



Nature Travels

outdoor experiences in Sweden



Photo: M. Johannson

VINDEL MOUNTAINS EXPEDITION

7 DAYS

Nature Travels Ltd
26 Andover Green
Bovington, Wareham
BH20 6LN
United Kingdom

Tel: 01929 463774

Email: booking@naturetravels.co.uk

Website: <http://www.naturetravels.co.uk>

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Vindel Mountains Expedition: 7-day tour

Experience Code: FH7ES1

Vindel Mountains Expedition is a multi-day mountain riding holiday taking you over 100km through the pristine mountain wilderness of Lapland. Along the way, you will stay at traditional wilderness camps in wooden wigwam accommodation with dinner prepared over open fire. The horses you will be riding are Icelandic horses - strong, sure-footed and friendly animals ideal for mountain riding in Lapland.

The silence and vastness of the Lapland landscape will seduce the senses with its tranquility and thrill you with its majesty, and you will carry your memories of the wilderness with you long after you have returned to "civilisation"!

Vindelfjällen, one of the largest protected natural areas in Europe with an area of more than 500,000 hectares, is rich in wildlife. Elk and reindeer roam the plains, Golden Eagles and Sea Eagles circle the skies above and the reserve is critical habitat for the Arctic Fox, Sweden's most endangered mammal. Vindelfjällen also offers excellent fishing, and during your tour you will have the opportunity to fish the clear waters for char and salmon trout.

Despite being an extended riding tour in a remote wilderness area, Vindel Mountains Expedition is an accessible horse riding holiday suitable for all levels from the novice to more experienced rider. The pace and distance covered each day will vary according to weather conditions and the needs and wishes of the participants.

Day 1:

Arrival in Ammarnäs for lunch. After lunch you will go through equipment and weigh and pack the personal equipment into "pack-rolls". You will then select your horses for the tour and make ready for your tour. Your experience in the wilderness begins with a ride of approx. 8km to the camp at Tjaskal.

Day 2:

From Tjaskal up onto the bare mountain, you ride northwest along Stuore Jåppe. Below is the protected area for birds, Marsivagge. There are a lot of arctic birds in this area and you may see Golden Eagles. If the weather is fine, you climb the highest plateaus of the mountain peak Urtstjåkke. After about 20 km you reach Lule Skeblejaure.

Day 3:

You ride westward towards the Swedish-Norwegian mountain chain, Skanderna. After approx 18 km you reach Dukkejaur, your stop for the night.

Day 4:

The horses take you eastward across Vindelälven to Björkfjället. If the visibility is good, you can look far away into Norway. You travel approximately 22 km across the smooth and welcoming mountains where you can try to ride in "tölt", (tölt is the Icelandic horse's fourth pace) to your next overnight.

Day 5:

You continue over Björkfjället's expansive grasslands towards the highest overnight spot on the route, Båsatjaure, at 1000 metres above sea level. Distance for the day approx. 20km.

Day 6:

Today you leave the mountain world and ride towards Ammarnäs, taking lunch in Biergenis where you can learn how modern methods of reindeer husbandry work. By the time you are down in Ammarnäs you will have ridden approx 20 km. After a shower and sauna it will be time for a hearty farewell dinner at Ammarnäs Wårdshus. You will spend the night at your host's hostel.

Day 7:

Breakfast and departure.

Fixed dates for 2010 season:

12.07-18.07.10, 26.07-01.08.10, 09.08-15.08.10, 23.08-29.08.10

The price:

£690/person

What The Price Includes:**Accommodation:**

Lodging as per itinerary above in traditional wooden wigwams and cabins along the route and in hostel accommodation at Ammarnäs.

Meals:

All meals and accompanying drinks are included. Other drinks and snacks may be brought with you as required. Food served is from the local area and will include elk, reindeer and fish.

Equipment:

Horse and riding equipment will be provided. Your personal equipment will be packed into pack-rolls, which hold approx. 40 litres. Pack-rolls will be supplied by your host.

Guides:

Experienced and knowledgeable local guide.

What The Price Does Not Include:

Alcoholic drinks.

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:

(please note that it is important to have the correct equipment for this experience – if there are items you are unable to source, please let us know and we will do our best to assist)

Toiletries:

Soap, toothpaste, plasters, moisturiser, sun-cream, painkillers, blister tape, mosquito repellent (see the "About Sweden" page on our website for further information about mosquitoes).

Clothes:

Take clothes you are not afraid to damage. Quick-drying materials are best. Raincoat (not poncho), rain trousers (it's a good idea if you sew straps on so that your trouser-legs will be kept in place), T-shirt, shirt, heavy warm sweater, cap, gloves, scarf, heavy socks, a change of underwear and something to sleep in.

Long trousers without the jeans-seam on the inside of the leg. Good trousers for riding are general "outdoor trousers", but not those which are designed to convert into shorts, as the zips on the legs can chafe. Military-style trousers work very well. Riding trousers are also fine, but should not be too tight and should have room for long-johns/thermal leggings underneath. It is important to pack long-johns and long-sleeved base layer. Conditions on the mountains may vary between riding in t-shirt to requiring base layer, hat and gloves.

Rubber boots/hiking Wellingtons are best. They should not have too low an ankle and should have space for thick socks. They should fit well, give good foot support and not rub when hiking. Riding boots will be too constricting and have poor grip if you need to hike in them. Bear in mind that there will be space for an extra pair of shoes in the packing. You should count on having just one pair with you for the whole trip – there will not be space in your pack roll to carry additional shoes. Boots can be dried in the teepee if they become damp.

Equipment:

Warm sleeping-bag (-10 C), towel.

Additional:

Compass, sunglasses, matches, knife, camera, binoculars.

Map of the riding region will be provided. Those who wish to may buy Swedish mountain map BD16. The equipment will be packed into pack-rolls, which hold app. 40 l. You'll borrow the rolls from the local provider.

Fishing-rods brought must not be longer than 50 cm folded up.

Things that will not find space in the pack-rolls are thick, heavy books, pillow and gym-shoes. Remaining equipment such as like travelling clothes, suitcase, mobile etc. will be left and locked up in Ammarnäs.

NB: There are no ATMs in Ammarnäs. Some shops may accept card payments, but please ensure that you have adequate cash with you for your stay.

Health requirements/experience:

To take part in this ride no experience of riding is required. However we insist that participants part are used to the outdoor life, have a weight of max 90 kg, have a normal level of fitness and are aged 15-55 years. If you are above or under the age limit, but have good experience of riding and fulfil the other requirements you are welcome to join.

If you have special dietary needs or preferences, please contact us to discuss your requirements.

Group size

On the rides max 15 persons can take part. This experience is open to travellers from all over the world. Groups may be made up of participants from a number of countries, around 70% of whom are likely to be from Scandinavia.

Groups

It is possible to book this tour as a group. Please contact us for more information.

Information about the area:

Vindelfjällen is one of largest protected areas in Europe. It contains almost all types of regions that can be found in the Swedish mountains, from primeval forests with spruces and pines, to the moors, marshes and the alpine bare mountain regions. The area has many lakes, loved by a wide variety of birds. In the reserve there is extensive reindeer breeding. The main river in the reserve is Vindelälven, with many rapids and waterfalls. The main villages are Hemavan/Tärnaby, Ammarnäs, and Adolfsström.

Ammarnäs is located in the heart of the Vindelfjällen nature reserve on the Vindelälven river, one of the few undeveloped rivers in Sweden. It is an attractive mountain village with a mixture of new settlers and Sami culture.

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.allemanstratten.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 (ARN)
- Stockholm Skavsta (NYO)
- Stockholm Västerås (VST)

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.
- **Harwich-Stockholm by ferry and train:** DFDS ferry Harwich to Esbjerg (Denmark), then onward train to Stockholm via Copenhagen. For ferry information and booking, see www.naturetravels.co.uk/add-ons-dfds-seaways-ferries.htm

Travel within Sweden:

By train and bus:

From Stockholm or Stockholm Arlanda (ARN) airport: Night train + bus from Stockholm C (Stockholm Central station) or Arlanda C (the station at the airport terminal). You should choose the connection travelling via Vännäs (night train to Vännäs + onward bus connections to Ammarnäs), which arrives in Ammarnäs at lunchtime for the start of the tour.

From Stockholm Skavsta (NYO) or Stockholm Västerås (VST) airports: Flight bus to central Stockholm (travel time approx. 80 mins) for onward connections as above.

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.

By car:

If you would like to drive, driving directions will be provided after booking.

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 to cultural and environmental sensitivity.