

"Arctic Safari at the Top of the World"

February 12 – 19, 2019

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"Winter is coming!" - Ned Stark from Game of Thrones

Come spark your sense of wonder on another magical AFS adventure deep into Finland where you'll witness nature in its purest form. A glistening Arctic Kingdom of Snow & Ice awaits for what will be your coolest vacay ever! Behold the Northern Lights where nothing separates you and sky, but the ceiling of your Glass Igloo. You'll love these lux igloos, but the new Arctic Treehouse Suites set in the forested Arctic Circle are off the charts! Add reindeer, huskies, woodland saunas, Helsinki, even a day in Tallinn Estonia - you have Polar Dream come true.

This trip to the Top of the World is one our clients constantly beg us for a repeat. Lapland is the Disneyland for adults. Thermal suits are provided to ensure you'll stay warm while taking in the frosted fairyland that is Finland. It is truly a winter wonderland surrounded by untamed wilderness. Winter is high season here because Rovaniemi makes it so much to play in the snow.

After a stay in uber-cool Helsinki, we fly north to Rovaniemi, the ultimate destination for those who truly want to experience winter fun. In this adventure capital, our Snow Safari begins donning snowsuits to meet the teams of happy huskies at the Husky Farm for an afternoon of dogsledding across the pristine landscape! Enjoy a scrumptious hot Lappish lunch at the not-to-be-believed Arctic Snow Hotel, constructed of snow and ice! Then, don snowshoes to trek through the deep powder of snow blanketed forests and a night coach tour in search of Northern Light

We'll meet up with the true Father Christmas at Santa's Village and later take snowmobiles to visit his reindeer at the Reindeer Farm. These special creatures are maintained by the indigenous Sami people whose culture is so intertwined with preserving reindeer. Reindeer sleigh rides with an Arctic Circle Ceremony adds a special touch. Each evening on our Arctic Adventure, we have the chance to see those magnificent Northern lights as they shimmer across the night sky. This will fill fast, limited to 15 twin rooms. Awaken your spirit of wonder with us on a snow safari you'll treasure forever!

Feb 12 - Depart on group air, Finnair non-stop JFK-HEL. You'll fly into Helsinki across a glistening landscape of frozen lakes and snow-laden forests. Get ready for the perfect winter adventure!

Feb 13 - Welcome to Friendly Finland!

D

The Finnish capital will surprise you. For a bustling capital of commerce for this Baltic country, it is remarkably intimate with most points of interest within walking distance.

We will explore Helsinki on a three-hour sightseeing tour by coach. Among the highlights are the Olympic stadium from the 1952 Summer Games, the 1888 Old Market Hall which offers an array of food stalls, the stunning Helsinki Cathedral and the incomparable Temppeliaukio Rock Church. Built into natural bedrock, the skylights in the Rock Church's copper dome ceiling play with shadows to make this a church like no other.

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In the evening, get to know your fellow AFSers at our Welcome Dinner here at the Sokos.

Overnight Sokos Presidentii

Feb 14 Helsinki - Rovaniemi

B

After our hotel buffet breakfast, we make our way to the airport to fly north to the Arctic Circle and Lapland's energetic capital Rovaniemi. Located at the junction of two great rivers, Rovaniemi is a bustling university city and a commercial center for the area with an international ambiance.

Glass Igloo

But most importantly, Rovaniemi is the official hometown of Santa Claus! We'll get the opportunity to meet the big guy himself since we'll be staying in igloos at his headquarters.

Lapland includes four countries. Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia. Finland's Lapland is located at the regions northernmost reaches. During the winter, the days are short and the

nights are long but the snow means reflects the moon and stars and of course the Northern Lights, illuminating the serene landscape. You'll have the evening free to enjoy this gleaming modern city where centuries-old traditions are maintained. Dinner at on own

Note there will be plenty of free time to play as well. See visitrovaniemi.fi for endless possibilities. Check out the Ice Float, the awesome evening Sauna experiences here from jacuzzi to snow, herbal to traditional, skiing, horse riding and more.

Overnight Santa Claus Hotel Glass Igloo. (A fabulous property of luxury glass igloos with a great restaurant right on the arctic circle. Our past groups flew to Ivalo for igloos at Kakslautanen but no more - property was taken over by a Chinese firm which raised prices and lowered the service.).

Feb 15 Rovaniemi - Dogsledding, Ice Hotel and Snowshoeing B/L

Eat a hearty breakfast at the hotel because we have a full day of snow safari ahead of us... starting with an exhilarating two and half hour dogsledding adventure, (most are just 30 minutes.). We will meet our local guide to get properly suited with winter clothing (thermal overalls, socks, shoes, gloves, wool scarf and helmet). Once our warmth is assured, we are ready to set out for the first of our arctic adventures.

Mushing is a must when it comes to Lapland experiences. These huskies want to run and the fast-paced journey covers pristine, snow-covered fields and forests at an amazing speed. The Huskie Farm is home to hundreds of dogs, eager to pull a sled. They will howl and bark in anticipation until the command of "Mush" is heard. From there on, the only the sounds besides your own Ooo's and Ahhh's will be the shushing of your sled through the untouched snow. This is an experience that you will never forget! Please note there will be two people per sled and no trying to sneak your sleddogs home with you!

Snow and Ice Hotel - Lunch will be a truly cool experience for both its mouthwatering local cuisine and for the location— at the Arctic Snow Hotel on the shore of a beautiful Lappish lake. The hotel and the restaurant are incredibly made of snow and ice! We'll warm your insides with dishes like creamy salmon soup or roasted reindeer sausage. Our tables and chairs... and even the glasses are entirely made of ice! But you'll stay warm with the blankets and food provided.

Snowshoe Trekking - In the afternoon, we don snowshoes to explore the magical, snow-hooded forests to experience the pristine nature of Lapland. Enjoy the fresh, winter air as the deep snow crunches under our shoes. Have your cameras ready. With any luck, we may see a Siberian jay, a pearly-white willow grouse, or a herd of reindeer wandering by.

We return to Rovaniemi in the late afternoon for a free evening and dinner on your own.

Overnight Santa Claus Hotel Standard Glass Igloo

Feb 16 Rovaniemi City Tour - Santa's Village - Northern Lights Tour

B

City Tour - Start our day with a guided tour of Rovaniemi which culminates with a trip to Santa's Village. Here, we get to do the one thing that every kid dreams of! Meet the real Santa Claus! First, we will all gather in Santa's Office and tell our secrets to him. Maybe even slip him our wish list for next Christmas? He's the real deal! Fluent in over 100 languages. Also, we will take a group photo (photos and USB-sticks possible to buy on the spot).

Santa's Village is also the best place to do some unique souvenir shopping. The Christmas spirit lives here year round!. We'll have some extra time for lunch on your own and even more shopping opportunities - not just here, but in Rovaniemi itself.

In the afternoon, we check into the stunning Arctic Tree House. Surrounded by pine forests, each room is its own pod with panoramic window to allow for the best tree-top viewing of the Northern lights.

Northern Lights Tour - Dinner is on our own, but we gather later for an evening outing in search of that perfect photo op of the Aurora Borealis! Tonight we enjoy a guided tour by coach into the wilderness. The Vikings believed that the Northern Lights were the reflection from armor worn by warrior maidens known as the Valkyries. In fact, it is a phenomenon caused by thousands of photons discharges that are released into the air, tinged the horizon of green and yellow, with intense shades of red, blue and purple. As we embark into the darkness we hope to get the chance to see these mystical lights dancing in the sky.

Overnight Arctic Tree House Suite

Feb 17 Snowmobiling – Reindeer - Arctic Circle Ceremony. Fly back to Helsinki B

After breakfast, we head out early for a little driving test – a Reindeer driver's license test!

It's just part of a snowmobile adventure to get better acquainted with Santa's flying friends, the reindeer. There will be 2 riders per snowmobile as we zip through a Lapland winter wonderland to a reindeer farm. On our snowmobile safari, our route will be lined with a breathtakingly beautiful landscape of the fields, the powdery snowdrifts, and trees bowing down under the weight of the snow.

The reindeer farm is an incredible cultural experience. For centuries, the indigenous Sami people have overseen the raising and care of the reindeer. One of their knowledgeable herders will greet us and teach us more about reindeer husbandry and the Lappish culture. We'll take a reindeer sleigh ride and be tested to receive an international reindeer driver's license. Our visit to the Arctic Circle will be commemorated with traditional Sami Crossing ceremony. Enjoy a cup of hot coffee or berry juice before returning back to the town and then airport.

Overnight Sokos Presidentii

Feb 18 Free day! (Optional Tallinn Tour)

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Today is a day at leisure to further explore Helsinki or you can choose our optional full day tour of Tallinn, Estonia. If you haven't been here, this fairytale city is a delight. It's a fun ride on the new Mega ferry across the Gulf of Finland.

Our Estonian guide awaits you. Tallinn is just a gulf away from Finland, but it's a world away in culture and ambiance. Our guide will meet us on arrival for a wonderful walking tour. The historic walled city is storybook enchanting with its cobblestoned streets and quaint shops and cafes. The Old Towne is a UNESCO World Heritage site with a photo op around every corner. Grand merchant houses, ancient churches and old warehouses line the streets. The four-hour tour includes a visit to the main square with its Gothic Town Hall, built in the 13th century and with its imposing 64m-high tower. We'll also see the landmark St. Nicholas Church which exhibits amazing ecclesiastical art and visit the Estonian parliament building known as Toompea Castle. (\$175, based on min of 20 people)

Overnight Sokos Presidentii

Feb 19 Back home

After breakfast, we bid farewell to Finland with independent transfers to airport.

Land cost: €2695 euros (today about \$3150)

Group Air: \$998 + \$87 taxes (taxes can change until group ticketed)

We looked into only offering the internal legs HEL-ROV, but found stupid high prices. You can, however, do all your own air if you choose. Only Finnair goes direct. You may want to add on another destination on your own. We feel you should take advantage of the great total group air price with all 4 legs direct on Finnair from USA! Believe it or not, this is high season in ROV.

FEB 12 AY006 JFK-HEL. 5:45PM - 8:50AM FEB 13

FEB 14 AY533. HEL-ROV 12:15PM-1:35PM

FEB 17 AY534. ROV-HEL. 2:10PM-3:30PM

FEB 19 AY005. HEL-JFK 2:10PM-3:55PM

Check in Finnair counter 3 PM at JFK. You land Feb 19 at 3:55, perfect for connections home.

Just 21 seats reserved on first come basis. Choose this as an option when booking or email us.

Deposit \$750 Final payment is due Sep 30, 2018

Includes: Accommodations, breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 dinner, all activities listed, tour guides, AFS tour leader

Not included: Gratuities \$70, optional Tallinn day tour \$195, air