



Sarek National Park, Sweden

Lose yourself in Europe's last great wilderness.



Sarek, in northern Sweden's Lapland province, is to Europe what Denali National Park is to the United States—the place to go for remote, untamed adventure. Sprawling across 1,200 square miles of pristine Arctic wilderness, the park contains 100 glaciers, a sea of 200 alpine peaks more than 5,000 feet high, and broad valleys cut by fast-flowing rivers. Just 2,000 people backpack here a year; don't take the challenges lightly should you decide to join them.

You'll ford icy rivers daily, face severe weather, and have to find your way in a place with no trails, signs, or shelters (and just two bridges). The payoff is adventure in its rawest form.

The best plan: Trek roughly 10 days and 60 miles from Sitoalvsbron to Kvikkjokk via the wide Rapa Valley. Thirty glaciers feed the silt-green, braided Rapaatno River, and elk, eagles, lynx, wolverine, moose, and brown bear inhabit the valley. From Sitoalvsbron, hike six miles to the east shore of Laitaure Lake, then catch a boat ride (arranged upon arrival) to the historic homestead of Aktse, where cabins are available. Ease in to things with a nine-mile round-trip dayhike to Skierfe—a prominent peak that rises 2,500 feet above the delta—and score a wall-worthy photo of the Rapa Valley parting a sea of mountains. The next day, travel by boat to the park boundary east of Nammatj and start walking across tundra

where wildflowers bloom in the brief summer; camp nightly in a broad valley flanked by cliffs and snowy peaks. **Life-list moment:** Midway through the journey, arrive at Rovdjurstorget, aka Predator Square, and find yourself closer than you'd like to an eight-foot-tall, 1,500-pound moose. Several days later, after crossing the vast Pårök plain, finish at Kvikkjokk, which has basic lodging and, of course, a sauna.

Plan It

- » **Map** *Sarek National Park BD 10* (mapsworldwide.com/sku_15009.htm, \$20)
- » **Season** August to early October; snow can fall in any month.
- » **Essential gear** A lightweight four-season tent
- » **Need to know** Expert navigation and foul-weather experience required. No permit or fee.
- » **Cost** DIY: \$ // Guided: \$\$
- » **Outfitter** Nature Travels, naturetravels.co.uk
- » **Info** naturvardsverket.se/en/ In-English; visitsweden.com