

Snowshoeing with Huskies and Pulka on the Bear Trail

7 days/6 nights



A physically demanding but unforgettable experience! The bear trail is situated in the national park Oulanka near Kuusamo in Finnish Lapland. A national park founded in very early years, because of its beauty. The dominating river Oulankajoki, which shores we hike often along mark the landscape ... especially in winter, the region looks like a small paradise. We will pass many interesting formations in the landscape, watch the fabulous frozen rocks and hike across covered lakes. These great landscapes we explore with our nice and friendly huskies which are pulling Pulkas with our luggage. We will be fixed by a rope behind the team and carry a light backpack

1st day: Transfer from the airport to Juuman Leirintä cabin. Sauna, dinner, info on the coming week and overnight.

2nd day: After breakfast we will start for the small bear trail (pieni Karhunkierros – the probably most hiked 12 km in Finland). A wonderful round hike with a lot of wonderful things to see. We still hike without huskies, because of some difficult ups and downs. Distance about 13 km. After return to our cabin, sauna, dinner and overnight.

3rd day: Today we get to know our dogs, who will join us for the rest of the week. We learn how to hook up the dogs to the pulkas and how to walk with the pulkas. On the lake straight in front of our cabin we will start... in the afternoon we will start to plan our tour and prepare all our things. Sauna, dinner and overnight.



4th day: After breakfast we go with our dogs and pulkas to our starting point in Virkkula. Our first stage brings us through beautiful fields and swamps – still outside of the national park. Lunch we will enjoy on an open fire. On the last km we enter the national park Oulanka. Just before the end we find ourselves in a little more demanding downhill – which will be easy if we work in a team! We reach our first overnight place Siilastupa. A cottage we met already on our small bear trail hike. Very nicely situated on a great waterfall Jyrävä. Distance about 13 km

5th day: Today we hike through the well known village Juuma and then leave to the winter route further through beautiful wild swamps and little hill always in the direction Russia. Only a few km separate us from the huge wilderness in the Russian north until we reach our stage end Jusinkämpä – which is only less than 5 km away from the Russian border.

Situated on a very idyllic lake (is of course frozen) a very beautiful spot on earth. Overnight again in a very simple cottage without electricity or running water. Distance about 15km

6th day: After the breakfast we continue to hike on an old moraine – out of the ice age in early years. This brings us through little hilly areas, which are easy to climb and descend. After a while we reach the valley of Oulanka – after which the whole national park is named. Oulanka valley with its river – Oulankajoki. A river which still winds its natural way around many bends. On the shore of this beautiful river we find our next cottage – Ansakämpä. The last few metres again demands team spirit! Distance about 8 km.

7th day: Our last stage brings us all along the impressive river Oulankajoki. Through beautiful light pine forests until we reach the famous waterfalls of Kiutaköngäs. A perfect scene for photographers. After we enjoyed this marvellous gorge we take our last 2 km... and reach the visitor centre of Kiutagöngäs. There will still have the possibility to enjoy some slides or films about the national park. From here we are picked up and brought again back to our cabin in Juuma. After a sauna we enjoy our last dinner together. Distance about 9 km.

8th day: After breakfast, transfer to airport.

Requirements

Good physical condition
Used to backpack (max. 10 kg)
Team spirit, cooperation
Endurance, desire to live in simple conditions

2011 Dates: (Sunday to Sunday)

6th to 13th February

27th February to 6th March

20th to 27th March

Included

Transfer from/to the airport Kuusamo
4 overnights in cabins with electricity and running water and sauna.
3 overnights in the wilderness cottages without facilities
Full board during the whole tour
Experienced, English speaking guide
Husky and 1 pulka minimum per 2 persons

Not included

Flights, travel insurance, alcoholic drinks, snowshoes (possible to hire on request at 50 euros per week).

Group size

min. 6, max. 10 persons

Cost:

£995/person

Overnights/catering

We bring our luggage ourselves along the trail, pulled by huskies in polkas (maximum 7-8kgs personal luggage) or on our own back. The food has to be carried for the whole tour and is shared within the group members and dog teams. The dog food will be brought with us too. Overnights in simple cabins. Every group member brings his/her own sleeping bag and sleeping mat.

Later in the season depending on the weather conditions – if team would like, we can have a bit longer days.

