

Arctic Survival Challenge

for Marie Curie

26 January – 2 February 2025



Your adventure starts here

Huskies, sledging, skiing... experience it all!

Take part in this once-in-a-lifetime challenge set in the pristine wilderness of northern Sweden, 100km south of the Arctic Circle. Try your hand at snowmobiling, cross country skiing and husky sledding whilst staying at a remote log cabin.

After acclimatising to the cold, you'll move onto the survival phase of the expedition, where you will build and live in a shelter or snow hole. If you're lucky, you might get to see the Northern Lights – a magical experience you'll never forget!



Take on the challenge of a lifetime for Marie Curie

Marie Curie provides care and support to people with any terminal illness, and their families. Our nurses offer free hands-on care and emotional support, in patients' own homes, until the end of their lives.

This would not be possible without the support of people like you, taking on the challenge of a lifetime and raising funds. As you brave the Arctic conditions, every step you take will help our Marie Curie Nurses continue their vital work.



Where your money goes

£10 pays for one phone call to our Support Line, offering practical information and emotional support to people living with a terminal illness, or caring for someone.

£180 pays for a Marie Curie Nurse to look after someone living with a terminal illness overnight in their own home.

£400 pays for five people to attend day therapy at a Marie Curie Hospice, benefitting from gentle exercise, emotional support and more.



Itinerary

Day 1 Depart London for Sweden

You'll fly from London Heathrow to Stockholm in Sweden and then transfer on to an internal one-hour flight north to Ostersund. Upon arrival at Ostersund you'll be met by your Swedish guides and travel for one hour by minibus to your base which is a log cabin set in the woods on the edge of a lake at a location called Raftlaven. This cabin is wonderfully basic with no power, just an open fire, a cooker and beds – perfect!

Day 2 Acclimatisation day

After breakfast and a briefing on the locality, this day is spent acclimatising to the environment. Today you'll have a go at cross-country skiing and building fires in the snow! Tonight, you will start building your snow hole under the stars.

Day 3 Snowmobiles

You'll wake up, have breakfast and then drive for approximately one hour where you will meet up with the snowmobiles. You'll pair up and head off across frozen lakes and fresh powder, covering approximately 40kms and driving through stunning scenery!

After about 20km you'll stop for lunch cooked on an open fire at a remote cabin, then back to the snowmobiles. The snowmobile safari lasts for six hours. You'll then return to the cabin and have dinner before heading out to continue building your snow hole.

Day 4 Husky driving

You'll have breakfast before setting off for the morning to do some Husky driving. Then you'll take a short transfer to meet up with the husky sleigh teams on the edge of a spectacular frozen lake. Experience an exhilarating trip around the frozen lake, both riding and having the opportunity to actually drive the husky dog teams. A delicious lunch is then cooked over an open fire.



There's also the opportunity to try your luck at ice fishing through holes bored in the icy lake and see if you can catch tonight's dinner!

In the afternoon you'll head back to the cabin and prepare for the survival phase. You'll set out at night time to spend your first night in the elements (and a large tent with a wood burner!).

Day 5 and 6 Survival phase

You will be extremely well briefed with lectures and demonstrations on many aspects of survival, and will get the opportunity to put what you learn to the ultimate test.

You will sleep in shelters that have been constructed from natural materials. On the second night, you will get to sleep in the snow hole you have spent the past few days building.

Other skills that will be learned including making and setting traps from natural resources, fire lighting to keep the chill out of the air, water purification and shelter construction.

The survival phase ends after your last campfire breakfast, after which you will then head back to the cabin.



Day 7 Relaxation

A little R&R! Following the challenging and rewarding previous 48 hours, treat yourselves to some well-deserved pampering. You will enjoy a hot tub to soak away those aching limbs under the clear blue sky, on the shore of the lake, as well as a sauna too. Relax in your beautiful surroundings and take in the stunning views, reflecting on what you have accomplished over the last few days. This evening we will have a celebratory meal in the cabin.

Day 7 Relaxation

After breakfast, you'll pack up and make your way to the airport to return to the UK.

Kit list

Here's the recommended kit you should pack for your Arctic Circle Expedition. But use your own common sense and personal preference – after all, you'll be carrying it with you on the trip!

(* = Optional)

Equipment

- Medium sized soft rucksack, holdall, or a suitcase for main luggage
- 25 to 30 litre day sack/rucksack with a good waist strap
- Sunglasses with UV protection
- Head torch with plenty of spare batteries
- Thin sleeping bag for inside the cabin
- Lightweight towel
- Thermos flask - enough to carry a litre

Clothing

- Footwear (for inside cabin) crocs / trainers
- Pair of very warm outdoor boots - e.g. Sorel winter boots
- 4/5 pairs of thermal socks to last the duration and inner socks if you use these - merino wool is particularly good
- 2 x Insulated waterproof winter trousers - e.g. ski trousers
- Fleece
- Waterproof jacket or ski jacket
- Down jacket
- Two complete sets of thermals (top and bottom)
- 4 x breathable tops – e.g. merino wool
- Pair of warm gloves, e.g. ski gloves with silk liner or down mittens
- Pair of leather gloves for cutting / handling pots etc.

- Fleece or woolly hat
- Balaclava
- Goggles*

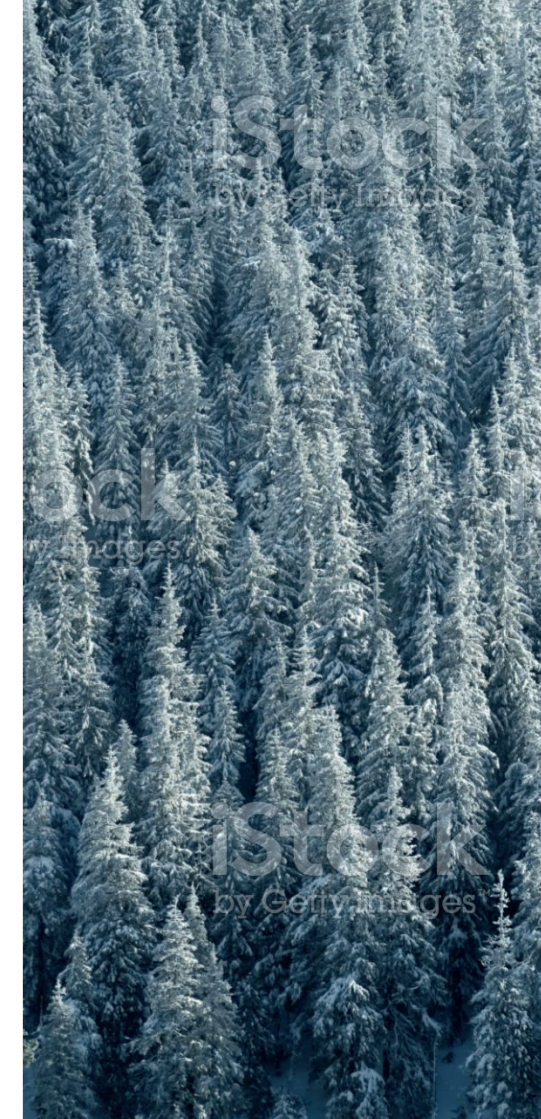
Survival phase

- Whistle
- Mess tin
- Knife/fork/spoon and plastic mug
- 3 x days' worth of rations for the survival phase (we will give you more information on how to purchase these before the challenge)
- Fire lighting kit, e.g. fire steel, matches
- Pocket knife and folding saw*
- Pocket rocket burner*
- The following items are provided for the survival phase: Sleeping bag, bivi bag and roll
- mat

Health and hygiene

- High-factor sun cream (SPF 30) and lip block
- Wet wipes
- Antibacterial hand gel
- Personal toiletries
- Earplugs
- Small personal medical kit – antiseptic cream, plasters, lint wound dressing, knee support, crepe bandage, safety pins, pain killers, tweezers, scissors, deep heat
- ointment, Diareze/Imodium, rehydration salts, plenty of Compeed blister plasters
- Miscellaneous
- Camera
- Hand warmers*
- Swimwear for the hot tub/sauna on the final day

- Full driving licence for snowmobile
- Extra snacks & energy bars
- Pillowcase
- Battery pack for charging phone
- If you wear contact lenses it is advisable to also bring your glasses



Essential information



Registration fee:

£250
(non-refundable)



Minimum sponsorship:

£4,000



Trip length:

Eight days (two days of survival experience)



Trip grading:

Tough

What's included:

- Return flights
- Local transfers
- Accommodation
- Tour leader
- Medic
- Three meals a day (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- Marie Curie t-shirt
- Marie Curie representative on the event

What's not included:

- Travel to and from the UK airport of departure
- Registration fee
- Recommended vaccinations
- Travel insurance
- Tips and gratuities
- Personal spending money
- Visa

Frequently asked questions

Who can take part?

You must be 18 years or older to take part. The typical group size is 10-15 participants, with people of all ages, from all backgrounds. The majority will be on their own, but some will go with friends, partners or relatives.

Can I extend my stay?

Anyone wanting to stay on after the trek can arrange to do so through The Ultimate Travel Company at an additional cost and subject to availability.

How fit do I need to be?

This challenge is graded as tough – cross country skiing, husky driving diffing snow holes and being out in the cold is tiring and might be demanding. All our challenges are designed to suit people who are fit and have trained to take part – the fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the adventure.

What about vaccinations?

We recommend you check that your polio and tetanus vaccinations are up to date. For everything else, we suggest you seek professional medical advice from your GP to ensure your vaccinations are up to date, including primary courses and boosters as recommended for life in Britain.

Do overseas challenges damage the environment?

Marie Curie is committed to responsible tourism. This challenge is organised by our tour operator, The Ultimate Travel Company, who can provide guidelines on responsible tourism.

What will the weather be like?

Average temperatures in December to early April are likely to be between 0°C to minus

30°C. Although the temperature is extremely cold, the atmosphere is crisp and exhilarating, and not like cold days in the UK.

Please note for safety reasons should the temperature drop below -20 °C at night, or below -25 °C during the day, the group will be advised to head back to the cabin. The guides will provide advice on how to avoid frost bite and other cold injuries.

When is the deadline for my sponsorship money?

We require 80% of your £4,000 fundraising target 12 weeks before the trip, with the remaining 20% due four weeks after you return.

Stage 1 (80%):

£3,200 due by 3 November 2024

Stage 2 (20%):

£800 due by 2 March 2025

Passports, visas and driving licenses

British and US Nationals need a valid 10 year passport, with at least six months validity.

Other nationals should check with the Swedish Embassy.

A full driving license or motorcycle license is also needed to drive the snowmobile. Those who don't have a valid license can still experience the snowmobiles as a passenger.

How will I be supported?

Beforehand: Your local community fundraiser will be in touch to explore ways to meet your fundraising target.

During the trip: Your group will be accompanied by an English-speaking challenge leader who is first aid trained, along with numerous support staff. You will also have a Marie Curie representative with you.

What will we eat and drink?

The whole group will assist with cooking in the cabin, chopping fire wood and clearing up. All water on the trek will need to be boiled and participants will assist in melting snow for drinking water. During the survival phase you will need to bring your own ration food packs to cover you for three days.

Meals at the beginning of the challenge will be substantial, but it is still a good idea to bring energy bars, snacks, etc, to keep you going during the day. We will need to know in advance of any special dietary requirements.



Fundraising and training

We're here to support you every step of the way.

Your local Marie Curie fundraiser

Once you've registered, you will be put in touch with your local community fundraiser who will help you with your fundraising plans and offer advice whenever you need it.

Getting started

A great first step is setting up a JustGiving page. This is the quickest and easiest way to tell people that you're fundraising and to gather your sponsorship online.

Make the most of social media

Announce your sponsorship page and ask people for donations on Facebook and Twitter. Add your JustGiving web address to your email signature so everyone you contact can see it. And don't forget to tweet it too!

Supersize your fundraising

See if your employer will match your fundraising pound for pound, or up to a fixed amount.

Training tips

- We recommend undertaking a good training programme before taking on the challenge – each day's activities will start early and last about 5–7 hours.
- Activities such as walking, cross-training and upper body exercise all increase the heart rate and will help you be prepared for this challenge.
- A training weekend will take place in Devon (date TBC), and we highly recommend everyone attends this weekend so you can learn basic survival principles. The course also enables you to meet your fellow team members and sort out any last minute queries before the challenge begins.



For more information visit:

mariecurie.org.uk/charity-events/overseas-challenges/arctic-survival-2025

If you have any questions, feel free to email:

treksandcycles@mariecurie.org.uk



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