

Arctic Ski Vacation

By **Judy Koutsky**

While the ski season in the U.S. usually ends by April, in Lapland, Finland, it can go as late as June, due to its location far north in the Arctic Circle region. Ruka, a tree-filled ski-resort located in Kuusamo, Eastern Lapland, has ski-in rooms, in-room saunas and balconies (with Northern Light views). Not only can skiers expect 200 powder-filled days a year, but the slopes stay open until 11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights. For those who don't ski, there's plenty more to experience through [Ruka Safaris](#), including reindeer sledding, snow shoeing, ice fishing, and snow mobiling. They'll even provide warm winter snow suits, gloves, boots, wool socks, ski/face masks and helmets. Here are some of their most popular excursions- all of which will appeal to the whole family.



Snowshoe hiking in Oulanka National Park

This hike takes you to some of the prettiest parts of Kuusamo, including the famous Oulanka National Park. The trail goes alongside the river Kitkajoki with stops at the Myllykoski old mill, where hot chocolate, coffee, sandwiches and marshmallows made over a roasting fire await.



Snowmobile safari to a reindeer farm

Kids five and older can join their parents on this magical winter adventure. Guests travel through the wintry forests and over ice-covered lakes until they reach a traditional reindeer farm, where they'll stop to feed the animals and go on a reindeer sleigh ride. They'll head back after filling up on hot beverages, pastries and local sausage.

**River floating**

Adventurous types will relish this unique Arctic experience. Float suits keep kids and adults warm while they glide through the chilly waters. After, they'll warm up with a fire and hot beverages.



Husky safaris

Don't worry—these adorable dogs know exactly what to do, but you will still learn how to “drive” the sled through the snowy forests.



ice fishing

Aspiring ice fisherman enjoy a guided snow shoeing tour over a frozen lake until they reach the perfect spot to drill a hole, pick up a rod and catch perch, whitefish and pikes.



Searching for the Northern Lights

If you go all the way to Lapland, you don't want to miss viewing the Northern Lights. A sleigh pulls visitors through the forest, up the hill and far from any town lights. If visitors don't see them on the sleigh ride, they have another chance once they reach camp (set up with warming snacks, beverages and a cozy fire).

Photo by Harri Tarvainen
