

## Self Drive Tour 2 - The Sami Trail

The Sami are the indigenous people of Lapland, an area that covers the northern part of Finland, Sweden, Norway and part of the Russian Kola Peninsula. Approximately 8000 Sami people live in Finland today, and 40,000 in Norway. This interesting self drive tour takes you to some of the most important Sami centres in Finland and Norway enabling you to discover more about these fascinating people and to learn about their culture, their history and their way of life.

### Day 1

#### **Kittilä – Hetta (Approx 170 kilometres)**

Collect your rental car from Kittilä airport and drive to the village of Hetta in the middle of the municipality of Enontekiö. Sami culture still thrives in Enontekiö, the north western arm of Finland, nestling between Norway and Sweden. Here you will find Finland's highest fells, a variety of hiking and nature trails, ancient Sami worship places and some wonderful nature and unspoilt countryside.

Overnight in the friendly, family run Hetan Majatalo.

### Day 2

#### **Hetta – Kautokeino – Karasjok (Approx 80 + 130 kilometres)**

From Hetta, drive to the Norwegian border and then to the town of Kautokeino.

#### **Kautokeino**

Kautokeino is undoubtedly a unique, Sami Norwegian town where it is not uncommon to see locals dressed in traditional costume. Approximately 85% of the population of Kautokeino have Sami as their first language and one third of the people work with reindeer which is the main industry here.



The timbered Kautokeino church is one of Norway's most used churches, particularly at Easter when there is a big festival in Kautokeino. The church dates from 1958 although some fixtures were salvaged from an earlier church from 1701.

We suggest a visit to Juhl's Silver Gallery, situated in the hills 2.5 kilometres from the town centre. This was the first silversmith in Norwegian Lapland and was

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established in 1959. Entrance is free and guided tours are possible. Traditional and modern jewellery and handicrafts are created and for sale here and there is also a cafe serving light refreshments.

From Kautokeino, continue to Karasjok.

## Karasjok

The Norwegian town of Karasjok takes its name from the river that runs through it. Karasjok is the social and cultural centre of the Sami people in Norway. It is home to the Sami Parliament and Library, NRK Sami Radio, The Sami Museum and a Sami “theme park” Sapmi. Its historic church, Gamlekirke is Finnmark’s oldest timber church which dates from 1807 and was the only building left standing after the World War II fires and bombings.



Overnight in the Rica Hotel Karasjok, a modern hotel situated in the centre of Karasjok. The hotel has been designed with strong elements of Lapp culture and characteristic architecture.

## Day 3

### Karasjok – Inari – Saariselkä (Approx 115 + 70 kilometres)

In the morning visit some of the Sami attractions in Karasjok.



The Sami Collections is the National Sami Museum and has some excellent exhibitions presenting Sami life. View 4500 historical artefacts from the whole region including colourful displays of traditional Sami textiles, everyday items and articles from industries and transport. Outdoors you can see old and traditional buildings that show the simplicity of life in previous times. (Please note that the museum is closed on Saturdays, Sundays & Mondays before 8 June and after 16 August).

Sapmi is a Sami “theme park” that presents Sami culture and history in a particular entertaining way. In the “Magical Theatre” modern film is combined with Sami mythology and history. Other buildings include a large turf hut where guests sit around open fireplaces. A cafe serves food based on Sami traditions and an art and crafts shop



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sells a range of products. (Please note that Sapmi is closed at Weekends during September).

Continue your Sami Trail tour, driving from Norway back to Finland and to the town of Inari. Inari is the centre of Finland's Sami culture and is situated on the shore of Lake Inarijärvi.



Visit Siida, the excellent 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 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.

From Inari, drive to the little fell village Saariselkä (approx 70km) where you will overnight at the Tunturi Hotel.



## Day 4

### Saariselkä – Äkäslompola (Approx 268 kilometres)



From Saariselkä, you will drive to the village of Äkäslompola (268 km), situated at the foot of Ylläs fell in the Pallas-Yllästunturi National Park. En route, you may like to stop at Tankavaara Gold Prospector Museum, approximately 30 kilometres from Saariselkä. Here you will learn all about gold panning and prospecting and have the opportunity to try your luck at panning yourself.

Continue to Äkäslompola where you will spend the next 3 nights in the comfort of a high standard traditional

Finnish Log cabin. The cabins are fully equipped and have 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 Äkäslompola and the restaurant Kaivohuone is open all year round for dinner and is renowned for its high standard cuisine and Lappish specialities.

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## Days 5 & 6 (In Äkäslompolo and the surrounding area)

Spend days 5 and 6 relaxing in the charming Lappish village of Äkäslompolo.

Here, the kilometres and kilometres of pristine forests and the cool, clear waters in the many rivers and lakes offer an abundance of summer activities that will leave the outdoor enthusiast simply spoilt for choice. The varied terrain offers endless opportunities for hikers and bikers whilst the waters provide the perfect setting for canoeing or fishing.



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 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 once gather at Pakasaivo and sacrifice antlers, fish and reindeer

for their gods.

There are several reindeer farms in the area and for parties of 4 people or more it is possible to book one of the programmes available at the farm to learn more about reindeer husbandry and traditions.



Should you feel like a spot of pampering, relax and unwind in the pool and sauna department at Ylläs Saaga hotel. The hotel is situated in Ylläsjärvi, the village on the southern side of Ylläs fell. A scenic drive along the Maisematie road connects Äkäslompolo with Ylläsjärvi. The swimming pool at Saaga is open 15.00-21.00 or you can pre-book yourself a massage or a beautician treatment.

**Day 7**

Your rental car will be collected from your cottage and we have arranged an airport transfer to take you back to Kittilä airport for your return flight.

**Prices from €613 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.