



**Nature Travels**  
outdoor experiences in Sweden



Photo: STF Bildarkiv

## HIKING IN THE NATIONAL PARKS OF LAPONIA - 7 DAYS

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# Hiking in the National Parks of Laponia

## 7-day tour

**Experience Code: STF7TS1**

*Leave the stresses and strains of modern life behind in the city and join fellow like-minded explorers on a unique hiking experience! In the company of guides from Saltoluokta Mountain Station in the heart of Lapland, you will visit the national parks of Stora Sjöfallet, Sarek and Padjelanta, all part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Laponia.*

*This very special hike passes through a wide variety of breathtaking landscapes. You will be crossing the vast mountain plains of Padjelanta, hiking amidst the high alpine peaks of the legendary, pathless wilderness of Sarek, and learn to know something of the rich cultural heritage of the area through contact with the indigenous Sami people.*

*The majesty and beauty of Laponia offer a world class hiking experience, and yet this tour is quite accessible. Most of the daily legs of the hike are relatively short and moderately challenging, and sometimes you will have the opportunity to leave the trail to make exciting day tours with the freedom of lighter packs.*

*The adventure ends at the traditional mountain station of Saltoluokta, famous for its good food!*

### **Day 1:**

Gather at STF cabin in Ritsem when the first arrives (around 14:00). Lunch and presentation of the week. In the evening you take the boat over Lake Akkajaure and after a short walk, 2 km you will reach the Akka cabins where you stay overnight.

### **Day 2:**

The "real" hike begins. After a few kilometres you cross the bridge over the mighty river Voujatätno and enter the national park of Stora Sjöfallet. The Padjelanta Trail winds under the impressive peaks and glaciers of Mt Akka. Today's destination is the cabins at Kisuris, just before the cabins you will be in 3 different national parks at the same time: Sarek, Stora Sjöfallet and Padjelanta! Distance 14 km.

### **Day 3:**

An easier day-tour into Sarek National Park. Weather conditions decide exactly where you will go. In the evening you walk down to Lake Kutjaure. Here you will be picked up by a boat that takes you over to the west side and to the Sámi settlement at Kutjaure Västända. There you can enjoy a sauna and dinner! You stay in the STF cabins close to the settlement. Distance 4 km + day tour.

### **Day 4:**

Day tour in the area around Kutjaure. You pass the mighty waterfall in Sieperjåkkå and walk into the north part of Padjelanta. This is a part of the national park with very few visitors. Stunning views of Padjelanta and Sarek from the mountain Kåtojtåkkå.

### **Day 5:**

Towards Vaisaluokta. The trail takes you high up into the mountains and you bid farewell to Padjelanta. Before you reach the STF cabin you will pass through Sweden's largest Sámi settlement. Distance 18 km.

## **Day 6:**

You board the first boat over to Ritsem. There the bus will be waiting for you to bring you down to Lake Langas and Saltoluokta Mountain Station with its sauna and showers! In the evening you will be served a traditional Lappish 3-course dinner in the restaurant. The evening will end with a slideshow about Saltoluokta, the Sjöfall area and Lapponia.

## **Day 7:**

Your adventure is at an end. After breakfast the boat takes you over Lake Langas to Kebnats and the bus to Gällivare.

**Please note that the programme is subject to change depending on weather conditions.**

### Other information:

The midnight sun does not shine all summer long but it is daylight 24 hours a day from around mid May to the end of July. In August, bring a small torch and a few candles.

There is no electricity at the STF or Padjelanta cabins. Heating by wood or gas fires. There are only emergency telephones in the cabins. The phone is directly connected to the police. Mobile phones generally do not work out in the mountains.

## **Fixed dates for 2008 summer season:**

21-27 July 2008

10-16 August 2008

## **The price:**

Prices below are prices for members of the International Youth Hostel Federation (Hostelling International), YHA or the STF (Swedish Tourist Association).

If you are not already a member, in order to qualify for the prices below you must purchase a membership card for the STF. This costs 295 Skr (approx. £26) for an adult. Membership cards will be collected and paid for on arrival in Ritsem.

Price: £536/person

*(Please note that if you are not a member and do not wish to become a member, the non-member price for this experience is: £598/person)*

## **What The Price Includes:**

### **Accommodation**

1 night at Saltoluokta Mountain Station and 5 nights in mountain cabins.

The cabins: The beds are fitted with mattresses, pillows and blankets. During the summer season you should bring a light sleeping bag or a set of sheets. The cabins are comfortable but of basic standard and there is no electricity or running water. You will all need to help each other with domestic duties, cleaning, cooking, doing the dishes etc. Wooden fires or gas heats the cabins. The cooking is done on gas stoves.

The cabins you will visit during this hike have 20-34 beds (rooms with 4-10 beds, male/female mixed). There are also extra mattresses and blankets in case the cabin gets full. Everyone will get shelter - in the event that all the beds are occupied you will get a space on the floor and a mattress. It is not possible to reserve beds in advance.

### **Meals**

Lunch in Ritsem.

5 days in mountain cabins including provisions.

1 day with full board at Saltoluokta Mountain Station incl. 3 course dinner.

Food for sale: In Ritsem you will find a small shop where you can buy dried and canned food, drinks and snacks etc. There is no food for sale in the mountain cabins.

### **Transfer**

Boat on Lake Akkajaure, Lake Kutjaure and Lake Langas.

Bus Ritsem-Kebnats (Saltoluokta).

### **Guides:**

Experienced and knowledgeable local guide.

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

Alcoholic drinks.

### **Optional extras:**

If you would like to extend your stay before or after the tour or rent some equipment, please contact us and we will be happy to discuss the alternatives with you.

### **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.

The right equipment in your backpack gives you a more enjoyable experience. Check your equipment at home, and make sure that everything is in good condition.

Travel clothes: You can leave things not needed for the hike when the bus stops at Kebnats jetty on the way to Ritsem. Bring a small bag to pack your things in and leave it with the staff on the boat M/s Langas. Mark the bag with your name and arrival date at Saltoluokta.

Equipment: Below you will find a suggestion for what to bring for the hike. Pack light! Most people bring too many clothes. The weight of your backpack should not be more than 10-12 kg during the hikes between cabins. Choose travel-sized toiletry items.

Map: A suitable map for the whole hike is Swedish Mountain Map BD7 (latest edition 2006). However, to cover the area around Saltoluokta tourist station you will need Swedish Mountain Map BD10 as well. We do not recommend a particular supplier, but to buy online see [http://www.mapsworldwide.com/sku\\_15006.htm](http://www.mapsworldwide.com/sku_15006.htm) and [http://www.mapsworldwide.com/sku\\_15009.htm](http://www.mapsworldwide.com/sku_15009.htm)

Fluids: It is essential to keep your fluid levels up. If you do not, you will feel tired and "gluey". Bring a thermos for warm drinks, a water bottle and a mug. You will find crystal clear water along the trail most of the time but in the high mountains and in the later parts of the summer it could be several kilometres in between the creeks.

### **Packing list (recommended):**

#### **Toiletries:**

A small bar of soap, toothbrush and paste, wipes, toilet paper, a small towel, 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. Bear in mind that jeans and sweatshirts are difficult to dry. Pack wind proof rainwear (jacket and trousers), hiking boots, gaitors, at least 2 pairs of socks (preferably woollen), something to cover your head in case of heat or rain, a pair of gloves/mittens, a warm sweater, shirt, trousers, long underpants, 2 light sets of underwear made of wool or synthetics and something to sleep in, indoor clothes and shoes.

**Equipment:**

Backpack with rain cover, approximately 60 litres with hip belt, sleeping bag or sleeping sheet, unbreakable thermos, drinking mug, camping set with plate, fork, knife and spoon, small whisk, water bottle, large cup for soup, etc. Poorly-fitting rucksack or boots can make your hike uncomfortable. Make sure you go for a trial hike with your equipment beforehand.

**Additional:**

Compass, map, sunglasses, matches, head torch, candles, sitting pad, paper and pen, knife, camera, binoculars and wax for boots, spare laces.

**Health requirements/experience:**

To enjoy this hike you should have some previous experience of walking with a backpack and be in good physical condition. Recommended minimum age 16 years.

Distances between the mountain cabins vary from 5 to 18 km. Difference in altitude on a single leg is maximum 400m (not including day tours).

**Group size:**

Minimum 5 and maximum 12 participants.

This experience is open to travellers from all over the world. Groups may be made up of participants from a number of countries, around 60% of whom are likely to be from Scandinavia.

**Groups:**

Groups of minimum 5-6 persons can book this experience on other dates by arrangement. Please contact us for details.

**Information about the area:****Laponia – UNESCO World Heritage Site**

The UNESCO committee considered that the site is of outstanding universal value as it contains examples of ongoing geological, biological and ecological processes, a great variety of natural phenomena of exceptional beauty and significant biological diversity including a population of brown bear and alpine flora. It was noted that the site meets all conditions of integrity. The site has been occupied continuously by the Sami people since prehistoric times, is one of the last and unquestionably largest and best preserved examples of an area of transhumance, involving summer grazing by large reindeer herds, a practice that was widespread at one time and which dates back to an early stage in human economic and social development.

The Arctic Circle region of northern Sweden is the home of the Sami, or Lapp people. It is the largest area in the world (and one of the last) with an ancestral way of life based on the seasonal movement of livestock. Every summer, the Sami lead their huge herds of reindeer towards the mountains through a natural landscape hitherto preserved, but now

threatened by the advent of motor vehicles. Historical and ongoing geological processes can be seen in the glacial moraines and changing water courses.

Laponia's nature offers a variety of experiences, from breathtaking mountains in Sarek to Muddus' mosquito buzzing swamps. One of the reasons for these differences is the bedrock, which differs by an unbelievable 1.5 million years from the mountains in the west to the Archaean rocks in the east.

The majestic mountains of the **Stora Sjöfallet** and the **Sarek** national parks are found in western Laponia. This is where you find Sweden's largest glacial area, with hundreds of glaciers. As hard, volcanic bedrock erodes slowly, the mountains are both high and steep. The tallest peaks reach 2000 metres above sea level.

In the **Padjelanta National Park** in the west the bedrock is softer and contains slate, limestone and sandstone from the seabed, which contribute to the characteristic soft and hilly landscape of this part of Laponia. This is where reindeer herds have grazed for hundreds of years and thus made the land extra fertile in a natural way.

## **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](http://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:**

The nearest international airport is Stockholm Arlanda.

- British Airways fly to Arlanda from London Heathrow.
- SAS fly to Arlanda from London Heathrow, London City, Manchester and Edinburgh.
- Ryanair fly to Stockholm Skavsta airport from London Stansted and Glasgow Prestwick.

#### **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.

### **Travel within Sweden:**

First travel to Stockholm as shown above.

Then travel to Ritsem. The most convenient way is to travel by train from Stockholm Central train station or Stockholm Arlanda airport to Gällivare and then bus to Ritsem. Alternatively you can fly to Kiruna or Gällivare from Arlanda airport and take the bus to Ritsem. Transfer time Gällivare C - Ritsem by bus is 3 hours.

The train ride from Arlanda or Stockholm Central to Gällivare C takes approx. 16.5-17 hours with one or two changes from Arlanda. Trains from Stockholm Central may be direct or require one change.

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.

If you fly into Stockholm Skavsta, take the connecting airport bus to Stockholm Central and then you can catch the train from there.

Trains and buses from Stockholm or Arlanda to Ritsem are run by national train operator SJ. See [www.sj.se](http://www.sj.se) for times and fares. To book your tickets contact SJ on [www.sj.se](http://www.sj.se) or 0046 771-75 75 75.

The experience ends at Saltoluokta. Kebnats the most convenient place to catch a bus back to Gällivare railway station or airport. Transfer time by bus is 2 hours and then by train to Stockholm or fly from Gällivare airport to Stockholm Arlanda airport.

More details and advice on local transport will be provided after booking.

If you have any question, 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](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.