

Cruise passengers spend less despite offers on land

22 December 2015, by Kim Andreassen



Cruise tourists spend less than any other tourist group, when on land. More options to buy, does not translate into increased sales. Credit: Colourbox

Cruise tourists are not influenced by extended shopping opportunities. They spend very little money during the port of call even when they are offered an increased number of spending options.

Bergen is Norway's largest cruise harbour, hosting more than 300 [cruise ships](#) every season. The local tourist industry, media, port authorities and politicians often praise the ever increasing number of cruise arrivals to Bergen, but for no good reason, according to Professor Svein Larsen at the Department of Psychosocial Science at the University of Bergen (UiB).

A study newly published by Larsen and colleague Katharina Wolff in *Tourism Management Perspectives* (Larsen et. al 2016), shows that cruise passenger's expenditures do not vary as a function of spending opportunities. In this study, the researchers compared different types of tourist's expenditures on normal weekdays including Saturday, when shops and other services tend to be open, to expenditures on Sun- and holydays, when most shops tend to be closed.

"Even if more possibilities to spend money arise, cruise tourists do not spend more. But land tourists do.", says Larsen.

"The myth that cruise passenger's expenditures are low because there is nothing to spend money on, as a Norwegian emeritus minister of trade phrased it in a local newspaper in 2013, is simply not true."

Hurry Back

The minister's phrase came after an earlier Larsen et al.-study published in 2013, which raised some debate. The study indicated that it is probably the length of stay on land, which is the most crucial determinant for how much money cruise passengers spend. As it is today, cruise tourists are normally not allowed much time in each and every port, thus limiting their possibilities to [spend money](#) during port visits.

"After a short morning or afternoon stroll in the city, cruise passengers typically hurry back to the ship where they can enjoy their already payed for lunch or afternoon-tea.", says Larsen.

Few return to a destination

Another myth about cruise tourists is that they want to return to a destination visited on the cruise on a later occasion. Many claim that when cruise tourists experience how beautiful for example the Norwegian fjords and the city of Bergen are, they will return as non-cruise tourists later.

But, the new study shows that among tourists who had visited Norway before, cruise tourists had visited as cruise tourists and land tourists had visited as land tourists. Similarly, revisit intentions, the expressed desire to come back to Bergen/Norway, are significantly higher among land tourists than among cruise tourists. At the same time, cruise tourists express a higher wish to return as cruise tourists also in the future, and they

express a higher wish to return as cruise tourists than as land tourists.

"It simply seems as if cruise tourism does not have any value as a promotor of Norway as a holiday destination at all.", says Professor Svein Larsen.

Facts/Cruise Tourism Study:

- The study is based on data from two surveys from Western Norway in 2012 (4002 respondents) and 2013 (1191 respondents).
- Cruise tourists spend as little on normal weekdays including Saturdays as they spend on Sundays and holidays.
- Land tourists spend significantly less on Sundays and holidays than on normal weekdays.
- Cruise tourists who had visited Norway before, had previously visited as cruise tourists.
- Land tourists who had visited Norway before, had previously visited as land tourists.
- Bergen is amongst the 50 most visited cruise harbours in the world, and the largest cruise harbour in Norway. In 2014, 323 cruise ships arrived Bergen, with 442 759 passengers. In 2015, 276 cruise ships with 429 504 passengers arrived in the port of Bergen. As of 16 December 2015, 290 cruise arrivals are registered for 2016.
- The numbers of cruise tourists have increased ten-fold in the past 30 years, worldwide.

More information: *Tourism Management*

Perspectives, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211973615300155>

Provided by University of Bergen

APA citation: Cruise passengers spend less despite offers on land (2015, December 22) retrieved 20 May 2020 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-12-cruise-passengers.html>

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