

What is required from a safari guide?

Wilderness skills, language and practical skills, interests in different kinds of hobbies, performance skills, a valid driving license (B), first aid skills, ability to handle stress and good communication skills.

What if I have never been working as a guide before?

Every guide recruited to Lapland Safaris will participate on a guide training before the start of the season. It is an authorized training that includes learning to drive and handle a snowmobile, going through the techniques of guiding a safari, customer service at Lapland Safaris, first aid skills as well as performance skills. The training is part of the Arctic Hospitality Academy and is organized by Lapland Safaris in cooperation with Lapland Hotels and educational institutions specialized in the field. Every participant gets a certificate.

How does the passing to the actual work happen?

After the guide training, the new guides start their work in the role of an assisting guide, working alongside with a senior guide. The first days and weeks are more like a familiarization to the different tasks. The senior guides and the lead guide make sure that the new guides know what is required from them and that it has been properly taught to them. The work during the first days is more about looking how things are done and listening to specific instructions. If the guide training and the familiarization has been well assimilated, the new guides can move on to independent work quite soon.

The tasks of a guide

In December, the new guides fulfill their tasks mostly as part of a group. The group can include between 2 to 15 guides and the task may be anything between guiding a snowmobile safari, handing out clothing to customers and looking after a toboggan hill. The duties can involve clothing maintenance, transporting customers, preparing juice and snacks, giving helmets or pouring juice, for example. After the New Year, smaller groups of customers and guides means more independent work. The guides will have to have assimilated the content of the guide training and need to remember the things gone through in the familiarization in December. If needed, the things that have already been learned will be gone through once more.

The guide who works independently is in the first place responsible for what happens during the safari. The guide picks up the customers, gives them the appropriate clothing and the driving/skiing instructions, sticks to the agreed schedule and, most important of all, makes sure that the customers get what has been promised to them. From the guide, all this requires local knowledge and being familiar with the product and the equipment.

Where is the guide work done?

The guiding can happen while travelling in a bus or while driving a snowmobile, indoors or outdoors, in a forest or in a museum. The guide always knows where to go, what to do and what is the time table. They don't let it show if there is a hurry or if something goes wrong – this is what makes a professional guide. Also, they can handle difficult situations and customers and they have good cultural knowledge and language skills. A professional guide knows the products and what the customers has paid for and understands that each customer has a different picture in their mind about Finnish nature, a reindeer or ice-fishing, for example. Making all of these pictures real on one safari is what makes a guide a professional.

An example of a day of a safari guide:

08:00 the given starting hour of the work shift – The guide is at work, clothing changed and ready to work

08:05 Preparations – planning the pick-ups of the customers, packing the backpack/the equipment, preparing the sledges, maintaining the skis, packing the food, filling in the safari plan, picking up the customers, and so on.

09:00 Start of the safari – welcoming the customers, taking care of the paper work, giving the clothing, giving the driving instructions, starting to move

09:30 Snowmobiling/skiing/museum etc. – guiding work

14:00 Coming back from the safari – customer drop-off to hotels, returning and maintaining the equipment and the clothing, filling in the safari report, signing up to the supervisor

16:00 The given finishing hour of the work shift