



Harriniva - Aurora Husky Safari



HOLIDAY TYPE: Small Group

VISITING: Finland

BROCHURE CODE: 2021

DURATION: 7 nights

In Brief

The chances of seeing the Northern Lights during this epic 5-day dog sledding safari are extremely high. Driving your own team of huskies and staying in wilderness cabins, you will be far removed from any significant light pollution and slap, bang in the heart of Finland's Auroral Zone.

Our Opinion

“ Five days on wilderness trails with your canine companions and sleeping in remote cabins far, removed from any significant light pollution. It's a life-affirming experience to stand in the crisp, silent night and watch the Aurora blaze overhead. When one of the dogs sings its plaintiff, wolfish lament – “aaaarrrrooooo” – it's enough to send shivers down your spine. ”

Ali Mclean



What's included?

- **Duration:** 7 nights
- **Flights:** return flights from London Heathrow to Kittilä (via Helsinki). Direct return flights from London Gatwick are available for a supplement on certain dates. Flight routes are subject to change
- **Transfers:** return airport transfers are included
- **Accommodation:** 3 nights safari house or hotel accommodation and 4 nights in wilderness cabin accommodation (all accommodation is on a shared basis)
- **Activities:** 5-day husky safari with own team of dogs
- **Meals:** 7 breakfasts, 7 lunches*, 7 dinners
- Cold weather clothing for the duration of your stay
- Fully qualified wilderness guides and instructors
- 24/7 assistance from our UK based operations team and in destination support from our local partners

* If you're travelling in December 2021 or from the 27th February 2022 you will receive 6 lunches.

Trip Overview

Can you imagine driving a team of dogs through the winter wilderness of Finnish Lapland before watching the Northern Lights shimmer across the Arctic sky?

This is the stuff of dreams. It is a real adventure, and you need to be fairly fit to get the most out of the safari but, the rewards are immense.

You will join a guide and a small group of similarly minded travellers as you traverse the snowy forests and frozen lakes of the Pallas-Yllas National Park. You will be responsible for the care of your dogs including feeding and harnessing them as well as making sure they are bedded down for the night. The dogs always take precedence, and their needs are catered for before your own.

You will be staying in shared accommodation throughout. The wilderness cabins during the husky safari are not equipped with running water or electricity but once your guide gets the fire on the go,

they become a cosy retreat surrounded by the dead silence that comes with deep snow. Okay, the dogs might shatter that silence with the occasional blood curling wolf-like “aaarrrrrrr-ooooooo”, but it simply adds to the atmosphere.

The morning of your second day is spent preparing for the safari, meeting your canine buddies, and learning how to drive the team and sled, before setting out to your first overnight accommodation out in the wilds.

Once darkness has fallen it is time to keep a regular eye on the night sky. This is prime Aurora territory where the lights are frequent visitors during the winter months. Situated where you are in the wilderness there will be virtually no artificial light pollution providing the perfect dark environment for enjoying the light show.

Each morning, you will harness up your dogs and hit the trail covering between 25km and 40km per day. Surrounded by pristine forests, rolling winter fells and expansive snow-covered lakes, you will find that the happy panting of the dogs and the swish of your sleds’ runners are the only things breaking the near-perfect silence.

Breakfasts and dinners will be prepared together in the huts and lunches will be cooked over an open fire and eaten outdoors where it always tastes better.

After five days and four nights of wilderness mushing and nighttime sky gazing, you will return to the base at your accommodation for two more nights. During that time, you may well want to try some other activities such as snowmobiling or snowshoeing. There is also the possibility of staying in some rather remarkable accommodation including Aurora Domes or a Snow Room at Torassieppi Winter Village.

Image credits: Antti Pietikainen

Agenda

Please note the order of activities is subject to change

DAY
1

FLIGHTS, ARRIVAL AND INTRODUCTION

On arrival at Kittila Airport, you will be met by your driver and transferred to your shared accommodation.

Where you stay depends on availability at the time and you will find yourself in either a local hotel or a shared safari house with your mushing companions. If you are staying in one of the hotels, you will enjoy dinner in the hotel restaurant and if you are staying in one of the safari houses, the hotel will provide a transfer to take you to dinner.

Get a good night’s rest after dinner because tomorrow will be a busy day as you meet the dogs,

prepare for departure and head into the Lappish wilderness.

Included Meals: Dinner

DAYS
2 TO 5

WILDERNESS HUSKY SAFARI

The adventure begins after breakfast when you will meet your safari guide for a full safety and instruction briefing. This will be followed by what is always a trip highlight, meeting your team.

The dog sledding centre is home to something in the region of 450 very happy and extremely well cared for trail dogs. You will hear them before you see them and, as you enter the compound, the cacophony of excited barking, yelping, and howling grows and grows. The dogs' excitement simply rises higher and higher as they realise that some of them are about to do their favourite thing in the whole world (with the possible exception of eating), run.

The hands-on work starts here but, firstly you will meet your team of either four or six dogs. Each one has its own name and character which you will come to appreciate increasingly as your days on the trail pass. There can be few greater human/animal interactions than between the musher and their team. As you are about to discover, dog sledding is very much about teamwork.

Following the initial introductions, you will load up the sleds and prepare to depart and if you thought it was noisy before, the dogs are about to crank it up to eleven. They will strain at the leash, genuinely fighting the tether that prevents them from speeding off into the wilds. Now is the time to become acquainted with the brake because as soon as that tether is released they will whizz off at a totally unsustainable pace. Keeping your foot depressed on the brake will prevent them from taking total control of operations and show them that you are in charge.

After a few hundred metres, the dogs begin to calm down and settle into a much steadier trot. You can now start to relax a bit too. You should always concentrate and keep an eye out for the guide's signals but now's the chance to enjoy your surroundings and embrace the pristine winter wilderness.

This part of the world is characterised by rolling fells, snowy forests and iced-over lakes and these are the landscapes that will be your playground for the next five days. Depending on the weather and local trail conditions, you should cover between 25km and 40km per day.

It is very much about teamwork on the trail. There will be wide open spaces such as frozen lakes where you can let the dogs take the strain and there will be times when you have to be on your mettle. For example, negotiating the meandering forest trails can take a lot of concentration and energy. Your dog team will also expect you to contribute at times. On rising ground, you should be jumping off the sled and helping to push it. The reward for not doing so will be reproachful looks from your team and a slackening of their effort. But hey, nobody ever said that dog sledding was easy!

Once you arrive at your evening accommodation it is all about the dogs. They must be fed, watered, and bedded down before you can even start to think about yourself. Only once the dogs are settled can you begin to get dinner ready and share your own well-deserved evening meal with the group.

Dog sledding is a strenuous activity and with the warmth from the fire, it is very easy to let your eyelids slowly droop but try not to fall asleep too early. You will be in an isolated location far removed

from any significant artificial light pollution and with a bit of luck, you will be able to witness the Northern Lights from the perfect vantage point.

To stand outside the cabin or maybe on a neighbouring frozen lake surrounded by darkness and silence is something in and of itself. To do it while the Aurora is dancing across the inky blackness of space is another thing altogether. We would defy anybody to not be moved by such an experience. With a bit of luck, you will get a solitary wolflike howl from one of the dogs just to complete the perfect "Call of the Wild" scenario.

After four nights of wilderness wanderings, you and your team will arrive back at base camp in the afternoon where it will be time to bid farewell to your canine pals. Be warned! This is not easy. The bond that develops between musher and dogs is tight and a tough one to break. Honestly, we have had to drag people away kicking and screaming.

Please note: physical fitness is required for this holiday and you must be 18 years of age or older

To fully enjoy this holiday you do need a good level of physical fitness and acquire previous experience with dog sledding. Temperatures can be anywhere between -5°C to even -45°C but the thermal clothing you are provided will keep you toasty warm whatever the conditions. You will spend long parts of your day standing on the runners of the sledge for a few hours at a time but when required you may also be needed to walk/ jog behind the sledge for a short period and help the dogs push the sledge up any short hills (which are few and far between in this part of the world). Anyone with any recent injuries or longer-term medical conditions who would like to discuss the level of physical activity required is more than welcome to speak to our travel experts who have all been lucky enough to take part in husky safaris of varying lengths (and are all manner of ages and levels of fitness too!).

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAYS
6 TO 7

FREE DAY

Your free day allows you to try some additional activities, such as snowmobiling and local culture experiences.

Why not spend your last night in a snow room at Torassieppi Winter Village or in a fabulous Aurora Dome with expansive views of the night sky? Watching the Aurora from the comfort of your own bed after a five-night wilderness dog sledding safari well and truly secures the bragging rights when you get home.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY
8

DEPARTURE

Today you will be transferred back to the airport for your homeward flights. Enjoy the transfer along the snowy roads giving you your last glimpse of the pristine snowy forests and iced-over lakes.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Included Accommodation

Harriniva Wilderness Hotel (Nights: 1,6-7)



Ideally located in the north-west corner of Finland, high above the Arctic Circle and in the very heart of the Aurora Zone, Harriniva Wilderness Hotel serves as a perfect base for your adventure holiday.

Owned and run by the Pietikäinen family, the hotel has developed a growing reputation for its warm ambience and a large range of enjoyable activities on offer.

Hotel facilities

The hotel has a range of facilities that have been designed to make your stay here as enjoyable as possible.

- There is free Wi-Fi throughout the main building for guest use, in our experience, we have found it works best in the main reception and dining area
- The hotel restaurant has a lively, buzzing atmosphere as people excitedly discuss the adventures they have taken part in that day. The meals are served in a buffet style with two or three choices for each course. The food here is hearty and wholesome
- The hotel also has a pub serving a range of beers, wines and spirits - this is the perfect place to unwind and relax with your fellow guests in the evening
- Tea and coffee are available free of charge throughout the day in the hotel restaurant / bar area.
- In the main reception area of the hotel, you will find a small gift shop selling a range of postcards, soft toys and handcrafted products. There is also a selection of snacks that can be purchased
- A sauna is available for guest use with separate facilities for men and women. This is free of charge and is heated every evening for around three hours
- The hotel also has an Aurora Wellness Centre (situated a short walk away on the riverbank),

where you can enjoy a range of therapies such as facials or massages. A real treat after a day of soaking up the pristine wilderness! During peak periods, we would strongly recommend booking therapies in advance through reception (all payable locally and we recommend booking in advance if possible)

- Snowshoes and cross country skis are available to hire for a small charge and there are marked trails surrounding the hotel for those with some experience. For those interested in downhill skiing, reception will be able to arrange a taxi to the nearby ski resort of Olos (payable locally)

Room types

Wilderness plus rooms

Decorated in traditional Scandinavian style, these bedrooms were refurbished in 2018. The rooms include double/twin beds and an unfolding sofa suitable for 1 adult or 2 children. All rooms have an en-suite shower room and a hairdryer, as well as a small seating area.

Double/twin rooms

Harriniva has 64 guest bedrooms which consist of twin or double rooms. Triple rooms are also available on request. Decorated in traditional Scandinavian style, all rooms have an en-suite shower room and a hairdryer.

Wilderness Suite

Spacious wilderness style room, decorated in traditional Scandinavian style, these rooms were refurbished in 2018. Located on the ground floor, close to reception these rooms include double/twin beds and an unfolding sofa suitable for 1 adult or 2 children. All rooms have an en-suite shower room and a hairdryer, as well as a small seating area.

Safari House

For those travelling on our longer husky or snowmobile experiences, your nights at the hotel will be spent in shared accommodation in one of Harriniva's Safari Houses. Each has sleeping facilities, a shower room, toilet and a sauna. Some safari houses are on site, whereas others are located 3km from the hotel. If you are staying off-site, you will be transferred to and from the hotel for meals.

Image credits Emmi Kähkönen - Harriniva Hotels & Safaris

Wilderness Cabins (Nights: 2-5)



Wilderness cabin accommodation is reserved for those people enjoying overnight safaris. There can surely be few better forms of escape from the everyday stresses (which could include laptops, mobiles and your day job) than a night in one of these cabins. Their isolation also means that the views of the night sky are incredible.

The Northern Lights could well pay you a visit should conditions be right and, if the sky is clear, you will never forget the sight of the galaxy overhead.

The title is fairly self-explanatory as the cabins are located in the wilds. The cabins that you visit are determined by the conditions of the trails you are using. They are varied in their set up but all offer the same incredible experience of complete silence in the evening (not guaranteed if you are dog sledding as the huskies do like a howl now and then!).

Some of the cabins are more basic than others, as some have no electricity or running water. Everyone will join the guide to help set up camp by collecting wood and water if needed. Participating enhances the wilderness experience.

Once the fire is lit, the food will be cooked. The guides prepare your meals over an open fire and our guests always provide exceptional feedback on the meals that the guides rustle up.

Should you have specific dietary requirements, please mention these at the time of booking.

There are no showers or bathroom facilities in the cabins but this is all part of the adventure. Finland is renowned for its saunas and the wilderness cabins are no exception. Once heated, you can steam clean in the sauna (don't forget to take a towel with you). The toilet facilities are normally a short walk from the cabin and are compostable. We certainly recommend a head torch for any ventures to the toilet during the night!

In most cases, the sleeping arrangements are dormitory style. You will be given your own Arctic-grade sleeping bag in which to sleep and combined with your thermals and the open fire, this should keep you lovely and warm.

You will carry with you all that you need for any stay in the cabins, so luggage is typically restricted to the essentials. Your main bag will be securely stored back at the hotel and a safe is provided for your valuables.

There is something so refreshing about realising that you can strip back your belongings and enjoy such a simple but satisfying experience.

The Specifics

Holiday group size (approximate)

Approximately 4 to 7 people

Group Size

We always try to provide an approximation of the group size you can expect to be with for the duration of each of our holidays. It may be that you are joined by others for parts of your holiday (such as transfers and particular activities) but the above number reflects those you can normally expect to be with from beginning to end. If group size is something which is particularly important to you, please speak to our Travel Experts and they can suggest the best holidays for you.

Tailor-made holiday group sizes will vary for all activities as will the group size for any additional activities you book.

Minimum numbers required for a holiday to operate

Some of our holidays require a minimum number of participants to operate (as listed in the 'Group Size' section). If your holiday departure has not yet reached the minimum number, you will be told at the time of booking. In the unlikely event that your chosen date is not guaranteed by nine weeks before your scheduled departure date, we will contact you to discuss the available options as per our [booking conditions](#).

Minimum and maximum age

If a specific minimum age applies to this holiday, it can be found in the Key Facts box on the holiday Overview page.

Unless otherwise stated in the Key Facts box on the holiday Overview page, the minimum age for participation in an Aurora Zone holiday is typically 12 years old (there may be younger children in some destinations who have booked with other companies). If an adult-only environment is important to you, then please contact our Travel Experts and they will advise on the best dates and destinations for you. If you are looking for a holiday designed specifically for families then please see our sister company www.activitiesabroad.com.

Itinerary amendments

The order of activities listed in this agenda is provided for guidance only, your final and detailed itinerary will be provided either with your final travel documents (which are uploaded into your online account around a week prior to departure) or upon arrival.

Terms and Conditions

Our full booking terms and conditions can be found on our website: <https://www.theaurorazone.com/booking-conditions>