

SANTA'S LAPLAND 2010 FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT DO I NEED TO CONSIDER AND KNOW BEFORE I BOOK?

★ How do I check availability and make a reservation?

1. Checking availability: Over the phone on 01865 265200, online at www.transun.co.uk or with your local travel agents.

2. Confirm reservation: We will require forenames, surnames and dates of births for all travellers. We will also request details of your insurer if you decline our insurance. A deposit of £150pp will be required or, if you book within ten weeks of departure, full payment. Payment can be made via credit* or debit card. *For payments made direct via credit card, there is a 2% transaction fee. Other travel agents' charges may vary.

3. Confirmation: A confirmation invoice will be sent. Please check all details carefully and advise us of any discrepancies within seven days. Any changes made after this will incur an amendment fee.

4. Tickets/Travel Documents: Travel documents will be sent approx seven days prior to departure, where possible via email. You no longer require physical tickets to travel.

★ What insurance do I require?

We recommend the insurance offered by Transun. If you choose to obtain other insurance cover, it is essential that your policy covers you for 'winter sports', including snowmobiles and huskies. For more information on insurance, please see page 50 of our brochure.

★ I know it can get cold in Lapland but how cold?

Winter in Lapland is extremely cold compared to the UK. Temperatures rarely rise above freezing and December temperatures range between -7C and -35C. The air in Lapland is quite dry and therefore -10C doesn't feel as cold as you might expect. You will need a series of base layers under your thermal suit.

★ How much daylight will there be in December?

There are four to five hours of daylight on average in December. This is termed as 'grey light' in Finland and is usually between the hours of 1000 and 1430. (This may vary by up to an hour according to location.) Either side of these times, it will be as night-time. Snow ensures a good level of reflection which makes it possible to see where you are walking. The darkness adds to the magical setting of your surroundings and is often emphasised by using the light of fires and outdoor candles (where appropriate). Some wilderness locations may be without artificial light.

★ Will I see the Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis)?

In the north of Finland, the chance of seeing this phenomenon is greatly increased. On a clear night, if you are lucky, you may see the Aurora Borealis, which appear across the sky in white, red or green lights swirling through the atmosphere.

★ Will I be able to ski while in Lapland?

Downhill skiing is not currently available in the wilderness locations that provide the setting for our short breaks.

★ Will I have the chance to buy souvenirs?

There are a few souvenir shops at Lapland's airports and at some of the hotels. Where time permits, we will arrange to take you to a souvenir shop before returning home.

★ Are the tours suitable for adults travelling without children?

Our tours can be enjoyed by adults travelling unaccompanied by children since there is a wide variety of activities suitable for adults. Alternatively those looking for a more adult focused break, without Santa, why not take a look at our Festive Lights breaks. For more details see www.transun.co.uk

★ Will I be safe in Lapland?

The local operators are fully qualified, experienced and safety conscious

and their equipment complies with local safety standards. However, it must be borne in mind that the activities are authentically Lappish as we are offering the experience of local adventures. To keep safe, you must ensure you follow the instructions of our guides. Bear in mind that you are visiting an area where Arctic conditions prevail. And please remember that the animal rides are traditional and authentic and use untamed animals. Rides are taken at your own risk, although that risk is very small. Parents and guardians are responsible for the supervision of their own children and those within their party at all times. Before commencing any activities on these tours, each participant will be given clear and full safety instructions. Please ensure you follow these instructions and exercise caution. No one should travel without insurance.

★ How much snow can I expect?

Snow falls in Lapland between October and May and it is common to find thick snow cover in December. However, it is also possible that there may be a period of warmer weather, especially given the effects of global warming, which may cause the snow and ice to melt before the next snowfall.

★ What happens to my activities if there is not enough snow or it is extremely cold?

If there are insufficient levels of snow or ice for reliant activities to operate upon the day of participation, then our suppliers will move all activities to a position where snow is available, adjust tracks accordingly so a modified activity programme can operate or provide alternative activities that are not reliant on snow and ice. Because it is possible that snow will fall just the night prior to one of our planned trips, Transun will not cancel trips nor refund payments in the event of no snow on the day and will endeavour to arrange all activities to replicate those planned. In cases where an exact replica is not possible a suitable alternative will be offered. Where this happens no refunds will be made.

All activities are arranged subject to local weather conditions, which are outside of our control. Should temperatures reach an extreme, then modified programmes will operate. We reserve the right to amend or cancel any part of tours or safaris if our suppliers or we consider that conditions are unsafe. These judgements are usually made when the temperature falls below -20 degrees; a variety of factors may influence decisions. NB: Periods preceding or post extreme weather maybe subject to changes in itinerary or operational order.

★ I have a dietary requirement; can this be catered for?

It is recommended that any passengers with special request such as nut-free, gluten-free, vegan, diabetic etc. carry some supplies of foodstuffs with them. For any dietary requirements, you must advise us at the time of booking and we will pass this request on to the airline and accommodation where applicable, who will endeavour to fulfil your requirements. However given the remoteness of the locations, this cannot be guaranteed.

★ How accurate is the brochure?

Details within this brochure are correct at the time of going to press. All excursions and itineraries are subject to alteration and withdrawal in response to local conditions, timings and demand. We cannot accept any liability for opening times of places of interest during your visit. All breaks are subject to Transun's terms and conditions and Frequently Asked Questions (copies on request). Prices/discounts are subject to change and are confirmed at the time of booking. Throughout this brochure 'child' prices etc. refer to all children aged two to fifteen years inclusive, unless stated otherwise. If you have booked/are booking based on our Preview brochure, you should consult our website or call to check updated travel arrangements and itineraries.

★ Are the photos in this brochure genuine?

Many of the photographs in our brochure were taken during our December 2008 season in Karesuando and Hetta. Some photography is for purposes of illustration. Transun cannot guarantee that the exact scenes will be replicated.

★ Are the tours suitable for infants?

Due to the extreme weather conditions in Lapland, we recommend that you do not take infants under the age of two on our inclusive day breaks. This is because a great deal of time may be spent outside in extreme Arctic conditions. It is possible on short breaks however if they are not walking we would not recommend that they travel. If you choose to travel with an infant you must be prepared to miss out on activities if advised by our local guide and safari providers. Infants are charged £80 on short breaks. We are unable to guarantee provision of thermal suits and boots and recommend you bring your own.

★ Is the trip suitable for disabled or severely ill visitors?

For many years we have been taking visitors suffering from a range of severe disorders on our trips to Lapland, and we know that a successful visit can be a dream come true. However, we cannot provide any special assistance or care and we do not have specially-made vehicles nor adapted sleighs etc to offer specialist facilities to those who need them. While our staff have always done their best to help, they do not have specialist training in care for the disabled, so we strongly recommend that specialist carers who are experienced in providing expert help (lifting, etc) accompany any disabled travellers. Certain resorts are more suitable than others for physically challenged visitors and you are advised to discuss your needs with our staff before making a reservation. Additionally, you must complete and return to us a checklist prepared by ABTA that fully informs us of your needs. Please note that acceptance of your booking by us does not mean that your needs will be met.

★ Can I pre-book seats on the plane?

As this is a family product we do not offer the opportunity to pre book seats as it is our belief that all families should be sat together where possible. We do brief the check-in staff at the airport to seat all families together, however this cannot be guaranteed in all cases.

★ Can I smoke in Lapland?

The regulations governing smoking in Finland and Sweden are similar to those in the UK and smoking is not permitted in public places or within any of the hotels. If you do smoke, we ask that you act responsibly as these are family breaks and respect the environment that you are in. We request that you do not smoke whilst on activities or when in large groups. Please dispose of your cigarette butts in ashtrays provided. Although the snow is a good cover for any litter, please bear in mind that this does melt and any litter becomes visible.

★ Are the itineraries in the brochure correct?

The itineraries shown within this brochure are for guidance only and subject to change. You may not do the activities in the order they appear within this brochure. For short break clients, we will endeavour to advise you of any major changes before you travel. However, this is not always possible and you will receive your full itinerary on arrival.

I'M GETTING READY TO TRAVEL, WHAT INFORMATION WILL I FIND USEFUL?

★ Do I get tickets for the flights?

We issue an e-ticket document which consists of a sheet of paper and not individual tickets. This will show your final flight and passenger details.

★ Will I be sent accommodation/activity vouchers?

We do not issue accommodation or activity vouchers, your booking information is sent directly to resort.

★ How much luggage can I take with me?

For those on short breaks, the limit is 20 kilos per person (excluding infants) plus one piece of hand* luggage per person.

★ What Happens if my day break flight is delayed?

If this were to happen on your outbound day break flight, then every effort would be made to ensure that the delay time was made up by a later return departure time from Lapland. Once the day break flight is delayed by more than three hours, it is likely that the whole trip will be cancelled and you will be offered an alternative trip or a full refund of monies paid to us. In the event that the delay is less than three hours and the flight takes off, every effort will be made to deliver the programme as planned but it may be necessary to reduce the time spent on the activities or on occasions to omit some of them. Please note that no compensation will be paid in these

circumstances. In the event that your aircraft is diverted due to weather conditions at your destination airport we will endeavour to replicate to the greatest extent possible the programme you would have received. Where this happens no refunds will be due. If no arrangements can be made you will receive a full refund minus a deduction for the airfare.

★ I'm travelling on a short break and my flight is delayed – what happens?

It is possible that short break passengers may still be flown out even if the delay exceeds three hours and guests will need to refer to their insurance policies for compensation. Should it be impossible to return home from the destination on the programmed evening departure due to reasons beyond our control (force majeure see terms and conditions), Transun will make every effort to accommodate passengers overnight in accommodation of a reasonable standard and provide an evening meal and breakfast. The company's liability will then cease and no compensation will be paid.

★ Can I purchase drinks and snacks in Lapland?

Whilst you are on activities, there are no opportunities to purchase these.

★ What clothing do I need?

We provide you with an all-in-one thermal suit and boots on arrival on all of our trips. It is also essential that you bring a warm hat, scarf and gloves. We recommend that you visit the Transun website (www.transun.co.uk/apparel) for the purchase of appropriate clothing. In the case of thermal suits, please note that exceptional sizes may not be available. Those needing thermal suits outside the usual children's sizes and adult small/medium/ large range are recommended to buy their own, before travelling. Minimum child sizes: 90cm suit and 25/26 boots. Maximum adult sizes: 48" chest and 47/48 boots.

The following guidelines are, in our opinion, a minimum requirement to ensure maximum comfort and enjoyment during your tour:

- **Layer One:** Thermal underwear or long-sleeved top and leggings, woollen tights, socks.
- **Layer Two:** Fleece or jumper and trousers (cotton or fleece i.e. jogging bottoms), woollen socks.
- **Top Layer:** Balaclava, hat, scarf, all-in-one suit (provided), gloves or mittens, boots (provided).

When choosing your clothing, we recommend you:

- **Take lots of extra gloves, socks and scarves.**
- **Wear lots of thin loose fitting layers so you can add or remove layers as required.**
- **Avoid denim and other restrictive clothing, the best insulation is provided from wool.**
- **Select a hat similar to a balaclava or one that has flaps that can be fastened to cover your ears.**
- **Wear thermal boots too big which allows for extra socks.**
- **Wear a pair of thin gloves under a thicker pair.**
- **Use hot pads, which you insert into your gloves and boots, and provides useful protection against the cold.**
- **Avoid water-based creams or balms on your face, lips and hands.**
- **The temperature can drop rapidly so always ensure you have hats, scarves and gloves with you.**
- **If your hands or feet get wet whilst on activities, change into a dry pair of socks/gloves.**
- **Mittens are better than gloves as they allow warm air to circulate between your fingers.**

★ Can I buy duty free?

Finland is part of the EU and therefore you are no longer able to purchase duty-free goods when travelling to Lapland.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT IN LAPLAND?

★ What is the time difference?

Finland is two hours ahead of the UK and Sweden is one hour ahead.

★ What is the local currency?

The currency in Finland is the euro. We strongly recommend that you purchase euros in the UK prior to travelling, as the option to withdraw or change money in resort may not always be available. Most hotels and shops will accept major credit cards and a limited number accept sterling.

★ Will there be queues?

On our all-inclusive programme, there will only be limited queuing for the

rides. If you do come across a lengthy queue we recommend your move on to another activity to avoid standing around and to maximise your time in resort enjoying activities.

★ Can I use my camera or camcorder in Lapland?

There is no problem using these indoors, in Santa's log cabin for example, but outdoors, photographic covers are essential. You should also bear in mind that the perpetual twilight will affect your photography. If you are going to be using a camcorder in Lapland, please bear in mind that the cold affects the life of the battery on your camcorder and if you intend to film a lot please ensure that on overnight visits you bring a charger or spare battery.

★ Are there toilet facilities?

Due to the natural environment, toilet facilities may not be widely available but temporary or wilderness toilets will be on hand at activity points. However, we recommend that guests use the facilities in their hotel or other establishments when they are available.

★ Is it commercial?

Far from it. The areas we operate to are genuine Lappish villages and not man-made resorts. We offer true wilderness locations which are far removed from anything artificial or commercial. Do not expect a theme park or Disney World.

★ Can anyone drive a snowmobile?

Driving a snowmobile in Finland is like driving a car, similar laws apply. A full driving licence is required. Please ensure you bring your driving licence with you. A damage waiver must be signed before commencing the activity. Credit card copies are taken and a 550 euros excess is payable for any damage, irrespective of severity. Normal traffic laws apply on snowmobile routes. Safety helmets must be worn at all times. (Please note this is not a definitive list of instructions and liabilities, further information is available upon request, and will be provided at resort.) As a general rule, all children 15 and under will travel in a sleigh pulled by the guide's snowmobile. Children 12-plus can ride as a passenger behind a responsible parent/adult, however this is physically demanding and therefore they will be assessed by the local guide on the day and it is at the guide's discretion, their decision being final.

★ Are the kids snowmobiles safe?

We have a miniature snowmobile ride for children. Depending on their size they are normally suitable for 4 to 10 year-olds. As it is a motorised vehicle, the ride is supervised so only available at specified times. Snowmobiles are driven around a small circuit, attached to a rope. Children will have a minimum of five laps.

★ What are the hotel ratings and are they suitable for everyone?

There is no official rating for the properties in Finland and therefore you will not find any within our brochure. We have listed all the facilities available within each property to help guide your selection and the information is accurate at the time of going to print. All our accommodation is similar to a good standard three-star. Because an essential ingredient of the Lapland experience is a proximity to nature, some of our properties may occupy locations that, due to distances or difficult/icy terrain, may be unsuitable for the disabled or very young or very old. Should you need detailed guidance regarding any particular location, please contact our reservations team (01865 265 200). Where additional beds are provided, these may be sofa or portable beds. The operation and supervision of overseas property, transport and other services is subject to local laws, regulations, standards and codes of practice of individual countries. The legal and safety requirements may be of a different standard to that in the UK and the standards imposed will be that of the country you are visiting, not of the UK. Upon arrival at your accommodation you will, after registration, be allocated your rooms. Please note that if accommodation units are filled to their maximum occupancy they may be cramped and storage can be minimal.

★ What does the real Santa look like?

All adults and children know that Santa has special magic powers and is able to do mysterious things like fly round the world in a single evening. He may also appear differently dressed depending on the task he is undertaking and may even have altered his facial appearance to confuse his naughty elves. We advise all parents to be diplomatic in sharing photographs with other clients and their children.

★ Can Igloos and IceBars be guaranteed?

No. Igloos and IceBars are reliant on a prolonged period of very specific

weather conditions for the manufacture of the snow and the harvesting of the ice from the local river. Whilst we endeavor to create them each year we are reliant on the appropriate weather conditions which can not be guaranteed.

★ What is the food like on short breaks?

You should bear in mind that, given the remote nature of the location, fresh fruit and vegetables are less plentiful than in the UK. Menus will vary from establishment to establishment. However the following are some of the dishes that might make up a typical menu:

• **Starters:** spinach, cheese, tomato soup.

Main Courses - meat loaf, macaroni casserole, minced meat, frankfurters in sauce, meatballs, chicken drumsticks, fried fish fillet, beef stew, roast pork.

• **For Children:** hotels usually provide additional dishes for kids if required such as fish fingers, frankfurters and chicken nuggets.

• **Desserts:** berry pudding, apricot dessert, pancakes. (All other drinks and snacks are at extra cost).

★ What time can I check in/check out?

For our short break clients, rooms are normally available from 4pm local time. On your day of departure, check out is normally 9am. This will be confirmed during your stay. Luggage will be stored in a communal area and you are advised to take all valuables with you.

DAY BREAKS

★What do I do with my belongings on a day break?

When you collect your thermal suits and boots, you will be given a bag in which you can store your outdoor coats and shoes that you have travelled in. Please ensure you take anything with you that you may require during the day, plus your valuables such as money and passports. There is no secure storage for valuables. You will collect your bag at the end of the day when you change out of your thermal suits. On some occasions it may be necessary that these bags are taken with you.

★What can I expect for lunch on a day break?

For those clients travelling on our all-inclusive day breaks, there will be a two-course lunch of a starter and main course buffet, which includes kids' and vegetarian options. Typical dishes are soup for starters, followed by jacket potatoes with a choice of fillings and pasta.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

★Flights

In most cases we charter direct flights on a fast comfortable B737, A320/321, B757, B733 or B767. However, flight plans may change before departure and we reserve the right to substitute alternative carriers and/or aircraft types where necessary. Where this situation arises, it is not possible to transfer to another day/short break or cancel without incurring normal cancellation charges (see booking conditions). All of our flights are non-smoking. Airline regulations vary but many will refuse permission to fly for women who will be 28 or more weeks into pregnancy on the date of return travel. Transun operates direct flights but these may occasionally stop to off-load or pick-up clients. A direct flight does not necessarily mean a non-stop flight.

★Health & medical care

Finland has reciprocal health care agreements with the UK. This entitles you to emergency medical treatment and to prove eligibility for this treatment you only require a British Passport. Non-British nationals should obtain an EHIC. Treatment is available either free of charge or for a standard fee, depending on the municipality. Clients who have special diets or are taking regular drugs for heart conditions, diabetes, etc, should ensure that they have ample supply, which should be carried with them at all times as well as required foods.

★ Passport

A full EU passport which is valid on day of return is necessary to travel to Lapland. Please note that children who are not already included on an existing full passport are now required to hold their own passport. Non-British citizens should enquire at the Finnish Embassy. Tel: 0207 8386200 www.finemb.org.uk see terms and conditions for further information. It is now a legal requirement for all passengers to submit to Transun in advance of travel full and accurate passport information. Failure to do so may result in cancellation of flight tickets. We will contact all clients with instructions on how to submit the information.