

Self Drive Tour I - Finnish Lapland Explorer

Although best known as a winter destination, Lapland during the summertime offers a vastly different landscape and a number of new experiences. With a rental car it is easy to visit exciting and interesting places and the delightful, quiet roads mean driving is simply a pleasure. Our self drive tour takes you both north and south to some of the most popular areas and attractions in Finnish Lapland.

Day 1

Taxi transfer from Kittilä airport to the the charming Lappish village of Äkäslompolo in Finnish Lapland. Äkäslompolo is situated approximated 150 kilometres above the Arctic Circle, nestling on the northern side of Ylläs fell.

For an authentic Lappish experience and to really appreciate the tranquillity of the area, accommodation is in an attractive and cosy log cabin. The high standard cabins are fully equipped and have a separate bedroom, mezzanine with additional beds, open plan living room/kitchenette with oven, microwave, fridge, dishwasher, coffee maker, TV and digital box, CD player, iron and vacuum cleaner. All have shower, WC, sauna and fireplace. A stay in a log cabin offers total freedom and flexibility.



There is an excellent supermarket in Äkäslompolo and the restaurant Kaivohuone is open all year round for dinner and is renowned for its high standard cuisine and Lappish specialities.

Your hire car will be delivered to your cottage upon arrival.

Day 2

In Äkäslompolo and the surrounding area

To learn more about the nature and culture of Ylläs, a visit to the Kellokas Visitor Centre in Äkäslompolo is a must. The centre houses the tourist information as well as a permanent exhibition "Meän elämaa" (Our Life). This is an excellent, informative and interactive display that tells the story of the area over the years gone by. Several walking paths start from the centre should you wish to venture into the beautiful forests and discover the nature of the area.

We also suggest a drive along the Maisematie, the scenic road that connects Äkäslompolo and Ylläsjärvi, the village on the southern side of the fell. The road travels along the west side of Ylläs fell rising to 400 metres affording some stunning views. From Ylläsjärvi you can take the gondola lift to the top of the fell which stands at 718 metres and offers views of up to 80 kilometres on a clear day. Gondola opening times (2008): 20 June – 30 Aug, Wed-Sat 11.00-15.00, 1-27 Sep, Mon-Sat 11.00-15.00. You can also visit Ylläs Saaga Hotel (open all year) for its swimming pool (open 15.00 -21.00) or you can pre-book yourself a massage or a beautician treatment. Overnight in your log cabin.

Day 3

In Äkäslompolo and the surrounding area

Make the most of the car rental and explore the area independently. We suggest a drive to Pakasaivo, a deep, dark, seemingly bottomless lake set in a gorge, known locally as “Hell of Lapland”! The water on the surface and the bottom of the lake never mix and although the lake’s depth is unknown it is believed to be at least 90 metres. Pakasaivo has a history of once being an ancient Sami worship place. People would gather here and sacrifice antlers, fish and reindeer for their gods. Some even believed the devil himself lived in the lake and if they wanted him to be in a good mood, sacrifices would have to be made.



Continue exploring with a visit to Ylläksen Viini and Willa in the village of Kurtakko, a vineyard and sheep farm selling Finnish berry wines and handmade woolen articles. Overnight in your log cabin.

Day 4

Äkäslompolo – Rovaniemi (Approx 200 kilometres)

Leave the peace and quiet of Äkäslompolo behind and head south to Rovaniemi. Rovaniemi is the administrative capital of Finnish Lapland and is approximately 2 and a half hours drive away. The town of Pello situated on the banks of the Torniojoki, close to the Swedish border is half way to Rovaniemi and therefore a good place for a coffee break. At Vihreä Pysäkki (the Green Stop) in Pello, there is a restaurant, souvenir and gift shops and the Eero Mäntyranta Museum, dedicated to the Finnish Olympic skier from Pello. The building also houses a large Pentik factory outlet, a famous Finnish ceramic company.

Continue to Rovaniemi and overnight in Hotel Santa Claus in the city centre.

Destination LAPLAND

Day 5

In Rovaniemi and the surrounding area



We thoroughly recommend a visit to Arktikum situated on the banks of the Ounasjoki in Rovaniemi. This is a special museum and science centre which will provide you with a unique insight into the way of life, culture and history of the north. Permanent and temporary exhibitions portray both history and modern life in the Arctic region. As well as the museum, Arktikum also has a restaurant, shop and library. Please note that the museum is closed on Mondays during September.

In the afternoon, why not visit the Santa Claus Village situated on the Arctic Circle, 8 kilometres north of Rovaniemi. Here you can visit Santa in his office all year round, post letters from the Santa Claus Post Office, and there are several different shops selling Lappish products, souvenirs and jewellery.

Overnight in Hotel Santa Claus.



Day 6

Rovaniemi – Saariselkä (Approx 260 kilometres)



From Rovaniemi, drive north towards Ivalo. Tankavaara Gold Village is situated approximately 230 kilometres from Rovaniemi and here you will learn all about gold panning and prospecting. Visit the fascinating museum and “Golden World” exhibitions that tell the story of gold fever in Finland as well as several other countries. At the gold panning site, you have the opportunity to try your luck at panning. Tankavaara also has a restaurant serving local specialities and is filled with memories of the gold rushes of the olden days.

Continue for another 30 kilometres to Saariselkä where you will overnight in high standard apartment accommodation at the Tunturi Hotel.

Day 7

Saariselkä – Inari (Approx 70 kilometres each way)

Today, we suggest a visit to Inari, home of Siida, the Sami Museum and Northern Lapland Nature Centre. This is a colourful museum full of interesting and educational exhibitions that tell how northern nature and the indigenous people of Lapland, the Sami, have adapted to life in extreme conditions. The displays show how nature and culture have evolved from the time of the Ice Age to the present. Outside, you will also find the Open Air Museum where you can see old Sami dwellings, trapping and fishing gear.



Overnight in Saariselkä at the Tunturi Hotel.

Day 8

Saariselkä – Sirkka (Approx 230 kilometres)



Drive from Saariselkä to Sirkka, the village nestling at the bottom of the Levi fell. Relax and unwind at the Spa Hotel Levitunturi with its swimming pool and sauna department. As well as being a bustling ski resort during the winter months, Levi has much to offer its summer visitors too. There is an 18-hole golf course set by a lake at the foot of the fells and ample opportunities for hiking and biking.

Overnight at Levitunturi hotel.

Day 9

Return your hire car to Kittilä airport before your flight home.

Prices from €698 per person based on 2 adults sharing accommodation and a Toyota Yaris for travel between 1 June & 31 August 2009.

September supplements, child prices and car hire upgrade supplements available on request.