

# 4<sup>th</sup> Int. Arctic Hot-Air Balloon Adventure in Levi, Finish Lapland | 10.-18.2.2010

From 10<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> February 2010 the world's only ballooning event of this kind above the Arctic Circle took place now for the fourth time. A nice mixture of ballooners from all over Europe came together. This year 13 teams from Holland, Belgium, France, Germany and Luxemburg and of course from Finland joined the adventure.

Part of the adventure were of course ballooning competitions, passenger rides, arctic sport activities, a survival day, safaris on skidoos, reindeer or husky sleighs, sitting together at a cosy campfire and of course lots of fun were also part of the exciting program.

An evening was spend in a real snow restaurant and for a few participants even an overnight stay in the ice hotel was part of their personal adventure. The polar light, Aurora Borealis, did send its regards and provided one extra portion of tension and the crowning glory!

An area of high pressure established north of us. So clear skies, low wind and temperatures of  $-23^{\circ}$  to  $-33^{\circ}$  Celsius contributed to an amazing experience. It is something real special to rise up - well dressed with thermo clothes provided by the local DMC Arctic Incentives - into 2500m and enjoy the wonderful clear air and the panorama view down on the snowy Lapland winter landscape with its frozen trees, its moose's and reindeers.



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We experienced extreme weather conditions with 45 degrees steering going higher and further an inversion of more than 10 degrees Celsius from 30 to 60 meter. To see the steam condensing in the cold air deflating the balloon is a very new experience for hot air ballooners. Altogether we had six flying days out of the ten possible days this is not at all usual - to be honest. And almost caused us to run out of propan gas..

In this endless nature only a few landing places are available beyond the endless forests and deep snow! One learns fast after a few landings in the deep snow. This is the main reason for us to do mainly fly-ins to the direct Levi area depending of the wind direction. Lakes and skidoo tracks are more suitable landing places! But in case of a landing in the deep snow our experienced guide functions as rescue skidoo and with the special build sledge was always able to pick up the balloon and its passengers.

Hot-Air balloon flying under most extreme conditions is nothing ordinary. Based on a true story of the Swede Salomon Andrée, two Dutchmen organize this adventure in Levi, Northern Finland since 2007.

Andrée tempted 1897 without success to reach the North Pole with a hydrogen balloon. After only 50 km of journey he had to make a forced landing and the following footpath of approx. 3 months finally cost his and his team's lives. He was completely unprepared. He should have - and this is the base for the experience character of the Arctic Hot-Air Balloon Adventure - more exactly

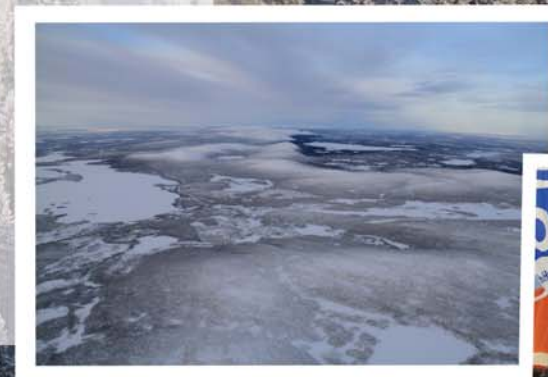


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investigated how the Sami (the residents of Lapland) deal with the extreme conditions ruling in these northern regions. He possibly would have survived then.

During the wintertime the professional European hot-air balloonists have little to do since the local weather is simply too bad. Therefore Ton Kurvers (European Balloon company) and Hendrik E. ten Cate (Easy Event GmbH) got the idea of this spectacular adventure. Ten Cate supports Lapland at the promotion of the M.I.C.E. Market for almost five years and has apart from his love for this country a variety of contacts here. Ton Kurvers drives for more than thirty years hot-air balloons all over the world. He gained an enormous experience and knows ofcourse lot's of ballooners worldwide.

In February 2007 they organised the first „try-out“ adventure. Five balloons from the Netherlands, Germany and Finland have taken part. It became a magnificent success right at the first time. With a stable high pressure situation and at temperatures of -20° degrees Celsius to -25° degrees Celsius and an endless view - it was truthfull an experience. „I come to Lapland already since the beginning of the nineties and haven't often seen mooses there yet, but then to see 30 animals on a 1 ½ hr trip from a hot balloon at one time was really fascinating!“ ten Cate says. Within the next years teams from Belgium, England, Finland, Germany, India, the Netherlands, Russia and Spain came to Levi with her teams, partly with vehicles of their own. The farthest journey up to now had a team from Barcelona with over 10,000 kilometers driven.



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Furthermore this unique event is also most suitable for incentives. The incentive guests, equipped with appropriate protective clothing, are right from the beginning „part of the team“. This means it may and should be tackled to build up the balloon, to hold the ropes when inflating the balloon. Then quickly into the basket – and up up it goes! The journey takes 1-2 hours. A maximum of 40 – 60 passengers can fly at the same time!

Apart from this classic adventure - in 2011 we will add an additional dimension. New is a survival aspect of having to survive outside during the extreme arctic polarnight. Teams from 5 different countries already showed interest and will start for this very special adventure. The target is to get as close as possible to a previous established target area but having to overnight. The teams can chose an outdoor specialist from their own country as only passenger to help them with his experience. Camera teams from the different countries will follow the teams.

In February 2011, there is a new chance for everyone who got the taste and likes to experience this adventure.

For further information on this journey, please take a look at [www.hot-air-balloon-adventure.com](http://www.hot-air-balloon-adventure.com) or contact Easy Event in Mönchengladbach, Germany.

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