



Menesjärvi - Wilderness Auroras



HOLIDAY TYPE: Small Group
VISITING: Finland

BROCHURE CODE: 21001
DURATION: 4 nights

In Brief

This 4-night trip takes you to Menesjärvi, one of the wildest and most pristine locations we offer. With excellent Northern Lights viewing potential, incredible winter activities and the warmest of welcomes from hosts Anne and Timo, this is a very hard place to leave.

Our Opinion

“ I know it sounds corny but if you really want to hear the silence then Menesjärvi is the place to be. It's remote, it's serene, there is almost no light pollution whatsoever and the lake in front of the hotel has completely unadulterated views of the night sky. It's everything a wilderness should be. The activities on this trip also highlight the best that Lapland has to offer from husky sledding to snowshoeing to a wonderful morning with a reindeer herder. This topped with incredible Aurora potential makes it truly wonderful.

”

Amy Walkington-Gray



What's included?

ALL OF THE ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES LISTED BELOW ARE INCLUDED IN THE HOLIDAY PRICE

- **Flights:** return flights from London to Ivalo (via Helsinki). Flight routes are subject to change
- **Transfers:** return group airport transfers
- **Accommodation:** 4 nights twin/double hotel rooms
- **Meals:** 4 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 4 dinners
- **The following activities and equipment are included in the price:** snowmobile safari and winter fishing, Aurora workshop and Aurora snowshoe, morning with a reindeer herder, Aurora snowmobile safari, husky safari, visit to Inari*, Aurora dinner (the order of activities is subject to change)
- Cold weather clothing is provided for the duration of your stay
- Free use of snowshoes, cross-country skis, kicksleds and toboggans
- Services of our expert local guides

Trip Overview

With no light pollution and unobstructed views of the night sky from the lake, Menesjarvi offers visitors a high chance of witnessing the Northern Lights at their spectacular best.

Your base for your four nights here is Hotel Korpikartano, a wonderfully welcoming hotel which, as a former boarding school, has a unique charm and is full of character. The accommodation is rustic and simple, but being in the middle of nowhere, it is the perfect wilderness location for an Aurora trip.

This Northern Lights holiday is designed to keep you nicely busy, with great opportunities to try out snowshoeing and cross-country skiing during your free time, and explore this stunning scenery at your own pace. One of our personal highlights is the morning with a reindeer herder: a genuine experience where you can gain an insight into one of the most important industries in this corner of the world. You will also get the chance to take the reins on an exciting husky safari and to enjoy the thrill of snowmobiling. Evenings are of course spent trying to witness a spectacular sighting of the Aurora while taking part in a snowshoe walk, an Aurora snowmobiling session and an evening dinner outside in a traditional wooden kota.

There are many reasons why we love this location, but the real draw lies in its location and the people who will be looking after you. Anne and Timo are wonderfully welcoming hosts and with their team, they make everyone feel at home.

In the evenings when you are not enjoying activities, guests often gather to light a fire in one of the hotel's kotas, enjoying the warmth and company whilst awaiting the Northern Lights. If a display is visible then guests can typically be found on the frozen lake enjoying the view.

This destination is about meeting the real people who live in the region and getting to know them, as well as getting to experience their culture and the landscape in which they live. Of course, it is also designed to ensure you have the best chance of witnessing one of the greatest spectacles on the planet.

Image credits: Timo Halonen & Ville Heimonen



Agenda

Please note the order of activities is subject to change

DAY
1

FLIGHTS, ARRIVAL AND INTRODUCTION

Upon arrival at the airport, you will be met and transferred to the remote region of Menesjärvi. On the way, you will drive through an increasingly wild landscape before reaching Hotel Korpikartano.

After arriving at the hotel you will have a chance to settle into your rooms before enjoying dinner in the hotel dining room. You will also be given a brief introduction to the upcoming schedule of activities and will be provided with your cold weather clothing.

Before bed, we would suggest taking a walk down to the lake. Here you can see the vast Arctic sky from a prime vantage point and this is the ideal place to stand and wait for a potential Aurora display.

It may be that you are arriving on a late night flight – if this is the case then you will get a cold supper on arrival and be given your introduction and cold weather clothing the following morning.

Included Meals: Dinner

**DAY
2****SNOWMOBILE SAFARI, WINTER FISHING, AURORA WORKSHOP AND
NORTHERN LIGHTS SNOWSHOE**

Today you will get the chance to explore the endless, pristine wilderness of the surrounding area both during the day and at night.

Following breakfast this morning you will be given a safety briefing and full instruction on how to use snowmobiles before setting off on an exhilarating safari. You will travel two people per machine with the chance to take turns at driving (providing you both have full licences and are 18 years or over). If you would like to travel one person per snowmobile, see our '[Personalise](#)' section for more information. You will also try your hand at one of the most popular local pastimes – winter fishing.

Lunch and dinner are included today. After dinner, there will be a two-part Aurora workshop. Many of the guides here are exceedingly talented and passionate Aurora photographers.

You will see some of their spectacular images during the presentation alongside information on the science and myths behind the Aurora. If you are interested in photography and have the right equipment they will also give you tips on how to capture the Northern Lights on camera yourself.

The second part of your workshop involves outdoor tuition and photography practice before you strap on snowshoes and head out with your guide on a leisurely hike. Our local experts know all of the best spots from which to capture the Northern Lights and they will lead you to the ideal viewpoints.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**DAY
3****MORNING WITH A REINDEER HERDER AND AURORA SNOWMOBILING**

Today you will gain a far better understanding of the essential role of the reindeer herders in this traditional community. Reindeer are of the utmost importance in the region and many elements of herding have remained unchanged for centuries.

After breakfast, you will be transferred to a nearby reindeer farm where you will gain an insight into the life of a reindeer herder in this very special part of the world. During your visit, you will depart from the farm in a snowmobile-pulled sleigh and will travel out into the forest. You will journey through the beautiful untouched wilderness, reaching a clearing. Drawn by the promise of the food they are about to receive, the reindeer will make their way towards the herder and you will then be given the chance to feed them their favourite snack of lichen and take some photographs.

A fire will be lit and you can sit and watch the reindeer with a nice, warm drink. You can chat and ask the herder any questions you may have about the reindeer herd and their way of life. This activity will last for approximately three and a half hours, including transfers.

This afternoon is free for you to do as you wish, with lunch included. You will have access to snowshoes, cross-country skis and toboggan equipment at the hotel so you can explore in the snow independently if you have some experience. You must obtain maps and trail conditions from the reception before setting off.

Many people simply like to relax and unwind with a good book or perhaps enjoy the sauna facilities.

After a hearty meal this evening you will be back on the snowmobiles for a safari into the Arctic night. The mobility provided by the snowmobiles should enable you to hopefully escape any cloud cover that may obstruct a potential Aurora. Regardless, this will be a thrilling experience as the forest takes on a very different feel once darkness has fallen. You will travel two people per snowmobile with the chance to take turns (providing you both have full licences and are 18 years or over). This activity will last around two hours in total.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY
4

HUSKY SAFARI, SÁMI SIIDA MUSEUM AND AURORA DINNER

Along with the Aurora Borealis, one of the main highlights for most visitors to Lapland is a husky safari. Today it is your chance to feel the thrill of driving a team of eager dogs through this stunning landscape.

You will master the basics of dog sledding and receive a full safety briefing before heading out with your husky team (two people per sled) for a safari lasting around an hour. You will be out for around two and a half hours in total spending time with the dogs and enjoying a hot drink after the safari in a Lappish hut.

After your husky adventure, you will head to the village of Inari. Here you will have lunch and then have the chance to visit the famous Sámi Siida Museum. The wonderful exhibits, displays and presentations offer an insight into Sámi culture and life in this region, both past and present.

To allow you to bid farewell to Menesjärvi in style, tonight's dinner will be cooked on an open fire in one of the hotel's lakeside kotas. After a meal to remember, you can head to the lake and keep a watch for the Northern Lights.

***Please note:** *The Sámi Siida Museum will sadly be closed for renovation for the 2021/2022 season so the main exhibitions are not accessible. Guests will be able to visit the gift shop and the open-air museum – an outdoor trail showcasing exhibits on the cultural heritage, architectural heritage and livelihoods of Finland's three Sámi cultures. Guests are also welcome to visit Sajos, an architecturally beautiful building in the heart of Inari which is home to the Sámi Parliament and is the centre of Sámi culture and administration. Guided tours and an informative video are offered throughout the day and there is also a shop selling Sámi handicraft, books and music.*

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY
5

DEPARTURE

This morning it will be time to say goodbye to Menesjärvi and return to the airport for your flights home.

We can also help arrange a stopover in Helsinki for you should you wish to visit the city en route to home. All of the options can be found in the ['Personalise'](#) section of the holiday page.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Personalise this tour

Our pick



Cross-country skiing

Cross-country skiing is remarkably good fun and is an efficient way to travel and explore the terrain surrounding the hotel. Gliding across a frozen lake or through a snow-laden forest helps you understand why people get addicted to this pastime. Your guide will give instructions and lead you through the forest on a short ski trip. The skis will then be yours for the remainder of the day should you wish to further enhance your skills. This is an excellent option for your first full day in Lapland.

Duration: 1 – 1.5 hrs (ski hire for the day)

Other options

ACTIVITIES



Additional Aurora snowshoe session

Wandering around on snowshoes is a classic way of getting around in Lapland, taking you into some truly quiet natural spaces. Why not add another to your holiday for an extra session of therapeutic walking, looking out to see if the Aurora are dancing in the skies above?

Duration: 2 hours

Image credit: Timo Halonen



Riding one person per snowmobile

Driving a snowmobile over the open whiteness is utterly electrifying, so it is well worth upgrading to drive your own snowmobile for the whole activity, rather than going two per vehicle.

TRIP EXTENSIONS



Helsinki city break

With our destinations being so remote, the majority of flights to Finnish Lapland are operated by Finnair and therefore involve connecting through Helsinki Airport. Many of our guests choose to extend this stop and spend some time in the Finnish capital, either at the start or end of their holiday.

We can arrange a wide variety of city centre hotel accommodation for guests to choose from and some options closer to the airport should you prefer. We know that everyone tends to be looking for something different

so please contact our travel experts for their opinion on the hotels which may best suit you and your party.

Located on the peninsula of the Baltic Sea, Helsinki enjoys a charming coastal location and has much to offer its guests. This thriving city has a rich culture and arts scene with many museums and galleries to enjoy alongside the exciting gastronomy.

Despite its cool urbanism and a reputation for cutting-edge design, Helsinki also retains its charm and visitors will enjoy this city's very friendly atmosphere.

In the city itself, Senate Square is the main feature, showcasing neoclassical architecture and offering easy access to the surrounding shops. With Helsinki once part of the duchy of Russia, it offers similar striking architecture, with wide streets and bold facades. For those looking for more of an insight into the city's past, we would suggest visiting the Ateneum Art Museum which houses over 20,000 pieces of art, or the Helsinki Design Museum which showcases the history of design in the country from traditional folklore to postmodernism.

A 15-minute ferry ride from the main city is the UNESCO-listed Suomenlinna Sea Fortress which was

constructed in 1748. As well as being a unique monument, it is also a lovely day trip, as the island has numerous shops and parks to explore.

Helsinki's food scene has seen a recent evolution, with a growth in street food which showcases the city's multicultural population. Helsinki is famed also for its specialist dishes of seafood and Russian cuisine so there is much to sample!

Finland is famed for its coffee consumption so you can be sure of a thriving café culture here. Be sure to include an obligatory stop for a coffee and a cinnamon roll during your explorations!

Whether you add your city break onto the start or the end of your holiday, spending a night or two in Helsinki is not something that you will regret.

Please contact our Travel Experts for a full quotation. All city breaks are subject to flight availability.

Image credit: VisitFinland

Included Accommodation

Hotel Korpikartano (Nights: 1-4)



Hotel Korpikartano is a very special place in a breath-taking location in Finnish Lapland. Its situation could not be more idyllic, with a fantastic outlook over Lake Menesjärvi and the remote wilderness beyond. The lack of artificial light in the area ensures that if the Aurora appears, then you can enjoy amazing displays from very close to the hotel.

Hotel Korpikartano was originally a boarding school for those growing up in this remote part of the world and is, therefore, full of quirks, character and charm. The welcome provided by the owners, Anne and Timo (Timo is retired but still makes regular appearances to take Aurora photos here), creates a wonderful atmosphere and their passion for the region is infectious.

The staff and guides have a huge passion for this landscape and for providing guests with a truly memorable stay.

The hotel comprises of two main buildings. The first houses the dining room and a number of bedrooms. A separate annexe building (a very short walk away) houses the majority of the guest accommodation.

It is a place with great soul and which offers guests the chance to completely switch off from the everyday and relax in a wild and beautiful environment. You are likely to leave feeling very privileged to have experienced this wonderful place.

Hotel facilities

- Traditional home cooking is the order of the day in the hotel's dining room. The food can be described as 'simple, tasty and hearty' and is very much designed to fuel you up for your outdoor adventures. In many cases, the evening's set menu will contain local ingredients such as fresh fish that Timo has caught, berries Anne has foraged, or meat purchased from the local reindeer herders. The set meals are all self-service. Breakfast is a buffet of breads, meat, cheese and fish with the addition of porridge and fruit. Lunch and evening meals start with a salad and bread, a set main and then a pudding which is often a local speciality. Please let us know at the time of booking if you have any dietary requirements so these can be accommodated.
- You can also purchase a range of wine, beer and spirits to accompany your meal.
- Obviously, saunas are a pre-requisite in these parts and there are two, one in each building. They can each be booked privately by guests each day in hour long slots.
- There is an outdoor wood-burning sauna and rustic hot tub. Should you request the use of the outdoor sauna (a local charge will apply), don't forget that a dip in the lake (in autumn) or a roll in the snow (in winter) is almost obligatory (as long as you are in a good physical condition).
- The simple lounge (near the reception) provides tea and coffee making facilities. Consider this to be the perfect spot to relax by the stove with a book but remember to keep your eyes peeled for the Northern Lights as the windows face north!
- There is free Wi-Fi for guests to use throughout both buildings and there is a PC available at reception.
- Books and games are also available to borrow from reception.
- If you are travelling in the winter then the hotel offers free use of snowshoes, cross-country skis, kick sleds and toboggans so there is also something for those who love the great outdoors and want to explore independently between activities. There are marked trails across the stunning frozen lake and maps are available at reception.
- If you want to send a memento home, then there are postcards available to purchase and some of Timo's Aurora photography is for sale. Anne also knits cosy woollen socks for charity and these can usually be purchased at reception.
- There is a lakeside Kota (wooden tepee) which is open for all guests during the evening. Here you can light a fire and warm up in between forays out onto the lake in search of the Northern Lights.

Room types

The 28 guest bedrooms vary in size and shape as you may expect from a former school. They are cosy, comfortable and decorated with locally-sourced wood. Some of the furnishings have been crafted by Timo's own hand.

All guest bedrooms have an en-suite bathroom with shower and a hairdryer. Cups and kettles are provided in each bedroom and a variety of teas and coffee is available in each building for you to take to your room.

Image credit: Timo Halonen, Matt Robinson (please note: The images depicted show the hotel during both the winter and autumn months)

The Specifics

Holiday group size (approximate)

This holiday requires a minimum of 2 people to run, however, on some dates, we require a minimum of 8 people for our flight allocation. Maximum 24 people (approximately). Please speak to our Travel Experts for further information.

Group Size

We always try to provide an approximation of the group size you can expect to be with for the duration of each of our holidays. It may be that you are joined by others for parts of your holiday (such as transfers and particular activities) but the above number reflects those you can normally expect to be with from beginning to end. If group size is something which is particularly important to you, please speak to our Travel Experts and they can suggest the best holidays for you.

Tailor-made holiday group sizes will vary for all activities as will the group size for any additional activities you book.

Minimum numbers required for a holiday to operate

Some of our holidays require a minimum number of participants to operate (as listed in the 'Group Size' section). If your holiday departure has not yet reached the minimum number, you will be told at the time of booking. In the unlikely event that your chosen date is not guaranteed by nine weeks before your scheduled departure date, we will contact you to discuss the available options as per our [booking conditions](#).

Minimum and maximum age

If a specific minimum age applies to this holiday, it can be found in the Key Facts box on the holiday Overview page.

Unless otherwise stated in the Key Facts box on the holiday Overview page, the minimum age for participation in an Aurora Zone holiday is typically 12 years old (there may be younger children in some destinations who have booked with other companies). If an adult-only environment is important to you, then please contact our Travel Experts and they will advise on the best dates and destinations

for you. If you are looking for a holiday designed specifically for families then please see our sister company www.activitiesabroad.com.

Itinerary amendments

The order of activities listed in this agenda is provided for guidance only, your final and detailed itinerary will be provided either with your final travel documents (which are uploaded into your online account around a week prior to departure) or upon arrival.

Terms and Conditions

Our full booking terms and conditions can be found on our website: <https://www.theaurorazone.com/booking-conditions>