



# Nature Travels

outdoor experiences in Sweden



Photo: Gabriella Garavell

## THE SAGA RIDES

### 4-7 DAYS

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## The Saga Rides: 4-7 days

**Experience Code: SA47ES1**

*Lovely long rides through forested hills and over picturesque pastures on Natural Horsemanship-trained Northern Swedish horses. You will be given a thorough briefing on these sturdy strong horses and how to ride them and you will have plenty of time to get to know your horse before you set off. Before galloping your instructor will ensure that rider and horse understand each other and are working well together. The landscape in the area is hilly and you will see very few humans, but lots of wildlife! You will pass places with splendid views, secluded forest lakes and lively forest streams.*

*You sleep in a newly-renovated timber log house on the farm in a room with 2 or 3 beds, all 3 rooms ensuite. Supper is served in the farmhouse pub, where you can linger in the evenings. Food is local produce and from the waters and forests around. A lot of fish and game is used, and it is possible to purchase local handicrafts.*

*On this tour it is possible to choose four days and three nights with two day's riding or up to seven days and six nights with five days' riding. You will be riding for between 4 and 7 hours each day. Additional days may be added if you wish.*

### **Thursday:**

Arrival at the farm during the day. When you arrive you have time to get acquainted with the surroundings, the other riders, the horses and your room. Lunch and dinner will be served in coordination with when guests are arriving. In the evening the farmhouse pub is open, as it is every night.

### **Friday:**

After breakfast you have a thorough briefing about how to handle and ride the horses. The horses are trained and handled with Natural Horsemanship as a basis. This means that their training and handling of horses is based on their natural way of communicating and reacting. Release of pressure is used in all riding and handling of the horses. During these sessions you also will be shown some of the training methods, including how to make a horse accept a noisy tarp so it is quite safe to put raincoats on while still in the saddle. Or you may be shown how to ride at full gallop with a rain poncho whipping about.

After lunch it is time to get the horses, but before mounting you will have the chance to try some of the things you have been seeing in the morning. Everyone should be in control of their horse from the ground with lateral movements, backing, stopping, and giving both head and neck without resistance. This is fun and fairly easy to do, and above all you present yourself as the leader of the horse.

After this, you will mount in the arena and you get the chance to show the horse your leadership on horseback. Then, as you ride into the forest, there is one simple security rule. The group will not trot until everybody has full control of the horse at a walk or canter until everybody has full control of the horse at a trot. And do not worry, as there is plenty of time to both trot and gallop – it is important that everyone feels secure enough to enjoy the beautiful surroundings to the full.

### **Saturday:**

In the morning you ride along winding country dirt roads and beaten tracks in the wonderful mature forest, every now and then taking in bubbling foaming streams and shining, black lakes. This is the country of elk, lynx and the Golden Eagle. But these are

horses of the forest and they feel both secure and full of energy as they take you through the landscape they have been working in for hundreds of years.

Lunch will be eaten in a very old communal building where village people still gather for festivities and meetings. In the afternoon you ride up on a majestic mountain ridge into the deep forest letting the horse find its own way among the trees on the soft green moss.

Dinner is served in the pub and stories are shared till your eyelids start to droop.

### **Sunday:**

(departure day for 4-day tour)

After breakfast you take a trip to some local craftsmen doing traditional handicrafts in the region. These are people that have it in their genes to produce artefacts from wood. Lunch is served back at the farm. The ride in the afternoon ends by one of many lakes. If you want you can swim in the lake or in a large heated wooden tub seating 8-9 people. Together you cook a wilderness dinner under open skies using techniques from the Stone Age. Fish will be cooked in a hole in the ground, bread will be baked over the fire, and the dessert will be flambéed in a large frying pan. If the weather is bad you can pitch a traditional Sámi tepee, and sit down for dinner inside. In the soft Nordic summer night you ride home, the horses secure and with better eyesight than a cat.

### **Monday:**

(departure day for 5-day tour)

Today the ride heads through the forests to a rocky hill with spectacular views. You eat lunch you brought along and rest in the grass, stretching your legs while the horses graze by your side.

On the way home you pass by an old wolf trap in the shape of a hole in the ground. We also ride over moorland dotted with crooked small pine trees. Here you ride slalom between the trees, practising the use of indirect reins which makes the horse bend along the track.

### **Tuesday:**

(departure day for 6-day tour)

Now you have got to know your horses better, maybe even changing horse to get the best one for you, and you can now ride long, rocking canters. You have lunch by the ruins of an old farmstead. It is quite a special place and you can almost hear the old inhabitants going about their business, even though nobody has lived here for a hundred years.

### **Wednesday:**

This is the day of departure for the 7-day tour. Lunch will of course be served to those who leave later in the day.

### **Fixed dates for 2010 season:**

Start days any Thursday from 13.05 – 23.09.10.

### **The price:**

4-day tour: £606/person; 5-day tour £749/person; 6-day tour: £891/person; 7-day tour: £1034/person.

Additional 24 hours: £143/person.

### **What The Price Includes:**

#### ***Accommodation***

The accommodations is in a small, recently renovated, old timber cottage in two 2-bed rooms and one 3-bed room, and all three are en-suite. Meals are served in the farmhouse pub, which also includes common quarters for relaxation. Bed linen and towels included.

#### ***Meals***

You will be served dishes made from local Swedish ingredients with a twist. The local guides use game from the forests and fish from the lakes and anything else the forests, waters and fields have to offer. The package includes full board. Beer and wine are available at extra cost during the meals. Your host, Olle, is a skilled chef and past finalist in the "Wilderness Chef of the Year" competition.

#### ***Horses***

Northern Swedish Cold Bloods, trained to be safe and secure. The horses are handled and ridden with care and have Swedish cavalry saddles, developed over hundreds of years for both rider and horse for tough conditions and long rides over rough terrain. You will ride bitless but with a kind of ridehalter, otherwise known as a sidepull.

#### ***Equipment***

Shortchaps, rain ponchos and approved riding helmets.

#### ***Guides:***

Experienced and knowledgeable local guide.

#### ***Transfer:***

Transfer to/from Tranås station.

### **What The Price Does Not Include:**

Alcoholic drinks, which are available for purchase in the farmhouse pub.

### **Optional extras:**

It is also possible to book transfer from Linköping for £41 per person.

### **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):***

#### **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:**

Bring along good riding pants so that the friction is between the pant and the saddle – with normal riding pants the friction is between the pants and your skin, which is certainly not comfortable on a long ride.

Take clothes you are not afraid to damage. Quick-drying materials are best. Pack rainwear (jacket and trousers), boots, shoes, a pair of warm socks, something to cover your head in case of heat or rain, a pair of gloves/mittens, a warm sweater, sweatshirt, T-shirt, shirt, trousers, long underpants, a pair of shorts, beachwear, underwear, anorak (or similar) and something to sleep in.

**Additional:**

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

**Health requirements/experience:**

You should be able to handle a horse at walking pace, trot and gallop in a forest environment. Weight limit 110kg (240 pounds).

**Participants**

Minimum age 12 for confident riders accompanied by adult, otherwise 18.

**Group size**

Minimum number of participants 1, maximum 7.

**Groups:**

The tour can also be booked by a group of 4-7 persons. Please contact us for a quotation.

**Information about the area:**

"Ydrebygden", as the region is called, lies in the borderland between the Swedish counties of Småland and Östergötland on the north side of the southern Swedish highlands. Here you find large forests with pine and spruce, but also deciduous forest surrounding glittering clear water lakes and mountains.

The region has been inhabited since the Stone Age and there are many exciting traces of man that your guides can tell you about. The area in which you will travel is a sparsely populated area of about 30.000 hectares, and it may be days before you see another human being. Resting places will often be beside a lake or an old farm-ruin.

In the forests you travel, there is plenty of wildlife: Moose, Roe Deer, Wild Boar, Fox and Lynx. In the air, there is Golden Eagle, Eagle Owl, Osprey and Falcon among the raptors. There are always some animals who cross the trails during the tours.

The inhabitants of the region have always been close to the Trolls, the Giants, the Elves and the very special "Skogsrået" (forest lady) and the "Näck" - the naked fiddler in the stream....

Here, the tales and sagas still live. And it is not hard to understand... when night falls you may feel as if someone is watching you and it might be difficult to know what your eyes are really seeing....

**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](http://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, Västerås or Skavsta)
- Gothenburg (Landvetter or City)
- Copenhagen

For details of flight connections see [www.naturetravels.co.uk/holidays-in-sweden.htm](http://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](http://www.naturetravels.co.uk/add-ons-flygbussarna.htm)

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

#### ***Without flying***

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

#### **Travel within Sweden:**

Transfer from Tranås is included in the price.

**From Stockholm Arlanda (ARN):** Flight bus to Stockholm Central (40 mins). Train to Tranås, travel time approx. 3 hours with one change.

**From Stockholm Skavsta (NYO):** Flight bus to Linköping (90 mins). Train to Tranås, travel time 45 mins direct.

**From Stockholm Västerås (VST):** Taxibus to central Västerås, train to Tranås. Travel time around 4 hours 45 mins with changes.

**From Gothenburg Landvetter or City:** Flight bus to central Gothenburg. Train to Tranås. Travel time around 5 hours with changes.

**From Copenhagen:** Train to Tranås, travel time around 4.5 hours with changes.

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

You can also opt to book a transfer directly from Linköping at additional cost – see "Optional Extras" above.

If you would like to drive, driving instructions can be supplied after booking with both maps and descriptions.

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](http://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.