

Trip Dossier for Finland – Ice-Pop!

Trip Code: FFIP Issue date: 23 June 2010 Valid from: 01 December 2009

Experience the magic of winter in Lapland with the whole family. Snow is a way of life here for much of the year with sub-zero temperatures, a low lying sun that may not rise until mid-morning and, most magically of all, the northern lights which illuminate the sky for, on average, 200 nights a year. You will learn about the Laplanders way of life in the least populated part of Europe and discover how the Sami peoples and culture survived and flourished in this harsh environment. There is the chance to learn a new set of winter sports skills from snowshoeing to sledging and you will spend time with both reindeer and husky dogs.

Day 1 Fly to Ivalo and transfer to Inari

You fly from London to Ivalo Airport, via Helsinki. On arrival you will be met and driven to your hotel in Inari (30-40 minutes), a village far north of the Arctic Circle, about 1200 kilometres from Helsinki. If you can get the children inside from the snow you will settle into your rooms and then have a briefing around the fire, getting information about the village and the activities. Getting everyone's priorities right is the key so it is either time for dinner or you sort out your full winter kit so kids can rush back outside! You have the option to have dinner in the hotel (not included). **Hotel – 4 nights (breakfast)**

Day 2 Fun in the Snow; Afternoon Snowmobiling (optional)

Wake up this morning feeling refreshed, pull back the curtains and enjoy the beautiful snowy landscape and views across the frozen river that feeds Lake Inari, the 3rd largest lake in Finland. Following a huge Finnish breakfast, your guide will introduce you to a range of snow activities with equipment and instruction provided. Over the next two hours you can try snowshoeing (learning to walk with what feels like a tennis racquet attached to your feet!), kick sledging, cross-country skiing and tobogganing. The equipment is free to use anytime during your stay and there are gentle slopes nearby for the sledges, deep snow for the snowshoes or sign-posted cross-country skiing trails right next to the hotel.

This afternoon is free to continue to use the kick sledges or go snowshoeing, or you have the option to venture deeper into the wilderness on a snowmobile. This is an optional excursion and can be paid locally. It's a short walk to the snowmobiles where you are given driving and safety instructions. When you're ready you'll climb aboard your snowmobile for a trip through snow-covered forests on a variety of tracks, depending on your skill. This is great fun, even if you have done it before. There are 2 persons per snowmobile and you can take it turns to drive, children are safely pulled along in the sledges, tucked up with blankets to keep warm. On the safari you will be taught the secrets of ice-fishing, as well as stopping for a warming cup of coffee or berry juice. The routes taken will depend on the conditions but might well include the nearby famous wooden churches and the chance to speed across the flat acres of frozen Lake Inari.

Alternatively, you can visit the local craft market, where you can learn about traditional and modern Sami handicrafts and silver jewellery. Maps are provided from the hotel, or if you would like extra guidance an English speaking guide can accompany you for €58 for two hours. If time allows children will be able to help bake cookies with the chef in the hotel and as the Northern Lights are a bit of an addiction in these parts if there is much going on in the night sky outside you will be kept well informed and encouraged to go outside. There are hundreds of websites dedicated to them and sometimes even a webcam set up on reception!

Day 3 Arctic Speed – Husky style (optional); PM Visit to the Sami Museum

This morning you have the option to visit a Husky Camp. You'll learn about these friendly Arctic dogs, their daily life and training. You will be taught how to 'mush mush' your eager team, and enjoy the scenery as you are whisked along. There are two people per husky team, one driver and one sits in the sledge in front, children are wrapped up in the sledges. En route we visit the wild animal park, an information centre where you can read about the Arctic Fox, Polecat, and Arctic Rabbit. Here we can warm up with a welcome cup of hot berry juice (or tea and coffee) around the open fire. The tour is approximately 4 hours long including the transfers to Ivalo.

This afternoon, we visit the excellent Sami Museum and Northern Lapland Nature Centre in Inari. There is a guided tour of these fascinating exhibits, taking you through the history of the indigenous Sami People, see how they have adapted to living in these cold conditions, with original artefacts, videos, wonderful photographs and exhibits. The Sami peoples live across the arctic areas of Norway, Sweden, Russia and Finland and Inari is the centre of their culture in Finland. It is the site of the Sami Parliament and radio station and its language holds official status.

Day 4 Meet the Sami and Reindeer

Today we head out to meet the hard working Sami reindeer herders. From Inari we drive to the home of a reindeer farmer and then, travelling in a snowmobiles and sledges, we track the reindeer across open fields and through the pine forests. Reindeer are semi-wild, with ownership shown by earmarks, so locating them is an uncertain science - the appearance of the herds out of the woods with their neck bells ringing is an unforgettable sight and sound. You can help feed the reindeer with handfuls of straw and pellets and feeding them up (quite) close gives you the perfect opportunity to observe these majestic animals. Returning to the farm there will be the chance to find out more about the lives of these unique herders and even try your hand at using a lasso. Drive to Inari early afternoon, with free time to use the kick sledges and snowshoes or test out the sauna.

Day 5 Sleep in a Snow Hotel

Today we set off early, making our way across the Finnish border into Norway to Kirkenes. The drive takes pass Lake Inari, through the Skolt Sami region, making a brief stop at Sevetijarvi village and the reindeer farm for refreshments. We carry onto the border, where there may be a short stop for border formalities. When crossing the border into Norway we gain an hour. From the Finnish/Norway border we head further north towards the Arctic Ocean and the Neidenfjord to Kirkenes.

Arriving at Kirkenes in the afternoon, with free time to explore and have some lunch (own expense). We meet up late afternoon at Hotel Rica, where your luggage can be left, as you only require a small hand luggage. Travelling by kick sledge for 15 minutes we arrive at the very special and unique Snow Hotel. Enjoy walking around and seeing the magnificent snow sculptured furniture and ice sculptures, from the ice bar where the drinks are served 'chilled' to the individual styled 'snow suites'. Dinner is served by an open fire in the cosy Lavo Gabba Restaurant, a typical wooden Lappish Hut. Wrap up warm tonight, thermal underwear, fleece, hat, scarf, warm socks and gloves and snuggle in your sleeping bag. <http://www.kirkenessnowhotel.com/klesguideen.html>

A Night in the Snow Hotel

*What do you need to take to the Snow Hotel? Please only take a small overnight bag, the rest of your luggage will be stored at Hotel Rica. Remember to pack long thermal underwear, an extra fleece/sweater, warm PJs or jogging bottoms and top, underwear and wash kit. Breathable warm clothing is recommended and don't forget your hat, scarf and gloves! Remember, we are in the Arctic Climate: take extra layers to keep yourself warm. This is not a fashion show, the purpose is to keep you warm! If required you will be provided with warm outdoor clothing: thermal overalls, hat, mittens, winter boots and socks for use during your stay in the Snow Hotel.

*In the Snow Suite, you sleep in proper bed with thick mattresses. The beds are surrounded by ice blocks. It would be too cold to sleep directly on the snow. You are supplied with a sleeping bag, sheet, woollen socks and woollen overnight hat. You can use your outdoor clothing as a roll and inside to the sleeping back or between the mattress and sleeping bag. There are only two beds; twin or double in a Snow Suite and a curtain as a door. The temperature is between -4 Celsius degrees -6 Celsius degrees.

*Remember to make a visit the toilet before going into the sleeping bag.

*Toilets, which are warm, are outside of the Snow Suite. You need to walk approx 50 meters to get there. There is no running water, but we have electric- and bio-toilets. However, you can wash tooth and hands in the rest room facilities.

Next to the Snow Hotel there is a warm Lavo restaurant. In this restaurant, there is one room with few beds, just in case, if a person staying in the Snow Suite does not feel comfortable to sleep inside the snow. In this Lavo restaurant there is staff also during night time to secure safe overnight in the Snow Suite

*Breakfast and dinner is served in the Lavo restaurant next to the Snow Suite.

CHILDREN: The minimum age to stay in the Snow Hotel is 7 years old. In addition, the staff at the Snow Hotel will assess each child's suitability to the cold environment inside the Snow Hotel following an hour or so spent there. Any child not comfortable in the Snow Hotel will be looked after by our Snow Hotel staff inside the warm Lavo next door to the Snow Hotel. Parents are however fully responsible for the welfare and comfort of their children.

* Sauna and shower facilities are at the Rica Hotel, 1 km from Kirkenes Snow hotel. You can travel by kick sleigh or by Snowmobile Taxi (sleigh pulled by snowmobile). There are towels in the changing room for you to use and the sauna is available from 0900 am.

* There is a Snow Bar to warm you up before sleeping in the Snow Hotel, but it is not advisable to drink too much before going to sleep.

Smoking is strictly forbidden in the snow hotel and snow suites, there are smoke alarms throughout the hotel.

*Remember this is an Adventure and fun, so please remember to be light-hearted and in good humour to enjoy of the night in the Snow Hotel.

Day 6 Fly to London

This morning walk down to the sauna by the lake to warm up. Saunas and showers are available at the Hotel Rica and towels are provided for your use. The Hotel Rica is approximately 1km from the Snow Hotel. If you do not want to walk, you can take a kick sledge or wait for the snowmobiles and sit in sledge. Setting off after breakfast, we cross the border to Finland and make our way back to Ivalo Airport for the afternoon return flight to London.

This itinerary includes our group flights from London. If you are making other flight arrangements, please refer to your Confirmation Invoice and Joining Instructions for details of the start or end of the trip. Please remember international flights and trip dates do occasionally change, so please always purchase flexible tickets.

Each itinerary is planned many months in advance and although it is our intention to operate the itinerary as printed in the brochure and detailed here, it may be necessary to make some changes as a result of alterations to flight schedules, climatic conditions, limitations of infrastructure or other operational factors which are beyond our control. As a consequence, the order or location of overnight stops may vary from those outlined but we will always endeavour to keep you informed of any such changes. Included meals are indicated in the daily itinerary.

The itinerary for the 22 December 2010 departure will follow an amended itinerary, with a visit to the Reindeer farm & Sami museum taking place on Day 2, Fun in the Snow on Days 3 & 5, and staying at a Snow Hotel on Day 4. The optional husky ride will be available on the morning of Day 6 before returning to London.

Optional Activities

These excursions, if available, can be arranged locally (approximate per person costs are shown below):

Snowshoes Rental	Included & free to use during your stay
Cross-Country Ski Rental	Included & free to use during your stay
Snow Mobile Safari (drivers must be 15 and over)	€115 pp adult (child under 15 €58) single driver €145
Husky Safari	€100 pp adult (child under 12 €50pp) Min. group 4 full paying person

Is this right for your family? This is an active winter break with tons of snow and a real alternative to ski or beach holidays. Your base is a good, comfortable hotel. Activities are available for all ages. Due to the cold in the Snow Hotel this holiday is not recommend for under-sevens. Children under seven are not permitted to stay in the Snow Hotel. Specialist clothing (overalls, mittens, hats & snowboots) and guiding is provided for all. Please remember to wear warm layers

Lone Parents Single parents or other adults travelling alone with children should be aware that some countries, including the UK, require documentation confirming that the individual has authority to travel with the minor. It is crucial that you contact the relevant country embassy for further information on exactly what may be required. These details can be found on the Foreign & Commonwealth Website under the appropriate country www.fco.gov.uk/travel

Climate Finland's proximity to the Arctic Circle characterises its warm summers and cold winters. It has the highest average temperature in Northern Europe and yet in the winter it can fall to below -30°C! It has little rainfall with 40% of its precipitation falling as snow between November and April. In spite of these extremely low temperatures, the air is dry and there is little wind, so by wrapping up in a good number of warm layers it is possible to keep warm, especially while being physically active.

Northern Finland does not see the sun between 20 November and 20 January! On our Christmas departure therefore there is no chance of a suntan. However the 'soft blue' daylight of the Arctic Circle does extend from 0930 to 1530 even on the shortest day, and as the days get longer and the sun sneaks above the horizon, combined with the lightening effect of the all-white landscape, you will be able to enjoy about nine hours of good light in February.

Average monthly temperatures in Inari, North Finland

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Max °C	-9	-9	-3	2	8	14	17	15	9	1	-4	-8
Min °C	-21	-19	-15	-9	0	6	9	7	3	-5	-12	-21
Rainfall (mm)	22	19	15	20	29	54	53	66	44	28	25	30

Accommodation In Inari is in a family run three/four-star hotel with en suite twin bedrooms. The hotel, on the banks of the River Juuta, was originally built in the 1920s for British trout fishermen and has a restaurant, cosy bar, lounge with fire, library and riverside sauna. The renowned restaurant tries to use local ingredients so there will be plenty of reindeer on offer and seafood from just across the Norwegian border. Breakfast is included daily. One night is in a Snow Hotel. Please take a small overnight bag to the Snow Hotel with thermal underwear, extra fleece, hat, scarf, gloves and warm socks.

Food and Drink To set yourself up for the day you'll be able to enjoy a very large Finnish breakfast consisting of bread, cheese, ham, porridge, cereal, and yoghurt. The evening meal is the main meal of the day and this is usually meat or fish, fresh salad, bread and dessert. Vegetarians are also catered for, but please advice in advance or all dietary requirements and we will do our best to accommodate this.

Local Costs *Based on a mid range tourist restaurant.

A small bottle of mineral water (500ml)	£0.70
A large bottle of mineral water (1 litre)	£1.50
A can of coke (soft drinks)	£2.55 / £0.70 in shops
A carton or bottle of fruit juice	£2.55 / £0.70 in shops
A bottle of beer	£3.30
Tea or coffee	£1.50
A light lunch time snack – sandwich for example	£3.00 – £5.00
A two course meal* - excluding drinks	£8.50 - £10.00
A three course meal* - excluding drinks	£16.00 - £20.00

Currency The unit of currency in Finland is the Euro. At the time of writing UK£1 = €1.15 and US\$1 = €0.79 (June 2009). Sterling Travellers' Cheques are readily accepted in banks and larger hotels, and banks in the main centres have ATMs. We recommend that you change money at the airport. Credit cards are accepted in larger hotels and some souvenir shops, but not many restaurants

Tiping is a recognised part of life and although at your discretion you will be expected to reward service. Please remember that all tips should be a way to thank staff for good service. As a guideline, each person should allow £2-£3 per day to cover tips for local staff.

Language English is widely spoken, with the country's main official languages being Finnish and Swedish.

Time Finland is GMT +2 hours Norway is GMT +1 hours

Packing List Please refer to our separate "packing list"

Clothing & Equipment List for Finland – Ice-Pop!

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Take warm layered clothing, as you may experience temperatures below **-25°C**. You will all be provided with specialised outdoor clothing; a padded one-piece snow suit and insulated waterproof boots, (we will ask for your size in advance). Please remember warm hats, scarves and gloves.

CLOTHING	NUMBER PER PERSON	Check	EQUIPMENT	Check
Ski Jacket & trousers or snow suit – or similar	1		Soft-sided bag (50 – 80 litres)	
Warm Windproof Trousers	1		Daypack (25 litres)	
Warm Windproof Jacket	1		Sunglasses (Feb & March departures)	
Socks	4 thick		First Aid Kit	
Thermal Underwear	1 or 2 pairs		Torch and Batteries	
Waterproof Shoes	1		Camera, Memory Card & Accessories	
Long Sleeved T-Shirts	3		Washing Kit	
Long Warm Trousers	2		Sun cream and lip balm	
Warm Fleece or Sweatshirt	2		Snow Goggles / Sunglasses	
Warm Hat, scarf and gloves	Essential			
Casual wear	For evenings			
Swim wear	1 for sauna			

ITEM	Check	ITEM	Check
Passport		Small Sewing Kit & Safety Pins	
Air Tickets		Universal travelling adapter	
Money/Travellers Cheques		Sweets for energy	
Credit Card / Visa		Notebook/Diary/Pen	
Insurance Documents		Hand cream	
Trip Information and Itinerary			

For details regarding **hand luggage restrictions**, please visit www.baa.com