

Lapland / Finland Winter Escape January 2025

Dates: January 25 – February 1, 2025

Trip Leader: Beth Whitman

HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Cross country skiing** in pristine woodland snow
- **Dog sledding** with the opportunity to mush/drive your own sled
- Night sky viewing with the chance to see the **northern lights** during a year **predicted to be one of the best in an 11-year solar cycle!**
- **Snowshoeing** through magical scenery
- **Fat tire biking** in the snow!
- Relaxing in an **outdoor sauna and an ice swim (brrr)**

The tour begins with your arrival into Kittilä Airport in Finland on January 25, 2025.

If you want to arrive early either into Helsinki or Kittilä, we can provide you with a list of places to stay. We recommend you book these on your own for the best pricing (and there's much more to do in Helsinki than in Kittilä).

We will be staying in a **large upscale lodge** that has private bathrooms and showers in each room. Participants will share a room with one other person. Those traveling on their own will be paired up with a roommate.. The lodge has a shared kitchen and common area. A chef will be on-site to prepare breakfasts and at least one dinner (most other dinners will be out at nearby restaurants).

PLEASE NOTE: While we will do our best to stick to this itinerary, it's very possible that the order of daily activities will change based on the weather. This is something we won't know until the week prior or, perhaps, the day of any activity. In short, we'll be flexing with the weather on this adventure! 🤖

ITINERARY

Day 1 – Kittilä – Äkäslompolo

Saturday, January 25, 2025

Meals: Dinner

Upon arrival into **Kittilä**, you'll be picked up at the airport for the start of our winter escape!

Before heading to our lodge, we'll first make our way to **Snow Village**. It's here that a temporary (but HUGE) snow/ice building is created each year. Not only is it an **ice hotel** (no, we won't be overnighing), but it also contains rooms with **spectacular ice carvings** with themes that change every winter season.

We'll then make our way to the lodge where we can get settled in, unpack and/or hop in the sauna.

In the evening, we'll have a lovely **welcome dinner** that includes local specialties prepared by our **private chef**.

After dinner, you can take advantage of the sauna or, if the skies are clear, head out for some night sky viewing that might include the northern lights.

Overnight near Äkäslompolo at [Villa Ahmola](#) or similar.

Day 2 – Äkäslompolo (snowshoeing)

Sunday, January 26, 2025

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



After a wonderful homemade breakfast prepared by our chef, we'll set out for a day of **snowshoeing in the pristine wilderness** near Kesänki Fell (a fell is a small mountain in Finland). We'll snowshoe our way along a flat area to a wilderness hut where we'll enjoy a meal, snack and/or hot drink.

Some may choose to return to our vehicle the way we came (via a flat trail) and return to the lodge. But if you're up for a bit of a challenge, we can make our way up the fell where we'll experience **spectacular scenery and views of the surrounding area**.



Whichever option you choose, when we return to the lodge, you'll have a chance to relax in the sauna or warm up with a happy hour drink.

In the late afternoon, we'll head out to a **lumberjack cabin** and enjoy a **traditional Finnish wood burning sauna** by a lake. You can even try an ice dip or two (yes, it's exactly what it sounds like!).

Overnight near Äkäslompolo at [Villa Ahmola](#) or similar.

Day 3 – Äkäslompolo (dog sledding)

Monday, January 27, 2025

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After another wonderful homemade breakfast, today we'll head out for a **half day of dog sledding!**

You'll learn how to **manage the sled on your own** and experience for yourself the solitude of the wilderness with only the sound of the excited dogs making their way through the snow. There will be two people to a sled and each person will get a chance at **mushing**.

We'll have lunch out at a local restaurant and then a little downtime in the late afternoon.



In the early evening, we'll head out for a one to two mile wilderness **hike to an indoor fire pit** where we'll cook some traditional food (sausages and cheese) for the meat eaters and some not so traditional foods for the vegetarians. 🍴

After dinner, you can take advantage of the sauna or, if the skies are clear, head out for some night sky viewing that might include the northern lights.

Overnight near Äkäslompolo at [Villa Ahmola](#) or similar.

Day 4 – Äkäslompolo (free day)

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

After a couple of active days, today we'll have a bit of down time. This will give you the chance to relax at the lodge or, if you like, walk into town for lunch (on your own) and do some souvenir shopping.

At the lodge, you can take advantage of the **indoor sauna**, hang out by the **fireplace** and **read, play games** with the group or **nap**.



If you prefer another active day, please let us know in advance and we can arrange for you to have **snowshoes** or a **kicksled** handy so you can explore the area a bit.

For dinner, we'll head into the village of Äkäslompolo for a fantastic dinner at a **traditional wilderness cabin** filled with artwork. We'll enjoy homemade food prepared by locals and learn about the artists whose work we'll enjoy while we eat.

After dinner, you can take advantage of the sauna or, if the skies are clear, head out for some night sky viewing that might include the northern lights.

Overnight near Äkäslompolo at [Villa Ahmola](#) or similar.

Day 5 – Äkäslompolo (fat tire biking)

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After breakfast, we'll head out to the Pallas-Yllästunturi National Park and go **fat tire biking**! Yes! Biking in the snow.

We'll be out for a good part of the day as we bike our way on **groomed paths** in otherwise **unspoiled wilderness**. We'll either enjoy a packed lunch that we've made ourselves or have a meal at a cafe before returning to the lodge.



Tonight, we'll have another **fantastic dinner** at one of the high quality restaurants in town.

After dinner, you can take advantage of the sauna or, if the skies are clear, head out for some night sky viewing that might include the northern lights.

Overnight near Äkäslompola at [Villa Ahmola](#) or similar.

Day 6 – Äkäslompola (reindeer farm)

Thursday, January 30, 2025

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today, we'll get to meet some locals who have a very Finnish business – a **reindeer farm!** We'll spend the morning here and learn all about these unique animals—and maybe even discover the secret to them being able to fly 🦋.

After lunch at a local restaurant, we'll have the afternoon free to spend in town, perhaps to shop for souvenirs, if you like.

We'll return to the lodge where we'll have time to relax for the remainder of the day/evening.



After much food out all week, we'll have a **simple dinner at the lodge** this evening.

Overnight near Äkäslompola at [Villa Ahmola](#) or similar.

Day 7 – Äkäslompola (cross country skiing)

Friday, January 31, 2025

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

On our final full day above the Arctic Circle, we'll go **cross country skiing**. Finland has some of the most **extensive cross country ski trails** in the world. Our guide will decide which one(s) of these **regularly groomed trails** will be best for the group based on our experience as well the weather conditions.

After two to three hours out, we'll stop at a **wilderness cafe for lunch**.

We'll return to the lodge in the mid- to late-afternoon and then, in the evening, we'll have a **final special dinner together** out a local restaurant.

After dinner, you can take advantage of the sauna or, if the skies are clear, head out for some night sky viewing that might include the northern lights.

Overnight near Äkäslompola at [Villa Ahmola](#) or similar.

Day 8 – Äkäslompolo – Home or onward journey
Saturday, February 1, 2025

Meals: Breakfast

After breakfast at the lodge, we'll make our way back to Kittilä via vehicle (about a 1-hour drive), where we recommend you take the early afternoon flight (usually 1:40 p.m.) from Kittilä back to Helsinki and then home or to your next destination. For information on alternative flight options, please see the [Finland FAQs](#).



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