

Willis's Walkabouts Scandinavian Winter/Spring

February - March 2019

First Update: 19 June 2018

This draft is just a taste with much more detail to come. It should, however, give you enough of a taste so that you can decide whether or not you are potentially interested.

I have been thinking about this for a few years now. If it runs, it will be the third Walkabouts trip to use dog sleds. The first two were in Nunavut and the Yukon in Canada.

I contacted a friend in Sweden and asked for some advice. Here's a bit of what he had to say.

"A while ago back I spoke about it with a friend of mine, Joel, who's an experienced winter hiker (skiing and climbing) and asked him for some advice.

His spontaneous answer was that it would be hard for you to walk between cabins a full week without skiing experience, and that you would either have to put up with a bit of money (renting dog sleds, a private guide etc) or do the "winter experience" via some sort of course. Like, try to live in the wild in the wintertime, one week of, igloos, skiing, but probably a bit to basic for a group with your experience. He sent me the following link for dog-sled rental"

<http://www.jokkmokkguiderna.com/en/dog-sledding-gate-sarek-nationalpark>

They say they can only take four people. I'm not sure I can run the trip for that few. It is, however, the kind of thing I'd like to do. The price is equivalent to about A\$3500 for the 8 days. I sent an email some time back asking if they could handle more than four but haven't heard back.

My friend also mentioned "the possibility of doing a combination of sled tour and hike. Around Kebenekaise (highest peak in Sweden) there are quite a few cabins on fairly short distance from one another. maybe you could hike from the station into the national park for some days and then be picked up by dog-sled or perhaps scooter. The people at the station could also be good for you to contact in order to discuss different possibilities of packages, combinations etc. It's run by the Swedish tourist association which is a member organization which I believe to be non-profit so the prices should be reasonable."

<http://www.swedishtouristassociation.com/facilities/stf-kebnekaise-mountain-station/>

The trip I did in 2014 was in this area. Instead of sticking solely to the Kungsleden, we followed my Swedish friend's recommendation and did a scenic detour to some of the lesser known cabins.

Snowshoes or skis? I have a reasonable (but not recent) amount of experience on snowshoes. Almost anyone who can walk can walk with snowshoes. I am not, however, experienced with cross country skis. If some of those who come on the trip are experienced cross country skiers, I will try and arrange it so that they can get ahead of the walkers some of the time and do their own thing.

The trip will be more than Sweden and will go into Norway as well. My summer and autumn trips have both gone to Lofoten. I'd like to see it in the winter. Here's a link to the local tourist info site, <http://lofoten.info/en/Winter>

When we were there in 2014, we did a walk from the town of Å up to the Munkebu mountain cabin. The walk took about three hours. It would take longer with snow shoes, but shouldn't be too bad (too steep for skis). The hut is in a beautiful setting, mountain tarns in most directions. You can get more info and see some beautiful photos at

<http://www.68north.com/outdoors/hiking-munken/>

At this point, I already have three people who are potentially interested. I anticipate the Walkabouts fee to be somewhere between \$1800 and \$2100.

If you think you might possibly be interested, please drop me a line at rrwillis@internode.on.net

Other websites to consider

I have looked at all these websites as well as a number of others. These are the ones I thought most worth considering.

I would welcome other suggestions.

Hetta Huskies Finland

<http://www.hettahuskies.com/en/activities/multi-day-husky-safaris/5-day-wilderness-safari>

5 days €1525 – up to 6 but might be able to arrange more

<https://www.pallashusky.com/english/husky-tours/>

5 days €1360 – up to 8

<https://www.beitohuskytours.com/overnight-tours>

price and numbers not immediately obvious

<http://www.nordnorge.com/en/dog-sledding>

Lists a variety of tours and operators

Night train

Sweden, Finland and Norway all have overnight trains. I've ridden in the ones in Sweden and Norway. I enjoy the trip. Worth considering as a way to get from south to north or vice versa.

Finland https://www.vr.fi/cs/vr/en/night_traintravel

Sweden <https://www.sj.se/en/about/about-sj/our-trains/sj-night-train.html>

The Swedish train goes as far as Narvik in Norway. I haven't gone that far but it might be interesting.

Norway <https://rail.cc/en/night-train/norway/no>

There appear to be more overnight trains in Norway than I realised.

Another possibility (essential if we go to Lofoten) is hiring a car. It's been a while but I've driven in snow. Places that get a lot of snow tend to be very good at clearing roads so this is easier than it might seem at first glance.