



Sustainability as a competitive advantage

Tim Williamson – Responsible Travel

Arctic Sustainable Tourism Activity Seminar


Monday 8th October 2018

Who are Responsible Travel?

RESPONSIBLE
TRAVEL

DESTINATIONSHOLIDAY TYPESLAST MINUTEOFFERSTRAVEL GUIDESABOUT USCONTACT US

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FINLAND HOLIDAYS

TOURS & HOLIDAYS IN 2018 & 2019

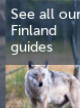
Its most famous resident may be Santa Claus, but Finland holidays are definitely not just for Christmas. Europe's seventh-largest country straddles the Arctic Circle, encompassing splintered archipelagos, 188,000 lakes, and far-flung Finnish Lapland, stretching towards the North Pole. This real-life Narnia shelters brown bears, wolves, elk, moose, and ferocious, fantastical-sounding wolverines; along with the indigenous, reindeer-herding Sámi.

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TRAVEL GUIDES



Finland



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FINLAND HOLIDAYS

TRAVEL GUIDE

REVIEWS

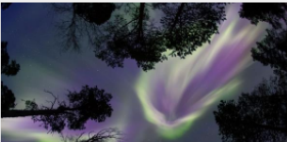
☒ All Finland holidays (88)

88 MATCHING FINLAND HOLIDAYS FOUND

DATE

Pick a date

HOLIDAY TYPES



FINLAND NORTHERN LIGHTS HOLIDAY, WILDERNESS AURORAS

Winter activities & Aurora hunting in the Finnish wilderness

From **£1,475** to **£1,575** 5 days inc UK flights

Small group travel: **2018:** 25 Nov, 2 Dec, 16 Dec
2019: 20 Jan, 3 Feb, 10 Mar, 17 Mar

Why we exist?

- To make tourism a more caring industry
- To show the win:win of responsible tourism
- To show that you can make money by selling responsible holidays




How we work

- We are a digital content company
- 2800 pages of guide content
 - Honest
 - Written by experts
- 20% of leads from paid search (PPC)
- Honesty based commission model

FINNISH LAPLAND TRAVEL GUIDE

2 MINUTE SUMMARY

“ I couldn't get over the fact that there were over 3,000 islands in and around Lake Inari, many with incredible Sámi history. I'm not spiritual, but this silent, snow covered place moved me greatly. ”



There is a good reason why we can't pin down where Lapland actually is, and it has nothing to do with Santa Claus. It's because these are homelands of the semi nomadic Sámi people for whom borders have long been as fluid as the melting snow. This region, stretching across Northern Finland, Sweden and Norway, is called Sápmi in the Sámi language, translated as Lapland, although the term Lapp or Lappish is considered derogatory these days. In Finnish Lapland the Sámi languages became official in 1991 with three main ones, Northern, Skolt and Inari. There are 9.300 Sámi people in Finnish Lapland and their culture, lifestyles and spiritual connection with wilderness is what life is all about here. So don't thank Santa for vast forests, remote lakes and traditional cabins with transparent roofs that look up to the Aurora. Thank the Sámi who have been the real stewards for generations. The Sámi word for 'thank you,' by the way, is *giitu* (pronounced 'kiihtu').

What we generate

- 400K sessions per month
- 4000 leads per month to 400 tour operators offering 5400 tours
- £18m of holiday sales in 2017
- Forecast £1m sales to Finland in 2018

<u>Tag</u>	<u>Leads</u>	<u>Bookings</u>	<u>Conversion</u>
Croatia	6940	636	9.16%
Spain	3328	391	11.75%
Portugal	2317	215	9.28%
Greece	2275	187	8.22%
India	2038	200	9.81%
Italy	1834	187	10.20%
Finland	1741	126	7.24%
Malaysia	1374	118	8.59%
South Africa	1372	92	6.71%
Borneo	1369	119	8.69%

How did we do this?

- Honest and well written content
- Amazing holidays
- Sadly not because all our operators and trips are responsible

HUSKY SAFARI IN FINLAND

★★★★☆

17 REVIEWS

[DATES, PRICES & AVAILABILITY](#)



"Five days on safari with your very own team of huskies gliding across the Arctic landscape and staying in wilderness cabins, this is a boundless adventure of team spirit."

Answering questions & tackling issues

BEST TIME TO VISIT ICELAND

“ ICELAND'S WEATHER CHANGES AS MUCH AS ITS TURBULENT VOLCANIC LANDSCAPE - YOU MAY REALLY GET FOUR SEASONS IN A DAY! ”

Iceland's far north ocean location makes for fluctuating weather. May-Sep is the best time to visit Iceland if you want to go whale watching; you can combine orcas with Northern Lights in late Sep. Jun-Aug offer endless days, low 20s warmth plus summer festivals. Dry weather inland makes this prime hiking season. Snow comes as early as Sep (and can linger to May) but Iceland can look good too in autumn. Winters can be brutal – but offer the aurora borealis for the long dark hours. Winter road closures make access to some areas difficult.

▲▲ [CALL US FOR THE BEST TIME TO GO TO ICELAND](#)



Anti Marketing

- Celebrate failures
- Be honest when we change our mind
- Admit that we are far from perfect

ELEPHANTS AND TOURISM

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL'S OPINION

OUR STANCE

As with many issues in responsible tourism, the topic of elephant trekking is neither black nor white. It's a debate that remarkably has the power to polarise those with the same objective: to conserve and preserve these beautiful animals and their close communities in the most effective way possible. The goal is clear cut, the way to achieve it is less so.

During spring 2014, Responsible Travel entered into an important consultation period with its members. Gathering invaluable opinions that spanned the full spectrum of this debate, we considered the arguments carefully and sought further information and clarification where necessary.

Our new policy* on elephant trekking and elephant performing is the result of this work.

Simultaneously, one of our in-house writers began researching this guide to elephant trekking and conservation which acts as a collective record of thoughts and opinions on the issues, from people across the globe and from all walks of life, NGO to small tour operator.

Lessons for Finland?


- The product (responsible or not) needs to be amazing

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ARCTIC WILDLIFE HOLIDAY, POLAR BEAR EXPLORER

★★★★★ 1 REVIEW



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Authentic Experiences, Local Experts. Discover The Amazing Arctic Circle. Lapland Specialists. Authentic Accommodation. Expert Knowledge. Fly From 20 UK Airports. ATOL & ABTA Protected. Amenities: Snowmobile Safari, Ice Fishing, Cross-Country Skiing, Husky Safari.

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Contact Our Specialist Expedition Team & Discover The Arctic By Ship. Enquire. Expedition Experts. Silver Explorer · Seabourn Quest · About Us · Special Offers & Deals · Ships · MS Roald Amundsen Best Of Spitsbergen - from £6,199.00 - Classic Arctic Itinerary · More

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14 matching Arctic Circle holidays found

- Husky safari in Finland. ...
- Short Arctic **cruise** from Iceland. ...
- Luxury Arctic **cruise** Spitsbergen & Franz Josef Land. ...
- **Winter** adventure in Finland. ...
- Family **winter** adventure in Finland. ...
- Norway wildlife holiday. ...
- North Pole **expedition cruise**. ...
- Arctic Norway photography holiday.

More items...

Arctic Circle holidays. Tours & holidays in Arctic Circle in 2018 & 2019
<https://www.responsibletravel.com/holidays/arctic-circle>



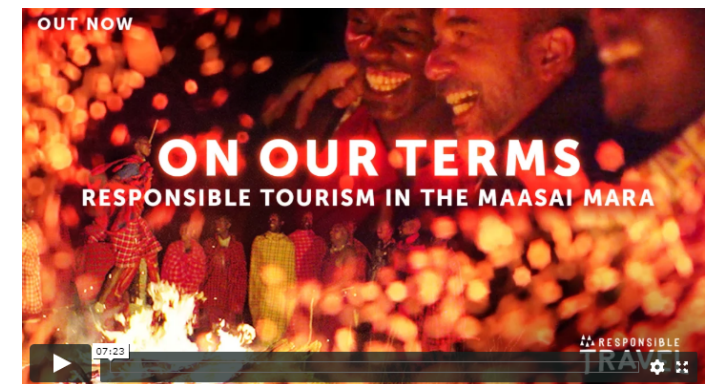
Hierarchy of competitive advantage

1. Authenticity



2. Feel good about doing good

<https://www.responsibletravel.com/copy/on-our-terms>



You can't create the holidays

- Create the framework to HELP tour operators create responsible tours
 - Promote locally owned hotels
 - Responsible excursions e.g. Well treated huskies
 - Local Sami guides
 - Locally sourced food and drink
- Stop those coming in who will not develop sustainable activities
 - No Santa day trips?
 - No large cruise ships?

Don't focus on the numbers

- Focussing on visitor numbers doesn't tell the whole story
 - It's the quality of the visitors
 - Length of stay?
 - Too dependent on one market?
 - Average spend per day?
 - And on what?
 - How much of what they spend is actually staying in Finland?

OVERTOURISM – WHAT IS IT, AND HOW CAN WE AVOID IT?



Finland's USPs lean naturally towards responsible tourism

- Aurora Borealis
- Wilderness
- Snow
- Slow
- Sauna!



Marketing with humanity

- Keep it personal & human
- Individual stories
- Avoid being too formal or perfect
- Everyone knows there is another side..

FOCUS ON SÁMI COMMUNITIES



If you're heading to Lapland we implore you to find out more about the indigenous Sámi people who've made this northernmost region of Finland their ancestral home. Although traditionally semi nomadic reindeer herders, the Sámi are adapting to a changing world with responsible tourism playing a role in keeping alive the languages, music and folklore tales from the Arctic Circle.

Be honest

- Every country has responsible tourism issues – key is what you are doing about them?
 - Sami people
 - Good treatment of huskies
 - Electric snowmobiles
 - Hunting...

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM IN FINLAND

TRAVEL RIGHT IN FINLAND

You can't really fault Finland. The culture is so steeped in connecting with nature it makes so many of the rest of us feel as if our efforts in that direction are mere child's play. Foraging and fishing, wolves and wilderness, bears and berries, they are just a way of life here. If there is one thing that they might be picked up on, however, it is that they are not proud enough of who they are and what they do in their everyday lives. Because for them it is just normal. Kayaking to islands in summer. Ice fishing in winter. Cross country skiing at night to catch the Northern Lights. Being respectful of wild animals. The Sauna. Skinny dipping. It's all normal. For some tourists, however, it has become a place to feed their current trend for all things wild. Wild food, wild swimming, wild camping, wild yoga. Finland isn't a fad though. Yes, they may have Santa, but Finland is not just for Christmas. It's for life.

PEOPLE & CULTURE

THE SÁMI & HUSKY DOGS



Key to success

- Make sure local communities are involved
- Keep it personal and human
- Finland doesn't need to be perfect to talk about or lead on responsible tourism
- Filter on responsible tourism criteria and customer satisfaction will follow
- Create the infrastructure for tour operators to create great responsible holidays
- Stop those who bring low value tourists to Finland, even in large numbers
- Be bold & have an opinion + share it

Thank you!

