



Nature Travels
outdoor experiences in Sweden



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SKI TOURING ON THE KING'S TRAIL FROM ABISKO TO KEBNEKAISE - 8 DAYS

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Ski Touring on the King's Trail from Abisko to Kebnekaise 8-day tour

Experience Code: STF8XW1

The King's Trail (known as "Kungsleden" in Swedish) is a long-distance path in the far north of Swedish Lapland, deep inside the Arctic Circle. An excellent destination for hiking in the summer, the King's Trail also offer marvellous opportunities for ski touring in wintertime.

Ski Touring on the King's Trail is one of the world's "classic" ski touring routes – challenging, spectacular and dramatic without requiring extensive expedition experience or extreme levels of fitness. The tour is led by local guide and is suitable for those with an intermediate-advanced level of ski touring experience.

The Abisko-Kebnekaise trail is probably the most famous section of the King's Trail, running from Abisko Mountain Station on the shores of Lake Torneträsk south to the base of Mt. Kebnekaise, Sweden's highest mountain at 2105m. Along the way, you will be staying in mountain cabins, taking part in the preparation of meals and other duties as you reflect on the day's adventures. The cabins are heated by wood-burning stoves and offer simple but comfortable accommodation – a welcoming haven after a long day on the trail! Your last night in the mountains is spent at Kebnekaise Mountain Station, which offers sauna, showers and a well-earned restaurant meal as you prepare for the final day's ski touring towards Nikkaluokta.

Each day you will be covering 12-20km between the cabins, carrying provisions for max. 2 days at a time. You should count on a pack weight of around 10-12kg.

Ski Touring on the King's Trail from Abisko to Kebnekaise offers a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in the dramatic scenery of this remote region in the full glory of a Swedish winter!

Day 1:

Gather at Abisko Tourist Station in the afternoon around 16.00-17.00 after the last connection arrives from Kiruna. Dinner in the station restaurant and information about the tour.

Day 2:

The start of your tour. The route takes you through Abisko National Park to lake Abiskojaure and your cabins on the south side of the lake.
Distance: 15km.

Day 3:

This day takes you up into the high mountains to the cabins at lake Alesjaure, with the chance for an evening sauna to soothe your muscles!
Distance: 20km.

Day 4:

A shorter section than the previous day, taking you to the mountain cabin at Tjätka.
Distance: 13km.

Day 5:

Today you will cross over the Tjåktjapass at 1440m with views of the Tjåktjavagge valley. From here, it is easy skiing down to the cabins at Sålka, where the opportunity for a sauna awaits!

Distance: 12km.

Day 6:

This day offers easy skiing along the Tjåktjavagge valley towards Singi, where accommodation for the night will be in dorms with gas or wood-fired heating.

Distance: 13km.

Day 7:

Stunning views over mountain peaks and glaciers as you head for Kebnekaise Mountain Station, which offers sauna, showers and restaurant dinner.

Distance: 14km

Day 8:

Your final day of ski touring takes you to Nikkaluokta, where you have a meal in the local restaurant and take a shower. Bus to Kiruna for onward connections departs around 17.00.

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

Other information:

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.

The max. height difference on a particular day during the tour is around 400m. You will be carrying at most provisions for 2 days at a time, with a typical pack weight of 10-12kg. You should count on an additional weight of 2-3kg for provisions/safety equipment on top of your personal packing.

The midnight sun does not shine until late spring. In March and April the nights will still be dark and you should bring a small torch and a few candles.

Fixed dates for 2010 winter season:

- 13.03-20.03.10
- 21.03-28.03.10
- 28.03-04.04.10
- 11.04-18.04.10
- 17.04-24.04.10

The price:

- | | |
|------------------|-------------|
| • 13.03-20.03.10 | £559/person |
| • 21.03-28.03.10 | £582/person |
| • 28.03-04.04.10 | £582/person |
| • 11.04-18.04.10 | £582/person |
| • 17.04-24.04.10 | £582/person |

NB: Please note that ski equipment is not included. Please see "Optional extras" below.

What The Price Includes:

Accommodation

Accommodation at Abisko Tourist Station, Kebnekaise Mountain Station and beds in mountain cabins along the route.

Cabins: The beds are fitted with mattresses, pillows and blankets. During the winter season you should bring a light sleeping bag (the interior of the cabins is warm once heated – a dedicated winter bag is not required). 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 20-78 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

Full board accommodation at Abisko Tourist Station and Kebnekaise Mountain Station. Meals along the route and final meal in Nikkaluokta.

Food for sale: In Alesjaure and Sälka there are small shops where you can buy dried and canned food, drinks and snacks, etc. There is no fresh food for sale in the mountain cabins. There is also a small shop at Abiskojaure where you can find some food, but the range is not as wide as in Sälka and Alesjaure.

Transfer

Bus transfer Nikkaluokta–Kiruna Centrum.

Guides

Experienced and knowledgeable local guide.

What The Price Does Not Include:

Alcoholic drinks.

Optional extras:

Ski Rental: An equipment package for your tour including skis, boots and poles can be hired for £180/week. Please advise height and shoe size in advance. We recommend that participants opt for "wax-free" skis. If choosing skis requiring waxing, please note that wax is not included.

If you would like to extend your stay in the area before or after the tour, please contact us to discuss your requirements.

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. Temperatures may vary from just a few degrees below zero to -20 degrees C or less.

If you are bringing your own skis, skis should be of XC or Telemark type and must have steel edges.

Transport of clothes: You can send things not needed for the tour by bus to Nikkaluokta. Bring a small bag to pack your things in. You will find necessary transport documents on the buses and at reception at Abisko Tourist Station. Luggage transfer is included in the price of your tour, but there is a storage fee of 25 Skr (around £2.20) per item in Nikkaluokta. This is an important source of income for the local Sami community.

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

Map: A suitable map for the whole tour is Swedish Mountain Map BD6 (latest edition 2006). We do not recommend a particular supplier, but you may wish to contact The Map Shop at www.themapshop.co.uk.

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. Water is available at the cabins and you may also find running water along the route.

Packing list (recommended):

A detailed equipment list will be provided after booking.

Toiletries:

A small bar of soap, toothbrush and paste, wipes, toilet paper, a small towel, plasters, moisturiser, sun-cream (min. factor 15), painkillers, blister tape.

Clothes:

Take clothes you are not afraid to damage. Quick-drying materials are best.

- Woollen socks (2 pairs)
- Lighter socks (2 pairs)
- Shirt or sweater (quick-drying)
- Windproof anorak/jacket and trousers
- Down jacket or fleece sweater
- Cap/hat
- Woollen scarf
- Gloves (2 pairs, one warm, one light)
- Extra pair of mittens (mittens are warmer than fingered gloves)
- Underwear/base layer (wool or synthetic, not cotton)
- Indoor clothes and shoes for use in cabins

Equipment:

- Backpack approx. 60 litres with hip belt. (A poorly-fitting rucksack can make your tour uncomfortable. Make sure you go for a trial tour/hike with your equipment beforehand. When packing your rucksack, you should plan to leave space for food, including bulky items such as bread.)
- Light sleeping bag for use in cabins. (Beds with pillows and thin duvets are provided in the cabins. However, at peak times these may not always be available.)
- Unbreakable thermos
- Drinking mug
- Water bottle (tip: place your bottle inside a woollen sock to prevent freezing)
- Camping set with plate, fork, knife and spoon, cup for soup, etc for lunch stops (plates, cutlery, cups and cooking utensils are provided at the cabins)
- Full-length insulated sleeping mat
- Gaiters

- Ski wax
- Climbing skins
- Proofing for boots

Additional:

Compass, map, sunglasses, matches, head torch, candles, sitting pad, paper and pen, knife, camera, binoculars.

Health requirements/experience:

For this mountain tour you should have a good level of fitness and previous ski touring experience. The distance between the cabins varies from 13-20km, with a maximum altitude difference on a single leg of around 400m.

Recommended minimum age 16 years. Children under 16 with suitable experience accompanied by an adult may also be able to participate – please contact us to discuss your requirements.

Group size:

Minimum 6 and maximum 14 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:

Private groups of minimum 6 persons can book this experience at standard prices on other dates by arrangement. Smaller groups are also possible at an additional rate - please contact us to discuss your requirements.

Information about the area:

Created by the Swedish Tourist Association at the end of the 19th century, the King's Trail was made to introduce hikers to the beauty and majesty of the Lapland scenery.

The trail runs 440km from Abisko in the north to Hemavan in the south, passing through some of the world's most spectacular mountain landscapes. In summer, taking day-tours from the main route allows for an ascent of Sweden's highest mountain, Kebnekaise, or excursions into the pathless wilderness of the mighty Sarek National Park.

Despite the remote ski touring possibilities afforded by the trail, altitude differences are relatively small, which makes the King's Trail an ideal long-distance path for extended tours.

The name "Kebnekaise" comes from a Sami word meaning "Cauldron Crest". The mountain has two peaks, the highest of which is glaciated and reaches to a current height of 2105m. As with glacial peaks worldwide, the glacier is showing sides of receding, and the oldest measurement of Kebnekaise puts the height of the mountain at 2117m.

At the foot of the mountain lies Kebnekaise Mountain Station, the starting point for ascents of the mountain via the western (4-6 hours) or eastern (3-5 hours) routes. Kebnekaise is the highest peak in Europe in such a northerly position, and on a clear day an area of land almost the size of the Netherlands can be seen from its summit.

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)
- Stockholm Skavsta (NYO)
- Stockholm Västerås (VST)
- Kiruna (via Stockholm)

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:** 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 to Stockholm. The fastest option.
- **Harwich-Stockholm by ferry and train:** DFDS ferry Harwich to Esbjerg (Denmark), then onward train to Stockholm via Copenhagen. DFDS ferries can be booked online through us – see www.naturetravels.co.uk/add-ons-dfds-seaways-ferries.htm

Travel within Sweden:

The experience begins at Abisko Turiststation and ends in Nikkaluokta for bus transfer to Kiruna.

First travel to Stockholm as shown above.

Stockholm to Abisko Turiststation:

By train: Night train to Abisko Turiststation (travel time around 17-18 hours, direct or with changes). From Stockholm Arlanda (ARN) airport, you can catch the train from Arlanda C, the station at the airport terminal. From Stockholm Skavsta (NYO) or Stockholm Västerås (VST), take the flight bus into central Stockholm (travel time about 90 minutes, can be booked online through Nature Travels - see www.naturetravels.co.uk/add-ons-flygbussarna.htm) for onward connections from Stockholm C (Stockholm Central station).

By air: SAS (www.flysas.com) and Norwegian (www.norwegian.com) both operate flights from Stockholm Arlanda to Kiruna. Abisko Turiststation is 1.5 hours by bus from Kiruna. Please contact us for timetable information.

Nikkaluokta to Stockholm:

By train: Bus transfer to Kiruna (included in the price). Train from Kiruna C to Stockholm (17-18 hours, direct or with changes).

By air: SAS (www.flysas.com) and Norwegian (www.norwegian.com) both operate flights from Kiruna to Stockholm Arlanda. Local buses serve Kiruna airport from Kiruna town. Please contact us for timetable information.

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.

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

If you have any questions, 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 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.