



**KNUT
REISEN**

Tour Description

6 Days on a Snowmobile in wild Northern Russia

Dates 2021:

04.02. – 09.02.

10.02. – 15.02. (route backwards)

Short description:

Discover the **Northern Russian Wilderness** on a **Snowmobile**. North of the Polar Circle you will explore areas of the **Kola Peninsulas** that can be reached in summer only by boat or helicopter (if at all). You will maneuver with your snowmobile through deep snow and quiet white forests, over icy mountain passes, frozen lakes, rivers and bogs. You will encounter **remote villages** of reindeer herders and with some luck you will be able to see the big **reindeer herds** and some **polar lights**. Warm up in the russian sauna "**banya**" and stay the night at friendly host families in remote villages and in comfy and warm forest cabins.

We advise you to drive on your own snowmobile. if you plan to share the skidoo with your friend or partner, this is possible but please contact us for advise. Suitable for **motivated participants** (beginners and experienced drivers) who enjoy snow and ice and who do not mind overnights in rustic but **warm wooden huts** (2-bed or 3-bed-rooms).

The route:

Kirovsk – Khibiny – Lake Umbozero – Lake Lovozero – Village of Krasnoshelye– Village of Varzuga – Village of Kuzomen – White Sea – City of Kandalaksha

The trip starts from the largest mountain massif on the peninsula, the Khibiny. We'll spend a day to explore the paths, to climb the peaks by snowmobile, and to race in mountain valleys. After the Khibiny you can view the Lovozero tundras, a mysterious mountain massif which is said by some be the center of an ancient Hyperborean civilization. Hundreds of kilometers of forest-tundra and huge peat bogs separate the village of Krasnoshelye ("red ravine") from civilization. Expedition participants will spend a day there getting to know the life of this unique settlement from inside. In Krasnoshelye you'll taste local delicacies that are not served in any of the restaurants! The expedition will end in the old Pomor village of Varzuga, famous for its wooden churches that include the Church of the Assumption built in 1674 "not



using a single nail". And, of course, by the end of the expedition you'll see the White Sea full of ice-drift.

Points of interest along the route: distinctive life of indigenous northern people, reindeer herds, mountains, tundra, forests, lakes, virgin landscapes, fishing, mountain lakes, Pomor villages, the 17th century Church of the Assumption, the White Sea, the Village of Krasnoshelye, sauna with snow rolls.

You will have a good chance of seeing wild animals (partridges, grouse, foxes, hares, reindeer) and aurora borealis.

Day by day description

Day 0:

Travel day to get to the Northern Russian settlement of Apatity (or straight to Kirovsk). You can also arrive to any of the Russian cities of Murmansk, Saint Petersburg or Moscow a few days earlier. We will help you to organize your travels.

Day 1:

The day before or today in the morning we will meet you at the train station of Apatity (optional: in Murmansk) and transfer you to the gateway to the Kola Peninsula: Kirovsk. Here the participants will meet and have breakfast together in a café. After breakfast follows the instruction part and all the equipment will be given out at our snowmobile center. Then the trip begins. The first part of the trip through the mountains to our Kuelporr guesthouse which is around 25 km from Kirovsk.

Lunch in the guesthouse.

Then we will start on the first day with a circular snowmobile route in alpine surroundings. In the afternoon we get back to Kuelporr and move on to the dinner.

The daily distance travelled will be about 60 km.

Day 2:

Breakfast. On our snowmobiles we will climb two passes: Kukisvumchorr and Umbozero pass. After this we will descent down to frozen Umbozero lake and pass the mountain massif "Lovozero tundras" along its southern foothills. We will stay for the night in the Yulinskaya Salma guesthouse at the edge of Lake Lovozero.

The daily distance travelled will be about 110 km.

Day 3:

Breakfast. Start the tour towards the east of Kola Peninsula. The route passes through untouched landscapes of the central part of Kola. During our tour it is not unlikely to encounter wild animals. In case of favorable weather conditions, the route passes through untouched, wild and beautiful areas, and we will pay a visit to the reindeer herder's team of Semiostrove. In case of bad weather we must take the Krasnoschelskomu winter road for safety reasons.

Lunch on the way.

After arrival in the village Krasnoshchelye, sauna and dinner.

The daily distance travelled will be about 180 km



Day 4:

Late breakfast. Visit the village attractions of our remote settlement. We will pay a visit to the local museum and to the school, and we will have a snowmobile excursion in the surrounding area. There is also a chance to try some ice fishing through a hole today.

After the return to our private guesthouse, dinner and a local folk ensemble's concert will be waiting for us.

The daily distance travelled will be about 40 km.

Day 5:

Breakfast. Route Krasnoshchelye - Varzuga.

The route of this day double-crosses Varzuga River, as well as the Arctic Circle. Ice fishing on the way for big perch in Lake Sergozero. Overnight in the ancient Pomeranian village Varzuga in a private guest house. Dinner with the excellent Pomor cuisine.

Sauna evening to celebrate our last night together.

The daily distance travelled will be about 130 km.

Day 6:

Breakfast.

Varzuga tour through the village, visit the famous wooden orthodox churches of Varzuga.

Snowmobile trips to the mouth of the river Varzuga into the White Sea. Excursion to the old village of Kuzomen, a solemn exit onto the ice of the White Sea.

Return to Varzuga. Lunch, end of route; transfer in a minibus to the train station of Kandalaksha (250 km) and travel further by train. Optional to Murmansk Airport (480 km).

The daily distance travelled will be about 40 km.

Overnights:

The Kuelporr Guesthouse is a modern one-story building with a loft, and a large hall with a fireplace. The guesthouse has electricity and running hot water. Double rooms with private facilities (shower, toilet, cloth dryer). There also are 6-bed rooms with shared facilities. The guesthouse is within mobile phone coverage. Internet is available for an additional fee. Our guests describe the Kuelporr Guesthouse as a very atmospheric place.

Yulinskaya Salma Guesthouse, a comfortable house with all conveniences, 2-3 persons per room, shared facilities on the same floor. The guesthouse is cozy in a home-like way, good homemade meals, cheerful personnel, a great bathhouse. It is within the reach of mobile operators (Megafon and MTS).

The Krasnoshchelye Guesthouse is on the edge of this remote village and is surrounded by pine forest. Accommodation is three persons per room. Warm, clean, and cozy. Common living room. Excellent local cuisine: moose, venison, cloudberries, whitefish. Many of our guests said that they had never before tried anything that delicious! In the daytime an outside toilet is used while there are indoor facilities for the night. Washing basins are in the house. A large local design sauna combines the steam and washing section.

The Varzuga Guesthouse: A small wooden wing of the main house. 2-3 persons per room. Unheated toilet outside and a warm one at the owners' house. Very delicious Pomor food:



salmon and pickled vegetables. There is a hot sauna. The house is on a small hill overlooking the village, and one can see the Varzuga River and famous Varzuga churches.

Our snowmobiles and equipment:

We use only advanced, comfortable, and reliable snowmobiles. We get new snowmobiles every year, and none of them are more than two years old. They are all kept in excellent technical condition.

We use four-stroke Lynx 49 Rangers made by BRP in Canada.

We recommend that our guests ride ONE PERSON per snowmobile. Even though all of our snowmobiles have a passenger seat, it is tiring and cold to ride there, and the presence of a passenger makes controlling the snowmobile much harder and more dangerous.

What to bring:

Prepare for daytime temperatures between 0° and -25° C. At times the sun (with the reflection of the snow) can be quite intense, even in February. But of course, colder temperatures will prevail. At night it can be even colder, but if it is a clear night with polar lights you want to be prepared to go out for a while to watch the spectacular northern sky.

Good, warm winter clothing is essential on this tour, but parts of it are included. We will provide: special warm snowmobile boots, winter overall for snowmobiles, helmets with an eyepiece and balaclavas (woolen hats to wear under the helmets), special furry mittens in case of very cold weather.

Bring normal warm skiing gloves, they are usually enough (skidoo handles are heatable). For details see the package list.

Do NOT bring hard suitcases, but soft bags or backpacks with no more than 60-70 litres volume.

Do NOT use your glasses when riding the snowmobile! They will steam up and freeze immediately. Bring contact lenses or use special glasses for alpine skiing.

The organizers provide Reima and Scott overalls, helmets with double glass, and snowmobiling boots and gloves. The use of own equipment is allowed and encouraged.

The Package list is downloadable on our website.

Duration: 6 days/5 nights

Length of the route: 600 km

Snowmobiles per group: 8



Age limitation: from 18

Price: 1430,- €

Participants: 4-10

Enrolment until: 6-7 weeks before departure (later enrolment not outruled)

Included are:

all overnights and meals according to program; snowmobile rental; winter clothes and equipment as described in our package list; transfers from Apatity train station to the start of the tour, transfer to Kandalaksha train station in the end; Russian and English speaking guide; certificate of insurance against operator's insolvency.

Extra costs:

Visa to Russia cost approx. 100-120 €.

Direct flights from airports in Germany to Petersburg or Moscow cost in winter around 100-250 € for both ways.

Prices for flights to Murmansk vary a lot. Not from all airports it is easy to find good connections with a short stopover.

The 23 hour train ride from Petersburg in a 4-bed-compartment will cost you approx. 120 € (one way).

The 32 hour train ride from Moscow in a 4-bed-compartment will cost you approx. 130 € (one way).

The 3,5 hour train ride from Murmansk starts at 35 €.

We can obtain all these train tickets for you and organize your transfers.

For some of these connections it might be necessary (or desirable if you want to stay longer) to include an overnight in a hotel somewhere. We will advise you about possibilities according to your personal needs and wishes!

Attention! In order to obtain a Russian visa you need a passport with a validity of at least 6 months longer than the date of your exit from Russia.

How to get there:

You should buy a flight to Murmansk, Saint Petersburg or Moscow - the first being the nearest, the last being the furthest away from the tour. So it might be a good idea to combine the tour with a visit to one (or more) of these cities.

We will help you finding the best and cheapest flight for you and we will organize all transports in Russia for you.

The tour itself starts in Kirovsk and ends with a bus transfer to a town called Kandalaksha, both on the Kola Peninsula.

Kandalaksha has a trainstation with connections to Murmansk, Petersburg and Moscow. So does Apatity where we will pick you up at the start.

So either you come there by train (organised by us) or you fly to Murmansk and we will pick you up from the airport there for a 3 hour transfer.