

GLOBL TRAVEL PRESENTS

LAPLAND

THE COMPLETE TRAVEL GUIDE

Everything you need. Nothing you don't.

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The Northern Lights
Up to ~200 nights a year



Husky Sledding
Drive your own team



Glass Igloos
Watch the sky from bed

What "Lapland" means in this guide

Lapland spans four countries. This guide covers **Finnish Lapland** in full — the region almost everyone means when they say "Lapland", and the one with the flights, the huskies and Santa. Swedish and Norwegian Lapland get their own cross-border box on p.11.

Quick-Start Essentials

CURRENCY

EUR €

Card works everywhere — cash is genuinely rare.

PLUG TYPE

 Type C / F

230 V, two round pins. UK and US visitors need an adaptor.

EMERGENCY

112

One number for police, fire, ambulance and mountain rescue.

TIME ZONE

EET

UTC+2 in winter, UTC+3 late Mar–Oct. An hour ahead of Sweden.

DRIVING

Right side

Winter tyres are required from Nov–Mar whenever conditions demand. Every hire car has them.

TAP WATER

Safe ✓

Among the cleanest on earth. Never buy bottled water here.

WHEN TO GO

Dec Santa season. Deepest magic, highest prices, thinnest snow of the winter months.

Jan–Feb Coldest and darkest. Best snow, strong aurora, far cheaper than December.

Mar The sweet spot. Deep snow, long bright days, excellent aurora, low prices.

Jun–Jul Midnight sun, 24-hour daylight, hiking — and serious mosquitoes.

Sep *Ruska* — the autumn colours. Aurora returns. Quietest month of all.

LIGHT & DARKNESS

Polar night *Kaamos* **KAH-moss**. The sun never clears the horizon at all — north of Levi only, and only around midwinter.

Not pitch black Even in kaamos you get 4–5 hours of blue twilight daily. It is beautiful, not bleak.

Midnight sun The sun never sets: mid-May to late July in the far north, June to early July in Rovaniemi. Bring an eye mask, seriously.

Further north Utsjoki gets nearly eight weeks of true polar night, Inari six, Levi three. Rovaniemi gets none — the sun scrapes the horizon even at midwinter.

Aurora season Late Aug – early Apr. There is no aurora in summer — the sky never darkens.



⚠ Hit a reindeer? You must report it

Around 4,000 reindeer are hit by cars here each year. None are wild — every one is owned by a herder. You are **legally required to report a collision by calling 112**, even if the animal runs off and your car is fine. Where there's one reindeer, there are five more.

Free money you're probably leaving behind

Non-EU residents can claim **VAT back** on purchases over €40 from tax-free-marked shops — up to 16% on Lappish design, outdoor gear and jewellery. Ask for the form at the till and process it at the airport before you check your bags.

Language & Phrases

FINNISH — THE ONES THAT ACTUALLY GET USED

Moi / Hei	Hi MOY / HAY	Kiitos	Thank you KEE-toss
Ole hyvä	You're welcome OH-leh HOO-va	Joo / Ei	Yes / No YOH / AY
Anteeksi	Sorry / excuse me AN-tayk-si	Näkemiin	Goodbye NA-keh-meen
Kippis!	Cheers! KIP-piss	Puhutko englantia?	Do you speak English? POO-hoot-koh ENG-lan-tee-ah

WORDS YOU'LL SEE ON SIGNS AND MENUS

Revontulet	Northern lights — "fox fires" REH-von-too-let	Kaamos	The polar night KAH-moss
Ruska	The autumn colours ROOS-ka	Sauna	Sauna SOW-na, never "SAW-na"
Löyly	The steam off the sauna stones LEU-loo	Avanto	The ice hole you swim in AH-van-toh
Poro	Reindeer POH-roh	Tunturi	Fell — a rounded Arctic mountain TOON-too-ree
Lounas	Weekday lunch buffet LOH-nass	Sisu	Stubborn grit. The national character. SEE-soo

NORTHERN SÁMI — THE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE OF THE REGION

Bures	Hello BOO-res	Giitu	Thank you GHEE-too
Boazu	Reindeer BWAH-tsoo	Guovssahasat	Northern lights GWOSS-a-ha-sat
Gákti	Traditional Sámi dress GAHK-tee	Mo manná?	How's it going? moh MAN-na

🚫 One rule: never call a Sámi person a "Lapp"

Safety in Lapland

OVERALL RATING

Very safe

Finland is consistently ranked among the safest countries in the world.

CRIME RISK

Very low

Violent crime is rare and pickpocketing is close to unheard of in Lapland.

⚠ THE REAL RISK

The cold

Nearly every incident here is environmental, not criminal. Read p.15.

THE FOUR GENUINE DANGERS

Thin ice

Winter driving

Getting lost

Darkness



Unlocks when you buy the guide

WILDLIFE — WHAT'S ACTUALLY OUT THERE

Predators Bears, wolves, wolverines and lynx all live here, and you will not meet one. Bears hibernate Nov–Mar, exactly when visitors come.

If you do meet a bear Don't run. Speak calmly, back away slowly, and leave it a way out. Never get between a mother and her cubs.

Moose & reindeer Far more dangerous — as a collision, not an attack. Moose come through the windscreen. Slow down at dawn and dusk.



The summer problem nobody warns you about

Healthcare & insurance

Drink-driving

Connectivity & Apps

 **Get your Finland eSIM before you land**

⚠ CRITICAL — DOWNLOAD FIRST

112 Suomi

The official emergency app. Transmits your exact GPS position to the dispatcher automatically. On a frozen lake at midnight with no landmarks to describe, that is the difference between a 20-minute response and a two-hour search.

Foreca

A Finnish weather service, and far more accurate this far north than Apple or Google.

AURORA HUNTING

FMI Aurora Nowcast

The Finnish Meteorological Institute's own feed. The most reliable source there is.

My Aurora Forecast

Best all-rounder. Push alerts when activity spikes near you.

SpaceWeatherLive

For the obsessives — live solar wind speed and Bz orientation.

CONDITIONS

Windy

Hour-by-hour cloud cover. Cloud is your real enemy, not solar activity.

Retkikartta

Official map of national parks, trails and free wilderness huts.

Offline maps

Download the whole region in Google Maps before driving north.

TRANSPORT

VR Matkalla

Trains, including the Santa Claus Express sleeper and car transport.

Matkahuolto

Intercity and airport buses. Cheapest way between towns.

Menevä / Taksini

Taxi booking. There is no Uber up here.

MONEY

 **Unlocks when you buy the guide**

Alko

Store locator for the state alcohol monopoly. Closed Sundays.

FOOD

ResQ Club

The Finnish Too Good To Go — surplus restaurant food at a third of the price.



Signal, realistically

Getting There & Around

FLY STRAIGHT IN — PICK THE AIRPORT THAT MATCHES YOUR BASE

RVN Rovaniemi — Santa, the Arctic Circle, most winter charters.

KTT Kittilä — the ski fells. 15 min to Levi, 40 to Ylläs.

IVL Ivalo — the far north. Saariselkä 30 min, Inari 40.

KEM Kemi-Tornio — the SnowCastle and the icebreaker.

ENF Enontekiö — remote fells and Kilpisjärvi. Very limited.

HEL Helsinki — connect on a 1h20 hop, or take the night train.



The night train is the best-value arrival in Europe

ONCE YOU'RE THERE

- **Hire a car if you plan to chase aurora.** The single biggest upgrade to a Lapland trip — you can drive out from under cloud. Winter tyres are fitted to every hire car through the winter; ask for the block heater cable and use it.
- **There is no Uber in Lapland.** Use *Menevä*, *Taksini* or *02 Taksi*, or ask your hotel. Fares are metered and pricey — a Rovaniemi airport run is around €30.
- **Buses are excellent and cheap.** *Matkahuolto* runs the intercity network; airport shuttles meet most flights at €7–10 versus €30 for a taxi.
- **Ski buses are usually free** with a lift pass or resort accommodation at Levi and Ylläs. Check before booking a taxi.
- **Distances are deceptive.** Rovaniemi to Inari is 330km — four hours in good conditions, six in a blizzard. Don't plan two bases in three days.



Unlocks when you buy the guide

Driving on ice, honestly



Rovaniemi

- BEST FOR FAMILIES
- EASY SOLO BASE
- FIRST-TIMERS



TOP HIGHLIGHTS

- Santa Claus Village** — Entry is **free**, and so is crossing the Arctic Circle line and meeting Santa. You only pay for the photo, the huskies and the post office stamp. Go late afternoon once the coach tours have left.
- Arktikum** — World-class, half-buried under a 172m glass tube. Arctic science, Sámi history and the story of Lapland's rebuilding. Allow three hours. *The best dark-day call in Lapland.*
- Santa's Main Post Office** — Send your Christmas letters here. The post office is open from 15.12 to 24.12. Half a million letters a year pass through it. **🔒 Unlocks when you buy the guide**
- Ounasvaara** — The hill above town. Ski slopes, toboggan run, and a short walk up for aurora away from the streetlights. Free.
- Ranua Wildlife Park** — 80km south. The world's northernmost zoo, with polar bears, wolverines and lynx in proper forest enclosures. A half-day out and a reliable win with children.

Nili

Roka Kitchen & Wine Bar

Gustav Kitchen & Bar

Arctic Boulevard

Book activities direct, not at the hotel desk

Levi, Ylläs & the Ski Fells

- SKIING & SNOW SPORTS
- GLASS-ROOF CABINS
- FAMILY-FRIENDLY SLOPES



LEVI — THE BIG ONE

- **Finland's largest resort** — 43 slopes, 27 lifts, a gondola and a full ski-in village. Season runs mid-October to early May.
- **Northern Lights Houses** — Glass-roofed cabins where you watch the aurora from bed. Expensive, and the reason half the visitors come.
- **Samiland** — A small Sámi culture center at the top of the gondola. Modest, but honest and Sámi-informed.
- **Nightlife** — Levi actually has some. It's the only place in Lapland where that sentence is true.

YLLÄS — QUIETER, BETTER-LOOKING

- **The longest runs in Finland** — 3km top to bottom, across two villages: *Äkäslompolo* and *Ylläsjärvi*.
- **330km of cross-country trails**, most of them lit. Nordic skiing is the real draw here.
- **Pallas-Yllästunturi National Park** — Finland's most-visited park, and where the cleanest measured air on earth is found.
- **SnowVillage at Lainio** — A hotel, chapel and bar rebuilt from snow and ice each winter to a new theme.

🔒 **Unlocks when you buy the guide**

THE OTHER FELLS

LIFT PASS

€50/day

At Levi — roughly half what the same day costs in the Alps.

SKI HIRE

€30–40

Per day. Book online for 15–20% off the counter price.

CROSS-COUNTRY

Free

Trails cost nothing. Only the hire — about €20/day.

Poro & Roll — the cheapest good meal in Lapland

Skiing in the dark, and in the cold

Saariselkä, Inari & the Far North

BEST AURORA ODDS

WILDERNESS & HIKING

SÁMI CULTURE

SAARISELKÄ & URHO KEKKONEN NATIONAL PARK

- **Kaunispää fell** — Drive or walk to the summit café for a 360° view over open fell. The classic spot for watching the sun graze the horizon in midwinter.
- **Urho Kekkonen National Park** — 2,500km² of wilderness with a network of **free open huts** anyone can use. One of the great walking regions in Europe, and free to enter.
- **Kakslauttanen Arctic Resort** — The original glass igloos. Famous, photogenic, priced accordingly. Cheaper glass-roof options now exist across the region.



Unlocks when you buy the guide

INARI — THE SÁMI HEART OF FINLAND

- **Siida** — The Sámi Museum and Nature Centre, rebuilt and reopened in 2022. The definitive museum of Sámi culture, told by Sámi people. If you visit one thing up here, visit this.
- **Sajos** — The Sámi Parliament building, in striking modern timber. Open to visitors, with a café and a genuine *duodji* craft shop.
- **Lake Inari** — Finland's third-largest lake, scattered with 3,000 islands. *Ukonsaari* is an ancient Sámi sacred site; in winter you can travel out across the ice.
- **Utsjoki & Nuorgam** — The northernmost point of the EU. A long drive for a signpost, but the emptiness on the way is the point.

Booking a reindeer experience the right way

Kemi, Pyhä-Luosto & Sea Lapland

ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME

GREAT WITH CHILDREN

EASY DAY TRIP



KEMI — WHERE THE SEA FREEZES SOLID

- **Sampo Icebreaker** — A retired state icebreaker that takes passengers out to smash through the frozen Bay of Bothnia. Then they put you in a survival suit and **let you float in the sea ice**. The single most extraordinary half-day in Lapland, around €300 — steep, and worth it.
- **SnowCastle of Kemi** — Rebuilt every winter since 1996 to a new design: a hotel, a chapel, a restaurant with ice tables. Cheap to visit by day, memorable to sleep in once.
- **Getting there** — Kemi-Tornio airport, or 1h15 by car from Rovaniemi. Easy as a long day trip.

PYHÄ-LUOSTO NATIONAL PARK



Unlocks when you buy the guide

- **Isokuru** — The deepest gorge in Finland at 220m. A boardwalked trail runs through it, spectacular under snow.
- **Lampivaara Amethyst Mine** — The only working amethyst mine in Europe open to visitors. You dig your own stone and keep whatever you find, provided it fits in your palm. Reached by snowcoach in winter, and a guaranteed hit with children.
- **Two resorts, one park** — Pyhä at the south end, Luosto at the north, joined by a 35km fell trail.

CROSSING THE BORDER — SWEDISH & NORWEGIAN LAPLAND

Abisko

Jukkasjärvi

Tromsø

⚠️ One hour, three countries

The Great Experiences



 Husky sledding



 Reindeer sleigh



 Meeting Santa

 Snowmobiling

 Ice floating

 Ice fishing

 Sauna & *avanto*

How to book without overpaying

THE REASON YOU CAME

Northern Lights 101

Where to stand, when to go out, what your eyes will actually see —
and how to photograph it without ruining the night fiddling with settings.



Unlocks when you buy the guide

SEASON

Aug – Apr

Peak Sep–Mar. None in summer
— the sky never gets dark.

ODDS UP HERE

150–200 nights

Roughly 200 nights a year in the
far north; nearer 150 around
Rovaniemi.

BEST HOURS

21:00–02:00

Peaking around magnetic
midnight, roughly 22:00–23:00.

What you're actually looking at

THE THREE CONDITIONS — YOU NEED ALL OF THEM

- 1

Darkness
Late August to early April. Get away from streetlights — a 15-minute drive out of any town is usually enough. Let your eyes adapt for 20 minutes and do not look at your phone screen.
- 2

Clear sky
This is what actually decides your night. Solar activity is fairly reliable up here; cloud is not. Check *Windy's* hourly cloud map (p.6) and be willing to drive an hour to a hole in it.
- 3

Solar activity
At this latitude you need very little — **KP 1-2 is plenty.** Check the *FMI Aurora Nowcast* or *My Aurora Forecast* (both p.6). Chasing high KP numbers is a mistake tourists make: KP measures how far *south* the aurora reaches, and you are already underneath it.

The honest expectation-setter nobody gives you

 **Unlocks when you buy the guide**

SHOOTING IT — CAMERA

- Mode** Full manual. Auto will hunt and fail.
- Aperture** As wide as you have — f/2.8 or faster.
- ISO** 1600–3200. Push to 6400 if it's faint.
- Shutter** 2–15s. Shorter when it moves fast or you smear the structure.
- Focus** Manual, to infinity. Focus on a bright star, then tape the ring.
- Tripod** Non-negotiable. Cheap ones seize in the cold.

SHOOTING IT — PHONE

- Night mode** Any recent iPhone or Pixel handles aurora surprisingly well.
- Hold still** Prop it on a wall, a car roof or a mini tripod. 3–10 seconds.
- Battery** Cold kills phone batteries in minutes. Keep it inside your jacket.
- Power bank** Carry one, warm, in an inner pocket. It will save your night.

Tour or DIY?

Surviving the Cold

THE THREE-LAYER SYSTEM, PROPERLY

1 Base layer — merino wool, never cotton

The layer that matters most and the one people skip. Cotton absorbs sweat, holds it against your skin, then chills you violently the moment you stop moving. Merino keeps insulating when damp. Long-sleeve top and leggings.

2 Mid layer — fleece or light down

The insulation. Fleece for activity, down for standing still watching the sky. On a -30°C night, wear both.

3 Outer layer — windproof and waterproof shell

Its job is to stop wind stripping the warm air out of your other layers. Wind is what actually hurts you — -15°C in a breeze is far worse than -25°C in still air.

EXTREMITIES — WHERE IT GOES WRONG

- **Mittens beat gloves.** Fingers together share heat. Wear a thin liner glove underneath so you can take the mitt off for a camera without exposing bare skin.
- **Two pairs of wool socks, and boots a size up.** Tight boots cut circulation and cold feet follow immediately. Boots should be rated to -30°C .
- **Cover your face.** A neck buff pulled over nose and cheeks — the first places to get frostnip, and you often can't feel it happening.
- **A hat that covers your ears,** worn under the hood. Not a beanie perched on the back of your head.
- **Ice grips for your shoes** in town. Finnish pavements in March are polished ice, and a broken wrist ends a holiday. About €15, and they fold into a pocket.



Unlocks when you buy the guide

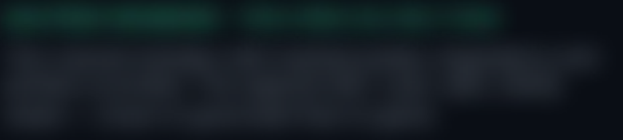


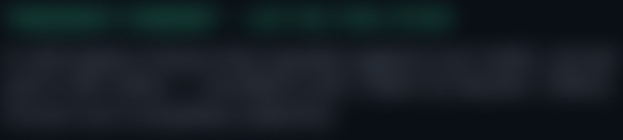
Don't over-buy — most of it comes free

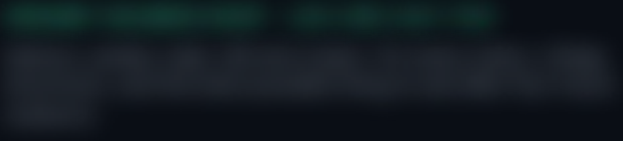
⚠ Frostnip and the things that catch people out

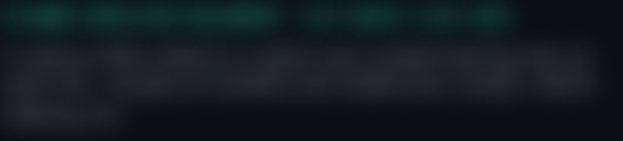
Food & Drink

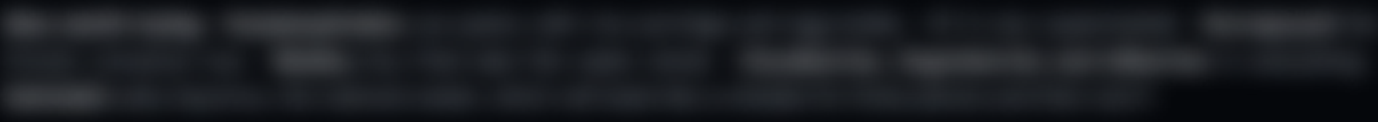
MUST-TRY LAPPISH FOOD

Poronkärstys


Leipäjuusto


Lohikeitto


Loimulohi




DRINKING

Coffee Finns drink more per head than anyone else in the world. Light-roast, filter, endlessly refilled.

Lapin Kulta "Gold of Lapland" — the regional lager, originally brewed in Tornio.

Lakkalikööri Cloudberry liqueur. Sweet, amber, the classic thing to bring home.

Glögi Finnish mulled wine, with almonds and raisins in the bottom of the cup.

EATING CHEAP

**Unlocks when you buy the guide**

Lounas The Monday lunch buffet, ~11:00–14:00, €12–15 all-in. The best value in Finland.

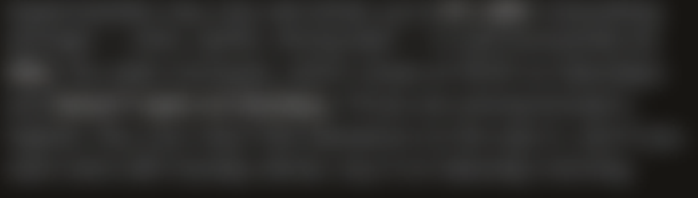
K-Market / S-Market Supermarkets. Look for the yellow 30–60% stickers after 20:00.

Hesburger The Finnish burger chain. Better than it needs to be; the garlic mayo is the point.

ResQ Club Surplus restaurant meals at a third of the price.



**Alcohol works differently here — and it's expensive**



Cultural Etiquette

- **Shoes off indoors. Always.** Homes, guesthouses, some offices, many small museums. Nobody will ask you — they'll just notice.
- **Silence is comfortable.** Finns don't fill pauses and don't find them awkward. Resisting the urge to chatter reads as confidence, not coldness.
- **Don't tip.** Service is included and tipping genuinely isn't expected. Rounding up a taxi fare is the most anyone does.
- **Personal space is generous.** Stand a step further back than you would at home, especially in a queue.
- **Take a number ticket** — *vuoronumero* — in pharmacies, banks and many shops. There's no physical queue, and jumping it is very visible.
- **Everyman's right** — *jokamiehenoikeus* — gives you legal freedom to walk, ski, camp and pick berries on almost any land, private included. Stay clear of homes and damage nothing.
- **Never approach or feed loose reindeer.** Every one is owned and working. Feeding draws them onto roads, which is how they get killed.
- **Punctuality is real.** A tour leaving at 09:00 leaves at 09:00, not 09:05.

Sauna, without embarrassing yourself



Unlocks when you buy the guide



Respecting Sámi culture — four things

Packing, Itineraries & Money

PACKING LIST

What to bring

- Merino base layers — top and leggings, two sets
- Fleece or light down mid-layer
- Windproof, waterproof outer shell
- Wool socks ×4, and boots a size up
- Mittens plus thin liner gloves
- Hat covering the ears, and a neck buff
- Ice grips · reflector for walking after dark
- Type C/F adaptor · power bank
- Swimsuit — sauna and hotel pools
- Lip balm · heavy moisturiser · sunglasses
- Head torch with a red-light mode
- Thermos flask · tripod for aurora



Unlocks when you buy the guide

MONEY

Where the savings actually are

Go in March Deep snow, long days, strong aurora — and typically a third to a half off December prices.

Book direct Skip the 15–25% hotel-desk commission on every activity.

Eat lounas The same kitchen, at lunch, for a third of the dinner price.

Take the bus €7–10 airport transfers versus €30 taxis.

Borrow the gear Operators lend thermals and boots — don't buy a parka for one week.

Claim your VAT Non-EU residents get up to 16% back on purchases over €40.

FREE IN LAPLAND · Santa Claus Village entry & meeting Santa · crossing the Arctic Circle · every national park · open wilderness huts · cross-country ski trails · the aurora itself

SAMPLE ITINERARIES

How long do you have? Tap any route to open the whole trip, in order, in Google Maps.

3

DAYS

Rovaniemi Winter Break

Santa Claus Village · Arktikum · a half-day husky safari · two aurora nights on Ounasvaara or with a chase tour.

[Open route](#)

5

DAYS

Rovaniemi + Kemi

Two nights in Rovaniemi, then the Sampo icebreaker and SnowCastle at Kemi — a genuinely different day.

[Open route](#)

7

DAYS

Rovaniemi → Saariselkä → Inari

The best week in Lapland. Two nights south for Santa and the museums, then north for wilderness, better aurora and Siida.

[Open route](#)

10

DAYS

The Full Lapland Circuit

Rovaniemi → Pyhä-Luosto → Saariselkä → Inari → Utsjoki → back via Levi and Ylläs → Kemi. Night train up, hire a car, two nights minimum per base.

[Open route](#)

Where to Book & Maps

Everything you need to plan your trip to Lapland is in one place. From flights to hotels, car hire to airport transfers, we've got you covered. And if you're looking for something a bit more unique, we've got you covered for that too. So what are you waiting for? Book your trip today!

Flights to Lapland

Find the best flights to Lapland from all over the world. We've got the latest deals and the most convenient routes. So you can get to Lapland in no time. Book your flight today!

Hotels & glass igloos

Find the best hotels and glass igloos in Lapland. We've got the latest deals and the most convenient locations. So you can stay in Lapland in style. Book your accommodation today!

Finland eSIM

Get a Finland eSIM for your trip to Lapland. So you can stay connected wherever you are. Book your eSIM today!

Car hire

Find the best car hire deals in Lapland. We've got the latest deals and the most convenient locations. So you can get around Lapland in style. Book your car hire today!

Activities & tours

Find the best activities and tours in Lapland. We've got the latest deals and the most convenient locations. So you can experience Lapland in style. Book your activities today!

Airport transfers

Find the best airport transfers in Lapland. We've got the latest deals and the most convenient locations. So you can get to and from the airport in style. Book your airport transfers today!

 Unlocks when you buy the guide

THE WHOLE REGION, ON YOUR PHONE

Finnish Lapland in Google Maps



Open the map

The one booking rule for Lapland

When booking your trip to Lapland, there's one rule you need to know. And that's the one booking rule for Lapland. So you can make the most of your trip. Book your trip today!

Using the itinerary maps

Using the itinerary maps is the best way to plan your trip to Lapland. So you can see all the places you want to visit in one place. Book your trip today!



Everything you need. Nothing you don't.

This guide is one of a series — a complete, honest handbook for every country worth going to, written to be read on your phone while you're actually there.

@globltravel



OPEN FINNISH LAPLAND IN GOOGLE MAPS

Open the map →

www.google.com/maps/search/?api=1&query=Lapland+Finland

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