



Nature Travels

outdoor experiences in Sweden



Photo: N.T. Nutti

REINDEER SLED SAFARI 6 DAYS

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Reindeer Sled Safari: 6 days

Experience Code: NSS5RW1

Reindeer sledding is an exciting and unusual alternative to dog sledding steeped in the traditions of the Sámi people.

Reindeer Sled Safari is a six-day experience led by a local Sámi guide, driving your own reindeer sled through the magical winter landscape of Swedish Lapland in the far north of Sweden, deep inside the Arctic Circle.

This is the land of the Sámi, the indigenous people of the region. Along the way you'll get to know the Sámi people, their culture and the animals of this wonderful area. In particular, you will develop a very special relationship with the reindeer, a noble animal that is the most well-known symbol of Sámi culture.

On your journey through the quiet winter world of Lapland, you will be seduced by the silence and the grandeur of the surroundings, where all you will hear is the crunching of the sled as it glides over the white powdery snow. The journey will take you along old Sámi tracks through snow-clad forests of pine and fir trees, and in some places ancient forest. During your experience you will sleep in Sámi Lavvus (teepees) and wilderness camps and dine around the open fire. Along the way you will have the opportunity to go snowshoeing and try your hand at ice-fishing on the frozen lakes!

The Reindeer Sled Safari is guided by reindeer herders who are experts on Lapland, and whose families have been working with the reindeer for generations. While in the 21st century, the Sámi people may rely more on snowmobiles than reindeer for their winter transport needs, reindeer nevertheless remain absolutely central to Sámi daily life, and reindeer sleds have been used by the Sámi herders for thousands of years.

Your guides' homestead is located in the small village of Jukkasjärvi, on the edge of the wilderness. Jukkasjärvi is also the home of the renowned ICEHOTEL, and if you wish you can choose to extend your experience with a stay here. Constructed afresh from ice carved from the local river every year, only to melt again when the spring comes, the ICEHOTEL is a truly unique experience!

Experience the tranquillity and splendour of this region, a perfect adventure for those who want to be close to the wilderness. You will care for your own team of reindeer and learn to handle your own sled on your journey of discovery across the mountains and through the forests of Swedish Lapland.

Day 1 SATURDAY - Arrival in Kiruna

Arrive in Kiruna, where you will meet your guide. Transfer to the village of Jukkasjärvi, home to the world famous IceHotel. In Jukkasjärvi you will be given your warm overalls, boots and hat, before departing for the small village of Soppero. Here your hosts Britt Marie and Per Nils Paivio will welcome you in for a traditional Sami dinner. Per Nils is a wonderful storyteller, so you should expect an evening filled with warmth and laughter! Sauna is available. Accommodation for the night is in a traditional log building. (Dinner included)

Day 2 SUNDAY - Your first encounter with the reindeer

After breakfast you will have your first encounter with the reindeer. The guide will instruct you in how to handle the reindeer and drive the sled. Everyone has their own reindeer to drive - you stand at the back of the sled to steer and control it. The reindeer, eager to be off, strain at their harnesses, and it may take you a few kilometres before

you find your confidence and become more adept at handling the sled. But the longer you drive, the safer and more in control you will feel, until by the end of the tour you may find it hard to remember a time when you were not an expert sled handler! You will arrive at the camp in time for a late lunch. After lunch, you will put on your snowshoes and go for a short exploratory hike. After your first day out in the wild, it will feel good to relax around the open fire for dinner. Accommodation for the night is in a Sami Lavvu, or teepee. (Breakfast, lunch and dinner included – hereafter referred to B, L & D).

Day 3 MONDAY - The safari continues into the wilderness

After the practice of the previous day's driving, you should be gaining confidence and becoming friends with your reindeer. You will be travelling through forests of pine, birch and willow, with a panoramic view of the mountains and the forest landscape spread out before you. In the afternoon you will reach your Sami camp for the night. Accommodation in Sami Lavvu. (B, L & D)

Day 4 TUESDAY - Snowshoeing and Ice Fishing

In the morning you will head out on your snowshoes to a frozen lake to try your hand at ice fishing. You will have lunch at the camp before continuing your journey by reindeer sled over the tundra. On this day you will be travelling through primeval forest in a protected nature reserve. A stop will be made along the way to light a fire, have some lunch and make some coffee. Your guide will tell you about the surrounding forest and its rich wildlife. In the afternoon you will arrive at a wilderness cabin for dinner. Here you have the opportunity to take a sauna before retiring for the night. Accommodation in wilderness cabin. (B, L & D)

Day 5 WEDNESDAY - Arrival at the reindeer camp at Sautojohka

After breakfast you will head out again with the reindeer for the final stretch of your journey, arriving later in the day at the reindeer camp at Sautojohka. Once you have unpacked the sleds and put the reindeer into the corrals you can settle in to the camp, relax and take a sauna. In the evening you will have your farewell Sami dinner. Accommodation at the reindeer camp in comfortable wilderness cabin. (B, L & D)

DAY 6 THURSDAY - Farewell to reindeer and departure day from Kiruna

After breakfast it is time to say goodbye to your new-found friends (both two- and four-legged!) before you leave the reindeer camp for transfer to the airport, railway station or hotel in Kiruna. (B)

2011 winter season:

All tours begin on a Saturday.

- 05.03-10.03.11
- 19.03-24.03.11
- 02.04-07.04.11

Groups of minimum 4 persons can book this experience on other dates by arrangements. Please contact us to discuss your requirements.

Reindeer Sled Safaris of other durations are also available on the following dates. Please contact us for more information and itineraries:

- 2-day tour: Dates by arrangement from 7th January to 10th April 2011. Price £538/person.
- 8-day tour: 23rd-30th April 2011. Price £2917/person.

The price:

£1499/person

What The Price Includes:

Accommodation

One night in Sami village log cabin, 2 nights in Sami Lavvu, 1 night in wilderness camp, 1 night in cabin at reindeer camp.

- In Soppero at the log building, accommodation is in mixed-sex large sleeping room. WC, bathroom facilities and sauna are available.
- In the Sami Lavvu, you will sleep on beds of spruce twigs covered with reindeer skins (an excellent insulator).
- At the wilderness camp sleeping accommodation is bunk beds in mixed-sex room.
- At the reindeer camp accommodation is in 2-person cabins.
- Warm thermo-sleeping bags are provided.
- Dry wilderness toilet is available at the camps, no WC.

Meals

All meals are included from dinner day 1 to breakfast day 6. The meals are typical for the region and for the Sámi culture, and will include mountain fish, reindeer meat and stews, and bread and berries from the Laplandic region.

Equipment

Warm snowmobile overalls, warm shoes, hat, gloves and sleeping bag and equipment for the tour.

Guides

Experienced and knowledgeable local Sámi guides.

What The Price Does Not Include:

Alcoholic drinks.

Optional extras:

Stay 1 extra night in Jukkasjärvi at the ICEHOTEL:

- Ice room shared double room: £232 to £380 per room*
- Single room: £163 to £269 per room*

Extra night in Kiruna Winter City at Hotel Ripan before or after the tour:

- Shared double room: £136 to £150/room*
- Single occupancy: £107 to £117/room*

*Price depending on dates

NB: If you book an extra night's accommodation before or after your tour, transfer to/from the railway station or airport is not included in the price. Cost around £33-£42 per transfer depending on the day of the week.

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.

For your clothing, we recommend you use the layer principle:

- 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 waterproof.

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.

Packing list (recommended):

Toiletries:

Soap, toothpaste, plasters, moisturiser, sun-cream, painkillers, blister tape, towel.

Clothes:

Take clothes you are not afraid to damage. Quick-drying materials are best. Bear in mind that jeans and sweatshirts are difficult to dry. Boots, shoes, a pair of warm socks, a pair of gloves/mittens, a warm sweater, sweatshirt, T-shirt, shirt, trousers, long underpants, underwear, anorak (or similar) and something to sleep in.

Additional:

Sunglasses, matches, knife, camera, binoculars.

Health requirements/experience:

Minimum age: 12 years

Minimum age to drive own sled: 16 years

All activities are moderate difficulty. Please contact us if you have any questions regarding your suitability for the tour.

Group size:

Minimum persons required for tour to be confirmed: 4

Maximum persons per tour: 8

Groups:

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

Information about the area:

The **Laponian area** is a large mountaneous wildlife area in the Swedish Lapland province in northern Sweden, more precisely in the Gällivare Municipality and Jokkmokk Municipality. It was made a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996.

The total area is about 9400 km², making it the world's largest unmodified nature area which is inhabited by natives - the natives in this case being the reindeer herding Sámi people. Being so large, the geography of the area varies greatly. Each nature reserve and national park has its distinctive features.

95% of the area is protected as national parks or nature reserves. It consists of the national parks Muddus, Sarek, Padjelanta and Stora Sjöfallet, and the nature reserves Sjaunja and Stubba. The other 5% is in the areas of Sulitelma, Tjuoltadalen, and Rapadalen. The highest mountain of that area is Sarektjånkkå, 2089 meters.

The Sámi

The Sámi are the indigenous people of Sweden. This means that they lived in the area before Sweden established its national boundaries. Today the Sámi live in four countries: Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia. The Sámi are an ethnic minority and the indigenous people of these countries. The estimated number of Sámi is 50,000-75,000. Of these 15,000-20,000 live in Sweden.

Originally the Sámi made their living by fishing and hunting. It is likely that domesticated reindeer had been kept for a long time, as draught and pack animals as well as for milking and to entice wild reindeer when hunting them. During the 17th and 18th centuries reindeer husbandry was developed and the domesticated reindeer became the foundation of Sámi livelihood.

Today only about 10% of the Sámi in Sweden make a living by reindeer herding (between 2,300 and 2,700 persons). Nevertheless reindeer herding is considered a fundamental part of the Sámi culture and according to Swedish law can only be carried on by Sámi.

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 (ARN), with optional onward flight to Kiruna
- 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 & 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. DFDS ferries can be booked online through us – see www.naturetravels.co.uk/add-ons-dfds-seaways-ferries.htm

Travel within Sweden:

From Stockholm Arlanda (ARN): Night train to Kiruna. Travel time 15-17 hours with changes. It is also possible to take a domestic flight from Arlanda to Kiruna. Flights are operated by SAS (www.flysas.com) and Norwegian (www.norwegian.com).

From Stockholm Skavsta (NYO) or Stockholm Västerås (VST): Airport bus into central Stockholm for onward train connections to Kiruna. Flight buses from Swedish airports into the city can be booked online through us – see www.naturetravels.co.uk/add-ons-flygbussarna.htm.

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.

After arriving in Kiruna, you will be met by a local guide. All local transport is included in this package. More details and advice on local transport will be provided after booking.

If you have any questions, 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 to cultural and environmental sensitivity.