



# Reindeer Herders Festival

Trip to Yamal



Have you ever tried lassoing a reindeer or competing in jumping over a sled? You can do this together with the indigenous people of Yamal during the main holiday of the Far North — Reindeer Herder's Day. It takes place once a year only on the days of the spring equinox. Join our trip!

# Experiences you'll have

## Ethnotour to Yamal

When the long polar night in the tundra ended, some Northern peoples celebrated "Day of the Sun", others — "Day of the Deer". Today, all residents of Yamal gather together at "Reindeer Herder's Day" — a holiday that combines the age-old traditions and rituals of various indigenous peoples of the Far North. Their life is based on the philosophy of the movement. Therefore, it is not surprising, that the holiday itself lasts for almost 2 months being held in different towns and villages of Yamal for 1-2 days in each.

You will take part in Reindeer Herder's Day in Aksarka village and for the rest of the journey you will stay at the reindeer herders' camp, living in a traditional rawhide tent and watching the everyday life of the nomadic inhabitants of the tundra.

Traditionally, the festival program includes Yamal folk groups performances and national sports competitions: reindeer sledding race, wrestling, jumps over sleds and lasso throwing. During the day you can visit a festive fair where you can buy different handicrafts and taste traditional Northern cuisine, including venison and fish delicacies.

**We accept bookings for groups of 6 or more**

During this tour, you will become not only a spectator, but also a participant of the festival:

- take a ride on a reindeer sled
- compete in catching a reindeer using a lasso
- take photos in national costumes
- participate in reindeer herders' folk workshops (national clothes sewing, preparing leather from reindeer skins, etc)

*If you are interested in watching the Northern lights in Yamal, see also a [7-day winter tour](#) with an excursion to the Khanty national settlement and accommodation both at a hunting base in the tundra and in a reindeer herders' camp.*

## Itinerary

The journey starts in Salekhard, where you should get to on your own (choose a flight by Yamal Airlines with a departure from Moscow at 3:00 am and arrival to Salekhard at 8:00 on the first day). We can help you with the purchase of tickets. If necessary, leave a comment on the application.

**Note:** this is an expedition program, and the itinerary may change depending on the weather and other unforeseen circumstances. Travelling across the tundra will be organized in a snowmobile sleigh. If desired, and for an additional fee, you can drive a snowmobile by yourself (this option requires prepayment).

### Day 1

**You will be met at the airport of Salekhard and taken to**

the hotel, where you will check in and rest. Then you will have a guided city tour around Salekhard. You will visit the historical and architectural complex "Obdorsk Burg", as well as will see the "66 Parallel" monument, installed at the intersection point of the Arctic circle.

**You will also visit the Ivan Shemanovsky Museum of local**

lore. Here you will get acquainted with the archaeological, natural and ethnographic collections dedicated to the natural treasures and historical and cultural heritage of the Yamal land.

**After the tour you will have lunch in a cafe (paid**

additionally) and then return to the hotel. In the evening you will have free time to relax or take an independent walk around the city. You can have dinner in the hotel's restaurant or in one of the city's cafes (extra charge).

### Day 2

Yamal

## Reindeer Herders Festival

Difficulty



Group size

from 4

Duration

6 days

Accommodation at the trip



3 nights 2 nights

Языки



guide

from 1 200 EUR



### **After breakfast you will move to Aksarka village. Here you**

will have a snack and receive a snowmobile driver safety training. Then you will change into winter clothes and will go to the camp of reindeer breeders on snowmobile sleds (25 km, one hour). During this route you can also drive a snowmobile by yourself (this option requires prepayment).

### **On your way you will take photos of landscapes and have**

tea in the open air. Upon arrival to the camp of reindeer herders you will meet the family of reindeer breeders and will accommodate in rawhide tents. For lunch and dinner you will taste the dishes of national cuisine prepared by the hosts.

#### **Day 3**

### **After breakfast with the reindeer herders you will ride**

snowmobiles to tundra (or travel in snowmobile sleds) to the place where a herd of reindeer is grazing.

### **Here an experienced reindeer herder will teach you how to**

use a lasso for catching reindeer and will show you how to drive a team of reindeer. You will have a chance to wear a national costume and take photos near rawhide tents and a reindeer team.

### **After lunch you will rest and feed reindeer. Also you will**

have a chance to communicate with the reindeer herders and learn more about their daily life and traditions. In the evening you will return to the camp and will have dinner with local delicacies.

#### **Day 4**

### **For breakfast you will taste some dishes of national cuisine**

and then you will ride the reindeer sleigh. Also different folk craft workshops are waiting for you today. You will see how to prepare leather and sew national clothing items.

### **After lunch you will continue your acquaintance with the**

traditions and life of reindeer herders. In the evening you will have dinner with the national delicacies and then have free time to rest.

#### **Day 5**

### **After breakfast you will go to Aksarka village where you**

will see the celebration of Reindeer Herder's Day.

### **You will watch races of reindeer teams, national fight,**

sledge jumps, mas-wrestling and other traditional local competitions. You will visit a concert, a festive fair and will find out who will win in «The Best Nomadic Family» nomination this year.

### **In the evening you will be taken to the hotel in Salekhard,**

have dinner (extra charge) and rest.

#### **Day 6**

### **In the morning you will be taken to Salekhard airport for**

your departure flight.

## **Accommodation at the trip**

The first and the last nights of the tour you will spend in Salekhard in **"Arktika" Hotel** or **"Russkiy Sever" Hotel**.

**"Arktika" Hotel** offers standart twin or double rooms equipped with a flat-screen TV, free Wi-Fi, a fridge, a kettle, a desk, a wardrobe as well as a private bathroom with a hairdryer.

**"Russkiy Sever" Hotel** is build in the national Russian style. You will be accommodated in twin/double rooms equipped with a flat-screen TV, free Wi-Fi, a microwave and a private bathroom with a shower.

From the second to the fifth days you will stay in reindeer breeders' camp. You will be accommodated in the "chum" — national raw-hide tents (for 4-5 persons+a family of reindeer herders). The chum is heated by a furnace, there is a washbasin inside, a toilet is outside. You will be given blankets and small mattresses (a warm sleeping bag you should take with you). If desired, and for an additional fee, you can choose to stay in a separate guest "chum".

## FAQ

### Who will be my guide

You will be accompanied by an experienced guide and an interpreter throughout the tour.

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### Meals

The program price includes three meals a day with national cuisine in the reindeer herders ' camp from the second to the fifth days of the tour. Additionally, you will need to pay for meals in Salekhard (lunch and dinner on day 1 and dinner on day 5).

While visiting the Reindeer herder's Restival in Aksarka village on day 5, you will have a snack (sandwiches and hot tea in thermos). If you wish and for an additional fee, you can taste various dishes of national cuisine or have lunch in the chum on the territory of the festival.

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### What transport is used on the route

Transfers шт Salekhard and to the village of Aksarka and back will be carried out by minibuses (Nissan,Toyota).

Snowmobiles ("Taiga Varyag 500" model) with passenger sleds (up to 4 people in one sled) will be used for moving across the tundra to the reindeer herders' camp and back. You can also ride as a passenger on a snowmobile or drive a snowmobile by yourself (this option requires prepayment).

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### What will the weather be like

In the period from December till March temperature varies from 0°C to -35°C. There can be snowfalls and blizzards. In December it is a polar night and a daylight is only 2-3 hours long. From January the daylight starts increasing. You can see the Northern Lights till the end of March (when the weather permits).

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### What to bring with me

Recommended equipment:

- comfortable warm clothes
- comfortable boots without heels
- photo camera, chargers for photo camera and mobile phone
- personal hygiene items

For trips on snowmobiles:

- 2 sets of thermal underwear
- winter overalls for -35°C temperature
- warm winter boots
- a hat
- mittens
- balaclava
- sunscreen
- sunglasses

Note: while traveling across the tundra, your luggage will also be transported on snowmobiles, so please pack your belongings in backpacks or travel bags, suitcases are not recommended.

## Booking

Yamal

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Accommodation at the trip



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from 1 200 EUR

#### What's included in the price:

- accommodation in traditional rawhide tents, hotel accommodation in Salekhard
- meals in traditional rawhide tents (national cuisine)
- all transfers according to the program
- 3-day tour to reindeer breeders' camp (a visit to the herd of reindeer, snowmobile tour, a team of reindeer riding, acquaintance with the lifestyle of northern nomads, photoshoot)
- a visit to "Reindeer herder's day" festival
- Salekhard city-tour
- English-speaking guide's service
- reindeer breeder services

#### Extra charge:

- [airfare to/from Salekhard](#) (starting at 240 EURO for a round-trip ticket)
- meals in Salekhard on days 1 and 5
- rent a set of warm clothing (winter suit, hat, balaclava, gloves, boots):+ 45 EURO per person
- fee for a snowmobile rental: +365 EURO per person (2 riders), +440 EURO per person (single-rider)
- accommodation in a separate guest chum in the reindeer herders' camp (+495 EURO for a group of up to 8 people)



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