

# Arctic Truck Expedition



I just packed my bag and not a minute later I hear the bell ringing at my house-door; It was Raymond as agreed at 3 pm. We packed my bags in the truck and drove off to pick up Maria and Kirsti. ***It was quite unusual to see the car at my house as its much more significant in size and no like any other car; it felt we are ready to get off the beaten path.***

***Raymond and Ken Stian, our expedition leaders, planned and modified the original trip according to our interests and our travel schedules.*** The first night we spent at Camp Tamok, an outdoor recreational centre 1h 15 minutes from Tromso.



At this place, we participated in Dog Sledding and spent the night in a cosy log cabin. The location is magical like out of a fairytale. Camp Tamok lays on private property and is the only human-made structure in the valley. It was unusual to spend time out there in the middle of remote and vast nature.

After a light supper by a fireplace at our log cabin, we went to gear up - all of the equipment we needed was on site including warm suits, winter boots, woollen socks, hats, mittens and headlamp.

***Our guides had already set a Huskie team ready for us. We had time to say hello and cuddle with our barking four-legged friends, and after brief instructions on how to handle the sledge, we started off our ride.***

I shared the ride with Maria, she was driving half of the way, and I got to sit back and enjoy. The Huskies seemed to be enthusiastic and happy to get going. Maria was doing an excellent job by pushing uphill and balancing the sledge on the curves. ***To run in the snow and handle a sleddog team is an outlandish and extreme exercise for most people and certainly requires some physical effort and excellent reaction skills but yet, possible to do without previous experience.*** I couldn't consider myself a musher, but yes, I have done it many times before; yet, every time I head out is extraordinary to me. ***I love to sense the power of nature, and how small it makes me feel, I suddenly***

***reconsider all the comfort I have in my life differently. I'm grateful to have the opportunity to be out there and to return full with energy and appreciation.***

Soon after the start the night came in and so did the snow, the Huskies were pulling enthusiastically and Maria pushing hard, the fresh snow didn't make it easier. Soon we found ourselves in total blue darkness in a snow blizzard in the middle of a remote Arctic winter landscape. The torch was our only light source and chance to communicate with the other teams ahead of us.

We were the last team in the line, and indeed it was a bit of a pressure to keep up with others, but looked like the lead dogs knew the way by heart or perhaps by their excellent sense of smell. Even though on that evening the dog sledging kennel had a bunch of



other travellers, visiting camp Tamok just for dog sledging, it felt that Maria and I were on a private trip. It was breathtaking to be out there in snow blizzard helping the Huskies to push the sledge through the fresh snow and enjoy the smooth ride when it was possible.

After some good two h of dog sledging, we arrived at Camp Tamok where we met the rest of our team and joined for delicious traditional dinner and cosy cup of tea around the fireplace. Before to go to sleep we had a short briefing about next days plans.



Next Day we drove to Sweden, the first part we drove through small forest roads. The trees were covered in snow from last night's snowstorm and made the landscape just marvellous.



It was unusual to see the landscape changing once we crossed from the coast of Norway with fjords and mountains to the Swedish flatlands. Not only the landscape but as well the weather was changing as we left the Golf Stream influenced coast of Norway. It got colder and colder once we crossed the Swedish border, here and there we got strong wind and snow blizzard beating us. Some parts of the road were snow covered, and here the Arctic Truck finally could show off its power.

***Struggle with the harsh weather and inhospitable landscape made me feel alive and united us all in this adventure. Isn't it the struggle we are looking for?***



By the sunset, we reach Icehotel in Jukkasjärvi where we had delicious dinner and visit in the Ice Gallery. It was my first Icehotel visit, and it certainly blew my mind with the dimensions and the detailed sculptures.



We could have spent the night in the Ice Hotel, but on this trip due to our interests and schedule we decided to make an off-road trip and do some outdoor "glamping".



After some time driving off-road, we arrived at our campground, it was a beautiful spot in a pine tree forest. At the place they have already build a sauna, igloo and a toilet; we just had to make it cosy with candles and start to set up our tents. All of us was invited to help to make the camp as comfortable as we wish.

***Cold in this situation was nothing to complain about; once I started shovelling, I felt the blood circulation increases, by the time I finished the "snow sofa" and bonfire pit I was warm and ready to help others to set up the tents. Once camp was set up, we sat back on our snow sofas and grilled late dinner snacks by the campfire. The evening we spent gazing at the starry sky, sharing stories and eventually looking at the Northern Lights dancing above the pine trees. It was a feeling of accomplishment and great teamwork.***



Next day was magical driving off-road in Swedish Lapland scouting for moose!



Our next stop was Kilpisjarvi, where Raymond and Ken Stian have planned snowmobile trip for us. It turned out to be different as planned since we got caught in a snowstorm and absolute white out the guide suggested that instead of driving our snowmobile, we would sit all together in a sledge pulled by the guide.

It was an excellent alternative considering our snowmobiling skills. In some moments we couldn't see a thing in front of us. I felt very grateful to sit back and enjoy the ride.

***At some point, we got even stopped by police on a frozen lake, turns out its a part of the Finnish police work routine.***



After Kilpisjarvi was time to close the Arctic Circle and return to Norwegian coastline, our Goal was to stay overnight in the Northern Most Whisky Distillery to celebrate our great journey with some comfort and glance.

It was only a couple of hours to Drive from The Finnish border to the coast of Lyngen Alps, the scenery was breathtaking, and it was a real pleasure to see the mountains and fjords again.

Once we arrived at the distillery, it was already evening; our hosts were waiting for us, and it was time to celebrate. We joined a guided tour in the distillery and finished with some local spirit tasting and delicious dinner. Our Expedition leaders have prepared a presentation of photos and videos from our journey that was a great surprise and appreciated to catch up whall all has been done during this expedition.

On this short presentation, I'm capable of sharing only a little glimpse of the motions, feelings and places and moments seen on this journey across the Scandinavian Arctic circle.



Next morning we woke up with spectacular view just outside our cabins the mountains were rising out of the sea, the clouds filling up the mountain valleys and eagle just passed our window front. Truly mesmerised we had breakfast with a panoramic view. It was time to leave, but that only means it will be time to return.

