

## **LAPLANDS WINTER EXPERIENCE**

### **06 Nights / 07 Days**

**Helsinki \* Rovaniemi \* Kemi**

#### **Highlights:**

- **Helsinki** – Half day city tour - Senate square, Esplanade, Orthodox Church, Sibelius monument, Rock Church, Finlandia Hall, Temppeliaukio Church and the Colourful Market.
- **Rovaniemi** – Santa Claus Village, Artikum House, Reindeer Farm, Snowmobile Safari & Husky Farm
- **Kemi** – “Sampo – Ice breaker”, Snow Castle or Gemstone Gallery.

#### **Day 01 Arrive Helsinki**

Arrival in Helsinki, Meet and greet by our local representatives. Transfer from airport to the hotel in private car with English speaking driver. Overnight at Hotel Scandic.

#### **Day 02 Helsinki – Rovaniemi**

This morning, after breakfast, depart on a half-day city tour of Helsinki visit – Senate square, Esplanade, Orthodox Church (Uspenskiy Cathedral), Sibelius monument, Rock Church, Finlandia Hall, Temppeliaukio Church and the colourful Market square. Afternoon we transfer you to the airport for your flight to Rovaniemi – self proclaimed capital of Lapland. Arrive Rovaniemi and you will first visit our local handling agent’s office to pick up full body suits and gear which are required for all winter activities you will experience over the next two days. These are provided at no additional cost. Later we transfer you to **Holiday Village** in Rovaniemi. Some of the very adventurous ones should have a **dip in the freezing lake followed by the traditional Sauna** - an age-old Finnish tradition. The Sauna is a very sacred area for the Finns. In olden days, babies were born in the Sauna as it was very cold outside and when a person died his body was immediately taken to a Sauna before the last rites. The circle of life began & was completed in the Sauna. **A visit to Finland is not complete without experiencing the Sauna.** Overnight at Hotel.

#### **Day 03 Rovaniemi - ‘Santa Claus Village, Artikum house & Reindeer Farm’**

After breakfast, we proceed for the highlight of the trip – Santa Claus Village in Rovaniemi, which is visited by over one million visitors a year. Santa Claus Village is located right on the Arctic Circle. **Santa Claus Village is the only place in the world that really feels like Christmas 365 days a year.** Santa Claus' spectacular Main Post Office is built of natural stone and logs & is truly a unique experience. At Santa Claus' Main Post Office a whole bunch of busy assistant elves are at your service, speaking different languages. Optional - you may also visit the Santa Park located close by. After the Santa Claus Village, visit the Arktikum House, which is a provisional museum of Lapland. This glass roofed Artikum centre has permanent exhibits, which focus all life history and culture of Arctic region. It also houses an Arctic science centre. We then proceed towards Reindeer Farm. The Reindeer Sledging is the highlight of this excursion. At the farm, you are initiated in Lapp culture by a Native Family. Your host will tell you all about reindeer husbandry and will also have a chance to feed the reindeers. Enjoy a traditional Lappish lunch. There is a special ceremony performed by the “The wizard” for all who cross the Arctic Circle. The masters of Water, Fire and Earth are invited to be present in the ceremony. The masters of Water gives us long life, masters of Fire protects us from evil and the master of Earth gave us the seeds of a reindeer which ensures that we will all come back to Lapland one day. The myth goes that anyone who takes part in the ceremony can live merrily and happily because it is protected by the good elves of Lapland. Overnight at the Hotel.

**Day 04 Rovaniemi – Snowmobile Safari & Visit to local Husky Farm**

After breakfast we proceed on a ***Snow Mobile Safari***, you will be given instructions on the operation of the snow mobile. The drive across the vast expanses of snow lined with Pine trees on either side. We arrive at the local Husky Farm, where the lovely husky dogs welcome you heartily, get familiar with these lovely arctic animals and their daily life and training. Take a ride on the sledge hauled by a dog team. Later in the afternoon we return to town onboard snowmobile. Overnight at the hotel.

**Day 05: Rovaniemi – Kemi**

After breakfast, we proceed to Kemi, located at the tip of Gulf of Bothnia, below the Arctic Circle and near the Swedish border. It is basically an International Seaport, which specializes in wood, pulp and paper. It is 80 kms from Rovaniemi. Arrive Kemi and proceed directly to “Sampo – **Ice Breaker**”, which is the number one attraction in Finland. The **Sampo** is described as a uniquely Finnish experience. Although many countries use icebreakers, only Finland has one available for tourists. Operated as a commercial icebreaker for thirty years, it has “retired” to make day trips for tourists. (This cruise takes approx. 4 hrs & operates in Winter months) The Sampo, is undoubtedly the most awesome experience especially when you are anchored in the middle of the Baltic Sea and get to float amidst the icebergs. It is unimaginable until you actually do it and a truly unique & exciting experience. From here we proceed to the **Snow Castle** – this is the biggest snow castle in the world. This snow castle has brought Kemi into the Guinness book of records. There is a snow bar, an art gallery, ice rooms, even a honeymoon suite with balcony fully made of ice. Overnight at the hotel **Cumulus Kemi**.

**Day 06 Kemi – Helsinki**

After breakfast, transfer to airport for your flight to Helsinki. Arrive Helsinki and transfer to your hotel. Day at leisure to further explore the city and for shopping! Overnight at the hotel.

**Day 07 :Depart**

Transfer to the airport for your return flight home.