

Victoria Hill, a guest on our Northern Lights Dog Sledding in Lapland tour December 2012, kindly sent us the following trip report



It's two years since my trip with Nature Travels to Lapland, on a dogsledding trip. I keep thinking back to the time spent with your wonderful guide and beautiful dogs. People often ask me what I enjoyed most and here's what I say...

The dogs are friendly, enthusiastic and very kind to beginners. They try to help you in every way, being really patient as you fumble with the harnesses until, very quickly, you get the hang of it. On the daily run, the lead dog looked over her shoulder often to check I was ok, and I had the feeling she was eager for me to have a good time!

The actual sleds are very compact and easy to manoeuvre, and it gave me a great sense of achievement every time I leaned into a corner or occasionally helped by running alongside (not strictly necessary but the exercise did me the world of good). I loved the peace and beauty of the surroundings, and being alone with my thoughts and feelings. It made a wonderful change not being able to check Facebook or emails for days at a time, a rare situation these days. Breaking for lunch in the snow was a welcome event, lighting a huge fire and watching the delicious soup bubbling in the pot, while chatting to my fellow sledders and taking photographs. Then it was back on board for the final run to the next overnight stop, usually in a wooden cabin in a beautiful setting.

On arriving at camp in the late afternoon, tired but happy, we would feed the dogs and make sure they were securely bedded down for the night. The warm and welcoming stoves are left on all through the season, so the sleeping quarters and lounge are toasty warm. The trip to the outside toilet was always an adventure, just far enough from the huts to feel like a pioneer, but close enough to dash there and back without getting too cold. And as for the saunas! I've never been so clean in all my life, and they warmed me to the very bone, making sleeping tight all night no problem at all (except for the odd bit of snoring from the bunk next door)!

Evening meals were made by the host, and very always tasty and filling. Some of us laid the table, and others did the washing up. Then it was cards, or sharing tales of the day, or looking at photos, or just sitting next to the fire reading. Drying out socks, gloves and tops next to the stove was part of the nightly ritual; it was so lovely to put on warm dry clothes in the morning. The cabins all have baskets of slippers so you could pad around in comfort in the evening. Having minimum kit was great too, as we packed up each morning and moved on to the next camp. I took some of the new merino underclothes (which always smelt fresh, despite sweating during the day) and all outer kit and boots and huge mitten-like outer gloves were provided by the host.

After three days I thought I was over it, and felt that would have been enough, but then I settled down again, and I can say hand on heart that after the full 8 day trip I was so sorry to leave, and could easily have done another week. One settles into the rhythm, and the scenery is so breathtaking, the only sound the panting of the dogs and the quiet swoosh of the snow parting, and of course the wild howling to get going in the mornings and after lunch, In fact, whenever you stop the dogs are straining at the harness to run again, accompanied by the happy laughter and shouts of joy from their human companions.

I would and do, without hesitation, recommend this trip to everyone. Take your kids, take your lover, take your best friends, but go.