



Nature Travels

outdoor experiences in Sweden



Photo: Annica & Torkel Idestrom

SNOWSHOEING IN WOLVERINE COUNTRY - 4 DAYS

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Snowshoeing in Wolverine Country: 4-day tour

Experience Codes: ATI4TW2

Explore the forests and mountains with nothing to disturb the silence but the crunch of your snowshoes in the snow. Snowshoeing is an ideal way to explore the winter landscape, moving quietly across snow-carpeted frozen lakes and through magical pathless forests of birch and pine. Enjoy real coffee made on warming fires, sleep well in high-quality Hilleberg tents and experience the real sound of silence. Along the way you will see dozens of tracks left by the animals which inhabit the region, with luck including those of wolverine and lynx, two of Sweden's rarest animals, which have a stronghold in this area. A real close-to-nature tour led by an experienced expedition guide which is ideal for those seeking a challenging yet very accessible get-away-from-it-all experience.

Your adventure starts at Vålådalen mountain station with breakfast. Your guide will assist you in packing your equipment and ensure everything is in order before you head off. Around lunchtime you will head out into the exciting and beautiful wilderness of the Vålådalen Nature Reserve, away from trails and cabins. Over the next four days you will be snowshoeing through and experiencing the fantastic wilderness you find here. You will learn about the nature and cultural heritage of the area and also mountaineering and winter camping skills.

The tour has no fixed itinerary and will be tailored as far as possible to the participants' wishes and level of experience. The distance covered per day depends on the amount of snow and the weather, but it will be anything from a few kilometers to 15km per day. On your final day you arrive back at the mountain station, where you will have a well-deserved sauna and hearty farewell dinner in the mountain station restaurant, renowned for its fine cuisine. In the evening it is possible to arrange a transfer to the night train or to stay on and continue your stay in the magical mountains of Vålådalen.

No previous snowshoeing experience is necessary - you may be surprised how easily snowshoes allow you to move through the snow! You should have a general good level of fitness and be used to hiking and in summertime with a backpack. If you wish, it is also possible to borrow a "pulk", or sled, to pull behind you when snowshoeing as an alternative to a backpack.

2009/2010 winter season:

This is a private experience available on dates by arrangement for groups of min. 4 persons between February and April.

The price:

£491/person

What The Price Includes:

Accommodation

Three nights outside in high-quality Hilleberg tents. Tent, kitchen, camping equipment are included.

Meals

All meals are included from breakfast on the start day to dinner on the final day.

Equipment

Tent, stove, safety equipment, compass, spade, GPS, snowshoes. There are also a limited number of "pulks", or sleds, available to borrow to pull behind you when snowshoeing as an alternative to carrying a backpack.

Guides:

Experienced and knowledgeable local guide.

What The Price Does Not Include:

Alcoholic drinks.

This experience runs from 8.00 am on the starting day to approximately 8.30 pm on the final day. Therefore we recommend you to arrange accommodation at the mountain station the night before the course starts and the night after the course finishes. If you would like us to arrange accommodation for you, please mention this at the time of booking. You can also choose to arrive and depart with the night train from Stockholm.

Optional extras:

It is possible to arrange transfer from Undersåker to Vålådalen. Please contact us for details.

Equipment/clothes needed:

NB: We advise you not to buy equipment or clothes for your trip or to incur other non-refundable expenses such as flights until you have received confirmation of your booking from us in writing.

Packing list (recommended):

Use the layer principle when you plan your clothing.

- Closest to your body an inner layer that transports humidity away from the body.
- Then a second layer that keeps in the warmth your body generates and absorbs the humidity from the inner layer
- The outer layer should protect you from weather and wind and be wind- and water proof.

Do not use cotton on the inner layers closest to your body, as cotton collects the humidity your body generates. The clothing gets heavy and chills you. Better materials to use are synthetics, wool etc.

Pack in backpack 60-80 litres (available to hire).

Toiletries:

Soap, toothpaste, plasters, painkillers, blister tape, personal first aid kit.

Clothes:

Pack windproof jacket and trousers, warm winter jacket, boots that are warm and comfortable, a couple of pairs of warm socks, thin socks (not cotton), hat, scarf, a pair of ski-gloves (thin), a pair of ski-gloves (thick), a warm sweater, long-sleeved t-shirt (wool), long underpants (wool) and underwear (not cotton).

Equipment:

Sleeping bag (available to hire), 2 x sleeping mats (available to hire), gaiters, plates, cup, cutlery, water bottle 0.5-1 litre, flashlight or headtorch, thermos, ski poles (available to hire). Please contact us for further details if there are items you wish to hire.

Additional:

Sunglasses, ski glasses, matches, knife, candles, toilet paper, map (Gröna Kartan, Mountain version Z53 Vålådalsfjällen. See www.themapshop.co.uk).

If there is any equipment you are missing, please contact us – we are able to arrange hire of most items if we know your requirements in advance.

Health requirements/experience:

Generally good health and fitness. Minimum age 16. Used to outdoor life and camping in summertime.

Group size:

Minimum group size: 4 persons

Groups of up to 12 persons can be accommodated in a single tour.

Groups:

This experience is suitable for groups of up to 12 persons. For larger groups, it is also possible to run parallel tours separately. Please contact us to discuss your requirements.

Information about the area:**Jämtland**

Vålådalen lies within the province of Jämtland. Here you will find great mountains and forests extending for mile upon mile, great lakes, small ponds, brooks and whirling rivers. Some of the rivers are still untouched and run unrestrained.

The water is fresh and you can drink it and fish in it everywhere in the province. Jämtland is rich in wildlife. Here live all of the big five of the greatest predatory animals in Sweden; the brown bear, the wolf, wolverine, lynx and the golden eagle. The moose and reindeer are common and often seen by the side of the road.

The mountains rise in the western parts of Jämtland. The rest of the province is mainly covered with forests and cultivated areas.

Vålådalen Nature Reserve

Vålådalen Nature Reserve is approximately 1,200 km². Here there are exciting river valleys with ancient forest surrounded by wide mountain ranges. The varied terrain offers numerous opportunities, from pristine forest to bare mountain plains. With a little bit of luck you can spot endangered species such as wolverine, lynx, arctic fox, gyrfalcon and golden eagle.

In the Vålådals mountains there are Stone Age remains which show that people have lived there for thousands of years. After that the land was used by reindeer herding Sámis and farmed by farmers. Today there are not many farmers in Vålådalen, but the reindeer herding still lives on.

The Vålådalen village lies beautifully located in an area as far as you can travel into the river Våls valley, surrounded by forest and plains. Still today you can experience the feeling of wilderness in Vålådalen. It is there when you pitch your tent on the mountain plains.

Common Sense and the Right of Public Access

Do not disturb, do not destroy – that is the basic principle of Sweden's right of public access. It is not an unrestricted right. Here, you can read about the rules that apply.

The Swedish right of public access is not a law, nor is it an absolute right. It may rather be regarded as an opportunity, one that makes it possible for everyone to enjoy the countryside. But it is an opportunity that requires responsibility, consideration and good judgement. Rules describing the kinds of consideration that must be shown are incorporated into Sweden's environmental law, and apply to everyone who exercises the right of public access.

Respect others' privacy

You may travel through the countryside on foot, bicycle, horse or skis, and temporarily remain in one place, as long as there is no risk that your presence or activities will damage crops, tree plantations or other sensitive areas. But you must respect the privacy of others, and you may not cross or intrude upon private property.

Camping

It is permitted to set up a tent for a day or so on ground that is not used for agriculture and is far from the nearest dwelling. The closer to a residence and the greater the risk of disturbing others, the more important it is to ask the landowner for permission.

Do not litter

All sorts of littering are forbidden in the countryside. A cigarette butt in a dry summer forest can destroy resources worth millions. Glass, tins and bottle caps harm both humans and wildlife, and plastic bags cause great suffering to animals that ingest them. For this reason, bags full of litter should never be left beside rubbish bin if it happens to be full.

Blossoms and berries

You may not take such items as twigs, branches or bark from living trees, including birches. Obviously, you may not take entire shrubs or trees, either. But you are allowed to pick wild berries, flowers and mushrooms, as well twigs and branches that have fallen to the ground. Certain flower species are so rare that they risk becoming endangered. These species are protected and may not be picked. Information about them is available from county administrative boards. Orchids are protected throughout Sweden.

Protected natural areas

Protected natural areas, including nature reserves and national parks, usually have special rules that restrict the right of public access.

More information on the right of public access can be found on our website under About Sweden or on www.allemansratten.se

Getting there:

NB: We advise you not to buy equipment or clothes for your trip or to incur other non-refundable expenses such as flights until you have received confirmation of your booking from us in writing.

By Air:

You can choose to fly to:

- Stockholm Arlanda (with optional domestic flight to Åre Östersund)
- Stockholm Skavsta
- Trondheim Vaernes in Norway (the closest option)

For details of flight connections see www.naturetravels.co.uk/holidays-in-sweden.htm. Click on the airport icons to see connections to/from each airport.

Flight buses from Swedish airports into the city can be booked online through us – see www.naturetravels.co.uk/add-ons-flygbussarna.htm

Many airlines offer discounts on rental cars in connection with their flights.

Without flying

- **London-Stockholm by train via Cologne.** Lunchtime Eurostar to Brussels, train to Cologne, overnight sleeper to Copenhagen and connecting trains to Stockholm.
- **London-Stockholm by train via Hamburg.** Early evening Eurostar to Brussels, overnight sleeper to Hamburg and train on to Stockholm. The fastest option.
- **London-Stockholm by ferry to Denmark then train.** Ferry from Harwich to Denmark, train to Copenhagen and train on to Stockholm. 3-4 departures weekly.

Travel within Sweden:

You can get to this experience by travelling to Undersåker. To/from Undersåker taxi transfer can be arranged (see Optional Extras above). Local bus services are also available.

From Stockholm Arlanda (ARN): Train to Undersåker, travel time approx. 6.5-8 hours, either direct or involving one change.

From Stockholm Skavsta (NYO): Airport bus to Stockholm Central. Train to Undersåker, travel time approx. 8-8.5 hours. It is possible to travel by night train. There are sleeping compartments and more affordable couchette compartment with six beds, where bedding consists of a sheet sleeping bag with a blanket and pillow.

Trains in Sweden are run by national train operator SJ. For train connections and to book your tickets, see www.sj.se. Click "In English" in the top right corner. Please note that the most affordable tickets are released 90 days before departure.

From Åre Östersund airport: Flight transfer bus to Undersåker. Get off at the Undersåker Hyrskidan stop (a ski hire shop). The flight transfer bus is called Åre Flygtransfer. The transfer operates between Åre Östersund airport and the ski village of Åre. The transfer is shared with other passengers heading in the same direction and will be a bus or taxi depending on the number of people travelling. Must be booked in advance. The transfer can be booked either:

- Through the airline together with your flight ticket to Åre Östersund airport.
- Online (please see the link on our information page at www.naturetravels.co.uk/add-ons-trains-buses-cars.htm).
- By telephone on +46 8 441 8137 or email info@flygtaxi.se.

Please contact us for more information or if you have any questions.

From Trondheim Vaernes (Norway): Travel by local train to Hell (3min) then train to Undersåker (2h 10min). You can see timetable information and book the journey from Hell to Undersåker at www.bokatag.se. Click on the English flag in the lower right hand corner. Enter "Hell" as start destination and "Undersåker" as end destination. Tickets for local train Vaernes-Hell should be bought on site.

More details and advice on local transport will be provided after booking. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

What to do next:

If you are interested in this experience, please make sure that you understand exactly what the experience entails and are confident that you will be able to take part fully in all activities included in the trip. If you have any doubts or questions, please discuss the matter with us and we will be happy to advise. Similarly, if you have any particular health or dietary requirements that we need to be aware of, please mention these at the time of booking.

If you feel confident that you will be able to take part, then download and read our TERMS AND CONDITIONS. Then, please contact us to make sure that your chosen dates are available, and feel free to ask us anything else you like: we are keen to ensure that your trip is an enjoyable and memorable experience for you – we love Sweden and we want you to too!

For more information on how to book this trip please visit our website www.naturetravels.co.uk/booking.htm or call us on 01929 463774

Additional Notes

This tour has received a prestigious Swedish Ecotourism award for its commitment to high standards of cultural and environmental sensitivity.