



HOW TO PREPARE FOR WINTER IN THE ARCTIC



YOUR WINTER PACKING GUIDE

Visiting the Arctic in winter is no ordinary adventure. This icy wilderness can present some unique challenges for the explorers who wish to see its marvellous natural wonders.

Packing the right gear for your journey requires careful planning to guarantee your safety and comfort. Dressing in the right way, with the right clothes, will help you stay warm no matter the temperature (which could be anything from zero to -35°).

In this comprehensive winter packing list, we'll cover everything you need to know.



COLD WEATHER PRECAUTIONS

Taking precautions for facing cold weather is as important as taking precautions for days spent in the sun.

1

Never make any journey without wearing the appropriate clothing and footwear: Even on a very short trip you could get very cold.

2

When out for long periods of time: Ensure you wrap up warm and protect your extremities, such as hands and feet.

3

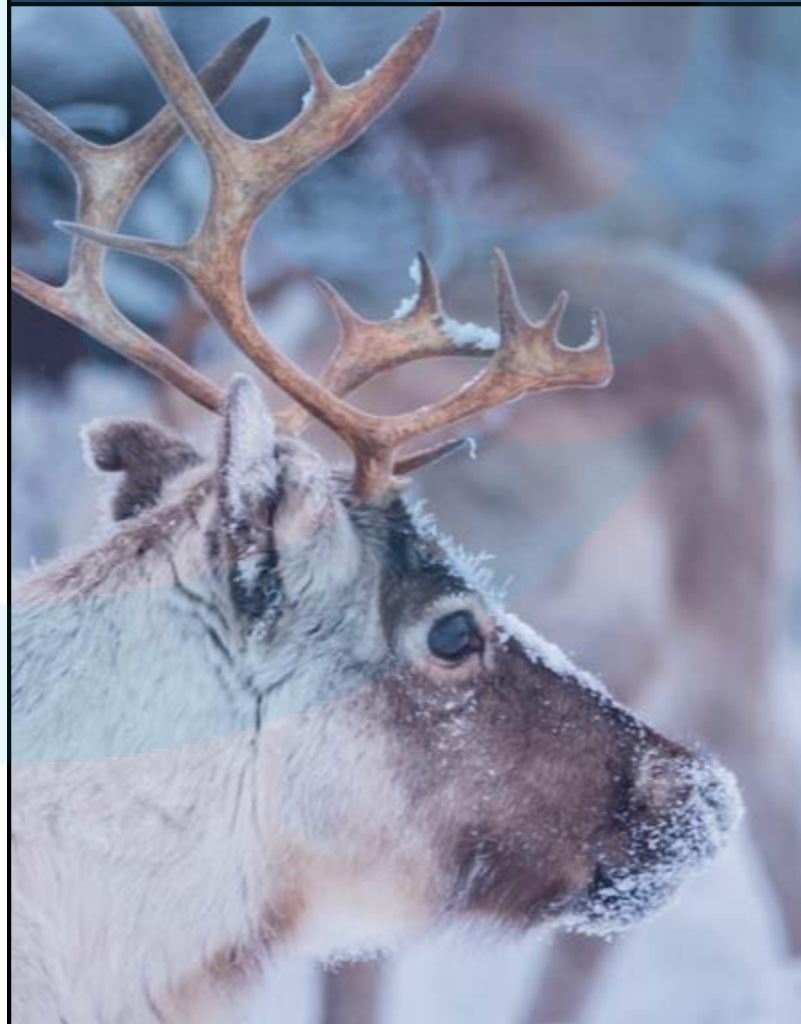
Avoid applying face moisturisers immediately before going outside: The water in these creams can cause frostbite.

4

If at any point any part of your body feels cold or uncomfortable return indoors as soon as possible: If you are out on an activity, inform your guide immediately.

5

Should you feel unwell at any time during or after being out in the cold: Contact your guide or your accommodation provider immediately.





CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

Many of our destinations can experience low temperatures because they tend to be within (or very close to) the Arctic circle. When planning what to wear, we recommend using a layer system. Wearing multiple layers of clothing to create air spaces between the layers can serve to both insulate and ventilate.

Here are some key items that we recommend taking on your trip:

- A waterproof winter coat, such as a ski jacket.
- Ski mittens or gloves, hat, scarf or buff and sunglasses. It is also worth taking a pair of liner gloves if you intend to take photos outside.
- Sturdy waterproof walking boots or snow boots suitable for cold icy conditions and thermal socks. Make sure your boots are large enough to fit good quality thermal socks because wearing boots that are too tight can reduce air circulation to your toes.

- Ice grips are also a very good item to take with you.
- Mobile phone.
- Salopettes (winter walking trousers).
- Thermal under clothing.
- You should bring with you warm woollen underwear (long johns) in one or two pieces as well as fleecy pants and shirt/jacket, and several pairs of warm, preferably woollen socks.

NOTE

Where possible do not wear cotton clothing (especially as a base layer) because this holds moisture and can reduce the ability to retain heat.



HOW TO DRESS IN LAYERS

Clothing is the first and most important line of defence against the cold.

The secret to staying warm and dry is layering your clothing, from underwear to outerwear.

Layering allows you to add or remove clothing as needed to maintain comfort and prevent overheating or hypothermia. So you can easily adjust to changing weather conditions.

Most of the hotels and activity providers that we recommend usually provide guests with the outer layer, which includes items such as: winter overalls, boots, gloves, and hat/beanie (and sometimes even socks).

THE BASE LAYER

The base layer should be soft, comfortable, and breathable to effectively control warmth and moisture. Choose base layer garments:

- Made of moisture-wicking materials to keep sweat away from the skin.
- Made from merino wool or synthetic fabrics that effectively transfer heat away from the body.
- Such as thermal underwear (long johns), thermal socks, and long-sleeved tops.

NOTE

- Add layers of socks to your liking. An extra pair is always good to have within reach in case your feet get wet.
- Where possible, do not wear cotton clothing, especially as a base layer. If you ask anyone in Swedish Lapland, they would probably say that (merino) wool is the way to go, while cotton is a poor choice because it holds moisture and can reduce the ability to retain heat.





THE MIDDLE LAYER

Mid layers are ideal for very cold conditions because they are designed to keep you warm by providing insulation and retaining heat.

Choose mid layer garments:

- Made of insulating materials that can trap and retain body heat, to regulate body temperature during activity.
- Such as fleece jackets, wool sweaters, and down vests to keep your upper body warm.
- Such as thick polyester or fleece pants to keep your lower body warm.

NOTE

The key is flexibility. Adding or removing mid layers quickly, pulling up or down a zipper or unbuttoning a collar without a hassle will make your life easier.

THE OUTER LAYER

The outer layer serves as a protective barrier against wind, snow, and precipitation. Protection from the elements is essential in order to stay dry and comfortable in extreme cold weather conditions.

For outer layer garments choose:

- Windproof, waterproof, and breathable materials to protect against harsh Arctic winds and stay dry in a snowy climate.
- A good winter jacket and pants for full body cover.
- Goggles to protect your eyes.
- A hat, beanie, neck gaiter, face mask, scarf or buff, balaclava, and insulated ear muffs to protect your head, face, and ears.
- Insulated gloves and mittens to protect your hands.

- Salopettes (winter walking trousers) to protect your legs.
- Warm, moisture-wicking and insulating socks (pack several pairs).
- Insulated, waterproof boots to keep feet warm and dry. Ensure they are rated for sub-zero temperatures, fit comfortably, and have good grip for navigating icy terrain.
- Gaiters to cover the lower part of your legs, with boots to prevent snow from entering.

NOTE

- Don't forget to pack extra clothing layers in case you get wet.
- In Swedish Lapland, we often refer to outer layers as "täckisar" which essentially means clothes stuffed with down feathers, or clothes that are just plain warm and puffy. Even though nowadays outer layers are generally made using other insulating synthetic materials, warm and durable winter clothing is what you want.



EXTRA EQUIPMENT

Although not essential, from our experience of exploring this destination in winter, you may want to consider taking the following additional items:

- **Head torch with a red light function:** To allow for great night-time Aurora viewing, the red light will not impact your night vision like a white light would.
- **Hand and foot warmer pads:** To prevent frostbite and ensure comfort during prolonged exposure to low temperatures.
- **Ice grips:** To maintain secure footing on icy surfaces, enhancing traction and reducing the risk of slips and falls, particularly in the challenging Arctic terrain.
- **Plug adaptors for the country you are visiting:** To ensure compatibility with local power outlets, allowing you to charge your electronic devices and maintain communication in the remote Arctic environment.

- **Phone/camera charger, power bank, and extra batteries:** To keep your essential electronic devices charged no matter the cold.
- **Waterproof pouch:** To protect your valuables and other personal items from moisture.
- **Memory card for your camera:** To expand storage capacity, allowing you to capture a multitude of photos and videos of the unique landscapes and wildlife encountered during your winter Arctic experience.
- **SLR Camera and Photography Equipment:** Capture the stunning Arctic landscapes but be cautious of battery life in the cold.
- **Other useful equipment includes:** a headlamp, sunglasses, sunscreen, and reflective gear.

KIT HIRE

It is possible to rent a cold weather clothing kit in many of our destinations. This includes items like snow suits, boots, hats, and gloves. Contact us to find out more information about this kit hire service.



PHOTOGRAPHING THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

Although photographing the Aurora can be very difficult, these days you could even capture its beauty using your mobile phone! But if you're looking to take some super crisp images, we would still recommend using your SLR camera and a tripod to ensure camera stability for the exposure length required.

NOTE

In cold weather conditions your camera and phone battery life can be significantly reduced so please take extra batteries and make sure they are fully charged when going out.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Telephone Number: 112

STAY WARM AND SAFE TRAVELS!

We hope that with this winter packing list you can adequately prepare and travel the Arctic with confidence. By packing wisely and prioritising your safety, you can be comfortable and ready to explore.

Remember, it's always better to have more than you need than to be caught unprepared in the biting cold. Embrace the challenge, enjoy the adventure, and return with unforgettable Arctic memories.

GET IN TOUCH

If you'd like to know more details, enquire about winter kit hire, or book your next trip with Arctic Inbound – simply send us an email: info@arcticinbound.com

