



Raft building in Sweden

The Klarälven River in Sweden was used as a professional logging route until 1991. On this ecologically sound holiday we travelled from Gothenburg to Klarälven and were taught how to build and pilot our very own raft.

Floating peacefully down river on your own timber creation must surely be the stuff of childhood dreams. It's an ideal way to experience the wilderness of Värmland and the tiny villages of the Klarälven valley, and with a good chance of encountering beavers, elk and deer.

The rafts can take five to six people and you travel for four days at a sedate 2kph. You carry all your provisions and camping equipment onboard and spend the nights either sleeping on the raft or camping beside the river. At your journey's end, the raft is dismantled and the logs are recycled – so you leave nothing behind you but a great holiday .

Age range: from three years.

What to bring: sleeping bags and mats, towels, rainwear and quick-drying clothing, swimwear, waterproof camera, bug repellent, sun cream. The water is warmest from the beginning of June to the end of August.

What's provided: three-metre logs, rope, tents, cooking and camping equipment, and basic provisions. You build the raft in the water with instructors' help and advice.

Where to book: adults from £172, children aged 6-15 years from £86, children aged 3-5 years £43, all for five nights with four nights' rafting. Nature Travels: 01929 463774, www.naturetravels.co.uk/timber_rafting_vv58rs1.htm. SAS (0870 60 727 727, www.flysas.co.uk) has 13 weekly flights from Heathrow to Gothenburg from £103.50pp. Ryanair (www.ryanair.com) flights

are available from Stansted or Glasgow to Gothenburg, followed by train or rental car (just over an hour's drive to Karlstad).

Raft building is also available through International Adventure: 01767 650312, www.btinternet.com/~international.adventure/timber1.html. It costs £434pp for an eight-day trip for a family of four, including car ferry between Newcastle and Kristiansand with DFDS Seaways, onboard accommodation in a four-person berth, and transport to site. Waterworld Sweden also offers raft building trips: www.waterworld-sweden.com/raftbuilding.htm

