



**Nature Travels**

outdoor experiences in Sweden



**FOREST WEEKEND WITH ELK  
& BEAVER SAFARI  
- 3 DAYS**

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|--|----------|
| <b>FOREST WEEKEND WITH ELK AND BEAVER SAFARI: 3 DAYS .....</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>2010 SEASON: .....</b>                                      | <b>2</b> |
| <b>THE PRICE: .....</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| WHAT THE PRICE INCLUDES:.....                                  | 3        |
| <i>Accommodation</i> .....                                     | 3        |
| <i>Meals</i> .....   | 3        |
| <i>Guides</i> : .....  | 3        |
| <i>Transfer</i> : .....  | 3        |
| <i>Additional</i> : .....                                      | 3        |
| WHAT THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE: .....                         | 3        |
| OPTIONAL EXTRAS:.....  | 3        |
| <b>EQUIPMENT/CLOTHES NEEDED:.....</b>                          | <b>3</b> |
| <i>Packing list (recommended)</i> : .....                      | 3        |
| <b>HEALTH REQUIREMENTS/EXPERIENCE: .....</b>                   | <b>4</b> |
| <b>GROUP SIZE:.....</b>  | <b>4</b> |
| <b>GROUPS:.....</b>  | <b>4</b> |
| <b>INFORMATION ABOUT THE AREA: .....</b>                       | <b>4</b> |
| BERGSLAGEN .....   | 4        |
| THE KOLAR VILLAGE .....  | 4        |
| <b>COMMON SENSE AND THE RIGHT OF PUBLIC ACCESS .....</b>       | <b>5</b> |
| <i>Respect others' privacy</i> .....                           | 5        |
| <i>Camping</i> .....   | 5        |
| <i>Do not litter</i> .....                                     | 5        |
| <i>Blossoms and berries</i> .....                              | 5        |
| <i>Protected natural areas</i> .....                           | 5        |
| <b>GETTING THERE:.....</b>                                     | <b>6</b> |
| <i>By Air</i> : .....  | 6        |
| <i>Without flying</i> .....                                    | 6        |
| TRAVEL WITHIN SWEDEN: .....                                    | 6        |
| <b>WHAT TO DO NEXT:.....</b>                                   | <b>6</b> |
| <b>ADDITIONAL NOTES .....</b>                                  | <b>7</b> |

## **Forest Weekend with Elk and Beaver Safari: 3 days**

### **Experience Code: SK2WS1**

*Forest Weekend with Elk and Beaver Safari combines chances to see and learn about two of Sweden's most interesting mammals with unique accommodation deep in the forests of Bergslagen. This is an accessible experience on land and water suitable for adults and families with older children, an ideal way to discover the magic of the Swedish forest and the beauty of its wildlife.*

*Go on a genuine Scandinavian adventure and meet the king of the forest, the mighty elk, and in search of Sweden's most industrious woodland inhabitant, the beaver. Your experienced guides will take you on an unforgettable journey through the dense forests of Bergslagen, a region known for its many lakes, evergreen woods and rich wildlife.*

*As dusk falls over the quiet forests you will take to the water in canoes to search for beaver on the lake. Led by an experienced local naturalist guide, you will visit one of the area's beaver hides. Cutting silently through the water in canoes gives you good chances to see this fascinating mammal and close-range encounters with beaver are quite common during the experience.*

*After a day at leisure, during which you can go hiking, canoeing, rowing or simply relax and soak up the atmosphere, it is time to head out in search of elk. Bergslagen is the area of Sweden where you are most likely to encounter wild elk in their natural habitat. Here the elk population far outnumbers the human population! Sightings are guaranteed and you have good chances to see a number of elk at close range. Your guide will share his knowledge of elk tracking gained over years of experience in the field, as you search for hoof prints, fresh droppings and bite marks. You will also be shown some of the traditional ways of communicating with elk.*

*The area in which the elk safari takes place is also home to one of Sweden's shyest and most misunderstood predators, the wolf. During your search for elk you may also come across signs such as scat and prints left by these elusive and mysterious animals during their passage through the deep woods.*

*The base camp is an attractive collection of genuine forest huts beautifully located by the shore of Lake Skarsjön. This is Sweden's most primitive hostel, where you leave the modern world and its comforts behind and live in harmony with nature for a while. You will cut your own firewood for the evening's campfire and prepare a wilderness dinner together over open fire, blending your own lingonberry drink with water from the forest well.*

### **2010 season:**

This experience is available every weekend Friday to Sunday between May and September subject to availability. The experience begins at 1pm on the Friday, finishing after breakfast around 11am on the Sunday.

You are welcome to extend your stay in the forest with additional nights before and/or after your wildlife experiences.

### **The price:**

£245/person

## **What The Price Includes:**

### ***Accommodation***

Two nights' accommodation in traditional forest huts. Each forest hut has two sleeping berths for sleeping bags and a wood heater. The huts also have space for an extra berth.

There are several comfortable outhouses. There are no showers but you can take a swim in lake Skärsjön or clean yourself in the little steam just nearby. During your stay, you will use genuine oil lamps for lighting up the evenings and a fire stove to heat your hut. There is no electricity. Fresh drinking water is available for you to fetch in the forest well - it is regularly tested and government approved as excellent drinking water.

### ***Meals***

Dinner day 1; breakfast and dinner day 2; breakfast day 3.

### ***Guides:***

Experienced and knowledgeable local guides.

### ***Transfer:***

Transfer from Skinskatteberg.

### ***Additional:***

Guided elk safari, learn how to track and call for an elk, sauna bathing, cooking over open fire. Guided beaver safari by canoe including all necessary canoe equipment.

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

Alcoholic drinks.

Lunch.

## **Optional extras:**

Extra night in the forest huts: £33/adult.

You will need to make your own arrangements for lunch. There are several fireplaces, of which one has a view over Lake Skärsjön. Firewood, pans, plates and cutlery are available.

Simple food for lunch, etc, can be purchased on site for preparation over open fire. The nearest supermarket is Skinnskatteberg, just 3km away, which also has a selection of restaurants. If you are not travelling by car, transport to the supermarket can be arranged.

Sleeping bag + liner: £9/person/stay

## **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.

#### **Clothes:**

Pack rainwear (jacket and trousers), boots, shoes, a pair of warm socks, a pair of gloves/mittens, a warm sweater, sweatshirt, T-shirt, shirt, trousers, a pair of shorts, beachwear, underwear, anorak (or similar) and something to sleep in.

**Additional:**

Camera, binoculars, sleeping bag (if not hired as optional extra), pillow and a drinking water bottle.

**Health requirements/experience:**

Good general health. Participants should be able to walk on rough terrain through forest. Children are welcome on this experience, but must be able to remain quiet for at least 2 hours while looking for and watching wildlife in the forest. There is a minimum age of 12 years for scheduled tours. For families with younger children, please contact us to discuss the possibilities for your chosen period.

**Group size:**

Maximum 8 participants per guide.

**Groups:**

Groups of minimum 4 can book this experience on other dates by arrangement. Please contact us for details.

**Information about the area:**

**Västmanland**

Västmanland is one of Sweden's most interesting provinces, offering a multitude of different attractions, both historical and otherwise. Västmanland is a province of small distances. You only have to travel short distances in order to encounter extremely diverse landscapes and vegetation zones. The southernmost part of the province consists mainly of Mälaren's archipelago. Animals, plants and deciduous forests are characteristic of this part of the province. The middle of Västmanland consists mainly of very fertile agricultural farmland. The northern region is dominated by vast pine and fir forests.

**Bergslagen**

The mining district of Central Sweden, Bergslagen, is a historically, culturally, and linguistically distinct region of Svealand in central Sweden. It covers several districts - Värmland, Närke, Västmanland, Dalarna, Uppland and Gästrikland. In the heart of Bergslagen is Skinskatteberg, beautifully situated between the two lakes Övre- and Nedre Vättern.

**The Kolar village**

You will stay in the charcoal-burner village in real charcoal-burner cottages! "Kolare" is the Swedish name for charcoal-burner and at the village the skills and traditions of the charcoal-burner are kept alive today. The charcoal pits or stacks were built vertically. Building the stack and then covering it with broken coal and earth required equal measures of skill and care. Once the stack had been lit, the charring process would take two to three weeks. There was always a danger that trapped gases would cause the stack to flare up suddenly, throwing off the broken coal and earth, with, at worst, the entire stack going up in flames. Voids could also occur, causing the stack to collapse, so the charcoal-burner had to sit watch over the stack continuously, day and night, and be

ready to intervene at any time. The charcoal produced from a stack would only be enough to keep the blast furnace fuelled for two days, yet it represented two or three weeks of work for the charcoal-burner. Still, it was absolutely vital that an adequate supply of charcoal was maintained.

A First Aid kit is available in the storehouse and staff have First Aid training. The nearest health centre is in Skinnskatteberg, 3km away. There is a general hospital in Fagersta, 23km away, and the regional hospital is 65km away in Västerås.

## **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
- Stockholm Västerås

Transfer from Västerås can be arranged for an additional charge.

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-Skinnskatteberg by train:** Lunchtime Eurostar to Brussels, train to Cologne, overnight sleeper to Copenhagen and connecting trains to Skinnskatteberg.
- **Harwich- Skinnskatteberg by ferry and train:** DFDS ferry Harwich to Esbjerg (Denmark), then onward train to Skinnskatteberg via Copenhagen.

## Travel within Sweden:

To reach this experience you travel to Skinnskatteberg from where pick-up can be arranged at no extra charge.

**From Stockholm Arlanda (ARN) or Stockholm Central:** Train and/or bus to Skinnskatteberg, travel time around 3 hours with changes. Routes vary depending on time of journey.

**From Stockholm Västerås (VST):** Taxibus to centre of Västerås. Train/bus to Skinnskatteberg. Total travel time around 2.5 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.

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.