

FINNISH LAPLAND

TRAVEL GUIDE

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Useful Information

CURRENCY
Euros

LANGUAGE
Finnish & Sami, but everyone speaks very well english

WHEN TO GO
Ideal period: February - March

You can go to Lapland all year round, but the experience can be quite different depending on the season.
Winter : Snow is present from November to April/May. But in December/January the days are really very short (polar night = no daylight at all in the north, but around Rovaniemi for example it only lasts one day). 👉 So February is the best time to take advantage of the longer days and have a chance of seeing the northern lights.
Summer : Found in summer looks pretty cool too, because it's super green and there are lots of lakes (188,000 in total) with lots of different activities and temperatures of up to 30°, and a sun that, on the contrary, never sets!

AURORA SEASON
Late August to early April

The Northern Lights are visible on around 200 nights a year, or every other night on a clear day. Clouds are often the problem! It snows a lot in winter, so the sky is quite overcast. During our 10 days here, we saw auroras 3 times ! The further north you go, the more likely you are to see them.

WHERE TO LAND
Rovaniemi, Kittila or Ivalo

Depending on your itinerary, you can land in Rovaniemi ("capital" of Lapland), Kittila or Ivalo. Prices are roughly the same, so compare and see what suits you best. Cost from Paris: average €200 per person return.

ENTRY CONDITIONS
Identity card/Passport

Finland is part of the European Union, so French nationals can simply go there with their identity card.

WHAT TO PACK
Super warm clothes !

How to dress for the cold?



To cope with temperatures down to -30°C, you really need the right clothing. The solution is layers of clothing, made for the cold.
You'll need at least 3 layers under your coat (which you'll find in ski/mountain department stores like Décathlon, or specialized brands like North Face, Columbia, Patagonia...).

- Thermal T-shirt
- Thermal undershirt
- Warm fleece pull
- Thermal tights/leggings
- Warm & waterproof trousers
- Thin merino socks
- Wool ski socks
- Merino under-gloves
- Ski gloves/mittens
- Wool hat
- Fleece neck warmer (up to the nose)
- Scarf
- Extreme-cold coat (brands often specify the temperature up to which the coat is made)
- Waterproof snow boots

❗ Note that many hotels offer equipment free of charge (large wetsuit, shoes, gloves) so if you're only staying in one place you don't necessarily need to buy everything !

Must-have : Hand warmers

An accessory that we found indispensable, especially if, like us, you take a lot of photos so you'll need to take off your gloves, and then I can tell you that the cold really hurts!

Slip these little sachets into your under-gloves and shoes: they heat up for several hours and are reusable for 2/3 days max. You can also find them at Décathlon or on Amazon:

Example here.

Moisturizing cream

With this cold, dry weather, it's a good idea to use a water-free cream for the face, because in sub-zero temperatures, the water in the cream can freeze and damage your skin! I bought Eucerin's "Aquafor" cream, which contains no water.

DRONE
Drone authorized in Finland

⚠️ On the other hand, be careful with the cold, and this applies to all electronic devices: they don't work as well or even at all when temperatures drop below -15°! Our drone sometimes crashed or wouldn't take off, and our phone wouldn't work (but it's back to normal as soon as it warms up). But as far as the drone is concerned, the battery can suddenly stop working in flight.

TAP WATER
Drinkable and excellent

Finland's tap water is reputed to be one of the best in the world.

ADAPTER
No need for adapters, plugs are the same as in France.

TRAVEL INSURANCE
Always travel insured!

If you need to pay for medication, medical consultations or repatriation if you're injured, the costs can be astronomical abroad, so don't take them lightly!

-10% on "Cap Assistance" (travel less than 3 months) with code MELLY10 at Chapka Assurances

GOOD TO KNOW

In Lapland, there are more reindeer than people!

In fact, it's often the main dish in every restaurant 😂... It's up to you to try it, but the fish is absolutely excellent. There are also plenty of vegetable soups: mushrooms, beet, cauliflower.

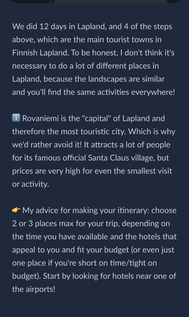
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Itinerary

MAP OF FINNISH LAPLAND

Steps we visited



Access to my saved Google Map points

We did 12 days in Lapland, and 4 of the steps above, which are the main tourist towns in Finnish Lapland. To be honest, I don't think it's necessary to do a lot of different places in Lapland, because the landscapes are similar and you'll find the same activities everywhere!

🏙️ Rovaniemi is the "capital" of Lapland and therefore the most touristic city. Which is why we'd rather avoid it! It attracts a lot of people for its famous official Santa Claus village, but prices are very high for even the smallest visit or activity.

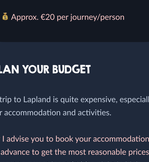
👉 My advice for making your itinerary: choose 2 or 3 places max for your trip, depending on the time you have available and the hotels that appeal to you and fit your budget (or even just one place if you're short on time/tight on budget). Start by looking for hotels near one of the airports!

HOW TO GET AROUND?

We rented a car to give us more freedom to stop wherever we wanted for photos. It's definitely more comfortable, and the roads are magnificent, lined with fir trees.

But you should know that the region is very well served by bus, so it's quite possible to reduce the budget by getting around this way. Hotels and activities also almost always offer shuttles to pick you up in the center of the nearest town. Another more expensive option is to book cabs with your hotels.
If you're on a tight budget, there's no need to go on a roadtrip, and you can choose one place for the week and do all the activities.

Rent a car



We rented a Golf from HERTZ for 11 days. We picked it up and returned it at Kittilä airport.

💰 €789 for 11 days

💡 The cars come with snow tires, of course. It's not particularly difficult to drive in the snow, but stay alert as the roads remain slippery.

Taking public transport

- For buses, you can use the RometoRio website to find out which bus companies run the route you're looking for.
- You can also visit the website of the Onni Bus company, which operates a number of routes in Finland.
- Otherwise, ask each of your hotels - they're bound to know the buses and timetables to get to them.

💰 Approx. €20 per journey/person

PLAN YOUR BUDGET

A trip to Lapland is quite expensive, especially for accommodation and activities.

👉 I advise you to book your accommodation in advance to get the most reasonable prices. Expect to pay at least €100 a night in high season (Dec-March) and more like €150/€200 if you book at the last minute.

🍽️ Most accommodations offer kitchens, so it's a good idea to save money and cook at home.

🤔 To treat yourself to luxury glass igloo accommodation, you'll need to pay at least 300€ a night, but it can go up to 1000€.

Here's a budget simulation for 10 days based on our experience:

Budget for 10 days in Lapland :

- Plane tickets from Paris: €350
- Petrol and car: €1,000
- Hotels (9 nights at €150): €1,350
- Shopping: €200
- Activities (4): €1,200

Total: €4,100 for 2 people

For smaller budgets, I've found some very interesting offers by researching with agencies where everything is included (but I haven't tested it):

7 days with TravelBase

7-night accommodation (studio with kitchen) 4 activities (dog sledding, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, aurora hunting)

💰 From €790 per person

Not included: Flights, food.
In total for 2 persons you can make it with a total of about 2000€!

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Levi

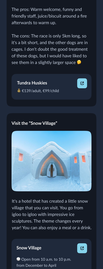
We started our trip by landing in Kittilä, 20 min from Levi. We were immediately in the mood, with snow everywhere!

Levi is a good starting point and offers plenty of activities and accommodation, as it's also Finland's largest ski resort (with 43 runs for all levels and 27 lifts). You'll see the slopes lit up as you arrive.

RECOMMENDED TIME
3 days

ACTIVITIES IN LEVI

Dog sledding



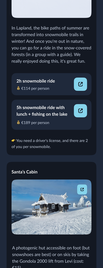
An activity we've all dreamed of! We tried it out with **Tundra Huskies** and it was great. Located 4.15min drive from Levi (they can pick you up from the center), this is a family-run business with 80 dogs (all waiting to run! Afterwards, you'll have some time to cuddle them and take photos.

The pros: Warm welcome, Sunny and friendly staff, juice/biscuit around a fire afterwards to warm up.

The cons: The race is only 5 km long, so it's a bit short, and the other dogs are in cages. I don't think it's good for mental health of these dogs, but I would have liked to see them in a slightly larger space.

Tundra Huskies
€ 119 /adult, €99 /child

Visit the "Snow Village"



It's a hotel that has created a little snow village that you can visit. You go from igloo to igloo with impressive ice sculptures. The theme changes every year! You can also sleep in the igloos.

Snow Village
Open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m
from December to April

Price: €25 /adult, €15/child
Ice Restaurant (dinner): €89 /adult, €45/child

There's also an Ice Bar where you can drink on the spot (with ice gloves).

Take a snowmobile ride



In Lapland, the bike paths of summer are transformed into snowmobile trails in winter! And every road is private, so you can go for a ride in the snow-covered forests (in a group with a guide). We really enjoyed doing this, it's great.

2h snowmobile ride
€ 114 per person

3h snowmobile ride with lunch + Saimaa on the lake
€ 159 per person

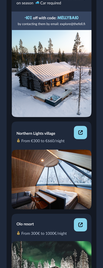
Tip: you need a driver's license, and there are 2 of you per snowmobile.

Santa's Cabin



A photogenic but accessible on foot (but snowshoes are best) or on skis by taking the Gondola 2000 lift from Levi (cost: €15).

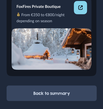
Ice Karting



Unbelievably we didn't have time to test this out, but what a shame! We were here more than a real life Mario Kart in WINTER mode!

Ice Karting Levi
€ 65 /person

Arctic Sauna World



Situé à 45 min du centre de Levi, ce sauna propose plusieurs saunas "cabines" de sauna à bois et un sauna panoramique! Il peut se réserver, et est toujours rempli dans la soirée juste devant !

Arctic Sauna World
€ 69 /personne

WHERE TO EAT IN LEVI

We were recommended a restaurant in the center of Levi and tried another one, a pancake restaurant, which we really enjoyed! For the rest, we cooked at our accommodation.

Pannukakkutalo Levi
Sweet and savoury pancakes, then Finnish specialties & delicious tea!

From €8 to €12 per pancake

Ice Karting Levi
€ 65 /person

Arctic Sauna World
€ 69 /personne

WHERE TO SLEEP IN LEVI

We did a lot of research to find the best accommodations for your budget, but we were surprised by how little choice there is. We went to Kuly enough to work with The Fell (see below), which is clearly the most beautiful accommodation of the whole trip!

It's hard to give you precise prices, as rates change completely depending on the month and even the day of the week. The cheapest time to go is from the beginning of April to November-VS-a Saturday in February...

Budget 150€-200€ per night

Holiday Home Moonlight Inn! 104 km Interhome
The rate decreases with the number of nights. 150€/night for one week- 560€ - 750€ (i.e. 80€/night).

Holiday Home Levi star 1103 km Interhome
The rate decreases with the number of nights: 150€/night for one week- 550€ - 650€ (i.e. 80€/night).

Levihelmi Apartments

Classic Log Cabin Ski in Ski out

Luxury accomodations :

The Fell
Magnificent chalet for 6 people, in an idyllic hilltop setting. It is quite expensive, but the location is to die for! In terms of activities, you have the lake (the account includes snowshoes, cross-country skiing, outdoor jacuzzi, snowshoeing Sups' skiing and even a small adjoining reindeer farm).
From €475 to €1600/night depending on season

4D1 off with code: MELLYSAAD
by contacting them by email: explore@kuly.fi

Northern Lights village
From €350 to €660/night

Oks resort
From 300€ to 1050€/night

Northern Lights Ranch
From 270€ to 1000€/night depending on season

FeelYen Private Boutique
From €350 to €800/night depending on season

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Saariselka

Saariselkä is the perfect spot for a nature getaway, surrounded by hills and right next to Urho Kekkonen National Park. This small village offers plenty of activities for a 100% authentic Lapland experience. Ideal for a break before heading further north to the Lake Inari region!

RECOMMENDED TIME
2/3 days

ACTIVITIES IN SAARISELKA

Hiking in Urho Kekkonen National Park

From the town center, you can park at the park entrance and take several hikes.We did the shortest, Aurora, Day-use Hut, 1.5km.

For each hike, it's easy to find your way around. There will be signs along the way indicating the different hikes possible (one color per hike).

Hiking in Kiilopää

At the Kiilopää summit, 16km from Saariselkä, you can enjoy a wide range of activities, including skiing, hiking and snowshoeing.We were recommended to walk to the summit. Kiilopää fell, but due to lack of time, we couldn't make it.

Meeting with the Reindeer



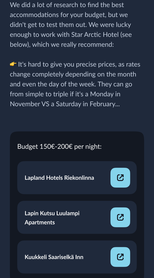
A unique experience in small group, but, quite expensive If you go through our hotel.

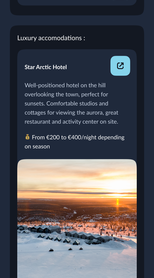
Though it was one of our favorite activities because it was really authentic. You spend half a day (4 hours) in the middle of nature with the local reindeer herders.
There are hundreds of reindeer, and you spend the morning feeding them by hand and taking as many photos as you like. To warm up, you'll also be treated to a hot drink around a small fire while grilling homemade sausages or enjoying sandwiches. You really have as much time as you want to enjoy the reindeer without having to rush.

Star Arctic Hotel

2 options:
🔥 4h in the wild with hundreds of reindeer and accompanied by the breeders: 350€/ pers
🔥 Reindeer farm visit and sleigh ride (2h): 140€/pers

Kaunispää summit walk and tower





It's easy to get there on foot, or even by lift or car. There's an observation tower and restaurant at the top. You'll have a magnificent view of the park and the city. We recommend going at sunset.

Beware, it's very windy at the top. We had trouble getting the drone to fly, and you'll need to cover up.

Other activities

We booked our activities through our hotel, but here is an agency in town that offer winter activities. They have great rates :

Arctic Timetravels DMC

WHERE TO SLEEP IN SAARISELKA

We did a lot of research to find the best accommodations for your budget, but we didn't get to test them out. We were lucky enough to work with Star Arctic Hotel (see below), which we really recommend:

👉 It's hard to give you precise prices, as rates change completely depending on the month and even the day of the week. They can go from simple to triple if it's a Monday in November VS a Saturday in February...

Budget 150€-200€ per night:

Lapland Hotels Riekonlinna

Lapin Kutsu Luulampi Apartments

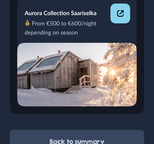
Kuukkeli Saariselkä Inn

Luxury accomodations :

Star Arctic Hotel

Well-positioned hotel on the hill overlooking the town, perfect for sunsets. Comfortable studios and cottages for viewing the aurora, great restaurant and activity center on site.

🔥 From €200 to €400/night depending on season





Northern Lights village Saariselka

Top Star Saariselkä - Arctic Glass Cubes

Aurora Collection Saariselka

🔥 From €500 to €600/night depending on season

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Inari

Inari was one of our favorites because of its huge lake! The scenery is magnificent, there are plenty of activities to discover, and the atmosphere is even more peaceful than in other regions. If you get the chance, we really recommend spending a few days there! 😉

RECOMMENDED TIME
2/3 days

ACTIVITIES IN INARI

Hiking in Inari

- **Hiking in Jäniskoski Rapids**



One of our roadtrip favorites. Access to the Jäniskoski rapids and suspension bridge is quick and easy, about 15 minutes, and well laid out. There are several hikes to be made. We only went to the suspension bridge and turned back. The scenery is magnificent and next to the bridge there's a little shelter with a fire pit if you want to spend a little time admiring the view.

Jäniskoski Rapids Parking

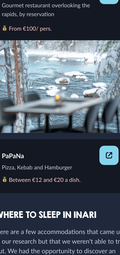
Ice fishing on Lake Inari



An authentic experience that requires a little patience! We spent a morning on the lake ice fishing, and it was really fun. The guide took us by snowmobile to the heart of the lake, where everyone tried their luck after drilling their hole in the ice. After this session, we headed back to the hotel to enjoy the day's fishing. And frankly, it was a treat! Our hotel guide is a real enthusiast, and he knows how to sublimate the fish.

Lake Inari Mobile Cabins
125€ par adult

Ice skating on Lake Inari



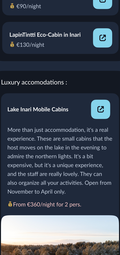
It was sold out when we got there, but the place looks really magical. A dream to skate on natural ice surrounded by fir trees 🎄

Arctic TIMETRAVELS
75€ per adult

Other possible experiences

Here are some other agencies we found, all with excellent scores :

For a husky safari in a small group



It's a small, family-run business that offers excursions in small groups and even privately. We would have loved to have done it privately, as our experiences in other cities have given us the impression that the activity is quite touristy. Everyone follows one another.

Happy huskies
325€ per adult in private • 2h
255€ per adult small group • 2h

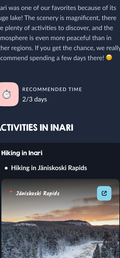
For the more adventurous, it is even possible to combine a two-day safari with an overnight stay in a chalet.

Private All-inclusive Overnight Stay

WHERE TO EAT IN INARI

We tested 2 places that we can recommend to you, and the rest of the time we were able to cook at the hotel:

Aanaar Restaurant
Gourmet restaurant overlooking the rapids, by reservation
From €100/ pers.



PaPaNa
Pizza, Kebab and Hamburger
Between €12 and €20 a dish.

WHERE TO SLEEP IN INARI

Here are a few accommodations that came up in our research but that we weren't able to try out. We had the opportunity to discover an atypical accommodation with Lake Inari Mobile Cabins (see below).

Budget 90€-150€ per night:

The Sleeping Bear
124€/night

Giellajohka
€90/night

LapinTintti Eco-Cabin in Inari
€130/night

Luxury accomodations :

Lake Inari Mobile Cabins

More than just accommodation, it's a real experience. These are small cabins that the host moves on the lake in the evening to admire the northern lights. It's a bit expensive, but it's a unique experience, and the staff are really lovely. They can also organize all your activities. Open from November to April only.
From €360/night for 2 pers.

Holiday Village Inari
from €130 to €500/night

Wilderness Hotel Juutua
Well placed just in front of the river and rapids.
from €120 to €400/night

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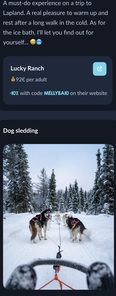
Pyha Luosto

This spot seemed less touristy than Levi and probably Rovaniemi, and we loved it. Our accommodation had a lot to do with it, because of the activities including a night spent in a real igloo!

RECOMMENDED TIME
2/3 days

ACTIVITIES IN PYHA LUOSTO

Sauna and Ice bath



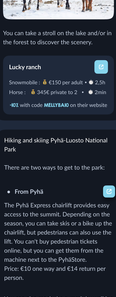
A must-do experience on a trip to Lapland. A real pleasure to warm up and rest after a long walk in the cold. As for the ice bath, I'll let you find out for yourself... 😅🥶

Lucky Ranch

💧90€ per adult

•EU with code **MELLYBAR** on their website

Dog sledding



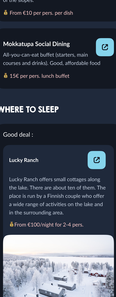
The course is really magnificent. We've had the chance to experience it twice, the first time in Levi, and we liked the scenery on this one the best.

If you don't have a car, the agency can pick you up in the surrounding area for €20.

Pyhä Husky Farm

💧€160 per adult • 🕐 1h
💧120€ per adult • 🕐 30min

Horseback riding or snowmobiling



You can take a stroll on the lake and/or in the forest to discover the scenery.

Lucky ranch

Snowmobile : 💧€150 per adult • 🕐 2.5h
Horse : 💧345€ private to 2 • 🕐 2min

•EU with code **MELLYBAR** on their website

Hiking and skiing Pyhä-Luosto National Park

There are two ways to get to the park:

- **From Pyhä**

The Pyhä Express chairlift provides easy access to the summit. Depending on the season, you can take skis or a bike up the chairlift, but pedestrians can also use the lift. You can't buy pedestrian tickets online, but you can get them from the machine next to the PyhäStore. Price: €10 one way and €14 return per person.

You can also reach the summit by walking along the summer or winter route. The route starts at the Calsberg restaurant, and is about 3 km long in one direction.

- **From Luosto: Scenic Hut Ukko-Luosto**

The route starts at the Luosto lift parking lot, the starting point for several hiking trails. Follow the signs to the Ukko-Luosto panoramic hut. The trail is perfectly signposted, and takes about an hour to reach.

WHERE TO EAT IN PYHA LUOSTO

Ravintola Tsokka

Ideal for a short break at the top of the slopes.

💧From €10 per pers. per dish

Moskatuura Social Dining

All-you-can-eat buffet (starters, main courses and drinks). Good, affordable food

💧15€ per pers. lunch buffet

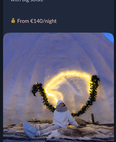
WHERE TO SLEEP

Good deal :

Lucky Ranch

Lucky Ranch offers small cottages along the lake. There are about ten of them. The place is run by a Finnish couple who offer a wide range of activities on the lake and in the surrounding area.

💧From €300/night for 2-4 pers.

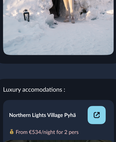


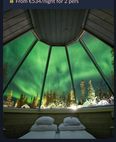


It was also with Lucky Ranch that we were able to experience sleeping in a real snow igloo! Every winter, the hotel builds its igloos with a unique design inside. Honestly, the early evening was really fun and unusual, but when you wake up at 4am and it's -10°C it's not as pleasant 😅

Fortunately, everything is provided for: big special cold sleeping bags, a hot water bottle, and if that's not fun anymore, the hotel restaurant is right next door, warm, with big sofas:

💧From €140/night

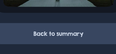




Luxury accomodations :

Northern Lights Village Pyhä

💧From €534/night for 2 pers



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Photo Tips : Auroras

Lapland is famous for its magnificent Northern Lights. It's a sight to behold, but don't expect to see them every day of the year! Here are a few tips on how to see them and take photos.

WHEN TO TRAVEL TO SEE THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

The best time to see the northern lights is in Winter (November - March) :

✅ Long, dark nights = more viewing opportunities.

✅ Intense cold, but often clearer skies (especially in February-March).

⚠️ Beware of the cold: battery discharges quickly in extreme conditions.

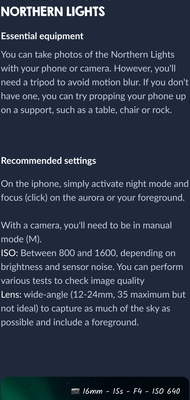
To maximize your chances, March is the ideal month: the days are long enough to enjoy the snow-covered landscapes, and the nights are clear.

Monthly informations :

- 👎 November and December: Lots of clouds
- 👍 January: Less cloudy but cold
- 👌February: Very cold but fairly clear skies
- 👌 March: best month - less cold and clear skies almost every day

Aurora intensity :

The intensity of the aurora borealis is measured in KP (K-index). It ranges from Kp 0 (weak activity) to Kp 9 (very strong activity). In Lapland, a Kp between 2 and 3 is enough to see an aurora borealis.We had auroras at 3 Kp, which was already quite good, clearly visible to the naked eye. I think that above 5, they must be really intense and impressive.



How to find it?

The aurora borealis moves quite fast. This means they can appear suddenly from one minute to the next, or in the space of a few dozen minutes. To avoid checking every minute and head in the right direction, you can use an app that will give you the probability of seeing them as well as their intensity.

⚠️ These indications are not 100% reliable, so don't hesitate to take a look in the sky yourself, or go aurora-hunting if the sky is clear.

My Aurora Forecast

Ideal conditions

You'll need clear skies, and try to find an unlit spot, away from towns and cities, with a clear horizon. Lakes or small roads can be a good spot.

PHOTOGRAPHING THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

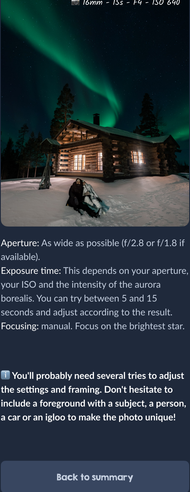
Essential equipment

You can take photos of the Northern Lights with your phone or camera. However, you'll need a tripod to avoid motion blur. If you don't have one, you can try propping your phone up on a support, such as a table, chair or rock.

Recommended settings

On the iphone, simply activate night mode and focus (click) on the aurora or your foreground.

With a camera, you'll need to be in manual mode (M).
ISO: Between 800 and 1600, depending on brightness and sensor noise. You can perform various tests to check image quality
Lens: wide-angle (12-24mm, 35 maximum but not ideal) to capture as much of the sky as possible and include a foreground.



Aperture: As wide as possible (f/2.8 or f/1.8 if available).
Exposure time: This depends on your aperture, your ISO and the intensity of the aurora borealis. You can try between 5 and 15 seconds and adjust according to the result.
Focusing: manual. Focus on the brightest star.

ℹ️ You'll probably need several tries to adjust the settings and framing. Don't hesitate to include a foreground with a subject, a person, a car or an igloo to make the photo unique!

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ENJOY YOUR TRIP!