

# Karelian Wilderness Safari

7 days / 6 nights/ 5 days dog sledding



On this trip you will be treated as guests of the family and will share their home and passion for dog sledding. This tour takes you through the quiet Finnish Karelian nature to the eastern most parts of Finland and the European Union. The trail passes through magnificent landscapes as it winds its way through and around the Patvinsuo National Park and the Ruunaa Nature Reserve. This tour covers approximately 180km. You will spend 3 nights in different wilderness cabins and 3 nights in a 4 bedded room in the family home at the base.

For the duration of the tour you will travel through the taiga forests, along frozen streams and rivers, forest paths and many beautiful lakes. You will also visit the actual Russian Border. Your guide will be happy to explain the intriguing history of Karelia, its many wars, interesting visitors and fascinating nature.

The nights will be spent in lakeside wilderness cabins where you can enjoy a well-earned sauna, dinner by candlelight and good stories.

The daily distances vary from 25-50 km and the trails are chosen according to the participant's abilities. You spend a good deal of your time in and around Patvinsuo National Park and the Ruunaa Nature Reserve.

The menu for this tour is prepared with as many natural ingredients as we can find or grow ourselves. It includes wild forest mushrooms (excellent for vegetarians), wild berries, home-grown vegetables and vegetable preserves, moose, reindeer, salmon and hare or rabbit. (If you have any special dietary requirements please let us know as we can cater for vegetarians and most food allergies).

During the tour you will drive your own enthusiastic dog team for which you are responsible for the entire tour. This means that the feeding, cleaning, petting, foot care and massaging are all part of your job as a trainee musher.



## Sunday:

Arrival in Joensuu and transfer to farm. Get to know your guides and fellow companions on the tour. Sauna, dinner and overnight in farm dormitory.

## Monday:

After a hearty breakfast, you will be equipped with your necessary gear and then go and meet the dogs and clean the dog yard. Thorough instruction, packing of sleds and departure for first day of sledding approx 30 km. Overnight in farm dormitory.

## Tuesday:

Today takes you through the Patvinsuo National Park, the biggest national park in southern Finland. It is well known for its scenic beauty. Lunch will be taken around a campfire in the centre of the park near a river where the beavers live. After lunch you continue through the park until you reach your cabin for the night. Lots of things to be done there with the dogs being the priority and then water to fetch to drink and for the sauna, firewood to be collected etc... After the chores are all done, then it is time to relax, have a sauna and enjoy some delicious Finnish cooking.

**Wednesday:**

After a good breakfast and the chores are done you will depart along the 'Bears path', following winding trails and meandering rivers. Lunch is around a campfire at the Valkealampi battle site where in 1939-1940 during the winter war, the Russians advanced along the nearby road. After lunch you continue along the 'Bears path' until you reach your cabin for the night. After all the chores have been done, you can relax in the sauna and enjoy a hearty meal.

**Thursday:**

Today your trail takes you to the Ruunaa Lake and the Ruunaa Nature Reserve which is the biggest roadless wilderness area in southern Finland and home to a small herd of rare wild forest reindeer. You will go along some of the border guard trails where if licences are approved you will get to visit the 'real' Russian/Finnish border inside the restricted area. This area is only visited by the border guards – very few human eyes have ever seen this area. You will have lunch on the shores of the Ruunaa Lake and then carry on to the wilderness cabin in the Ruunaa Wilderness Recreation area. After the chores, you can enjoy your sauna and dinner.

**Friday:**

After breakfast, your trail takes you through the Ruunaa area following the shore ice along the Ruunaa rapids and river. After leaving the Ruunaa area we pass through the small village of Hatunkyla on our way back to the kennel. Here we unload our equipment and sledges, feed our hardworking dogs, and then we will settle in and have a well deserved sauna and meal.

**Saturday:**

After breakfast it is time to say our 'farewells' and you will be able to 'face the world' with renewed energy! Transfer back to Joensuu airport.

**Departures** weekly from: **10th January to 28th March 2010** (Sunday to Saturday)

**Cost:** £1095 per person **Group size:** min 1 person, maximum 5 persons

**Included:**

Transfers from/to Joensuu Airport, 3 overnights in farm dormitory, 3 overnights in wilderness cabins, full board, daily Sauna, own dog team (3-6 dogs), thermal overalls, hats, gloves, boots, sleeping bag and liner, professional guiding by an English/ German/ Dutch/ Russian speaking guide.

**Not included:**

flights, travel insurance,, alcoholic drinks.

**Accommodation:**

4 bedded room (bunks) in family home at base with shared facilities, wilderness cabins with sauna but no running water, electricity etc.. Heating is by wood burning fires and lighting by candles. Water is collected from the rivers. Outside loo.

Please note that this is what we hope to achieve but is subject to change due to weather conditions, trail access and client ability.

Transfers are from Joensuu airport at 17.15. Return to Joensuu for the 11.30 flight. For other times there will be an extra charge.

