



# Nature Travels

outdoor experiences in Sweden



Photo: J. Postma

## WALKING THE PATH OF THE PILGRIMS - 5 OR MORE DAYS

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## Walking the Path of the Pilgrims: 5 or more days

### Experience Code: EW5TS1

*The Pilgrim's Trail in Dalmland in the west of Sweden offers 51km of marvellous self-guided hiking through a beautiful landscape of forest and lakes rich in natural and cultural heritage.*

*Starting from the small village of Mellerud, you can choose to complete the trail in 3 or 4 days, spending 2 or 3 nights camping wild along the way in your own tent or staying in one of the simple wind shelters placed at strategic points along the route.*

*At the end of the trail awaits a comfortable lakeside guest house, offering warm hospitality and good food prepared from local ingredients - the perfect opportunity to unwind and recharge those tired muscles after your hiking adventure.*

*After a good night's sleep, you will swap your heavy rucksack for a lighter day-pack with packed lunch provided by your host. Choose between one of the many routes for hiking day-tours in the area, or why not hire a canoe, take to the water and go in search of beaver? If you are in the mood for pampering, there is a local spa centre within walking distance offering a wide range of relaxing and invigorating treatments. As the sun sets, you return to the guest house for evening meal.*

*If you wish, you are welcome to extend your stay with additional days and nights at the guest house, exploring the area on foot or by canoe. When it is time to depart, you can choose to travel by public transport to the small town of Åmål for onward connections, or hoist your pack and hike into town along the 20km stretch of "Storspåret", a lovely trail leading through the woods and keeping you close to nature right to the end!*

*Self-guided Hiking on the Pilgrim's Trail is suitable for anyone with a love of hiking and general good level of health and fitness who is comfortable with self-guided walking tours carrying a pack. There are small villages along the way to purchase provisions, but you will need to carry tent, camping equipment and all personal items. A map of the trail and route description, including information on the history of the area and the Pilgrim's Trail, will be provided.*

### **Arrival Day:**

At the start point in Mellerud, you will receive information and maps for your hike and will have a chance to ask questions about the coming tour before taking to the trail to begin your adventure.

### **Hiking Days:**

Over the next 3 days/2 nights or 4 days/3 nights depending on your preference (you must let us know your chosen duration in advance), you will hike the 51km length of the historic Pilgrim's Trail, taking you through a beautiful landscape of forests and lakes.

Accommodation along the route is wild camping in own tent. There are also a number of wind-shelters with fireplaces at certain points, where wood is provided. Space in these shelters cannot be reserved but you are very welcome to make use of the shelters if available. Please note that you should bring all necessary camping equipment for the tour (see recommended equipment list below).

You will pass some small villages along the way with opportunities to purchase provisions.

## **The Guest House:**

At the end of your hiking tour you will arrive at the guest house for 2 nights' accommodation including dinner and breakfast. You will also be provided with a packed lunch and daypack for use on your day-tours. You can choose between one of a number of self-guided hiking day routes in the area, take a canoe tour or book a spa treatment at a local spa centre.

The area around the guest house offers wonderful hiking and canoeing and you are welcome to extend your stay with additional nights if you wish.

## **Departure Day:**

Depending on your preference, you can travel by public transport to the small town of Åmål for onward connections, or alternatively hike to Åmål along the 20km "Storspåret" walking trail.

## **2010 season:**

Season 1<sup>st</sup> May-30<sup>th</sup> October 2010. Start any day by arrangement between 09.00 and 16.00.

Minimum stay at the Guest House 2 nights. You are welcome to extend your stay with additional nights.

## **The price:**

£162/adult based on 2 persons sharing. Min. 2 persons required for safety reasons.

Special family, group and romantic options for couples are also available. Please contact us to discuss your requirements.

## **What The Price Includes:**

### ***Self-guided hiking:***

- 3-4 days' self-guided hiking on the Pilgrim's Trail (duration depending on preference). Map and route description will be provided.

### ***Accommodation:***

- 2 nights' accommodation in 2-person room at guest house. You are welcome to extend your stay with additional nights.
- All rooms are en-suite. 2-person and single rooms have balcony overlooking the lake.

### ***Meals:***

- 2 x breakfast and 2 x two-course dinner at guest house.
- 1 x packed lunch for day tour containing coffee, sandwich, mineral water and banana.

### ***Equipment:***

- Day-pack for use during day-tours from guest house.

## **What The Price Does Not Include:**

- All camping equipment for hike on Pilgrim's Trail. Please note that you should bring your own tent, sleeping bag, camping stove, etc for use on the trail.

Camping equipment is not available to hire.

- Food during hiking tour on Pilgrim's Trail. Provisions for the tour can be purchased in Mellerud and there are also small local stores in villages along the route.

## **Optional Extras:**

### ***Activities at the guest house:***

- Wood-heated bathing barrel on arrival at the guest house (a perfect way to end your hiking tour!): £70/group. Must be booked in advance.
- Canoe hire: £24/2-person canoe/day including paddles, buoyancy aids and packing container. The guest house is situated next to the lake. There is a beaver hide in the local area ideal for visiting by canoe.

### ***Additional nights:***

- £82/person/night based on 2-person room including breakfast, dinner and daypack with packed lunch.

## **Equipment/clothes needed:**

*NB: We advise you not to buy equipment or clothes for your trip or to incur other non-refundable expenses such as flights until you have received confirmation of your booking from us in writing.*

### ***Packing list (recommended):***

#### **Toiletries:**

Soap, toothpaste, plasters, moisturiser, sun-cream, painkillers, blister tape, mosquito repellent (see the "About Sweden" page on our website for further information about mosquitoes).

#### **Clothes:**

Take clothes you are not afraid to damage. Quick-drying materials are best. Bear in mind that jeans and sweatshirts are difficult to dry. Pack rainwear (jacket and trousers), waterproof hiking boots with good ankle support, a pair of warm socks, something to cover your head in case of heat or rain, sweatshirt, T-shirt, shirt, trousers, long underpants, a pair of shorts, beachwear, underwear, anorak (or similar) and something to sleep in.

At the beginning and end of the season, temperatures can be cooler and you should bear in mind the time of year at which you will be travelling when planning your journey. In spring and autumn we recommend warm clothes - a pair of gloves/mittens, warm sweater, etc. You should also bring shoes or sandals you can use in the water if canoeing.

#### **Camping equipment and food:**

You should bring your own camping equipment for your hike on the Pilgrim's Trail, including:

- Tent
- Sleeping bag, sleeping mat and liner
- Camping stove with fuel
- Camping meal set (plates, cutlery, cup)
- Biodegradable washing-up liquid with sponge
- Water bottle

- Provisions for meals during your hike

Accommodation along the Pilgrim's Trail is wild camping. There are wind shelters at certain points which you are welcome to use if space is available. At the shelters there are also fixed fireplaces.

Provisions can be purchased in Mellerud, the start point for your hike, and also at small villages along the route.

**Additional:**

Sunglasses, compass, matches, knife, camera and binoculars.

**Health requirements/experience:**

This experience is suitable for anyone in general good health who enjoys walking and the outdoors. You should be comfortable with hiking a distance of 51km in 3-4 days over rough, undulating terrain. You should also be comfortable carrying a rucksack with all camping equipment and personal items for this distance. Swimming ability required if canoeing.

Minimum 2 adults required for safety reasons.

Children accompanied by an adult are very welcome on this experience provided they are used to hiking and comfortable with the distances covered.

**Group size:**

Minimum 2 persons required.

**Groups:**

Groups of up to 32 persons can be accommodated at the guest house. Please contact us to discuss your requirements.

**Information about the area:**

Pilgrims in the Middle Ages walked the Pilgrim's Trail to the grave of St. Olof in Nidaros (today known as Trondheim) in Norway. Pilgrims made this journey for 500 years from the mid-11<sup>th</sup> Century onwards until the Swedish King Gustav Vasa forbade it.

Today the trail runs 51km in a north-south direction through eastern Dalsland, with the possibility to extend the route a further 20km along "Storspåret" to the small town of Åmål.

Bordering Norway to the west, Värmland to the north and Vänern, Sweden's largest lake, to the east, the county of Dalsland has more lakes than any other Swedish province. The Dalsland Canal, one of Europe's most beautiful waterways, extends 240km through a network of rivers and lakes, with only 10km in total being man-made.

With just one town of significant size, Åmål, which has a population of around 50,000, Dalsland is a sparsely-populated province dominated by a landscape of lakes and forest and offers marvellous opportunities for hiking and other outdoor pursuits.

**Common Sense and the Right of Public Access**

*Do not disturb, do not destroy – that is the basic principle of Sweden’s right of public access. It is not an unrestricted right. Here, you can read about the rules that apply.*

The Swedish right of public access is not a law, nor is it an absolute right. It may rather be regarded as an opportunity, one that makes it possible for everyone to enjoy the countryside. But it is an opportunity that requires responsibility, consideration and good judgement. Rules describing the kinds of consideration that must be shown are incorporated into Sweden's environmental law, and apply to everyone who exercises the right of public access.

### **Respect others' privacy**

You may travel through the countryside on foot, bicycle, horse or skis, and temporarily remain in one place, as long as there is no risk that your presence or activities will damage crops, tree plantations or other sensitive areas. But you must respect the privacy of others, and you may not cross or intrude upon private property.

### **Camping**

It is permitted to set up a tent for a day or so on ground that is not used for agriculture and is far from the nearest dwelling. The closer to a residence and the greater the risk of disturbing others, the more important it is to ask the landowner for permission.

### **Do not litter**

All sorts of littering are forbidden in the countryside. A cigarette butt in a dry summer forest can destroy resources worth millions. Glass, tins and bottle caps harm both humans and wildlife, and plastic bags cause great suffering to animals that ingest them. For this reason, bags full of litter should never be left beside rubbish bin if it happens to be full.

### **Blossoms and berries**

You may not take such items as twigs, branches or bark from living trees, including birches. Obviously, you may not take entire shrubs or trees, either. But you are allowed to pick wild berries, flowers and mushrooms, as well twigs and branches that have fallen to the ground. Certain flower species are so rare that they risk becoming endangered. These species are protected and may not be picked. Information about them is available from county administrative boards. Orchids are protected throughout Sweden.

### **Protected natural areas**

Protected natural areas, including nature reserves and national parks, usually have special rules that restrict the right of public access.

More information on the right of public access can be found on our website under About Sweden or on [www.allemansratten.se](http://www.allemansratten.se)

## **Getting there:**

*NB: We advise you not to buy equipment or clothes for your trip or to incur other non-refundable expenses such as flights until you have received confirmation of your booking from us in writing.*

### **By Air:**

You can choose to fly to:

- Gothenburg City
- Gothenburg Landvetter

For details of flight connections see [www.naturetravels.co.uk/holidays-in-sweden.htm](http://www.naturetravels.co.uk/holidays-in-sweden.htm). Click on the airport icons to see connections to/from each airport.

Flight buses from Swedish airports into the city can be booked online through us – see [www.naturetravels.co.uk/add-ons-flygbussarna.htm](http://www.naturetravels.co.uk/add-ons-flygbussarna.htm)

Many airlines offer discounts on rental cars in connection with their flights.

#### ***Without flying***

- **London-Mellerud by train and bus:** Lunchtime Eurostar to Brussels, train to Cologne, overnight sleeper to Copenhagen and onward connections to Mellerud.
- **London-Mellerud by train and bus via Hamburg.** Early evening Eurostar to Brussels, overnight sleeper to Hamburg and onward connections to Mellerud. The fastest option.
- **Harwich-Mellerud by ferry, train and bus:** DFDS ferry Harwich to Esbjerg (Denmark), then onward connections to Mellerud via Copenhagen.

#### **Travel within Sweden:**

This experience begins in Mellerud. On departure from the Guest House, you will travel by local bus or on foot to Åmål for onward connections.

**From Gothenburg City or Gothenburg Landvetter airports:** Flight bus into central Gothenburg (travel time 20 mins).

**From Gothenburg to Mellerud:** Train/bus from Göteborg C (Gothenburg Central station) to Mellerud, travel time 1.15-2 hours, direct or with changes.

**From Åmål to Gothenburg:** Train from Åmål to Göteborg C (Gothenburg Central station), travel time around 2 hours, usually direct.

Trains in Sweden are run by national train operator SJ. For train connections and to book your tickets, see [www.sj.se](http://www.sj.se). Click "In English" in the top right corner. Please note that the most affordable tickets are released 90 days before departure.

More details and advice on local transport will be provided after booking. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

#### **What to do next:**

If you are interested in this experience, please make sure that you understand exactly what the experience entails and are confident that you will be able to take part fully in all activities included in the trip. If you have any doubts or questions, please discuss the matter with us and we will be happy to advise. Similarly, if you have any particular health or dietary requirements that we need to be aware of, please mention these at the time of booking.

If you feel confident that you will be able to take part, then download and read our TERMS AND CONDITIONS. Then, please contact us to make sure that your chosen dates are available, and feel free to ask us anything else you like: we are keen to ensure that your trip is an enjoyable and memorable experience for you – we love Sweden and we want you to too!

For more information on how to book this trip please visit our website [www.naturetravels.co.uk/booking.htm](http://www.naturetravels.co.uk/booking.htm) or call us on 01929 463774

#### **Additional Notes**

This provider is a member of the Swedish Ecotourism Society and has a detailed written environmental policy.