



Credit: Visit Finland/Julia Kivelä

ARCTIC SLOW LIFE

Hosted Autumn Tour in Finland
September 14-21, 2023



fine by nature

IMMERSIVE TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

Slow Travel Experience

8 days/7 nights

fine by nature offers un-hurried, low-impact experiences combined with connection to people who live in the communities you visit. We have based our operation on the concept of 'slow movement'. We believe in travelling more slowly and seeing what's around you; immersing yourself in the local landscape, the history, the culture, the food and the people. With us your journey becomes a moment to relax, rather than it being a stressful interlude between tourist attractions.

'Arctic Slow Life' tour will take you to the Gulf of Bothnia and then further north all the way to the Arctic Circle in Finland. On this tour we meet everyday locals who are living their lives with creativity and passion. From a textile artist to locals who come together to knit and save one of their local traditions. From brewers of organic beer to herbalists who want more people to use and appreciate the power of Arctic superfoods.

We experience beautiful landscapes from a windswept island to the high hills of Northern Finland. We learn how life slows down with the diminishing day light hours and how nature puts on amazing shows with autumn colours and light shows in the sky.

Join us on this unique tour designed and escorted by the owner of fine by nature, by Leila Myllymäki-Hay. Leila has intimate knowledge of Finland, her second home country, and her love for the destination shines through in every detail of this tour full of exclusive experiences.

Our Autumn Tours will take place in September 2023 outside the busiest tourist season. This will make your whole travel experience more relaxed and enjoyable. During September the foliage and ground covers are starting to change into colourful displays. It is also harvest season which means we will be spoilt with an abundance of fresh produce like berries, mushrooms & vegetables. And if we are lucky, we might also get a glimpse of the Northern Lights on our travels.

This beautifully executed tour provides you with a true sense of place and access to unique experiences, genuine authenticity and local immersion. This is a small group tour designed for only 12 guests so if the itinerary appeals to you, do send us your expression of interest form soonest possible to secure your spot!

September 1-14, 2023 The 'Why' Behind Finnish Happiness
September 14-21, 2023 Arctic Slow Life



fine by nature

IMMERSIVE TRAVEL EXPERIENCES



Credit: Thomas Kast

Our Tour Itinerary

Thursday
September 14, 2023

Welcome to Oulu

If you stay on after *The 'Why' Behind Finnish Happiness* tour, you will travel by train from Kuopio to Oulu. The Guardian has chosen this train route as one of the most beautiful train routes in Europe. Relax and enjoy the four hour long journey through the beautiful Finnish countryside as we travel from the lakes to the Gulf of Bothnia.

Tonight we gather for a welcome drink & dinner at our hotel restaurant. The 'surprise menu' served tonight is a tribute to the diverse nature of the North and the world's purest ingredients sourced from the wild.

Friday
September 15, 2023

Capital of Culture

After breakfast our local guide takes us on a walking tour around this northern city. Oulu is a perfect mix of northern nature, urban city culture and original local flavour and – it will be The European Capital of Culture 2026 which the locals are very excited about! Our first visit is to Oulu Cathedral that houses several interesting works of art, the most notable of them being the portrait of Johannes Messenius, painted in 1611. Our next stop is at the Market Square with its legendary Market Square Policeman's statue. We cross the bridge from the Market Square to the old district of Pikisaari Island with colourful wooden houses.

Saturday
September 16, 2023

We enjoy lunch at a cosy restaurant located in an old timber warehouse followed by a visit to an old wool factory (Villatehdas) which today houses a group of artists and other creative businesses. We meet a textile artist at her studio and then explore 'Pikinen Poloku', an environmental art path that circles the shores and forests of Pikisaari island. We continue our walk back to the city center where our tour finishes at the Taito Shop, a treasure trove full of local crafts & gifts. Rest of the day free.

Island Life

Today we head out to the Island of Hailuoto, the largest island in the Gulf of Bothnia. The island started to rise from the sea approximately 2,000 years ago and continues to do so. Eventually the island will adjoin the mainland. The island has been inhabited for at least 1,000 years. Fishing was naturally essential for the islanders as was agriculture. Population of the island is currently around 1,000 residents. Hailuoto is characterised by well-preserved traditional buildings and unique nature, and has been named one of the national landscapes in Finland. This trip includes a ferry crossing as the island is not connected to the mainland yet.

Hailuoto is famous for its traditional woollen jumper design called Tikkuröijy. According to old records first sheep arrived to the island on the 1700's and the first Tikkuröijy was made from local wool by Sofia Björnholm about 200 years ago. In those days selling woollen jumpers and other crafts was the only way for local women to earn money. Today Tikkuröijy jumpers have experienced a renaissance and have become very sought after garments.

Upon arrival on the island we drive to the Old Vicarage, now home of our hosts Anne-Maria and her husband Timo, who is the local vicar. Anne-Maria & Timo have generously opened their home to us so that we can meet some of the members of their local knitting group and learn more about the traditional Tikkuröijy. Afterwards Timo will give us a tour of his church.



Sunday
September 17, 2023

We continue our tour by bus with our local guide to Marjaniemi Fishing Village with its traditional red&white fishermen's cottages. We visit the lighthouse and the local fishermen's co-op where we taste some freshly smoked fish. Then it is off to the main village centre where we drop in at the local handicrafts co-op store. Warning: there is a high chance that you will walk out with your own Tikkuröijy!

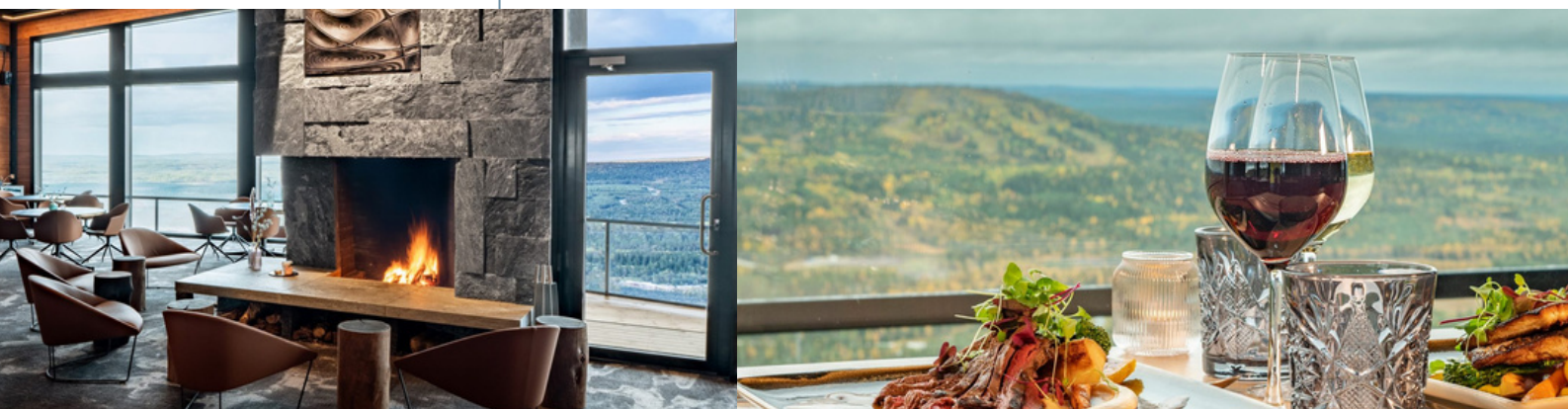
We enjoy lunch at Hailuoto Brewery, Finland's first organic brewery where all beers are preservative and additive free and are made from organically grown raw materials. After lunch we have a tour of the brewery and learn more about the ethos & principles behind the business followed by a guided tasting. Then it is time to head back to the mainland. Your evening is free to try out some of the local restaurants for dinner.

From the Sea to the Hills

After breakfast we continue our journey further North. We are spending the following three nights at a beautiful boutique hotel located next to a national park. Syöte National Park is covered with old forests and rocky outcrops formed by ancient sea waves and ice age meltwaters flushing the rock bare. Our hotel sits on the top of the southernmost 'tunturi' in Finland with amazing views of the surrounding wilderness. ('Tunturis' are hills predominantly located in Lapland that are high enough for their tops to be above the tree line.)

Upon arrival we enjoy lunch at the hotel before heading out for a guided walk (easy) in the National Park. We drop in at the information centre to learn more about the surrounding wilderness. After our walk we enjoy a hot drink and pancakes by a camp fire and return to our hotel in late afternoon.

Free time to enjoy the Spa at the hotel (also with amazing views) which offers a traditional Finnish sauna and a steam bath, a pool area with a hot tub, a therapy pool with hydrotherapy jets and counter current units, and a cold pool. The Spa also offers comprehensive wellness and beauty services such as manicures and massages. Dinner at the hotel.



Monday
September 18, 2023

Inspired by Arctic Nature

After breakfast we head a bit further North – this time to a small town called Posio. Posio is famous for one thing particularly and that is the Pentik Ceramics Factory, the northernmost ceramics factory in the world. Next to the factory is 'Pentik-Mäki', a popular destination for visitors consisting of several buildings housing a museum, exhibitions, a ceramics store and a café. The Anu Pentik Gallery is dedicated to ceramic arts and Finnish design. The facade of the gallery features a stunning, eight-metre high and twenty-metre wide ceramic installation which was created from recycled pieces of ceramics.

Anu Pentik and her husband Topi founded the company Pentik in 1971. The couple moved to Posio for Topi's work. Anu found work teaching ceramics at the local adult education college while also selling clay items made by herself at the local petrol station. Fast-forward 50 years and the company's turnover today is 30 million euros and it has 250 employees. The desire and burning enthusiasm towards testing the boundaries of ceramics have now taken Anu from the ceramics factory to creating large art installations. Anu still lives and works in Posio her & Topi might join us for a coffee if they are available.

After morning tea we continue our tour by bus to Riisitunturi National Park. The hillsides of the park are covered by rare slope mires and the bare fell tops offer breathtaking views over Lake Kitkajärvi and the wilderness beyond. Our guide will take us on a 4km walk (medium difficulty – elevation 110m) to the summit of the Riisitunturi hill. We enjoy a soup lunch by a camp fire before returning to our bus and drive back to our hotel.

How about a relaxing sauna or swim before dinner at the hotel?



Credit: Mylene van der Donk

Tuesday
September 19, 2023

Wednesday
September 20, 2023

Day at Leisure

Today is your free day. Relax, enjoy spa treatments, read a book by the fire place or just gaze out at the beautiful scenery. There are walking trails to be explored or you could hire an E-Bike and hit the trails. Alternatively join a guided canoeing tour or another activity. Dinner is served at the hotel restaurant.

Super Women & Super Foods

We leave our haven on the hill after breakfast when our journey continues even further North to the Arctic Circle. Today is going to be a slow but a long day! Our first stop is at the home farm of a 'superfood' company established by a local herbalist. The knowledge of herbs and folk medicine runs in her family and our host has now followed in the footsteps of her mother and great-grandfather.

There is something magical in the herbs and berries of Lapland. In summer they grow 24/7 under the midnight sun enjoying the purest air in the world – in winter they don't seem to suffer from harsh winds or the snow. The company turns these Arctic power plants into tasty and easy-to-use natural products to keep us all healthy. Our host shares her business story with us and tells us more about Arctic plants and her products which we can also sample.

Our tour then continues to meet another 'Super Woman', who together with her husband own a workshop/studio where they make beautifully crafted items out of natural materials like reindeer antlers, leather and wood. We enjoy a home-made lunch served at our hosts' house. After lunch we learn about the materials these artisans use for their creations and hopefully this will give us some inspiration when we create our own Arctic souvenir to take home.



We couldn't let you go home without meeting another famous Finnish personality, namely Santa Claus himself. We stop at the Santa Claus Village where we meet the Big Man. You also have time to say 'hello' to the reindeer, buy some last minute gifts and maybe enjoy an afternoon tea.

After the afternoon tea we meet our local guide who takes us on a tour of Rovaniemi. Rovaniemi is not only the Official Hometown of Santa Claus but it is also the capital of Lapland.

Almost totally destroyed during World War II, rebuilding of the city was designed with input from the famous Finnish architect Alvar Aalto. He planned the city's footprint in the shape of a reindeer's head, with the city roads forming the antlers, and the local sports stadium as the reindeer's eye. We pay visit to Arktikum, a science centre and museum where you can experience northern nature, culture, and history up close. We also learn about how climate change is affecting the Arctic regions.

After a guided tour and some time to explore the exhibitions on your own, our driver takes us to Restaurant Nili for our Farewell Dinner consisting of local seasonal specialities. After dinner transfer to Rovaniemi Railway Station for our overnight train trip to Helsinki. We sleep in comfortable modern cabins with bunk beds and private compact bathrooms. The train also has a restaurant onboard should you want to have a nightcap before bed.

Thursday
September 21, 2023

Arrive in Helsinki

Enjoy breakfast onboard before arriving in Helsinki. This tour has now come to an end but should you wish to stay longer, we would be delighted to design an extension itinerary for you.



Credit: Visit Finland/Mariia Kauppi



Join us & enjoy slow life in the Arctic!

Bookings & Enquiries

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Credit: Visit Finland/Julia Kivelä