



Nature Travels

outdoor experiences in Sweden



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SAREK NATIONAL PARK EXPEDITION - 9 DAYS

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Sarek National Park Expedition – 9 days

Experience Code: STF9TS1

Visions of Sarek National Park – “Europe’s Last Wilderness” – are the stuff of dreams for many a hiking enthusiast. Together with a guide and like-minded mountain adventurers, you will take a journey through the Sarek mountains and gain a unique insight into a magical area of northern Sweden. The attraction of Sarek is that it is wholly untamed – no marked paths exist to guide you through its breathtaking landscape of mountains and valleys.

The route taken through Sarek National Park has been specially chosen to showcase the diversity of this beautiful area, offering stunning views of moorland to the west, the dramatic high alpine peaks of the Sarek mountain chain with their glacial landscape, and the rainforest-like vegetation of the Rapa Valley (or “Rapadalen” in Swedish). The itinerary also includes time for day excursions and peak tours, allowing you to explore Sarek’s wild beauty with lighter packs.

During the hike you will also have the opportunity to discuss mountain skills with your experienced local guide – including how to assess the weather and wind, the snow and the glaciers, and what to look for when choosing where to pitch camp for the night.

Sarek is a wild and challenging environment, but you do not need to be an expert adventurer to participate. Distances covered daily are manageable, but if you would like to take part in this experience, you should have some experience of mountain hikes carrying a tent and be fit. You should bear in mind that you will need to count on adding another 6-8kg to your personal pack weight to allow for food, tent, kitchen equipment and fuel.

As always in Sarek it is the weather that decides the itinerary. As with any mountain environment, conditions can be unpredictable and your guide may choose to alter the route depending on circumstances. But whatever route you take, you will find the space and freedom of Sarek an uplifting, some would say spiritual, experience, far from the trappings of the modern world.

Sarek National Park is a place to cleanse your soul and rediscover what it really means to be alive!

Itinerary:

Please note that the itinerary below is for guidance only and may be subject to change dependent on weather conditions, abilities of the group, etc.

Day 1:

The group will meet in Ritsem when the first bus arrives. You will have lunch and have a short information talk about the week. The equipment and food will be divided among the participants and you will go through and get to know your equipment for the coming week. In the evening you will take the boat over Akkajaure and hike around 8km to a beautiful camp spot beneath the western peaks of Akkas. Bear in mind that it will be late into the evening before camp is pitched and dinner made.

Day 2:

The hike continues towards the south-east. After some hours you will cross the National Park boundary into Sarek! The needs and wishes of group, as well as weather conditions, will determine the length of the route.

Days 3- 6:

For the most part the hike continues through Ruohtesvagge towards the far end of Rapadalen and Pielaslätten. The terrain will vary from easy-going on heather moorland to high alpine stony ground, possibly through areas covered with snow and ice. The exact route taken will vary dependent on weather conditions, which can be very changeable in this high alpine area.

Day 7:

Towards Guhkesvagge and a bridge which leads over a mountain stream. On the other side you cross into Stora Sjöfallets ("Big Waterfalls") National Park.

Day 8:

Over Nienndo towards Slugga. You can make out the lake of Pietsaure in the pass between Gahppo and Slugga, where a boat will be waiting to take you over to the Pietsaure Sami camp (the indigenous people of Lapland). Here you will be welcomed with a meal – it is a real experience to sit at a table to eat after a week in the mountains! You will pitch your tents for the night at a spot around 3km east of the Sami camp.

Day 9:

You will break camp for the last time, hiking around 4km down to Saltoluokta Mountain Station. Here await showers, sauna, and a served dinner! In the afternoon the boat will take you over Langas, where the bus will be waiting on the other side to take you to Gällivare and the train south.

Additional information:

The midnight sun does not shine the whole summer, but it is daylight around the clock from approximately 15 May to 31 July. In August, bring a small torch or headtorch.

Mobile phones do not normally work on the mountains. The guide will carry a satellite phone for use only in emergencies.

Detailed information about times, guides, etc, will be sent out to all participants around 2-4 weeks before departure.

Fixed dates for 2010 summer season:

23.07-31.07.10

The price:

£521/person

What The Price Includes:

Transfer

Boat transfers on Akkajaure, Pietsaure and Langas.

Accommodation

Accommodation in shared tents.

Meals

All meals during hike, meal in Ritsem, meal in Pietsaure Sami camp, meal at Saltoluokta Mountain Station.

Equipment

Camping and kitchen equipment, tent and fuel.

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.

Food: When you meet in Ritsem the food for the whole hike will be divided. There are no possibilities to supplement food or equipment supplies after leaving Ritsem. NB: Please note that toilet paper is not included in the food package.

Tents: When you divide the food you will also be divided into tent teams of 2 (in exceptional cases 3) persons, and share food, tent, kitchen and fuel during the whole hike.

The tents used are high quality mountain tents. Most of them are made by Hilleberg, with a few exceptions, and are made for 2 or 3 persons. The tents weigh 3-4 kg. It generally works well to divide the weight so one person carries the tent canvas and one carries the poles and pegs.

Map: A suitable map for this hike is BD 10, "Sareks Nationalpark" (edition 2006 or later). We do not recommend a particular supplier, but the maps are stocked by www.themapshop.co.uk

Travel luggage: If you wish, it is possible to leave surplus clothes and other personal equipment in Kebnets, where the bus stops on the way to Ritsem. Please bring a small bag to pack excess items in and hand the bag to one of the crew on the boat M/S Langas. This will then be transferred for you to Saltoluokta Mountain Station, where your tour ends. Mark your luggage with your name and arrival date. The mountain station will make a small charge for this service.

Packing list: A detailed equipment list will be provided after booking. Think about packing light! During a Sarek hike the backpack does not need to weigh more than 18-20kg incl. tent and food. Most people bring too many changes of clothes. Buy hygiene articles in travel size (or transfer to smaller containers!). Choose the smallest and lightest. Remember that on top of what you pack at home you will need to add approximately 6-8kg for food, tent, cooking equipment and fuel.

Fluids: It is extremely important to maintain your fluid levels, otherwise you will become tired and slow much more easily. Bring a water bottle and cup. You will often cross streams flowing with crystal clear water, but these can sometimes be spaced quite far apart, especially up on the mountain plains.

Packing list (recommended):

Toiletries:

Small soap, toothpaste/toothbrush, sun-cream, first aid kit, toilet paper, small towel and 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 rainwear (jacket and trousers) and anorak/windproof jacket, boots or hiking wellingtons with ruff and profiled sole. Gaiters if you have low hiking boots, shoes/sandals for wading, hiking socks (wool), a pair of warm socks, something to cover your head in case of heat or rain, a pair of gloves/mittens, a warm sweater, shirt, trousers, long underpants, underwear and something to sleep in.

Equipment:

Backpack minimum 60 litres with hip belt, rain cover for backpack, hiking pole(s) min. 150 cm, sleeping bag, sleeping mattress, water bottle, mug, camping set with plate and cutlery, scrubbing sponge (for washing up).

Additional:

Compass, sunglasses, matches, knife, and a map in plastic cover.

Can be good to bring:

Camera, binoculars, paper and pen, boot wax, shoelaces, small whisk, a novel, spare straps/buckles for backpack, small washing line, talc to protect against blisters.

Health requirements/experience:

You should have a good level of health and fitness and be used to hiking in alpine conditions. The distance covered each day varies between 10-20 km. Note that 20km over rough, pathless terrain can be considerably more challenging than hiking in other environments.

Largest height difference in a single stretch around 300m, excluding peak tours and other exploration.

Recommended minimum age 18 years.

Group size:

Minimum participants: 6

Maximum participants: 14

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:

Sarek National Park:

Area: 197,000 hectares

Sarek is strikingly alpine for Sweden with magnificent mountain ranges and narrow valleys, glaciers and wild rapids. It is a splendid piece of unspoiled wilderness. The park contains over 200 mountains over 1,800 metres. Six of Sweden's 13 highest mountains are found here, as are about 100 glaciers. Rapadalen valley is the artery of Sarek. The Rapaätno river has an enormous flow and carries green glacial water from about thirty glaciers. Rapadalen contains dense thickets of mountain birch, osier and herbaceous plants. The flora is rather poor in most of the park, but the animal life in the great valleys is rich. If you are lucky you can see bear, wolverine, lynx or one of the unusually large elks.

Sarek is not recommended for beginners. Those wishing to visit the park must have considerable alpine experience and the correct equipment and should be used to spending time outdoors. Sarek is an extremely inaccessible wilderness with no facilities whatsoever for tourists. Here, you are on your own. The foremost sights of Sarek are the alpine landscape with its sharp peaks, glaciers and narrow valleys, the animal life and the delta areas in Rapaselet and Rapadeltat.

Hiking in Sarek requires familiarity with alpine conditions, difficult terrain and rapidly changing weather. There are no sleeping facilities for tourists. There are only a few bridges, and crossing the many rivers may be difficult: rain, or warm weather that accelerates glacial melting, may dramatically increase the flow of water. During winter, the risk of avalanches and severe snowstorms is great.

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 at 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)

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 start point is at the bus station in Ritsem. The tour ends at Saltoluokta with boat transfer to Kebnats for bus to Gällivare.

Stockholm to Ritsem:

From Stockholm: Night train from Stockholm C (Stockholm Central station) to Gällivare, travel time around 14.5 hours direct. Bus to Ritsem, travel time around 3.5 hours direct.

From Stockholm Arlanda (ARN): Night train from Arlanda C (the station at the airport terminal) to Gällivare. Travel time around 14 hours with one change.

From Stockholm Skavsta (NYO) or Stockholm Västerås (VST): Flight bus to central Stockholm (travel time about 80 mins) for onward connections as shown above.

Kebnats to Stockholm:

Bus from Kebnats to Gällivare (travel time 1 hour 40 minutes direct) for onward connections as shown above.

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 provider has received a prestigious Swedish Ecotourism award for its commitment to high standards to cultural and environmental sensitivity.