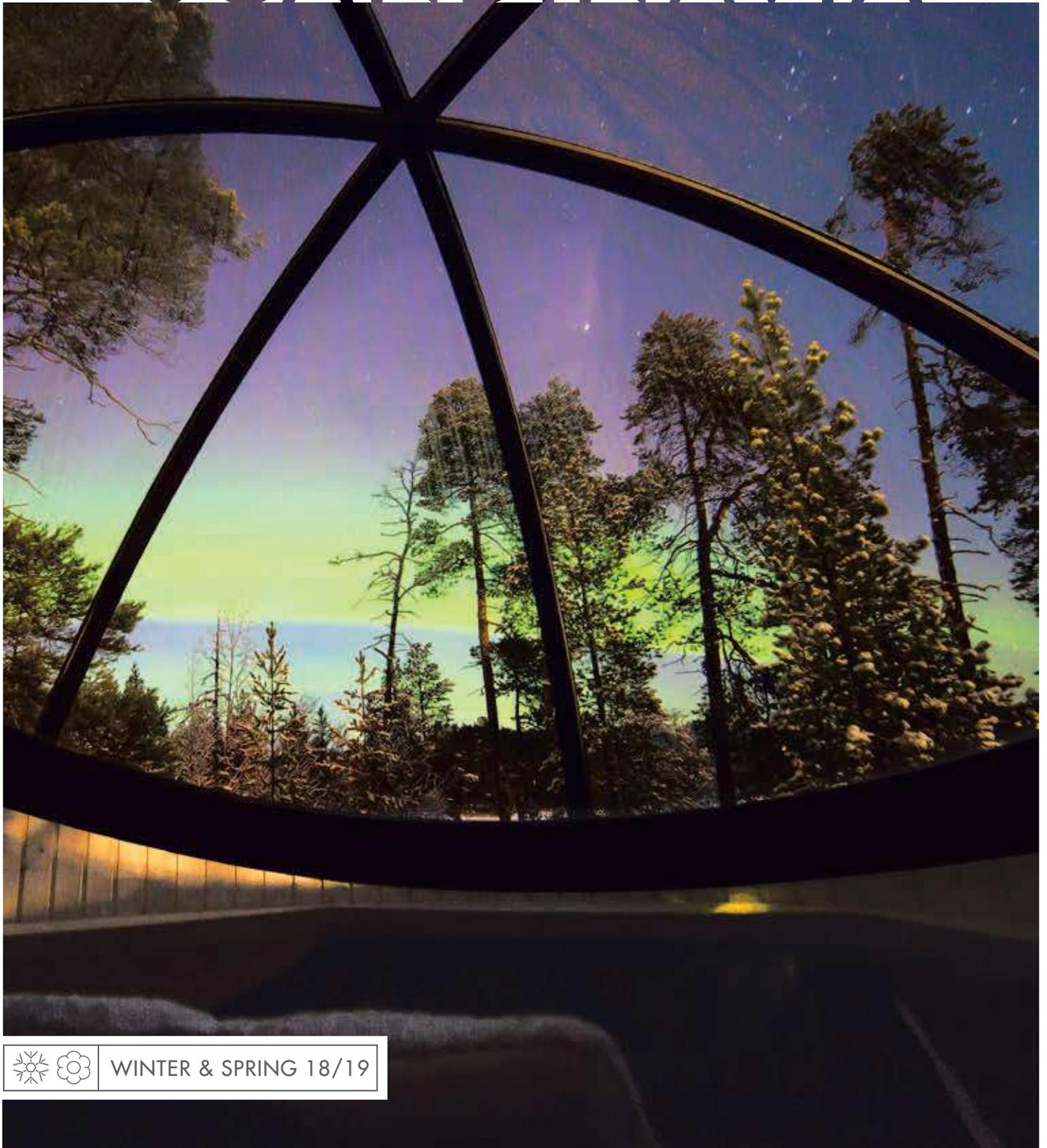


# BEST SERVED SCANDINAVIA



WINTER & SPRING 18/19





## WELCOME

---

Welcome to our 2018/19 brochure for winter and spring. Across our portfolio, we showcase the very best that Scandinavia and the Nordics have to offer during those exciting snow-bound months and, for the first time, spring, that season beyond, when the ice melts to reveal a landscape renewed.

But now to winter and, as you'd expect, there's no shortage of Nordic innovation, with the likes of glass igloos perched on remote fellsides and luxury treehouses hidden away in snowy Lapland forests. There are some old favourites, too, from fun-filled family adventures to meet Santa in his log-cabin home to our ever-popular Tromsø city break, this time with added husky appeal and promises of even more wintry adventures under the Northern Lights' colourful swirls.

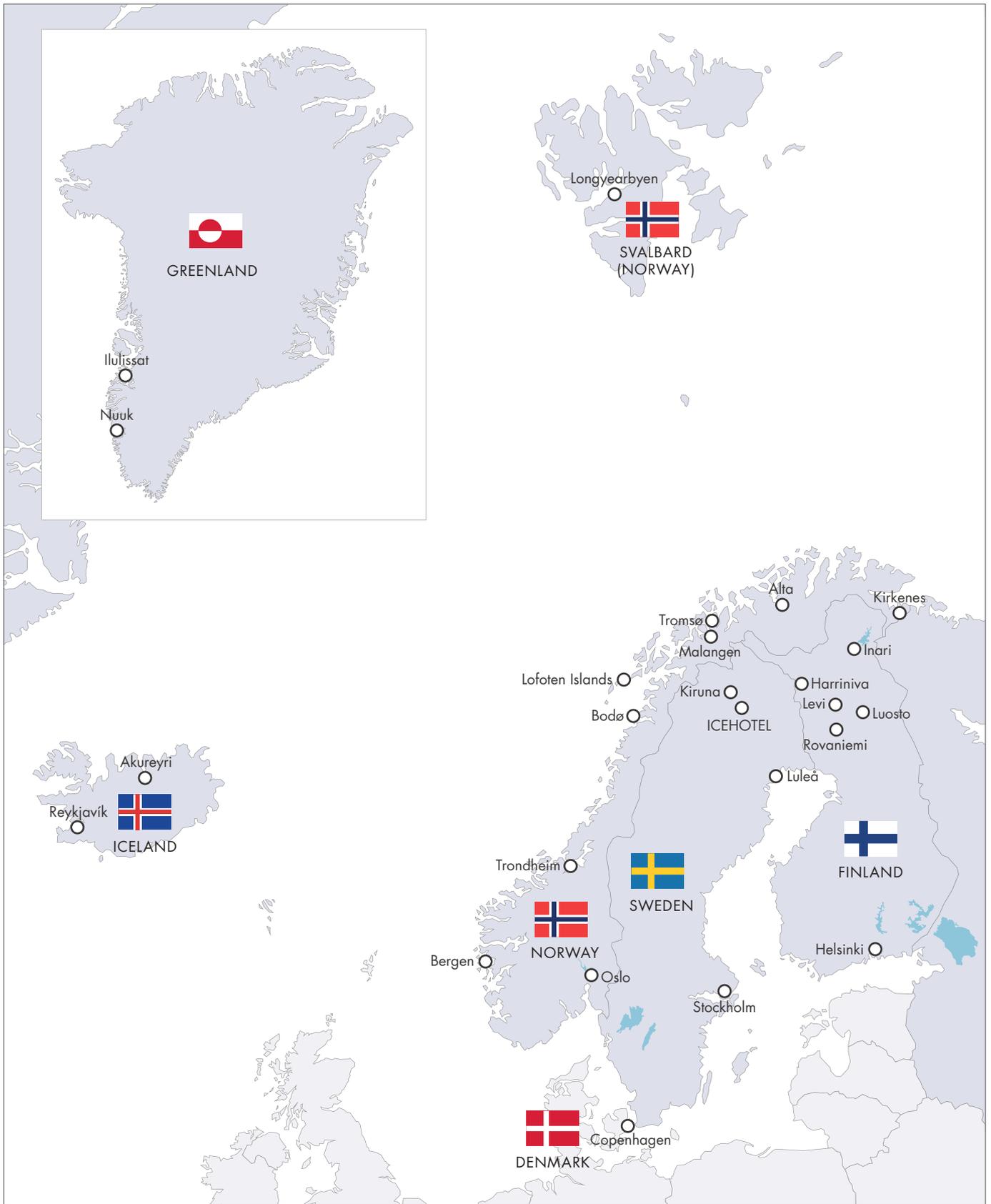
Or, why not book a trip out to Sweden's ICEHOTEL for the chance to experience the sheer magic and artistry of a true Scandinavian icon? Along with our classic break, we've come up with a whole

range of new ICEHOTEL itineraries for the coming season, pairing unforgettable nights in snow-carved suites with everything from overnight husky adventures to scenic cross-border rail trips.

No matter what you choose, you can expect a dazzling array of optional and included activities to help make the most of your stay, all tried and tested by our specialists. Remember, if you'd prefer to take it all in under the Midnight Sun rather than the Northern Lights, just let us know, and get in touch to register for our next summer brochure, due out later this year.

KATHERINE GERSHON  
MANAGING DIRECTOR





# CONTENTS

---

08 » NORTHERN LIGHTS IN TROMSØ

ITINERARIES: 01 – 06

24 » ICE & SNOW HOTELS

ITINERARIES: 07 – 13

38 » GLASS IGLOOS

ITINERARIES: 14 – 21

52 » SANTA IN LAPLAND

ITINERARIES: 22 – 25

60 » FINLAND

ITINERARIES: 26 – 32

70 » SWEDEN

ITINERARIES: 33 – 38

80 » NORWAY & SVALBARD

ITINERARIES: 39 – 43

90 » ICELAND

ITINERARIES: 44 – 49

100 » SPRING IN SCANDINAVIA

ITINERARIES: 50 – 53

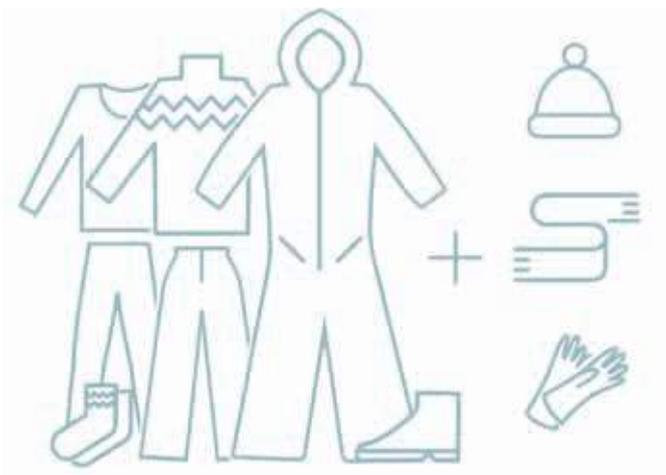
108 » STOPOVERS

# ABOUT THIS BROCHURE



## DRESSING FOR THE ARCTIC

Put away the flip-flops and sarongs, this holiday is going to be different. Arctic chic shows little skin, with a three-layer principle advised: wear thermal undergarments, complemented by jogging bottoms and a warm fleece or a woolly jumper, topped off with a weather-resistant outer layer. Cotton should be avoided as it cools when it gets wet, and don't forget your hat, gloves and scarf. Please note that some excursion suppliers do not offer warm clothing in children's sizes.



## BEST FOR

Throughout this brochure you'll spot the symbols below next to our properties. These should give you a helpful hint as to the hotel's qualities and features, making sure you pick the perfect spot.



WILDLIFE



HONEYMOON



FAMILY



NORTHERN LIGHTS



CITY



WILDERNESS



GLASS IGLOOS



ACTIVITIES



ICE HOTELS



SANTA

## ACCOMMODATION IN THIS BROCHURE

As there is no universal system for grading hotels, we have applied our own grading system to featured hotels and itineraries. They are based on the opinion of our destination specialists, usually upon first-hand experience of staying there themselves.

### Standard

Clean and comfortable accommodation with reasonable facilities (typically 3 stars).

### Superior

A high standard of accommodation with a good range of quality facilities, often in a good location (typically 4 stars).

### Deluxe

Outstanding accommodation with excellent facilities and service, usually in a fantastic location (typically 5 stars).

## MEAL INCLUSIONS

Any meals included in the price of our suggested itineraries, whether they're part of a tour, an excursion, or a hotel stay, are indicated at the end of each day's description using the following symbols:

**B** Breakfast

**L** Lunch

**D** Dinner

All prices, fares, hotels and tours described in this brochure are correct at the time of going to press (26/04/2018) and are subject to change and availability. All prices are per person based on two people travelling together sharing twin/double accommodation (unless otherwise stated). Many of the flights and flight-inclusive holidays in this brochure are financially protected by the ATOL scheme. But ATOL protection does not apply to all holiday and travel services listed. Please ask us to confirm what protection may apply to your booking. If you do not receive an ATOL Certificate then the booking will not be ATOL protected. If you do receive an ATOL Certificate but all the parts of your holiday are not listed on it, those parts will not be ATOL protected. For more information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate go to: [atol.org.uk/atolcertificate](http://atol.org.uk/atolcertificate). The Best Served Scandinavia/Wexas ATOL number is 2873. Full Best Served Scandinavia booking conditions can be found at [best-served.co.uk/terms-and-conditions](http://best-served.co.uk/terms-and-conditions).



## NORTHERN LIGHTS: SCANDINAVIAN MYTHOLOGY

---

The Northern Lights have long played a central role in Scandinavian mythology. Indeed, many Samí people – whose ancestors have inhabited the northern reaches of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia’s Kola Peninsula for the past 5,000 years – still share the belief that the aurora borealis emanates from the souls of their departed ancestors. In Norse mythology, the Northern Lights are said to reflect the soaring trails of Valkyries as they charge across the night sky. Throughout northern European folklore, these vibrant and ghostly midnight flares have garnered great respect. Today, despite a clearer scientific explanation for these astral displays – that the auroras are a result

of the interaction of solar wind and the earth’s magnetic field – these otherworldly displays still stun seasoned observers into awed silence and continue to inspire thousands of pilgrimages to the Arctic north each winter.

### HINTS & TIPS

- Get as far from artificial light as possible
- Keep an eye on the sky at all times
- Wrap up warm – you may have to wait a while
- If you want to photograph the Lights, be sure to pack a tripod

### THE AURORA ZONE

Cutting across a vast swathe of Scandinavia and the Nordics, the fabled aurora zone offers the very best chances of seeing the Northern Lights. And, as luck would have it, it’s a region blessed with a seemingly endless landscape of pristine wilderness, with few towns and even fewer cities to interrupt the views of those spectacular swirls. From Norway’s Tromsø to the far reaches of Finnish Lapland, our winter holidays are tailor-made to make the most of these ideal conditions.

69.6814° N, 18.9178° E



# NORTHERN LIGHTS IN TROMSØ

Lost among Norway's stunning fjordland, 400km north of the Arctic Circle, Tromsø is one of the world's more isolated city-break destinations. Yet, against all the odds, it's a place that revels in a richness of cultural delights, from a vibrant arts and music scene to a roaring pub route and cutting-edge restaurants. The surrounding stage set of stunning snow-capped peaks and regular aurora spectaculars adds a seriously exciting edge to this stylish Scandinavian city.

## WHY WE RECOMMEND

- Tromsø is situated at the centre of the Northern Lights 'zone', which rings the Magnetic North Pole
- The city's scenic location – locked between fjords and rugged mountain ranges – offers calmer weather than the coast, insulated from high winds and stormy weather
- There's a wide range of excursions on offer, led by experienced operators
- Tromsø is easily accessible, with direct flights from London Gatwick twice weekly
- It's possible to combine a stay in the city with longer trips into the surrounding region and beyond

But there's far more to Tromsø than just long weekends spent hunting the Northern Lights. A short hop from downtown, you'll find plunging fjords and islands home to a dazzling array of wildlife, as well as the new Tromsø Ice Domes, open for overnight stays for the first time this winter. In the Lyngen Alps, there's everything from snowmobiling and husky sledding to guided tasting sessions at the world's northernmost brewery. Also nearby, Malangen Resort offers a crowd-pleasing blend of first-class food, fabulous views and the chance to hunt the aurora from a camp deep in the wilderness. And, while Tromsø has traditionally been a one-stop shop for snowbound adventure, there's plenty to see in the wider region, too. Over the next few pages we'll show you how to combine a stay in the city with a journey further afield; there's a trip out to the island of Sommarøy, and even a border-hopping jaunt to Sweden's ICEHOTEL.



01

NORTHERN LIGHTS CITY BREAK, TROMSØ



4-DAY TAILOR-MADE CITY BREAK

4 days Tromsø



» PRICES FROM: £795 pp incl. flights, 3 nights BB accommodation, airport shuttle transfer, husky safari & aurora tour.

Tromsø is at the centre of the northern aurora zone, and dazzling celestial displays circle the sky above the city with great and regular abandon. Anyone who's been to Tromsø will assure you that there's more to the city than what goes on above, with an animated street scene and creative culture reflecting the vibrant colours of the pulsating aurora borealis.

**Day 1 » Tromsø** Fly from Gatwick to Tromsø and transfer to the Thon Tromsø hotel, situated on the south of Tromsøya Island in the heart of the city centre. Spend the rest of the day exploring the centre on foot, visiting the city's museums and galleries. The Tromsø Kunstforening, home to an exceptional collection of Norwegian contemporary art, is a five-minute walk from the hotel. As is the Polaria Museum, whose cinema shows short films of the Northern Lights. Tromsø's picturesque harbour is also nearby, providing yet another visual feast. Later, head out to dinner and fall in with the city's fashionable set as you sample the town's best local brews at one of the many drinking holes.

**Days 2-3 » Tromsø** Tromsø's extreme northern location allows for a multitude of exciting excursion opportunities, from

husky and snowmobile safaris to reindeer sledding and whale watching trips (see pages 12-13). In the evening, wrap up warm and join an included aurora tour for the chance to see the Northern Lights as they make their merry way across the night sky. The city and its surrounds are famous for the auroras and are among the world's best places to spot them. **B**

**Day 4 » Husky sledding** Saving the best for last, today's included excursion sees you out into the snowy Troms countryside for an unforgettable husky safari. Riding two to a sled, you'll head along frozen trails with your team of dogs yapping happily up ahead. It really is among the best and most exciting ways of exploring Norway's Arctic north, and makes a fabulous end to your trip before you transfer back to the airport for your flight to London Gatwick. **B**



## CLARION COLLECTION HOTEL WITH SUPERIOR



Named after former steamship captain Hans Rudolf With, this is one of our favourite Tromsø hotels. Modern, comfortable rooms are matched by a relaxation area on the top floor with a gym, sauna and steam room, which is also a great place to spot the Northern Lights on clear nights. The hotel also offers complimentary waffles between 3 and 6 pm and an included light evening meal between 6 and 9 pm. We recommend upgrading to a spacious Superior room for wonderful views across the harbour.



## THON HOTEL TROMSØ STANDARD



Situated in the centre of Tromsø, this modern hotel is close to innumerable daytime and late-night attractions. There are 150 Scandi-style rooms, each with en suite shower room and free WiFi, and guests can help themselves to complimentary tea and coffee in the hotel's lobby – a nice touch, especially when you've just come in from a long day in the cold. We recommend requesting a room on the 6th floor for excellent views of the city and its impressive surrounds.



## SCANDIC ISHAVSHOTEL SUPERIOR



This contemporary hotel has some of the finest rooms in Tromsø. Situated quayside on the east coast of Tromsøya Island, close to the city's famous wooden cathedral, the Scandic Ishavshotel's spacious, stylish and recently refurbished rooms offer exceptional views of the harbour. Roast, the hotel's restaurant, is a delight too, serving an excellent breakfast – a real theme in these parts – a variety of local lunchtime delicacies, fresh seafood, and wine by the glass – a surprising rarity in Tromsø. What's more, it's all just a stone's throw from the city centre's myriad delights.



## THON HOTEL POLAR STANDARD



Small but perfectly formed, this city-centre offering pairs modern Scandinavian design with a location ideal for exploring all of Tromsø's most popular attractions. With options for couples and families alike, the Polar's en-suite rooms are comfortably furnished and come with complimentary WiFi, a mini bar and, in some cases, a Nespresso machine. The included breakfast is a delicious highlight while the next-door Egon Restaurant has an excellent pizza buffet if you don't feel like straying too far.

## TROMSØ'S TOP 10 EXCURSIONS



### 1 CHASE THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

Even in today's scientific world we remain under the spell of the Northern Lights, which turn the crisp Arctic night into a dancing display of disco beams. With Tromsø just a few hours' flight from Britain, and a collection of well-placed basecamps on its snowy outskirts, these celestial charms have never been easier to find.

» INCLUDED TOUR

### 2 DRIVE A SNOWMOBILE PAST THE LINGEN ALPS

To the east of the city lie the Lyngen Alps, a range of sharp, snow-capped peaks that extend northwards towards the Norwegian Sea. Riding a snowmobile is the best way to view this imposing landscape, giving you the agility and power to carve your way up steep ascents and meander through thick forests.

» PRICES FROM: £195 pp

### 3 JOIN A HUSKY SAFARI THROUGH ARCTIC WILDERNESS

The peoples of the Arctic haven't lost the need for a well-trained pack of huskies. A mode of transport that has changed little in a thousand years, dogsledding remains the most reliable way of getting around, and, as you glide over the ice with the hazy wintry light filtering through the trees and glittering off the ground, you'll appreciate it's the most beautiful mode of travel too.

» INCLUDED TOUR

### 4 TAKE A NORTHERN LIGHTS DINNER CRUISE

Chasing the Northern Lights with a trip into a wilderness with zero light pollution may well be the best way to guarantee a front row seat at the polar show, but a dinner cruise is perhaps even more special. Tucking into delicious and hearty home-cooked food, and included hot drinks, it's all accompanied by the moody lighting of the Tromsø quayside, making this tour among the best ways to view the aurora.

» PRICES FROM: £155 pp



### 5 VISIT THE ICE DOMES AND TUCK INTO ARCTIC TAPAS

A recent addition to the city's winter scene, the Tromsø Ice Domes are carved anew each year by expert artists, their shimmering sculptures and friezes lit by ethereal glows and themed on everything from the

Northern Lights to the local region's Sami culture. On this tour, you'll enjoy a drink at the ice bar, explore the domes themselves in the company of a guide, and then settle down to an included lunch of delicious Arctic tapas.

» PRICES FROM: £115 pp



## 6 HEAD FOR A TASTING AT THE WORLD'S NORTHERNMOST DISTILLERY

In the freezing arctic, there's much to be said for a warming glass of the local tippel. In this case, at the world's northernmost distillery in the shadow of the Lyngen Alps, it's vodka, aquavit, gin and whisky – all made from local herbs and berries – that form the day's tasting centrepiece. Spend a memorable few hours sampling the produce in the company of experts, and learning about the Norse mythology surrounding the making of alcohol under the Northern Lights.

» PRICES FROM: £145 pp

## 7 COMBINE DOG SLEDDING WITH A STAY AT AN AURORA CAMP

There can be few better experiences than staying right out in the wilderness to watch the Northern Lights swirl in inky black skies, before curling up in a snug sleeping bag on a bed of reindeer skins in a traditional Sami tent. But that's exactly what lies in store on this overnight adventure, which also includes a tasty bacalao supper followed by coffee and cake for desert. A morning of action-packed husky sledding only adds to the fun.

» PRICES FROM: £295 pp

## 8 EXPLORE TROMSØ'S SEAS ON A RIB BOAT TOUR

The coastline around Tromsø is truly spectacular, its snow-dusted fjords and soaring cliffs home to all manner of seabirds, from puffins and guillemots to little auks and the delightfully named yellow-billed loon. From time to time, seals can be seen lazing on the rocks and, while most whales tend to depart before the onset of winter, there are still the odd pod or two that hang around well into January.

» PRICES FROM: £115 pp

## 9 HEAD OUT INTO THE WILDS ON A GUIDED SNOWSHOE TOUR

They've been the preferred choice of footwear among Arctic explorers for centuries. Now, you can follow in the steps of Amundsen and the rest by strapping on your very own pair of snowshoes and heading off into Tromsø's wintry surrounds. It's a trip made all the more memorable by sweeping views across Balsfjord and the chance to warm up afterwards with hot drinks by a roaring fire.

» PRICES FROM: £105 pp

## 10 SAMI CULTURE & REINDEER SLED RIDE

More closely related to the Arctic peoples of Siberia than to the Vikings, these semi-nomadic pastoralists have inhabited Norway's northern regions for millennia. Masters of trapping, fishing and reindeer herding, the Sami showcase an ancient and sustainable way to live off the land. On this half-day tour, you'll gain an insight into their unique culture, and take a spin on their go-to form of transport – the trusty reindeer sled.

» PRICES FROM: £180 pp



NEW

02

TROMSØ ICE  
DOME BREAK



## 4-DAYS TROMSØ

4 days Tromsø



» **PRICES FROM:** £1,325 pp incl. flights, shuttle transfers, 2 nights Clarion Collection Hotel With BB, 1 night Tromsø Ice Domes with transfers, snowshoeing excursion, wilderness dinner & husky safari. Operates 16 Dec to 20 Apr.

This dazzling winter break combines Tromsø's far-flung fjordside delights, all surrounded by sugar-white stacks and almost-nightly aurora displays, with a stay at an ice dome hotel deep in the Arctic wilderness. And, as it's new for this winter, you'll be among the first to experience its magical setting alongside included husky safaris and delicious dinners in the wilderness.

**Day 1 » Fly Tromsø** Fly to Tromsø and transfer to the Clarion Collection Hotel With, enjoying quayside views of the harbour and its idyllic fishing huts, dwarfed by distant snow-dusted summits. Perhaps spend this evening taking advantage of the hotel's top-floor sauna and steam room that affords magnificent views of the blanketed city below.

**Day 2 » Tromsø** With a free day to explore the Arctic capital of Tromsø, stroll around the historic Skansen area or hike the boundless mountain trails that encircle the city. It all culminates with a nighttime cable car ride, bookable locally, which offers splendid views of the city and its surrounding peaks. Alternatively, perhaps explore Tromsø's buzzing pub scene, or join an optional tour into the wild remotes in search of the aurora borealis. **B**

**Day 3 » Snowshoeing & Ice Domes** Today you'll transfer to the Tromsø Ice Domes – seven intricate and newly carved suites nestled in the Tamok Valley.

With its astonishing ice art and rooms lit to perfection, it's an idyllic base from which to chase the aurora. An included snowshoe hike will see you explore ice-slicked forests framed by misty crags before you tuck into a wilderness dinner cooked on an open fire; expect the likes of seafood caught fresh from the surrounding fjords, forest-picked berries and reindeer steak cooked to perfection. Then, on return to the domes, it's time to bunk down in your private ice suite, complete with sleeping bag and reindeer skins to keep out the chill. **B L D**

**Day 4 » Depart** After a hearty Norwegian breakfast, you'll be introduced to your eager team of huskies for a thrilling safari through the dramatic Arctic interior. End your trip in style with a delicious lunch, then transfer to Tromsø Airport for your evening flight home. **B L**

NEW

03

## WILDLIFE, HUSKIES &amp; NORTHERN LIGHTS ON SOMMARØY



## 4-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

1 day Tromsø » 3 days Sommarøy



» **PRICES FROM:** £1,195 pp incl. flights, return shuttle transfers, 1 night Clarion Collection Hotel Aurora BB, 2 nights Sommarøy Arctic Hotel FB, husky safari, wildlife safari & Northern Lights hike. Operates Nov to Mar.

Beginning with a stay in Norway's Arctic capital, a day of city sightseeing and a husky safari will introduce you to the thrills of life in Norway's frozen north. Then, swap city lights for island adventure as you transfer out to Sommarøy to hunt the Northern Lights and seek out wildlife amid the surrounding islands.

**Day 1 » UK to Tromsø** Fly to Tromsø for an included shuttle-bus transfer to the city and check into the Clarion Collection Hotel

Aurora. It's ideally situated within walking distance of the harbour and iconic Arctic Cathedral. You'll also be well placed for exploring the mountain crags and serene fjords that surround the city, views of which can be enjoyed from rooms and restaurant alike. Depending on your arrival time, enjoy complimentary afternoon waffles and coffee before indulging in the hotel's sauna and outdoor rooftop Jacuzzi, overlooking the city's snow-dusted surrounds. Come evening, there's a light buffet-style Nordic supper available, while for something more substantial, Tromsø's best restaurants are just a stroll away.

**Day 2 » Sommarøy** After breakfast, you'll immerse yourself in Tromsø's Arctic wilderness with an included husky sledding adventure, speeding forest trails, the silence interrupted only by the yaps and paw-steps of your eager team. Then, enjoy a wilderness lunch before returning to the hotel for your transfer to the Sommarøy Arctic Hotel. It's a scenic drive, taking you through the wintry wilds to stay in a

charming wood-panelled room, complete with panoramic mountain views. In the evening, indulge in a three-course dinner before a walk to hunt the famous aurora with a local guide, who'll also share stories of myth and legend from Sommarøy's intriguing past. **B L D**

**Day 3 » Kvaløya day trip** Join a local guide this morning for a trip out to the island of Kvaløya, where more tranquil fjords and snow-topped mountains set the scene for an abundance of native wildlife. You'll be greeted with a fireside wilderness lunch before heading out to spot reindeer, otter, moose and sea eagles. It's then time to return to the hotel for a well-earned sauna and another delicious three-course dinner, before spending your final evening keeping an eye out for the Northern Lights as they dance their way across the northern sky. **B L D**

**Day 4 » Sommarøy to UK** After breakfast, check out of your hotel and head back to Tromsø in time for your flight home. **B**

04

TROMSØ & THE ICEHOTEL BY RAIL



5-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

2 days Tromsø » 1 day Narvik » 1 day ICEHOTEL



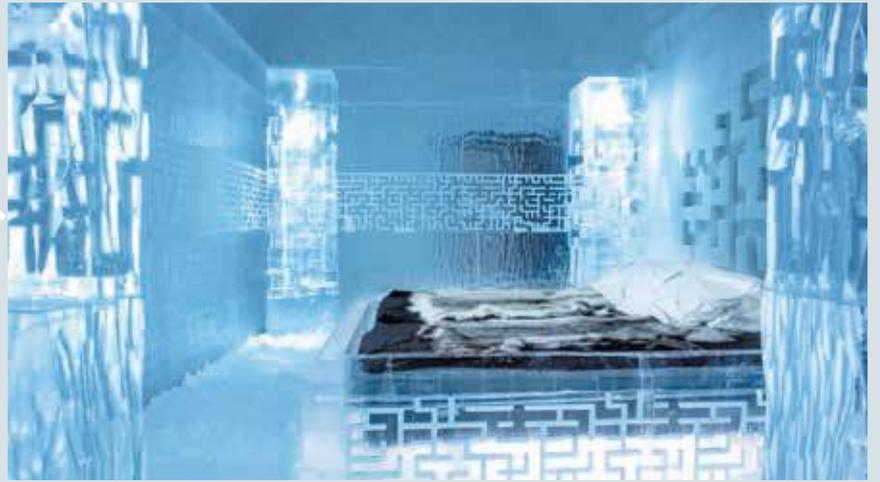
» **PRICES FROM:** £925 pp incl. flights, 2 nights Tromsø BB, 1 night Scandic Narvik BB, 1 night ICEHOTEL Ice Room BB, Local bus from Tromsø to Narvik, train from Narvik to Kiruna, airport transfers & local transfers between Kiruna and ICEHOTEL. Operates mid-Nov to mid-Apr.

This is an unmissable chance to combine two Scandinavian icons, and two countries, on one unforgettable trip. Beginning with the dazzling disco-light displays over Norway's Northern Lights capital, you'll then board a bus east, stopping for a night in remote Narvik, before heading on, via the Arctic Circle train to Kiruna for a stay at Sweden's classic ICEHOTEL.

**Day 1 » Depart for Tromsø** Fly to Tromsø and take the airport shuttle to the city centre, then check into your hotel. We recommend the Clarion Collection Hotel With for its wonderful harbour views and top-floor relaxation area, perfect for views of the Northern Lights. Stays here



also include afternoon waffles and a light evening meal, on the house. The rest of the day is free to explore, and there's plenty to discover, whether it's the informative Polaria Museum, itself a fabulous guide



### ICEHOTEL: SURVIVING A NIGHT ON ICE

A stay at Sweden's ICEHOTEL is a true bucketlist experience. But for some, sleeping on a bed of ice is a daunting proposition. Here are a few handy tips for surviving, and enjoying, your night on ice:

- » **Dress for the conditions** It's cold in those rooms, but you'll go a long way to ensuring a comfy night if you dress for the occasion. Pull on some long johns, a long-sleeved top, thick socks and a hat, then let your Arctic sleeping bag do the rest!
- » **Grab a sleeping bag** As part of your stay, you'll be provided with a sleeping bag. It's guaranteed to keep the chill out to temperatures as low as  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$ , so the ICEHOTEL's constant  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$  will feel comfortable in comparison.
- » **Make the most of a morning sauna** After a good night's sleep, you'll be greeted in your room or suite with a warm glass of lingonberry juice and the chance of a morning sauna. Take it – it's a wonderful way to relax and start the day.
- » **Book a Deluxe Suite** If the idea of a full night in an icy room still a little daunting, consider an upgrade to a Deluxe Suite. Based at the new, permanent ICEHOTEL 365, each of these suites comes with a heated en-suite bathroom and sauna.

to the frozen north, or the many excellent restaurants and seemingly limitless supply of pubs that dot this lively city.

**Day 2 » Tromsø excursions** While Tromsø itself is full of bustling charm, the region's real highlights lie beyond the city limits. You'll have the chance to take in some of its many delights today with a choice of optional excursions (see pages 12–13 for our favourites). There's everything from husky-sled rides and snowmobile trips through the wilderness to Northern Lights dinner cruises and distillery tastings. And, in the evening, be sure to book onto an aurora safari to catch the light show in all its ethereal splendour – weather permitting, of course. 

**Day 3 » Bus to Narvik** Your trans-Scandinavian adventure begins in earnest today as you board the bus to Narvik. Grab a seat by the window if you can, for the best view of snow-dusted crags and icy fjords. On arrival, check into the Scandic Narvik whose contemporary rooms and 15th-floor sky bar look out across the mountainous surrounds. If you've time, take the chance for a cable car ride to the summit of Narvikfjellet. 

**Day 4 » Journey to ICEHOTEL** Today you'll board the Arctic Circle Train for a memorable cross-border journey into Swedish Lapland. Along the way, you'll race past the snowy mountain resort of Björkliden and Abisko National Park

before sweeping into Kiruna for the short transfer to ICEHOTEL. Enjoy a tour of the hotel on arrival before checking into your freshly sculpted Ice Room. Art Suite upgrades are also available (see page 29 for details). The rest of the day is left free for optional adventures; snowmobiling, ice carving and Northern Lights tours compete for your attention alongside the likes of ice-carving classes and multi-course gourmet dining experiences. 

**Day 5 » Depart ICEHOTEL** Wake from your night on ice with a warm glass of lingonberry juice and a sauna. Then, after breakfast, you'll transfer back to Kiruna for your flight home. 



05 WINTER BREAK AT MALANGEN RESORT

4-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK  
4 days Malangen Resort



» PRICES FROM: £935 pp incl. flights, return transfers from Tromsø Airport direct to Malangen Resort, 3 nights at Malangen Resort HB & a Northern Lights excursion with aurora alarm.

Malangen Resort is, in many ways, the ideal winter escape. Delightfully secluded, it's tucked away on the shores of a beautiful fjord, a 90-minute transfer from Tromsø. Here, amid the snowy surrounds, a full spread of optional winter activities brings you deep into Norway's Arctic wilderness.

**Day 1 » Fly to Tromsø** Depart Gatwick on a direct flight to Tromsø where you'll be met for a 90-minute transfer to Malangen Resort. Then, after checking into your room, you'll have time to relax before heading to the restaurant for the first of your included meals. Designed to showcase fresh Norwegian produce, menus feature everything from locally caught fish to reindeer and lamb from the Lyngen Alps. **D**

**Days 2-3 » Malangen Resort & Camp Nikka** Spend two memorable days exploring the snow-laden Arctic wilderness around Malangen Resort with optional excursions that range from snowmobiling to husky safaris. There's also the chance to take to the snow on specially adapted 'fat bikes', head into the forests on cross-country skiing trips or follow in the

footsteps of the great Norwegian explorers on a snowshoe hike. Or, if you prefer, simply relax with a sauna or take in the views from one of Malangen's hot tubs. What's more, after dinner on day two, you'll be invited out to Camp Nikka for an included Northern Lights watch. Heading out some 20 minutes from the resort, far from any light pollution, you'll gather around a roaring fire inside a cosy *lavvu* tent as you wait for the aurora to appear. And, if you fall asleep, a Northern Lights alarm will sound a traditional Sami song, ensuring you don't miss a thing. **B D**

**Day 4 » Depart for home** After breakfast at the resort, a direct transfer will bring you back to Tromsø airport in time for your flight home. **B**

# MALANGEN RESORT

---

The escapist and expansive Malangen Resort is a wilderness hotel offering thrilling adventures in a fabulous setting. The resort overlooks the Malangen Fjord, which stretches 60km from the Hekkingen Lighthouse to the small village of Nordfjordbotn. Hiking trails lead from the hotel into the region's wild interior and, in the winter months, Malangen excels at Northern Lights excursions, dog sledding and snowmobile safaris.

## STANDARD & SUPERIOR ROOMS

---

Ten comfortable rooms line the top floor of Malangen's central building. All are comfortably furnished and stylish, with wooden floors and large windows. Features include large double beds, en-suite bathrooms and tea and coffee making facilities. Superior rooms are larger – 26 sq m to the Standard rooms' 18 – and in addition to the extra space, they have a sofa, table and writing desk.



## SEA-VIEW CABIN

---

### STANDARD

Your very own home from home, these two-storey, three-bedroom cabins are ideal for families or small groups. Many are located on the water's edge while others sit higher up the bank, offering amazing views of the Malangen Fjord and surrounding countryside. The cabins have self-contained kitchens, and the spacious lounge areas, with their comfy sofas, make the most of those amazing views.

## SEA-VIEW CABIN

---

### DELUXE

For those seeking a little something extra, Malangen's fjordside Deluxe cabins are more spacious than their Standard neighbours and feature wooden balconies and large, furnished viewing decks. Some have Jacuzzi baths while all come with either two or three bedrooms, a living room, dining area and fully equipped kitchen, as well as floor-to-ceiling windows that frame spectacular views.



## MALANGEN EXCURSIONS

Surrounded by miles of empty wilderness, Malangen Resort is perfectly placed to offer a range of exciting wilderness excursions departing from the hotel's doorstep. A highlight of these outdoor experiences is Camp Nikka, which features a rustic shelter and two large *lavvus* – traditional Sami tents that are excellent for aurora gazing. The camp is also close to Malangen's enthusiastic huskies, waiting to whisk you into the surrounding wilds.



### NORTHERN LIGHTS AT CAMP NIKKA

Situated on the shores of picturesque Lake Nikka, Camp Nikka is Malangen Resort's very own wilderness camp. Neither of the camp's *lavvus* have electricity, making it the perfect place to view the aurora, unobstructed by artificial light. Wrap up warm beneath reindeer skin rugs and sip coffee brewed on an open fire while you wait for the Northern Lights to make their riotous appearance.

» INCLUDED TOUR: incl. pre-excursion Northern Lights briefing, warm clothes, hot soup meal and hot drinks. Duration: 4 hrs. Operates 01 Dec to 31 Mar.



### HUSKY SAFARI

Don thermals, thick socks, woolly hats and snow boots and head out into the frozen wilds around Camp Nikka, towed by a pack of huskies. You'll be introduced to the sled dogs by an expert guide, learn how to drive and enjoy a simple yet delicious fireside meal on your return to camp.

» PRICES FROM: £165 pp incl. warm clothes and a light meal. Duration: 3 hrs. Operates 01 Dec to 31 Mar.



### FAT BIKE RENTAL

Ideal for dealing with soft, snowy and sometimes unstable terrain, Fat Bikes are a fun alternative for exploring the wilds around Malangen Resort. The area's well-marked tracks, coupled with the Fat Bikes' oversized tyres, turn this already-stunning place into a fun-filled winter playground to enjoy at your own pace.

» PRICES FROM: £65 pp incl. equipment hire. Duration 3 hrs. Operates 01 Dec to 31 Mar.

## MALANGEN EXCURSIONS

Get wonderfully lost in the wilds on these two very different excursions. One offers speedy thrills and the opportunity to explore far and wide, the other takes things slow, wanders the snowy paths and, in doing so, offers an intimate look at northern Norway's winter habitats.

### SNOWMOBILE SAFARI

Explore the rugged interior of Norway's Arctic region as you speed across mountain plateaus, lakeshores and snow-white peninsulas. You'll travel in pairs and have the chance to change drivers at the halfway point – provided you remembered to bring a valid driving licence. Your guide will point out the unique features of the landscape, while keeping an eye on the snowy expanse for signs of local wildlife. A hot meal provides the ideal end to an exhilarating afternoon.

» **PRICES FROM:** £195 pp incl. transfers, warm clothing and a hot soup meal.  
Duration: 3.5 hrs. Operates 01 Dec to 31 Mar.



### SNOWSHOEING

Norway has produced some of the world's most celebrated explorers, many of whom earned their stripes venturing and adventuring across the snowy scenes of the country's Arctic north. Pull on a pair of snowshoes and follow in their footsteps, stepping through the beautiful silence of frozen forests and spotting wildlife before huddling around an open campfire for a well-earned break.

» **PRICES FROM:** £80 pp incl. warm winter clothing and a hot soup meal.  
Duration: 3.5 hrs. Operates 01 Dec to 31 Mar.



06

LYNGEN LODGE & THE NORTHERN LIGHTS



5-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR

1 day Tromsø » 4 days Lyngen Lodge



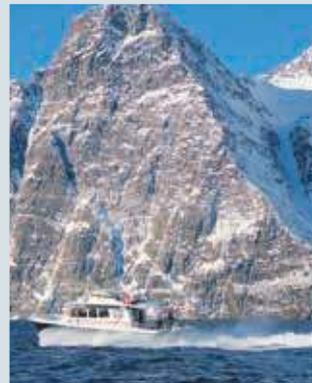
» PRICES FROM: £2,165 pp incl. return flights, 1 night Clarion Collection Hotel With BB, return transfers to Lyngen Lodge, 3 nights Lyngen Lodge FB, husky sledding excursion, snowmobiling & Northern Lights presentation with photography tips. Selected departures 20 Nov to 10 Mar. Please note, on certain dates Lyngen Lodge operates a four-night stay. Ask our specialists for details and prices.

Lyngen Lodge is an intimate wilderness retreat two-and-a-half hours' drive east of Tromsø. Overlooking a beautiful fjord and in the shadow of the Lyngen Alps, it's a wonderfully scenic base from which to explore northern Norway's awesome Arctic landscapes. An included husky safari and snowmobile excursion help bring your Arctic adventure to life.

**Day 1 » Tromsø** Fly to Tromsø and transfer to the Clarion Collection Hotel With, ideally situated right by the harbour. Spend the rest of the day exploring at your own pace, perhaps visiting the city's museums and art galleries before dining out at one of Tromsø's celebrated restaurants – we recommend Emmas



Drømmekjøkken or seafood specialists Fiskekompaniet. To round off your first day in style, be sure to add on a Northern Lights hunt, bringing you out to a series of aurora basecamps deep into the snow-covered wilderness.



#### SEA SAFARI

One of the best ways to take in the region's extraordinary nature is by boat. On this excursion, you'll board the *Spirit of Lyngen* for a half-day tour of northern Norway's fjords, starting the day dolphin spotting before heading to the island of Uløya where they still dry stockfish on wooden racks.

» SUPPLEMENT: £160 pp incl. hot drinks, barbecue lunch and warm clothes. Duration 4 hrs.

**Day 2 » Lyngen Lodge** After a morning at leisure, set out for Lyngen Lodge. Catering for just 18 guests, Lyngen features a sauna and outdoor Jacuzzi among its facilities, as well as a delightful lounge complete with an open fire and views across the adjacent fjord. Then, in the evening, after the first of your included dinners, you'll join a Northern Lights presentation complete with photography tips before heading outside to hopefully put your newfound knowledge to use. **BLD**

**Days 3–4 » Lyngen Lodge** Spend two days exploring Lyngen Alps, with snowmobiling and husky trips included in the price. On your snowmobile excursion, you'll join an expert guide on a thrilling

ride through snow-laden birch forests to arrive on a mountain plateau where you'll try your hand at ice fishing. After drilling holes through the lake's frozen surface, you'll gather around a fire to cook and eat your catch. There's even time to explore further on your snowmobiles between fishing stops. The next day you'll head to the Reisa Valley on a husky safari, learning how to mush a team of eager dogs. Again, a wilderness lunch is included, before your return journey brings you between open valleys and jagged peaks back to the comforts of the lodge. **BLD**

**Day 5 » Depart** After a final delicious breakfast, transfer back to Tromsø for the night before your flight home. **B**



#### SNOWSHOEING NATURE TRAIL

Set off in search of wildlife in the forests around Lyngen Lodge on this snowshoe excursion. Led by an expert guide, you'll learn about the Arctic region's fascinating natural and human history. This excursion is included with our six-day Lyngen Lodge tour. Ask our specialists for details and prices.





## ICE & SNOW HOTELS

---

Ever since the first ice hotel opened in Sweden in 1989, hunkering down on a bed of ice surrounded by frozen furniture, art and décor has been a rite of passage for the winter traveller. Now, scattered throughout Scandinavia's frozen north, a collection of six other ice and snow hotels are bringing cutting-edge sculptures, thrilling excursions, the finest regional food and a warm wintertime welcome to some of the Northern Hemisphere's most beautiful and remote regions.

Each year, the ICEHOTEL – the world's first – pulls out all the stops to piece together a wildly ambitious and impressive hotel from huge blocks harvested from the frozen Torne River, styled by an endlessly creative team of architects and artists. In its fleeting existence, the hotel has established an unparalleled variety of exciting adventures to keep you enthralled. Add to that the likes of gourmet tasting menus and ICEHOTEL 365's stunning Deluxe Suites, which come with private heated bathrooms and saunas, this Scandinavian icon has raised the bar once more.

But, while it might be the best known, ICEHOTEL is not the only one of its kind. Across the border in Norway, Sorrisniva Igloo Hotel is more intimate, but no less impressive. There's a superb restaurant to enjoy in the evenings, while days are filled with husky sledding and snowmobile rides. Also in Norway, the Snowhotel at Kirkenes is looking forward to its twelfth successful season. Close to the Finnish and Russian borders, this is the northernmost snow hotel of them all. And, this coming winter, the new Tromsø Ice Domes are set to open their doors to overnight guests for the first time, bringing the very best in frozen art and frosty nights to Norway's Northern Lights capital.

Then there's Finland's impressive Snowcastle in coastal Kemi and Lainio's Snow Village with its Ice Restaurant and subterranean warm rooms, all surrounded by the rugged beauty of the Finnish fells. Finally, just outside Rovaniemi, the Arctic SnowHotel, and its neighbouring glass igloos, are taking the ice hotel concept to the very heart of Santa's Lapland.

# ICE & SNOW HOTELS

With five ice and snow hotels now open in Scandinavia and the Nordics, and Tromsø Ice Domes welcoming guests from this winter, there's never been more choice for those seeking sub-zero sleeps. But which ice hotel is best? To help you choose, here are their highlights.



## ICEHOTEL Jukkasjärvi, Sweden

- » Venture 200 km north of the Arctic Circle to stay at the world's original ice hotel
- » Expect intricate sculptures and stunning art across a vast collection of Ice Rooms and Art Suites
- » Experience everything from overnight husky safaris to gourmet tasting menus

Page 28



## SORRISNIVA IGLOO HOTEL Alta, Norway

- » Stay at Norway's first ice hotel, home to 30 rooms and suites, an ice bar and even a frozen chapel
- » Celebrate the culinary traditions of the Arctic at Restaurant Laksestua
- » Sip on carefully crafted cocktails served in glasses made of ice

Page 34



## KIRKENES SNOWHOTEL, NORWAY Alta, Norway

- » Expect a warm family welcome at this remote snow hotel, located just 16 kilometres from the Russian border
- » Fish for king crabs, then cook and eat your catch – a unique Arctic experience
- » After a night on ice, warm your cockles in a cosy Gamme Cabin

Page 36



## SNOW VILLAGE Kittilä, Finland

- » Sleep in one of 30 themed and sculpted Snow Suites in the remote reaches of Finnish Lapland
- » Be amazed by its vast network of corridors, full of spectacular ice art
- » Practise your downhill and cross-country skiing at any number of nearby slopes

Page 33



## KEMI SNOWCASTLE Kemi, Finland

- » Enjoy all the trappings of an ice hotel with the convenience of a city location
- » Dine in the uncompromising splendour of the world's largest ice restaurant, with seating for up to 200 guests
- » Throw yourself into the frozen Gulf of Bothnia on a thrilling icebreaker cruise

Page 35



## TROMSØ ICE DOMES Tromsø, Norway

- » Experience the sub-zero delights of an ice hotel in Norway's Northern Lights capital
- » Feed your appetite for adventure with snowshoe hikes and wilderness dinners
- » Round off days of adventure with perfectly chilled drinks at the ice bar

Page 14



07

CLASSIC  
ICEHOTEL BREAK



#### 4-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

4 days ICEHOTEL



» PRICES FROM: £795 pp incl. flights, transfers, 1 night Ice Room BB, 2 nights Arctic Chalet BB, thermal clothing & morning sauna. Operates 12 Dec to 16 Apr.

A classic short break combining a one-night stay in a freshly built Ice Room and two nights' warm accommodation with a choice of Lapland adventure activities. There's everything from reindeer encounters and dogsled rides to Northern Lights hunts by snowmobile.

**Day 1 » ICEHOTEL** Fly to Kiruna via Stockholm and make your way to the ICEHOTEL, perhaps upgrading your transfer to a husky sled ride for a fittingly wintry arrival. Once there, you'll be handed thermal clothing and shown around the hotel. Grab a cocktail at the ICEBAR and a tasty meal at one of the hotel's three restaurants, keeping an occasional eye on the sky for Northern Lights apparitions before settling into your Arctic sleeping bag for a snug night in your private ice cave. **B**

**Days 2-3 » ICEHOTEL** After a wake-up cup of hot lingonberry juice, a morning sauna will chase away any lingering icicles, before a hearty breakfast sets you up for two days of outdoor adventure. You can choose between the likes of dogsledding, encounters with reindeer and other wild animals of the

region, a wilderness dinner, Northern Lights snowmobiling (see overleaf) – or ask our specialists about a snap course in ice sculpture using traditional tools, a nighttime Northern Lights horseback ride, or a leisurely day of Nordic skiing in the spectacular Poikkijarvi woods. For these two nights, you'll toast in the comforts of a warm and bright Scandinavian chalet. **B**

**Day 4 » ICEHOTEL** After breakfast, transfer to Kiruna for your return flights via Stockholm. **B**

#### ICEHOTEL WINTER OPENING

Be the first to experience this season's ICEHOTEL iteration with our special winter opening package. For a full itinerary and price, visit [best-served.co.uk/150598](http://best-served.co.uk/150598)



## ICEHOTEL

### SUPERIOR



The original of its kind, the ICEHOTEL is set 200 km within the Arctic Circle and is lovingly and painstakingly constructed each winter using ice and snow from one of Europe's wildest and purest rivers. Designers and artists from all creative disciplines join forces to create an imaginative, icy and extremely unusual experience.

The ICEHOTEL has been a wild success story since it was first created in 1989. With each reincarnation, blocks of snow and ice are harvested from the River Torne at Jukkasjärvi in the far north of Sweden, and crafted by architects, sculptors and ice experts into rooms, suites, hallways, galleries, a bar and even a small ceremony hall for weddings. Artworks and sculptures throughout the hotel are thrown into stunning iridescence by judicious lighting, lending further sparkle to proceedings. And, since its 2016 opening, ICEHOTEL 365 has brought a year-round permanence to what



was once the most ephemeral of retreats. They've also ramped up the luxury, with higher ceilings than its winter-only cousin setting the scene for even more extravagant ice carvings. It's all showcased in a stunning collection of Art Suites and Deluxe Suites, the latter of which come complete with heated en-suite bathrooms and saunas. There's also an ice gallery, and even an ice bar on site for added indulgence.

Back at the classic ICEHOTEL, accommodation ranges from simple but spacious Ice Rooms, each featuring a raised ice bed covered in thermal sleeping bags and reindeer skins, and themed Art Suites. For obvious reasons, running water and heating are kept to a minimum around the rest of the hotel, but you can always warm yourself at the 24-hour sauna and the relaxation area with its roaring fire.

The ICEBAR too, takes on a new guise each winter, with bespoke cocktails inspired by the latest hotel themes. It's a lovely place to chill out, with all drinks served in glasses made of ice. There's also fun to be had in testing out your slipperiest moves on the snowy dance floor.

The hotel's main restaurant is in a heated building nearby, and serves up its own inventive takes on such local delicacies as reindeer, moose, Arctic char, Lapland flatbread and berries. Elsewhere, the delightfully cosy Jukkasjärvi Homestead features roaring fires and chargrilled steaks, while, for something really special, the Chef's Table on the Veranda offers 12-course gourmet dining, all inspired by the flavours of Sweden and perfectly paired with a selection of fine wines from around the world.

## ICEHOTEL EXCURSIONS

From its remote location in deepest Swedish Lapland, the ICEHOTEL provides an astounding range of Arctic wilderness adventures guaranteed to keep your circulation flowing. Here are some of our favourite day and night excursions. Ask one of our Scandinavia specialists about other fun tours and expeditions in spectacular landscapes that will stay with you for a lifetime.



### WILDERNESS DINNER

Transfer to a forest wilderness camp at the water's edge for a warming pre-dinner drink in a tipi-style Sami tent and an informal talk about the Northern Lights and wild animals of the region. A three-course dinner of local dishes with thoughtfully paired drinks is then served around a fire in the rustic cabin.

» PRICES FROM: £240 pp, 4 hrs. Operates year-round



### WINTER WONDERLAND DOGSLED TOUR

A team of huskies pulls you across the pristine landscape around Jukkasjärvi, taking you close to nature like never before. Settle into a seat in the sled and enjoy the enthusiasm of the dogs yapping and howling in expectation, followed by silence all around as you journey deep into the snowy surrounds.

» PRICES FROM: £160 pp, 1.5 hrs. Operates 15 Nov to 20 Apr.



### RÁIDU – ENCOUNTER WITH REINDEER

An expert Sami guide invites you to a reindeer camp to meet these wonderful animals. Enjoy a short reindeer sled ride around a track before hand-feeding the calves. A cup of steaming coffee and the signature Sami dish of souvas, dry-salted and smoked reindeer meat, is prepared over open flames.

» PRICES FROM: £240 pp, 3 hrs. Daily from 16 Dec to 10 Apr.



### NORTHERN LIGHTS SNOWMOBILING

On this snowmobile excursion in search of the magical aurora borealis, experts from the Swedish Institute of Space Physics explain the facts and myths surrounding the celestial phenomenon. A rustic supper is served at a wilderness camp, and there are plentiful photo opportunities right through the evening.

» PRICES FROM: £190 pp, 4 hrs. Operates 15 Dec to 15 Apr.

NEW

08

CLASSIC ICEHOTEL &  
OVERNIGHT HUSKY SAFARI**4-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK**

3 days ICEHOTEL &gt;&gt; 1 day wilderness cabin



>> **PRICES FROM:** £1,385 pp incl. flights, transfers, 1 night ICEHOTEL (Ice Room) BB, 1 night ICEHOTEL (warm room) BB, 1 night wilderness cabin, overnight husky experience, guided tour of ICEHOTEL. Operates Nov to Apr.

A stay at Sweden's ICEHOTEL is an essential Scandinavian experience, and our classic break (page 28) has long been among our most popular tours. But we think we've improved it by combining a night on ice with an overnight husky safari to a remote cabin in the wilderness. Now what could be better than that?

**Day 1 >> Depart for ICEHOTEL** Fly out to Kiruna where a shuttle transfer will bring you to the ICEHOTEL on the frosty banks of the Torne River. Check into your Ice Room – or Art Suite if you've plumped for an upgrade – before a complimentary tour introduces you to the hotel's spectacular frozen art and architecture. It's the perfect preamble for a warming sauna, followed by dinner at one of ICEHOTEL's three restaurants. Then, after a drink in the ICE BAR, perhaps take the chance for a first-night excursion in search of the Northern Lights.

**Day 2 >> Overnight husky safari** After a hot lingonberry juice, served to your room, and a warming sauna and delicious breakfast, you'll check out of ICEHOTEL to begin a day of unimaginable adventure in the wilds of Swedish Lapland. Your overnight husky trip doesn't depart until mid-afternoon, so take your pick from a full spread of optional excursions. You might try your hand at ice sculpting under the watchful gaze of the hotel's ice experts, sharpen your camera skills on a photo tour, or work up a sweat with

some cross-country skiing. Then, at around 3:30pm, you'll meet your guide – a 9th generation Arctic settler whose forefathers were among the first to build permanent homes in the region. He'll lead you, by snowmobile sled, across the frozen Torne River to meet the huskies and learn the basics of mushing your own team. It's then time to head out into the wilderness, racing down icy trails to reach your remote wilderness camp. On arrival, settle the pack in their kennels before warming up with a wood-fired sauna and sate your appetite with a hearty two-course dinner. Keep an eye on the sky for the dancing aurora, then settle in for a night in your rustic log-cabin home, one of five surrounding a central campfire. **B D**

**Day 3-4 >> ICEHOTEL** Wake to a sauna and a delicious breakfast before harnessing the dogs for the journey back to ICEHOTEL, where you'll check into a warm Arctic Chalet. Perhaps take the chance for one final optional excursion in the afternoon, followed by a restful night and morning transfer to Kiruna for your flight home. **B**



09 TREEHOTEL & ICEHOTEL



TREEHOTEL

Beautifully set in a rugged, attractive forest in Harads, just south of the Arctic Circle, Sweden's Treehotel is the original grown-up treehouse, setting the standard for cool treetop dens and demonstrating that even adults can enjoy life among the branches. The unique accommodation experience may be lo-fi but the location and the extraordinary design of these chic Scandinavian rooms, perched at the top of floating walkways or suspended high in the pines, make the Treehotel an incredible, romantic, once-in-a-lifetime stay. Meals, all delicious and seasonal, can be enjoyed at the homely Brittas Restaurant, or in the privacy of your treetop cabin.

5-DAY TAILOR MADE TOUR

2 days Treehotel » 3 days ICEHOTEL



» PRICES FROM: £1,155 pp incl. flights, transfers, train, 2 nights Treehotel BB, 2 nights ICEHOTEL BB with a guided tour. Operates 12 Dec to mid-Apr.

Stay at two of Scandinavia's most iconic and celebrated hotels on a memorable tour of Swedish Lapland, including a scenic train ride from Luleå to Kiruna and a fabulous choice of winter escapades deep within the Arctic Circle.

**Days 1–2 » Treehotel** Fly to Luleå and transfer to the Treehotel in the pine forests near Harads. Your accommodation for the night will be in one of seven treetop rooms; there's everything from UFOs and birds' nests to mirrored cubes which blend seamlessly into the forest. The next day, choose from a range of optional excursions include dogsledding, horse-and-sleigh rides, a cultural tour to a nearby Sami village or an afternoon spent skiing at nearby Storklinten. Evening meals, at an extra cost, feature haute hunter-gatherer dishes and local delicacies such as reindeer and moose meat or fish from the local river. **B**

**Day 3 » ICEHOTEL** After breakfast, travel by train from Luleå to Kiruna and transfer to the world-famous ICEHOTEL, your home for the next two nights. Take a tour of the hotel before checking into an Ice

Room where you'll spend your first night. Upgrades to the hotel's stunning Art Suites are also available. **B**

**Day 4 » ICEHOTEL** Wake to a warm glass of lingonberry juice before enjoying a delicious buffet breakfast. A morning sauna is a great way to start the day before you set off on an optional husky or snowmobile safari, ice sculpting class or reindeer encounter. Perhaps round things off with a traditional Lappish dinner – there's everything from hearty steaks to 12-course tasting menus – and an optional adventure in search of the Northern Lights. Your second night at ICEHOTEL will be in a warm room. **B**

**Day 5 » Departure** After breakfast, check out and transfer to the airport for your return flight via Stockholm. **B**

10

SNOW VILLAGE  
& LEVI

## SNOWMOBILES &amp; REINDEER

Follow the snowmobile track through the powdery drifts to a local reindeer farm where the owner presents a select group of reindeer trained for sleigh pulling and reindeer races. Reindeer herders demonstrate how to drive a reindeer sleigh, and then you take the reins for a bracing one kilometre ride.

» PRICES FROM: £150 pp incl. warm clothing, hot drinks & transfers. Duration 2.5 hrs. Operates Mon, Wed & Fri from 1 Dec to 15 Apr.

## 4-DAY TAILOR-MADE ITINERARY

1 day Lainio Snow Village » 3 days Levi



» PRICES FROM: £950 pp incl. flights, transfers, 1 night Snow Village HB and 2 nights Levi Panorama BB. Operates 28 Dec to 7 Apr.

Spend a night in an igloo-style room at Snow Village followed by two action packed days of winter sports and activities from your base at Levi Panorama, a unique hillside hotel with views across the hills and plains of Finnish Lapland.

**Day 1 » Snow Village** Fly to Kittilä and transfer to Lainio Snow Village, a magical world in the western corner of Finnish Lapland that changes shape, size and design each winter. The rooms and suites are complemented by a warm subterranean area with bathroom facilities,

a large fireplace, an Ice Restaurant, Ice Cocktail Bar, chapel, and striking frozen art. Enjoy a welcome drink and a village tour before a three-course meal of Lappish delicacies in the spectacular Ice Restaurant. Finally, snuggle into your warm sleeping bag on your icy bed. **D**

**Day 2 » Levi** Wake up to hot berry juice and a buffet breakfast at the cosy Log Restaurant before transferring to Levi, 170km above the Arctic Circle. It's the largest ski resort in Finland. The alpine-

style Hotel Levi Panorama, centrally located within the resort, is well known for its sweeping Lapland views and close proximity to the slopes. **B**

**Day 3 » Levi** Fill your day with a choice of optional excursions, perhaps combining morning cross-country skiing with a Husky Safari (below) or a Snowmobiles & Reindeer Tour (above). Or, enjoy an evening snowmobile quest for the Northern Lights through snow-covered forests and over frozen lakes. **B**

**Day 4 » Levi** After breakfast, transfer to Kittilä for your return flight. **B**



## HUSKY SAFARI

Kitted out in suitable Arctic attire, depart by bus to a husky camp to meet the dogs, then venture into the Lappish wilderness for a 10 km safari with your eager companions. After the ride, relax with a hot berry juice while you're regaled with stories about the pack.

» PRICES FROM: £175 pp. Duration 3 hrs. Operates Tues, Wed, Thur & Fri from Dec to Apr & Sat from 1 Jan onwards.

1 1

SORRISNIVA IGLOO HOTEL & ALTA



REINDEER & NORTHERN LIGHTS

Climb aboard a Sami reindeer sled and head out in search of the Northern Lights. It's an exciting yet serene experience, only enhanced by the quiet of the night, as you glide your merry way to a *lavvo* for hot coffee, snacks, a traditional *joik* musical performance and stories of the aurora.

» PRICES FROM: £200 pp incl. warm clothing, hot drinks & transfers. Duration 2.5 hrs. Operates Mon, Wed & Fri from 15 Dec to Apr.

4-DAY TAILOR-MADE ITINERARY

1 day Alta » 2 days Sorrisniva Igloo Hotel » 1 day Alta



» PRICES FROM: £1,180 pp incl. flights, transfers, 2 nights Scandic Hotel Alta BB, 1 night Sorrisniva Igloo Hotel BB, morning sauna and Northern Lights hunt. Operates Jan to Apr.

This action-packed Arctic experience centres on a one-night stay in the unique Sorrisniva Igloo Hotel, combined with unparalleled adventures on snow and ice, and a nocturnal quest for the Northern Lights.

**Day 1 » Alta** Fly to Alta via Oslo, and check in to the Scandic Hotel.

**Day 2 » Sorrisniva Igloo Hotel** After breakfast at the Scandic, the morning is free to take a look around Alta; with a population of 20,000 it's Finnmark's largest town. Don't miss the Alta Museum, where

you can learn about the rock carvings at Norway's only prehistoric World Heritage Site. In the afternoon, transfer to Sorrisniva Igloo Hotel where you can splash out on a sumptuous feast at Restaurant Laksestua. Freshly prepared local delicacies include grouse breast with cream cheese and cloudberry sauce, smoked reindeer with sour apple salad, and such seafood delights as salmon baked in ham and hazelnut-coated Arctic char. With an indoor temperature of -4 to -7 degrees, you'll then appreciate snuggling up in a thermal sleeping bag and reindeer skins as you spend the night under (and on) dramatically sculpted ice. **B**

**Day 3 » Sorrisniva Igloo Hotel** After a warming sauna and breakfast, optional excursions include husky sledding or a snowmobile safari, before you transfer back to the Scandic for a night drive deep into the countryside to a viewing point and a chance to glimpse the aurora borealis. **B**

**Day 4 » Alta** Breakfast and transfer to Alta Airport for return flights via Oslo. **B**



SNOWMOBILE SAFARI (DAY OR EVENING)

Following a former trade road to Karasjok, one of Europe's last true wildernesses, you'll drive your very own snowmobile through snow-covered forests to the Finnmarksvidda plateau. Here you'll enjoy lunch alongside spectacular views and the sheer fun and excitement that comes with driving a snowmobile.

» PRICES FROM: £320 pp. Duration 4 hrs. Operates daily from 15 Feb to 7 Apr.

12

KEMI SNOWCASTLE  
& ICEBREAKER SAMPO

## KEMI SNOWCASTLE

Its pure white walls adorned with intricate carvings, Kemi's impressive Snowcastle occupies a prime coastal location on the frozen Gulf of Bothnia, just a short hop (or husky sleigh ride) from the Swedish border. Inside, you'll find a collection of beautifully decorated snow rooms complete with ice beds and reindeer hides for warmth while, throughout the main building, there are countless areas to explore including the Snow Chapel and, with space for 200 hungry guests, the world's largest ice restaurant.

## 4-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

1 day Kemi » 1 day *The Icebreaker Sampo* » 1 day Kemi Snowcastle » 1 day Kemi



» PRICES FROM: £2,420 pp incl. flights, transfers, 2 nights glass villa in Kemi, 1 night at Snowcastle or Olokolo, *Icebreaker Sampo* cruise, selected touring & meals as indicated. Operates Jan to Apr.

Make the most of winter in Finnish Lapland with this thrilling four-day break, packed with unique and adventurous activities. Throughout your stay you'll try your hand at snowmobiling and snowshoeing, swim in the icy waters of the Gulf of Bothnia from the bows of an icebreaker and spend a magical night in a castle made of snow.

**Day 1 » Kemi** Following a flight and a transfer, your first day is free to explore the village of Kemi at your own pace before settling down to dinner at your glass-villa hotel. Then, in the evening, you'll have the opportunity to get your adventure under way with an optional snowmobile or snowshoe excursion. **(D)**

**Day 2 » *The Icebreaker Sampo*** After a hearty breakfast at your hotel, you'll transfer by snowmobile across the frozen Gulf of Bothnia for the start of your icebreaker cruise. Once on board, you'll tour the ship's bridge and engine rooms before heading out across the ice. If you're feeling adventurous, this is the chance to take a dip in the sea; survival suits are included, but it's still a bracing experience. As you return to the relative warmth of dry land, you'll continue by snowmobile to a Lappish tipi where you'll enjoy refreshments. And, if all that wasn't enough, this evening there's the chance to join an optional ice fishing trip before returning to your hotel. **(BLD)**

**Day 3 » Kemi Snowcastle** Today begins with a husky safari. Warm up with coffee and snacks around a roaring fire as your guide explains the importance of these good-natured working dogs to life in the Arctic. Then, after lunch, you'll set out on an Olokolo Ice Safari, where pods are pulled by snowmobile across the frozen sea. After the tour you'll head for Kemi's Snowcastle where you'll spend the night. Following a guided tour and a delicious three-course dinner, you'll test your skills on a kiksled before retiring to a bed carved out of ice, covered in lambskin and topped with a thermal sleeping bag. Or, if you prefer, spend the night in an Olokolo 'pod' (different to those mentioned above). With their glass roofs and views to the night sky, you might even be treated to a display of the Northern Lights. **(BLD)**

**Day 4 » Kemi** Following a night on the ice you'll no doubt enjoy a hearty breakfast served in the Snowcastle Lounge. Then, it's back to the airport for your flight home via Helsinki. **(B)**

13

CLASSIC KIRKENES  
SNOWHOTEL BREAK



4-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

4 days Kirkenes Snowhotel



» PRICES FROM: £1,390 pp incl. flights, transfers, 1 night Snow Room HB, Northern Lights by Snowmobile excursion, tour of Snowhotel, morning sauna and 2 nights in Gamme Cabins HB. Operates 20 Dec to 20 Apr.

The Norwegian frontier town of Kirkenes, near the Finnish and Russian borders, is home to the world's most northerly snow hotel. Now entering its twelfth season, the Kirkenes Snowhotel is a firm fixture on the adventure travel circuit, with the resident ruminants of Gabba Reindeer Park, and excellent opportunities for Northern Lights viewing, just two of the natural highlights of your stay.

**Day 1 » Snowhotel** Fly to Kirkenes via Oslo and transfer to the Snowhotel. A welcome drink at the Ice Bar and tour of the hotel are followed by a sumptuous three-course dinner by the open fire, before you retire for an unforgettable night – snug within thermal clothing and sleeping bag – in one of the freshly sculpted ice suites. The rooms here are truly spectacular, all ethereally lit and surrounded by stunning frozen furniture and intricately carved ice art. **D**

**Days 2-3 » Snowhotel** For the next two nights, you'll stay in a cosy Gamme Cabin, designed by Swiss architects in the style of traditional Sami hunting and fishing huts but with tall, one-way glass windows from which to gaze out onto the night sky. A night-time Northern Lights by Snowmobile tour is included, and your days can be filled with a fabulous choice of optional excursions, the best of which are highlighted opposite. **E D**

**Day 4 » Kirkenes** After a satisfying breakfast, check out and transfer to the airport for your return flight. **E**



KIRKENES GAMME CABINS

Inspired by the Norwegian Arctic's traditional hunting and fishing huts, these cabins provide a warm alternative for those staying longer at Kirkenes Snowhotel. Designed by Swiss architects, each cabin is designed and built using locally sourced materials, all very Scandinavian and all very stylish. Each one comes with underfloor heating and large windows for cosy views of the Northern Lights.

## KIRKENES EXCURSIONS

Deep within the Arctic Circle, winter activities are wild and varied. From the Snowhotel you can safari by snowmobile or husky-drawn sled, meet the locals at a Samí camp or learn ancient techniques of fishing through thick ice. Winter darkness descends from late November to late January at this northernmost point of Europe, while the plentiful Russian signage is a reminder you've also ventured far, far east.

### HUSKY SAFARI

Handle your own husky team as you head through the Arctic wilderness on an exhilarating adventure over a snow-covered frozen lake. The well-trained and friendly dogs take you on an invigorating ride through spectacular scenery. Warm clothing is provided to keep chills at bay, and you'll feel like top dog as you're awarded your husky driving licence at the end of the day. If you're in luck, a magical apparition of the Northern Lights will complete your day as darkness falls.

» PRICES FROM: £200 pp, incl. snacks, transfers & warm clothes. Duration 2 hrs. Operates 1 Dec to 20 Apr.



### ARCTIC SNOWMOBILE SAFARI

A memorable journey awaits as you learn to handle a snowmobile. Two people share each vehicle, with the chance to switch drivers at photo stops. Longer tours, complete with a wilderness picnic, are also available.

» PRICES FROM: £215 pp incl. snacks, transfers & warm clothes. Duration 2 hrs. Operates 1 Dec to 20 Apr.



### KING CRAB SAFARI

Head out on sleighs pulled by snowmobiles to fish for king crabs which, with few natural predators, can grow to up to six feet wide and weigh up to 25 pounds. Your tasty catch will then be cooked and served for lunch at a local fisherman's home.

» PRICES FROM: £200 pp incl. lunch, warm clothing & transfers. Duration 4 hrs. Operates 1 Dec to 20 Apr.





## GLASS IGLOOS

---

Having long been at the forefront of innovative design, it's perhaps no surprise that Finland is leading the way in terms of inventive accommodation too. And, while its Nordic neighbours might have been first past the post with snow hotels and art-installation treehouses, it's perhaps the recent explosion of Finnish glass igloos that is most intriguing.

Combining an ancient architectural form with the best in modernist materials, they've become something of an icon for Nordic design. But, while they're all glass-and-steel thrusts, an igloo stay is just as much about showcasing the natural world around you as it is indulging artsy sensibilities. Cloaked by the wintry beauty of Lapland's wild remotes, it's the skies that demand the most attention. From your very bed you'll be treated to spectacular stargazing opportunities and, fingers crossed, the Northern Lights. And, with heated windows, you'll enjoy perfectly unclouded views. Many even feature a motorised bed so you can get the best angle.

One of our favourite examples, Levin Iglut, will see you right into the depths of Finnish Lapland. Perfectly poised among the fells and forests, its delightfully remote setting – far from any light pollution – is ideal for catching glimpses of the aurora borealis. You'll even take your dinner in a giant glass tipi after spending your days exploring with snowmobiles and dogsledding. Otherwise, if you're looking for some skiing, or to explore the wilds on horseback, head to Kakslautanen, whose latest invention combines glass-igloo innovation with the traditions of a log-cabin home.

There's also the opportunity to combine your stay with another of Finnish Lapland's accommodation icons at the Arctic SnowHotel & Glass Igloos. Here, underfloor-heated igloos make for a cosy contrast to a night spent on a bed of ice. Then, for an equally exciting pairing, Father Christmas himself will pay a visit to your igloo at Santa's Hotel Aurora.

## GLASS IGLOOS & AURORA HOTELS

Over recent years, glass igloo-style hotels have been springing up across Finnish Lapland. And, with eight to choose from, it's hard to know where to begin. Fortunately, whether it's the location, facilities, or even the style of 'igloo' itself, each has its own unique features to help it stand out from the crowd.



### LEVIN IGLUT Levi, Finland

- » With heated glass, en-suite showers and even small kitchens, these glass igloos are among Finland's most luxurious
- » Enjoy spectacular Northern Lights views from a privileged fell-top location
- » Combine some of the best skiing in Finland with outdoor hot-tub soaks

Page 43



### ARCTIC SNOW HOTEL & GLASS IGLOOS Rovaniemi, Finland

- » Tick two off the bucket list in one trip with nights in a glass igloo and ice hotel
- » Experience the magic of a stay right on Santa's doorstep
- » Let off steam in the resort's Snow Sauna, surrounded by walls of ice

Page 42



### KAKSLAUTTANEN Saariselkä, Finland

- » Stay at the first resort in Finland to offer glass igloo accommodation, with the first ones popping up way back in 1999
- » Take part in a wide range of winter excursions, all available on site
- » Upgrade to a Kelo-glass igloo – an innovative glass-igloo/log-cabin hybrid

Page 44



### SANTA'S HOTEL AURORA Luosto, Finland

- » Featuring just 10 beautifully furnished igloos, this is one of the most intimate, and stylish, resorts of its kind
- » Unlike many of its competitors, these igloos are open year-round
- » Book a private in-igloo audience with Santa for the ultimate festive experience

Page 46



### NORTHERN LIGHTS RANCH Köngäs, Finland

- » While they aren't igloos as such, the Sky View Cabins at this remote resort offer stunning aurora views
- » Splash out on a Deluxe Cabin, complete with a private hot tub
- » Set out across the wilderness on sleighs pulled by the ranch's resident reindeers

Page 47



### APUKKA RESORT Rovaniemi, Finland

- » The new kid on the block, this quirky resort offers superb aurora viewing just a short hop from the Arctic Circle
- » Enjoy an overnight adventure in a glass-roofed Aurora Wagon
- » Mix things up with a stay in an ice cabin and relax in a sauna on skis

Page 48



**WILDERNESS HOTEL INARI**  
Lake Inari, Finland

- » Settle in for a front-row seat of the Northern Lights and views over neighbouring Lake Inari
- » Swap glass-igloo innovation for a cosy log cabin complete with rotating stove
- » Head out onto the frozen lake with ice-fishing trips and snowmobile dashes

Page 49



**AURORA DOMES**  
Torassieppi, Finland

- » Experience the best in Arctic glamping at these remote lake-side domes
- » Relax in comfy armchairs to private views across Lake Torassieppi, glass of wine in hand
- » Meet the local reindeer at a farm which dates back to the mid-19th century

Page 50

14

GLASS IGLOO & ICE HOTEL BREAK



ARCTIC SNOWHOTEL

It's rare to find a resort that ticks off two essential Nordic experiences in one visit, but this hotel, hidden away in Finnish Lapland's frozen forests, does just that. And, while a stay in a heated glass igloo screams innovation, over at the neighbouring SnowHotel, up to 70 guests can enjoy that most memorable of Scandinavian experiences – a night spent on a bed of ice. While temperatures hover between zero and minus five degrees, a combination of Arctic sleeping bags and reindeer furs are on hand to keep you warm. All the while, clever lighting brings to life the intricate carvings that are unique to each room. And, as with their glass-igloo cousins, the aurora alarm will wake you when the time is right.

4-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

4 days Rovaniemi



» PRICES FROM: £1,040 pp incl. flights, transfers, 2 nights Glass Igloo HB, 1 night SnowHotel HB (Ice Restaurant). Operates 01 Nov to 31 Mar.

Scandinavia is well-known for its design-driven accommodation and this itinerary combines two of the region's finest. What's more, they're both on the same secluded site, tucked away in Finland's Arctic north. You'll start off in a glass-domed igloo, with private views of the Northern Lights, before swapping over to its snow hotel neighbour to sleep on sheets of ice as expertly carved friezes watch over you.

**Days 1–2 » Glass Igloos** Flying out to Rovaniemi, you'll be transferred the short distance north to the Arctic SnowHotel. Once there, you'll check in to your Glass Igloo for the next two nights. And what nights they'll be, with the chance to watch the Northern Lights play out right above your head, framed by your igloo's thermally heated glass dome. There's even an aurora alarm service that can be turned on for those not wanting to miss out on any midnight colours. You'll then have the option of a snow-sculpting course to have a go at creating the intricate artwork that brings the neighbouring SnowHotel to life. Finish with your first taste of the Arctic at Kota Restaurant for Lappish delicacies served around the roaring fire of a traditional hut. The following afternoon you'll enjoy optional excursions that include husky safaris and snowshoeing trips through the frozen forest. **BLD**

**Day 3 » SnowHotel** Check in to the stunning SnowHotel. Here, you'll sleep on a transparent bed of ice as carefully chosen lighting sets it all aglow. Although temperatures are strictly sub-zero, you'll be kept warm with an Arctic sleeping bag and even receive a certificate for your troubles. Today you'll also have the option of trying your hand at ice fishing at the adjacent Lake Lehtojärvi. Drill a hole and listen to the fishermen's stories as you catch everything from perch to pike. In the evening, you'll take your dinner in the Ice Restaurant, where dishes such as roasted elk and braised fish are sure to keep you warm. If that's not enough, you'll have use of a traditional sauna. **BLD**

**Day 4 » Rovaniemi** After breakfast, return to Rovaniemi for your flight home. **B**

15

## GLASS IGLOOS &amp; NORTHERN LIGHTS



## LEVIN IGLUT

A night in a glass igloo is fast becoming *the* quintessential Nordic experience. Leading the way is Levin Iglut, a resort at the forefront of Finland's recent glass igloo explosion. Here, a collection of stylish heated domes look out from a snowy hilltop perch to the forested wilds beyond and, on clear nights, uninterrupted views of the aurora's psychedelic disco clouds. The experience doesn't end there, of course, as the remoteness of the resort means a twinkling hemisphere of constellations drifts gradually by as the night recedes into morning.

## 5-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR

1 day Levin Iglut &gt;&gt; 4 days Levi



>> **PRICES FROM:** £1,095 pp incl. flights, transfers, 1 night Superior Glass Igloo HB and 3 nights Levi Panorama BB. Operates mid-Nov to end Apr.

There are many ways to see the Northern Lights, and tour companies and hotel owners across the Arctic have spent hours devising ever more exciting ways to see the aurora. In Finland especially, they've settled on a wonderfully simple solution – a glass igloo. This short break includes a stay at just such a hotel, with an unforgettable night under the glass domes of Levin Iglut followed by three days of fun-filled adventure in nearby Levi.

**Day 1 >> Levin Iglut** Fly to Helsinki and connect with a domestic flight to Kittilä in Finnish Lapland. From here transfer to Levin Iglut, set deep amongst the fells and forests. Don't be deceived by the igloo moniker: this is no ice hotel, and nor is it a faithful representation of the Inuit snow house. Instead, imagine a cabin in which walls and roof have been replaced by an insulated and heated glass dome. Settle into your surroundings and enjoy a Lappish soup dinner in the tipi-style restaurant before heading to bed – the show starts as soon as your head hits the pillow. 

**Day 2 >> Levi** Wake up at leisure and enjoy breakfast in your igloo, gazing out over the winter landscape that encircles you. A transfer then takes you to Levi Panorama, a contemporary hotel perched on a fell just minutes from some of Finland's finest ski slopes. The hotel itself comes complete with a cosy bar, a traditional Finnish sauna, a new café with

roaring fires and sweeping fell views, and a restaurant that serves everything from burgers and buffalo wings to succulent sautéed reindeer. 

**Days 3–4 >> Levi** With two free days for optional tours, perhaps try your hand at cross-country skiing to experience one of the most rewarding, and tiring, modes of transport in the Arctic. There are all the usual Arctic favourites, too, from thrilling snowmobiling safaris and dog-sledding tours to lazy reindeer rides through snow-dusted forests. 

**Day 5 >> Depart Levi** Transfer to Kittilä airport after breakfast for your return flights via Helsinki. 

16

KAKSLAUTTANEN  
WINTER BREAK



#### KELO-GLASS IGLOOS

While our featured itinerary includes stays in a traditional log cabin and a glass igloo, Kakslauttanen's stunning Kelo-Glass Igloos very handily combine both in one very special type of accommodation. Sleeping up to six guests, and featuring a fireplace, a kitchenette and a private sauna, they combine the innate cosiness of a traditional Lappish hut with the sort of spellbinding views that only a glass roof can provide. Put simply, they're the ultimate way to experience winter in the Arctic. Speak to our specialists to upgrade your stay.

### 5-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR

5 days Hotel Kakslauttanen



» **PRICES FROM:** £1,975 pp incl. flights, return shuttle transfers, 3 nights Kakslauttanen small cabin HB. 1 night Glass Igloo HB, reindeer safari, Northern Lights tour by snowmobile & husky safari. Operates Nov to Apr.

Taking in the full Kakslauttanen experience, this break features stays in a log cabin and glass igloo alongside a full spread of excursions. Explore the snowy forests on snowmobiles and husky sleds, and explore the region's traditional Sami culture with reindeer rides and village visits. It's all set to a backdrop of warming saunas and delicious Lappish dining.

**Day 1 » Hotel Kakslauttanen** Fly to Ivalo and take the airport shuttle to Kakslauttanen. Your accommodation for the first three nights is a Kelo Cottage in Kakslauttanen's East Village. These traditional log cabins fit perfectly with their Arctic surroundings, all delightful rusticity complete with fireplaces and saunas. Take time to settle in before making your way to the restaurant for the first of your included meals – three courses based on the traditional flavours and ingredients of Finnish Lapland. **D**

#### Days 2-3 » Reindeer & snowmobiles

The first of your included excursions is a reindeer safari, perhaps the most authentic way to experience Lappish nature and culture. Decked out in thermals, you'll have time for a quick photoshoot with your newfound furry friends before heading off into the forest. The pace is slow and the scenery stunning as you make your way to a herder's shelter for hot coffee and a roaring fire. You'll also have time to explore the Sami Village and even throw a traditional lasso. Then, head back to base for a

leisurely afternoon as you look forward to the next day's activity – a thrilling safari by snowmobile. Heading out after dark, after a full day of optional Nordic skiing and horseback rides, you'll go in search of the aurora borealis, riding two to a vehicle and swapping drivers half way. **B/D**

#### Days 4-5 » Huskies & glass igloos

The adventures continue today as you kick things off with an included husky safari – perhaps *the* quintessential Arctic experience. Riding two to a sled, and taking it in turns to drive, you'll mush your team along frozen trails beneath the forest canopy. Then, this afternoon, you'll check into one of Kakslauttanen's famous glass igloos, each one a wonderfully cosy base for private views of the inky skies above, hopefully painted in the vivid colours of the Northern Lights. The next morning, make the most of the showers and sauna before jumping on the airport shuttle back to Ivalo for your flight home. **B/D**

## KAKSLAUTTANEN EXCURSIONS

While Kakslauttannen is rightly famed for its glass-igloo accommodation, there's far more to a stay here than merely stargazing and aurora-spotting – though as far as pastimes go these are surely among the best. Instead, between nights hunting the Northern Lights, there's a full spread of Arctic excursions to choose from. Below are four of our favourites – three of which are included on our featured tour opposite.



### HUSKY SAFARI

Carve along the frozen trails that fan out into the forests around Kakslauttannen on a sled pulled by a team of eager huskies. Riding two to a sled, you'll take it in turns to drive, before stopping in the wilds for hot drinks and stories from your expert host.

» INCLUDED TOUR: incl. transfers, equipment & hot drinks.  
Duration 2 hrs.



### AURORA HUNTING BY SNOWMOBILE

Enjoy a thrilling nighttime ride through the pines as you speed off on snowmobiles in search of the Northern Lights. Taking it in turns to drive, you'll dash between the best viewing spots, pausing for hot drinks and photos along the way.

» INCLUDED TOUR: incl. transfers, instruction, shared snowmobile, hot drinks & warm clothes. Duration 3 hrs.



### REINDEER SAFARI & SAMI CULTURE

Reindeer have long been used as transport by the indigenous Samí people. On this tour, you'll experience not only a sleigh ride through the wilds – itself an unforgettable experience – but also visit a local Samí village where you'll try your hand at lassoing.

» INCLUDED TOUR: incl. transfers, winter equipment, coffee and a sweet treat. Duration 2 hrs.



### HORSEBACK RIDE

Finnhorses are Finland's national breed. Known for their calmness, they're a joy to ride, something you'll discover on this peaceful horseback tour through the wilderness, which departs from Kakslauttannen's very own stables. Suitable for beginners.

» PRICES FROM: £150 pp incl. transfers, winter equipment, helmet, hot drink & treat. Duration 2 hrs.

17

GLASS IGLOO BREAK  
IN LUOSTO



4-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

4 days Luosto



» PRICES FROM: £1,070 pp incl. flights, transfers, 3 nights Santa's Hotel Aurora (2 nights hotel room, 1 night glass igloo), husky safari, wilderness dinner & snowshoe hike. Operates Dec to Apr.

This thrilling trip offers spectacular Arctic landscapes right on your hotel's doorstep, taken in with husky safaris, forest hikes and hunting the Northern Lights. The star of the show is your luxury aurora igloo on the edge of the Pyhä-Luosto National Park, where star-spangled skies and pine-tree forests frame some of the oldest fells on Earth.

**Day 1 » UK to Rovaniemi** After your flight from the UK to Rovaniemi, take an included transfer to Santa's Hotel Aurora, where your pine-clad room offers panoramic views of snow-dusted firs. Then, head to the delightfully cosy onsite restaurant, all wood-panelled walls and oversized windows looking out across the forest. Here, menus showcase delicious ingredients plucked directly from Finland's northern wilds, all complemented by a comprehensive wine list. **D**

**Days 2-3 » Pyhä-Luosto National Park** Spend two memorable days exploring your national-park surrounds, beginning with a husky farm visit – a friendly introduction to your four-legged mushing team. Then, an ultra-scenic safari awaits as your eager crew wind along frozen trails, past snow-sculpted trees and vast frozen lakes, the silence only broken

by enthusiastic yelps and the steady pitter-patter of paws on snow. Warm up with a hot berry juice by the fire before an evening walk leads you to your dinner destination, a snug forest *kota* where you'll tuck in to the likes of forest mushroom soup, fire-smoked salmon and traditional pancakes and jam. The next day we recommend a snowshoe hike, spotting everything from ambling elks to swooping Siberian jays as you trek among the spruce trees and past gorges which carve through the ancient icy fells. Finally, head back to the hotel to sleep in a stylishly appointed glass igloo. As you settle in for the evening, look forward to private views of the northern sky and, luck depending, the Northern Lights. **B D**

**Day 4 » Rovaniemi to UK**

After breakfast today, transfer to Rovaniemi for your flight back to the UK. **E**



18

## LEVI &amp; THE NORTHERN LIGHTS RANCH



## NORTHERN LIGHTS RANCH

As its name suggests, the Northern Lights Ranch is all about the aurora borealis. Tucked away in the heart of Finnish Lapland, well within the Arctic Circle and far from any light pollution, there are few better places for spotting the world's greatest visual phenomenon. It's all taken in from the ranch's sky-view cabins, whose glass roofs and motorised tilting beds ensure uninterrupted views of the stars-spangled heavens. There's also a full spread of delightful dining experiences and all of those must-do winter activities that make holidaying in this part of the world so exciting. And, after days spent tearing through the wilderness on snowmobiles and husky sleds, there's time to kick back with private saunas and outdoor hot-tub soaks.

## 4-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

2 days Levi » 2 days Northern Lights Ranch



» **PRICES FROM:** £1,130 pp incl. flights, transfers, 1 night Levi Panorama BB, 2 nights Northern Lights Ranch in a standard Skyview Cabin HB. Operates Nov to Apr.

On this short break you'll visit two of Finnish Lapland's aurora hotspots. Kick things off with a stay at Levi's Break Sokos Hotel – the ideal base for winter activities including husky sledding and reindeer safaris – before heading on to enjoy two memorable nights at the all-new and ultra-stylish Northern Lights Ranch.

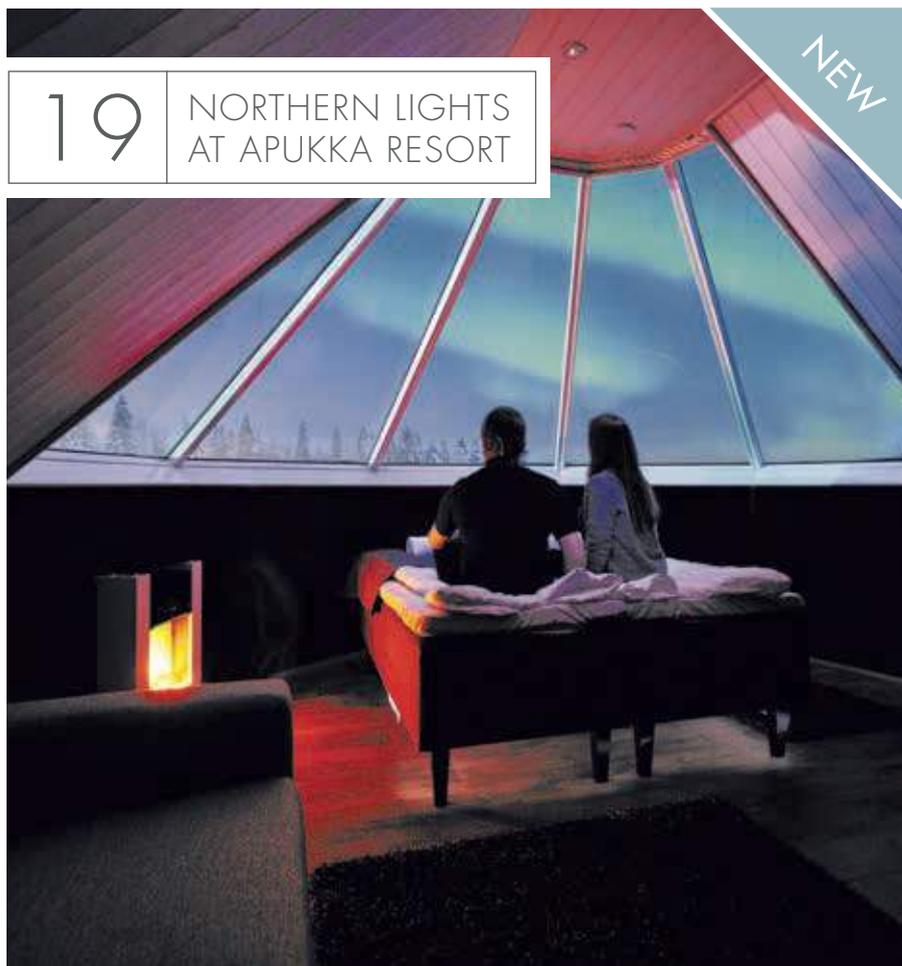
**Day 1 » Fly to Kittilä** Board a flight out to Kittilä and transfer to the Break Sokos Hotel. Here, alongside a superb Lappish restaurant and coffee house, you'll find a traditional Finnish sauna and Jacuzzi, that together provide a wonderfully relaxing antidote to action-packed days spent exploring the wild surroundings.

**Day 2 » Levi & Northern Lights Ranch** Feeling well rested, you'll head down for a hearty breakfast before embarking on a day of optional activities. There are all the winter classics, including reindeer and husky safaris, snowmobiling and snowshoeing, as well as some excellent alpine and cross-country skiing, with miles of perfectly groomed pistes and acres of pristine backcountry to explore. Then, as evening approaches, you'll transfer out to Kõngäs for two nights at the Northern Lights Ranch. Far from any light

pollution, it's the ideal place for spotting the aurora, with glass-roofed Sky View Cabins complete with tilting beds and, in one case, a private hot tub, taking full advantage of the celestial displays. **B D**

**Day 3 » Northern Lights Ranch** With a full day free, you'll have time to head out from the ranch to explore its glorious surroundings. Gripped by winter's chill, the region's forests are dusted with snow, making for wonderfully scenic views as you take to the frozen trails on optional reindeer sled rides and husky safaris deep into the wilderness. Then, as night descends again, you'll return to the ranch to enjoy a delicious dinner of Nordic delicacies as you wait for the Lights to appear. **B D**

**Day 4 » Depart** Transfer back to Kittilä in time for your flight home.



19 NORTHERN LIGHTS AT APUKKA RESORT

4-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

3 days Apukka Aurora Borealis Resort  
» 1 day Apukka Aurora Wagon



» **PRICES FROM:** £980 pp incl. flights, shared transfers, 2 nights Aurora Cabin BB, 1 night Aurora Wagon BB with winter clothing, hot drinks & evening snacks. Operates Dec to Apr.

Experience the very best of winter in Finnish Lapland with a stay at the new Apukka Resort. Following a two-night stay in a glass-roofed aurora dome, you'll head deep into the wilds for an unforgettable all-night adventure in one of the resort's aurora wagons, bringing you in style to some of the region's best Northern Lights viewing spots.

**Day 1 » Fly to Rovaniemi** Departing the UK, you'll board a flight to Rovaniemi in the heart of Finnish Lapland. On arrival, an included transfer will whisk you to your accommodation, the wonderful Apukka Aurora Borealis Resort, tucked away in the wilderness on the edge of the Arctic Circle. This new addition to Finland's burgeoning array of innovative hotel options comes complete with everything from ice cabins to aurora domes, where you'll spend your first two nights. These glass-domed rooms, fully heated and with en-suite bathrooms, make the most of the location, fully showcasing the Northern Lights' dancing displays.

**Day 2 » Optional activities** After a hearty breakfast, your first full day is left free for optional excursions. And, this being Finland, there's much to choose from with snowshoeing and reindeer farm visits heading up a menu that also includes ice carving and even a sauna on skis. What's more, Santa's Village is only 10 minutes away for the ultimate festive treat,



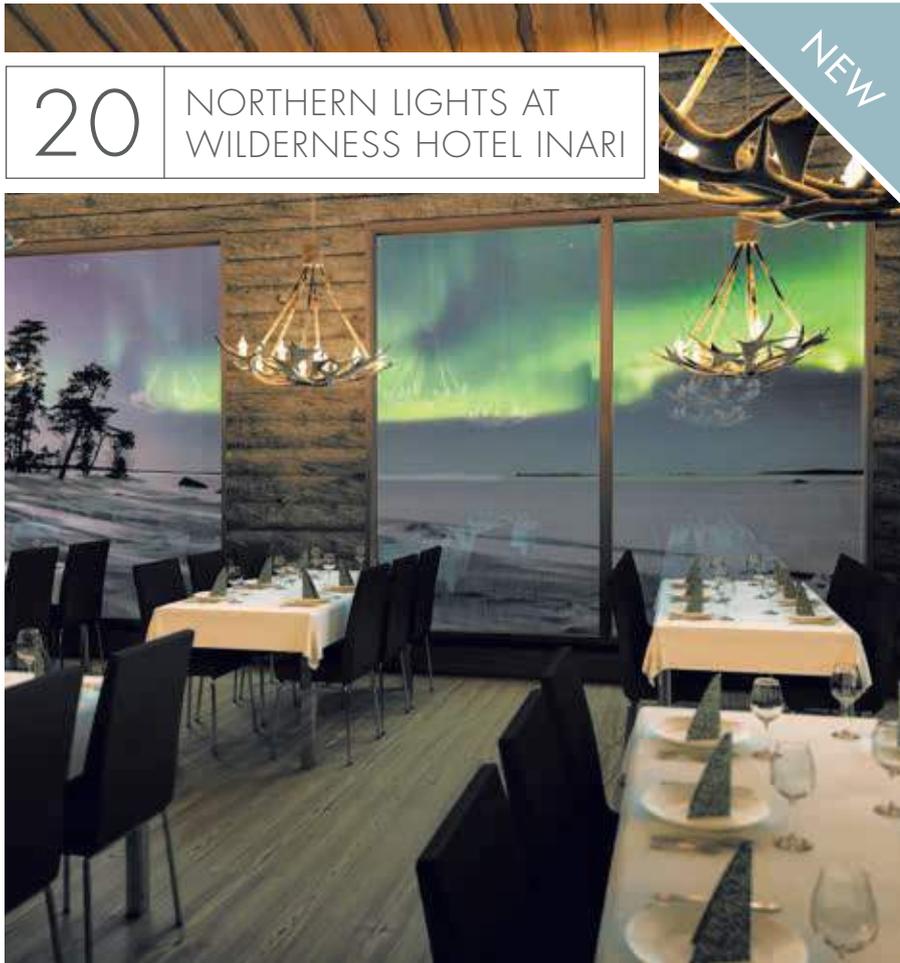
APUKKA AURORA BOREALIS RESORT

This wilderness retreat, just a short hop from Rovaniemi, Santa's Village and the Arctic Circle, is the latest in a recent line of innovative hotels to spring up in this wild and beautiful corner of Finnish Lapland. But what makes this latest offering unique? Along with a full spread of accommodation options – ice cabins, aurora domes and even portable luxury wagons, there's an equally impressive, and eclectic, programme of excursions, ranging from Arctic Circle snowshoe hikes to a sauna on skis.

while those seeking more snowbound adventure can book onto a guided husky or snowmobile safari. **B**

**Day 3 » Aurora Wagon** After breakfast and another day of optional excursions, it's time to head out into the wilds in one of Apukka's aurora wagons. Travelling through the Arctic night, you'll arrive at a remote location far from any light pollution for a truly memorable wilderness adventure. Each wagon is fully heated and comes with a double bed, sleeping bags, a small kitchenette and an en suite toilet. There's even a handy window in the roof so you can relax in fully cosseted luxury as you wait for the aurora to appear. And, you'll be kitted out with warm winter clothing too, so you can step outside to snap those all-important Northern Lights photos. Hot drinks and snacks are also provided. **B**

**Day 4 » Depart Rovaniemi** After a final breakfast, you'll return to the resort for your airport transfer and flight home. **B**



20

## NORTHERN LIGHTS AT WILDERNESS HOTEL INARI



## AURORA CABINS

Although maintaining a considered sense of intimacy, one of Inari's biggest draws is its range of accommodation, allowing its guests to experience many of Scandinavia's hotel highlights. Indeed, there's everything from cosy log cabins to modern hotel rooms to choose from. Among them all, the Aurora Cabins are our favourite, where sweeping glass domes offer a front-row seat for the Northern Lights. The glass is even heated to keep your views pristine throughout the night, while timber cladding adds a more traditional dimension.

## 4-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

4 days Wilderness Hotel Inari



» **PRICES FROM:** £1,795 pp incl. flights, transfers, 3 nights Aurora Cabin FB, snowmobiling, husky safari, reindeer farm visit, entrance to Samí Museum Siida, aurora camp visit, snowshoeing & winter clothing. Operates mid-Dec to Apr.

Head deep into the wilds of Finnish Lapland for a stay at the ever-so-cosy Wilderness Hotel Inari. In the day, husky-sled rides, snowmobile adventures, reindeer-farm visits and ice-fishing trips will introduce you to life in the Lappish wilds. And, at night, between snowshoeing trips and wilderness camp visits, the glass dome of your Aurora Cabin (see panel) will give you the very best chance of catching the Northern Lights.

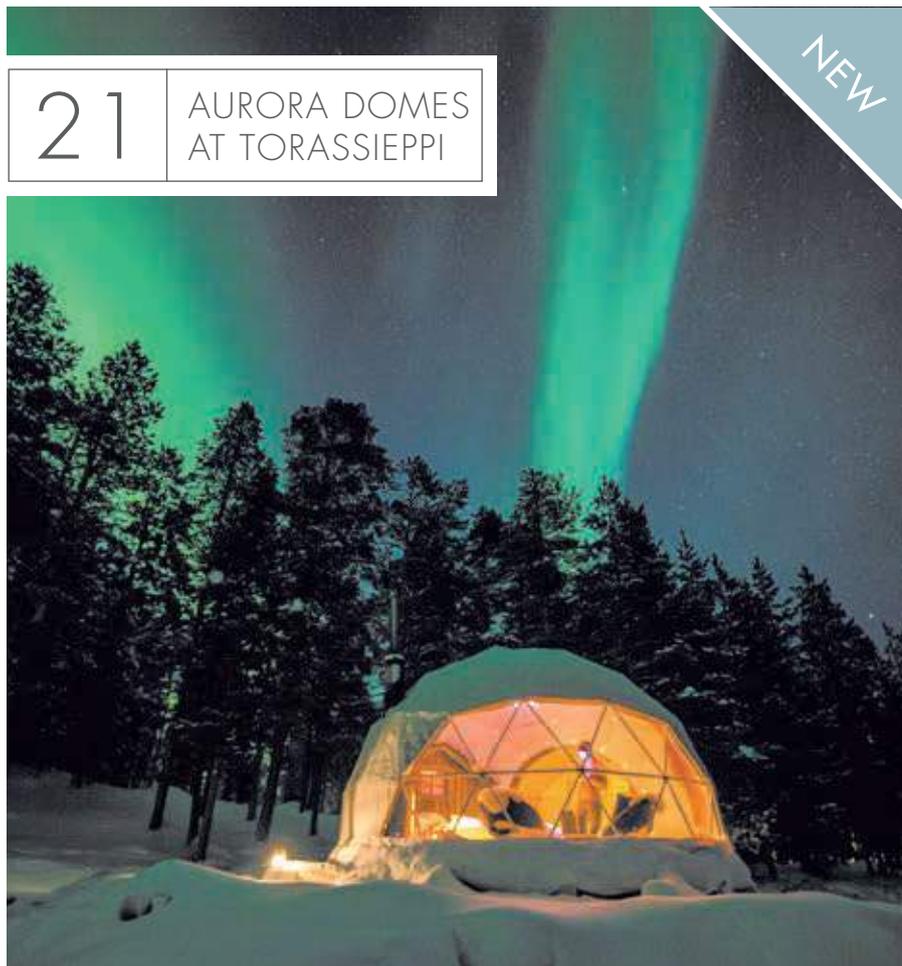
**Day 1 » Arrive at Lake Inari** Fly to Ivalo and transfer to the Wilderness Hotel Inari, your cosy base in the snowbound heart of Finnish Lapland. On arrival, check into your glass-roofed Aurora Cabin before settling down to a hearty welcome dinner. Later on, collect your cold weather gear, perhaps putting it to the test with a stroll outside to see if the Northern Lights have made an appearance. **D**

**Days 2-3 » Included excursions** With two full days, you'll have plenty of time to explore the great outdoors. And, with a full spread of excursions included in the price, there's plenty to keep you occupied. Try your hand at snowmobiling, racing through frozen forests in the company of an expert guide, and head out on a sled pulled by huskies – a must-do activity in this part of Scandinavia; you'll even be taught how to handle your own sled before setting off on a truly unforgettable adventure. There's also the chance to visit a reindeer farm, calling in to experience the life of a herder, and to visit the fascinating Siida Samí Museum

in Inari to learn about their unique culture and traditions. In the evenings, strap on snowshoes to go in search of the Northern Lights, or visit a remote camp to watch the aurora's dancing display accompanied by hot drinks and an open fire. **B L D**

**Day 3 » Departure** After breakfast, transfer to the airport in time for your flight home. **B**

IN THE EVENINGS, STRAP ON SNOWSHOES TO GO IN SEARCH OF THE NORTHERN LIGHTS



21

AURORA DOMES AT TORASSIEPPI

4-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

2 days Harriniva » 2 days Torassieppi



» **PRICES FROM:** £1,385 pp incl. flights, transfers, 2 nights Hotel Harriniva FB, 1 night Torassieppi Aurora Dome FB, reindeer encounter, Northern Lights safari by snowmobile & husky safari. Operates 03 Jan to 21 Apr.

Arctic adventures abound on this action-packed short break, from snowmobiling among frozen forests to tranquil reindeer rides through the wintry Lappish wilderness, and, naturally, a few sessions in your hotel's own Finnish sauna. It all culminates with a stay in a heated Aurora Dome, accompanied by – luck depending – a dazzling display of that most celestial of lightshows.

**Day 1 » Fly to Kittilä** After your flight to Kittilä from the UK, transfer to cosy wilderness lodge Hotel Harriniva. Perched on the banks of the peaceful Muonio River, this hotel charms with rustic wood-cabins, each featuring an en-suite bathroom. Later on, you'll head to the pine-clad walls of the restaurant, a cosy setting for a three-course meal. **BLD**

**Day 2 » Harriniva** Finland's friendliest antlered residents await you today for a serene sled ride through blanketed fir forests before you enjoy a fireside wilderness lunch in a traditional *kota*. Later, tuck into pancakes around an open fire as your guide shares the myths and legends of the aurora. It all comes into play, after dinner of course, with a snowmobile safari where you'll hunt the Northern Lights. **BLD**

**Day 3 » Torassieppi** After breakfast, you'll be introduced to another of Lapland's emblematic animals at the on-site husky farm – take the reins as you mush your own team, or sit back and marvel at the frozen



TORASSIEPPI AURORA DOMES

Instead of a glass roof, these Aurora Domes break the mould by putting the view front and centre. No bad idea, when each one looks out to private views of beautiful Lake Torassieppi – frozen over in winter, glittering in spring and summer, and moodily atmospheric in autumn, when the Northern Lights make their first appearance in the inky skies above. Inside, log burners and large double beds provide cosy comforts, while a pair of armchairs are ideal for relaxing with a glass of wine or two as the drama unfolds outside.

landscape hurtling past. Then, after lunch back at the hotel restaurant, indulge with optional riverside saunas and hot-tub soaks before heading to Torassieppi and your Aurora Dome, idyllically set on the tranquil shores of a frozen lake. Expect fireside cosiness and uninterrupted views of the Arctic sky. **BLD**

**Day 4 » Depart Torassieppi** Your adventure comes to an end with a relaxing sauna followed by breakfast and a transfer to the airport for your flight home. **B**

EXPECT FIRESIDE COSINESS & UNINTERRUPTED VIEWS OF THE ARCTIC SKY







## SANTA IN LAPLAND

---

Santa and Lapland – synonymous for centuries. But, with Finland heralded as a juggernaut of innovation, Santa’s permanent residence has, in recent years, offered far more than just meeting the great man himself. There’s also a showcase of accompanying delights to thrill children and adults alike.

Between visits to Santa’s official village in Rovaniemi – where we defy even the surliest Scrooge not to revel in the festive fun – you’ll enjoy cosy evenings in one of Lapland’s iconic log cabins, many of which come with their own personal wood-fired sauna – a tradition almost as old as Christmas itself. Or, find Santa in his Harriniva hideaway, perched among snow-dusted firs and reached via twilight sled rides beneath the forest canopy. There’s even the chance to make like Santa himself, meeting real-life Rudolfs and Dashers before taking the reins and sledding through the ice-slicked wilderness. Or, you might prefer to take in the fairytale Arctic surrounds on snowshoeing trips and snowmobiling safaris through Lapland’s snowy wilds.

If it’s the Northern Lights you’re after you’re in luck, as across Lapland there’s an unparalleled collection of cutting-edge accommodation tailor-made for viewing that most spectacular of lightshows – we’ve everything from glass-fronted treehouses to glass-roofed igloos featured across the following pages.

And, no visit to this part of the world would be complete without a visit to SantaPark, hidden deep in the frozen forests near Rovaniemi. Here, legions of helpful elves will introduce you to the delights of a traditional Lapland Christmas, with a gingerbread bakery, an elf school and workshop and even Santa’s official post office all ensuring a truly magical stay.

22

ROVANIEMI & SANTA'S VILLAGE



#### 4-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

4 days Rovaniemi



» **PRICES FROM:** £1,990 pp (adult) £1,120 (child) incl. flights, transfers, 3 nights Ounasvaaran Lakituvat HB, visit to Santa's Village with lunch & meeting with Santa Claus, snowmobile excursion to a reindeer farm with a reindeer ride & reindeer driving licence & a 1-hour husky excursion.

Stay in a cosy log cabin as you meet Santa and his elves, enjoy reindeer sleigh rides and plunge into the wilds on snowmobiles and dogsleds. You're also ideally positioned for spectacular Northern Lights displays.

**Day 1 » Rovaniemi** Fly to Rovaniemi where you'll have lunch before transferring to your delightful log cabin – Ounasvaaran Lakituvat. With timber beams and roaring fires, it's an idyllic contrast to the icy wilderness outside; cabins even feature private saunas and complimentary toboggans. You'll then enjoy your first taste of hearty Lappish cuisine at the wonderfully named Royal Reindeer. Here, regional favourites are served up in a rustic log-cabin setting, perched on a hilltop on Rovaniemi's pretty outskirts. **LD**

**Day 2 » Rovaniemi** Today you'll meet Santa himself at his snowy village home. Following an audience with the jolly gentleman, you'll have the opportunity to send a card back home from Santa's very own post office, staffed by postal elves of course. There's also the chance to have a look round the workshop stores before

lunch. Then, heading out on snowmobiles to a local reindeer farm, you'll get to meet Donners and Blitzens that make Santa's yearly miracle possible, before gaining a reindeer driving licence and Arctic Circle certificate on a sleigh ride of your own.

**BLD**

**Day 3 » Rovaniemi** Your last full day in Finnish Lapland will see you enjoy one of the region's most iconic activities – husky sledding. Departing from a nearby farm, you'll strike out into the wilderness, driving two persons per team to give you the opportunity of both admiring the scenery and having a go at mushing yourself. **ED**

**Day 4 » Rovaniemi** Following a final, hearty breakfast, make the 15 minute transfer to the airport for your flight home. **B**

## ROVANIEMI EXCURSIONS

Remote and wonderfully picturesque, the Finnish town of Rovaniemi is Lapland's Christmas capital. With Santa's village on its doorstep, and excursions that range from snowmobiling, husky sledding and reindeer safaris to more unusual offerings such as our featured Aurora Ice Floating tour, there can be few better places to celebrate the festive period.

### ARCTIC DELIGHT

Make the most of Rovaniemi's privileged location as you discover all the secrets of Christmas on a trip to Santa's Village. Meet Father Christmas and his team of elves, visit his official post office, take the chance to do some festive shopping and enjoy a delicious lunch. Then, in the afternoon, you'll hop on a snowmobile for a thrilling drive to a local reindeer farm. Here, you'll meet the reindeer, go on a sleigh ride and take part in a magical 'Crossing the Arctic Circle' ceremony before returning, by snowmobile, to your Rovaniemi hotel. And, at the end of the tour, you'll be presented with a 'Crossing the Arctic Circle' certificate to commemorate your day's adventure.

» **INCLUDED TOUR:** incl. winter clothing, snowmobile instruction and safari, reindeer farm visit with sleigh ride and reindeer driving licence, Arctic Circle ceremony and certificate, hot drinks, visit to Santa's Village, meeting with Santa Claus & lunch. Duration: 6 hrs. Operates daily.



### THE THRILL OF SPEED

Heading out to a local husky farm, you'll be greeted by the excited yap of the pups before embarking on a two-hour trip into the snowy surrounds. Driving two persons to a team, you'll have the chance to swap over halfway as you pause for photos and to admire the wintry wilderness in all its ice-bound beauty.

» **INCLUDED TOUR:** incl. winter clothing, transfers, husky farm visit, 1-hour husky safari & hot drinks. Duration: 2 hrs. Operates daily in winter.



### AURORA ICE FLOATING

Pull on a high-quality dry suit to dip into the Arctic waters of a frozen lake as, with luck, the Northern Lights put on their spectacular show overhead. It's a truly unique experience as you float under the starry sky in sub-zero temperatures while remaining toasty and warm in your suit, with your own clothes dry underneath.

» **PRICES FROM:** £90 pp (adult), £65 pp (child) incl. winter clothing, transfers, guided floating & hot drinks. Duration: 3 hrs. Operates daily in winter. Minimum height for children is 120 cm.

23

HARRINIVA  
SANTA BREAK



**ESCORTED DEPARTURES**

Santa can be found in his Lapland home throughout the early winter, busily readying himself for Christmas in the company of his hard-working elves. And our featured itinerary allows you to catch up on his preparations from as early as November. But, for many, there's nothing more magical than those final few days before December 25th, when the final festive preparations are being made. As such, Best Served Scandinavia will be running two very special escorted tours. Departing 17th and 20th December, we'll accompany guests on a magical three-night trip from the UK to see all the action unfold. For a full itinerary and prices, visit [best-served.co.uk/151556](http://best-served.co.uk/151556).

**4-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR**

4 days Harriniva Hotel



» **PRICES FROM:** £1,590 pp (adult) £1,195 pp (child) incl. flights, transfers, 3 nights Harriniva Hotel FB, winter clothing and selected activities. Operates 15 Nov to 16 Dec. Escorted departures from 17 Dec (see panel).

Tired of waiting for Father Christmas to drop in for his annual, oh-so-fleeting visit? Then it's time for you and the family to make the journey up to Lapland to visit him for a change. And you can even have him all to yourselves, with a private meeting included on this fun-filled and ever-so-festive break.

**Day 1 » Harriniva Hotel** Sadly, air traffic control prevents Santa from living near a major airport, so you'll have to fly first to Helsinki before connecting onward to Kittilä, a remote town in the Arctic Circle. From here you'll be transferred to the Harriniva Hotel, a cosy wilderness lodge with lakeside cabins tucked away on the banks of the Muonio River, just a short hop from the Swedish border. **(D)**

**Days 2-3 » Harriniva Hotel** These two days should provide enough ho-ho-hos to keep all the family happy. The wilderness surrounding Harriniva is a magical expanse of fir trees, needles and branches hanging heavy with snow, a white blanket that muffles sound and creates an ambience unique to the Arctic. You can pierce this atmosphere with the yelps of huskies on a dogsled safari, or the more penetrative roar of a snowmobile,

while quieter activities involve riding some of Santa's reindeer and baking some special Christmas cookies. On one evening you'll make your way, on a sled, through the forest to visit Santa Claus in his log cabin. Here, an elf will greet you and lead you to meet the man himself, who will hear all your Christmas requests and maybe even hand out a few early presents to well-behaved guests. If you're especially good you'll be rewarded with a glimpse of the Northern Lights as you return to the hotel. **(B)(L)(D)**

**Day 4 » Harriniva Hotel** Say a fond farewell to Santa, Rudolph, the huskies and elves as you head for home. **(B)**



# 24

## GLASS IGLOO SANTA BREAK



### GLASS IGLOOS

A stylish alternative to the Santa Aurora Hotel's cosy standard rooms, these impressive glass igloos come with modern, en-suite bathrooms and décor that speaks of Finnish Lapland's unique nature and rich cultural heritage. Open throughout the year, they provide a window to Luosto's ever-changing landscapes, from magical displays of the Northern Lights in winter to the endless glow of the summer's Midnight Sun, all from the privacy and comfort of your room.

### 4-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR

4 days Luosto



**>> PRICES FROM:** £1,365 pp (adult) £700 pp (child) incl. flights transfers, 2 nights Santa's Aurora Hotel BB, 1 night Glass Igloo HB, private in-room Santa visit & guided reindeer excursion. Departs daily in Dec and without Santa visit in Nov & from Jan to Mar.

A reindeer excursion and a private meeting with Santa are among the highlights on this four-day festive break to Santa's Hotel Aurora in Luosto. You'll also have plenty of free time to explore the Pyhä-Luosto National Park on optional activities that include cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling. And, with all rooms facing north, it's an ideal spot for aurora viewing.

**Day 1 >> Santa's Hotel Aurora** Fly to Rovaniemi and transfer to Santa's Hotel Aurora in Luosto. The rest of the day is free to spend as you wish, so, after you've settled in, perhaps head into the village to try some traditional Lappish cooking at a local restaurant. After dinner, make your way back to the hotel for a relaxing steam in your private sauna.

**Day 2 >> Santa's Hotel Aurora** Your adventure begins in earnest today, and to help you get started, we've included a guided reindeer excursion. As you venture into the snow-laden forest in the company of your guide you'll learn about the importance of these hardy animals during the harsh Lappish winter. 

**Day 3 >> Glass Igloo** Today you'll check out of your hotel room to spend a memorable night in your own glass-domed igloo (see panel). Once you've settled in, the rest of the day is free to experience one of the many winter excursions offered by the hotel. Perhaps try your hand at ice

fishing, or hit the trail on a cross-country skiing trip or snowshoeing adventure. If all that sounds a little too demanding, then an exhilarating snowmobile or husky safari might be more up your street. Later today we've arranged a private visit from Santa in your igloo, so remember to have your Christmas list ready. 

**Day 4 >> Rovaniemi** Sadly, it's time to say goodbye as you transfer back to Rovaniemi airport in time for your flight home. 

WITH ALL ROOMS FACING NORTH, SANTA'S HOTEL AURORA IS AN IDEAL SPOT FOR NORTHERN LIGHTS VIEWING

25

LUXURY SANTA BREAK AT ARCTIC TREEHOUSE HOTEL



4-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

4 days Rovaniemi



» PRICES FROM: £2,325 pp (adult)  
£995 pp (child) incl. flights, transfers, 3 nights Arctic TreeHouse Hotel HB, Santa's Village tour with lunch & meeting with Santa Claus, 2-hour husky safari with lunch. Operates 01 Nov to 31 Dec.

This is Lapland's finest Santa break. You'll stay in a designer treehouse hidden in the forest, returning from days of wintry fun to Northern Lights displays and indulgent dinners. Alongside a husky safari, you'll be treated to a day with the elves, enjoying everything from kicksledding and fairytale forest walks to a private audience with Santa Claus himself.

Day 1 » The Arctic TreeHouse Hotel

Fly out to Rovaniemi and transfer to your luxurious treehouse where floor-to-ceiling windows let in views of the Northern Lights. Once you've settled in, you'll enjoy the first of your included dinners; choose from a menu of traditional Lappish delicacies prepared with a modern twist and locally sourced ingredients. For something really special, perhaps warm up at the lakeside sauna before taking your meal in private, under the stars by a roaring fire. **D**

Day 2 » Santa visit Today you'll head deep into the forests of Finnish Lapland for a very special private meeting with Father Christmas. But, first, you'll be welcomed by one of his faithful elves who'll guide you through the legendary Elf School as you learn such crucial Christmas skills as the fine art of gingerbread decoration. Then, after graduating with your Elf School

Diploma, you'll be led along the Fairytale Path, through the forest, trying your hand – or perhaps feet – at kicksledding. You'll then arrive at Santa's Secret Command Centre where you'll watch as the elves prepare for Christmas before your meeting with jolly St. Nick. **B L D**

Day 3 » Husky sledding After another hearty breakfast you'll be ready to make the most of Lapland's wintry playground once more, this time with some help from man's best friend. You'll be met and brought out to a nearby farm where you'll have a chance to meet the adorably sociable huskies. Finally, board a sledge to head out into the wilderness, its quiet only disturbed by the happy yelps of your team. **B L D**

Day 4 » Rovaniemi Transfer to Rovaniemi for your flight home. **B**



## ARCTIC TREEHOUSE HOTEL

### SUPERIOR



In the snow-laden forests near Rovaniemi, the glass-fronted modernism of Lapland's latest wilderness retreat combines all the snugness you could want from a stay in the Arctic with the very best in cutting-edge, Scandinavian design.

Inside, it's all blonde-wood walls, mock-fur-clad armchairs, cosy duvets and log-burning stoves, while floor-to-ceiling windows face north from your forest canopy vantage point to make the most of Northern Lights displays. Choose between Arctic TreeHouse Suites – perfect for couples – and Arctic Glass Houses, which come with two double bedrooms – including fun, alcove bunks for the kids – a well-equipped kitchenette and, in true Finnish style, a private sauna.

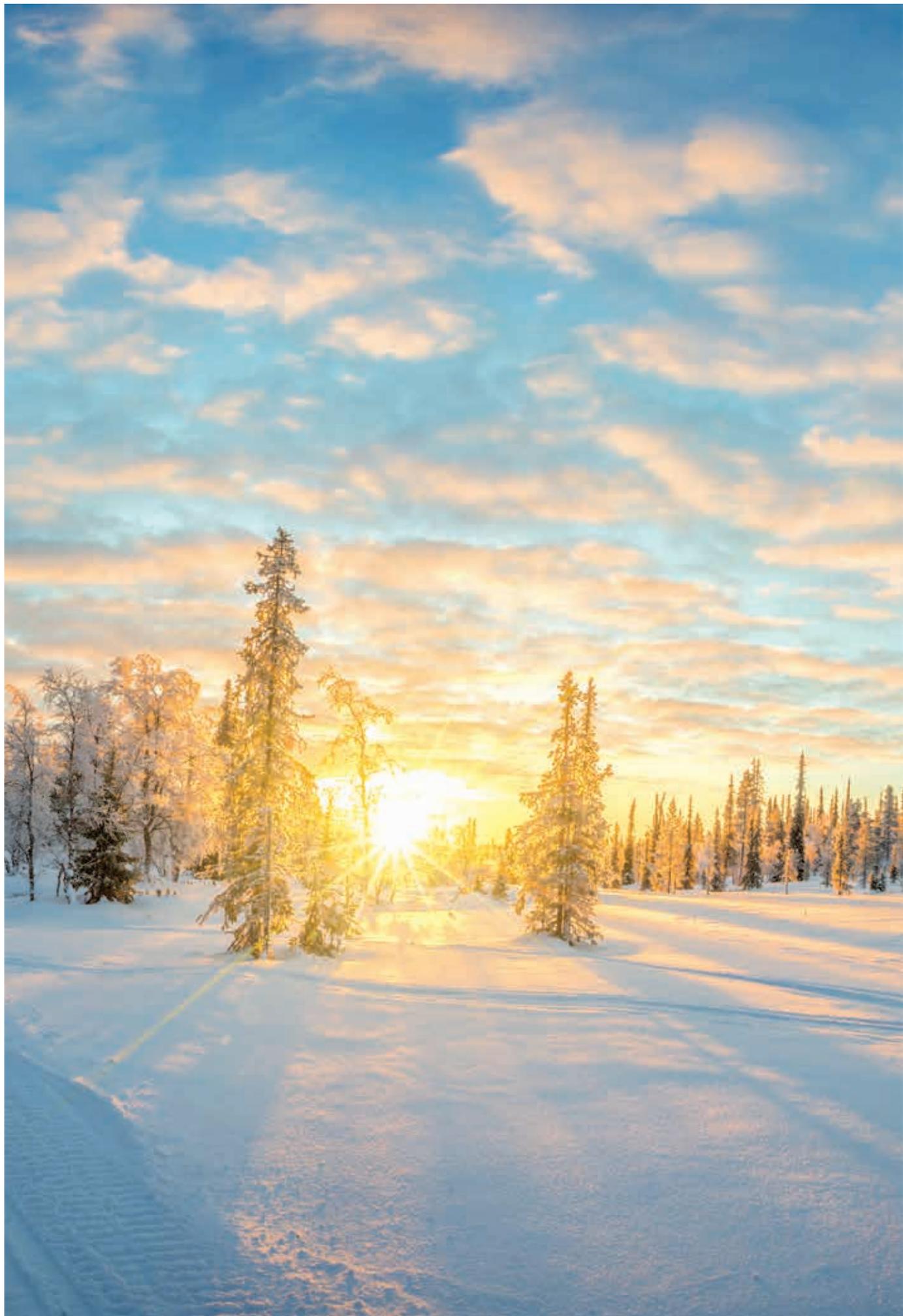
But, this being Lapland, there's far more to a stay here than a mere room with a view. Indeed, you're going to want to get



out and explore. Located no more than a snowball's throw from the gingerbread kitchens and magic train rides of the world-famous SantaPark, as well as the elven magic of the Santa Claus Secret Forest at Joulukka, the Arctic Treehouse Hotel is the ideal base for a visit to Father Christmas's year-round home. Elsewhere, there are thrilling husky safaris, reindeer sled rides and even private candlelit dinners, served al fresco and, if you're lucky, accompanied by the dancing swirls of the Northern Lights. It's also possible to book treatments at the secluded Metsäkyly Arctic Forest Spa, perched on the lake shore a 20-minute transfer away.

Of course, with so much excitement and adventure, you'll doubtless work up quite an appetite, so it's fortunate that the hotel's restaurant, Rakas, is excellent. With a menu full of modern takes on tasty Lappish dishes, you can expect everything from forest mushroom tartare to wild reindeer with lingonberry sauce or delicious, homemade berry cheesecake.

66.6659° N, 24.9109° E



# FINLAND

---

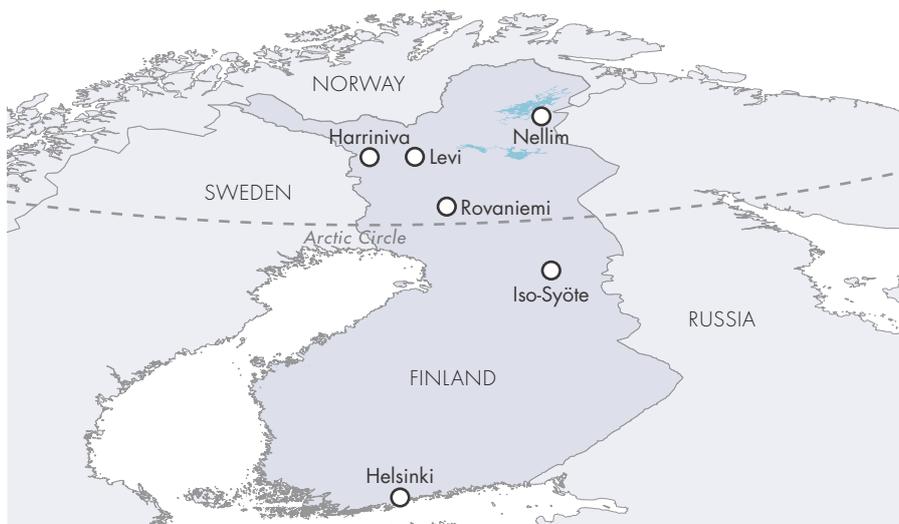
While it might be best known as Santa's year-round home (see page 52), there's far more to Finland in winter than just gingerbread cookies and helpful elves. The country's sweeping northern reaches are unspoiled and spectacular, with frozen lakes and snow-laden forests transforming the land into an otherworldly fairytale. And, there's excitement at every turn, with the likes of snowmobiling, snowshoeing and reindeer-sled rides made all the more magical by the ephemeral dancing rays of the Northern Lights.

It's all set against a wonderfully diverse backdrop of accommodation, from traditional log cabins – both cosy and exclusive – to innovative igloos (see page 38) and glass-fronted suites idyllically perched in icy forest canopies. No matter which you choose, you'll be treated to the very best in seasonal Lappish cuisine, all locally sourced and utterly delicious, cooked to perfection in homely restaurants, private kitchens and out in the wilds over roaring fires.

And, while the aforementioned Mr Claus is busy readying for Christmas, there are all manner of adventures for adults to enjoy, with or without the kids. Beana Lapponia (page 67), for example, is strictly for grown-ups – expect luxurious lodge-style

accommodation complete with outdoor Jacuzzis, adrenaline-fuelled activities and lie-ins aplenty. Levi Spirit Villas, too, offer plenty of refinement, with dinners prepared by private chefs and your own bar-staff to pour the drinks.

First and foremost, however, Finland is a place of exhilarating adventure, showcased in a dizzying array of excursions and experiences designed to make the most of the frosty terrain. One day you might be driving a team of huskies along pristine lakeside trails, while the next you'll be drilling holes in that same stretch of frozen water to pluck Arctic char from its icy depths. And, between traditional saunas and hot-tub soaks, there are plenty of opportunities to simply relax and take it all in.



26

ISO-SYÖTE SNOW ADVENTURE



SUITES AT ISO-SYÖTE

While Iso-Syöte’s homely log cabins and hotel rooms are part of its charm, there’s also the chance to upgrade to something a little more indulgent. The exclusive Eagles View Suite is a one-of-a-kind split-level retreat with a bedroom on the upper floor, complete with Jacuzzi, and a lounge area below where you’ll find a sauna and a cosy lounge overlooking the frozen forest far below. Other options include the Aurora View Suites, again with sauna and Jacuzzi, and panoramic windows for watching the Northern Lights, and the Bear Cave Suites, new for this winter. These feature two types of sauna – Finnish and Turkish – a roaring fire and glass façade to make the most of those spellbinding views.

5-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

5 days Iso-Syöte



» PRICES FROM: £730 pp, incl. flights, transfers, 4 nights Standard Hotel Room BB. Operates 1 Dec to 30 Apr. Upgrade to and Aurora View Suite from £195 pp.

This invigorating itinerary takes you deep into the heart of the Finnish wilderness and Syöte National Park, a rolling expanse of hills and boreal forest that, under the white wintry duvet, resembles an extraterrestrial field of stalagmites.

**Day 1 » Iso-Syöte** Your holiday starts with a flight to Helsinki, where you’ll connect with another flight up to Rovaniemi before taking the two-hour transfer to Iso-Syöte Hotel. After checking into your hotel room, spend the rest of your day getting accustomed to your new environment. For a more traditional experience, ask us about an upgrade to one of Iso-Syöte’s homely log cabins.

**Days 2 » Iso-Syöte** You’ll have a whole day to enjoy the many exciting excursions on offer at Iso-Syöte. These range from driving your very own team of dogs through the forest to hiking with showshoes, keeping an eye out for local fauna as you pass. Unusually for this part of the world, downhill skiing is also available, with 17 slopes and 10 lifts offering superb opportunities for skiers and snowboarders of all levels. Then, in the

evening you can take a snowmobile out to search for the Northern Lights. **B**

**Days 3–4 » Iso-Syöte** With another two free days, you’ll have ample time to enjoy more optional activities with the likes of reindeer safaris, kicksled adventures and ice fishing excursions among a whole host of options. Alternatively, you might simply choose to relax with a day of steaming saunas and hot-tub soaks at the Arctic Spa. Further afield, the excellent Ranua Wildlife Park – the world’s northernmost zoo – offers the chance to come face to face with brown bear, lynx, wolf, moose and deer. **B**

**Day 5 » Iso-Syöte** After breakfast, transfer to Rovaniemi for your return flight. **B**

# ISO-SYÖTE EXCURSIONS

One of Finland's most stylish properties, Iso-Syöte Hotel provides an array of Arctic adventures and unforgettable experiences to fill the time during your stay. Two excursions revolve around domesticated animals, the husky and reindeer, and reflect centuries of tradition in which locals relied upon these furry friends for their survival. Other excursions depend on more recent transport innovations, from the snarling snowmobile to the kooky kicksled.



## NORTHERN LIGHTS BY SNOWMOBILE

This snowmobile safari allows you to take to the region's fastest and most adaptable transport to chase the Northern Lights, weaving your way through deep drifts and dense thickets in search of the best viewing spots.

» PRICES FROM: £120 pp (2 on 1 snowmobile) incl. hot drinks & warm clothes. Duration: 3 hrs. Tues, Wed. mid-Dec to 30 Apr.



## ICE FISHING AND SNOWMOBILE SAFARI

Carve along icy trails on a thrilling snowmobile ride to a frozen lake where you'll try your hand at the age-old art of ice fishing. Here, after cutting holes in the ice, you'll wait for a catch as your guide shares stories of life in the Lappish wilderness.

» PRICES FROM: £115 pp (2 on 1 snowmobile) incl. hot drinks. Duration: 3.5 hrs. Weds only. mid-Dec to 30 Apr.



## HUSKY FARM VISIT & SAFARI

Huskies in this part of the world live on farms where their handlers help train and maintain a successful team. On this excursion, you'll visit one such centre, where you'll be taught how to drive your own pack before heading onto the trail.

» PRICES FROM: £150 pp (2 on 1 sled) incl. hot drinks & warm clothes. Duration: 2 hrs. Thurs only. mid-Dec to 30 Apr.



## KICKSLED GLIDES AND RIDES

Invented in the late-19th century, the kicksled revolutionised pedestrian transport in the Arctic. Have a go on this quirky bit of kit and glide effortlessly down hills before kicking yourself back up again.

» PRICES FROM: £45 pp incl. hot drinks & warm clothes. Duration: 2 hrs. Tues only. mid-Dec to 30 Apr.



27

LAPLAND  
IN STYLE



#### ARCTIC LIGHT HOTEL

In the centre of Rovaniemi, this contemporary hotel combines modern Finnish design with the cosiness and character of a Lappish winter retreat. Rooms and suites, with names such as Magic, Polar and the Christmas Cabin, are cleverly themed around the heritage, landscapes and wildlife of the Arctic as life-size polar bears gaze down from the walls and starlit headboards speak of nights under the northern sky. Meanwhile, the Arctic Boulevard Restaurant is a showcase for regional ingredients with game from the northern forests and fells, and fish fresh from Lapland's lakes.

### 4-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

4 days Rovaniemi



» **PRICES FROM:** £1,230 pp incl. flights, transfers, 2 nights BB Arctic Light Hotel, 1 night HB Arctic TreeHouse Hotel, husky safari and snowmobile tour with dinner. Operates mid-Nov to end Apr.

While Rovaniemi's pretty surrounds are perhaps best known as the year-round home of Santa Claus, the town's stunning setting, just south of the Arctic Circle, ensures its wintry allure stretches far beyond the busy festive season. This four-day break showcases the very best in outdoor adventure with an included husky safari and snowmobiling, along with luxury stays at the Arctic Light and the Arctic TreeHouse hotels.

**Day 1 » Rovaniemi** Fly to Rovaniemi and transfer to the Arctic Light Hotel. Your first day in Finnish Lapland is free to adjust to life at these rarified latitudes. The superb Arktikum Science Museum is a good place to start, with exhibits tracing the town's history and the wider region's indigenous culture. Then, head down to the Lumberjack's Candle Bridge on the Ounasjoki River. Something of an architectural landmark, its design pays homage to Rovaniemi's logging past. It's also the starting point for some fine riverside walks.

**Day 2 » Huskies & snowmobiles** Driving out of town to a husky farm, you'll be greeted by the sheer enthusiasm of your new furry companions. Then, you'll speed off into the wilderness, with the yaps of the dogs and the soft patter of paws on snow as your soundtrack. With two to a sled, you'll stop halfway to change drivers and take some photos of the snowy landscapes before returning to Rovaniemi. Then, following an afternoon of relaxation,

you'll join your guides once more to plunge into the forested surrounds, this time by snowmobile. Stopping for a fireside supper, you'll listen as your guides share legends of the Northern Lights, all the while keeping an eye on the sky in case the aurora makes an appearance. **B D**

**Day 3 » Arctic TreeHouse Hotel** Today, you'll swap town-centre convenience for a night in the wilderness and an unforgettable stay at the Arctic Treehouse Hotel (see page 59). Here, a collection of architect-designed suites look north from floor-to-ceiling windows to views of a magical snow-covered canopy and, if conditions are right, the aurora's kaleidoscopic lightshow. This afternoon, choose between optional excursions that range from reindeer sled rides to relaxing lakeside spa treatments. Then, as the evening arrives, settle down to enjoy an included Lappish feast. **B D**

**Day 4 » Rovaniemi** Transfer back to Rovaniemi to board your flight home. **B**

28

NORTHERN LIGHTS  
AT NELLIM

## 4-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

4 days Wilderness Hotel Nellim



» **PRICES FROM:** £1,345 pp incl. flights, transfers, 3 nights Wilderness Hotel Nellim FB, warm clothing and excursions as indicated. Operates 26 Nov to mid-Apr.

Situated miles away from any light pollution, high up in the Arctic at just the right latitude, Nellim is one of the best spots from which to see the Northern Lights. In between skygazing, dogsledding and other Arctic adventures, all the traditional delights of an old-fashioned log cabin holiday await.

**Day 1 » Wilderness Hotel Nellim**

Fly to Finnish Lapland and the town of Ivalo from where you'll transfer to your cosy lodge at the Wilderness Hotel Nellim. Enjoy some free time to settle in

before an evening expedition brings you out in search of the aurora. **D**

**Day 2 » Wilderness Hotel Nellim** Today is the day to practise your dogsledding skills, as you'll spend three hours mushing across Lake Inari – all frozen over into icy splendour. After enjoying the thrills of this timeless mode of transport, head back to the hotel for lunch and a relaxing afternoon. Activities then resume with an evening snowshoeing excursion. **B L D**

**Day 3 » Wilderness Hotel Nellim** Swap the dogs for an engine – this morning's activities involve a guided snowmobile safari, taking you far out into the wilderness and showcasing the beauty of the winter landscape and its inhabitants. Then, return to the hotel where you'll catch a sleigh to another secluded camp for a fantastic final chance to view the aurora. **B L D**

**Day 4 » Ivalo** Transfer to the airport for your return flights. **B**

**AURORA BUBBLES**

Handily located within walking distance of the main lodge, Nellim's north-facing Aurora Bubbles offer private views of Finnish Lapland's inky Arctic skies. Double beds and central heating provide homely comforts, but a stay in one of these glass-domed cabins is all about watching the Northern Lights. Practicalities are taken care of with an en-suite eco toilet, while sinks, showers and a sauna are located in a separate building. If you do want to sleep, it's possible to hire an aurora alarm for a small extra cost.

29

WINTER AT MUOTKA WILDERNESS LODGE



5-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

5 days Muotka Wilderness Lodge



» PRICES FROM: £1,695 pp, incl. flights, transfers, 4 nights Muotka Wilderness Lodge FB and excursions as indicated. Operates 25 Nov to mid-Apr.

Muotka Wilderness Lodge lies way out in the depths of Finnish Lapland, a rustic hideaway in spectacular snowy woodland. Its cosy rooms, two saunas and one huge open fireplace are perfect to while away warm evenings after snowy days spent outdoors. Speak to our specialists about upgrading to Muotka’s latest addition – an Aurora Cabin.

Day 1 » Muotka Wilderness Lodge

Depart the UK for Helsinki, where you’ll connect with your onward flight to Ivalo, one of Finland’s northernmost towns. From here you are transferred straight to your lodge. **D**

Day 2 » Muotka Wilderness Lodge

The first activity begins after breakfast, and combines modern technology with an ancient tradition. Drive a snowmobile through the wilderness to a reindeer farm, where you’ll meet the herders and learn a few of their husbandry skills, including how to throw a lasso and how to ride a sleigh. Upon return to the lodge, have dinner and venture out in search of the Northern Lights. **ELL**

Day 3 » Muotka Wilderness Lodge

Yesterday reindeer, today another symbolic animal of the north: the husky.

Your guide will take you to a nearby kennel where you’ll meet these intelligent dogs, learn how to handle them and then jump straight onto the trail. Set off into the wilderness, enjoying the thrill of the ride, the Arctic scenery and a lunch cooked over a fire before returning to the lodge for the evening. **BLD**

Day 4 » Muotka Wilderness Lodge

There’s a whole snowy expanse to discover around the lodge, so put on a pair of snowshoes and spend the morning hiking, swapping them for cross-country skis in the afternoon. After a day in the snow, warm up in the sauna before dinner. **BLD**

Day 5 » Muotka Wilderness Lodge

Breakfast, and transfer to the airport for your return flights. **B**

30

BEANA LAPONIA  
LUXURY BREAK

## 5-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

5 days Rovaniemi



» **PRICES FROM:** £2,250 pp incl. flights, transfers, 4 nights at Beana Laponia (Beana Room) FB, winter clothing throughout your stay, daily sauna & all excursions as described. Operates 01 Dec to 30 Apr.

It's time to call in the babysitters as you head to Finnish Lapland without the kids on this luxury, adults-only break. Flying out to Rovaniemi, you'll look forward to five memorable days of snow-bound adventure and indulgent relaxation as included excursions, steaming saunas and gourmet dining introduce you to the very best of this stunningly beautiful corner of Scandinavia.

**Day 1 » Rovaniemi** Fly to Rovaniemi in Finnish Lapland and transfer to your wilderness boutique hotel – Beana Laponia. Strictly adults only, it's a romantic base for exploring the beauty of your snow-laden surrounds. Settle into your stylish room before a private evening sauna or a dip in the outdoor Jacuzzi. Then, head to the lodge's restaurant where the finest local ingredients are showcased in a world-spanning range of gastronomic styles. 

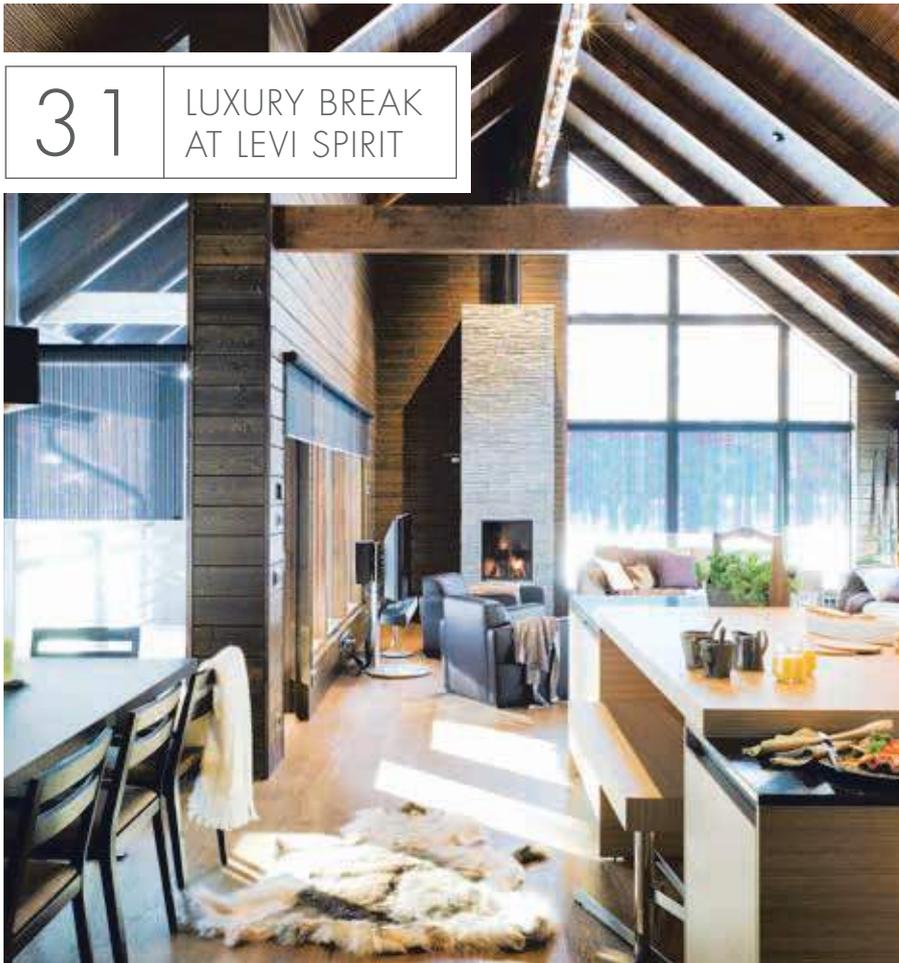
**Day 2 » Snowshoes & Northern Lights** Kickstart your day with a delicious breakfast before the first of your included excursions – snowshoeing. Stepping out into the wilderness, your guide will bring you along pristine forest trails as you keep your eyes peeled for local wildlife. Return to the lodge for lunch and a free afternoon, perhaps making use of the complimentary toboggans and cross-country skis. Then, after dinner, you'll walk through the woods to a *lavvu* tent, where

campfire stories will keep you entertained as you wait for the Northern Lights. 

**Day 3 » Dogsledding** With 26 years' experience, Beana Laponia's husky safaris are among the best in the region. Heading out to the hotel's own farm, you'll be greeted by your enthusiastic new companions before setting off on a thrilling, five-hour adventure along the lodge's own private trails. 

**Day 4 » Snowmobiles & reindeer** Your final full day begins with a three-hour snowmobile excursion. Then, swap horsepower for hoof power on an afternoon visit to a reindeer farm before a final dinner back at the lodge. 

**Day 5 » Rovaniemi** After breakfast, transfer to Rovaniemi for your flight home.



31

LUXURY BREAK  
AT LEVI SPIRIT



#### LEVI SPIRIT LUXURY VILLAS

Blending into the landscape, almost unnoticed in their spectacular alpine setting, Levi Spirit Luxury Villas' stone, wood and glass construction frame typically stylish Scandinavian interiors; think stripped wood floors, faux fur rugs, Jacuzzi baths and log-burning stoves. Each villa also has its own *kammi* – a traditional Sami earth lodge with balcony, outdoor terrace and roaring open fire. And, as a nod to that greatest of Finnish traditions, you'll be treated to your very own private sauna. Sleeping up to 10 guests at a time, these indulgent retreats are ideal for larger groups and special family getaways.

### 4-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

4 days Levi Spirit Villas



» **PRICES FROM:** £2,550 pp incl. flights, transfers, 3 nights Levi Spirit Villas HB, husky sledding, Northern Lights hunt by snowmobile or snowshoe & reindeer sledding. Operates Dec to Apr.

A truly luxurious take on a traditional Finnish log-cabin experience, this four-day break includes a thrilling husky safari, a northern hunt by snowshoes or snowmobile and a guided reindeer ride through Levi's snow-dusted pines. It's a programme of excursions enjoyed from your base at Levi Spirit Villas, whose chic Nordic design sets the scene for Jacuzzi baths, log-burning stoves, a private sauna and gourmet meals cooked by a private chef.

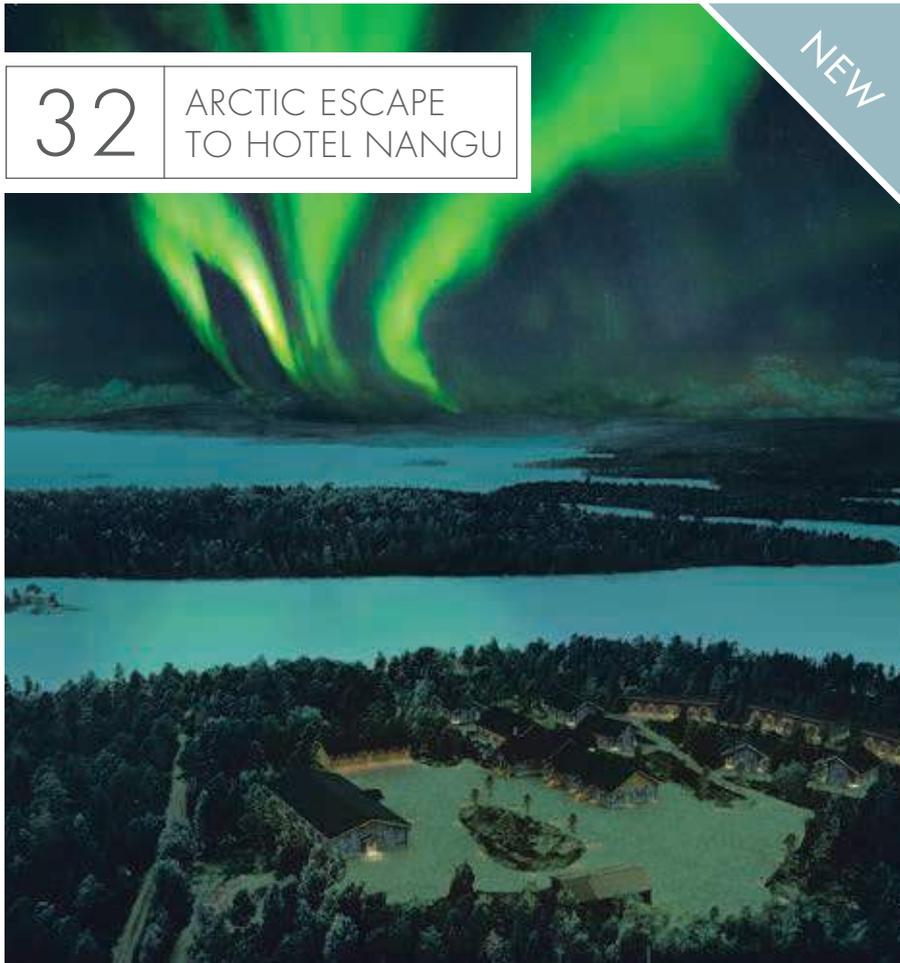
**Day 1 » Fly to Kittilä** Fly out to Kittilä where you'll be met for an included transfer to Levi Spirit Villas, a collection of private and ever-so-stylish houses in a truly stunning alpine setting. Bringing a slice of indulgent luxury to Finnish Lapland's wild and wintry wilderness, each villa provides the perfect blend of contemporary sophistication, pristine nature and thrilling Arctic adventure. This evening, enjoy the first of your included dinners, three-course affairs cooked by a private chef and served by your personal butler – you can even arrange for a bartender to pour and serve your drinks. **D**

**Day 2 » Huskies & Northern Lights** After a first cossetting night in your villa, it's time to head out into the frozen forest – after a butler-served breakfast, of course. First on the agenda is a husky sledding excursion. With two to a sled and expert instruction included, there's the chance to drive your own team, or sit back and enjoy the view. Then, after an afternoon of fireside relaxation and another delicious

dinner – perhaps this time at the excellent Kuura Brasserie or Colorado Bar & Grill in Levi – you'll step out once more, this time on either snowshoes or snowmobiles in search of the Northern Lights. **E L D**

**Day 3 » Reindeer sledding** A change of pace today as your included excursion introduces you to the local reindeer herd. For centuries, the Sami people have relied on these animals for warmth, food and transport, and you'll see just how effective they are at tackling the deep snow as you're led on a wonderfully serene sleigh ride through the wilderness. Then, a free afternoon invites more luxury-lodge relaxation or the chance to explore Levi's famed alpine playground – the downhill skiing here is among the best in Finland. This evening, enjoy a final gourmet dinner, a sauna and, with luck, a last chance to see the aurora dancing across the sky. **B L D**

**Day 4 » Depart** After breakfast, transfer to Kittilä for your flight home. **E**



32

ARCTIC ESCAPE  
TO HOTEL NANGU

NEW



### WILDERNESS BOUTIQUE HOTEL NANGU

This is the latest in a pair of offerings from wilderness lodge purveyors Nellim – a special favourite among our clients for their considered blend of comfort and authenticity. Although beautifully poised on the southern shores of Lake Inari in the depths of Finnish Lapland, Hotel Nangu is just a flight hop away. Expect cosy respite combined with a full spread of adventure activities under the Northern Lights. And, while it's open to all for summer fun, the hotel is adults only over the winter months, making it an ideal retreat for couples or groups of friends.

#### 4-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

4 days Wilderness Boutique Hotel Nangu



» **PRICES FROM:** £1,825 pp incl. flights, transfers, 4 nights Wilderness Boutique Hotel Nangu – Wilderness Room FB, snowmobiling on Lake Inari, husky sledding, reindeer farm visit, snowshoeing & aurora camp visit. Operates mid-Dec to Apr.

Experience the newly renovated wilderness chic of Wilderness Boutique Hotel Nangu. Flying in to northern Lapland, you'll arrive on the icebound shores of Lake Inari, just a short hop from Finland's Russian border, for five days of wonderful Lappish food, warm Finnish hospitality and thrilling Arctic adventure. There are snowmobiling and ice fishing trips to days out with reindeer herders and nights spent in aurora camps.

**Day 1 » Depart for Ivalo** Depart the UK on a flight to Ivalo where you'll be met for the 30-minute transfer to Hotel Nangu on the southern shores of Lake Inari. Then, once you've settled into your stylish, log-cabin surrounds, you'll head to the cosy restaurant for the first of your included dinners. The menu changes daily, so you might be treated to anything from a hearty stew to locally caught salmon.

**Days 2–3 » Included activities** Tearing yourself away from your cosy timber-clad room, you'll return to the restaurant for a delicious buffet breakfast, fuelling yourself for three days of adventure in the wilds of Finnish Lapland. And there's plenty to keep you busy, with a full programme of included activities. Perhaps begin with a snowmobile adventure on frozen Lake Inari, pausing for a campfire lunch. Or visit a nearby reindeer farm to meet local Sami herders before joining a husky sled tour along frozen forest trails. There's also the chance to try out snowshoeing on a guided trek, and to head out on a

snowmobile sleigh ride to a remote aurora camp to watch out for the Northern Lights.



**Day 4 » Depart for home** After a final buffet breakfast, you'll return to Ivalo Airport in time for your flight home. 

TEAR YOURSELF AWAY FROM  
YOUR COSY TIMBER-CLAD  
ROOM FOR THREE DAYS OF  
ADVENTURE IN THE WILDS OF  
FINNISH LAPLAND

65.5838° N, 22.0426° E



# SWEDEN

---

Straddling the Arctic Circle, Swedish Lapland is one of the world's last untouched wildernesses. A place of roaring rivers, frozen over by winter's chill, and snow-draped fells framed by ancient boreal forests home to roaming moose and reindeer and prowling packs of wolves. It's the spectacular setting for a whole host of magical winter experiences, from stays in mirrored treehouses and private wood-cabin hideaways to the sub-zero wonders of the world's first ice hotel.

In Luleå's surrounding archipelago, delightful pine-clad lodges peer out from their tree-shrouded seclusion to the frozen Gulf of Bothnia, all dusted in white. The vast icy swathes create the perfect winter playground, where guests can spend thrilling days exploring by husky sled and snowmobile, join guided ice fishing trips or strap on snowshoes for silent hikes through the woods. It's all a thrilling counterpoint to cosy evenings spent around open fires, dining on the best of the region's bounty and warming the cockles in steaming saunas and bubbling hot tubs, before stepping outside once more to catch sight of the Northern Lights painting vibrant shades of green and gold across the inky Arctic sky.

Heading north from Luleå, log-cabin traditions make way for the very best in Scandinavian innovation. Nowhere is this showcased better than at Treehotel – a collection of architect-designed rooms hidden in the forest canopy near Harads. Choose between UFOs, birds' nests and blue-cone hideaways which are actually red before checking out the surroundings on fat bike tours, Samí cultural experiences, moose safaris and aurora photography excursions led by expert guides. It's the perfect pairing for that other Swedish icon, ICEHOTEL (page 72), whose immaculately carved rooms and suites, created anew each year by the world's leading ice artists, are just a scenic train hop away across the Arctic Circle.



33

HIGHLIGHTS OF SWEDISH LAPLAND



Swedish Lapland’s inspiring landscape lends itself to thrilling bespoke experiences, including nights spent in luxury treehouses or reclining upon large blocks of ice for beds, as well as husky sledding or reindeer tours through Scandinavia’s most fascinating national parks. During the winter months, this is also one of the world’s best places to view the Northern Lights. This seven-day tour has them all.

train across the Arctic Circle to Kiruna and transferring to the world-famous ICEHOTEL. You’ll spend your first night in an Ice Room, wrapped in a thermal sleeping bag beneath a tactile cover of reindeer skin rugs. The hotel, which is built from scratch each year, is a sightseeing spectacle itself, so take a tour, sip a drink at the ICEBAR on site or join one of many activities on offer (see page 30). You’ll spend your second night in a warm room, which offers conventional cosy beds. **B**

7-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

1 day Treehotel » 2 days ICEHOTEL  
» 3 days Björkliden » 1 day Kiruna



» PRICES FROM: £1,765 pp incl. flights, transfers, 1 night Treehotel HB, train travel, 2 nights ICEHOTEL BB, 3 nights Hotel Fjället BB and Aurora Sky Station excursion. Operates 1 Dec to mid-Apr.

**Day 1 » Treehotel** Fly to Luleå and transfer to Treehotel. Each room at this award-winning hotel is unique, designed by Scandinavia’s leading architects, and draped elegantly around the trees of the hotel’s grounds. After settling in, explore the equally striking surroundings and later enjoy a typical Swedish dinner at the hotel restaurant. Just be sure to keep your eyes on the sky in case the Northern Lights decide to take a turn. **D**

**Days 2–3 » ICEHOTEL** Travel from one iconic hotel to another, taking the

**Days 4–6 » Björkliden** Once again board the train and head north, this time to the town of Björkliden, one of the best places in Scandinavia to see the Northern Lights. Check into Hotel Fjället, a mountainside ski hotel and your base for exploring the great Arctic surrounds. You’ll also have the chance to visit the Aurora Sky Station in Abisko National Park, a high-altitude base perfectly located for viewing the aurora. **B**

**Day 7 » Kiruna** After breakfast, transfer to Kiruna Airport for your flight home. **B**



## TREEHOTEL, SWEDEN

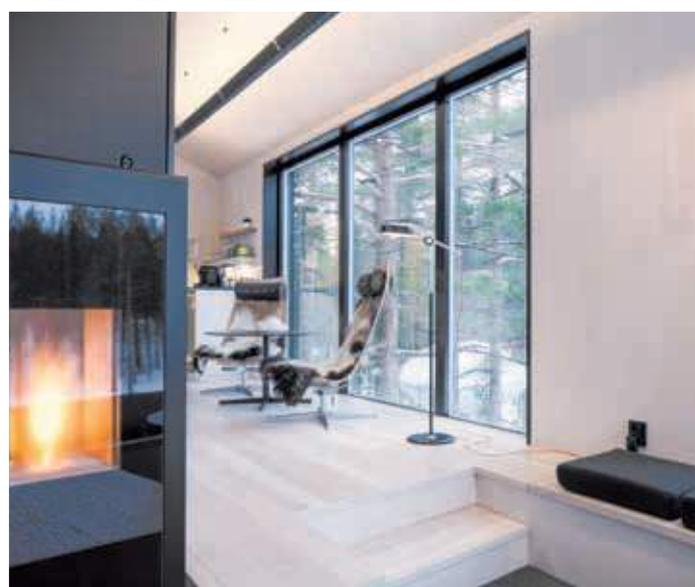
### SUPERIOR



‘Designer’ isn’t just a label for uber-chic urban trendsetters. If the Treehotel is anything to go by, the real epicentre for all things trendy and modern is a wild pine forest in Sweden’s northern wilderness, where architects have designed seven entirely individual rooms in the canopy.

Set high in a beautiful pine forest, 60 kilometres south of the Arctic Circle and just outside the small village of Harads, the Treehotel is unlike any other hotel on earth. Mixing modernist, minimalist design and back-to nature values, it’s the ultimate way to fulfil childhood fantasies of sleeping amongst the treetops.

Your toughest choice is which room to pick. The Cabin sits on a platform high on the hillside overlooking the Lule River valley with commanding views. The Mirrorcube is a 4x4x4-metre hideout with walls of reflective glass. Then there’s the Bird’s Nest, the ultimate hideaway, camouflaged by a complex network of branches.



The Blue Cone sits close to the ground, supported by sturdy foundations while the UFO is a classic flying saucer cast in durable composite material with a silver sheen. The Dragonfly is a room built for four with an exterior of sheet metal rusting to brown to blend further into the forest. Finally, the new and aptly named 7th Room is camouflaged from below by a life-size photo of the pine trees that it’s replaced, while its north-facing panoramic windows and skylights make the most of the Northern Lights’ dancing displays. Each individually themed treehouse is equipped with underfloor heating, a sink and toilet. Showers and meals are taken in the hotel’s main house. The Tree Sauna

is a wonderful addition and makes for a welcome retreat after a day’s exploring.

Although open all year round, winter guests can experience majestic displays of the Northern Lights, along with horse and sleigh excursions, dogsledding and downhill or cross-country skiing at the nearby resort of Storcklinton.

Meanwhile, Britta’s Restaurant offers a delicious array of Swedish home cooking based on fresh, wild local produce including Arctic char, Kalix caviar (the most sought-after caviar in Sweden, also known as ‘red gold’), salmon, moose, reindeer and even Norrland bear.

34

A WINTER BREAK IN SWEDISH LAPLAND



BRÄNDÖN LODGE

Overlooking the icy Gulf of Bothnia and the Luleå archipelago, the cabins at Brändön Lodge form the perfect base for exploring a region where islands outnumber people by some distance. Making the most of the beautiful surroundings, the recently renovated cabins are all sea-facing, and come with two bedrooms and a private bathroom. A large lodge provides ultra-comfortable communal spaces, including a restaurant and lounge lit up by a roaring fireplace, pictured above. There's also a soothing sauna situated by the water's edge, ideal after long days of exploration.

4-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

4 days Brändön Lodge



» PRICES FROM: £1,485 pp incl. flights, transfers, 3 nights Brändön Lodge HB, thermal clothing, husky safari & snowmobile safari with wilderness lunch.

Overlooking the snow-dusted islands of the Luleå Archipelago, Brändön Lodge is the ideal base for a winter adventure. Here, guests can experience an array of seasonal excursions from husky sledding and guided snowmobiling to hovercraft trips, ice fishing and snowshoe hikes. This four-day break includes two such adventures – a husky safari and snowmobile tour across the pack ice of the archipelago, which freezes up to a metre thick during winter.

**Day 1 » Luleå** Fly to Luleå via Stockholm and transfer to Brändön Lodge for a three-night stay. You'll be provided with warm winter clothing on arrival, before enjoying an afternoon of sauna relaxation followed by the first of your included three-course dinners. Menus are inspired by the region's seasonal produce, and prepared to perfection by the lodge's talented chef. Then, in the evening, keep an eye on the sky for your first glimpse of the Northern Lights, conditions permitting, of course. **D**

**Day 2 » Snowmobiling** After breakfast you'll set out on a guided snowmobile excursion across the frozen sea to explore the islands of the beautiful Luleå Archipelago. The tour takes you to the 17th-century fishing village of Brändöskär, located in the outer archipelago. Here, you'll try your hand at ice fishing before riding out across the seemingly endless fields of pack ice, stretching away into the Gulf of Bothnia. Enjoy a wilderness lunch cooked over an open fire as part of your tour, before returning to the lodge

for dinner and another of those warming saunas. **B L D**

**Day 3 » Husky safari** Today's adventure sees you heading out to a local husky farm to begin a thrilling husky safari through Brändön's snow-dusted surrounds. With the chance to mush your own team, or sit back and enjoy the view, it's an utterly enchanting way to take in forest and lake trails that carve through the Luleå region. Tonight, you'll return for a final delicious dinner and one last chance to see the aurora in the clear night sky. **B D**

**Day 4 » Luleå** Tuck into a final hearty Brändön Lodge breakfast before your included transfer back to the airport and your flight home. **B**

35

PINE BAY LODGE &  
AURORA HIDEAWAY

NEW



## PINE BAY LODGE

This classic Swedish lodge is located on the remote Lappish archipelago of Luleå, in the heart of the snowy Arctic forests through which you can speed snowmobiles, mush huskies and indulge in other sub-polar fun. Just eight rooms, all en suite and typically pine clad, create an intimate atmosphere. The lodge is particularly proud of its cuisine, with a menu that features such local favourites as moose, reindeer steak and Arctic char with cloudberries. It's a dining experience made all the more memorable when each dish is paired with glass or two of well-matched wine.

## 4-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

4 days Pine Bay Lodge



» **PRICES FROM:** £1,685 pp incl. flights, transfers, 3 nights Pine Bay Lodge FB, husky sledding, Northern Lights snowshoeing excursion, snowmobiling & aurora hideaway tour with dinner. Operates mid-Dec to Apr.

On this adventure-packed break, you'll chase Northern Lights and discover picturesque fishing villages, all the while staying in an archetypal Swedish lodge with its very own sauna and delightful Lappish restaurant. It's all the setting for husky sledding, snowmobiling and fireside wilderness feasts before a guided aurora hunt and candlelit dinner in an ultra-cosy cabin hideaway on skis brings the trip to an unforgettable conclusion.

**Day 1 » Luleå** After your flight from London to Luleå, via Stockholm, you'll be transferred to Pine Bay Lodge, perched on the sleepy Luleå archipelago and framed by a forest dusted in snow. You'll stay in one of eight intimate rooms, with an on-site wood-fired sauna to enjoy. This evening, indulge in a three-course dinner, with the likes of moose, Arctic char, cloudberries and local caviar on the menu, accompanied by a glass or two of well-matched wine. **D**

**Days 2-3 » Pine Bay Lodge** Over the next two days you'll explore the vast beauty of the Luleå archipelago. Begin with a husky sledding tour through snow-blanketed woods and across frozen lakes followed by a traditional lunch back at the lodge, then take advantage of the clear, dark skies only granted this far north with a snowshoeing trip through the fir forests in search of the Northern Lights. It's a truly magical experience, made even better with a traditional fireside dinner. The next day, you'll head out on a snowmobile

excursion to picturesque Brändöskär, an idyllic fishing village where the blue sea ice can pile up to 10 metres high – try your hand at ice fishing before a wilderness lunch by an open fire. For your penultimate night, you'll jump on a sled pulled by snowmobile, heading out to a frozen lake for supper in a wooden cabin on skis. In these unique surroundings, you'll enjoy three delicious courses accompanied by a toasty fire and romantic candlelight, before hunting the aurora in the silent wilderness. **B L D**

**Day 4 » Depart Luleå** After breakfast, take your included transfer to Luleå airport for your flight back to the UK. **B**

36

SÖRBYN LODGE & AURORA SAFARI CAMP



4-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR

3 days Sörbyn Lodge » 1 day Aurora Safari Camp



» **PRICES FROM:** £2,045 pp incl. flights, transfers, 2 nights Sörbyn Lodge HB, 1 night Aurora Safari Camp HB, snowmobile safari, husky safari and Northern Lights excursion. Operates Dec to end Mar.

Ramp up your chances of Northern Lights viewings on this away-from-it-all break far from artificial light pollution in the heart of Swedish Lapland. It includes a night under the stars at a traditional-style Sami camp, dogsled touring, expert photography tuition and fine cuisine.

**Day 1 » Sörbyn Lodge** Fly to Luleå and transfer to Sörbyn Lodge, settling in over a delicious dinner. **D**

**Day 2 » Aurora Safari Camp** After a morning snowmobile tour along frozen rivers and through snow-laden forests, transfer to the Aurora Safari Camp, established by photographer Fredrick Broman, who drew inspiration from the camps he has worked with in East Africa. Bring your camera for some optional expert tuition from Fredrick or one of his colleagues (not included). You'll spend the night in a traditional *lavvu* tent, tucked up in a comfortable bed and Arctic sleeping bag. A traditional sauna is also at hand to keep off the chill. **B L D**

**Day 3 » Sörbyn Lodge** Enjoy a morning husky safari through frozen lakes and forest before returning to Sörbyn Lodge for lunch. In the evening head into the forested mountains in 4x4s in search of the Northern Lights. Enjoy a mountain-top barbecue before returning to the lodge for a final night. **B D**

**Day 4 » Sörbyn Lodge** Transfer to the airport for your return flight. **B**



AURORA SAFARI CAMP

Set deep in the frozen forests of Swedish Lapland, the Aurora Safari Camp is one of a kind in Scandinavia. There's no artificial light at all from the camp and on clear nights the stargazing is simply stunning. Inside, five comfortable *lavvu* rooms each have a firewood heater while the open fire outside has a magnificent view over the neighbouring river. The forest behind the camp is home to moose, red fox, reindeer, roe deer and bears, which hibernate in winter.

## SÖRBYN LODGE EXCURSIONS

The region around Sörbyn Lodge is an extensive wilderness area offering an unrivalled array of winter activities. Here are four unmissable optional extras you're sure to want to work into your itinerary. You can also ask our Scandinavia specialists about opportunities for skiing, skating, hiking, horse or reindeer sleigh rides and other snowbound adventures.



### ISDIMMA HUSKY ADVENTURE

Join Richard Karlsson and his pure-bred Siberian huskies for a special safari. Richard's dogs are calm, quiet and closely bonded to their human family. You'll travel two to a sleigh with just one or two sleighs per tour, so you're guaranteed an intimate experience.

» PRICES FROM: £225 pp incl. hot drinks and warm clothes.  
Duration 1.5 hrs. Operates mid Dec to end Mar.



### SNOWMOBILE SAFARI

The expedition starts with comprehensive training before you venture out through a landscape that ranges from open moors to thick pine forests. Along the way you'll break for coffee and the chance to spot moose, reindeer and other wildlife.

» PRICES FROM: £205 pp incl. hot drinks and warm clothes.  
Duration 3 hrs. Operates mid-Dec end Mar.



### VISIT A SAMÍ FAMILY AT GORGIM

Lars Eriksson will show you his reindeer and recount stories about forest Samí life. A typical lunch is served in a wooden tipi around the campfire at beautiful Gorgimlake, followed by a short hike in the surrounding landscape with Lars.

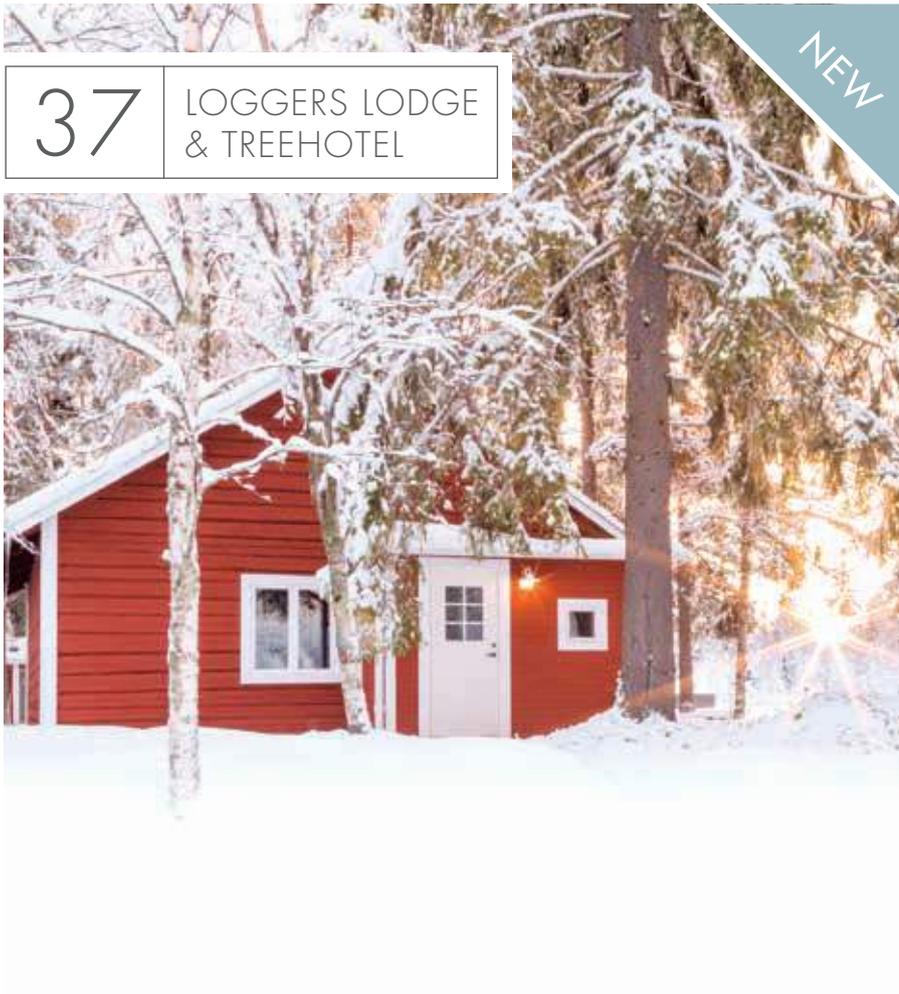
» PRICES FROM: £215 pp incl. transfers, hot drinks and lunch  
Duration 4 hrs. Operates year round.



### MOOSE SAFARI

Guides will meet you at your hotel where you're equipped with warm clothing for a day out in the forests searching for the Scandinavian moose by 4x4. A barbecue lunch is included, comprising sausages, bread, soft drinks and coffee.

» PRICES FROM: £135 pp incl. guide, warm clothing & lunch.  
Duration 4 hrs. Operates Sep to Mar.



4-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

2 days Loggers Lodge » 2 days Treehotel



» **PRICES FROM:** £3,155 pp incl. flights, transfers, 2 nights Loggers Lodge with private host & outdoor Jacuzzi FB, private husky sledding, 1 night Treehotel HB. Operates Dec to Apr.

This very special break makes the most of Swedish Lapland's spellbinding winter landscapes with stays in two stunning retreats. You'll begin with the wood-clad cosiness of Loggers Lodge, where roaring fires invite evenings of champagne-soaked relaxation and private outdoor hot tubs look up to star-strewn skies. Then, after a day of action-packed Arctic adventure, you'll head over to the iconic Treehotel for a night spent in the pine forests of Harads.

**Day 1 » Fly to Luleå** Fly to Luleå where you'll be met for an included transfer to Loggers Lodge, a one-time wilderness cabin turned luxury retreat for two in the very heart of Swedish Lapland. It's super stylish throughout, with native timber, scattered furs and huge fireplaces adding to the pervading cosiness. In the evening, you'll enjoy the first of your included dinners, cooked by a private chef and showcasing local dishes ranging from melt-in-the-mouth moose steaks to Arctic char caught fresh from the nearby rivers. Then, head to the outdoor hot tub to gaze up at starry skies and, with luck, the aurora. **D**

**Day 2 » Loggers Lodge** Today is set aside for excursions as you join your hosts on a husky-sled ride through the frosty forests. You'll have a chance to mush your own team before stopping in the wild to soak up the scenery and partake in the Swedish tradition of *fika* – strong, thick coffee served by a roaring campfire. You'll then return to the lodge for lunch before



LOGGERS LODGE

This one time logger's lodge is now a beautiful, cosy cabin in the heart of Swedish Lapland's ancient boreal forest. Original features – including a tremendous fireplace – make for a truly authentic nature retreat. Beautifully restored and upgraded, the property retains a number of original features, from the giant fireplace to scattered reindeer skins, and lets you immerse yourself in a wild landscape in a truly authentic way. It's all topped off with delicious dinners cooked by a private chef, a full spread of winter activities and private hot tub soaks under the Northern Lights.

more optional adventures this afternoon; activities range from snowshoeing and snowmobiling to Sami reindeer encounters and Northern Lights photography classes. In the evening, after a snowy dash to the sauna and another superb dinner, there's still time for a short hike through the pines to see if you can spot the Northern Lights swirling overhead. **BLD**

**Day 3 » Treehotel** Today sees you swap log-cabin luxury for the cutting-edge modernism of Treehotel and its collection of from-the-future cabins in the canopy. Choose between a mirrored cube, a bird's nest or a UFO, among others, before stepping out into the wilds on optional husky safaris and horse-drawn sleigh rides. At the end of a thrilling day, return to the delicious home-cooked food of Britta's Restaurant before settling in for your night among the branches. **BD**

**Day 4 » Departure** Check out and transfer back to Luleå for your flight home. **B**

NEW

38

FJELLBORG ARCTIC  
LODGE & ICEHOTEL

## 5-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

1 day ICEHOTEL » 4 days Fjellborg Arctic Lodge



» PRICES FROM: £4,995 pp incl. flights, transfers, 1 night ICEHOTEL BB, 3 nights Fjellborg Arctic Lodge Master Cabin FB, selected excursions. Operates mid-Dec to mid-Apr.

With landscapes frozen under thick snow, deep winter is Swedish Lapland in its most magical form. It's all showcased to perfection on this thrilling Arctic break, which begins with a stay at the world-famous ICEHOTEL before a husky-sled ride across the frozen tundra brings you to the frozen shores of Lake Väkkärä and your exclusive four-bedroom log cabin, complete with private guide.

## Day 1 » UK to ICEHOTEL, Kiruna

After your flight to Kiruna, transfer to the ICEHOTEL, nestled deep in Swedish Lapland's frozen wilderness. Marvel at its beautifully carved ice sculptures, created anew each year, before heading

to dinner at one of the ICEHOTEL's three restaurants. There's everything from cosy and traditional dining to ice menus and the indulgent 'Chef's Table' on the Veranda, where 12-course tasting menus feature local delicacies paired with a world-spanning collection of wines. It's then time to bunk down in your Ice Room, snug with reindeer furs and Arctic thermal sleeping bags, for a night to remember.

**Day 2 » Fjellborg Arctic Lodge** Wake to a glass of hot lingonberry juice, breakfast and a sauna before a morning of optional excursions ahead of your transfer to Fjellborg Arctic Lodge, reachable only by husky sled. It's an unforgettable experience, mushing your team of dogs to your waiting Master Cabin, of which you'll have exclusive use. Here, blonde timber walls, bear skin rugs and antique skis offer the ultimate in Scandi Arctic chic, served up alongside a private sauna and hot tub. Tonight, you'll enjoy the likes of fish, game and wild mushrooms plucked fresh from the wild outdoors. **BLD**

## Day 3 » Snowshoeing and snowmobiling

After breakfast, your personal guide will help you explore the silent landscape on

a snowshoe trek, stopping along the way for homemade snacks and hot chocolate. Then, swap the quietude for the thrills of a snowmobile ride, as you zoom across the frozen tundra to a wilderness hut for lunch served by an open fire. The day ends with a sauna session and soak in your private hot tub overlooking the lake and starlit sky, interspersed, luck depending, with the shimmer of the aurora. **BLD**

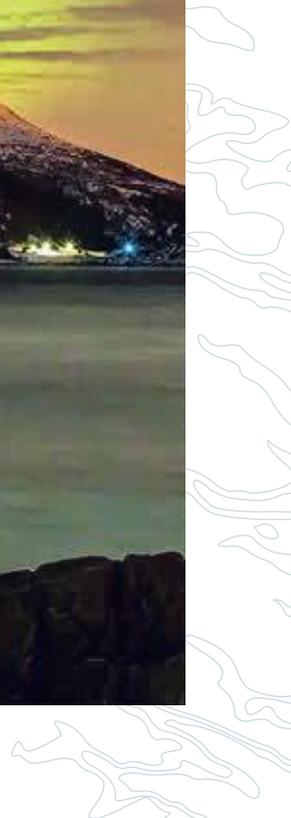
## Day 4 » Ice fishing and ICEHOTEL lunch

Enjoy classic Lappish adventures today as you head out, armed with reindeer skins and an ice drill, for a private ice fishing excursion. Then, a snowmobile voyage takes you across blanketed forest to reach the ICEHOTEL, where you'll enjoy lunch. Later, having returned to the lodge, tuck into a final gourmet dinner, enjoyed in your luxurious lodge or served by candlelight in the main restaurant. **BLD**

## Day 5 » Kiruna to UK

After breakfast, enjoy an ice sculpting class, creating your own masterpiece alongside a professional ice artist. Then, wrap things up with a snowmobile transfer back to Fjellborg Homestead to change before heading on to Kiruna for your flight home. **B**

68.2048° N, 12.7922° E

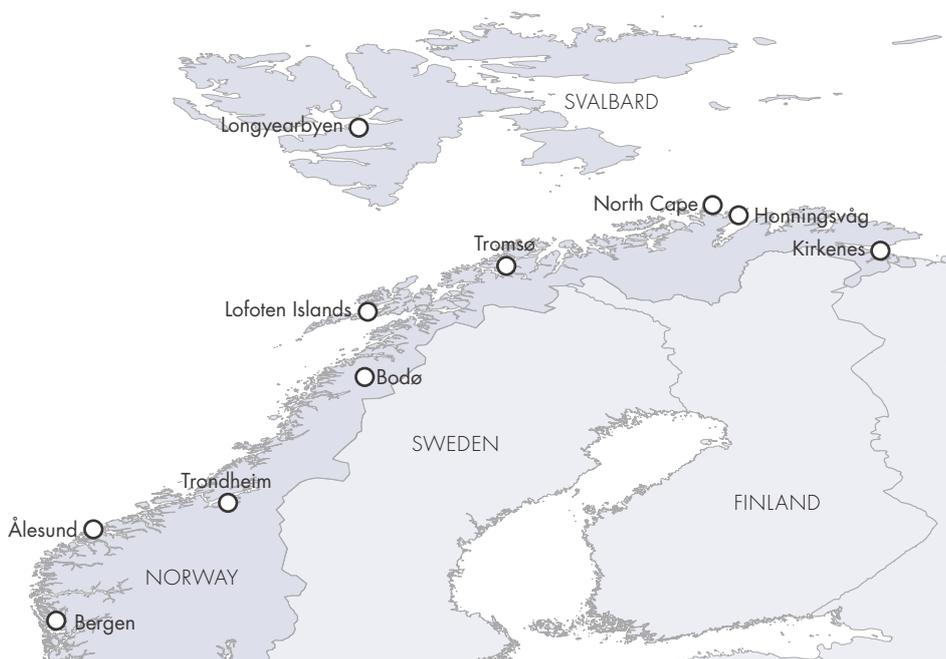


# NORWAY

Big and bold, snow-carpeted and spectacular, Norway in winter is a traveller's dream. From Tromsø (see page 8) and the fjord-riven west coast to the dreamy Lofoten Islands and remote North Cape – mainland Europe's most northerly point – the landscapes are dizzying in both their scale and beauty. And, just a short hop from the North Pole itself, the islands of the Svalbard archipelago offer unsurpassed adventure in one of the world's last true wildernesses.

Along the coast, an endless array of craggy islands and mountain-framed fjords are best explored by cruise ship, with the converted postal ships of the Hurtigruten fleet bringing passengers all the way from Bergen in the south to distant Kirkenes, home to the indigenous Sami people. Between the two are some of Europe's most dramatic seaside stretches, not least the Lofoten Islands, whose windswept cliffs and sweeping golden sands form an idyllic backdrop for dazzling Northern Lights displays. The region's cities are equally enticing, from the Art Nouveau treasures of Ålesund to the erstwhile capital Trondheim, its colourful warehouses all dusted in snow. Take it all in with scenic train journeys and a full spread of winter excursions.

Further north still, the Svalbard archipelago is synonymous with its largest island, Spitsbergen, which has captured imaginations since the Dutch first spotted its pointed, craggy peaks piercing the sheet ice and the clouds. Here, the town of Longyearbyen serves as a comfortable base. A selection of cosy hotels join the colourfully painted cabins spread along the sheltered shores of Adventfjorden, and the surrounding mountains provide protection from the worst of the wind. Somewhat surprisingly, in an otherwise sleepy atmosphere, the town's pubs and cafes add real vibrancy, and delicious and exotic Arctic delicacies abound on restaurant menus. Ride out of town on a snowmobile or dogsled and even more excitement awaits in the wilderness.



39 TRØNDELAG, THE POLAR EXPRESS & THE ARCTIC



8-DAY TAILOR-MADE ITINERARY

1 day Trondheim » 1 day Bodø  
 » 2 days Lofoten Islands » 2 days  
 Hurtigruten cruise » 2 days Trondheim



» PRICES FROM: £1,140 pp incl. flights, 2 nights BB Trondheim, Polar Express Train, 1 night BB Bodø, Bodø to Svolvær flight, 2 nights Hurtigruten inside cabin HB, 2 nights Svolvær BB. Operates 1 Nov to mid-Apr.

This epic journey encapsulates almost all northern Norway has to offer, combining the 1,000-year history of Trondheim, a train journey through dramatic countryside, a stay on one of Europe’s most beautiful archipelagos and a cruise along a ruggedly idyllic coastline, not to mention a superb selection of wintry activities along the way.

**Day 1 » Trondheim** Fly direct to Trondheim and check in to the Scandic Nidelven Hotel. Spend the rest of the day exploring this historic city.

**Day 2 » Bodø** Today, take the ‘Polar Express’, otherwise known as the Nordland Railway, which spends ten hours winding through Norway’s wild mountains, offering stunning views of the fjords, forests and frozen lochs along the way to Bodø inside the Arctic Circle. **B**

**Days 3–4 » Lofoten Islands** Catch a quick flight to Svolvær, the largest settlement on the Lofoten Islands – an otherworldly archipelago whose sharp peaks rise

almost vertically from the sea. Here there are myriad chances to have fun in the snow, so spend the next few days enjoying snow safaris and looking out for the Northern Lights. **B**

**Day 5 » Norwegian Sea** After another action-packed (or leisurely) day in Lofoten, board a Hurtigruten cruise ship and set sail overnight for Trondheim. **B D**

**Day 6 » Norwegian Sea** Enjoy watching the cliffs, inlets and mountains of the Norwegian coast float past as your cruise ship steams south, over the Arctic Circle and past the rippled peaks of the Syv Søstre. **B D**

**Day 7 » Trondheim** Arrive in Trondheim and check back into the Scandic Nidelven Hotel. Spend the day enjoying the city and the surrounding scenery. **B**

**Day 8 » Trondheim** Enjoy breakfast at your hotel, famous for serving the best in Norway, before your flight home. **B**

40

## HURTIGRUTEN: CLASSIC VOYAGE NORTH



## 7-DAY HURTIGRUTEN CRUISE

1 day Bergen » 1 day Ålesund » 1 day Trondheim » 1 day Lofoten Islands » 1 day Tromsø » 1 day Honningsvåg » 1 day Kirkenes



» PRICES FROM: £648 pp incl. transfers, 7 nights inside cabin Hurtigruten FB. Selected departures Oct 2018 to Mar 2019.

Hurtigruten's ships have plied Norway's coasts since the late 19th century. On this cruise, you'll explore some of Norway's best-loved coastal towns, navigate world-famous fjords and strike out on optional adventures including snowmobiling (from December) and Samí cultural tours as you sail north from Bergen to Kirkenes.

**Day 1 » Bergen** Fly to Bergen, whose UNESCO-listed Hanseatic wharf and beautiful fjord setting provide a wonderfully scenic backdrop for the start of your voyage north. 

**Day 2 » Ålesund** Having sailed overnight, you'll call in at Ålesund, home to a rare concentration of Art Nouveau buildings. Take in the stunning views of the city and its surroundings from the top of Mount Aksla. 

**Day 3 » Trondheim** Arriving in Norway's snow-dusted former capital, you'll have time to visit its colourful wharves and warehouse, and impressive 14th-century cathedral. 

**Day 4 » Lofoten Islands** Cross the Arctic Circle to reach the Lofoten Islands where you'll have the chance to join a Lofotr Viking feast and explore the fishing port of Svolvær. It's all framed by cragged peaks and golden sweeps of sand that invite leisurely strolls in the day and at night are bathed in the glow of the aurora borealis.



**Day 5 » Tromsø** Get a taste for Arctic city life in Tromsø, Norway's Northern Lights capital. Explore the city on foot, or head into the wilds on an optional guided husky safari (extra cost). 

**Day 6 » Honningsvåg** Arrive in Honningsvåg, gateway to the North Cape, mainland Europe's most northerly point. This evening you'll call at the pretty port town of Kjøllefjord. 

**Day 7 » Kirkenes** As you reach the end of your cruise, perhaps join a snowmobile tour or extend your tour with a stay at the Kirkenes Snowhotel and its resident reindeer (extra cost). 

NEW

41

LOFOTEN  
AURORA BREAK



### 6-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

1 day Tromsø » 2 days Hurtigruten cruise  
» 3 days Lofoten Islands



» **PRICES FROM:** £1,465 pp incl. flights, transfers, 1 night Tromsø BB, 1 night Hurtigruten BB, 3 nights Svolvær BB, selected other meals, Northern Lights safari by husky, Lofoten aurora safari. Operates Dec to Mar.

This is an unforgettable winter break that culminates, via an iconic Hurtigruten cruise, in Lofoten, one of the world's most scenic archipelagos. You'll cruise among isolated polar landscapes and speed through dramatic Arctic wilderness alongside enthusiastic huskies, but it's nighttime that takes centre stage, shimmering beneath the Northern Lights' psychedelic ballet.

**Day 1 » UK to Tromsø** After your flight from the UK to Tromsø, buried among Norway's northern fjordland, transfer to the Clarion Collection Hotel With, which boasts views of the harbour's rainbow huts

and silvery peaks. You've got the rest of the evening at leisure, whether you want to explore the city's roaring pub scene – we recommend Tromsø's oldest pub Ølhallen – or take advantage of the hotel's sauna and steam room that overlooks the city.

**Day 2 » Huskies and Hurtigruten** This morning, explore the spectacular Arctic capital, perhaps hiking the plethora of surrounding snow-laden mountain trails. Come evening, an eager group of huskies await to tow you through the darkness, illuminated by the white canopy surrounds. It's all punctuated by a backdrop of majestic zeniths, but – luck depending – the Northern Lights' ethereal kaleidoscope steals the show. Return to a fireside wilderness supper, then return to Tromsø to board your Hurtigruten ship and bunk down in your cabin. **B D**

**Day 3 » Hurtigruten and Svolvær** The delights of the Norwegian coast await you today as you navigate awe-inspiring winter scenes, from Harstad's unexpected sugar-white beaches to idyllic Stokmarknes' imposing heights. Arrive in Svolvær to emblematic Rorbu cottages neighboured by colossal white crests – your introduction to the spectacular Lofoten archipelago.

Make like a local with a stay in your own red-painted fishing cabin, all white timber beams and log walls, before enjoying a gourmet three-course dinner featuring the likes of reindeer and signature stockfish.

**B D**

**Days 4–5 » Svolvær** After cosseting nights in your cosy cabin, explore this stunning share of the Lofoten archipelago. Perhaps find epic spots to hunt the aurora with a local nature photographer and get close to majestic sea eagles on a RIB boat safari. Or, go one further with a sea kayak adventure on the islands' serene waters. Staying on land affords the likes of snowshoe hikes among icy forests and horse rides along sandy bays and past jagged ridges and emblematic stockfish racks. End each day with dinner in the picturesque town centre or the hotel's gourmet restaurant. The headline act comes later, as you hunt the aurora, guided towards the best locations each evening. **B**

**Day 6 » Svolvær to UK** After breakfast, you'll head to Svolvær airport in time for your return flight, via Bodø and Oslo, to the UK. **B**

## LOFOTEN ISLANDS EXCURSIONS

The landscapes of the Lofoten Islands are perhaps Norway's most impressive. And, while winter invites the likes of Northern Lights hunts and nights in cosy cabins, there's a whole host of excursions to fill adventurous days. Here are just four of our favourites:



### FISHING VILLAGE WALK

Lofoten island life has revolved around cod fishing for more than 100 years; vibrant communities evocative of a time gone by still thrive. Stroll through the quaint village of Svinøya for views of traditional ochre-red huts and iconic fish racks – ending with a taste of locally dried and cured stockfish.

» PRICES FROM: £45 pp incl. guided walk & stockfish tasting. Duration 1.5 hrs. Operates daily Sep to Apr.



### WINTER SEA KAYAKING

Winter sees the Lofotens at their spectacular best – all snow-covered crags shadowing remote coastlines, peppered with frozen inlets. The islands' jagged frame is a spectacular backdrop for sea kayaking among dramatic fjords and hidden bays, looking out for passing wildlife such as harbour porpoises and seals.

» PRICES FROM: £135 pp incl. approved guide, transfers, sea kayak & equipment. Duration 4 hrs. Operates daily Sep to Apr.



### EAGLE RIB SAFARI

A fifth of the world's white-tailed eagles fly among the Lofotens' ice-slicked crags – and a RIB boat is a spectacular way to witness their splendour, winding past abandoned Viking settlements and white-sand beaches. But it's up above that impresses most, where these majestic birds of prey soar just a few feet away.

» PRICES FROM: £95 pp incl. thermal suits, life vests, goggles, skipper & guide. Duration 2 hrs. Operates daily year-round.



### SNOWSHOE HIKE

In the Arctic, snowshoeing has long been a favourite mode of transport, and it makes exploring the Lofoten Islands' glistening landscapes all the more magical. Take in the beauty of it all as you head out with a local guide through snow-dusted firs and remote mountain trails edged by sugar-white peaks.

» PRICES FROM: £115 pp incl. guide transfer, snow shoes, walking poles. Duration 3 hrs. Operates daily Dec to Apr.

NEW

42

POLAR NIGHT: NORTHERN LIGHTS BREAK IN SVALBARD



4-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

4 days Longyearbyen



» **PRICES FROM:** £1,315 pp incl. flights, 3 nights Funken Lodge BB, Northern Lights Polar Night husky excursion, evening Northern Lights excursion. Operates Nov to Feb.

The frozen islands of Svalbard provide the setting for what is perhaps the ultimate winter adventure. From the polar bears that outnumber people to a blue Polar Night that shrouds the islands in an otherworldly glow, it's a place of intoxicating beauty, of nature writ large. This unforgettable trip explores it all, taking in aurora hunts and dinners in the wilderness between cosseting nights in a luxury Spitsbergen lodge.

**Day 1 » Fly to Longyearbyen** After your flight to Svalbard, take your included transfer to Longyearbyen – the archipelago's only permanently inhabited town – and the ever-so-stylish Funken Lodge. With its interiors dressed in the finest contemporary Scandi chic, this delightful hotel sits perched atop a snow-dusted hillside, affording spectacular views over the Lars glacier's colossal expanse. If time permits, take the chance to borrow a kicksled for a play in the snow before heading to the hotel's superb restaurant, Funktionærmessen, where tables look out to the majestic Hiortfjellet mountains.

**Day 2 » Northern Lights** Embark on a unique daytime aurora hunt amid the blue haze of the Polar Night, mushing your own team of huskies or sitting back to enjoy views of snow-capped peaks. There's another chance to chase the aurora this evening when you head to a wilderness camp for a hearty dinner before braving the chill in the company of your expert guide. **EBD**

**Day 3 » Excursions** After breakfast, you've got the day free to explore the frozen tundra with an array of optional tours. For the adventurous, there's the chance to head underground on an ice cave tour, watching as glassy ripples glitter in cobalt and diamond crystals as you hike among the spectacular formations. If that all sounds a little too extreme, perhaps enjoy a champagne tasting at Nordpolet liquor store, home to the world's northernmost wine collection. There's even a selection of delicious canapés to match your fizz. **B**

**Day 4 » Depart** After a final breakfast at your hotel, transfer to the airport for your flight home. **B**



## BASECAMP HOTEL

### SUPERIOR



Basecamp Hotel is an atmospheric homage to the Arctic days of yore, with its walls showcasing trophies from the centuries of trapping and whaling activity on Svalbard. The hotel, located in the heart of Longyearbyen, bursts with character and provides a cosy and intimate base, offering 16 rooms with private bathrooms and WiFi, all with extraordinary views across the Longyeardalen Valley.

## FUNKEN LODGE

### SUPERIOR



This newly opened luxury lodge combines 21st-century good looks with one of the most historic hotel experiences in Svalbard. Found on a hillside just ten minutes' snowmobile ride from the centre of Longyearbyen, the hotel has an enviable location, with fabulous views over the town and the Lars glacier. And there's much to enjoy indoors too, with a stylish lounge, a celebrated champagne cellar and Longyearbyen's best restaurant all on site.



## RADISSON BLU POLAR HOTEL

### SUPERIOR



One of the finest hotels in town, the Radisson Blu Polar offers a collection of traditional hotel rooms and stylish new suites. Luxury modern amenities, which include outdoor hot tubs, line up alongside more timeless comforts such as an open fire in the lobby and a traditional sauna room. In turn, Restaurant Nansen serves up a range of delicious Arctic game.



43

ARCTIC LUXURY



**ISFJORD RADIO**

As you approach this 1930s telecommunications outpost, you'd be forgiven for thinking your hotel must be housed somewhere else. Cross the threshold, however, and luxury awaits – a cosy retreat from the wintry environment. Inside, the décor is testament to the station's colourful past, with fascinating artifacts dotted throughout. Activities range from snowmobile safaris to icy dips in the frozen sea, while equally adventurous menus might include reindeer, halibut or smoked seal.

**6-DAY TAILOR-MADE ITINERARY**

1 day Oslo » 1 day Longyearbyen  
 » 1 day Isfjord Radio » 3 days Longyearbyen



» **PRICES FROM:** £2,940 pp incl. flights, transfers, 4 nights BB, 1 night FB and touring as per itinerary. Selected departures late Feb to end Apr.

The only way to truly soak up the pristine wilderness of the vast Arctic landscape is to head straight out into it. This might sound a little chilly, but there is plenty of cosiness to be found in the selection of eccentric and conventionally luxurious hotels tucked away amongst the epic landscapes.

**Day 1 » Oslo** Your journey begins way south of the Arctic Circle, in one of Europe's most charming capitals, Oslo. Check in to Thon Hotel Opera, a modern and comfortable base, conveniently located for city-centre exploration.

**Day 2 » Longyearbyen** From Oslo, take a three-hour flight north to Longyearbyen, Svalbard's largest township. From here, transfer to the atmospheric Basecamp Hotel, where furs and whaling memorabilia adorn the walls. You'll spend the rest of the day exploring the austere beauty of this former mining town. **B**

**Day 3 » Isfjord Radio** After breakfast you'll meet your guide for an induction session on snowmobiles, the main form of transport in the Arctic. After the briefing, mount your vehicle and strike out onto the ice, heading west across the sublime landscape to Basecamp Isfjord Radio, stopping at various points of interest along the way. Once at the hotel, settle in to

a day of wilderness adventure – choose between ice caving, skiing, snowmobiling and dogsledding – coupled with the very best in Arctic-inspired food. Perhaps round things off with a warming sauna and perhaps even an invigorating ocean dip.

**B/L/D**

**Day 4 » Barentsburg & Longyearbyen** Head deep into the wilds of Spitsbergen again as you make your way, weather depending, to the remote Russian mining town of Barentsburg. Spend time exploring this isolated outpost before returning to Longyearbyen and the Basecamp Hotel.

**B/L**

**Days 5–6 » Longyearbyen** Spend today exploring Longyearbyen at your own pace; there's everything from ice caving and husky safaris to champagne tasting at the town's famous Nordpolet liquor store. On day six, transfer to the airport for your flight home. **B**

## SVALBARD EXCURSIONS

A list of the enchanting experiences available in Svalbard would stretch across the tundra and over the horizon, with each excursion changing as the year goes by and the Midnight Sun fades to the darkness of a polar winter. It would be impossible to see everything the archipelago has to offer on one trip alone, but a combination of the excursions below will go a long way to ensuring that you experience the best of the region.



### DOGSLEDDING

Revisit the world of Jack London and the mode of transport that has been the Arctic's favourite for centuries. With a seasoned team of huskies at your command, you'll mush across Bolterdalen, taking the chance to gaze around the frosty landscape. Keep your eyes peeled as you may glimpse reindeer, grouse and Arctic fox.

» **PRICES FROM:** £165 pp incl. guide and hot drinks.  
Duration 4 hrs. Operates Feb to May.



### ICE CAVE TOUR

The ice caves of Longyear Glacier magically glitter in glorious cobalt and diamond crystals. All equipment is provided, though some of the most fabulous formations may require you to stoop and crawl a little before you can see them – well worth the effort.

» **PRICES FROM:** £95 pp incl. equipment, transfers and guides.  
Duration 3 hrs. Operates Jan to May.



### WILDERNESS NIGHT CAMP BARENTZ

Head out into the Advent Valley where you'll be indulged with hearty food, drink and some good-old-fashioned storytelling. Relax in front of a crackling fire as your hosts serve a hot dish of local reindeer, brew some revitalising coffee and entertain you with tales of the island and its polar bears.

» **PRICES FROM:** £120 pp incl. bus transfer, all food and drink.  
Duration 3 hrs. Operates 16 Feb to mid-Aug, Sundays only.



### CHAMPAGNE TASTING

The historic Nordpolet liquor store is particularly proud of its champagne selection and visitors are invited to step in, sit back and pour a glass of fizz. After all, from the aurora to the wildlife to the scenery, there's plenty to celebrate.

» **PRICES FROM:** £60 pp incl. canapés and three glasses of champagne. Duration 1 hr. Operates year-round.

64.1333° N, 21.9333° W



# ICELAND

---

Iceland is extraordinary – there are no two ways about it. Where else can you find volcanic eruptions, disintegrating glaciers, geysers shooting 30 metres into the air, humpback whales congregating with dolphins and orcas off black-sand beaches, and still return to a colourful and cultured capital city to sample fine cuisine and dive head first into a boisterous bar scene?

In keeping with its extraordinary nature, Iceland is actually getting bigger, too. This incredible 'Land of Fire and Ice' sits atop a divergent plate boundary, so Iceland is steadily growing year on year, despite the great Atlantic swells that wear down the island's wildly frayed coastlines. Its interior is a veritable playground for outdoor enthusiasts, amateur geologists and photographers whilst its varied coast attracts wildlife enthusiasts and cold-water surfers alike. In the winter, the Northern Lights stream

across the night sky, as vibrant green lines are spray-painted across the inky black. During summer, the locals go en masse to build campfires around the country's lakes, and music festivals add an extra atmospheric edge to proceedings. Most visitors, however, just come to absorb the amazing ambience. The extreme vastness of Iceland's volatile landscape rolls through deep gorges and over snow-capped mountain peaks, tumbles down waterfalls and collapses into the heavy swells of the Atlantic Ocean.



44

REYKJAVIK  
ADVENTURE



#### 4-DAY TAILOR-MADE BREAK

4 days Reykjavik



» **PRICES FROM:** £1,090 pp incl. flights, transfers, 3 nights Reykjavik Centrum BB, Golden Circle jeep tour, whale-watching cruise & entry to Blue Lagoon.

So much more than just a city break, this stay in Reykjavik includes a trio of excursions. You'll cruise out to spot giant whales, enjoy a soak in the famous Blue Lagoon and even head out on Iceland's iconic Golden Circle route. Here, a jeep tour will see you between everything from national-park treasures to cascading waterfalls and explosive geysers.

**Day 1 » Reykjavik** Touching down in Keflavik, head into the vibrant Icelandic capital and make for the Hotel Reykjavik Centrum in the heart of the city. Tonight, perhaps enjoy dinner at the hotel's own gourmet restaurant; the cured Arctic char and Icelandic blue mussels both come highly recommended.

**Day 2 » Golden Circle** Today you'll head out on the famous Golden Circle route by SuperJeep, beginning with Thingvellir National Park where dramatic valleys make for a spectacular backdrop to its thousand-year-old heritage. It's then on to Gullfoss – often described as Iceland's most beautiful waterfall – and Strokkur, a geyser whose clockwork-regular outbursts reach up to 20 metres high. You'll then test the jeep's capabilities as you head back to Reykjavik, driving over craggy highlands, glacial drifts and rushing waterways. **E**

**Day 3 » Whale-watching cruise** The waters around the Icelandic capital are not only a favourite among humpbacks and minke whales; it's also possible to spot everything from harbour porpoises to white-beaked dolphins on today's included cruise. If you're lucky, they'll even put on an acrobatic display. Then, returning to Reykjavik, you'll have some time to explore further. Perhaps take in its sculpture gardens, cathedral architecture and superb Museum of Photography before sampling the city's famous nightlife. **E**

**Day 4 » Blue Lagoon** After a final breakfast this morning, an included transfer will see you out to the Blue Lagoon. Shrouded in mists and ringed by volcanic rock, its bright-azure, geothermally heated waters are the perfect pre-flight tonic. After a soak, a shuttle transfer will bring you to the airport for your flight home. **E**



## HOTEL REYKJAVIK CENTRUM

### STANDARD



Situated on one of Reykjavik's oldest streets in one of the city's liveliest districts, the charming Reykjavik Centrum is perfectly placed for fun. Choose from Deluxe Rooms, suites or a sleek Studio Apartment, featuring a fully equipped kitchenette and living room. Fjalakötturinn, an inventive restaurant right next door, is popular with local foodies and has an à la carte menu brimming with regionally inspired dishes. There's an emphasis on fresh seafood and traditional delicacies with a modern twist.

## HOTEL BORG

### SUPERIOR



The best hotel in town, Hotel Borg is a Reykjavik landmark in its own right. With an arresting Art Deco style throughout, the hotel's rooms are spacious and feature leather furnishings and large, marble bathrooms. There's a spa, too, with a hot tub, steam bath, sauna and a range of treatments providing idyllic relaxation after days spent exploring the city's surrounds. The staff are renowned for their friendly attentiveness and will gladly point you in the direction of the best local restaurants.



## ALDA

### SUPERIOR



This smart, four-star stop on Laugavegur, Reykjavik's main shopping street, offers comfortable and modern rooms in a relaxed and friendly environment. The hotel features a fitness centre with sauna and a full range of exercise equipment, a buzzing bar serving local draught beers and champagne cocktails, a chocolate shop, a 24-hour grab-n-go snack station and in-room massages. The rooftop terrace offers excellent sea and mountain views.

## REYKJAVIK & BEYOND

The landscapes of Iceland are truly otherworldly – a stunning showcase of geological and climatic clout. And, exploring them is easier than you might expect with Reykjavik the perfect jumping-off point; climb aboard a SuperJeep, set sail on whale-busy bays or lie back in the Blue Lagoon and let lava-field thermals warm your bones.



### HUNT FOR THE NORTHERN LIGHTS BY SUPERJEEP

Travel by SuperJeep to an isolated part of Iceland's wild interior and hunt for the Northern Lights, far from the distractions of artificial light. Guides will lead you to the best spot from which to view the aurora, dependent on the weather.

» PRICES FROM: £165 pp Duration: 3–5 hrs.  
Operates daily 15 Sep to 15 Apr.



### ICELAND'S SOUTH COAST & VOLCANOES

Setting out from Reykjavik, this full-day SuperJeep tour explores the extraordinary landscapes of Iceland's south coast. With a picnic lunch included, you'll take in the region's highlights, showcasing lush farmlands, smoking craters, creaking glaciers, plunging waterfalls and beaches black with volcanic sand.

» PRICES FROM: £255 pp Duration 9–10 hrs. Operates daily.



### THE BLUE LAGOON

When photographer Juergen Teller travelled to Iceland to photograph Bjork, they visited the Blue Lagoon, where he took one of his best-loved portraits. Central to a laidback culture, no trip to Iceland is complete without a visit to this modern spa powered by the country's lively geothermals. Pre-booking is essential.

» PRICES FROM: £110 pp incl. standard entry and transfers.



### WHALE WATCHING

Observe the North Atlantic's diverse whale populations as they circle Iceland's barren coastline on this fascinating short cruise. Wrap up warm and sail out into Faxaflói Bay to spot dolphins, orcas, minke and humpback whales. Guides are on hand to offer information about Iceland's rich waters and diverse habitats.

» PRICES FROM: £65 pp Duration: 3 hrs. Operates year-round.

45

ION HOTEL  
& REYKJAVIK

### ION HOTEL

This designer hotel, less than an hour's drive from the bustle of Reykjavik, effortlessly treads the fine line between luxury and adventure. With its Thingvellir National Park location there's activities aplenty from challenging glacier treks to days spent ice fishing in one of the nearby rivers. At the restaurant, guests are treated to a journey through Iceland's gastronomic landscape with fresh, regional ingredients heading up a menu that changes with the seasons. Elsewhere, the ION Spa promises the ultimate in relaxation with a full list of treatments and massages coupled with a sauna and a heated, 10-metre pool for soaks under the Northern Lights.

### 5-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

2 days Thingvellir National Park

» 3 days Reykjavik



» **PRICES FROM:** £1,550 pp incl. flights, 4 days car hire, 2 nights ION Hotel BB, 2 nights Hotel Borg BB & airport transfer on day 5. Operates year-round.

Reykjavik is a pretty coastal city with a cultured heart. Woolly-jumper-wearing hipsters skip around record shops while sharp suits sip cocktails in stylish bars and restaurants. This short break combines a stay in the city with two nights at ION Hotel, a contemporary design hotel in the Thingvellir National Park.

**Day 1 » Thingvellir National Park** Fly from London to Iceland's Keflavik Airport, collect your hire car and drive to the ION Hotel in the Thingvellir National Park, perhaps stopping along the way for a dip in the Blue Lagoon.

**Day 2 » Thingvellir National Park** Spend today exploring the geological sights of Iceland's Golden Circle including the Kerio Crater, the impressive Gullfoss Waterfall and the geysers of Strokkur. Even in winter, your hire car gives you freedom to roam and discover this spectacular region at your own pace. Meanwhile, the hotel offers the chance for further adventure with a programme of activities that includes SuperJeep journeys, helicopter flights, glacier hikes and ice caving. **B**

**Days 3-4 » Reykjavik** After a leisurely morning, or perhaps another excursion,

drive to Iceland's capital, Reykjavik. Spend two days exploring the city, visiting the extraordinary Hallgrímskirkja church and the Reykjavik Art Museum, and enjoying the atmosphere of the city's boisterous bars and excellent restaurants; the Grillmarket is one of our favourites, but it's popular, so you'll need to book in advance. **B**

**Day 5 » Reykjavik** Check out of the Hotel Borg and transfer to the airport to catch your flight home. **B**

46

HOTEL RANGA & THE GOLDEN CIRCLE



HOTEL RANGA

A stay at Hotel Ranga encapsulates the best that Iceland has to offer – warm hospitality, fabulous food and stunning nature. Rooms at the lodge are appointed in a typically minimalist style, using plenty of pinewood and furs. The restaurant is excellent, too, its menus all seasonal and the ingredients locally sourced. Most importantly, though, this is one of the best places in Iceland to see the aurora, far from any light pollution. What’s more, the thermally-heated outdoor hot tubs make perfect viewing spots.

4-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR

2 days Hotel Ranga » 2 days Reykjavik



» PRICES FROM: £750 pp incl. flights, car hire, return transfer, 2 nights Hotel Ranga BB and 1 night Reykjavik BB. Operates Oct to Apr.

Few places are as exciting as Iceland, an effervescent expanse of mid-Atlantic rock that must be a geography teacher’s idea of heaven, but equally compelling for wild adventure. This land of ice and fire is a medley of spectacular waterfalls, thermal baths, natural light shows, glorious glaciers and towering mountains, all tied together by the slightly bohemian and very friendly spirit of the locals.

**Day 1 » Hotel Ranga** Arrive at Keflavik International Airport and pick up your hire car. We recommend a stop at the Blue Lagoon, a natural thermal spa where the warm cobalt waters provide a delightful contrast to the cool winds whistling above the surface. Afterwards, head east along the main coastal highway towards the town of Hella, and the nearby Hotel Ranga, your base for the next two nights.

**Day 2 » Hotel Ranga** This part of Iceland offers a spectacularly scenic drive: on one side glacial meltwater tumbles in myriad waterfalls over and off the central plateau; on the other the black sand beaches and hexagonal rock formations stud the shoreline. Take in this extraordinary landscape from a helicopter, jeep or, for the best perspective, both. The hotel’s outdoor hot tubs provide the ultimate relaxing viewing point for a chance to glimpse the Northern Lights. **B**

**Day 3 » Reykjavik** Before returning to the capital, today is the day to view Iceland’s ‘Golden Circle’, which comprises the historic national park Thingvellir, home to the first Icelandic parliament, and the magnificent Gullfoss, a roaring cascade in the Hvítá River. The nearby geysers, including the now extinct Geysir (from which the English word derives) are spectacular, especially Strokkur, which erupts violently every few minutes. Head back to Reykjavik this evening before returning your hire car and enjoying the buzz of the city’s nightlife. Many of the restaurants are notable and we particularly like the tasting menu at Fiskmarkaðurrinn, possibly the best place to experience the impressive variety of seafood Iceland has to offer. **B**

**Day 4 » Reykjavik** Explore the capital’s stylish streets in the morning before your transfer to the airport. **B**

47

## ROMANTIC ICELAND &amp; THE NORTHERN LIGHTS



## HOTEL GRIMSBORGIR

Just a short hop from Thingvellir National Park, this delightful hotel is ideally located in the heart of Iceland's Golden Circle. Rooms here are sleek, modern and comfortable, all wooden floors and muted tones that effortlessly mirror the landscapes outside. The Junior Suites are particularly impressive, their flowing drapes, pastel shades and private terraces lending more than a little romance. Whichever you choose, you'll be treated to superb seasonal dining at the restaurant and access to communal outdoor hot tubs, perfect for viewing the Northern Lights.

## 5-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR

3 days Hotel Grimsborgir » 2 days Reykjavik



» PRICES FROM: £1,185 pp incl. flights, car hire, return transfer, 3 nights Hotel Grimsborgir BB and 1 night Reykjavik BB. Operates Sep to Mar.

Iceland – all creaking glaciers and smouldering volcanoes – serves up scenery on the grandest scale. From self-drives between epic waterfalls and otherworldly geysers to Blue Lagoon soaks and aurora viewing from private hot tubs, this winter break blends action and adventure with a stay at the ever-so-romantic Hotel Grimsborgir.

**Day 1 » Fly to Keflavik** After flying to Keflavik airport from the UK, head along the scenic south coast road, taking in roaring waterfalls, looming peaks and lava fields before arriving at the luxury, Scandi-chic Hotel Grimsborgir, all whitewashed wooden walls and contemporary furnishings. Tonight you'll tuck into the likes of Icelandic cod and mountain lamb among the open fireplaces of the restaurant before taking advantage of your private deck, hopefully to spot the Northern Lights.

**Day 2 » Golden Circle** After breakfast it's time for the iconic sights of Iceland's Golden Circle, from the immense power of Strokkur geyser to the Great Geysir's boiling mud pools. The awe-inspiring Gullfoss waterfall is next, glistening in rippling waves of ice interspersed with spouting, inky sprays. End your day at UNESCO World Heritage-listed Thingvellir National Park, where further epic scenes are on offer in an eerie expanse of rock-flecked wilderness, all dusted in snow. **B**

**Day 3 » Iceland's South Coast** Wind along the blustery roads of the South Coast, edged by moss-covered boulders and sheer snow-dusted crags before arriving at the 60-metre-high drop of Skógafoss, a waterfall swelled by two enormous glaciers. You'll then head on to Seljalandsfoss's raging torrents, found among soaring silvery cliffs. The black sand beaches of Vik are a final unmissable stop. End the day with a soak in one of the hotel's hot tubs, each one a magical vantage point for viewing the aurora. **B**

**Days 4-5 » Reykjavik** Head to the capital and the ever-so-hip Hotel Reykjavik Centrum. With a day at leisure, perhaps climb the tower at Hallgrímskirkja for panoramic views, get a sense of the city's past at the National Museum or venture out from the harbour on a whale-watching tour. Tonight, why not let someone else do the driving as you go on a final quest for those psychedelic disco lights in the sky? On day five, head back to the airport via the cleansing waters of the Blue Lagoon. **B**

48

ICELAND'S NORTHERN LIGHTS & WINTER WONDERS



piercing-blue icebergs, calved from the Breiðamerkurjökull glacier. On your way back to Hotel Katla, you'll drive through the spectacular Vatnajökull National Park, home to one of Europe's largest glaciers. **B**

**Day 4 » Reykjavik** Your journey back to Reykjavik stops at the Skógafoss and Seljalandsfoss waterfalls, as well as the Mýrdalsjökull Glacier, situated close the Eyjafjallajökull Ice Cap, site of the infamous 2010 eruption. You'll also stop in at the Blue Lagoon, before returning to your hotel. **B**

**Day 5 » Reykjavik** Transfer to Keflavik Airport for your flight home. **B**



5-DAY ESCORTED TOUR

1 day Reykjavik » 1 day Golden Circle  
» 1 day Jökulsárlón » 2 days Reykjavik



» PRICES FROM: £960 pp incl. flights, transfers, 3-day escorted tour, 2 nights Centerhotel Plaza BB, 2 nights Hotel Katla BB, Northern Lights Hunt at Hotel Katla, entrance to Eyjafjallajökull Visitor Centre, Blue Lagoon & visit to Icelandic farm and stables.

Iceland's attractions cover every angle; there are chic bars and award-winning restaurants in sleek contrast to its active volcanoes and iceberg-packed glacial lagoons. This five-day escorted tour of the island nation's southern coast takes in the whole range of these spectacular highlights, all easily accessible from Reykjavik.

**Day 1 » Reykjavik** Arrive in Reykjavik and transfer to the Centerhotel Plaza, located in the heart of Iceland's capital. Consider dining out at one of Reykjavik's celebrated restaurants; locals rave about Grillmarkaðurinn and Fiskmarkaðurinn.

**Day 2 » Golden Circle** Head for the Golden Circle, home to some of Iceland's most impressive geological sites, including Thingvellir National Park, the famous hot springs at Geysir and the spectacular Gullfoss waterfall. Then, visit a local stable and meet a herd of Icelandic horses, before driving on to Hotel Katla near Vik. As the sun goes down, look out for the Northern Lights; the hotel is situated in relative isolation, making it a great place to see the famous aurora. **B**

**Day 3 » Glacier Lagoon** Drive along Iceland's southern coast to the Jökulsárlón Glacier Lagoon, a glacial lake filled with



CENTERHOTEL PLAZA, REYKJAVIK

This modern hotel is located right in the centre of Reykjavik's downtown area, a short walk from the Reykjavik Art Museum, National Theatre and Culture House, as well as many of the city's finest bars and restaurants. Earthy tones and contemporary oak furnishings contrast nicely with black leather sofas and whitewashed walls, making this one of the city's most stylish hotels. Each room has free WiFi and an en-suite bathroom, and the Plaza's bar is the perfect venue for a 6 o'clock cocktail or late nightcap.

49

HUNTING THE AURORA IN  
NORTH & SOUTH ICELAND

NEW



## 9-DAY ESCORTED TOUR

1 day Reykjavik » 1 day Golden Circle  
 » 3 days South Coast » 1 day Mývatn  
 » 2 days Akureyri » 1 day Reykjavik



» **PRICES FROM:** £2,375 pp incl. flights, shuttle transfers, 8 nights accommodation BB, selected other meals & daily touring including Northern Lights hunt, admission to Mývatn Baths & entry to Blue Lagoon. Selected departures Oct to Mar.

This epic escorted tour captures Iceland at its dramatic best, combining the south's spectacular national parks with ultra-scenic wilds in the north. Extraordinary natural wonders abound, from otherworldly geothermal landscapes to colossal ice caves and the ethereal glow of the aurora borealis.

**Day 1 » Fly to Reykjavik** Fly to Keflavik and transfer to your hotel. With the rest

of the day free, perhaps enjoy a gourmet Nordic dinner at Fiskmarkaðurinn, or take in some of the city's cutting-edge galleries and museums. **D**

**Day 2 » Thingvellir, Geysir & Gullfoss**

After breakfast, the adventure begins as your coach winds towards the spectacular Thingvellir National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Compare Geysir's bubbling geothermals with Strokkur's 20 metre-high hot spring spurts, ending the day with the raging two-tiered torrents of the Gullfoss waterfall. **E D**

**Day 3 » Iceland's South Coast** Explore Iceland's southern shores today, enveloped in winter's icy throes. Pass snow-dusted farms home to Icelandic horses, then juxtapose Seljalandsfoss' serene beauty with the milky-blue roar of Skógafoss. Eerie black-sand beaches grab the attention en route to Myrdalsjökull Glacier before your arrival in Kirkjubæjarklaustur for dinner. When night falls, keep one eye on the sky for the Northern Lights. **E D**

**Day 4 » Vatnajökull National Park** More world-class scenery awaits today as you enter the Vatnajökull National Park. Drive through vast sandy plains to Jökulsárlón Glacial Lagoon, then walk between Svínafellsjökull Glacier's jagged spikes before ending the day at Skaftafell and its otherworldly ice caves. **E D**

**Day 5 » Hveragerði & The Blue Lagoon**

Enjoy a relaxing hot-spring soak in the village of Hveragerði, where shimmering white crags surround geothermal baths. Then, trace the coastline towards the Reykjanes Peninsula to enjoy a dip in the Blue Lagoon's healing waters. **E**

**Day 6 » Goðafoss & Lake Mývatn**

Head to Iceland's remote north today, stopping at Goðafoss where glacial waters cascade from snow-covered columns in a swirling half-moon pool. Then head to the volcanic Lake Mývatn, marvelling at the peculiar lava formations at Dimmuborgir and the bubbling mud pits of Namaskard's geothermal terrain. The fantastical landscapes of Mývatn's natural hot pools bring the day to a fitting conclusion. **E D**

**Day 7 » Fjords & The Troll Peninsula**

Take the scenic road to Eyjafjörður – the longest fjord in Iceland – then onto the Tröllaskagi (the Troll Peninsula) where sheer mountains plunge to the black-sand coastline below. Mountain tunnels and colourful fishing villages await in Siglufjörður, along with the Herring-Era Maritime Museum where you'll sample local herring and Icelandic schnapps before the short drive to Akureyri. **E**

**Day 8 » Akureyri to Reykjavik**

Enjoy a free day to discover Akureyri, home to the most northerly botanical gardens in the world and the distinctive Akureyrarkirkja church that dominates the town. Perhaps take a swim in the nearby geothermal pools, or head further afield to ski the mountainous surrounds or ride horseback along canopied trails. Then, transfer back to Reykjavik for your final night. **E**

**Day 9 » Depart Reykjavik** Transfer back to Keflavik for your flight home. **E**





## SPRING IN SCANDINAVIA

---

While the majority of this brochure is focussed on winter adventures north of the Arctic Circle, we thought it only right to devote some pages to spring visits, too. After all, once the ice and snow has melted, what's left behind are landscapes that are surely among the world's most beautiful – verdant, blossom-studded and utterly captivating.

First among these are Norway's Western Fjords – their plunging valleys and cragged peaks finally free from winter's icy grip. This endless labyrinth of impossibly narrow waterways, framed by raging rivers and crashing cascades, is perfect for springtime exploration; a comprehensive network of roads scale steep mountain passes to connect even the remotest villages, while scenic train routes and a full ferry timetable make things just as easy for those who prefer to leave the car at home. And, once you've reached your fjord of choice – Sognefjord and Hardangerfjord are both featured over the following pages – you'll settle in to enjoy the region's famous gastronomy and a full spread of delightfully traditional accommodation, some with spas, and all with spectacular views.

Elsewhere, such faraway outposts as Ilulissat in Greenland also come alive under the spring sunshine. Here, the inhospitable winter climate is replaced by longer, milder days and the chance to spot whales off the iceberg-studded coast, enjoy cruises in calm seas and watch as the sun's rays carve huge chunks of ice from enormous glacier walls.

Then there's Scandinavia's cities which, while also appealing in winter, truly awaken in spring with outdoor festivals, blooming parklands and pavement pubs and cafes perfect for people-watching. Indeed, our Nordic cities itinerary (page 106) features four of our favourites – Copenhagen, Gothenburg, Stockholm and Helsinki – linking together luxury stays in each with country-spanning rail journeys and Baltic Sea cruises.

50 SPRING IN NORWAY'S FJORDS



5-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

1 day Oslo » 1 day Flåm » 3 days Bergen



» PRICES FROM: £1,355 pp incl. flights, 1 night Thon Hotel Panorama, Oslo BB, 1 night Flåmsbrygga BB, Viking plank meal at Aegir Restaurant, 2 nights Thon Hotel Bristol, Bergen BB, train, ferry and bus tickets. Operates May to June.

Norway's landscapes during the blossoming spring are unparalleled – waterfalls thaw and cascade beside idyllic villages and fjord-framing mountains turn vivid shades of green. It's all spectacularly explored on this rail and cruise journey, as you'll swap Oslo city life for UNESCO-listed fjords and snow-dusted peaks, ending with Bergen's Hanseatic heritage.

**Day 1 » Fly to Oslo** After your flight to Oslo, you've got the rest of the day to explore. Head to museums dedicated to the likes of the Vikings and Edvard Munch, indulge in Aker Brygge's renowned pier-side restaurants and marvel at Vigelandsparken's 200 sculptures, where, from May onwards, ambling strolls take in



spring blossoms that speckle the sprawling gardens. Then, head to the Thon Hotel Panorama, where ultra-contemporary furnishings nestle beneath oversized windows that let in striking city views.



**Day 2 >> Oslo to Flåm** The majestic mountainscapes of Norway await today. Plunging fjords and striking precipices still dusted with winter's snow vie for your attention before you board the spectacular Flåm Railway to view tumbling waterfalls surrounded by the new season's verdure. Tonight, you'll stay at Flåmsbrygga, where wood-panelled rooms look out to magnificent fjord views. To help make the most of your stay, we've included dinner at the Aegir Viking where you'll sample a five-course "Viking plank", pairing the likes of smoked reindeer and shellfish with carefully selected beers. 

**Day 3 >> Flåm to Bergen** Today is a spectacular showcase for Norway's most

emblematic fjords. Begin with a cruise along the picturesque Aurlandsfjord, edged by towering mountain overhangs, before swapping its dramatic beauty for the narrow waters of UNESCO World Heritage-listed Nærøysfjord, encircled by farmlands clinging to mountain foothills. Then, navigate snaking hairpin bends on one of Europe's steepest roads before a journey on the scenic Bergen Railway brings you through remote, rocky terrain to the city-centre comforts of the Thon Bristol Bergen. Here, polished wood floors and stylish Nordic furnishings provide a contemporary base for an evening of independent exploration. Perhaps head down to the colourful waterfront, home to some of Bergen's best restaurants and

bustling harbourside bars, all bathed in spring sunshine. 

**Days 4-5 >> Bergen** Enjoy a day at leisure today to explore Bergen's myriad delights; the scenic Festplassen Gardens and the city's popular fish market are both just moments from your hotel – the Thon Bristol Bergen. The city's standout attraction, however, is its Bryggen wharf, which began life as an important Hanseatic trading post. Take a stroll between the colourful quayside warehouses, followed by a ride on the Fløibanen funicular for panoramic views over the city and its shimmering fjord surrounds. Finally, on day five, transfer to Bergen airport for your flight home. 

NEW

51

FJORD NORWAY: BLOSSOMS OF HARDANGERFJORD



6-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

1 day Solstrand » 2 days Utne  
» 3 days Bergen



» **PRICES FROM:** £1,395 pp incl. flights, 4 days car hire, 1 night Solstrand HB, 2 nights Utne Hotel HB, 2 nights Clarion Collection Havnekontoret, Bergen BB. Operates mid-May to June.

The apple blossom season is one of the most delightful times of year to visit the 'garden of Norway'. And this six-day springtime self-drive sees the Hardangerfjord at its blooming best, as you take in the region's still snow-dusted mountains, pretty orchards and rivers and waterfalls full to bursting from the melting winter ice.

**Day 1 » Solstrand** Fly to Bergen and collect your hire car for the short but scenic drive to Solstrand and the spa delights of your fjord-side hotel. Spend the rest of the day soaking up the spring sunshine in its sprawling gardens, and indulge with a swim in the heated outdoor pool, or even in the fjord itself. There's also a stylish wellness centre on site, complete with sauna, fitness room and an indoor pool, all framed by stunning views of the fjord and mountains beyond. The dining here is equally impressive, with modern takes on traditional Nordic dishes, all locally sourced and perfectly paired with a world-spanning collection of wines. **D**

**Days 2-3 » Utne** After a delicious breakfast, it's time to check out for the drive to the Utne Hotel which, having first opened its doors in 1722, is Norway's oldest hotel in continual operation. Utterly charming and idyllically located overlooking Hardangerfjord, it's a wonderful base from which to explore the region. And there's much to discover, from

the dramatic landscapes of Trolltunga and the Husedalen Valley to hikes between blossoming orchards and kayak paddles on the fjord. There's even a daily tasting session in the hotel's cider room. **EB**

**Days 4-6 » Bergen** Return to Bergen and check into the harbour-side Clarion Collection Havnekontoret, just a stone's throw from the city's Hanseatic wharf and fish market. You'll have a full day to explore the meandering cobblestones which creep up steep hillsides lined with pretty whitewashed houses. It's a setting best taken in from the summit of Fløyen Mountain, reached via a scenic funicular ride. Spend your evenings indulging in a restaurant scene that ranges from the utterly contemporary to the fiercely traditional. The excellent Bryggen Tracteursted is among our favourites. Set in a converted 18th-century warehouse, its tapas-style dishes are inspired by the food cultures of Bergen and the Hanseatic League, and accompanied by a wide range of locally brewed beers. Fly home on day six. **B**



52

SPRING IN  
ILULISSAT**7-DAY TAILOR-MADE TOUR**

1 day Copenhagen » 5 days Ilulissat  
» 1 day Copenhagen



» **PRICES FROM:** £1,875 pp incl. flights, transfers, 2 nights Hilton Copenhagen Airport BB, 4 nights Hotel Arctic BB, welcome dinner & iceberg sailing trip. Operates Jan to Apr.

Ilulissat is a small settlement north of Nuuk on Greenland's western coast. Located close to the Ilulissat Icefjord, a UNESCO World Heritage site, it's a perfect base from which to explore the area's stunning surrounds. As Greenland's third largest town, it's home to just 4,500 people – and a similar number of sled dogs. And in spring it's especially appealing, with longer days and milder weather showcasing this stunningly beautiful region at its sparkling best.

**Day 1 » Copenhagen** Fly to Copenhagen and spend the evening exploring the Danish capital.

**Day 2 » Ilulissat** Take a connecting flight to Ilulissat and, on arrival, transfer to Hotel Arctic, your base for the next four nights. Spend the rest of the day settling into the hotel and familiarising yourself with your new surroundings. The centre of the small town is only a short distance away – there's a regular shuttle bus, or it's a short walk along a quiet road – and there are a number of interesting places to visit, including the fishing port, local church and a small art gallery. In the evening, you'll enjoy a welcome dinner at the hotel. Be sure to keep an eye on the sky – the town is regularly treated to a Northern Lights display. **B D**

**Days 3–5 » Ilulissat** Spend the following days enjoying a number of fascinating optional excursions. Choose from a five-hour dogsledding tour, a cruise among the harbour's ethereal icebergs, which

**HOTEL ARCTIC**

Located on a small hill to the north of the town centre, Hotel Arctic is a welcoming, cosy proposition that offers a range of comfortable rooms, suites and igloo pods – all with harbour views. The hotel's restaurant – named by one reviewer as 'the world's wildest kitchen' – is regarded as one of Greenland's best, and a relaxed bar and café complement the hotel's inviting atmosphere. A regular shuttle bus runs to the tourist office in the centre of town, from where many of the excursions start.

are calved from a nearby glacier, take a guided walk to a former settlement on the icefjord, or a cruise to the small Oqaatsut settlement. We've also included a sailing trip among the icebergs. Board a small boat at Ilulissat's tiny harbour and set out into stunning Disko Bay to get a closer look at the huge towers of millennia-old icebergs that have calved from the famous Ilulissat Icefjord. This excursion comes highly recommended by our specialists. **B**

**Days 6–7 » Copenhagen** After breakfast, catch your flight back to Copenhagen in time for shopping, sightseeing and dinner. The next morning, head to the airport for your return flight. **B**

53

NORDIC CITIES IN SPRING:  
COPENHAGEN TO HELSINKI



9-DAY TAILOR-MADE JOURNEY

2 days Copenhagen » 2 days Gothenburg  
» 2 days Stockholm » 3 days Helsinki



» PRICES FROM: £1,495 pp incl. flights, 7 nights accommodation BB, rail travel between Copenhagen, Gothenburg & Stockholm, overnight ferry from Stockholm to Helsinki BB. Operates Apr to Sep.

This captivating itinerary showcases Scandinavia’s most celebrated cities, all cloaked in springtime finery. Start among the vibrant cobblestones of Copenhagen before picturesque rail journeys take you to Gothenburg’s winding waterways and Stockholm’s mix of tradition and modernity. End with the rich heritage and cutting-edge design of Helsinki. Knit it all together with stays in boutique hotels and the very best in regional gastronomy.

Days 1–2 » Copenhagen Fly to Copenhagen and head to your hotel, 71 Nyhavn, a converted 200-year-old warehouse overlooking the clinking masts of Copenhagen Harbour. With two days to explore, you’ll have time to take



in the best of the city, beginning with the doorstep delights of Nyhavn’s aged brick wharves and brightly plastered townhouses which line a quayside full of buzzing waterfront cafes. There’s also



the grandeur of Amalienborg Palace, bohemian Christiania and the winding waterways and endless greenery of Tivoli Gardens. In the evenings, explore a restaurant scene that ranks among Europe's finest. Your hotel's offering, SEA by Kiin Kiin, is particularly impressive, with its menu of Asian street food-style dishes that include the likes of scallops with kimchee and marinated oysters. **B**

**Days 3–4 » Gothenburg** Today, a scenic train journey brings you to buzzy Gothenburg. Admire Sweden's eye for aesthetics at the Röhsska Design Museum and look out for the iconic Poseidon statue in Gotsplasen before heading to your ultra-contemporary Clarion Hotel Post complete

with spa and rooftop pool. The next day, take in the surrounding archipelago, where you'll find pretty red-timber homes, floating saunas and boathouse seafood cafes. **B**

**Days 5–6 » Stockholm** Board the train to Stockholm and check into the King's Garden Hotel before taking in the Renaissance delights of the old town, all framed by the serene waters of Lake Mälaren. The next day, perhaps take a steamboat from the waterfront to Drottningholm, the Swedish royal family's 17th-century castle, and visit the VASA Museum, home to the remnants of a sunken warship. And, you can't visit Sweden without enjoying a traditional *fika* break – strong coffee served alongside a freshly baked cinnamon bun. **B**

**Days 7–9 » Helsinki** Take in some more of Stockholm's highlights, perhaps with an optional boat trip to its island surrounds, before boarding your overnight ferry to Finland's capital. After checking into the stylish Hotel Fabian, be sure to visit the Design District's galleries, boutiques and ateliers, stroll the pretty trails of Central Park or take in the city's resplendent Art Nouveau architecture. Tuomiokirkko, the neoclassical Lutheran cathedral, is another highlight, set atop steep granite steps that afford glorious city views. For a special final night, we recommend the Ravintola Nokka restaurant, which offers the likes of grilled wild boar and smoked bream. Then, on day nine, make your way to the airport for your flight home. **B**

## STOPOVERS IN SCANDINAVIA

---

The cities of Scandinavia and the Nordics – especially the capitals Oslo, Stockholm, Copenhagen and Helsinki – all provide wonderful opportunities for extended stays in the region, transforming a three or four-night trip into an in-depth holiday.

Trendy, fun, vibrant and historic, each of these capitals offers the chance to get to the heart of its country's culture, through art, food, music and a whole lot more besides. And, they're just as explorable in winter as they are throughout the rest of the year, with their snow-dusted rooftops framing everything from cosy pubs to ice-skating

rinks and some of Europe's finest Christmas markets, all twinkling lights and hug-in-a-mug cups of spicy mulled wine. It's simple to add on a night or two in any one of these destinations, either at the start or end of your journey. Simply browse the following pages for inspiration, then speak to our specialists about the various combinations available.





## OSLO, NORWAY

Ice skating? Tick. Cross-country skiing? Tick. Two-kilometre-long toboggan run? Well, you get the idea. Oslo, Norway's architecturally innovative, mountain-framed capital, is just the ticket for those craving some outdoor excitement, winter style. Indeed, the city centre is just minutes away from the forested ski resorts of Nordmarka, so while you might pop into the National Gallery to view Edvard Munch's *Scream* in the morning, by just after lunch you could be hitting the slopes.

But it's not all action and adventure. There's plenty for culture vultures and gastronomes, too, with fun-packed festive markets and the world's most northerly three-Michelin-starred restaurant, Maaemo, sharing the headlines with a café scene that's the envy of Europe. And the nightlife's not bad either, with late-night party spots ranging from cosy and traditional to wild and grungy, and utterly cutting edge.

### BEST PLACE TO STAY

**THE THIEF** This unapologetically contemporary hotel offers cutting-edge Nordic design and a sumptuous spa right in the heart of the city.

## STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

If you've ever visited Sweden's capital in summer, you'll know it's a place that embraces the great outdoors, its archipelago a swarm of yachts and bathers making the most of long, balmy days. In winter, outside exploration is just as important, with the ice rinks at Vasaparken and Kungsträdgården providing just two of the highlights. And the action continues at Hellasgården, a twenty minute transfer from the centre, where the likes of cross-country skiing and ice swimming offer plenty of chilly adventure.

But, for us at least, it's historic Gamla Stan where Stockholm really comes into its own during the colder months. As the city's UNESCO World Heritage-listed old town, its winding alleyways and cobblestone squares welcome with delightful pubs and ever-so-cozy cafes. It's the perfect place to tuck into a freshly baked cinnamon bun and steaming cup of artisan coffee – the ideal antidote to the plunging mercury outside.

### BEST PLACE TO STAY

**King's Garden Hotel** Located by Stockholm's Royal Garden, this luxury hotel offers ultra-chic rooms, a gourmet restaurant and a private wine cellar.





## COPENHAGEN

From unique spa experiences to Christmas at Tivoli Gardens, winter is, arguably, the best season to visit the Danish capital. What is certain is that whether it's chilling in a wood-stoked sauna, stopping for a coffee and pastry along the 17th-century waterfront, relaxing with a local brew at a city-centre bar, or simply wandering the cobblestones of the historic old town, a winter stay in Copenhagen is all about embracing the tradition of *hygge* in its many and varied forms.

Sitting snugly alongside all that cosy relaxation is arguably Copenhagen's number one winter highlight – its Christmas markets. Running throughout December, they're ideally located in some of the capital's best spots – Christiansia, Nyhavn, Tivoli Gardens and Kronborg Castle are among the most popular. And, their twinkling lights, delicious homebaked treats and ubiquitous glasses of *gløgg* guarantee oodles of first-rate festive fun.

**BEST PLACE TO STAY**

**71 Nyhavn** This landmark hotel, converted from a historic warehouse, pairs avant-garde art with stunning views across Copenhagen's waterfront.

## HELSINKI

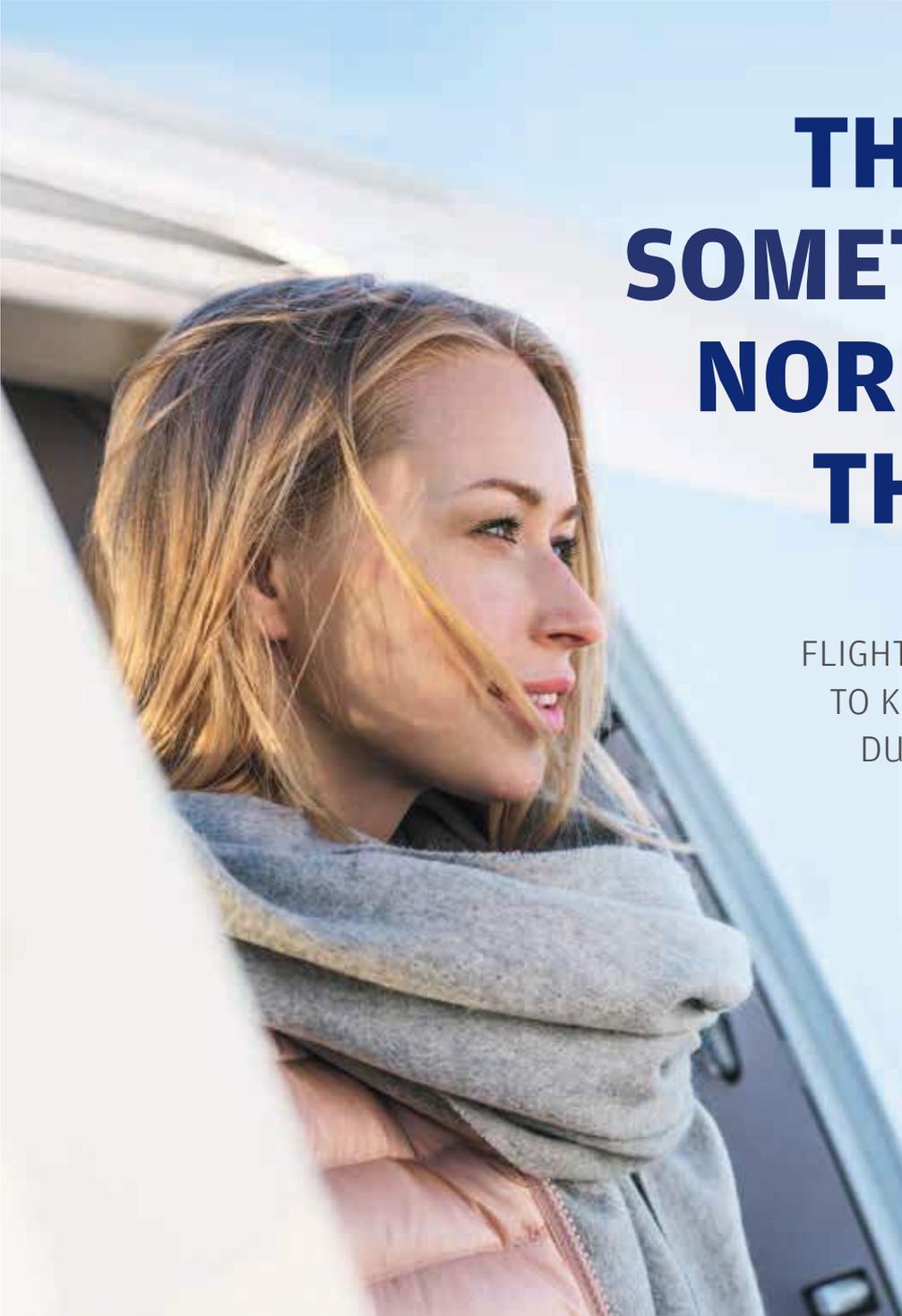
'Nobody in their right mind would come to Helsinki in November...' read a sign outside Helsinki's international airport in late 2016. 'Except you, you badass. Welcome'. A great piece of marketing, yes – photos of the sign went viral worldwide – but also, perhaps, an unwarranted level of self-deprecation from a city that, occasional snow storm aside, truly sparkles during winter.

Yes it gets cold, and yes you'll have to wrap up. But, those that venture beyond the airport departure gates will be amply rewarded with traditional markets, delicious seasonal food, warming saunas, cosy cafes and some truly dazzling shop-window displays, especially in the build-up to Christmas. Despite the big freeze, in the city itself it's business as usual, from the cutting edge of the Design District to the city centre's spectacular collection of art nouveau, neo-Renaissance and modernist architecture. It's best to have those cameras fully charged, as throughout winter it's all prettily sprinkled with a dusting of snow.

**BEST PLACE TO STAY**

**Hotel Lilla Roberts** Built under the exacting gaze of architect Selim A. Lingqvist, this hotel features bold interiors and a Design District location to match.



A photograph of a woman with long, wavy blonde hair looking out of an airplane window. She is wearing a grey scarf and a pink jacket. The background shows a clear blue sky and the side of the airplane.

# THERE'S SOMETHING NORDIC IN THE AIR

WE OFFER DIRECT  
FLIGHTS FROM GATWICK  
TO KITTILÄ AND IVALO  
DURING THE 2018/19  
WINTER SEASON

THE NORDIC WAY

When flying with Finnair, it's not just about the destination. We're here to make the most of your time in the air. Enjoy tasty Nordic cuisine and friendly service. Book your flights with Best Served Scandinavia.



**FINNAIR**

## YOUR TAILOR MADE SPECIALISTS

---

All of our specialists have travelled extensively in Scandinavia and the Nordic and Baltic regions. Their recommendations are always up-to-date, and their honest, informed approach to planning holidays, together with insightful suggestions based on first-hand knowledge, will ensure your Scandinavian stay is a special one.



REBECCA THERIAULT

---

Head to Greenland to experience the ultimate wilderness destination. I recommend a stay at Hotel Arctic in the UNESCO World Heritage-listed town of Ilulissat, a cosy and comfortable base for spectacular coastal hikes, Inuit village visits and cruises out among the icebergs.



AMY STAFFORD

---

One trip to Scandinavia always stands out as my most memorable, and that was to Sweden's ICEHOTEL. It's a true icon of the region, and the chance to pair a stay in a freshly carved ice suite with a whole host of winter excursions is one not to be missed.



LISA AYLING

---

In Swedish Lapland, thrilling excursions and stunning accommodation combine to wonderful effect. My favourite has to be Treehotel, whose collection of designer rooms, from birds' nests to UFOs, are hidden away in a secluded pine forests near Harads.



MADDALENA CARDONE

---

With its stunning volcanic landscapes, delicious food and full spread of adventurous activities, Iceland is right up there among my favourite destinations. Nothing beats relaxing in a thermal pool under the snow, and the scenery at Snæfellsnes Peninsula is, for me, among Europe's most dramatic.



MAISIE BAMFORD

---

For me, a trip to Finnish Lapland is *the* quintessential winter experience. And the cosy and traditional accommodation at Hotel Harriniva perfectly encapsulates the spirit of the Nordics. The activities here are first class, and a visit to the hotel's own husky farm is something not to be missed.



PIPPA MCCARTHY

---

When it comes to winter in Norway, it's hard to beat a stay at Malangen Resort. The rooms, complete with gorgeous fjord views, are simply stunning. As is everything else, from the fresh seasonal food to the Northern Lights viewing at remote Camp Nikka.



NORIRE ARAKELYAN

Just a stone's throw from Rovaniemi, the Arctic TreeHouse Hotel is everything I love about modern Scandinavian architecture while maintaining a rustic woodland experience. Go for a glasshouse suite overlooking the pine forests for the best Arctic experience.



SOPHIE SADLER

Tromsø & Malangen Resort is the perfect winter pairing. Combine the two to experience the buzz of the city – all roaring pubs and first-rate restaurants – before retreating to Malangen's beautiful fjord-side cabins. It's an idyllic base for a wilderness husky safari – an exhilarating & unforgettable experience!



SAIJA KOKKONEN

Last winter I had the chance to visit Svalbard, located just 650 miles from the North Pole. It was truly one of the most fascinating and incredible places I've been to. You really feel as if you're at the edge of the world, and the fact that you could encounter a polar bear at any point only adds to the excitement.



ANGELA PERRO

Finnish Lapland is truly magical. Not only as the home of Santa Claus, but also as the setting for my favourite Nordic accommodation – the glass igloo. Watch the Northern Lights from the comfort of your own bed, then head outside for ice fishing, skiing and much, much more.



STEFF SARGEANT

I absolutely loved my stay at Brändön Lodge in Swedish Lapland. Waking up in a private log cabin to views of the frozen archipelago was incredible. I recommend combining your stay with unforgettable hovercraft and snowmobile tours across the pack ice.



MIRANDA BERLIAND

If you're a fan of Nordic innovation and the Northern Lights, the glass igloos at Levin Iglut are an absolute must. Perched on a fell overlooking the snow-covered town and valley below, there's no better setting for views of the aurora. Book early though, as they tend to get snapped up fast!

# DISCOVER THE MAGIC OF WINTER WITH BEST SERVED SCANDINAVIA

Best Served Scandinavia is an independent tour operator specialising in tailor-made holidays to Scandinavia and the Nordic and Baltic regions. Since our first trip to Tromsø in 2005, we've dedicated ourselves to all things Scandi, bringing our clients the region's latest and greatest travel innovations, from ice hotels and glass igloos to romantic log-cabin retreats and lodges hidden in the treetops. Our specialists continue to travel extensively throughout our featured regions, so you can be sure of the most up-to-date advice when planning your next winter holiday.



WHY TRAVEL WITH US...

- » Expert destination knowledge
- » Hand-picked itineraries
- » Authentic travel experiences
- » One-to-one advice
- » Exceptional service
- » ATOL Protected





# BEST SERVED SCANDINAVIA

Dorset House · 27-45 Stamford Street · London SE1 9NT  
020 7664 2263 · [best-served.co.uk](http://best-served.co.uk)



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE