

ACTIVITIES ABROAD WINTER TRIP DOSSIER

SAVALEN – A MAGICAL FAMILY CHRISTMAS



Is this the perfect winter destination? The snow arrives in November and lies until late April, there's a great range of accommodation with spa facilities, downhill skiing and Nordic activities as well as a fabulous Santa experience.

ACCOMMODATION – Our Opinion

Santa Street Apartments

Santa Claus' Street is located in the centre of Savalen and aptly enough, Santa's House and workshop occupy pride of place at the very top of it.

Each of the 45m² apartments have two bedrooms with a total of five sleeping spaces. There is an open plan kitchen and living room with TV and wood burning stove as well as a bathroom and WC.

For parties of more than five people, Santa Street also has 68m² apartments over two floors with three bedrooms totalling 9 beds, open plan kitchen and living room, and two bathrooms.

You will have all your meals at Savalen's hotel as well as free access to the spa, a great option after all those winter activities.

The spa features: a swimming pool, massage seats, massage showers, massage beds and massage waterfalls, two jacuzzis, a steam grotto, sauna and treatment rooms.



AGENDA

5 days, 4 nights

Day One Flights, arrivals and transfers

On arrival at Oslo you will be met by one of Santa's elves who will take you to your transfer vehicle. Once you are on your way, we will play a family Christmas video or DVD to keep everybody happy during the transfer to Savalen.

On arrival at Savalen you'll be shown your apartment. You then make your way to the restaurant for an introductory meeting and dinner.

Day Two Santa's House and winter olympics

There's no point in keeping the kids (young and old) waiting so this morning you'll walk along the street to Santa's House. In his workshop where wishes are turned into presents, Santa will tell everybody a fairy tale before taking the children to meet and feed his animals including Rudolf the reindeer, a llama, pigs and miniature ponies. You can also see him in training for Christmas Eve in his practice chimney – It really is a special experience.

We can't stress this enough: This is not a "stopwatch Santa experience". Each family gets a private audience with Santa lasting a minimum of ten minutes and you are welcome to stay at his house and workshop all morning.

After lunch we've laid on our very own winter olympics a fun "competition" using a combination of three or four activities from the likes of snowshoeing, kick sledding, triple ski, skating and Santa's obstacle course. Great family fun in the snow.

Day Three Snowmobile safari and horse-pulled sleigh ride

This morning you go on a snowmobile safari around the lake. Naturally, you will receive full tuition and a safety briefing prior to setting off. This is an easy-paced safari with two adults per machine and children riding in a sleigh behind the guide's skidoo.

You should have some free time after lunch so why not head for the pool and spa? As the day draws to a close we take you out on a winter sleigh ride. In sleds pulled by horses, our one hour safari is all about Christmas with tinkling bells and torches – It doesn't get closer to Narnia!

Day Four Husky safari and ice fishing

This morning's activity is yet another huge family favorite. There will be plenty of time to pet the excited and eager dogs before you set off on a 5km husky safari. Along the way you'll get the chance to try some ice fishing with the help of an instructor.

There's some more free time after lunch to take advantage of Savalen's many active facilities. Don't forget the ski slopes and ice rink.

To round off a fabulous family holiday your farewell meal is a traditional Norwegian Christmas dinner followed by a "magical hour" in the candle-lit Aqua Wellbeing Centre.

Day Five Return airport transfers and departure

Your kids will hate you for this but all good things must come to an end. Sorry!



Note: Drivers of snowmobiles must remember to take their full or provisional driving licence.

Please note that the above itinerary is subject to change at the discretion of the activity providers for reasons of safety or other unforeseen circumstances. Wherever possible any alternative arrangements made will be in keeping with the spirit of the original itinerary.

GENERAL INFORMATION

CLIMATE

Norway does get affected by severe cold weather during the winter months. Temperatures can be extremely low and if you visit in winter you should come prepared for these harsh conditions.

EQUIPMENT

There is no need to buy lots of expensive cold weather clothing before your holiday.

You will be provided with thermo overalls, thick socks, mittens, boots and warm hat as well as helmets when appropriate. The equipment provided should keep you comfortably warm. However, for added assurance we

suggest enhancing the clothing provided with the following:

Thermal Underwear

Forget sartorial elegance and invest in some thermal long johns and top to wear under your overalls.

Turtleneck or fleece sweater

Wool is the best material. We recommend wearing one or two such garments in sub-zero temperatures.

Socks

Again, wool is the best material. You should take several pairs both thin and thick.

Sunglasses

The glare from the snow can be almost blinding. Always have good quality sunglasses close to hand.

Oil based suntan lotion and lip balm

These two items are as essential in a winter landscape as they are on a sun soaked beach. Water based suntan lotions and lip balm will freeze so ensure that yours are oil based. In our experience, it is easier to purchase these items in the country you are visiting rather than at home.

Balaclava

Freshly washed balaclavas are often provided by our activity providers but you may like to consider taking your own. It's a personal thing!

Head Torch

Particularly useful if you are staying in a wilderness cabin or taking part in an overnight safari.

SUGGESTED GENERAL PACKING LIST

ITEM	CHECK	ITEM	CHECK
Passport		Glasses/Contact Lenses	
Air Tickets		Toiletries	
Car Hire Voucher and full driving licence (for driver)		Universal Travelling Adapter	
Driving Instructions/Map		Small Sewing Kit	
Trip Dossier and Itinerary		Sweets & Snacks for journey	
Insurance Documents		Notebook/Diary/Pen	
Money/Travellers Cheques/Credit Card		Guide Book	
Money Security Belt/Pouch		Games, books, toys for your kids	

For details regarding hand luggage restrictions please visit www.baa.com

For all other airports please go to the relevant airport website.

AIRPORT TRANSFER INFORMATION

Our airport transfer time is included in your holiday documents and you must be at the designated meeting point at that time. If you do not arrive on time we cannot guarantee that the transfer can be delayed as this means holding up the entire group. If you do miss your transfer then you will need to make your own arrangements to your accommodation.

If your flight is delayed, please telephone either your local representative or our UK emergency number. Emergency numbers are provided in your final travel letter.

TIPPING

At your discretion you may wish to tip your guides at the end of your stay as a gesture of appreciation for their efforts during your holiday.

PARENTAL SUPERVISION

Our family holidays are designed to be just that, family holidays. During activities, our guides are there to provide advice, tuition and supervision but we must stress that you are responsible for the child or children in your care. We do not employ qualified child minders and you should not put our guides or other group members in a position where they are responsible for the care of your child or children.

BOOKING ACTIVITIES LOCALLY

In almost all of our destinations you can book and pay for additional activities locally. Our guides will normally discuss the options available at your welcome meeting. Please note that we cannot be held responsible for any injury or loss that occurs through any activities that are booked in your destination.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Visas are not required for Norway but you must hold a valid British Passport. Norway is a member country of the EEA, which entitles you to work or reside in Norway. To do so an EEA permit is required, which the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) issue.

You should be in possession of a valid passport. There is no minimum validity required but you should ensure that your passport is valid for your return journey.

Single parents or other adults travelling alone with children should be aware that some countries require documentary evidence of parental responsibility before allowing lone parents to enter the country or, in some cases, before permitting the children to leave the country.

HEALTH

The standard of healthcare in Norway is high.

Under the terms of the EEA Regulation, you are covered for emergency treatment whilst visiting Norway. The Form E111 is no longer valid. You should obtain a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) before leaving the UK. The EHIC is not a substitute for medical and travel insurance, but entitles you to emergency medical treatment on the same terms as Norwegian nationals. It also does not cover you for medical repatriation, on-going medical treatment or treatment of a non-urgent nature.

The Norwegian Food Control Authority warns that local advice should be sought if you intend to eat mussels harvested off the coast and certain types of fish from lakes and fjords.

For further information on health, check the Department of Health's website at: www.dh.gov.uk or contact NHS Direct on 0845 46 47.

CURRENCY AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE

The currency in Norway is the Kroner. Norway is very expensive - bring or have electronic access to plenty of money, especially if you intend to eat and drink in restaurants and bars. Bank opening hours are more restrictive than in the UK - especially in summer, though cashpoints are widely available. Most Norwegian cashpoints accept Visa, Mastercard and Cirrus cards issued by British banks. You should be aware that credit cards are generally not as well accepted as a means of payment in Norwegian supermarkets and petrol stations as they are in the UK - but this situation is improving all the time.

CARD FRAUD

We recommend that you tell your bank or card issuer where you're going abroad and what dates you will be travelling. This avoids the embarrassment of having your card refused because your bank thinks you could be a fraudster yourself! Give the bank or card issuer your contact details so that they can call you if they spot an unusual transaction.

TRAVEL SAFETY

The safety of our clients is of paramount importance at all times in terms of activity participation and destination. We always follow the advice of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and should they advise against travel for any reason you will be contacted with a view to making alternative arrangements. We monitor this advice on a daily basis. To see this advice for yourself visit www.fco.gov.uk

YOUR SAFETY

Here at Activities Abroad we are extremely proud of our safety record and believe this is entirely due to the excellence of our activity providers.

It is absolutely essential when partaking in any activity that you listen very closely to, and abide by, the instructions provided. While we do all we can to minimize any dangers, participants must be prepared to accept some risk as part of the holiday. Nobody knows the environment better than our activity providers who work here almost every day. Consequently, their knowledge and experience is unsurpassed.

Please always respect any decisions made by our guides. Your safety is their principal concern at all times. By following their instructions, your safety and enjoyment during each activity will be greatly enhanced.

WHEN YOU GET YOUR TICKET

You should check to make sure that the date, times, and flight numbers are as booked and the names on the tickets are spelt correctly. **It is vital that surnames and initials on tickets match the passports.**

CARE OF YOUR TICKET

Please take care of your ticket as getting a replacement is not straightforward and can be costly.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We strongly recommend that you obtain comprehensive travel and medical insurance before traveling. You should check any exclusions, and that your policy covers you for the activities you want to undertake.

MEDICAL HISTORY AND ADVICE

It is essential that you advise us prior to departure of any pre-existing medical or dietary condition relating to any member of your party so that we may notify our local staff before you arrive. Activities Abroad cannot be held responsible for any incident or event arising from your failure to do this.

ROAD SAFETY

A valid UK, or other EU/EEA, driving licence is sufficient for driving in Norway if here as a visitor. There is no need for an International Driving Permit. You should ensure that you have arranged appropriate vehicle insurance cover prior to travelling.

Distances are great and driving takes longer than you think. Narrow and winding roads may be hazardous and impassable, especially in winter. Winter tyres are mandatory from approximately 1 November to 15 April (exact dates can vary year on year). You should keep headlights on at all times and observe speed limits, which are, in general significantly lower than in the UK. Fines for exceeding the speed limit are high. You should be aware that certain driving laws differ in Norway. For example, on roads which are not marked with a priority sign (a yellow diamond), drivers must give way to traffic coming from the right.

Alcohol limits for drivers are far stricter than UK levels. Roadside checks for alcohol are frequent, and submission to a breathalyser is mandatory. Penalties for driving under the influence are severe and can lead to a prison sentence. The 0.20ml limit means in effect no alcohol 12 hours before driving.

LOCAL LAWS AND CUSTOMS

You should not become involved with drugs of any kind. Possession of even small quantities can lead to heavy fines and/or imprisonment. This applies also to the use, possession and/or importation of khat/qat which is prohibited in Norway, though legal in the UK.

Norwegian authorities allow the importation of up to a maximum of 10kgs (combined total) of meat and cheese for personal consumption. If you have any other import queries may contact the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for additional information.

Norway is not in the EU. Many shops operate a VAT refund shopping system for non-residents. This enables you to receive refunds of the VAT on purchased goods, usually at the airport as you leave Norway. UK authorities cannot refund Norwegian VAT.

There are limits to the amount of currency you can personally carry into or out of Norway. This is currently set at 25,000 Norwegian Krone (about £2,500). If you bring any more than this into the country, the amount must be declared to Customs on arrival. Exporting currency from Norway in excess of the set limit has to be approved in advance by Norwegian Customs and transferred through a bank. You will need a form RD0026.

Failure to comply with these rules can lead to arrest, a substantial fine and temporary confiscation of currency in excess of the limit which may then be released only through a bank.

BAGGAGE ALLOWANCES

Please refer to your flight booking confirmation for information on your baggage allowance.

TOURIST BOARD

For further information on Norway visit www.visitnorway.com

AIRPORT PARKING, HOTELS AND LOUNGES

You can book airport parking, hotels and lounges at very reasonable prices on our website at:

Car Parking: <http://secure.holidayextras.co.uk/activitiesabroad-parking>

Hotels: <http://secure.holidayextras.co.uk/activitiesabroad-hotels>

Lounges: <http://secure.holidayextras.co.uk/activitiesabroad-lounges>

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM POLICY

At Activities Abroad we are well aware that tourism can have both positive and negative impacts in three key areas, economic, social and environmental.

The negative aspects are well documented but tourism can also be a strong force for good and as members of Responsible Travel, we aim to ensure that our holidays benefit the communities and environments we visit.

Economic responsibility:

- We firmly believe that the communities and areas to which we send our clients should benefit economically. The very nature of our holidays means that we operate for the main part in remote rural and coastal areas where employment can be limited. Hence, we always ensure that we use local accommodation, transport and activity providers. This enables local economies to benefit directly and through the tourism multiplier effect, helping to generate incomes and sustain employment in areas where the drift might otherwise be towards larger employment areas such as cities and towns.
- Our policy, wherever possible, is to use local or family run hotels and guesthouses, steering away from large chains whose main beneficiaries tend to be shareholders and senior management.

Environmental responsibility:

- The management at Activities Abroad is all too well aware of the negative impacts tourism can have on the environment and take all possible steps to negate these impacts.
- We have recently adopted digital brochures on our website which allow our clients to view all our brochures online. This action has considerably reduced our brochure print run and our fervent hope is that we will produce no paper brochures in the not too distant future.
- Our holidays rely on using beautiful and un-spoilt areas, often in remote rural or mountainous areas.
- Naturally, we wish to maintain the natural settings in which we work, not just for the future of our company, but also for future generations.
- Hence, we always insist that our local providers are equally conscious of this need. We insist that all litter and rubbish is removed from any of our activity sites, we strongly encourage group transfers, reducing the volume of road traffic and make our clients aware of their obligation to the environment and local communities.

Social responsibility:

- We fully appreciate the impact of tourist visits on local communities and residents and strive to be sure that we are having a positive effect.
- Hence, as stated above, we always use locally owned providers with the aim of distributing the financial benefits throughout the local economy.
- We also encourage our clients to respect the lives of local inhabitants by learning a few important words, Hello, Goodbye, Please, Thank You etc and where possible to become involved in local events and learn about their lives.

USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

English	Norwegian
Yes	Ja
No	Nei
Please	Var så snill
Thank you (very much)	(Tusen) takk
Good Morning	God morgen (or just "hei")
Good Afternoon	God ettermiddag (or just "hei")

Good night	God kveld (or just "hei")
Goodbye	Farvel (more common; "hade" or "hade bra")
How are you?	Hvordan har du det?
Fine thanks and you?	Fint, takk. Hvordan har du det?
Do you speak English?	Snakker du engelsk?
Bread	Brod
Jam	Syltetoj
Coffee	Kaffe
Milk	Melk
Eggs	Egg
Cheese	Ost
Beer	Ol

Please Note: The information given in this trip dossier covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip. Please refer to the foreign office website for more up to date information on your chosen destination. Abnormal conditions or events beyond our control can prevail at any time, therefore all holidays can be subject to unexpected changes. In order to enjoy and be safe in all activities you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary.