

Lapland in the grip: Manoel Morgado and his recent adventure in the Arctic

By Editorial Staff

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Aerial view of the dogsled journey through Lapland. Photo: Daniel Kroiss.

Known for his extreme expeditions in places like Antarctica and the Himalayas, **Manoel Morgado** recently traded the high altitudes for the inhospitable plains of Lapland.

The Brazilian mountaineer and doctor set out on an unprecedented challenge: a 300 km dogsled crossing in the remote Vindelfjällen Nature Reserve in Swedish Lapland — the largest protected area in Europe and, paradoxically, one of the least visited.

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“I’m very curious about trying new things. I always say that I divide the world into specialists and generalists, and I’m the kind of guy who likes to try everything,” says Morgado, who, without knowing exactly what he was getting into, chose the most challenging version of this tour, designed by the British agency **Nature Travels**.



Morgado about to start the adventure alongside his friend André Moraes. Photo: Personal Archive.



Dog sled crossing frozen lakes in Sweden. Photo: Personal Archive.



Rustic breakfast in Lapland. Photo: Personal Archive.

The Wilderness Dogsled Adventure in Vindelfjällen expedition is a journey that organizers consider to be a difficult one—an eight-day immersion into the Arctic lifestyle that demands physical and mental endurance and a great deal of adaptability. On his first visit to the Arctic, Morgado found the adventure he was looking for.

“They told me that I needed experience to drive the sled, but in practice it was just ten minutes of instruction. I got on, took off the brake and suddenly I was flying around a curve. And off I went,” jokes Morgado, who took part in the expedition alongside an Italian guide, his friend André Moraes and two other Europeans.

Each participant was responsible for a team of six huskies, all elite “athletes” trained to cover long distances. With the sled under his feet and the canine team in front, Manoel glided daily over about 40 km of icy terrain — crossing frozen lakes, snowy forests and valleys between

mountains. “It was like surfing. You stand on a narrow track behind the sled, balancing from one side to the other, trying to keep up with the dogs’ dance,” he describes.

“But we learned along the way, taking some nice tumbles. And the snow varies, sometimes it’s soft, sometimes it’s harder. There were times when we walked on ice, then everything was faster and without obstacles, easier to keep our balance. But there were other times when we went into the snow, then went up the mountain, down the mountain, and always trying to control the crazy dogs,” says the Brazilian guide.



The little dogs eager to start the day's activities. Photo: Personal Archive.



View of Swedish Lapland. Photo: Daniel Kroiss.



Nights were spent in tents or rustic cabins in the middle of nowhere. Photo: Daniel Kroiss.

The routine was demanding: it began with preparing breakfast for the dogs—large blocks of meat melted in a bain-marie—, followed by breaking camp, reorganizing the sleds, and setting off for another day in the snow. At the end of the day, the priority remained the same: taking care of the dogs first. Only then would dinner and a well-deserved rest come in rustic cabins or makeshift camps in the middle of nowhere.

“You get attached to the dogs. You know each one’s name, you feed them, you put their coats on them at night, you really take care of them. They love it. When we got on the sled, they were desperate to start running. And at the end of the day, it was beautiful to see how much care the team took. They even put a kind of ice pack on the dogs’ ankles, like a physiotherapist would do with an athlete.”

While I’ve experienced brutal temperatures in the Himalayas and Antarctica, the Arctic presents a different kind of challenge: continuous exposure to the ever-moving, icy wind. “The cold you feel on the frozen lakes, with the wind blowing from the front, is something I’ve never experienced before. And those endless lakes... 10, 15 kilometers of pure ice. It’s an impressive expanse.”

“I’m kind of biased towards mountains, but that view got me. It was like the Arctic was pulling back the curtain and showing everything at once.”

At the end of the 300 km journey, Manoel returned to the place where it all began, with a whiter beard and his skin damaged by the snow. “It was my first time in the Arctic, but it left me wanting more. The experience of moving like the ancient people of Lapland, in silence, with the dogs and the snow, is something that transforms you.”

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Wilderness Dogsled Adventure, Vindelfjällen, Lapland. Photo: Personal Archive / Daniel Kroiss / Sarah Zietlhof

Go there:

Dogsled in Vindelfjällen Nature Reserve, Swedish Lapland

Best time:

Between March and April, when there is a lot of snow, but the cold is not as extreme as in the height of winter. In March, temperatures range from -15°C to -5°C .

Difficulty level:

Optional. Morgado's expedition was considered to be of a difficult level, with 300 km covered in 8 days. It is necessary to be physically fit and willing to undertake hours of intense activity, including setting up camp, caring for the dogs and moving over uneven terrain.

Golden tip:

Dogs' well-being is a top priority. Choose agencies like [Nature Travels](#) that have a proven track record of caring for animals — and prepare to bond with them. By the end of your trip, you'll know all of your four-legged companions' names.

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