

Bear viewing in Finland



This four-day short break is an ideal wildlife getaway to one of Europe's premier bear locations. You'll stay at Martinselkonen, a family-owned lodge and wildlife centre that began operating in 1991. The centre is located in peaceful surroundings close to the Russian border in Suomussalmi, next to Martinselkonen nature reserve.

The wildlife centre operates from the old 'Pirttivaara' border guard station, which closed in 1990 and has been refurbished to meet modern standards. It has comfortable rooms, apartments, a dining area and a sauna.

The centre provides a versatile nature programme. During the summer months, the primary focus is on watching and photographing brown bears, but other wildlife attractions include moose, wolverines, and birds (notably, black kites and white-tailed eagles). The natural scenery, too, is spectacular.

The bear watching season begins mid-April and lasts until mid-August. This is one of the best places in Finland to see and photograph brown bears in their natural habitat.

Day 1 – Arrive Kajaani

You will be met on arrival in Kajaani or Kuusamo and transferred to Martinselkonen Wildlife Centre.



After you've checked into your room, the rest of the day is at leisure to explore the lodge and grounds, or to enjoy the sauna! A delicious dinner will be served in the lodge dining room this evening.

A hot coffee pot is always available for guests at Martinselkonen, and meals can be arranged to order. Local vegetables, berries, fish and meat are used in the preparation of the meals.

NB. This itinerary starts and ends in eastern Finland, and a return transfer from either Kajaani or Kuusamo Airport is included in the cost. We can also arrange for your international flights to Helsinki and connecting flight to Kajaani/Kuusamo, but this is not included in the basic rates.

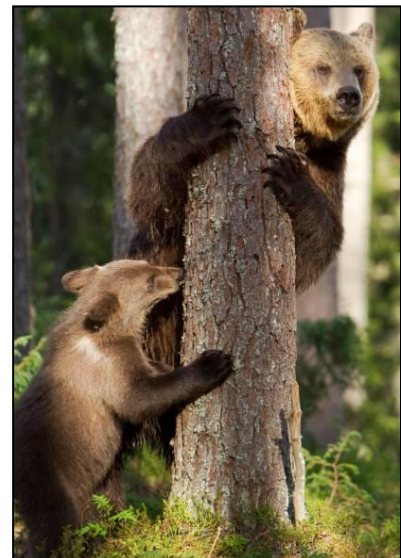
Day 2 & 3 – Bear Watching

Breakfast is served in the dining room, after which the morning is free; you might enjoy a walk in the surrounding area, or watch the birds that come to feed in the lodge gardens. The bird feeder attracts rarities such as Siberian Jay – not to mention lots of red squirrels! During the day, a local wildlife expert will tell you about the Bears in the area and you will have the opportunity to ask questions.

At 3pm you will have an early dinner, and then depart the lodge at around 4pm, taking everything you will need for the evening with you. A short drive is followed by a 30-minute walk through a beautiful old-growth forest to reach the hide.

You will then settle into the hide, which has comfortable chairs with reclining backrests, bunk beds for those who will require some sleep during the night and a dry toilet.

The hide is located within a copse of pine forest – the shortest bear-viewing range is some 5 metres. A forest is a more suitable viewing place than an open swamp or grassland, as bears generally prefer the wooded areas, which provides safety and hiding places for cubs. There are two large wooden hides which can accommodate 9/10 persons. Both hides are equipped with sound amplifying audio systems and are suitable for bear photography.



For serious photographers, there are 3 private hides available at additional cost – please contact us for rates.

You will spend the whole night in the hide watching the bears as they come into view. A guide will be present and will provide information and answer any questions you may have. Snacks and drinks are also served.

During the course of the night, you can hope to see various different bears of all ages as well as birds such as white-tailed eagles and black kites, which nest in the area and are very rarely seen elsewhere in Finland. The rarest visitor is the Golden Eagle.

In the morning you will leave the hide around 7am – after ensuring there are no bears in the area! – and return to the lodge for breakfast and maybe a few hours’ sleep before you repeat the experience.

Day 4 – Homeward

Return to the lodge for breakfast. Mid-morning, transfer to Kajaani or Kuusamo Airport and check-in for your return flight to Helsinki and connecting flight home.



Price Guide:

The cost of this itinerary is from **£770 per person***, or €910pp, based on twin/double share (single supplement is **£280**) and subject to availability at the time of booking. For more information, or if you would like to enquire about a tailor-made holiday combining part or all of the above itinerary, please [contact us](#).

**This price is based on exchange rates available at the time of publication and may vary at the time of booking. Please see our [booking conditions](#) for more information.*

Includes:

- Return airport transfers (from either Kajaani or Kuusamo)
- Accommodation in a twin room while at Martinselkonen Lodge
- Meals – breakfast, dinner, evening snack
- Two nights in the bear hide (shared hide)
- English-speaking guiding

Excludes:

- International flights
- Travel insurance – please ask us for a quote
- Items of a personal nature
- Some drinks and snacks are at additional cost while at Martinselkonen

There are also a number of professional hides available. The Pro hides have been specially designed for photographers and have room for 1-3 persons. They are located in three different places: in a swamp, a forest and close to a small pond. A 5-day itinerary using the pro-hides in place of the standard hides is available at additional cost – please contact us for a quotation.