

LAPLAND

Stretching over three Nordic countries – Norway, Sweden, Finland – and Russia, Lapland is the cultural region associated with the Sami people, one of the largest indigenous ethnic groups in Europe.

Although Lapland has been traditionally inhabited by the Sami people, they make up only a small minority of about 5% of the population. Yet, their culture and traditions remain deeply rooted in the region to this day, strengthened by the belief that the world around them is alive, and that every living and non-living being possesses in them a soul.

In fact, the mystery of Lapland not only lies in its breath-taking nature – which is a mere stone’s throw away from the bustling towns and ski resorts – but in its culture, which has been best exemplified with the Laplanders’ way of life. Nature has played such a central role, so much so that Laplanders spend most of their waking hours out in nature, and rely on it to make a living. Even their food, music, literature and art reflect this historic bond. And perhaps, it is their meaningful and empowering communing with nature that makes Lapland a special destination for the curious and wanting soul.

Travelers will find themselves deeply immersed in Lapland’s diverse natural wonder the moment they arrive. Coast over the snows by foot, on skis or sledge. Lapland’s wilderness is ripe whatever the season, the space around you seemingly limitless, the skies open, the mountains daunting and beckoning for a challenge.

It is only in Lapland where you can experience eight distinct seasons instead of four, as well as the Polar Night and the Polar Day, defined by the prolonged periods of a seemingly endless night and day. One can say that its attraction lies in its rather unique ability to offer travelers with distinct and sometimes extreme contrasts, set on a stage of vast natural exquisiteness. It is enough to make one feel rather small yet extremely whole and grateful.

Whether one is picking cloudberry in the marshes, skiing in the exotic wilderness of Riksgränsen, fishing for Skellefteå’s wild salmon, fishing for king crab in Kirkenes, dashing on a reindeer-drawn sleigh in Rovaniemi, or perhaps sitting by a campfire in the middle of “ruska” when a sea of green foliage turns to vivid shades of ruby, gold and copper, or for the child at heart – baking pastries with Santa’s elves in his secret forest, the possibilities for travelers in Lapland are many.

Did You Know?

- ❖ The trees in Lapland are known for their longevity, with many of the region’s snowy pine trees being over 200- to 300-years-old. The oldest pine tree in Inari, Finland is said to be 529-years-old.

Did You Know? (CONTINUED)

- ❖ When Sami people protest, they show their disdain by turning their 'gakti' (traditional clothes) inside-out. This is perhaps the strongest non-physical way of protesting for the Sami.
- ❖ In Bjurholm, Sweden, which is located in Southern Lapland, you will find Älgens Hus (the Moose House), where you can not only meet the enigmatic moose, but taste and purchase moose cheese, which is locally produced.
- ❖ Over 50% the Sweden's Laplanders work as farmers or in the forests, and the rest wander the wilderness with their reindeer.
- ❖ Ođđasat is the Sami television news program that is available in Norway, Sweden and Finland. The news are presented in Northern Sami and have either Finnish, Norwegian or Swedish subtitles for the respective areas.

