

ARCTIC SPIRIT 2011 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 persons travelling. We will also request contact details of someone that can be contacted in case of emergency and also details of your insurer if you decline our insurance. A deposit 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 via email. 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 in this brochure. 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, see page 45.

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

Temperatures rarely rise above freezing, temperatures usually range between -7C and -35C. You will need a series of base layers under your thermal suit.

★ How much daylight will there be from December to March?

There are four to five hours of daylight on average in December and January. This is termed as 'grey light' in Finland and is usually between the hours of 1000 and 1430. Either side of these times, it will be as night-time. Snow ensures a good level of reflection making 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. In February the days are longer and by March there will be approx ten to twelve hours of day light.

★ Will I have the chance to buy souvenirs?

There are a few opportunities to buy souvenirs whilst in Lapland. The Davvi Arctic Lodge has an extensive souvenir shop but there will also be possibilities else where. Where time permits, we will arrange to take you to a souvenir shop before returning home.

★ 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 requests 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 both our 2008 and 2009 seasons in Karesuando and Hetta. Some photography is for purposes of illustration. Transsun cannot guarantee that the exact scenes will be replicated.

★ 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.

★ Will I be safe in Lapland?

The local operators are experienced and safety conscious and their equipment complies with local safety standards. To keep safe, you must ensure you follow the safety instructions given by our guides before commencing activities and exercise caution. 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. For all snowmobile activities you will be required to sign a disclaimer which carries an excess of €550 in the event of damage to the machines. No one should travel without insurance.

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 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 Transsun website (www.transsun.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?

It is possible to purchase duty free when travelling to Norway. Finland is part of the EU and therefore you are no longer able to purchase duty-free goods when flying to Finnish airports.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT IN LAPLAND?

★ What is the time difference?

Finland is two hours ahead of the UK. Norway and Sweden are 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. The currency in Norway is the Kronor; we recommend that you purchase your currency in the UK before travelling. Most hotels and shops will accept major credit cards and a limited number accept sterling.

★ 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.

★ 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 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).

★ Will I see the Northern Lights?

The Northern lights is a natural phenomenon which is dependent on a number of natural events conspiring to produce the appropriate conditions. All of our breaks take place in an area which has been officially designated as part of the Northern Lights route. We make every attempt to take excursions to areas where there is little light pollution or to vantage points from which a large portion of the sky can be seen. However, we can not guarantee a sighting of the Northern Lights.

★ How easy is it to 'mush' a Husky team or drive a snowmobile?

'Mushing' a dog team is reasonably straightforward and is mastered by most people quickly. A certain degree of physical strength is needed as well as a sense of balance. It is not a strenuous activity although you should note that you will be required to stand up, on the two runners at the rear of a sled, for the duration of your excursion. In the case of over night expeditions, a reasonable level of physical fitness is required to cope with the cold and the longer time standing controlling the dogs. In some cases, where track conditions are particularly harsh, you may be required to help the dogs by removing your weight and pushing the sled through deep snow.

Driving a snowmobile is easy. All snowmobiles are fully automatic and do not require any expertise or previous experience. In the case of over night expeditions, a certain level of physical fitness is required to maintain composure against the cold and driving posture.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

★ Flights

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 short break or cancel without incurring normal cancellation charges (see booking conditions). Airline regulations vary but many will refuse permission to fly for women who will be 28 or more weeks into pregnancy.

★ 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. 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 valid EU passport (period of validity is dependent on country) to travel to Lapland is required. 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, Norwegian or Swedish Embassy.