

## *Aurora Borealis ~ Scandinavia*

*26 October – 8 November 2018*



Meals as noted next to days: B: Breakfast L: Lunch; LL: Light Lunch; S: Snack; D: Dinner

### **Day 1 – Friday October 26th      Stockholm, Sweden**

Welcome to the capital of Sweden. Stockholm is situated on 14 islands and on the banks to the archipelago where Lake Mälaren meets the Baltic Sea. The city centre is virtually on the water. Our arrival day is free to explore this unique and wonderfully enchanting city.

△ *Overnight: Freys Hotel, Stockholm*

*We are spending 3 nights in this charming family owned hotel that has unique & individually styled rooms with bright décor and up to date facilities. Located in the centre of Stockholm making it very easy to walk and explore this wonderful city.*



### **Day 2 – Saturday October 27th      Stockholm (B/D)**



After breakfast, we meet our local guide and enjoy a 3-hour walking tour around the hidden treasures and most interesting areas of Stockholm. We will explore the amazing Old Town, visit the colourful Stortorget Square and witness the famous Changing of the Royal Guard ceremony.

After our tour we have the rest of the day free to explore Stockholm on our own ...and there are plenty of options here for us to enjoy !

In the evening we are experiencing an authentic cozy Viking restaurant ~ going back in time to feel the spirit of the local people and their food.

△ *Overnight: Freys Hotel, Stockholm*

### Day 3 – Sunday October 28th

#### Stockholm (B/L)



Following a leisurely breakfast, we walk to the pier (easy walking distance from our hotel) to experiencing Stockholm from a different perspective – from a boat! Our Royal Canal experience will give us a duck's eye view of these unique thoroughfares throughout this city on the water.

After our water journey, we meet our private guide and proceed by public transport (experiencing Stockholm like a local!) to the Skansen Museum - the world's first open-air museum founded in 1891. Skansen exhibits the country's life before the industrial era. During our tour we will take a fascinating journey through the five centuries of Swedish history, see the large collection of traditional rural houses and visit the museum's zoo that represent over 75 different species of both domestic and wild Scandinavian animals, including brown bears, seals, lynx and wolverines.

Later we will walk to the nearby Vasa Museum rated as the most visited museum in the whole of Scandinavia. This museum is famous for being home to the only intact 17th-century ship in the world - the Vasa. It sank on its maiden voyage in 1628 and was salvaged 333 years later. It managed to preserve more than 95 % of its body in its original state.



After we finish our tour, we are having lunch in the Vasa Museum next to the ship.

Late afternoon & evening is free to shop, explore, eat, drink and be merry !

△ Overnight: Freys Hotel

### Day 4 – Monday October 29th Lulea, Storforsen - Sweden (B/L)

After breakfast, we meet our private driver in the hotel lobby and he takes us to the airport for a short flight to **Lulea** in the north of Sweden. We are met at the other end and transferred to our hotel in Lulea.

We will drive to **Storforsen** - northern Europe's largest rapid, about an hour from Lulea. The amount of water breaking down is so immense that it never freezes over even in the middle of winter. The whole area around the rapids is a nature reserve, and even if the river is the main attraction, the surrounding landscape is equally fascinating. The river used to run slightly west of its current flow and the old riverbed has turned into an area of dramatic cliffs and streams. At Storforsen we can also walk on a 2 km nature trail on wooden walkways, which will take us upstream and very close to the rapids.



Our private guide will prepare a traditional meal over an open fire at a scenic spot. BBQ Swedish style ! Delicacies from the region and Swedish fika will complete our gourmet food experience.

This will be a completely relaxing day to soak in the atmosphere of this powerful place.

△ Overnight: Clarion Hotel Sense, Lulea, Sweden

*This newly opened hotel is in the centre of Lulea and features unique photo art & designer furniture in each room creating a wonderful atmosphere to this hotel which is at the gateway to the Arctic Circle.*

## Day 5 – Tuesday October 30th Swedish Lapland (B/L)

Today we have a real treat in store for you! We will share our day with Lars Eriksson, whose family have lived in remote Flakaberg as Sami's for seven generations. We will meet his reindeer and Lars will tell us stories about his unique lifestyle. This will give us some unique insights into the Sami culture.

In Lars cabin we will share a lunch made by his lovely wife Anette. After lunch we will get appropriately dressed and head off into the forest on skis or snowshoes. It is about 6 km to Gorkim Lake where Lars will serve us coffee by the fire in his Sami cot. On our way back we will stop at the Arctic Circle Monument to appreciate how far north we are.



△ *Overnight: Clarion Hotel Sense, Lulea, Sweden*

## Day 6 – Wednesday October 31st Tree Hotel, Harads, Sweden (B/D)



After breakfast we check out of Lulea and leave for the magnificent Tree Hotel Lodge – a truly magical place ! We are welcomed by the owners and shown around the property where we will learn of the story of how the Tree Hotel became a reality. We will also have a leisurely stroll through the fields and forests that this hotel is surrounded by – unspoilt nature at it Swedish best!

Our home for the next 2 nights has all of it's unique tree rooms suspended 4 – 6 metres above the ground and accessible by ramp, bridge or electric stairs. Two tree sauna buildings – large enough to hold all of us – are up amongst the century old pines. In the evening we are having dinner in the local village of Harads.

△ *Overnight: Tree Hotel – This very unique hotel is neatly nestled among the trees of the Harads forest in the middle of pristine nature. Designed by some of Scandinavia's leading architects our tree rooms feature up-to-date décor and modern facilities. The in house restaurant focuses on wild game and locally sourced ingredients.*

## Day 7 – Thursday November 1st Free day and Sami Dinner, Sweden (B/D)

Today we will enjoy our amazing surroundings – perhaps a walk, a sauna in another Tree cabin or a very lazy morning reading your book from your birds eye view in the trees !

Tonight is going to be an amazing dinner experience. In the glow of the fire we will experience a **sámi bear ceremony**. We will hear of the legend of the Bear, the rituals, the hunting, a little of the culture of the sámi and why they celebrate this. The sámi are the only indigenous people of Scandinavia and the northernmost indigenous culture of Europe. They inhabit from Sweden in the south to the Arctic circle in the north and their most common livelihood is semi-nomadic reindeer herding. This is the beginning of our connection and understanding of this unique and wonderful culture.

Our night includes sámi songs and stories by Katarina Rimpi, a 3 course a la carte dinner and local alcohol free drinks created from local produce. Wine and beer are available in addition.

△ *Overnight: Tree Hotel, Sweden*

**Day 8 – Friday November 2nd****Rovaniemi, Finland (B/D)**

After breakfast, we venture onward to Finland. Our driver will take us from Sweden into the heart of Finnish Lapland to the village of Rovaniemi. Free time in the afternoon to settle into your hotel & explore around it.

In the evening we will enjoy a wonderful gastronomic experience at an authentic Lappish restaurant, which also happens to be in the Michelin Guide. The atmosphere of old Finland, married with a delicious array of gourmet morsels on our special menu, will be yet another experience to remember.



△ *Overnight: Arctic Light Hotel, Rovaniemi.*

**Day 9 – Saturday November 3rd Kätkävaara, Finland (B/Snacks)**

After breakfast get ready to experience some breathtaking scenery!

Partly bare fells (Fell is old Norse word meaning 'mountains rising above the alpine tree line') climb towards the skies in the Kätkävaara region. Rivers with crystal clear waters, vast string bogs and dense forests lie in the valleys between these fells. We get to immerse ourselves today within this stunning environment.



Part of our time here will be walking the Kätkävaara nature trail which travels along the shores of the ancient seas. The 7 km trail weaves through this nature sanctuary and there are many scenic points to stop and ponder and breathe in the beautiful energy of this special area. At our halfway point when we reach the top of the Kätkävaara fell, there is a log hut where we can rest and enjoy the spectacular views. From this breathtaking vista we can see the entire Southern Lapland.

We return back to our hotel and our evening is at leisure.

△ *Overnight: Arctic Light Hotel, Rovaniemi*

**Day 10 – Sunday November 4th Rovaniemi, Finland (B/Light Dinner)**

After a leisurely breakfast, we meet our local guide and we journey to a remote nature location for a few hours of quiet contemplation enjoying the simple beauty and silence of what surrounds us in this unique part of the world.

After this, we have free time to enjoy the town of Rovaniemi or explore the stunning surroundings of where we are staying.

Tonight we are having an Aurora Picnic. A short hike takes us away from the city lights and into the dark, tranquil nature ~ hopefully capturing the breathtaking dancing lights! Around the open fire we hear many stories about the phenomenon of the Aurora Borealis, both folklore and fact, while our guide prepares our delicious evening picnic of pure Lappish flavours. We return back to our hotel late.



△ *Overnight: Arctic Light Hotel, Rovaniemi*

**Day 11 – Monday November 5th**

**Ivalo, Northern Lapland (B/D)**

Following breakfast we leave Rovaniemi and we drive up and into the picturesque Ivalo region in Northern Lapland, famous for its amazing Northern Lights experiences.

Upon arrival to the village of Saariselkä, our last and most spectacular hotel awaits us ~ the Kakslauttanen Glass Igloo Resort. After we check-in we have the rest of the day free to explore our amazing surroundings.

After our delicious dinner, we will experience a real Northern Lights adventure - an unforgettable 2-hour husky ride. Our professional guide takes us to some very special places best for experiencing the fantastic Aurora Borealis.



**Note:** Due to unsuitable weather conditions (e.g. there is no snow or it is raining), the husky ride will be replaced with another alternative - perhaps horse drawn carriage.



You will be enjoying three nights in your glass igloos so we can maximise the possibility of experiencing the extraordinary natural phenomenon of the northern lights. Laying in your warm and cozy igloo you will be able to see it from your bed when it reveals itself, or outside experiencing the dancing lights in the cold night air. Truly breathtaking !

△ Overnight: Kakslauttanen Glass Igloo Resort

*Enjoy an unforgettable stay in your glass igloo where we will simply immerse ourselves for 3 nights into the spectacular phenomenon of the magnificent northern lights!*

**Day 12 – Tuesday November 6th**

**Ivalo, Lapland (B)**

Today we have free time to enjoy our incredible surroundings. So much to do. Or not. It is totally up to you.

△ Overnight: Kakslauttanen Glass Igloo Resort

**Day 13 – Wednesday November 7th**

**Ivalo, Lapland (B)**

After breakfast, time to walk and explore this extraordinary resort.

Early evening we will experience an authentic & traditional Smoke Sauna and ice pool! This sauna is quite different from the ones we usually encounter, as it is fired with wood and the smoke penetrates the room and warms it up and is released just before the sauna is ready. This is the traditional way a sauna was heated many decades ago. It is very healing and a perfect way to complete our journey to the Arctic Circle.

△ Overnight: Kakslauttanen Glass Igloo Resort



Day 14 – Thursday November 8th

Departure from Ivalo (B)

Our journey together throughout these amazing lands is now complete.

After breakfast, we transfer to Ivalo airport for our departing flights. You may like to continue your travels ...or simply journey back home.

Hyvää matkaa !



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