New Bothnian Coastal Route - between sky and sea

The Bothnian Coastal Route stretches between sea and sky along the northernmost coasts of the Baltic Sea. Two countries border the Bay of Bothnia high up in the north, which merge on a road trip into this adventurous, arctic destination.

At the heart of the Nordic coastal region lies the Bay of Bothnia, a wide, shallow and northernmost inlet of the Baltic Sea. The name is related to the Swedish name for this part of the Baltic Sea, Bottenhavet (Bottom Sea). Here, at the point where the sea connects these two countries, sits the Bothnian Coastal Route. The route runs along the coast from western Finland to the Finnish-Swedish border in southern Lapland and offers a wide range of experiences and fascinating insight into this region all year round.

The landscape along the Bothnian Coastal Route changes with every season: in winter, snowy landscapes and frozen seas enchant, while summer beckons with endless days and magical sunsets. Autumn brings magnificent foliage (called ruska), and spring revives nature with fresh shoots. The coastal towns and villages along the route are accessible all year round and offer authentic experiences. Whether it's local food, freshly caught fish or Kalix Löjrom caviar with a protected designation of origin - every palate is spoilt here.

The journey begins at the southernmost point,Kvarken, a strait often referred to as the ‘neck of the sea’. This area, part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a paradise for nature lovers with its 5,600 islands. Here, sky and sea merge into a single entity.

Many towns along the route, on both sides, are particularly worth seeing.**Umeå**, the largest city in northern Sweden with 133,000 inhabitants, is characterised by its young, creative and progressive atmosphere. With over 37,000 students, the university city has a youthful and international flair. Umeå offers a wide range of cultural attractions, including Sami traditions (which can be experienced in an open-air museum), the world's northernmost opera house, an architecturally outstanding art museum, the world's only guitar museum, a sculpture park with over 40 works of art and gastronomic surprises. The city, which is surrounded by unspoilt nature, dense forests and the wide Umeälven River, is also known as the city of birch trees, as 3,000 birch trees adorn the city centre.

Skellefteå, located on the north coast of the Baltic Sea, is considered the epicentre of the green transition in Europe. This lively small town is surrounded by vast pine and spruce forests, which for centuries have served as winter grazing grounds for the reindeer of Europe's only indigenous population, the Sami. The green city has the longest coastline in the country with natural small beaches and harbours along the coast. Experience the Arctic lifestyle, enjoy culture and history and wonder at the tranquillity of unspoilt nature. It is hardly surprising that the Scandinavian Winter Swimming Championships are held here. Skellefteå is a member of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), which supports its members in their sustainability work.

Piteå, a charming small town, attracts visitors from all over the world. This lively tourist town radiates hospitality and charm. Along the 300 kilometres of coastline, long sandy beaches at Pite Havsbad, the sparkling archipelago, picturesque walks and cosy cafés where Swedish fika is celebrated beckon. Tranquil forest, adventures on the Pite River and icebreaker tours in winter. The city offers a wide range of accommodations, from campsites to rural villages and archipelago cabins to luxury hotels.

Luleå, with a population of 80,000, is located on a peninsula where the wide Lule River meets the Bay of Bothnia. The city combines modern urbanity with historical charm, especially in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Gammelstad. There are good shopping opportunities, sports and leisure facilities, a rich cultural and nightlife programme and first-class restaurants and hotels. In winter, visitors can take a walk on the 10-kilometre ice path around the town on the frozen sea, borrow free kick sleds or go ice skating. Luleå offers direct access to the Bay´s brackish water archipelago with over 1,300 islands, two rivers and extensive forest areas that offer seasonal contrasts from snow and ice in winter to warm, sunny, deserted beaches in summer.

Kalix, where the beauty of nature meets exciting adventures, offers unspoilt beaches, a fascinating archipelago and a mysterious underground fort. Of particular note is the exquisite Kalix Löjrom caviar, which has been awarded the prestigious status of Protected Designation of Origin and is savoured at exclusive events and restaurants. In summer, archipelago tours, fishing and canoeing on the Kalix River are inviting, while winter is a paradise for snowmobiling, dog sledding and Northern Lights safaris. A tour on an icebreaker offers an extraordinary experience. Kalix is a world of flavours, thrills and memorable experiences where the river meets the sea.

No less impressive is the Finnish side of the route, from Kemi to Vaasa. These places also offer a mixture of architecture, history and natural beauty.

This Arctic adventure road trip takes you on a journey through the history and culture of two countries connected by the sea. The destinations along the route can be easily reached by car, bus, train (including night trains) or plane. The 3.5-hour ferry crossing between Vaasa in Finland and Umeå in Sweden is particularly attractive, offering the opportunity to experience the vastness of the Gulf of Bothnia from a different perspective. And in an environmentally friendly way too.

More information: https://bothniancoastalroute.com/

Press photos: https://bothniancoastalroute.com/content-bank/

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