



Nature Travels

outdoor experiences in Sweden



Photo: Staffan Widstrand

TIMBER RAFTING ON KLARALVEN: 5/8 DAYS

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Timber Rafting on Klarälven: 5 or 8 day tour

Experience Code: 5 day: VV58RS1-5; 8 day: VV58RS1-8; 8 day shorter route: VV58RS1-8/50

Floating peacefully down the river Klarälven on a timber raft, seeing Värmland's wild nature and the tiny villages of Klarälven valley from the river gives you the feeling that the bustle and stress of everyday life has ceased to exist. But floating downstream in a leisurely manner like Huckleberry Finn is only part of the story – this is a voyage of adventure, a journey of discovery and an exercise in teamwork.

Once assembled, your raft will weigh around 2000kg, and you will need to keep an eye on what's up ahead as you steer her towards your destination. Along the way, there will be sandbanks and log traps to negotiate, and you will learn to know the moods of the river as you navigate your way down the wide and gently-flowing Klarälven. The timber rafts that are used on the Klarälven river are both easy to build and easy to dismantle after the trip. Logs about 3 metres (= nine feet) long and rope are the only materials allowed.

Discover the adventure of a 5 or 8-day log-raft trip and experience the feeling of constructing, riding and dismantling your own log raft!

The River Klarälven has the longest history of use as a professional logging route in Sweden and was used for this purpose right up until 1991. Today you have a unique opportunity to keep this old tradition alive by building your own timber raft. During your timber raft tour you are certain to have some memorable and occasionally exhilarating experiences.

Day 1: You gather at 17:00 in Gunnerud. You will be issued with the equipment you have booked for your tour. You will be provided with information about building your timber raft, the timber raft route and country code. You spend the first night in a tent at the meeting place.

Day 2- 5 or 8: In the morning, you will be driven to the timber raft building site at Osebol or Branäsäng, depending on the water level in Klarälven. Independent of building site, the tour will be about 50 km. On the river shore there will be good supply of 3 metre long logs and rope, which is all you need to build a stable timber raft. The timber raft must be constructed in the water. Capable instructors will be at hand at the building site. Building a raft is fun but can be very hard work. We recommend you bring some working gloves to avoid blisters!

In the afternoon you should be ready to cast off. For the following days this 18 square metre timber raft will be your home. The raft will go with the stream at a speed of about 2 km per hour. Depending on the water level in the river you might have time to set ashore and explore various attractions along the Klarälven. There is a variety of heritage centres, local handicraft shops, churches and beauty spots, winding lakes, sand river banks etc. You will also have an opportunity to see wild animals and do some fishing (you need a fishing licence). You may also face challenges such as sand bars and eddies.

You will need to keep a check on the pace of the river, observing the contours on the map and letting the raft follow the flow of the water – and you will need to use your pole and paddles to stay clear of backwaters, sandbanks and overhanging branches. Steering with paddles takes determination – the current is strong and the raft heavy, but if you do get stuck in a backwater, there is only one thing for it: paddling is the only way out! If you find yourself stuck on a sandbank, it's time to use the pole – but don't forget to push off in the same direction you came from!

Please note that this is not a guided tour. This is a discovery of your own, taken at your own pace and you will choose your own camping spot each night. You will be given detailed guidance and advice before the start of the tour by the local provider. You choose the daily stages to suit your own pace and spend the night under canvas on your own well-moored timber raft or ashore in a tent. At your destination, Gunnerud, you take your timber raft apart and return your hired equipment by 17.00 on day 5 or 8.

Dates for 2008 summer season:

Period: Sundays, Mondays, Wednesdays 04.06 - 27.08.08. During high season Fridays 04.07 - 08.08.08.

Meeting place: Gunnerud at 5 pm.

Price for 5 day tour:

Price £/person	Adults	Children 6-15yrs	Children 3-5yrs	Groups*
Basic equipment, kitchen equipment	205	103	52	148

***Groups:** 10 participants minimum. Price per person regardless of age. 5-6 persons/timber raft.

Distance covered: 50km

Price for 8 day tour:

Price £/person	Adults	Children 6-15yrs	Children 3-5yrs	Groups*
Basic equipment, kitchen equipment	243	122	61	171

***Groups:** 10 participants minimum. Price per person regardless of age. 5-6 persons/timber raft.

Distance covered: 100km

NEW FOR 2008! If you wish, you can choose to do a 50km route over 8 days (prices as above for 8-day tour), giving you more time to stop and explore, go for day hikes, etc along the way. If you would like to choose this option, please mention this in the "notes" section when you complete your booking form.

What The Price Includes:

Equipment

Your basic equipment consists of: Logs, ropes, life ring, paddle, pole, life-jacket, tarpaulin, matches, plate for spirit stove, first aid kit, bucket, garbage sack, toilet paper, spade, fresh water container, topographical map, storage box.

Kitchen- equipment contents: Hurricane stove* with petroleum, mug, plate, knife, fork, spoon, carving knife, chopping board, frying spatula, cheese cutter, whisk, tin-and bottle-opener, potato-peeler, washing-up bowl, dish-sponge, washing-up liquid, kitchen roll, matches and one storage box.

*For approximate contents please see: http://www.trangia.se/english/2921.25_series.html

Instructor:

Services of experienced and knowledgeable instructor before your tour starts.

Transport:

Transport by bus for participants and equipment from the meeting point to the raft building site.

What The Price Does Not Include:

Food, tent, sleeping bag.

Please note that this is not a guided tour. This is a discovery of your own, taken at your own pace and you will choose your own camping spot each night. You will be given detailed guidance and advice before the start of the tour by the local provider.

Optional extras:

There are sleeping bags and tents available for hire and the option to take a canoe along. See descriptions and price list below.

Accommodation

Four-person Hilleberg tents are available to hire.

Meals

There is no food included. There are opportunities to stop and shop along the way in Branäs, Likenäs, Ambjörby, Stöllet, Osebol and Ekshäräd.

Sleeping bag package

Sleeping bag, sleeping bag liner, sleeping mat.

Canoe

2 person Canadian canoe (we would recommend this as it gives you much greater flexibility during your trip).

5 day tour:

Additional	Adults	Children 6-15yrs	Children 3-5yrs	Groups*
Sleeping bag	£12	£12	£12	£12
4-person tent**	£46			
Canoe**	£77			

*Groups: 10 participants minimum. Price per person regardless of age. 5-6 persons/timber raft

**Price given is per tent or per canoe

8 day tour:

Additional	Adults	Children 6-15yrs	Children 3-5yrs	Groups*
Sleeping bag	£15	£15	£15	£15
4 person tent**	£65			
Canoe**	£97			

*Groups: 10 participants minimum. Price per person regardless of age. 5-6 persons/timber raft.

**Price given is per tent or per canoe

If you wish to buy a fishing licence or if you have any questions or need to buy anything else, the local instructor will help you and will be there at least 30 mins before you start.

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.

To make sure your trip is as comfortable as possible, pack your belongings in waterproof containers.

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:

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), 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. Footwear for use in water.

Equipment:

Rucksack, sleeping bag, sleeping mat, towel, tent (if not hired as optional extra).

Additional:

Compass, sunglasses, matches, knife, camera, binoculars, sufficient food, and a good book. We also recommend you bring working gloves for building the raft to avoid blisters.

Health requirements/experience:

Swimming ability required by adults. All participation at own risk. You should be in good health and have a reasonable level of fitness and strength. A good deal of physical activity is required during this tour. The poles for building the raft must be carried to the water and assembled once in the water. This requires some effort, but above all it is necessary to help each other and work together. It is not necessary to be particularly strong - many "normal" families take part in this tour – but the work can be demanding. You should also be used to and enjoy the outdoor life.

A minimum of 2 adults is required for each raft. You should bear in mind that for only 2 people it can be physically demanding to build and pilot the raft. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions regarding what is involved and we will be happy to answer your queries.

Groups:

10 participants minimum for group price. Price per person regardless of age. 5-6 persons/timber raft. It is possible to book this tour for larger groups. Please contact us for a quote.

Information about the area:

Värmland is often described as the province of nature and culture. It is also a province of wilderness with unspoiled forests, distant blue mountains and shimmering wild waters for fishing and canoeing. The people of Värmland are known for being friendly and helpful. Hospitality and obliging manners are also typical characteristics for a person from Värmland. Värmland is an excellent recreation area. There are a lot of lakes, streams, high mountains and deep forests. And through it all runs the river Klarälven, the largest river in Sweden.

The Klarälven River and valley

Klarälven is the longest river of Sweden, about 270km long and runs the length of Värmland, from the Norwegian border in the north to Lake Vänern in the south. It has its sources in the Härjedalen from where it runs further on into Norway and the area of Femund and runs back into Sweden. In Norway it is more of a white-water river, slowing down south of Sysslebäck and finally changes its character into a slow and calm river, heading for its outlet in the Vänern lake.

Klarälven is both of historical and geological interest. It is a typical example of an "old river" that has eroded and dug its way through the primary rocks for thousands of years. Today it winds its way through the rock and sandy soil of the valley in numerous meanderings (86 of them from Sysslebäck to Gunnerud). In the northern part the forested valley side plunge steeply into the river, while further south the landscape is flatter and opens out onto meadows and cultivated land.

The special meanderings of the river also give the beautiful sand beaches along the way. The former Pilgrims' Way (Pilgrimsleden) runs alongside the Klarälven, it was used during the 11th century by monks and pilgrims on their pilgrimage to the grave of Olov the Holy in Nidaros, now Trondheim, in Norway. These pilgrimages have had its impression on the valley. The churches lay with a days walk (20-30 km) from each other. Apart from the religious function of the churchyards were a safe place to spend the night– safe from animals, ambushes and more (the pilgrim usually carried all their belongings with them). Around these churches, markets and small villages naturally developed, where the handling of all sorts of merchandise were common. Still, until this day, the valley reminds you of this.

Keep a lookout for wild animals. The forests of Värmland are home to elk, roe deer and foxes. At the border towards Norway there are wolves, bear and lynx, but it is very difficult to catch a glimpse of any of them. The biggest inhabitant of the river is the beaver and if you keep real quiet and still in the dusk you have good chances to see this fascinating animal.

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

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
- Gothenburg
- Oslo (Norway)
- Copenhagen (Denmark) with onward flight to Karlstad

For details of flight connections see our Travel Add-ons page at <http://www.naturetravels.co.uk/category-add-ons.htm>

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

Without flying

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

Travel within Sweden:

Travel to this experience via Karlstad and then on with bus or rental car.

From Stockholm: Train to Karlstad. Travel time 2.5-3.5 hours direct.

From Stockholm Arlanda airport: Train to Karlstad via Stockholm. Travel time 3-4 hours with one change.

From Stockholm Skavsta airport: Train to Karlstad. Travel time 4-5 hours with changes.

From Stockholm Västerås airport: Local taxi bus to Västerås. Train to Karlstad. Travel time 3.5-4.5 hours with changes.

From Gothenburg: Train from Gothenburg Central station, travel time approx. 2.5 hours. Direct or with changes.

From Oslo: Train to Karlstad. Direct or with changes.

From Copenhagen: Fly direct to Karlstad with SAS.

Flight buses from Swedish airports into the city can be booked online through us – see www.naturetravels.co.uk/add-ons-flygbussarna.htm

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.

After arriving in Karlstad, you have the option to travel by bus (travelling time 2 hours), or rent a car (travelling time 1 hours 10 min). More details and advice on local transport will be provided after booking. If you would like to drive, full driving instructions can 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.