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Karelian Winter Adventure



*Snow-mobiling, Dog sledding, X-country Skiing,
Snow Shoeing and Ice Fishing*

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Karelian Winter Adventure 2009/10

Space to find peace, amid pure unsullied country side – that's Finland. It is Europe's 7th largest country with only 5 million people! Even Helsinki is home to only 1 million people – you will not see any skyscrapers anywhere in Finland. Finland contains more lakes than any other country, these huge stretches of water link up to form massive inland waterways. Sprinkled with thousands of islands they form a vast aquatic system of astonishing beauty. In the winter these are all frozen.

Karelia

Finland became independent in 1917, but before this time Karelia was ruled by Russia and Sweden in turn. The Karelian border has been re-drawn again and again over the centuries, the last time being just 50 years ago. Nowadays Finnish Karelia, officially known as the Province of North Karelia, is the eastern most province of Finland and of the entire European Union. Karelia is a beautiful, wilderness region on the Russian frontier. This is a land where people respect the countryside and the forces of nature, and where the natural environment is a source of joy and vigour. Karelia is truly a land for the adventurous and a region we believe to be the best for winter exploration.

Climate

In November Finland freezes and then unfreezes in April. It is dark over the winter months but by March there are 12 hours of daylight and the snow is normally in excellent condition. It will be cold with temperatures between -10°C and 5°C and March is the driest month. The lakes are solid and the forests and tracks are covered with about a metre of snow.



The Northern Lights. As dusk deepens to night, the winter sky in Finland can be lit up by mesmerising streamers of coloured lights and vibrant blazing arcs as the celestial sphere cracks with electricity. This is the Aurora Borealis. It is usually possible to see it every few nights between January and May when the atmosphere is crystal clear and the nights are cold.

Sauna – smoke and steam but no sex

The Finns will prescribe a sauna session to cure all ills. There are over a million saunas in Finland, most of them are private. An invitation to bathe in a family's sauna is an honour. Finns are quite strict about the non-sexual character of saunas and this should be respected. The ideal temperature of a sauna is about 90°C, you can use the vasta (bunch of leafy birch twigs) to lightly strike yourself to improve the circulation. When you are sufficiently warmed you can then jump in the lake or sea (in the winter gently lower yourself through an ice hole!!).

Itinerary

- Day 1 Arrival and met at Joensuu airport. Transfer to hotel
- Day 2 **Joys of Snow-mobiling.** Equipped in warm thermal suits at 'Forest Folk' Safari house you will be given instruction on driving your snowmobile. The safari will take you through snowy forests and across the ice-covered Lake Pielinen. Along the way you will stop lunch at a tepee. The distance covered is about 120 km.
- Day 3 **Snowshoe Hike.** The tour starts at the 'Forest Folk' Safari house at the hotel with you collecting your equipment. You will then be taken to Pyssyvaara hill, which is located about 10 km away. There you will be shown the basic technique of snowshoe hiking by an experienced guide. On the top of the hill you will enjoy fantastic views across Lake Pielinen. Lunch will be round the campfire. After the break the hike downhill appears much easier!
- Day 4 **Dog Sled Trekking.** You will be given thermal clothing, felted rubber boots, woollen socks, gloves and a cap. At the husky centre you will be given basic instruction on mushing and you will be able to practise handling your team of huskies. After harnessing the dogs you will start the 20 km safari through frozen forests with each person driving their own team of 4 dogs. On return to the husky centre there will be a warm sauna waiting. Lunch will be served at the end of the day.
- Day 5 **Skiing Lesson and Cross-Country Ski Journey.** You will have instruction on the techniques of cross-country skiing by professional guide after which you will ski to a nearby village across relatively flat terrain. Outdoor lunch and hot juice will be served during the day.
- Day 6 **Rainbow Trout Fishing.** You will be given thermal clothing, felted rubber boots, woollen socks, gloves and a cap. You will transfer to Lokinlampi situated about 6 km away where you will be welcomed by the local fisherman. You will then try and catch the local delicacy - rainbow trout. Coffee with a snack will be provided round the fire. Return transfer to hotel.
- Day 7 **Free Time - equipment for hire**
- Day 8 Transfer from hotel to Joensuu airport



Accommodation

You will be accommodated in cottage/cabin type accommodation in an excellent hotel with swimming pools and sauna. The rooms are twin bedded, warm with en-suite facilities. You will eat in a grand log house and have the choice of a buffet or 'a la carte' for the evening meal.

Visa, Passport and Currency

Finland is a member of the European Union thus no visa's are required for European citizens. You will need a valid passport and for in-country medical emergencies, you should have form E111 which is available from most Post Offices. Finland is in the Euro Zone.

Dates and Prices

Ref. No. Dates
 2009/10

This trip can be arranged for a minimum of two people for any week from December to April.

Group size: min 2 Persons

Experience required. No previous experience of any of the activities is required. However this is an active holiday and a reasonable level of fitness is required.

Land only: £1115

Insurance: Insurance can be bought through our representative 'Travel & Insurance Company plc' 0845 408 0583 or insurance@tagconnect.co.uk

Supplement for single room (140 EUR).

Air Flights

If you are arranging your own flight you need to arrive at Joensuu by 15:00 on the Saturday and we will be departing from Joensuu at about 10:00 on the following Saturday

We can arrange international air flights - give Martin a call for a quote. Cost guide £350 inclusive of taxes.

If you arrange your own flight please let us know your flight details.

Price includes: Airport transfers to and from Joensuu, accommodation at the hotel in a double/twin room (7 nights), full board, activities mentioned and thermal suites.

Insurance: The snowmobiles are insured in Finland by the snowmobiling company. However if you damage the snowmobile whilst it is under your control you are responsible for paying the excess on the policy. The excess is approximately €340. This excess is not covered by your Travel Insurance.

Suggested Kit List

*It is going to be cold. You will need to bring your own warm underwear etc.
We will provide: Thermal overalls, boots, gloves whilst on the activities.*

You should bring the following:

- | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Warm jumper or fleece jacket | <input type="checkbox"/> Good woollen hat (can be bought in Finland) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outer shell jacket and trousers for walking around the hotel. Your waterproof will be fine. | <input type="checkbox"/> Gloves |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mid layer fleece | <input type="checkbox"/> Clothing for the hotel in the evening |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 sets thermal vest and long johns | <input type="checkbox"/> Torch and spare batteries / bulb |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snow/Ski goggles and sun glasses. Glacier glasses with side pannels are fine. | <input type="checkbox"/> Good warm socks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sun cream | <input type="checkbox"/> Small first aid kit |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Camera and film |



Outdoor Equipment Specialists
Spirit of Adventure's preferred
Outdoor retailer
www.trailventure.co.uk

If you would like to discuss your holiday with us please feel free to call us or if you are passing Powder Mills please drop in for a cup of coffee and a chat.

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