photos of snowy peaks, serene lakes, or Arctic adventures inspire others to seek out these cooler-climate adventures. In short, the promise of spectacular, Instagram-worthy landscapes and outdoor adventure is drawing tourists northward and upward.

- **Economic and Practical Considerations:** There are also practical economic factors driving the trend. Travelers have discovered that visiting traditionally “cold” destinations in summer can actually be cost-effective. For example, alpine or Nordic destinations often have well-developed off-season infrastructure (due to winter ski tourism), and summer prices for lodging or tours there can be competitive compared to sky-high prices in packed beach towns. Additionally, some travelers are adjusting *when* they travel to save money and avoid heat: rather than vacationing in July or August, they plan trips in late spring or early fall (shoulder seasons) when southern destinations are cooler and cheaper – essentially a timing strategy akin to a coolcation

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. Tourism boards in warmer countries have even started promoting off-peak travel to cope with summer heat. For instance, some Mediterranean destinations now highlight autumn or spring offerings, effectively encouraging a “cooler season” vacation [countryandtownhouse.com](https://www.countryandtownhouse.com)

. Finally, the travel industry is responding with tailored offerings: airlines and tour operators are adding routes and packages for northern destinations, which increases competition and can lower costs. All these economic considerations make the coolcation concept even more attractive to budget-conscious or value-seeking travelers.

### 3. Popular Coolcation Destinations and Trends

Coolcation travelers are primarily looking to regions known for milder summers, crisp temperatures, or even year-round cold. Over the past 2–3 years, several destinations have risen to the top as coolcation favorites, with tourism numbers surging in these cooler climes:

*Coastal villages in Northern Europe – like this fishing hamlet in Norway – are seeing more summer visitors seeking mild weather and stunning natural scenery. Tourism to Scandinavia has spiked as travelers swap Mediterranean heat for Nordic cool.*

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- **Northern Europe (Scandinavia and UK):** The Nordic countries and other parts of Northern Europe have been big winners of this trend. Statistics show a sharp uptick in travel to Scandinavia in particular. A luxury travel network reports a **27% increase in summer bookings to Scandinavia** in 2023–24 compared to the previous year [hospitalitytoday](https://www.hospitalitytoday.com)
- . Interest in specific countries is even higher – bookings to Sweden jumped 47%, and to Iceland 49%, over the same period [hospitalitytoday](https://www.hospitalitytoday.com)

. This aligns with on-the-ground data: online travel agencies have noted that Norway has become their fastest-growing summer destination, with some Norwegian towns seeing ~50% more tour bookings than the prior year [skift.com](https://www.skift.com)

. Denmark and Sweden have likewise seen booking growth far above average [skift.com](https://www.skift.com)

. Travelers are flocking to Scandinavia's fjords, lakes, and forests as a refreshing alternative to southern Europe's beaches. The **British Isles** have also gained attention; for example, Scotland's highlands and coastal areas offer cool weather even in July, and travel companies report increased inquiries for UK trips during heatwave months. Cruise demand around the British Isles rose by over 30% in 2023 [iglu.com](https://www.iglu.com)

, indicating more tourists choosing, say, an Irish or Norwegian Sea cruise instead of a Caribbean one in summer. All told, Northern Europe is "having a moment" as a summer refuge – even traditionally hot-weather European travelers (from Italy, Spain, etc.) are now heading north for their holidays [hospitality.today](https://www.hospitalitytoday.com)

- **North America (Canada and Alaska):** Across the Atlantic, cooler parts of North America are also experiencing a tourism boost. **Canada**, with its vast stretches of wilderness and generally temperate summer climate, has drawn heat-escaping travelers from both the U.S. and overseas. Cruise bookings for Canada jumped over 137% from 2022 to 2023

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, and Canadian national parks reported strong visitation numbers during the normally quieter shoulder seasons [iglu.com](https://www.iglu.com)

. The Rocky Mountains, coastal Atlantic Canada, and even urban destinations like Vancouver (famed for mild summers) are increasingly popular as *coolcation* spots. Likewise, **Alaska** – the U.S.'s coldest state – has solidified itself as an "ultimate coolcation destination" [tripit.com](https://www.tripit.com)

. Demand for Alaskan cruises and tours climbed about 22% year-over-year [iglu.com](https://www.iglu.com), as visitors seek its glaciers, mountain scenery, and wildlife in the comfortable mid-60°F (~18°C) summer weather. Notably, these northern trips aren't just for North American travelers; foreign tourists are also choosing Canada/Alaska over sweltering U.S. cities or desert locales in summer. The trend extends to other parts of the U.S. with cooler climates as well – for instance, the Pacific Northwest (Washington, Oregon) saw tourism growth in summer 2023 as it offered refuge from the heatwaves that hit California and the Southwest.

- **Arctic and High-Latitude Adventures:** What used to be considered extreme or niche travel destinations – like the Arctic Circle – are becoming surprisingly popular. Tour operators have noted a surge of interest in the **Arctic regions** (northern Canada, Greenland, Arctic Norway, etc.) as summer vacation spots

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. Iglu Cruise, for example, reported a remarkable **235% increase in Arctic cruise inquiries** in 2023 vs 2022 [iglu.com](https://www.iglu.com)

. Travelers are drawn by the chance to see polar landscapes, midnight sun phenomena, and wildlife (polar bears, whales) while escaping extreme heat at home. Even **Antarctica**, traditionally a winter-season destination (during the Southern Hemisphere summer), has seen an uptick – with about 32% more demand according to one travel company [iglu.com](https://www.iglu.com)

– as some travelers flip the script and take their long breaks in the Southern

Hemisphere's cooler winter months. Additionally, **Iceland** deserves mention as a standout coolcation spot: its tourism was already booming pre-2020, but interest has resurged—bookings to Iceland are up nearly 50% as noted above

[hospitality.today](#)

. Summer temperatures in Iceland hover around a cool 10–15°C (50–60°F), making it an appealing refuge for those in search of literal cooler heads. From soaking in Reykjavik's hot springs to hiking on glaciers, Iceland offers the “cool” without the crowds of southern beaches (it also actively markets itself as an ideal summer alternative) [euronews.com](#)

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- **Mountain and High-Altitude Destinations:** Not all coolcations are about heading north – some travelers simply head *up*. Mountainous regions across the globe are seeing increased summer tourism as people seek cooler air at elevation. In Europe, the Alps and Pyrenees have drawn more visitors in summer months, partly because their lower slopes have become more pleasant as summers lengthen, and also as an escape from lowland heat. (There's even a feedback loop: ski resorts suffering from shorter winter seasons are promoting summer hiking and biking to compensate, another factor boosting mountain tourism – effectively turning a climate challenge into a summer attraction.) In Asia and Africa, high-altitude destinations have also benefited. For instance, in **India**, 2023's heatwaves led to a rush of tourists to Himalayan hill stations and other cool upland areas. Hotels in Indian mountain towns saw **occupancies jump ~30%** as city-dwellers fled 40°C city heat for the cooler hills [livemint.com](#)  
. Popular Indian summer getaways like Kashmir, Ladakh, and Himachal Pradesh reported booming business, with many resorts fully booked and even airfare to mountain-region airports climbing due to demand [livemint.com](#)  
[livemint.com](#)  
. Similar patterns are noted in other parts of Asia: travelers in the Middle East escape to cooler highlands (or to Europe), and those in tropical Southeast Asia might seek out cooler inland or northern areas when possible. These examples underscore that *coolcations* are a global phenomenon – whether it's heading north or heading to the hills, tourists worldwide are gravitating to places where the climate is kinder.
- **Notable Mentions:** Other regions gaining popularity from the coolcation trend include the **Baltic states** (e.g. Estonia, Latvia) and **Northern Japan** (Hokkaido's summer sees domestic travelers fleeing Tokyo's heat). Even within typically hot countries, cooler sub-regions are drawing interest – for example, South Island of New Zealand in austral summer (when it's winter in the north) or Patagonia in South America have seen more Northern Hemisphere visitors in July/August, essentially turning the tables on traditional seasonal travel. While concrete data on these specific shifts are still emerging, the anecdotal evidence points to a broad realignment: travelers are more willing than ever to swap climates and seasons in search of a comfortable adventure.

## 4. Impact on Traditional Warm-Weather Destinations

The rise of coolcations has started to ripple through the tourism industry, posing both challenges and adaptations for the classic sun-and-sand destinations. Traditionally popular warm-weather locales – think Mediterranean Europe, tropical Asia, the Caribbean, and so on – are feeling the effects in various ways:

- **Slower Growth or Declines in Peak Season:** Many hot-weather destinations are seeing a relative dip in their usual summer tourist influx. Travel analysts note that while countries like Italy or Spain are still drawing crowds, the growth in visitors is not as high as it could be – partly because some travelers who *would* have gone there are now choosing cooler options. For example, Italy saw only a modest **3% increase in bookings** in summer 2023 compared to the previous year, whereas cooler Northern Europe saw double-digit jumps [hospitality.today](https://www.hospitalitytoday.com).  
In fact, tourism experts describe Southern Europe's summer 2023 performance as underwhelming given the post-pandemic travel boom, and they attribute this to the extreme heat and competition from cooler locales [hospitality.today](https://www.hospitalitytoday.com).  
A climate study by the European Commission even projected that, under a scenario of continued warming, southern European countries could see a **7% drop in visitors by 2025 (vs 2019 levels)** due to heat, whereas Northern Europe might see a surge in tourists [euronews.com](https://www.euronews.com).  
[euronews.com](https://www.euronews.com).  
While that projection is based on an extreme scenario, early signs of this shift are already visible. Notably, a lead author of an MIT study on climate and travel pointed out that people are indeed starting to choose Sweden “instead of the Mediterranean, which is showing a significant drop” in appeal during heatwaves [skift.com](https://www.skift.com).  
[skift.com](https://www.skift.com).  
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- **Changes in Travel Season and Patterns:** Rather than losing tourists entirely, some warm-weather destinations are seeing a change in *when* visitors come. The blistering heat of midsummer has pushed many travelers (and tour operators) to shift itineraries to spring or autumn. For instance, tour companies reported more bookings for Italy in September 2023 than in the typically peak month of August [skift.com](https://www.skift.com).  
This unheard-of flip – August used to be the height of European travel – shows that even those who still want to visit the Mediterranean are timing it differently to avoid the worst heat. Similarly, Greece and Turkey have seen an uptick in May and October travel. In effect, the summer season in some beach destinations is shrinking at the core (July-August) but stretching at the shoulders (May-June and Sept-Oct). Traditional warm destinations are adapting by promoting these shoulder seasons and touting things like “milder weather, fewer crowds” to entice travelers back. Over time, this could lead to a more evenly distributed tourist season, which might actually benefit local economies by reducing strain in peak months – though it requires businesses to adjust to new calendars.
- **Infrastructure and Operational Strains:** For those travelers who do continue to visit hot destinations in summer, the experience is sometimes less pleasant than it used to be, as destinations grapple with the effects of extreme weather. In recent



years, heatwaves in places like Greece and Thailand have led to occasional closure of outdoor attractions (such as the Acropolis in Athens shutting down during midday heat) and increased demands on electricity and water for cooling. Destinations are having to invest in heat adaptation – more shade, better cooling centers, improved emergency response for wildfires – which can strain local resources. Meanwhile, hotel operators in these regions note that guests now prioritize strong air-conditioning and even ask about backup generators (in case power grids falter under high demand). These added concerns slightly dampen the carefree image that warm destinations usually sell. If such places fail to adapt, they risk further losing appeal to climate-savvy tourists. On the flip side, some traditionally hot destinations are innovating: for example, desert resorts in the Middle East (like Dubai) are building indoor attractions and marketing nighttime activities to cope with scorching daytime temperatures. Such adaptations aim to keep tourists coming even when it's 45°C outside, but the necessity of these measures underscores how significantly climate change is reshaping travel norms.

- **Economic Repercussions for Hot-Spot Communities:** Fewer summer visitors (or a shift to off-season) can have economic implications for communities that rely on peak-season tourism revenue. Businesses in beach towns and islands have expressed concerns that heat warnings and wildfire headlines in the news have led to booking cancellations or shorter stays. For instance, the summer 2023 wildfires in Rhodes, Greece led to mass tourist evacuations, and bookings for the remainder of the season dropped in affected areas – a stark reminder that climate events can directly hit tourism income. If the coolcation trend siphons off a portion of visitors, destinations like southern Spain or Southeast Asian beaches might face a slowdown in growth. However, it's not all doom and gloom: many of these locales still attract *millions*. Analysts emphasize that **sun-and-beach vacations remain dominant** – over 300 million travelers spent their holidays in Southern Europe last year, compared to about 80 million in Northern Europe

[travelandtourworld.com](https://www.travelandtourworld.com)

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. The traditional beach holiday isn't disappearing overnight, and warm destinations continue to be top choices for a large segment of travelers (especially those unperturbed by heat or those whose vacation schedules are fixed in summer). In summary, while coolcations are nibbling at the market share of warm-weather tourism, they haven't overturned it – at least not yet. The immediate impact on warm destinations is prompting adjustments and awareness, but those places still remain popular, especially as they adapt by shifting to cooler periods or enhancing climate resiliency to keep summer tourism viable.

## 5. Economic and Environmental Implications of Coolcations

The coolcation trend carries a mix of economic benefits and environmental considerations, affecting both the newly popular cool destinations and the traditional ones:

- **Economic Boost for Cooler Destinations:** Regions that once had relatively quiet summers are now experiencing economic booms due to increased tourism. Countries like Sweden, Norway, Canada, and others benefiting from coolcations

have seen a rise in travel-related revenues – more hotel nights, tours booked, and dollars spent by visitors. For example, as of early 2024 Norway recorded an **18% increase in overnight stays** by tourists, and Sweden a 12% increase, compared to the previous year

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. Short-term rental supply in these countries has also grown (hosts responding to demand), with Norway seeing a 37% rise in available rentals and Finland 24% more [skift.com](https://www.skift.com)

. This influx provides jobs and business opportunities in areas that may have been economically stagnant in summer. Small towns in Iceland or northern Scotland that once had an off-season are now buzzing in July. Additionally, tourism boards in cooler regions are receiving greater funding and attention, further fueling marketing campaigns (it's a positive feedback loop: more tourists justify improved infrastructure, which in turn attracts more tourists). Even outside Europe, we saw that hill resorts in places like India enjoyed higher occupancy and were able to charge premium rates during heatwaves [livemint.com](https://www.livemint.com)

. In essence, *cooler destinations are cashing in* on climate-induced travel changes, diversifying global tourism spend.

- **Challenges of Rapid Tourism Growth:** The economic windfall in cooler areas isn't without its challenges. Many of these destinations are not used to handling large crowds, and a sudden surge can strain local infrastructure. There are reports of small Nordic towns becoming temporarily "overrun" in mid-summer, with limited hotel capacity or roads congested with tour buses. Overtourism, previously a problem mainly in cities like Venice or Barcelona, could become a concern in fragile environments like Iceland's highlands or Norway's fjord villages. For example, Iceland has had to implement visitor quotas at certain natural sites due to environmental wear and tear from the sheer number of tourists. Managing sustainable growth is crucial: local authorities in coolcation hotspots are now grappling with how to expand tourism facilities (hotels, trails, waste management) in a way that doesn't spoil the natural beauty that attracted visitors in the first place. From an economic standpoint, there's also a seasonality factor – some of these places still have harsh winters when tourism drops off, so an influx of summer revenue must be balanced against off-season lulls. Nonetheless, many cooler regions are eager to extend their season (some, like parts of Canada or the Nordic countries, are marketing year-round outdoor activities), which could smooth tourism income throughout the year.

*Remote cabins and lakeshores in countries like Sweden offer tranquility and natural beauty, but the influx of visitors raises questions about environmental impact and sustainability. Cooler destinations are benefiting economically from tourism, yet must manage growth to protect their pristine environments.*

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[tripit.com](https://www.tripit.com)

- **Environmental Trade-offs:** From an environmental perspective, coolcations present both positive and negative aspects. On one hand, shifting some tourist



traffic away from extremely hot areas during heatwaves can reduce stress on those environments. For example, Mediterranean ecosystems under drought conditions suffer when millions of tourists arrive (water shortages, pollution, etc.). A reduction in peak visitors could allow local resources to cope better and potentially reduce damage like litter or habitat disturbance in those areas. Furthermore, exploring temperate zones often means travelers engage in outdoor activities like hiking, which – if done responsibly – can have a low carbon footprint compared to energy-intensive resort tourism (which often involves air conditioning, swimming pools, etc.). However, there are also concerns: many cooler destinations are environmentally sensitive. The Arctic, for instance, is ecologically fragile; a spike in Arctic cruises or expeditions raises worries about disturbances to wildlife (like polar bears) and emissions in a region already warming faster than the rest of the planet. More visitors to remote mountains or forests can lead to erosion, wildlife disruption, and increased waste if not managed properly. Additionally, the travel required to reach these far-flung cool spots often involves long flights or cruises – which carry significant carbon emissions. There's an irony that escaping the effects of climate change (heat) by flying to the Arctic contributes to the problem via carbon output. This has led to calls for making coolcations more sustainable: e.g., using rail travel to reach northern Europe instead of flights, choosing eco-friendly tour operators, and following strict leave-no-trace principles in wilderness areas. In summary, coolcations can alleviate some environmental pressures in overheated regions, but they also risk transferring those pressures to new locales. Sustainable tourism practices and careful planning will be vital to ensure that the economic benefits do not come at the expense of the environment.

- Impact on Traditional Destinations' Economies:** For warm-weather destinations that see fewer summer visitors or a shift in timing, there may be economic downsides. Businesses that rely on peak summer crowds (hotels, restaurants, tour guides, vendors) might experience lower income if a chunk of their potential clientele goes elsewhere. Some resorts in Southern Europe reported a noticeable drop in bookings during summer 2023's worst heatwave weeks, correlating with travelers' growing trepidation about extreme heat [hindustantimes.com](https://www.hindustantimes.com).  
 . In places like Thailand or the Caribbean, if more people choose a Canadian lake or a Scandinavian city over a tropical beach, that represents lost revenue for the tropical destination. However, as noted, many such locations are adapting by pushing alternative timing (e.g., Caribbean islands promoting their slightly cooler, breezier summer as still appealing, or Mediterranean destinations focusing on spring/fall). They may yet recoup visitors in those shoulder seasons, which could stabilize yearly income even if July-August dips. Moreover, destinations could invest in climate adaptation (like better cooling infrastructure, disaster preparedness) to reassure and retain tourists. Economically, there might also be a redistribution: while some money flows north, the overall travel pie is growing post-pandemic, so many hot destinations are still seeing high absolute numbers (just less of the growth). In the long run, if climate change continues unchecked, the viability of summer tourism in certain regions could diminish, forcing significant economic shifts in those areas – a strong incentive for these destinations to innovate and diversify (for instance, focusing on cultural tourism, year-round offerings, or niche markets less impacted by heat).

## 6. Future Outlook: Sustainability and Evolution of Coolcation Trends

Looking ahead, the big question is whether coolcations are a passing fad or a lasting change in travel behavior. Based on current evidence and climate projections, it appears that this trend has staying power, though its growth may be gradual and not without challenges:

- **Continued Climate Warming Will Reinforce the Trend:** Unfortunately, climate scientists project that extreme heat events will become more frequent and intense in the coming years. Even optimistic forecasts suggest global temperatures will keep rising in the next decades  
[hindustantimes.com](https://www.hindustantimes.com)  
. As long as summers continue to break records, the motivation for travelers to seek relief isn't going away. The summer of 2024, for instance, began with record warmth globally [tripit.com](https://www.tripit.com), and early reports indicated many tourists preemptively headed for cooler regions as a result. If future summers turn even hotter – a plausible scenario – one can expect *coolcation* demand to increase correspondingly. We may soon reach a point where it's commonplace to hear someone say, "Oh, I avoid [insert usually hot destination] in July and go here instead." In that sense, coolcations could shift from being a niche trend to a default consideration for summer travel planning.
- **Growth Potential vs. Cultural Attachment:** That said, travel preferences are deeply ingrained, and many people have emotional or cultural attachments to the idea of a sunny beach vacation. Industry experts caution that while interest in cooler trips is rising, it might take a long time to truly change the global tourism landscape  
[travelandtourworld.com](https://www.travelandtourworld.com)  
[travelandtourworld.com](https://www.travelandtourworld.com)  
. Surveys in Europe show a majority of travelers *acknowledge* climate change and say they'll adapt, but on the ground, millions still flock to warm coasts each year  
[travelandtourworld.com](https://www.travelandtourworld.com)  
[travelandtourworld.com](https://www.travelandtourworld.com)  
. The concept of "summer holiday = beach" is enduring. So in the near term (next 2-5 years), coolcations will likely grow in popularity but **not completely eclipse traditional vacations**. We may see a balance where a significant segment of travelers pivot to cooler options while another segment continues as usual. For example, families tied to school holidays might still choose a classic seaside trip (perhaps hoping the year isn't too hot), whereas more flexible or climate-conscious travelers drive the coolcation surge.
- **Destination Adaptation and Competition:** One evolution we might witness is a sort of *competition* between destinations: cooler ones will heavily market their advantages, while warm ones will innovate to retain visitors. Nordic and alpine countries are already branding themselves as the go-to summer havens. Visit Norway's campaign to "escape the scorching sun... head north for a refreshing summer"  
[hindustantimes.com](https://www.hindustantimes.com)  
is one such example of aggressive positioning. We can expect to see more package deals, flight routes, and travel itineraries oriented around northern summers or southern winters for opposite-hemisphere travelers. Conversely,

traditional hot destinations will try to adapt – for instance, by improving cooling infrastructure, possibly adjusting school holiday calendars (a radical but not impossible idea in some places) to avoid the worst heat, or developing new indoor attractions to keep tourists entertained regardless of weather. Some Mediterranean tourism boards are exploring sustainable cooling solutions for cities and promoting lesser-known cooler microclimates (e.g., mountainous interior regions or coastal breezes) to entice visitors despite the heat. Essentially, destinations will evolve to either join the coolcation wave or mitigate its impact. This could lead to more diversified tourism offerings globally, which is positive for traveler choice.

- **Sustainability and “Green Coolcations”:** A critical aspect of the trend’s future will be its sustainability. Travelers and the industry will need to address the carbon footprint issue. If people are flying farther (like from the equator to the poles) to chase cooler weather, that could increase emissions, ironically worsening climate change. There is likely to be a push for **sustainable coolcations** – for example, emphasizing travel by train or electric vehicles to cooler destinations within one’s own continent rather than intercontinental flights. Europe is well-positioned for this, with its dense rail network allowing an easy swap of Spain for Scotland by train. The concept of slow travel might merge with coolcations: taking a leisurely multi-stop journey northward, rather than a quick flight. Additionally, the tourism industry in cooler regions may adopt stricter sustainability measures to protect their environments (especially if they see what overtourism did elsewhere). One can imagine future marketing of “eco-friendly Arctic adventures” or certified carbon-neutral tour packages in the Alps, catering to climate-conscious travelers. If executed well, coolcations could become a flagship for low-impact tourism, showcasing how to travel in an era of climate change responsibly.
- **Potential New Trends Emerging:** Building on coolcations, we might see spin-off trends. One possibility is “**climate swapping**” vacations – where travelers plan their trips based on seasonal climate forecasts, almost like following the good weather around the world. Travel tech could play a role, with apps predicting where temperatures will be pleasant and suggesting trips there. Another related concept is the resurgence of **wellness and nature travel**: as people escape heat, they often go to pristine natural environments (lakes, forests, mountains), which dovetails with the desire for tranquility, mental health breaks, and wellness retreats. Coolcations might thus blend with wellness tourism (imagine yoga retreats in the cool Finnish Lapland summer, etc.). Finally, if extreme weather continues, there could be a greater blending of domestic and international travel patterns – e.g., Americans who traditionally went to Florida in summer might choose Alaska or the Pacific Northwest instead (domestic coolcation), while say Indonesians might favor trips to New Zealand’s winter. These shifts could redefine “peak season” in various destinations. Overall, the **future outlook for coolcations is strong**: it addresses a direct need (comfort in travel), aligns with growing climate awareness, and is being embraced by both consumers and the travel industry. While it may not completely overhaul where the world vacations in the next couple of years, its influence is steadily expanding, and it stands to significantly shape travel decisions in the coming decade.

## 7. Practical Recommendations for Coolcation Travelers

For those considering a coolcation as their next getaway, some planning and preparation can ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience. Below are tailored recommendations and tips for different types of travelers – whether you’re a family looking for a safe, fun trip, a solo adventurer seeking new horizons, or a luxury traveler wanting comfort and exclusivity in cooler climes.

### For Families

- **Choose Family-Friendly Cool Destinations:** Seek out cooler destinations that offer plenty of activities for children and accommodations suited to families. **Scandinavia** is an excellent option – for instance, Copenhagen, Denmark is renowned as a family-friendly city with more than 100 playgrounds, the famous Tivoli Gardens amusement park, a world-class zoo, and even fairy-tale themed attractions [tripit.com](https://www.tripit.com). Similarly, Norway’s coastal towns or Scotland’s countryside can provide outdoor adventures (like gentle hikes, boat rides, or wildlife parks) that kids will love, all in mild summer weather. Another great choice is **Canada**, where national parks such as Banff or Jasper have family-oriented facilities (guided nature walks, canoe rentals, visitor centers) amid stunning cool-temperature scenery. When picking a destination, also consider healthcare and safety – many cooler-climate countries rank high on safety indices, which can put parents’ minds at ease.
- **Plan Around School Holidays and Weather:** If you’re bound by school summer break, look at the typical weather of prospective destinations during those months. Many higher-latitude destinations have a short summer window with very pleasant weather (for example, Sweden and Finland in July are usually 20°C and daylight lasts late into the night). However, “pleasant” can quickly turn to chilly or wet if you go too early or late. Aim for the height of summer when going far north, to ensure the best conditions. Conversely, if you’re considering a trip to, say, New Zealand or Patagonia during the Northern Hemisphere summer, remember it will be winter there – which can be fine (perhaps even snow fun for kids) but requires more gear. Always check seasonal norms: a place like Iceland can be 10°C even in midsummer, so pack layers and rain jackets accordingly. Families might also avoid extremely remote cold areas (like the deep Arctic) unless on a cruise, since those can be logistically challenging with young kids. Instead, opt for *accessible coolcation* spots – e.g., the **Pacific Northwest (USA)** or **Northern England** – where infrastructure is solid and emergencies can be handled easily.
- **Engage Kids with Unique Experiences:** One advantage of coolcations is the unique experiences they offer – make these the highlight for your family. For example, children tend to be fascinated by phenomena like the **Northern Lights** or midnight sun. While the Northern Lights are mostly a winter occurrence, some destinations like Iceland or northern Canada have visitor centers or exhibitions about them year-round. In summer, consider destinations with wildlife – kids might enjoy whale watching in Alaska or seeing puffins in Newfoundland. Interactive museums or cultural experiences in cooler destinations can also be a hit (e.g., Vikings history in Norway, or indigenous culture programs in Lapland). By focusing on these distinctive activities, the trip becomes educational and memorable. Pro tip:

involve your kids in trip planning by showing them pictures of the glaciers, mountains, or animals they might see – building excitement for something other than a beach builds their openness to a different kind of vacation.

- **Prepare and Pack Smart:** A family coolcation might require slightly different packing than a typical beach vacation. Be sure to bring layers of clothing (so everyone can add or remove as temperatures fluctuate). Even in summer, northern destinations can have chilly mornings or a cold snap. Don't forget essentials like sunscreen (cooler doesn't mean no sun – UV can be strong in places like high altitudes), insect repellent (some forested or lake areas might have mosquitoes/gnats in summer), and sturdy walking shoes for all family members so you can comfortably explore nature. If traveling with very young children or infants, ensure your destination has necessary amenities (like availability of baby supplies, stroller-friendly paths, etc., which is usually the case in developed cooler regions, but remote cabins might not). Lastly, consider travel insurance that covers weather-related disruptions – although you're avoiding heat, sometimes cooler areas can have surprises like sudden storms that might affect plans.
- **Highlight: Cool but Kid-Friendly Destination – Denmark:** As a specific recommendation, Denmark (and Copenhagen in particular) stands out as a coolcation spot ideal for families. As mentioned, it's packed with kid-friendly attractions [tripit.com](https://www.tripit.com), and the Danish summer rarely goes above 22–24°C (70s °F). This means you can sightsee comfortably with the family. Outside the city, Denmark has sandy beaches that are much cooler and quieter than the Mediterranean – perfect for a relaxed day by the sea without the risk of heatstroke. There are also fairy-tale castles (think Hans Christian Andersen) to spark young imaginations. With its blend of culture, safety, and moderate climate, a Danish coolcation could be an unforgettable family trip that proves you don't need tropical heat to have summer fun.

## For Solo Travelers

- **Embrace Adventure in the Great (Cool) Outdoors:** Solo travelers often seek freedom and adventure, and coolcation destinations offer plenty of it. Consider heading to places where you can immerse yourself in nature solo. **Iceland** is a prime example – it's known to be very friendly and safe for solo explorers, and you can drive the Ring Road or hike trails to waterfalls and volcanoes at your own pace. The climate will be brisk, but with good gear you'll be fine, and the endless daylight in summer means you have more hours to explore each day. **New Zealand's South Island** (during its winter, which aligns with Northern Hemisphere summer) is another great solo adventure: you can ski in Queenstown or hike in crisp mountain air without the tourist hordes of high season. These kinds of trips allow a solo traveler to enjoy solitude and empowerment, all while escaping the crowds that often swarm warm resorts.
- **Look for Solo-Friendly Tours or Transit Routes:** If you're traveling solo but want some social interaction or easier logistics, look for group tours or well-trodden routes in cooler destinations. For instance, there are backpacker-friendly circuits through **Scotland's Highlands and Islands**, where you can join day tours to Isle of Skye or take ferries with fellow travelers – you'll meet people along the way, but still have plenty of personal freedom. Scandinavia has good public transport and youth

hostels, making it manageable for solo tourists to hop between cities and nature spots. Many travel companies now even advertise “coolcation packages” for solo travelers, knowing this demographic is adventurous; these might include guided hikes in Norway or a multi-country Nordic rail pass. Taking advantage of such options can ease planning and provide a safety net (e.g., a guide who knows the area), which is comforting when exploring remote cold areas alone.

- **Safety and Preparedness:** Cooler climates are generally safe in terms of crime (many northern countries have low crime rates), but solo travelers should still exercise common sense. Additionally, “safety” in this context includes being prepared for the elements. If you’re hiking solo in a national park or mountain area, always inform someone of your plans or stick to well-marked trails. Weather can change quickly in places like the Alps or Patagonia – a sunny morning can turn into a cold rain by afternoon – so pack essentials like a map, first aid kit, and appropriate clothing when venturing out alone. One advantage of popular coolcation spots is that in summer there will often be other hikers or travelers on the same route, so you might not be as alone as you think (for better or worse!). Nonetheless, remote areas require self-sufficiency. The upside of a coolcation is you typically avoid the risk of heat exhaustion, but you should be mindful of risks like hypothermia if you misjudge the weather. In short: relish the solo adventure but plan responsibly.
- **Budget and Logistics:** Solo travelers often are budget-conscious. It’s worth noting that some cooler destinations (like Iceland or Norway) can be expensive. To save money, consider traveling in shoulder periods (e.g., late August or early September for Nordics – still cool but maybe slightly less demand), when prices drop a bit. Use cost-saving strategies like staying in guesthouses or hostels, which are plentiful in these regions and also a good way to meet other travelers. Transportation like trains or buses might be cheaper than renting a car solo – for example, an **Eurail pass** can be a cost-effective way for a solo traveler to see multiple cool European destinations. For meals, look for local markets or grocery stores in countries like Finland or Canada to self-cater occasionally, as restaurant prices can add up. These tactics let you enjoy a solo coolcation without breaking the bank. Plus, with fewer tourists in these areas than major hotspots, you might find better deals on last-minute bookings or walk-in rates.
- **Highlight: Tranquility in the Faroe Islands:** A slightly offbeat suggestion for solo travelers is the **Faroe Islands** (an archipelago north of Scotland, part of the Kingdom of Denmark). The Faroes are emerging as a coolcation gem for those truly looking to get off the grid – perfect for a solo journey of reflection. You can hike along dramatic sea cliffs, visit tiny villages, and even do a digital detox (cell coverage is there, but the serene environment encourages you to unplug) [tripit.com](https://www.tripit.com). It’s the kind of place where you might be the only person on a trail overlooking the Atlantic, which can be a profound experience when traveling alone. The weather is cool, often misty, and the landscapes lush and green in summer. Do note it’s remote and weather can be unpredictable, so ensure you have flexible plans. But if solitude in nature is what you crave, the Faroe Islands deliver it in a safe, stunning package.



## For Luxury Travelers

- **High-End Cooler Getaways:** Luxury travelers interested in coolcations will be pleased to know that many cooler destinations offer premium experiences that rival any tropical resort. In fact, the luxury segment has been a driving force in the coolcation trend – upscale travelers often lead new trends, and advisors reported a significant uptick in luxury bookings to cooler regions [tripit.com](https://www.tripit.com).  
For an opulent coolcation, consider destinations like **Swiss Alps in summer** – you can stay at five-star alpine resorts with spa facilities while enjoying mild mountain weather and gorgeous views. Switzerland's luxury hospitality is legendary, and many mountain resorts offer gourmet dining, private guided hikes, and even summer toboggan runs. Another top choice is a **luxury cruise in Arctic or Antarctic waters**. Expedition cruises have become popular among wealthy travelers, with small 5-star ships taking guests through the fjords of Norway, around Iceland, or up to see Arctic glaciers in comfort. These cruises often come with experts on board (for nature talks), fine dining, and even helicopters or submarines for exploration. It's worth noting this sector is booming: Arctic cruise demand shot up over 200% last year [iglu.com](https://www.iglu.com), indicating affluent travelers are indeed splurging on polar adventures. Similarly, **Greenland** or **Lapland** luxury tours (staying in upscale lodges, perhaps glass igloo hotels to see the Northern Lights in late summer/early fall) are now featured by high-end travel operators. In essence, there is no shortage of cool, luxurious experiences – from private villas on New Zealand's South Island to chic boutique hotels in the Scottish Highlands – and they often come with the bonus of exclusivity, since these locales are less overrun by mass tourism.
- **Curated Experiences and Personal Guides:** Luxury travel is all about bespoke experiences. In cooler destinations, this could mean chartering a private yacht to explore the Norwegian fjords or hiring a personal guide to lead you to a secluded waterfall in Iceland with a gourmet picnic in tow. Many luxury tour companies have rolled out specific coolcation itineraries: for example, a week-long private tour of the **Canadian Rockies by luxury train**, or a tailored photography expedition to capture the midnight sun in Finland. If you're a luxury traveler, leverage networks like Virtuoso or high-end travel concierges who have deep knowledge of these cooler destinations – they can secure exclusive access (such as a private after-hours tour of a museum in Copenhagen, or a helicopter flight to a glacier in New Zealand). Also consider timing: some traditionally winter luxury spots have "secret" summer seasons that are delightful – for instance, the famous Ice Hotel in Swedish Lapland transforms into a "Green Hotel" experience in summer where you can stay in designer cabins and enjoy river safaris under the midnight sun. Such unique offerings can make a coolcation truly one-of-a-kind.
- **Fine Dining and Culture in Cool Locales:** Just because you're avoiding the tropics doesn't mean sacrificing culinary or cultural richness. Many cooler destinations have vibrant cultural scenes, especially in summer when festivals abound. Luxury travelers should take note of events like the **Salzburg Festival in Austria** (music and drama in a beautiful Alpine setting) or the **Edinburgh International Festival in Scotland**, which combines arts with a cool climate. These allow you to indulge in high culture without the heat. In terms of fine dining, regions like Scandinavia boast Michelin-starred restaurants (Copenhagen's Noma was often rated the world's best) where the focus is on local, often foraged ingredients –

a different palate experience than tropical cuisine, but world-class nonetheless. You could craft a luxury coolcation around a theme: say, a gastronomic tour of the Nordic countries, tasting your way through cool climates (from smoked fjord trout in Norway to cloudberry desserts in Sweden), all the while staying in top-tier hotels or manor houses. The key message for luxury travelers is that cooler destinations are not a step down in sophistication; in fact, northern Europe, Canada, etc., cater very well to upscale clientele with their safety, cleanliness, and high service standards.

- **Sustainable Luxury:** Many affluent travelers are increasingly concerned with sustainability. Cool destinations offer a chance to engage in “green luxury.” Consider booking eco-luxury lodges – for example, some resorts in New Zealand or Patagonia combine luxury comforts with eco-friendly design (like solar power, locally sourced food, conservation programs you can partake in). Traveling to a cooler place can also allow one to support environmental preservation efforts: you might choose a luxury package that includes donating to glacier conservation, or partake in a guided tour with researchers in Antarctica. This not only enhances the experience (making it more meaningful) but aligns with a luxury traveler’s potential desire to have a positive impact. Given that coolcation trend itself is born from climate issues, luxury travelers can lead by example, showing that one can vacation richly and still care for the planet.
- **Highlight: Lapland in Summer for Luxury Seekers:** As a distinctive recommendation, think about **Lapland (northern Finland/Sweden)** in the summer. While Lapland is famous for winter (reindeer, Santa’s village, etc.), in summer it’s a tranquil land of forests, lakes, and luxury wilderness retreats. You can stay in glass-domed suites where you might catch the Northern Lights if you go late summer or early autumn (they start appearing by late August as nights get dark again). Daytime offers fishing, private lake cruises, or visiting Sami artisans – all with temperatures in the 10–20°C range (50–70°F). Some luxury lodges even offer treehouse villas or aurora “camps” with high-end amenities. It’s an extraordinary, off-the-beaten-path choice that exemplifies the coolcation idea – and your friends will likely be hearing about it for the first time when you share your experience.

## General Tips for All Coolcation Travelers

- **Plan Ahead:** Cooler destinations, especially those with short peak seasons, can book up quickly. Hotels in small Nordic towns or popular national park lodges might have limited availability, so make reservations well in advance. This is particularly true if traveling in July–August in the Northern Hemisphere or around Christmas in the Southern Hemisphere (when it’s summer there).
- **Stay Informed on Weather:** Keep an eye on local weather forecasts and climate conditions for your destination. “Cool” can also mean variable – you might encounter an unseasonably warm spell or a chilly rainstorm. Pack versatile clothing and be ready to adjust plans (for instance, swap a hiking day with a museum day if cold rain rolls in).
- **Leverage Technology and Local Knowledge:** Use apps or local tourism websites to your advantage. Many cooler destinations have excellent tourist information centers (common in places like Canada and New Zealand) that can give up-to-date advice on trail conditions, wildlife sightings, or any safety alerts. Engaging with locals (hotel staff, guides, or even community forums online) can yield tips like the

best secret viewpoint or a hidden gem café to warm up with hot cocoa after a day out.

- **Respect the Environment:** Whether you're luxury or budget, solo or family, one principle of coolcations should be respecting the pristine environments you're venturing into. Follow all guidelines in national parks (stay on marked paths, carry out your trash), don't disturb wildlife, and be mindful of local customs especially in rural communities that might not be used to heavy tourism. The longevity of coolcation destinations depends on today's travelers being responsible stewards.
- **Have a Backup Plan:** In this era of climate unpredictability, it's wise to have a backup plan. Ironically, while you escape one set of weather risks, cooler areas have others (e.g., a freak cold snap, or smoke from wildfires in some northern regions). Consider travel insurance that covers weather disruptions. And perhaps keep an alternate destination in mind – if a wildfire (though less common in very wet/cold areas) were to close a Canadian park, could you reroute to a different region? Flexibility can be key to a successful trip.

By following these recommendations, travelers of all types can make the most of the coolcation trend. Whether it's building snowmen in July with your kids in the southern Andes, savoring reindeer stew in a Swedish lodge, or snapping photos of icebergs under the midnight sun on a solo trek, coolcations offer a refreshing twist on travel that's both of-the-moment and likely to shape the future of tourism. Safe (and cool) travels!

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