



## Trip Report from Scott Gray

### Discover Dog Sledding in Lapland combined with Wilderness Cabin at the Reindeer Lodge (+ associated activities), March 2017

*(note that the Ice Hotel component of the tour and horse-riding activity described below were an independent arrangement – we do not offer these activities, but are happy to provide suggestions for combining the experiences we offer with other possibilities locally)*

We made our way from Texas to Frankfurt to Stockholm and eventually to Kiruna where we were promptly collected by our shuttle driver who immediately drove us to be outfitted with snowsuits, hats, mitts, etc. From there we were deposited at a site approximately 2km from the dog sledding camp and picked up via snowmobile and taken to the camp. We knew we were close as the barking of the excited dogs grew more intense.

The camp was - as advertised - not equipped with running water or electricity and so simple candlelit dinners were the norm. We did have sufficient heat from a woodburning cast-iron heater, which kept us toasty. There was plenty of snow and the dog sledding was fully exhilarating. Everyone had a good time. It is clear that Eef and PJ are well versed in dog care and handling, and are passionate about what they do in the winter time.

After a couple of days we made our way via snowmobile/shuttle back towards the town of Kiruna where we enjoyed a local lunch (the Safari Cafe is great!), toured around and - eventually - to the Ice Hotel, which was a really fun adventure. The cold rooms are kept at -5c, and with an outside temp of -2c we were happy to have the down-filled sleeping bags. That night we went horseback riding in search of the northern lights, and the young woman who guided us was very pleasant, knowledgeable and friendly. My family and I enjoyed the meal she prepared and although we didn't see the northern lights, it was a good time discussing Lapland history and customs. No complaints whatsoever. Upon returning to the Ice Hotel and enjoying a bit of time at the bar we were summoned outside because there - in the sky - were the northern lights, and it was a fine showing.

One night in the cold room is sufficient, we all agreed, and the next day we made our way to the Reindeer Lodge, which is really, really fantastic. I'm pleased to say that we fully recommend Johnny (spelling??) and the Reindeer Lodge. It was super nice, and so was he. It is an easy place to relax, I would say. The meals he prepared were simple, but nonetheless delicious. It's clear that he is not only practiced at cooking, but must enjoy it very much as everyone in our group exclaimed about Johnny's culinary skills. His dry wit and clever humor went a long way, as well.

The snowmobile outing that evening was a kick in the pants, and Daniel is a fun guide. We had met and spoken with him earlier at the Sami museum and so it was a very nice evening. He was very eager to assist and was hopeful that we might have a good time while in Sweden, which we did.

We participated in the reindeer sledding the next day which was quite fun, and although we did not anticipate it, we were given a solidly informative lecture on the Sami people by a very nice young man named Rasmus who is - as I recall - 7/8 Sami himself. It's a very interesting culture and we - being rather inquisitive - were thoroughly entertained for a couple of hours over a lovely reindeer lunch.

The local Sami museum and the town of Jukkasjärvi were splendid. All of the people we encountered were friendly, kind, courteous and engaging. We even stopped at the local food truck and practically gorged on delicious moose subs! What a funny time it was - particularly walking back to the Reindeer Lodge across the frozen river!



On our last evening in the area we enjoyed yet another Swedish sauna and - with the permission of Johnny, the host - cleared the snow from the fire pit and shared a glass of wine (or two) when - much to our delight - the northern lights put on an absolutely stunning grand finale. What a treat !

I can say that for us this was a very engaging trip and I can recommend not only your services, but those who were 'on the ground' and making our trip a seamless event.

Thank you very, very much - really - for helping us put everything together and for graciously accepting all of our calls and patiently answering all of our questions. Sweden is a long way from home for us, and it's not often that we are able to take a trip as this so your helpfulness is much appreciated.