

## Trip to midnight sun

start: Kuhmo

finish: Rovaniemi

duration: 8 days

kilometer: app. 1,800 km

best season: middle of May until end of July (best time for daylight nights)

Around the time of midsummer the sun in the Finland's north does not set for several weeks. It is a time where night becomes day and one could spend it on the seat of one's KTM traveling north. A trip of about 2,000 km with lots of forests and lakes along the way, wait to be discovered from the heroes on the famous Austrian bikes.

The trip starts in Kuhmo and ends in Rovaniemi, where Santa Claus supposedly lives. In between lie about eight days and a 1,800 km route through beautiful landscapes in Europe's north.

From Kumho the road 76 leads towards Sotkamo. The town is located about 60 km away. Here it is possible to ski even during the summer, because Finland's only year-around indoor cross country skiing area is located in town. Anyone who wants to enjoy some winter feeling along the summer trip may want to stop here for the first time. Anyone else who rather enjoys summer and who does not think 60 km are enough for the day may want to continue on one's KTM towards Kajaani west of Sotkamo. 40,000 inhabitants live in town (province Oulu). Although it does not have that many sights in store, it is located within picturesque surroundings. It is certainly worth a short break to enjoy some coffee and to inhale the romantic surroundings of the place. If the motorcyclists still thinks the number of kilometers is not enough one may want to continue along E 66 via Hyrynsalmi to Suomussalmi, the finish of the first day after 210 km on the trip to midnight sun.

The town with its 10,000 inhabitants is located next to a beautiful lake right at the Russian border and is a perfect place to spend the (still dark) night. Forest and water are typical for Finland and therefore also of Suomussalmi. One can either choose the typical Scandinavian vacation homes or for the more luxurious taste a room in the Scandic Hotel Kiannon Kuohot.

On day two the trip continues north towards Kuusamo. This is a relaxed 165 km ride from Suomussalmi. It runs along seemingly endless forest regions, just what the traveler expects. When the motorcyclists reaches Kussamo one may want to consider a short detour to the waterfalls of Kuitakoengas and the lake of Julma Oelkky framed within steep rocky walls up to 50 m high. Maybe a summer toboggan run helps raise one's personal adrenalin level with a fast ride downhill. For those travelers who enjoy rather relaxed vacation a visit to the 9-hole golf course at Ruka may be a great option. There should be plenty of time left because the second stage finish at Kuusamo is finished rather quickly.

Hotel Sokos Kuusamo, decorated with three Finnish stars, awaits the motorcycling guest for the night.

From Kuusamo the third stage leads along road 81 towards Posio and continues via road 8 and road 944 along Kemijoki, Finland's largest river, to Kemijaervi. The town is located about 90 km east of the finish at Rovaniemi. It is also Finland's most northern town. 13,000 people live here. From here one can make several short trips, for example to Pyhae-Luotso National Park, the oldest one in the country. The 400-year-old and untouched forests of Luosto and Europe's last Amethyst mine at Lampivaarassa are certainly worth a visit.

From Kemijaervi the motorcyclist rides another 108 km until he reaches the stage finish at Sodankylae. Here one should definitely stop at "Corona Borealis, house of northern lights," where interested visitors learn more about the unusual lights. However, when the sun shines during summer time these lights cannot be seen just with the eye. In the exhibition the light spectacle is made visible for the guests and they can learn more about the history of research from the ancient world to modern scientific perceptions. After the trip in the world of

science and secularity one finds a different kind of sight right beside it: one of Lapland's oldest wooden churches.

Hotel Artica Sodankylae, a nice accommodation, is also right in town, just a little ways apart.

Day four offers a feeling of gold fever. Along E 75/4 about 96 km north of Sodankylae one reaches Tankavaara, a gold digging village. Until today one can still experience the atmosphere of the rush for the precious metal. Here one can learn from experienced gold diggers how to dig for gold. Additionally, an exhibition in town explains the history of the worldwide gold rush. Therefore it is certainly worth the time to get off one's motorcycle and take a break to catch some gold fever. Afterwards the trip continues to Saariselkæ in the heart of the Finnish fells close to Urho Kekkonen National Park. From here the trip through northern Finland leads to Ivalo, located at the intersection of the roads to polar sea, to Russia as well as Lapland, and then along E 75 to Inari.

Inari is the administrative district of Finnish Sami people. It is a great idea to visit Sami museum, to learn more about the culture of the native inhabitants of this region. Anyone who likes may also enjoy a trip to a reindeer farm or to check out Sami artwork. The town and whole region has certainly lots in store for interested visitors.

Guests do not need to camp out for the night. Hotel Inari offers a great service for travelers.

If one likes to stay here for another day, no problem. The fifth stage leads from here to the farthest northern point of Finland and finally back to Inari. For the motorcyclist that means riding 355 km in a loop along one of Finland's nicest roads – along 970.

From Inari the trip continues on E 75 to Kaamanen and Utsjoki. Along the way one passes Kevo Nature Park. Its main attraction is Kevo Canyon, which stretches for 40 km. Utsjoki is Finland's most northern and only community inhabited mainly by Sami people. Beyond that point the trip continues on a wonderful road. Road 970 leads south again along the banks of Teno and the border between Finland and Norway to Karigasniemi. Afterwards the motorcyclist returns to road 92 and follows it to Kaamanen and then back to Inari.

From the north into real wilderness – that is a short summary of day six along the midnight sun trip. Because following road 955 from Inari to Levi one rides through an area of real wilderness along Lemmenjoki National Park to east Lapland. Lemmenjoki is Finland's largest National Park and stretches on almost 3,000 square kilometers. That means lots of room for nature. Here rules Lapland's true wilderness with forests, swamplands and fell regions.

Please note: Here one finds neither gasoline stations nor other service facilities. Therefore one should stock up on all necessary things in Inari before leaving on the day trip.

In Levi, after about 190 km of wilderness, humanity is back. And the people here like to celebrate, for example the traditional midsummer and midnight sun festivals. But Levi is not yet the end of the stage, but a nice enough place to catch a glimpse of the celebrations. The finish is located at Muonio at the Swedish border. Here one has accomplished 235 km and may want to choose Hotel Yeris Oy for the night.

Rovaniemi comes closer. However another two stages have to be tackled until the final destination. Stage seven leads from Muonio to Ylitornio and is about 200 km long. It runs parallel to the Swedish-Finish border in a southern direction. It does not take too long to finish the stage and therefore there should be plenty of time to climb the hills of Aavasaksa with thousands of Fins and to watch midnight sun from there. And there should also be time left to visit a proper sauna. Afterwards one may want to celebrate the last night along the trip at Hotel Karemajat.

Rovaniemi is the last town on the trip to midnight sun. It is located at the convergence of Finland's largest rivers, Kemijoki and Ounasjoki. The polar circle runs through this town and Christmas is present year around. It does not surprise, because it is said that Santa Claus lives close to this town. A trip to Christmas village is always a great idea, even during the summer. And maybe one has a chance to send a postcard from Santa's post office to tell friends and family back home that one has finished the trip to midnight sun.

**overview of the trip:**1<sup>st</sup> day

Kuhmo – Sotkamo – Kajaani – Hyrynsalmi – Suomussalmi  
app. 210 km

2<sup>nd</sup> day

Suomussalmi - Alajaervi - Kivivaara – Metsaekylae - Taivalkosi - Kuusamo  
app. 165 km

3<sup>rd</sup> day

Kuusamo –Hyvaeniemi - Posio – Koutu – Soppela – Isokylae - Kemijaervi – Saerkikangas –  
Tapiionniemi – Pelkosenniemi - Sodankylae  
app. 270 km

4<sup>th</sup> day

Sodankylae – Sattanen – Vuotau - Tankavaara – Saariselkae – Toemaenen - Ivalo – Inari  
app. 200 km

5<sup>th</sup> day

Inari – Kaamanen - Utsjoki – Karigasniemi – Kaamanen - Inari  
app. 355 km

6<sup>th</sup> day

Inari – Koengas - Levi - Muonio  
app. 235 km

7<sup>th</sup> day

Muonio – Ylaesjokisuu – Seppijaervi – Orajaervi – Pello - Ylitornio  
app. 200 km

8<sup>th</sup> day

Ylitornio – Tornio – Kemi – Tervola - Rovaniemi  
app. 190 km

**accommodation:**

Kuhmo

Hotel Kalevala, Väinämöinen 9, 88900 Kuhmo  
phone: +358 (0)8 655 41 00, [www.hotellikalevala.fi](http://www.hotellikalevala.fi)

Lentiiran lomakylä – Holiday Village, Petäjänientie 121, Kuhmo  
phone: +358 (0)8 650 141

Kuusamo

Spa Hotel Holiday Club Kuusamo, Kylpylätie, Kuusamo  
phone: +358 (0)8 85 960,  
[www.holidayclub.fi/portal/english/spa\\_hotels/holiday\\_club\\_kuusamo](http://www.holidayclub.fi/portal/english/spa_hotels/holiday_club_kuusamo)

Sokos Hotel Kuusamo, Kirkkotie 23, 93600 Kuusamo

phone: +358 (0)20 1234 693, <http://www.sokoshotels.fi/english/index.cfm>

Sodankylä

Hotel Artica Sodankylä, Unarintie 15, 99600 Sodankylä  
phone:+ 358 (0)16 611 924

Hotel Luostotunturi, Ellisantie 6, 99555 Luosto  
phone.: +358-(0)16 620 400, [www.luostotunturi.com](http://www.luostotunturi.com)

Inari  
Hotel Inari, Inarintie 40, 99870 Inari  
phone: +358-(0)16 671 026, [www.hotellinari.fi](http://www.hotellinari.fi)

Hotel Inarin Kultahovi, 99870 Inari  
phone: +358-(0)16 671 221 [www.saariselka.fi/kultahovi](http://www.saariselka.fi/kultahovi)

Muonio  
Hotelli Jeris Oy, Jerisjärventie 91, 99300 Muonio  
phone: +358 (0)16 558 511, [www.hotellijeris.fi](http://www.hotellijeris.fi)

Lapland Hotels Olos, 99300 Muonio  
phone: +358 (0)16 536 111, [www.laplandhotels.com](http://www.laplandhotels.com)

Ylitornio  
Hotel Karemajat, Ainiovaara , 95600 Ylitornio  
phone: +358 (0)16 31 551

Hotel Kievari, Alkkulanraitti 67, 95600 Ylitornio  
phone: +358 (0)16 31201

Rovaniemi  
Sokos Hotel Vaakuna, Koskikatu 4, 96200 Rovaniemi  
phone: +358 (0)20 1234 695, <http://www.sokoshotels.fi/english/index.cfm>

Best Western Hotel Oppipoika, Korkalonkatu 33, 96460 Rovaniemi  
phone: +358 (0)16 338 8111

gasoline tanks along the way:

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Kuhmon Laatu Oy, Kainuuntie 77, 88900 KUHMO  
phone: +35886550449  
Internet: [www.kuhmonet.fi/kuhmonlaatu](http://www.kuhmonet.fi/kuhmonlaatu)

Ylitornio  
J&J Lakkapää OY, Alkkulanraitti127, 95600 YLITORNIO  
phone: +358165101200  
Internet: <http://www.lakkapaa.com>